Honouring our Past, Fostering our Future

A Kaupapa Māori Exploration of Identity, Whanaungatanga and How this Supports Rangatahi Māori Hauora and well-being

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Abstract

Exploring identity can be both a complex and beautiful journey for young people, especially for rangatahi Māori. However, rangatahi can often find themselves navigating environments, experiences and relationships in which Māori ways of being, knowing and living in this world are questioned, scrutinised and dissected to pieces. What it means to be Māori in contemporary times is constantly evolving, as are the relationships that we share with one another. This research therefore, aimed to explore the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity, and how this supports the hauora and well-being of rangatahi Māori. To explore this question, I have drawn from a kaupapa Māori methodology which prioritises and centres research by Māori, for Māori, and with Māori. This thesis is drawn from a wider project titled Harnessing the Spark of Life where a total of 51 rangatahi Māori engaged in semi-structured interviews in relation to whanaungatanga. The current study draws on the experiences and knowledge shared by four of these rangatahi Māori. Within this research, I draw upon a reflexive thematic analysis to understand the holistic nature of hauora and well-being, as well as the constantly evolving identities of rangatahi Māori today. Rangatahi Māori drew upon a range of tools and strategies to bolster and support their hauora and well-being including the engagement in whanaungatanga, tikanga Māori and engaging in te ao Māori. In engaging with whanaungatanga relationships, rangatahi were able to find a sense of belonging whilst navigating foreign environments, experiences and relationships, fostering a positive sense of identity and hauora and well-being.

Dedication

To the rangatahi Māori who shared their whakaaro for this kaupapa - it is a privilege and an honour to share your words of wisdom. I hope I can do you justice in the sharing of your stories. I hope they inspire others, the way they have inspired me.

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Glossary

Provided below is a partial glossary of commonly used te reo Māori words that appear throughout this thesis. Spellings and translations of some Māori words may vary according to the context in which they are used and iwi (tribal) affiliations and dialects.

Kupu Māori	**Kupu Pākehā**
Haerenga	Journey
Hauora	Health
Hītori	History
Hononga	Connection
Kaumātua	An elder, a person of status within the whānau
Kaupapa	Topic, policy, matter for discussion
Kaitiaki	Custodian, guardian, caregiver
Kōrero	To tell, say speak, address

Kotahitanga	Unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action
Kuia	An elderly woman, female elder
Mamae	To be painful, sore, hurt
Mana motuhake	Autonomy, self-determination, sovereignty
Mana whenua	Those with authority over the land
Moana	Sea, ocean
Ngahere	Bush, forest
Pānga	Connections with, related to, association with
Papakāinga	Home base, village
Pōwhiri	To welcome, welcome ceremony on marae
Ringawera	Kitchen worker
Rohe	Boundary, region, territory, area

Tangata whenua	People born of the land
Tau	Relaxed, without panic
Tautoko	To support, prop up, agree
Te ao Māori	The Māori world/ways of being
Te ao Pākehā	The Pākehā world/ways of being
Tino rangatiratanga	Self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy
Tohu	A sign, mark, symbol
Tuakiri	Identity
Tūpuna	Ancestors, grandparents
Turanga hou	A new standing place
Tūrangawaewae	Place where one has the right to stand
Wero	Challenge

Whakaaro	Thought, opinion, understanding
Whakamā	To be ashamed, shy, embarrassed
Whakamana	To empower, uplift, give voice to
Whakamomori	Death by suicide
Whakapapa	Genealogy, lineage; to be layered amongst
Whakawhanaungatanga	The process of establishing relationships, relating well to others
Whanaungatanga	A relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging

Ko wai au?

Ko Aorangi te maunga

Ko Takitimu te waka

Ko Moawhango te awa

Ko Ngāti Kahungunu te iwi

Ko Ngāti Whitikaupeka te hapū

Ko te Riu o puanga te marae

Ko Keryn Maraea Koopu ahau

It seems most appropriate to begin this thesis concerning rangatahi Māori and their identity with a brief reflection of my whakapapa. For Māori, whakapapa is an analytical tool for understanding our world and relationships (Pihama & Cameron, 2012). My identity, first and foremost as Māori, and my identity as a researcher begins and ends with my whakapapa. In unravelling the many layers of my whakapapa and exploring how this intertwines with my identity, perspectives, lived experiences and view of the world, I hope to shed light on how I arrived at this thesis. Always in the presence of, and with the guidance of, my tūpuna.

To contextualise my whakapapa, I am of Ngāti Kahungunu and Te Whānau ā Apanui descent. However, while I proudly claim my whakapapa, this is a journey of learning that I am still on, particularly on my Te Whānau ā Apanui side. My whānau on my mother's side come from a small rural town called Moawhango near Taihape. My whānau on my father's side come from a rural town called Maraenui near Ōpōtiki. Whilst my parents grew up in small rural towns, my sister and I grew up living in urban cities. Living urban is all I know- my whānau moved to

Christchurch, where my sister and I were born, then to Palmerston North and again to Hamilton before I moved to Auckland to complete my university studies.

During my primary school years in Palmerston North, I attended a predominantly Pākehā school. While I knew that I was Māori, it was a part of myself and my identity that I dimmed down to fit in with my Pākehā peers who surrounded me. A coping mechanism that I would selectively enhance or diminish when the situation called for it. I was able to utilise this mechanism because of my privilege as a fair-skinned Māori, a luxury I now know many do not have. My "Māori side" would resurface from hibernation only when around family, especially when I went to stay with my nan, a kōhanga reo teacher in Maraenui.

My schooling in Hamilton differed from my earlier experiences in that I went from being one of few Māori to being one of many Māori students. Within this new environment in which Māori peers surrounded me, I felt a sense of comfort in the familiarity of Māori who looked like me while simultaneously feeling a sense of inadequacy in terms of my identity and being Māori. At the time, I was very aware that I looked the part of being Māori. However, I lacked the cultural descriptors I thought I needed to be Māori-being fluent in Te Reo Māori, doing kapa haka, and being in bilingual classes. I gave labels to myself such as "plastic" or "white Māori", which had nothing to do with my physical features and everything to do with my own insecurities. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I would come to find out that this was the influence of colonisation in action. As I grew older and progressed through high school, being Māori became a box to tick rather than a part of my identity to embrace.

Beginning my study at the University of Auckland was a turning point for me in terms of my identity and my values. In my pursuit of a degree in psychology, I was repeatedly exposed to the overrepresentation of Māori in mental health statistics. It was here that I learnt about colonisation's historical and very present impact on the Māori people, my people. Not only did these papers open my mind to the atrocious acts that Māori have been subject to and continue to be subjected to, but they also brought out feelings of shame, hurt and anger. Shame on myself for not having sought out this knowledge earlier in my life, hurt for my ancestors who lived these realities, and anger that the intergenerational effect of this is still being felt by Māori.

While seemingly mundane, these experiences have contributed to my sense of cultural identity as a young Māori woman and as a young Māori researcher. They also provide a foundation for how I arrived at this thesis. It is my own journey with being Māori, alongside my whakapapa which has shaped my interest in exploring the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori.

Chapter One: Introduction

"E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea"

I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea

This whakatauki encapsulates the very essence of what it means to be Māori. Although short, the passage is rich with culture, knowledge and tradition significant to te ao Māori. A seed has endless potential, and it has the capacity to grow and develop into something beautiful if nurtured in the appropriate conditions. Even before the seed is planted, it has inherent promise and potential to do great things. When planted, the seed buries its roots deep below the surface into the whenua, acting as a foundation. Meanwhile, above the surface, the seed continues to grow, sprouting new fruits and spreading its seed, continuing the cycle of the plant and fostering growth for the future. Like the seed, a person also shares the same promise and potential to grow into something of greatness. Our tamariki were valuable members of the Māori world, before conception, before birth and before time. Our pūrākau tell stories of how our tamariki began their journey into this world from Rangiātea, the home of the cosmological beings. The beginning and the end of the journey of potential. As well as the arrival point of opportunity to realise this potential. Our tamariki and rangatahi were regarded as gifts from the Atua and as such, were nurtured like a seed to ensure health and to foster growth. *E kore au e ngaro* is a reminder that our culture, our identity as Māori, will never be lost. *He kākano I ruia mai I Rangiatea*, an ode to where and who we as Māori, come from. This whakatauki acts as both a reminder and an affirmation that our culture, our identity as Māori, will always remain strong because we know where and whom we come from.

Thesis Aims and Objectives

This thesis will explore the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori through the following objectives:

- Explore how rangatahi Māori support their hauora and well-being through te ao Māori;
- Explore how rangatahi experience, express and seek out whanaungatanga in their everyday lives;
- Explore how rangatahi Māori enact identity in urban environments when living away from their home;
- Explore the ways that rangatahi Māori are safeguarding tuakiri Māori and mātauranga Māori for the future of Māoridom.

Thesis Outline

This research begins with a review of existing literature on Māori identities. Here, I journey from the past to the present, the historical and contemporary impact colonisation has had and continues to have on Māori identities. Chapter three contains the research methodology utilised within this thesis, in which I detail the theoretical underpinnings and principles central to a Kaupapa Māori methodology. In Chapter four, I attend to some of the finer details of this particular research process. Here, I outline the process of data collection and the process of data analysis that I engaged in to complete this thesis research. Chapter five presents the findings from the research and includes excerpts from each of our rangatahi Māori collaborators. Within this chapter, the analysis and discussion of these findings are presented concurrently. The final chapter, Chapter six, draws this study to a close by tying the threads of this research together.

Within this chapter, I provide an overview of the key findings in relation to the objectives of this study, the strengths and limitations of this research project, and the implications and recommendations for future research and further practice.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Who are Māori?

Indigenous people are said to be some of the most researched people in the world (L. Smith, 2012). For Māori, as tangata whenua (People born of the land) and Indigenous people of Aotearoa, this is especially true when considering the complexities involved when discussing identity and belonging. To answer the question "who are Māori?" it is essential first to understand the historical and contextual factors in which Māori identities develop.

The Colonisation of Māori Identity: Past to Present

In seeking to provide insight and further clarity into the main processes experienced by Māori since the onset of colonisation, it is imperative to preface this section with a caveat. Attempting to divide history into a neatly sectioned, chronological, and linear narrative is particularly problematic, especially considering the immense influence that colonisation has had on Māori and their identities (Reid et al., 2017). Furthermore, with the collision of two fundamentally different worlds are multiple truths and 'versions' of history, to provide a nuanced account of this is beyond the confines of this thesis. As such, the following section aims to provide a rather simplified understanding of colonisation as it pertains to Māori identity.

In te ao Māori, the past, present and future are intertwined; therefore, the present cannot be understood without considering what has happened in the past. As indigenous people, colonisation is painfully forged in our history as Māori, intertwined with our stories as Māori, and manifests itself in our lived experiences as Māori (L. Smith, 2012). Within the current

literature, there exists a tendency to speak of the "legacy of colonialism" rather than its ongoing presence, written in past-tense terms, as if colonisation has not continued to significantly impact Māori on numerous levels (Jackson, 2020; L. Smith, 2012). The terms pre-colonial and post-colonial reinforce the Western-coined narrative that colonisation is an event of the past (Veracini, 2015). However, this narrative puts a timestamp on colonialism and fails to recognise that Māori continue to face the consequences of colonialism to this day (L. Smith, 2012). Given the historical context of colonisation in Aotearoa and its role in the creation of contemporary Māori identities, it is important to journey through previous literature to understand how significantly Māori identity has been impacted by colonisation (Te Huia, 2015).

The Past

Prior to the arrival and the settlement of tauiwi in Aotearoa, tangata whenua (people of the land) existed in accordance with mātauranga Māori and tikanga. Tangata whenua were yet to be exposed to those who were distinctly non-Māori, and as such, tangata whenua identity was without question because there was no ethnic other living in Aotearoa at the time (Cain et al., 2017; Moeke-Pickering, 1996). At the core of mātauranga Māori is whakapapa, which has many different meanings and operates at numerous levels but generally refers to one's genealogy or descent (Rameka, 2018). Whakapapa could also be explained as the process of laying one thing upon another. For example, one could visualise Io-matua-kore, considered the supreme God in Māori creation stories, as the first layer of whakapapa and the foundation. Successive generations are placed on top of Io in ordered layers to comprise an expansive network of whakapapa connections that encompass everything from creation to the present (Cain et al., 2017; Moeke-Pickering, 1996). By this understanding, people were not solely seen as individual beings; their identity was conceptualised through their relationships with others (Gallagher,

2008). These whakapapa relationships comprised the basis of personal, collective and whānau identities and, therefore, at the very core of what it meant to be Māori (Gallagher, 2008; Rameka, 2018; Taonui, 2015). The relationships between people and between people and the physical world emphasise connections that were inextricably linked to identity formation prior to tauiwi arrival (Gallagher, 2008). These delicate relationships will be briefly discussed below.

Whakapapa ki te tangata: Relationships Between People. The past, present and future are intricately intertwined within whakapapa links - a continuum of life from the spiritual world to the physical world (Rameka, 2018). Identity is drawn from the past through one's ancestors to the present through whānau, hapū and iwi groupings and passed on to the future through the next generations (Ngawhare, 2019; Rameka, 2016, 2018). Prior to the arrival of Europeans, there was no single term for tangata whenua; rather, people distinguished themselves from one another by their tribal or iwi names (Walker, 1990, p. 94). The whānau, hapū and iwi groupings connect the individual to the collective through a shared common genealogy (Liu et al., 2005; Moeke-Pickering, 1996; Rameka, 2016; Weber, 2008). The importance of relationships and connectedness emerge through the delicate layers of whānau, hapū and iwi. During this particular time prior to tauiwi arrival, land and resources were important. Therefore these whānau, hapū and iwi relationships were significant in defending and protecting the land they were on (Moeke-Pickering, 1996). Whakapapa relationships within one's iwi grouping were also significant because they helped to enmesh a person in a collective identity (Hamley & Le Grice, 2021), to foster an interconnected sense of identity, belonging, health and well-being (Gallagher, 2008; Moeke-Pickering, 1996).

Whakapapa ki te Whenua - Relationships Between People and the Land. Whakapapa provides a link between people and includes the relationships between people and the whenua (Rameka, 2018). Whakapapa also allows Māori to trace their genealogy back to Papatūānuku, and as tangata whenua, people of the land, it was important to nourish this relationship. After all, the land provided tangata whenua with a geographical location to call tūrangawaewae proudly, but it also provided a source of sustenance needed for survival (Walker, 1990). Tangata whenua identity was intimately associated with the location of iwi boundaries or prominent landmarks in the surrounding environment. It was common to recite these orally as an act of claims-making and also to locate oneself in relation to another iwi (McIntosh, 2006; Rameka, 2018; Walker, 1990). Locating oneself in relation to the features of the land establishes a sense of meaning and belonging to the whenua, something that continues to be reflected in how Māori identify and introduce themselves in the present day through pepeha (Rameka, 2018).

The Arrival of Tauiwi

The arrival and subsequent settlement of the British in the 18th century brought contact between two fundamentally different cultural groups. Early European travellers in Aotearoa referred to the Indigenous people as ‘New Zealanders’, but eventually, the term ‘Māori’ was coined as a general label to encompass the entirety of tangata whenua in Aotearoa (Stewart, 2021, p. 36). Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the word ‘māori’ was used to refer to something ‘natural’ rather than in relation to the Māori people (Royal, 2012). However, the cultural differences were significant enough to catalyse a new ethnic identity as Māori. This signalled a post-contact identity shift from tangata whenua - people born of the land, to an

umbrella term that would combine all iwi together. This shift would signal changing times for Māori in relation to the formation and construction of their identity.

Initially, the arrival of settlers, to an extent, was welcomed by tangata whenua due to the variety of foods, weapons, animals and technology that tauiwi had brought with them (Walker, 1990, p. 79). These relationships brought opportunities for trade and for Māori to make their daily lives more efficient. Nevertheless, Māori enthusiasm to take advantage of the opportunities from relationships with the British was mistaken for a willingness to be colonised (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59). This was predicated on the Eurocentric assumption that Māori were racially, religiously, culturally and technologically inferior to the superiority of the British (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 63; Walker, 1990, p. 85). Māori were believed to be "inferior, lesser human beings" and described as undeveloped savages, and therefore, needed to be civilised (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017, p. 48). There was an expectation that Māori would adapt and assimilate to a British way of living-one that was assumed to be more modern and progressive than the current uncivilised way of living that Māori engaged in. Mātauranga Māori and tikanga, which had previously underpinned Māori political, legal and social groupings, were deemed by the incoming British settlers as "lacking morality, certainty and reasonableness" (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017, p. 48). As such, Māori would be exposed to a period of rapid cultural dispossession, land loss and new colonial systems, which would shift Māori ways of living and being to that which aligned with the values of the colonial settlers (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017; Walker, 1990).

He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni. Colonisation presents itself in various forms. One way in particular which has had (and continues to have) a significant impact on Māori has been through government legislation and policy. The increase of European activity

and growing lawlessness in Aotearoa became a cause for concern in the years leading up to 1835. As a result, He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (The Declaration of Independence) was signed to address the challenges that came with European contact (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020). For Māori, the Declaration proclaimed Aotearoa as an independent state in which power and decision-making remained with rangatira; it was also a way of strengthening the alliance between Māori and the British (Cain et al., 2017, p. 57). For Busby, who drafted the Declaration, some would say it was a step towards making New Zealand a British possession, an intermediary form of governance until the British could take hold of the reins (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2022).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and remains a highly contested and long-standing subject of debate today. In the years following the signing of He Whakaputanga, the idea of sovereignty was still a relatively newly introduced concept to Māori, who already had their own governing systems in place guided by tikanga (Gallagher, 2008). The Treaty of Waitangi was supposedly an accurate translation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, despite containing fundamental differences which prove otherwise (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020). To touch briefly on some of these crucial differences, in the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori chiefs gave the Queen absolutely and without reservation all rights and powers of sovereignty over their lands. However, they were guaranteed the ‘undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries and other properties (Wynyard, 2019). In contrast, in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori gave the Crown ‘kawanatanga katoa’ or complete governorship over their land. Māori were guaranteed tino rangatiratanga, or the unqualified chieftainship over their lands, villages, and taonga. There is no doubt that these documents are not a direct translation of each other, nor do the promises made align with one another. Perhaps one of the most important concerns raised

is why rangatira would readily cede their recently gained sovereignty to the British Crown when only five years prior had they signed He Whakaputanga, in which 'sovereignty' remained with rangatira (Cain et al., 2017, p. 57). These concerns remain heavily debated in contemporary times.

Colonisation (Post-Treaty)

Language Loss. In the years following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, policy and legislation continued to impact Māori identity in more specific ways. In 1847, the Education Ordinance Act was one of many acts implemented to aid the assimilation process of Māori (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011, p. 201). To colonise Māori minds, English was to be the only language of instruction in what would become compulsory British-based schools for Māori (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59). The Act fuelled the expansion of boarding schools which saw Māori children physically removed from their whānau and separated them from their land, language and culture. Like mātauranga Māori and tikanga, te reo Māori is an inheritance from the ancestors and a gift from the Atua (Te Huia, 2015). The removal of the Māori language from the mouths of its native speakers only aided the colonisation process and swiftly assisted the assimilation of Māori into the language of the Europeans (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017, p. 45; Te Huia, 2015).

Land Loss and Alienation. Further down the historical timeline, policy and legislation continued to wreak havoc on Māori ways of living and being. The gradual alienation and loss of Māori land had devastating consequences on Māori identity, especially considering that identity was intimately associated with the whenua (Rameka, 2018; Walker, 1990). The whenua provided a standing place for Māori to call tūrangawaewae and a place to draw a sense of belonging and strength (Cain et al., 2017, p. 9). In 1862, the Native Lands Act was introduced, followed by an

amended version in 1865. Through the Native Lands Acts, the Native Land Court contributed to the individualisation of Māori land titles (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59; Taonui, 2012). Thus, making land more accessible to purchase by the incoming British settlers whilst simultaneously contradicting the communal values that were intrinsically embedded in Māori social systems (Taonui, 2012). Taking into account that the whenua is so profoundly intertwined with Māori identity, the Native Land Act was to have a detrimental impact on Māori for many years to come (Walker, 1990, p. 136).

The 1860s were rampant with land confiscations by the Government, partly due to the flow-on effect of the Native Land Court, which significantly fuelled the process (Boast, 2015). The introduction of the New Zealand Settlements Act in 1863 paved the way for land confiscations to become even more pervasive (Adds, 2017). The act was intended to introduce settlers onto the land, but in reality, allowed and normalised land confiscation without compensation from the Government. As a result, Māori were left with a rapidly declining land base to stand on, a lack of resources and an identity crisis. After all, how could Māori be tangata whenua if they had no whenua to stand on? People of the land no more, the consequences of displacement continue to impact Māori today (Walker, 1990).

Loss of Political Autonomy. In 1867, the Crown introduced the Māori Representation Act, which would override the political autonomy of Māori and rapidly progress the colonial agenda of the European settlers (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59). Rather than providing political representation for hapū or iwi, this Act would establish a mere four parliament seats for Māori amongst a 72-seat settler Parliament (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59; Taonui, 2016). Compared to their European counterparts, Māori would be significantly underrepresented and lack the political

power within a foreign system of Governance to safeguard and protect Māori ways of living and being for future generations (Cain et al., 2017, p. 59).

During the late 18th century and early 19th century, the expression and exercise of identity and belonging for Māori began to change drastically (Cain et al., 2017, p. 61). Many Māori would begin to find themselves unable to speak te reo Māori, with a severed connection to culture, landless, without access to shelter or food, and with a rapidly declining population due to European-introduced diseases (Cain et al., 2017, p. 61). In the aftermath of legislation and policy changes, aspects of a tangata whenua identity that were once ubiquitous would become less prevalent in society.

Māori Renaissance. The beginning of the 20th century was a time of great difficulty for Māori society, whose population fell to the lowest it had ever been (Royal, 2005). The bright lights of the big cities offered opportunities for Māori in terms of work, money, and pleasure, fuelling the movement of Māori living rurally to urban locations (Meredith, 2015b). The transition to living in cities, often some distance from rural communities, presented a physical hurdle between papakāinga, marae, and contact with whānau, hapū, and iwi. Maintaining a connection with one's home community became increasingly difficult, as did maintaining the cultural values associated with Māori ways of living (Pool & Kukutai, 2018). While some were able to navigate te ao Pākehā successfully and remain connected to te ao Māori, for others, it was easier to adjust to Pākehā lifestyles and values (Meredith, 2015a). This would change how relationships and ways of connecting with people, the physical world, and the Atua were constructed (Meredith, 2015a; Pool & Kukutai, 2018). Consequently, a Māori identity would evolve from within unfamiliar urban spaces.

Despite carrying the consequences of colonisation from the previous centuries, this time was also a period of raised political consciousness and growing awareness of the impact of colonisation on Māori (Greaves et al., 2018). The urbanisation of Māori undoubtedly caused harm to the long-established practices and customs that Māori adhered to before European arrival (Meredith, 2015b; Royal, 2005), including whānau-based relational practices such as whanaungatanga (Le Grice et al., 2017). The cumulative effect of urbanisation brought the imposition of colonial ways of seeing and understanding the self and, simultaneously, a reconfiguration of how Māori would begin to identify themselves (Hamley et al., 2021). As the century progressed, urbanisation would continue to subject Māori to significant harm. However, it would also demonstrate the resiliency of Māori, who began to fight back to resist colonialism and assimilation (Greaves et al., 2018). A larger concentration of the Māori population living in the cities made it easier for Māori to educate each other on the injustices that tangata whenua face as a direct consequence of colonisation (Meredith, 2015b; Pool & Kukutai, 2018) and to take collective solidarity and action (Greaves et al., 2018). Urban enclaves populated with Māori would become sites of resistance that enabled Māori to collectively resist the imposition of colonial ways and collectively empower each other as Māori. Activism and protest movements of many forms and scales were common features during this renaissance period. In 1975, protest movements such as the Māori land march saw Māori and non-Māori march from Northland to the steps of Parliament in Wellington to protest the alienation of Māori land by the Government (Walker, 1990, pp. 212–215). In 1977, Māori coalesced to occupy the whenua of Ngāti Whātua for 506 days in peaceful protest of the selling of their land by the Crown (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, 2021). The year 1979 saw He Taua, a collective of Māori students at the University of Auckland, confront a group of engineering students who, for many years, had called it ‘tradition’ to insult

and mock the Māori culture (Walker, 1990, p. 222). He Taua tried to resolve the issue through the formal channels of the University to seek justice, but when this did not work, resorted to an in-person confrontation - one that put He Taua at risk with the law. The act of protest and activism is embedded in our history as Māori. In its simplest form, it provides a vehicle for Māori to resist the colonial forces which have historically taken so much from us (Greaves et al., 2018).

The Present: Māori Today

Māori have unique origin stories and histories, fundamentally different from those of white or settler New Zealanders, known as Pākehā (Stewart, 2021). Māori identities have continued to evolve and adapt in response to changing circumstances and environments (Reid et al., 2017; Te Huia, 2015). Considering the historical events that have altered and reconstructed a Māori identity, it is worth emphasising that there are now a wider variety of cultural and social features that exist among Māori (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010). So-called 'traditional' values commonly considered to be a central marker of a Māori identity are not the same for all Māori (Durie, 1995). Far from being a homogeneous group, the diversity of Māori presents a challenge to those who wish to conceptualise Māori identity in a condensed and tidy way (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Te Huia, 2015). In fact, much of the current literature debates whether it is helpful to have such binary and rigid understandings of what conceptualises a Māori identity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; McIntosh, 2006). The following section provides an overview of the literature pertaining to Māori identities.

Many have attempted to conceptualise what a Māori identity entails, some understandings more inclusive than others (Durie, 1995; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Kukutai,

2013; McIntosh, 2006; Te Huia, 2015). Durie (1997) posited that cultural identity is the coalescence of personal perceptions, cultural knowledge and participation in Māori society. He argued that a Māori cultural identity could be classified into a secure, positive, notional and compromised identity. Claiming a secure identity rests on the definite self-identification as Māori, coupled with involvement in and knowledge of whakapapa, familiarity with te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. The positive identity has lower engagement and involvement in te ao Māori but still self-identifies as Māori. The notional identity is one in which the individual has no access to te ao Māori but still claims a Māori identity. Lastly, the compromised identity refers to those individuals who have access to te ao Māori but do not self-identify as Māori.

McIntosh (2006) identified three categories of Māori identity, a fixed, fluid and forced identity. According to her definitions, the fixed Māori identity is characterised by cultural markers such as whakapapa, mātauranga Māori and proficiency in te reo Māori and tikanga. This identity adheres to relatively rigid criteria, with fixed elements of identity that can often unintentionally act as an exclusionary mechanism for many Māori. For example, as a consequence of colonisation, many Māori cannot converse in te reo Māori (Te Huia, 2015). A fluid Māori identity is more inclusive with its 'criteria', allowing the individual to borrow and select cultural markers. Here, individuals are able to reconfigure these markers in a way that gives both voice and currency in their social environment and challenges notions of authenticity. This identity is one that is often associated with conceptualisations of an 'urban Māori'. Forced Māori identities are formed under conditions of deprivation. Mcintosh (2006) states that identities are formed from within; however, the forced identity is one that is predominantly based on the perceptions of others.

While there is no single definition of what constitutes a Māori identity, what is certain is that Māori identities are innovative and adaptive to the needs of Māori over time (Hamley et al., 2021). Māori identities are constantly evolving over time, and as they do so, the urgency for literature which reflects this becomes salient.

Māori in Official Statistics

In Aotearoa, estimates of the Māori population are often drawn from the population census (Cormack, 2007). However, over time, there have been considerable changes in how ethnicity data has been collected and reported in Aotearoa. Historically, Māori identity has been categorised according to Western constructions of ethnic identity that are rooted in European and colonial ideas about race (Edwards, 2019; Te Huia, 2015). For much of the twentieth century, the official census used the concept of blood quantum to measure a Māori identity (Te Huia, 2015). Blood quantum was also based on the notion that culture and identity are shaped by one's biology (Borell, 2005). This form of measurement reduced Māori to a fraction-based system premised on the colonial assumption that a Māori identity could be quantified or validated by a number (Kukutai, 2013). By this understanding, an individual may be considered more or less Māori based on a percentage. Having “half or more” percentage of Māori blood meant the individual was officially counted in the Māori population (Borell, 2005; Kukutai, 2013). The notion of blood quantum reflected a gross undermining of Māori conceptions of identity that centred on whakapapa and kinship ties. Although blood quantum has since been disregarded, these conceptualisations continue to be reflected in Māori perceptions of identity at present and manifest in phrases like “half-caste” and “full-blooded” (Borell, 2005).

In official statistics, definitions of the Māori population have since moved away from biological definitions to definitions that centre on ancestry, cultural affiliation and self-identification with an ethnic group (Borell, 2005; Cormack, 2007; Kukutai, 2013). Currently, the Government offers two options for measuring and claiming a Māori identity: if the individual has Māori ancestry and if they choose to self-identify as having a Māori ethnic identity (Te Huia, 2015). The first can be thought of as whakapapa based, providing a count of people who have descended from a Māori ancestor (Cormack, 2007). The second is a measure of cultural affiliation and enables people to identify with the Māori ethnic group (or groups) they feel they belong to (Te Huia, 2015). While Māori descent and Māori ethnicity are closely related concepts, there is often a discrepancy within the census data between those who indicate having Māori ancestry and those who choose to subscribe to the Māori ethnicity (Bycroft et al., 2016). Within the census, more people often claim Māori descent than those marking their ethnicity as Māori (Webber & Kukutai, 2017). This variation in why some people might embrace their whakapapa or ancestry but choose not to acknowledge themselves as ethnically Māori reinforces the heterogeneous diversity amongst Māori (Bycroft et al., 2016; Greaves, 2014).

Whanaungatanga

Exploring Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga is a practice and cultural value deeply embedded within te ao Māori that refers to nurturing relationships through care, connection, common understandings and shared obligations (Hamley et al., 2022). As with many concepts in te ao Māori, whanaungatanga is an intricate and complex word that is difficult to articulate in a brief and concise sentence in te reo Pākehā (Greaves et al., 2021; Hamley et al., 2022; McNatty & Roa,

2002). In translating concepts from te reo Māori to te reo Pākehā, there is often a risk of losing the depth of meaning, and the culturally significant ways of being that contribute to the more profound value of the word itself (Hamley et al., 2022). Whanaungatanga has long been undermined and invalidated through everyday colonising dynamics (Le Grice et al., 2017). Eurocentric (mis)understandings have often reduced whanaungatanga to the building of rapport (Hamley et al., 2022). However, this understanding fails to capture the importance of the cultural contexts that provide the foundation for whanaungatanga to be enacted or expressed (McNatty & Roa, 2002). Hence, the following section aims to provide an overview of the current literature on whanaungatanga to provide a contextual foundation on which whanaungatanga is premised.

In an etymological sense, Ritchie (1992) deconstructs whanaungatanga into three simple elements: whānau, ngā, and tanga. *Whānau* refers to extended family or close kin; *ngā* encompasses the bonds beyond kin and family relationships, and *tanga* is a "process concept concerned with everything about relationships between kin". By this understanding, Ritchie (1992) describes whanaungatanga as the "basic cement that holds things Māori together". In a customary sense, whanaungatanga refers to the interconnectedness and relationships created amongst whānau, hapū, and iwi through whakapapa (O'carroll, 2013). Whanaungatanga was defined entirely in relation to whakapapa and *whanaunga* connections (Metge, 1995). Creating, maintaining, and sustaining relationships ensured that whānau maintained strong relational ties with one another (Durie, 1994). With these connections, the individual was tied to the collective, providing them with a sense of belonging and strengthening each kin group member (Rameka, 2018). Here, a more comprehensive network of connections to draw upon not only signified the

strength of the collective group (Le Grice et al., 2017) but also reinforced the commitment, responsibilities and obligations that whānau members have to each other (Rameka, 2018).

Within contemporary Māori research, the value of whanaungatanga has persisted, despite the urban migration that saw Māori shift to less intensive support networks and systems (Le Grice et al., 2017). Conceptualisations of whanaungatanga have noted the significant role colonisation and urbanisation have played in altering how Māori make sense of their diverse realities and identities (Greaves et al., 2021). In more recent times, definitions of whanaungatanga have extended beyond the whanau, hapū, and iwi to include the relationship between those who are brought together through a common or shared purpose but are not necessarily connected by whakapapa (O'carroll, 2013). Metge (1995) describes this relationship as '*kaupapa whānau*', where there is a greater emphasis on establishing whānau-like relationships (Rameka, 2018). As whakapapa connections are no longer an essential component, whanaungatanga can exist between people at all levels of society, including with close family or whānau, friends and other adults (Greaves et al., 2021). In te ao Māori, whanaungatanga connections can also encompass the sense of connectedness fostered with people, place, and the physical and spiritual worlds (Rameka, 2018). These conceptualisations cater to the diverse identities of Māori in contemporary society, especially those living in urban areas (McNatty and Roa, 2002). These various understandings of whanaungatanga bring to light the centrality of relationships within te ao Māori and the need to build family or kin-like relationships (Greaves et al., 2021).

Since whanaungatanga is a broad and multifaceted concept that encompasses many meanings, interpretations and applications (O'carroll, 2013), it is essential to create a working

definition of whanaungatanga for this research. Within the confines of this thesis, the term whanaungatanga refers to the "active participation and sense of belonging in social groups such as whānau, friends, school communities, iwi and hapū, kaupapa-based collectives, organisations or groups, and wider society" (Greaves et al., 2021). This understanding of whanaungatanga includes whakapapa and non-whakapapa relationships between people.

Whanaungatanga, Wellbeing and Identity

The importance and centrality of whanaungatanga has been echoed across a wide range of academic disciplines, including psychology (Greaves et al., 2021; Hamley et al., 2022; Le Grice et al., 2017), health (Lyford & Cook, 2005), social work (Douglas, 2022) and education (Bishop et al., 2014). Within the growing academic literature base, whanaungatanga remains a protective factor for rangatahi Māori and is associated with greater levels of hauora and well-being (E. Cooper, 2014; Greaves et al., 2021; Hamley et al., 2021; Le Grice et al., 2017). In tandem with whanaungatanga comes access to an expansive web of underlying connections integral to any child or young person's development (Rameka, 2018). For rangatahi Māori, the ability to invoke an affiliation to whānau, hapū and iwi membership through whakapapa and whanaungatanga networks contributes to that feeling of being a part of something larger than oneself (Rameka, 2018), and the development of a positive sense of self-identity (Rua et al., 2017). It is within this context that meaningful relationships have the potential to occur and a sense of belonging and unity to be fostered (Douglas, 2022; Greaves et al., 2021; Hamley et al., 2022). The opportunity to participate in and build whanaungatanga relationships provides rangatahi with tools to bolster against socio-cultural challenges that Māori face in contemporary times (Rua et al., 2017). Thus, for whanaungatanga to thrive and rangatahi Māori to flourish, it is

vital to “rekindle, establish and maintain as many whanaungatanga links as possible” (Kukutai et al., 2016).

Chapter Three: Kaupapa Māori Methodology

Within this chapter, I draw attention to the finer philosophical details of this research project and the theoretical underpinnings and principles that I engaged with throughout to adhere to the research kaupapa. This project is guided and informed by Kaupapa Māori research principles throughout- a way of doing research that is firmly grounded in Māori ways of being (L. Smith, 2015). In engaging with Kaupapa Māori research, it is essential to critically interrogate the dominant epistemologies and ontologies that reflect Western forms of knowledge. This theoretical discussion will bring to the forefront Māori approaches to knowledge and research, situating our ways of knowing and being as valid, authentic, legitimate and normal.

Decolonising Methodologies

Within the realm of academia, research has been utilised as a tool of colonisation that has often failed to contextualise historical and contemporary events that determine Indigenous realities and experiences (Wilson et al., 2021). Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing have been marginalised, mistreated, misrepresented and silenced in favour of Western knowledge, despite the long-standing existence of Indigenous knowledge prior to European arrival (Smith, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). Academia, within the constraints of a Eurocentric lens, has often subjected Māori to scrutiny (L. T. Smith, 2012), establishing the positional superiority and dominance of Western knowledge (F. Smith, 2020). Research in this context, more often than not, fails to produce research that benefits Māori in useful or transformative ways (G. Smith, 1997).

Kaupapa Māori research as a theoretical framework came to fruition during a period of the Māori renaissance when there was increased recognition that Māori were progressively suffering from the consequences of political, cultural and economic marginalisation (Henry & Pene, 2001). The production of knowledge, the construction of knowledge, and the validity of specific types of knowledge have predominantly been dictated by a Western Eurocentric understanding of what counts as knowledge and what does not (L. T. Smith, 2012). This understanding of knowledge and theory has acted and continues to act as a vehicle for the colonial exploitation of Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001). Having evolved from within the praxis of Māori schooling and the education domain, Kaupapa Māori is a move to reclaim space by Māori to ensure that research that concerns Māori meets our needs and aspirations (F. Smith, 2020; G. Smith, 1997). In a collective effort to prioritise the well-being of Māori and to avoid furthering the colonial agenda, Māori intellectuals within academia would develop a Kaupapa Māori paradigm - a theoretical space in which Māori would have complete and total autonomy and tino rangatiratanga over the research process (Henry & Pene, 2001; Pihama et al., 2002; G. Smith, 1997). Within this space, Māori knowledge, language and culture are taken for granted, prioritised and regarded as legitimate (L. Smith, 2015). Māori political resistance and the fierce collective pursuit for mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga has inspired an environment in which Māori academics have begun to challenge western models of knowledge and knowledge construction - this has been central to the development of Kaupapa Māori research (Henry & Pene, 2001; F. Smith, 2020). Resistance stemmed from the concern that practices, especially within research and academia, would continue to privilege Western knowledge while simultaneously invalidating Māori knowledge, language and culture (L. T. Smith, 2012).

The theoretical foundation of Kaupapa Māori research and theory stems from Kaupapa Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001; Wilson et al., 2021). Broadly speaking, Kaupapa Māori literally means “the Māori way or agenda”, and it is a term used to describe the traditional Māori ways of doing, being and thinking encompassed within a Māori worldview or cosmology (Henry & Pene, 2001). While the academic terminology of Kaupapa Māori research and theory is relatively new, the term Kaupapa Māori is not a new phenomenon but rather a continuation of the legacy of our tūpuna (Pihama, 2001; Taki, 1996). As Pihama (2015) explains in the following passage:

> Our ancestors have always theorised about our world. The navigational expertise of our people highlights a deep understanding of a range of sciences related to building waka, tides and sea movement, distance navigation, cosmology and much more. Each skill and knowledge area requires the development of frameworks for understanding and explaining the knowledge base that informs Kaupapa Māori. As such, Kaupapa Māori theory is based upon and informed by mātauranga Māori. (p. 6)

Mātauranga Māori is created through the use of whakapapa - an analytical tool that Māori have utilised to understand our world and our relationships (Pihama, 2015). By this understanding, through the vehicle of whakapapa, the origins of mātauranga Māori return back to Māori creation stories involving Papatūānuku and Ranginui (Nepe, 1991; Pihama, 2015; Royal, 1999). Kaupapa Māori knowledge, therefore, lays its foundational roots within Māori worldviews, language and tikanga and is gathered through a system of beliefs, experiences, understandings, and the histories of the Māori people (Nepe, 1991).

Epistemology

Knowledge has always held a central position within Māori society (Pihama, 2001). However, Indigenous knowledge, and more specifically, Māori knowledge, has not always been given the same degree of significance as Western ways of knowing (L. Smith, 2012). In fact, academia has traditionally subjected Māori individuals and communities to scrutiny (L. T. Smith, 2012), analysing, categorising and pathologising Māori in unhelpful and often impractical ways (Pihama, 2001; Tupaea, 2020). Western discourse has perpetuated epistemological racism and violence that continues to 'other' Māori people and favours those of the dominant discourse (Tiakiwai, 2015). As a consequence, the emergence of power imbalances within research relationships arises. More often than not, the researcher maintains control over what counts as legitimate knowledge and what does not (Tiakiwai, 2015). Western epistemologies and ontologies have often failed to contextualise the historical and contemporary events that have contributed to Indigenous realities and experiences (Wilson et al., 2021). As a form of resistance to the hegemonic practices of Western research, Indigenous academics are beginning to recognise and challenge the unequal power dynamic in research and, more broadly, society by utilising epistemologies and ontologies that provide a more relevant and appropriate experience for their people (F. Smith, 2020; Tiakiwai, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). For Māori, this comes in the form of Kaupapa Maori.

Kaupapa Māori knowledge originates from Papatūānuku, from mātauranga and tikanga Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001). This knowledge stems directly from the navigational expertise and experiences of our ancestors, who held a deep understanding of the sciences in relation to building waka, tides and sea movement, distance navigation and cosmology, to name a few

(Pihama, 2015). While seemingly trivial knowledge by the dominant Western standards, it is worth noting that each of these knowledge areas requires the development of frameworks for understanding and explaining the knowledge base that informs Kaupapa Māori. Kaupapa Māori theory is based upon and informed by mātauranga Māori - ways of being and knowing and worldviews that encompass distinctive theories about what is real and what is true (Pihama, 2001, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). It is a culturally defined and determined framework shaped by the knowledge, experiences and diverse histories of the Māori people (Nepe, 1991; Pihama, 2015).

Within this research, I have drawn upon a social constructionist epistemology to decentre and critically interrogate the dominant colonial discourse. A social constructionist epistemology posits that there is no singular truth to our experiences, nor is there an objective way of knowing the social world (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Instead, knowledge is constructed, given meaning to, and reproduced through the language, social processes and interactions one engages in (Burr, 2015; Linsay-Latimer, 2018; F. Smith, 2020). Therefore, knowledge is a socially generated phenomenon that relies on human interpretation (Martel et al., 2021). The political, social, cultural and historical intertwine to shape multiple perspectives and ways of being that can coexist in parallel (Burr, 2015). In tandem with Kaupapa Māori research, social constructionism explores new possibilities and offers alternatives to the status quo that marginalises mātauranga Māori.

Ontology

Not only have Western theories and Eurocentric approaches to research diminished Indigenous knowledge bases, but they have also acted to suppress Māori ontologies or ways of

being. Māori ways of knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology) are intimately associated with tikanga, whanaungatanga, wairuatanga and kaitiakitanga (Henry & Pene, 2001). Taken together, the coalescence of these ethics that Henry and Pene (2001) suggest informs a Māori ontology and the assumptions of human nature about 'what is real' for Māori. Salmond (1993) states that a Māori ontology considers two aspects of human existence - one visible, tangible and every day, the other invisible, intangible and extraordinary. Western paradigms have often delegitimised and failed to comprehend the physical and metaphysical relationships between people and the environment deeply entrenched in Māori cultures, worldviews, cosmologies and realities (Cooper, 2017; Martel et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). For example, Western discourse will frequently translate wairuatanga to 'spirituality', which posits our specific knowledge within a supernatural realm, removing mātauranga from rational thought and delegitimising its importance (Mika, 2017). Within this project, I considered the importance of wairuatanga in research, in tandem with the experiences, ideas and beliefs of rangatahi Māori as real, valid and legitimate. This approach aligns with a critical realist approach to research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Alongside centring a Māori ontology, I have also drawn from a critical realist perspective that acknowledges the potential for Māori ontologies to create space for new knowledge while simultaneously challenging the dominant Eurocentric paradigms. Critical realism highlights the importance of lived experiences as real, valid and meaningful to the lives of rangatahi Māori. Collaborators' diverse experiences are not only interpreted as 'real' and 'valid', but it is also crucial to interpreting the experiences of rangatahi Māori as fluid, multiple and varied (Le Grice, 2014).

Current Research Project

The current research project situates itself within the realm of Kaupapa Māori research and aims to contribute to this existing body of literature. Deeply rooted in Kaupapa Māori research principles, this research is premised on Māori ways of living and being. Mātauranga and tikanga Māori are prioritised and considered the norm, not the other. Through these vehicles of knowledge, it is my aim to foster tino rangatiratanga for rangatahi Māori.

Chapter Four: Kaupapa Māori Methods

Within this chapter, I explore the finer details of this particular research project, the wider project from which this data was collected, and the demographics of the rangatahi involved whom we collaborated with. Following this, I speak to the thematic analysis method I employed for this thesis.

Data Collection

The Wider Research Project

This thesis is situated within a broader project spearheaded by Te Rōpū Hiko. The wider project- titled 'Harnessing the Spark of Life: Maximising whānau contributors to Rangatahi Wellbeing' is the combined effort and contributions of many individuals, not solely the mahi of one. The wider research project obtained ethics approval by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on the 21st of November 2017 for three years (Reference number 020085).

The wider Harnessing the Spark of Life project aimed to explore how whanaungatanga influences health and well-being for rangatahi Māori. From the inception of this project, right through to the dissemination stages, this project engaged in a Kaupapa Māori research methodology to ensure that this research foregrounds Māori aspirations and uplifts mātauranga Māori (Lindsay Latimer et al., 2021). The wider project utilised a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design and was separated into three phases. *Phase one* consisted of three parts; part (A) involved a participatory photo-voice methodology in which 51 rangatahi Māori documented in pictures their understanding of whanaungatanga and how this influenced their well-being. The

photos were then used to stimulate discussion in semi-structured group interviews with rangatahi and their whānau. In part (B) of phase one, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 13 Māori practitioners who work with rangatahi and whānau in Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Canterbury regions in Aotearoa. Part (C) of phase one involved drawing together this data to develop a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms of whanaungatanga that contribute to rangatahi well-being. *Phase two* drew on the findings from phase one to develop a set of survey questions to measure the components of whanaungatanga. *Phase three* was concerned with the dissemination of findings. My introduction to the research project came during phase three - the dissemination phase.

The Present Research Context

The current research project explores the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori.

Collaborator Demographics. 51 rangatahi Māori from Te Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau and Waikato, were asked to creatively explore via photos what whanaungatanga means to them, and how whanaungatanga influences their well-being. Subsequently, these rangatahi were then interviewed, and the photos were used as a visual aid to foster discussion. While the kōrero from each rangatahi collaborator was rich and produced valuable insight, this thesis reports on the experiences of four rangatahi Māori to provide a more nuanced understanding of their realities, perspectives and experiences concerning identity. This meant that I could delve into a richer and more nuanced understanding of the lives and experiences of four rangatahi instead of a superficial grasp of all 51 rangatahi experiences.

Data was drawn from four rangatahi in total, including two rangatahi wāhine and two rangatahi tāne. Rangatahi varied in age, the youngest being 17 and the oldest being 22. Three of the rangatahi identified with a different iwi (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngātiwai ki Aotea), with the exception of one rangatahi wāhine who did not know her iwi, but still identified as Māori. Despite this, her inclusion in this thesis is important because it highlights the diverse and genuine realities of contemporary Māori identities that rangatahi maintain (Borell, 2005). Each of the four rangatahi collaborators was from a mixture of rural and urban backgrounds, one rangatahi tāne rural, one semi-rural, one rangatahi wāhine urban Māori and the other wāhine urban Māori, but raised tuturu Māori.

Rangatahi are at the heart of this study; therefore, it was essential to uphold the mana of our rangatahi collaborators and respect the kōrero they shared. Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality remain at the forefront of my intentions throughout this thesis. To preserve anonymity, protect their identities, and avoid potential harm to our rangatahi and their whānau, pseudonym names have been used in place of their own. Care was taken in allocating pseudonym names to each of our rangatahi collaborators and their whānau, and it was only fitting to draw on names within te ao Māori that reflected the mana of each of our collaborators. Furthermore, identifying information was removed; this included whānau names, locations and contextual information. Instead, identifying information was replaced with more general descriptions in brackets where the specific context would have been identifiable.

Photo Elicitation

A Kaupapa Māori methodology validates mātauranga Māori. It ensures that research includes cultural values significant to our knowledge and ways of being - this includes visual storytelling methods such as photovoice (Mark & Boulton, 2017). Photovoice as a method provides an opportunity for Māori to become the researchers and not merely the researched (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017, p. 30), therefore, honouring the value of their subjective experiences (Jones et al., 2010). Moving beyond the confines of literary structures on a page (Lee, 2009), rangatahi Māori collaborators who engaged in the project were asked to capture visual representations of what whanaungatanga means to them and how it influences their well-being. These pictures provided a starting point for discussion during interviews. While it offers a glimpse into the lives of rangatahi Māori, it simultaneously represents a movement away from Eurocentric understandings of knowledge and towards the reclamation of Māori knowledge.

Data Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative method within psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2022). At a basic level, thematic analysis is useful for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since its inception in 2006, Braun and Clarke have written extensively on thematic analysis, allowing them to refine their thinking and approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022). Braun and Clarke have since come to refer to thematic analysis by the term Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Reflexive TA), as this recognises that a reflexive researcher is a fundamental characteristic of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Reflexivity involves the critical reflection and interrogation of the researcher's values, the methods and aspects of design, and,

more broadly, the academic discipline. This reflexive process shapes how research and knowledge are produced. Researcher subjectivity becomes an essential component of the reflexive process and contrasts the Western discourse notions of "researcher bias" (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The theoretical flexibility of reflexive thematic analysis allows for the application and use across a range of disciplines and epistemological methods - this makes it suitable for use with Kaupapa Māori research.

Braun and Clarke have composed a six-phase process for doing reflexive TA - the phases exist as robust guidelines rather than rigid rules. From their most recent articulation of Reflexive TA, six phases of reflexive thematic analysis are as follows: (1) Familiarisation with the dataset and writing familiarisation notes; (2) Data Coding; (3) Generating initial themes from coded and collated data; (4) Developing and reviewing themes; (5) Refining, defining and naming themes; and (6) Writing up and producing the report. The following sections are how I utilised Braun and Clarke's Reflexive TA for this specific research project.

Data Familiarisation and Writing Familiarisation Notes. The first phase involved familiarising and immersing myself in the data. This phase involved reading and re-reading through rangatahi transcripts, repeatedly viewing the associated photos, and listening to kōrero from rangatahi through audio recordings of interviews. I had the honour of meeting these rangatahi for the first time through their transcripts, photos, and stories. As I was not involved with collecting the data or transcribing of interviews, it was imperative that I spend additional time familiarising myself with the data to gain a more intimate understanding of each rangatahi and their personal experiences. To become deeply immersed in the data, I listened to each audio transcript while simultaneously reading through the corresponding transcripts and photos - this

allowed me to familiarise myself with the data and check the transcripts against the original audio to ensure accuracy. After my initial engagement, I began to take notes and highlight potential points of interest to examine how rangatahi narratives provide insight into experiences of identity, whanaungatanga, hauora and well-being and the broader colonial contexts in which these experiences have developed. I also kept a reflexive journal to note my initial analytic ideas, which helped me to find meaning from the data. The potential direction of my research project came from within the familiarisation phase.

Systematic Data Coding. The second phase of the analysis process involved identifying sections of data that appeared to be potentially interesting, relevant or meaningful in relation to how whanaungatanga interacts with identity and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori. After identifying segments of data, the next step is to assign codes (labels) to them. Each interview transcript was copied into a Microsoft word document during this process. From here, I worked my way through each interview to highlight potential patterns for a deeper, nuanced investigation to create codes for interesting features of the data. The codes identified were both semantic and latent, although it is important to note that these exist on a continuum. Some of the codes identified were semantic and were drawn specifically from rangatahi accounts, and other codes became more latent as the analysis process developed.

Generating Initial Themes. During the third phase of Reflexive TA, I examined the initial codes identified in the previous phase and began to consider how the codes were related to each other – which codes could be clustered together to form potential themes, and which could be collapsed to become potential candidates for sub-themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest visual representations to help aid this phase – I chose to transfer the code labels into a separate

Microsoft word document. From here, I adjusted and altered the different codes until I had established ten very broad provisional candidate themes.

Developing and Reviewing Themes. The fourth phase involved assessing the relevancy and fit of the provisional candidate themes in relation to the coded extracts and the full dataset. This was both an extensive and recursive process in which I spent a considerable amount of time editing, reviewing and reformulating the confines of candidate themes. This was to ensure that themes were related but also possessed their own distinct aspect of uniqueness.

Refining, Defining and Naming Themes. The next phase was ongoing and evolved throughout the writing process. The refining, defining and naming of themes came after substantial discussion and careful consideration with my supervisor. This developed gradually and occurred by looking at each of the themes to ensure that they told a coherent story. At this phase, it was also important for me to ascertain the 'essence' of each theme - this was a repetitive process. The final themes are as follows; Healing the Mamae: Reconnecting to te ao Māori and to Identity, Home, the Place, Home, the People, Navigating te ao Pākehā: Being Māori in a Pākehā World, and Honouring our Past, Fostering our Future: The Pursuit of Tino Rangatiratanga.

Writing Up: Weaving the Threads. The final phase involved writing up and producing a thesis. During this phase, I weaved together the narrative, accompanied by supporting data extracts, to craft a coherent story from the kōrero of our rangatahi Māori collaborators'.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion

At this point of this research project, I have detailed my motivations for engaging in this research - highlighting my journey as a rangatahi wāhine in the process of reclaiming my Māori identity. Following this, I explored the relevant literature related to Māori identities before attending to the literature pertaining to the colonisation of Māori. I then tended to the relevant methodological literature and described the methods utilised within this research. The preceding chapters set the scene and provide context for the following analytic chapter, in which I will explore our rangatahi collaborator's stories of identity, whanaungatanga and well-being. This chapter is presented together with an analysis and discussion of information.

Healing the Mamae: Reconnecting to Te Ao Māori and Identity

Throughout this analytic section, it is my aim to explore the kōrero of rangatahi Māori, which describes the myriad of ways in which they unload, soothe and heal the mamae in their lives. The kōrero from each rangatahi provides valuable insight into their world through their eyes while concurrently bringing to light elements of identity for rangatahi Māori. Within this section, I seek to explore how identity is navigated in the everyday lives of rangatahi Māori and how practices of identity are both unconsciously and consciously embedded in the ways that rangatahi navigate their mamae. Here, I briefly explore rangatahi accounts of their mamae, with emphasis on the use of tikanga as a tool to unload and soothe the mamae in their lives and how this relates to the expression of identity.

Before delving into this section, it is important to discuss the notion of mamae briefly. The term ‘mamae’ is generally used to describe a source of pain (Marques et al., 2021). However, it can also be used to refer to an individual's state of being following a traumatic event

or shock (L. P. Pihama et al., 2019). Mamae can be felt and experienced for several reasons. Within their kōrero, all of our rangatahi collaborators mentioned having experienced some form of mamae or pain throughout their young lives. Whether this mamae was caused by the loss of a whānau member, death by suicide, or in one rangatahi wāhine case, the impact of a natural disaster on the place that she calls home, our rangatahi collaborators continued to employ various tactics and methods to unload, soothe and heal the mamae in their lives. This section is a testament to the strength of our rangatahi Māori to persevere through this pain.

Turning to Tikanga Māori

In this subsection, I analyse and discuss how rangatahi Māori employ tikanga Māori to heal and soothe their mamae associated with loss, grief and pain. Tikanga Māori is situated within the spiritual realm of the Atua and was handed down from tūpuna to the present (Gallagher, 2008). The flexibility of tikanga provides a variety of understandings and techniques to help rangatahi cope with loss in their everyday lives. As aforementioned, deep mamae or pain was experienced by rangatahi in a multitude of ways. For example, in relation to whakamomori, one rangatahi tāne gave a compelling account of how he unpacks the mamae in his life:

> ***Kawiti:*** *Thinking about things like suicide, loss is a huge thing for a lot of these victims of suicide. Loss. Loss of a family member, loss of a friend and I've seen firsthand people who have succumbed to that. That to me is a way of remedying or contributing to helping our people with this situation of suicide. Tikanga. Understanding. Understanding that all things in nature have a balance. True Māori people who have been raised and taught in their tikanga will understand. They all understand. They will feel the hurt, they will feel the sorrow but they*

will also have the understanding and the strength to come through it. To go there into that pain and come through it. Through understanding of tikanga. Through understanding of kawa and why we do things, how we do things"

In Aotearoa, Māori are disproportionately affected by suicide, with the overall rate of deaths by suicide higher for Māori in comparison to non-Māori (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). In previous years, rangatahi tāne between the ages of 15-24 have had the highest death rates of any group in the country. Considering the sombre statistics, it becomes increasingly important for rangatahi Māori to equip themselves with tools in their kete that will allow them to heal their mamae, especially concerning whakamomori and the pain associated with this. For this rangatahi tāne, knowledge of tikanga and kawa provides a way of *"remedying"* or *"helping our people"* with the hurt, sorrow and pain that comes with loss. For Kawiti, the knowledge of tikanga brings an understanding that "a*ll things within nature have a balance*", and when someone passes away, this balance may become disrupted for those who remain in the physical realm (Lawson-Te Aho, 2013). Without explicitly stating it, this rangatahi eloquently captures the notion of *"wairua"*. Wairua is fundamental to Māori ways of being; without a sense of spiritual awareness, the individual is considered to lack well-being (Valentine et al., 2017). The stabilising of wairua and the healing of mamae extends beyond the psychological and emotional level and operates within the spiritual or wairua level (Lawson-Te Aho, 2013). While hurt and sorrow are associated with the physical death that has occurred, there is also an understanding that this person remains intact spiritually. This knowledge and understanding gives those who understand the tikanga surrounding loss the strength to move through their mamae. There is the capacity for hope in knowing that life in this physical realm is a temporary part of life and that the spirit lives on in eternity (Lawson-Te Aho, 2013). Tending to the relationship between the living and those who

have passed away from this physical realm can be a powerful way to soothe and heal mamae. This can be achieved through many different avenues of tikanga practices, and one common way is through karakia.

The reciting of karakia provides an outlet for healing mamae and involves calling the Atua for comfort and easing pain or distress (Riki-Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Situated within the realm of rongoā Māori, there are many different types of karakia for different occasions and purposes (Mark et al., 2017). Through karakia, a bond is formed between the person reciting the karakia and the spiritual dimension they identify with - whether this is with Ngā Atua, to specific whānau members who have passed on, or more broadly to the universe. For one rangatahi collaborator, the reciting of karakia allowed him to step into the spiritual world and express tikanga knowledge in a time of distress:

> ***Kawiti:*** *So theres this one night, it was pouring down, hailing. I thought, yeah, that was the tohu for me coz that was the worst night I was there. So where I was: I broke into karakia. I was in karakia, in my own world for…I don't know how long. Then it came to a point when the rain stopped and then I went to bed. Then when I woke up the next day and we had all been gathered back into a group. All the girls - the one next to me, on top and the one next to me down bottom of the hill, they were all talking about "oh my gosh! You sounded like a wizard chanting and we were all freaking out!", Oh sorry…and I explained to them and they were like "oh far that's awesome!" yeah and I was explaining to them what our tikanga is, when it comes to karakia. If you're in time of distress, if you're in need, even if you're just giving thanks or blessings of, - it doesn't have to be when you need something or distressed.*

After seeing a tohu which he believed symbolised the passing of his nan, Kawiti describes falling back onto the use of karakia to invoke the spiritual guidance and protection of the Atua during a deeply distressing time for him. For this rangatahi tāne, being able to readily draw on kaupapa Māori and tikanga knowledge such as karakia allowed him to find support and guidance from the Atua. Possessing the knowledge of karakia then becomes a valuable and useful tool to have inherited from being raised in te ao Māori. As someone who was brought up in te ao Māori and immersed in tikanga, Kawiti is a testament to the merits of knowing your tikanga. In this instance, tikanga practices in the form of karakia have allowed Kawiti to draw support from the Atua to find an understanding of *"what is right, what is normal, what is natural"*- resulting in the sense of assurance and certainty for this rangatahi tāne, during a time of great uncertainty.

Situated in contrast to this rangatahi tāne's experience are those rangatahi who were not brought up with the knowledge of tikanga and karakia. Due to the obstruction of colonialism and urbanisation (Hirini & Collings, 2005), the reality for many rangatahi Māori is that the knowledge and understanding contained within tikanga have not been transmitted or rightfully inherited through the generations. As a result, tikanga, and more broadly, mātauranga Māori, is something that many 'urban' rangatahi are taking steps to reconnect with and relearn (Lawson-Te Aho, 2013). While karakia is one vehicle for expressing wairuatanga and the soothing of mamae, it is not the only way rangatahi can express their connection to the Atua, to those who have passed on or to the environment that surrounds us. For example, this rangatahi wāhine utilised her voice to connect with the whenua and unload her mamae:

Aotea: "*kōrero - it can be to people, to Tangaroa, to the whenua. I always sing when I'm by myself. I just feel it's the best way, for me personally, to connect".*

For this rangatahi wāhine, being able to kōrero to people, to ngā Atua and to the whenua was a vessel to connect herself with the wider world. Having found a way to connect herself to te ao Māori personally, the simple acts of talking and singing to the Atua, to people and the whenua have provided Aotea with a similar sense of assurance and certainty in the same way that reciting karakia does. Thus, establishing a wairua connection with the Atua through the power of talking and singing. For some rangatahi Māori, like Aotea, who are in the process of reclaiming their knowledge, their voices were a tool of great importance. Karakia is one way of finding reassurance and comfort, but Aotea demonstrates that one should never underestimate the power of a conversation. Engaging in simple conversation with ngā Atua is a powerful and easily accessible tool to engage with the Atua for guidance and support, especially if that individual does not have knowledge of tikanga Māori or karakia.

Theme Summary: Weaving Together the Threads

While rangatahi like Kawiti can readily draw on their knowledge of tikanga practices and tap into their knowledge of karakia to connect themselves with the Atua when they require support, rangatahi like Aotea use their voices as a tool to establish a wairua connection with the Atua through the power of kōrero and song. Here we have an example of two diverse rangatahi Māori, one who has inherited the knowledge of tikanga and karakia during his upbringing, and one who did not. Although raised in different environments, both rangatahi Māori draw on support from higher external sources within te ao Māori. For Kawiti, a connection to his

mātauranga Māori and tikanga occurs naturally and unconsciously. For Aotea, her connection to mātauranga Māori and tikanga is activated when she is in contact with te taiao. Despite these differences, both rangatahi Māori show a connection to whakapapa and to mātauranga through the people who have come before them. This highlights that regardless of their te reo Māori me ōna tikanga knowledge, there are many ways to establish an emotional or spiritual relationship and balance with the world, and therefore, many ways to soothe and heal mamae.

Returning to te Taiao

In this section, I delve into and discuss the relationship between rangatahi collaborators and te taiao. The tendency of rangatahi to gravitate towards te taiao to ease their anxieties when faced with uncertainty, difficulty or loss within their lives was a common narrative shared by all rangatahi collaborators. Rangatahi spoke passionately about their adoration for being immersed in nature and the influence that te taiao has on shaping their lives. From exploring the ngahere to being by the ocean, rangatahi collaborators employed a number of both specific and broad ways of engaging with te taiao, which contributed to their hauora and the healing of their mamae on different scales. For some rangatahi collaborators, immersing themselves in te taiao was a way of alleviating daily stressors. As this rangatahi tāne further explains:

> ***Maihi:*** *I was a bit nervous getting back into uni and what that would entail and what I'd have to do and I think just seeing that kinda kept my mind at peace. I'm very much a nature person. I love taking pictures of nature. I love being in nature and I love seeing nature. So I think that always gives me peace of mind when I see te taiao.*

In this passage, Maihi fervently describes his love for te taiao, claiming te taiao as a part of his identity and who he is. The significance of being in nature is reflected in how this rangatahi tāne speaks of te taiao. The act of physically being present in te taiao and seeing photos of te taiao provides a way of keeping his mind at peace. Thus, when Maihi voices his concerns about returning to his University studies and the uncertainty and anxiety that this causes him, it seems obvious that Maihi would look to te taiao to manage these concerns. It is clear by the way in which Maihi speaks of te taiao, that the influence of nature in this rangatahi tāne's life is important.

Māori have always shared a special and intimate relationship with te taiao (Centre for Indigenous Psychologies, Massey University, 2021; Rangiwai, 2018). The therapeutic nature inherently embedded in te taiao cannot be overstated. The association of te taiao as a place of therapy and calmness reflects the intricate relationship between Māori and the natural environment. This relationship is ever present in Māori ways of being, cultural beliefs, values and practices (Tassell-Matamua et al., 2021). Within the current literature, engagement in te taiao has been identified as a key indicator of Māori well-being (McLachlan et al., 2021) and, more broadly, as an important part of the development of individual and collective well-being and identity (Rangiwai, 2018). Maihi's kōrero brings to light the therapeutic nature of something as simple as returning to te taiao can have on hauora and well-being and in healing various forms of mamae that Māori may experience.

The power of immersing oneself in te taiao to soothe and heal mamae was also observed within the kōrero of other rangatahi collaborators on a much larger scale beyond everyday

uncertainties and anxieties. For example, this rangatahi wāhine describes how she healed her mamae following a life-changing experience:

> ***Hinewaoriki****: I first went to Nepal which was in 2015 I think, 2014, just before the earthquake, I was hugely connected to it. Like it changed my life, changed my spiritual awareness, everything. And obviously after the earthquake I was a mess. Pretty much we arrived in Auckland the day before it happened, we just missed it, and then after I just wanted to get back outdoors - reconnect with it. Mum would take me out on hikes or walks during the day, even if it was just out to Karekare or Piha, just getting out of the city"*

Hinewaoriki describes a deep and life-changing mamae associated with a natural disaster that occurred in Nepal, a place which this rangatahi collaborator is "*hugely connected to*". Describing herself as "*a mess*" in the aftermath of the earthquake, Hinewaoriki details how this experience changed her wairua or "*spiritual awareness*". The mamae experienced was intensified for this rangatahi wāhine, who was now physically distant from Nepal and back in New Zealand. In an attempt to soothe her mamae and realign her spiritual awareness, Hinewaoriki mentions a need to "*reconnect*" with the outdoors and specifically details going for hikes or walks in locations outside of the city. Situating herself within the ngahere of Karekare and the moana of Piha allows Hinewaoriki to feel spiritually close to those who remain in Nepal, despite being physically distant from them. For Hinewaoriki, the outdoors and environment surrounding her represents a place of familiarity and comfort as well as a reminder of Nepal. Traversing distance and time to connect with Nepal and realign her wairua and spiritual awareness all the way from Aotearoa speaks to the significance of the relationship that Hinewaoriki has with te taiao. This rangatahi wāhine's connection to the natural environment

demonstrates the healing qualities of te taiao (McLachlan et al., 2021). Natural environments such as lands, mountains and waterways provide an opportunity for rangatahi to "reconnect", and in a wider sense, it allows Hinewaoriki to embrace her identity as Māori without realising it (Sciascia, 2016).

Theme Summary: Weaving Together the Threads

For Maihi and Hinewaoriki, a similarity that each of their stories shares is that they were living away front the places that were significant to them. For Maihi, a return to complete his University studies meant that he would have to leave his homelands again and return to the city. For Hinewaoriki, being back in New Zealand meant she could not physically be in Nepal, a place of huge significance to her. Irrespective of the diverse contemporary realities that Māori find themselves in today, each of these rangatahi Māori remains connected through wairua to the whenua which they long to be on. Furthermore, there is a nostalgic element to physically being on the whenua and in te taiao of their current place of dwelling. For both rangatahi, the whenua and te taiao in their current place of dwelling is a nostalgic reminder of memories, experiences and relationships associated with their homelands and places of significance. Thus, producing a sense of connection wherever they are in the world.

Home the Place, Home the People

Within this theme, I delve into the intricate connection between people and place throughout rangatahi Māori perceptions of 'home'. The life experiences and backgrounds of our rangatahi collaborators were diverse, and each conceptualisation of home reflected their own unique experiences. In sharing their valuable insights, rangatahi also shared commonalities in

their understanding of what makes a home, home. Broadly speaking, rangatahi tended to associate home with a place of safety, belonging, and peace. More specifically, while there was no one definition of home for our rangatahi collaborators, their perceptions of home focused on two particular aspects. For some rangatahi, home was defined in relation to whakapapa and connections with people, such as whānau and family - home the people. For other rangatahi, home was conceptualised with regard to a physical place and connections with geographical locations - home the place. Within all of our rangatahi collaborator's understandings of home, there is a strong emphasis on the connections between people and place. These connections will be explored in further detail below.

For rangatahi Māori, the home was not solely a physical dwelling; it was where rangatahi could connect with and build connections with their whānau members. The whānau unit tended to incorporate those who shared whakapapa bonds. Whānau included parents, siblings or grandparents but was also inclusive of those relationships with individuals who did not share whakapapa bonds, such as partners or friends who were "like whānau". This understanding transcends well beyond a Western nuclear family structure to provide a broader and more inclusive understanding of diverse rangatahi realities (Walker, 1990). A more embracing sense of whānau also provides more people for rangatahi to draw support from in times of need. Therefore, maintaining a connection with our whānau is vital for Māori (Boulton, Allport, Kaiwai, Harker, et al., 2021; Sciascia, 2016), especially for our rangatahi collaborators, who described their whānau as "*cornerstones*" and "*anchors*" who kept rangatahi grounded and their "*minds at peace*". This allowed rangatahi to feel "*supported*" in their everyday lives. The influence of whānau in the lives of rangatahi is immense (Hamley & Grice, 2021), and for some

rangatahi collaborators, home was about their relationships with and connection to their whānau. As detailed by this rural-based rangatahi tāne:

> ***Kawiti:*** *who are you without your whānau?" and you look at some cultures and you just feel sorry because they don't know that feeling. That feeling of being a part of more than you are, a part of more people, more places, you know… that hononga*

When speaking of his home, this rangatahi tāne emphasises, "*Who are you without your whānau?*" recognising the role of the whānau and, more broadly, the collective in the lives of rangatahi Māori. Here, Kawiti places great importance on the "*hononga*", or the connection that the individual experiences with other people, particularly with his whānau. Understanding how we are connected through a vast web of whakapapa whānau relationships strengthens our sense of belonging and identity (Rameka, 2018). Kawiti's conceptualisation delves deeper and highlights how hononga within whānau relationships foster a sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose. It is these intangible feelings that help to strengthen connectedness within the whānau unit whilst simultaneously shaping one's identity as Māori over time (Matika et al., 2020). Our identities are acquired through the everyday encounters we have with people and with our whānau (Cain et al., 2017, p. 159). Considering that the whānau unit is a crucial source of identity and well-being for rangatahi Māori, it becomes important to tend to and strengthen the union between the individual and their whānau.

Some rangatahi collaborators associated their home with their connection to their whānau and their papakāinga or ancestral lands. The act of returning to connect with their papakāinga

allowed them to immerse themselves in knowledge related to their whakapapa. As Maihi details below:

> ***Maihi:*** *Me and my sister went to Waikare to the family reunion and we were just blown away by just learning about where our whānau comes from and knowing that we're from that wāhi, that area. Just going there and feeling at home and feeling at peace. So, this one really stands out for me. This being my home, being my papakainga, - one of my papakainga. It brings a lot of memories because it was essentially the starting point for me wanting to embrace who I am as Māori coz I was able to link back to where I come from and connect with where my whānau came from so essentially it was the starting point for me.*

Here, Maihi acknowledges the rural location related to one of his two inherited whakapapa lines from his parents. For this rangatahi tāne, who lives away from his ancestral lands, being in the presence of his papakāinga fosters a sense of comfort and a feeling of being "*at peace*". Returning to his rohe to connect with his 'home' is also a powerful motivating force for him to re-engage with his whakapapa. This 'pull' to connect with his papakāinga and to learn more about his whakapapa is not unique to Maihi's journey. In fact, this pull is experienced by many other rangatahi Māori who live away from their rohe, too (Sciascia, 2016). Whakapapa knowledge grounds an individual to the whenua that their tūpuna traversed, giving that individual a sense of belonging and a connection to that place (Rameka, 2018). The significance of place and land within the realm of te ao Māori is best understood when considering the Māori term for both land and placenta is whenua. At birth, the placenta is buried deep in the land, in a place of significance. At death, the body is usually

buried in the land, also in an area of significance, completing a cycle and demonstrating the symbolic and physical connection to the land (Rameka, 2018). So while the urge to return home for rangatahi manifests itself as a 'pull', it could also be understood as an innate connection between the individual and their ancestors calling them home. For Maihi, this pull is fostered by a number of different elements, including living away from his homelands and having learnt about colonisation at University. For rangatahi who may not be aware of or have knowledge of their whakapapa, this pull can often be facilitated through the learning of the historical and contemporary consequences of colonisation (Sciascia, 2016).

When people live away from the place they call home, they may develop a renewed sense of what home entails and an appreciation of how their current place of dwelling differs from ideas of what and where they consider home to be (Cain et al., 2017, p. 148). For many individuals raised outside of their iwi regions, returning home is not solely about returning to a physical place but the relationship with that environment and the connection the individual associates with it (Ngata-Turley, 2002). Therefore, returning home to their papakāinga to learn more about their whakapapa and whānau can help the individual find a deeper connection with their Māori identity (Te Huia, 2015). For Maihi, a solid connection to 'home' is demonstrated through the physical connection with place and the deeper acquisition of knowledge about the place he and his family come from. This provides the foundation and "*starting point*" for this tāne to embrace who he is as Māori.

While Maihi's kōrero highlights a myriad of factors that coalesce to provide a foundation of support for rangatahi who live away from their papakāinga, it also brings to light some of the barriers that can hinder and prevent rangatahi Māori from returning to and

connecting with their home. Given the historical context of colonialism and urbanisation in New Zealand, there are intergenerational repercussions that have resulted in Maori living away from their papakāinga or ancestral lands (Te Huia, 2015). Like Maihi's situation, this is the reality for many rangatahi Māori (Borell, 2005). There are often feelings of whakamā (shy, embarrassed, ashamed) carried by 'urban' Māori who return home to experiences of being Māori that vastly differ from their own (Te Huia, 2015). Despite whakapapa being the sole marker to be able to claim a Māori identity, Māori who have been raised in te ao Pākehā can often feel whakamā with their lack of knowledge of their whakapapa, mātauranga Māori or even te reo Māori (Rameka, 2018). This can result in hesitancy and feelings of inadequacy associated with making claims to a Māori identity (Te Huia, 2015). Our individual perceptions of how 'Māori' we feel can act as a mental barrier that impacts our sense of belonging and acceptance by others as Māori (Webber & Kukutai, 2017). Those individuals who hold secure bonds within their whakapapa relationships are more likely to enjoy the sense of belonging that these relationships provide (Te Huia, 2015). It then becomes increasingly important to find ways of disrupting these mental barriers that many young Māori can be subjected to.

For other rangatahi collaborators, 'home' was conceptualised in relation to a physical place and connections with geographical locations. For Aotea, 'home' was not necessarily one place, one geographical area or one idea. Instead, home encompassed multiple different facets which intertwine to provide a broader understanding of home. As Aotea describes below:

> ***Aotea:*** *"This is me on the ferry going back to my safe haven (Rural Motu, . Yeah, this is always my favourite feeling, knowing that I'm going home. Yeah, I'm always happy when I'm*

on the boat, - no matter how rough it is, I'm going home…This is on the island. This is my safe haven. As you can tell the home is right there next to the sea and the marae is just up here which is just out of the photo. I love this place its like a old, old house but I love it. I love it. It's not the flashest places but I dunno, I just feel happy and a sense of want where you can just feel the love. The love is so present"

For this rangatahi wāhine, the act of returning to her home where there is happiness and love present is described as her favourite feeling. Within Aotea's kōrero, home is perceived at various levels. Home is the island or the motu, which Aotea travels to by ferry. Home is the sea that surrounds the island. Home is the marae which sits on the hill and overlooks the sea. Home is the old house Aotea describes as "*not the flashest*" but a place where "*love is so present*". For this rangatahi wāhine, the act of returning to her home reconnects her with elements of the whenua, such as the moana, alongside aspects of relationality, such as her marae and a physical house. What emerges from Aotea's kōrero is that the concept of home is broad and encompassing and occurs within multiple spaces where home is much more than just a physical dwelling (Boulton et al., 2021).

In an age where the majority of young Māori people live in urban areas, some distance from their homelands, it is imperative to note that many rangatahi cannot physically connect with their tribal communities and homelands on a day-to-day basis (Kidman, 2016). While returning home can provide a breath of fresh air and spiritual nourishment for rangatahi Māori, one must also consider the physical distance, time and financial burden that limits many Māori from returning home as often as they would like to (Sciascia, 2016). Living in the city away from home can present a time of complexity and great difficulty for rangatahi Māori, who often

encounter experiences of racism and cultural discrimination in their daily lives (Borell, 2005; Kidman, 2016). Rangatahi Māori are often required to negotiate radically contrasting cultural assumptions, behaviours and values that differ from the taken-for-granted aspects of Māori culture we experience at home (Rameka, 2018). Not only can this be incredibly taxing to the hauora and well-being of rangatahi Maori, but more specifically, it can impact the individual's ability to embrace and proudly claim their Māori identity (Te Huia, 2015). Therefore, when Aotea speaks passionately of the love and happiness she is immersed in when she returns home, we understand that her "s*afe haven*" offers her protection and refuge from the concrete jungle of Auckland city. Here, the significance of having a broad understanding of home, like Aotea's, that encompasses the island, the sea, the marae, and a physical dwelling becomes salient. Aotea's connection to each of these places she calls home is important because it provides her with multiple avenues of support to draw from in times of difficulty and need. Although there are plenty of opportunities for Māori living in the city to connect with Māori culture (Boulton, Allport, Kaiwai, Potaka Osborne, et al., 2021) and a variety of opportunities for Māori to connect with their home through social media and virtual avenues (Sciascia, 2016), these methods of connection to culture do not compare with physically being on the land, connecting with the whenua or physically experiencing the familiar scents of home.

Encompassed within Aotea's conceptualisation of home is her marae. In te ao Māori, the marae is one of many focal points of Māori culture, and it is a place of belonging that enables Māori to feel connected to their home, their Māoritanga, their ancestors and their identity (Sciascia, 2016). By this understanding, being at home on the marae then fosters a physical, emotional and spiritual connection. Through the marae space, the expression of Māori values, tikanga and te reo Māori is also preserved (Boulton, Allport, Kaiwai, Potaka Osborne, et al.,

2021). Marae can then be understood as sites of cultural revival for Māori where one can resist colonial domination of Māori ways of being (King et al., 2015).

Theme Summary: Weaving together the threads

In weaving together the threads of this theme, it becomes clear that constructions of home for our rangatahi collaborators were centred around whanaungatanga experiences with people and places. Rangatahi collaborator's conceptualisations of the home were multifaceted and encompassing. Within Kawiti's kōrero, there is an emphasis on whānau and acts of whanaungatanga as being central to the idea of home. The concept of home then becomes intimately associated with the people in our lives and the encounters that we share in their presence. For Maihi, the notion of home focused on the centrality of the papakāinga. To be able to return to your papakāinga and walk the same whenua that your tūpuna once traversed is a comforting experience . But, to simultaneously be able to learn your whakapapa and family history in the presence of your whānau while being present on this land is a beautiful learning experience. There is value in knowing that ideas of home produce a sense of belonging so warm and full of love. In sharing kōrero with Aotea, the concept of home was an amalgamation of geographical locations and features of the land that held significance to her. Aotea's recollection of home paying homage to the moana, an old home, and her marae. Each of these elements contributes to fond memories that she associates with the notion of home - adding a nostalgic aspect to how the home is perceived. When each of our rangatahi collaborator's kōrero is taken as a whole, there is clearly no single definition of home. However, what is present, is the multiple aspects of home which centre on our connections to people and to places. The idea of having multiple 'homes' that are inclusive of our experiences shared with our whānau and our

experiences shared in specific places is significant because it provides multiple avenues of connecting and relating, as well as multiple forms of support to draw on in times of need. Within these contexts, there is potential for strong, positive Māori identities to develop in safe spaces. Home is the place, home is the people.

Navigating Te Ao Pākehā: Being Māori in a Pākehā World

Traversing te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā is both a complex and beautiful experience for rangatahi Māori (Rameka, 2018). Whether we walk confidently between both worlds or have our feet firmly planted on either side, the journey often requires us to unravel the many delicate layers of our identity throughout the process. This section explores how our rangatahi collaborators navigate being Māori in a Pākehā world. Here, rangatahi experiences of struggle intertwine with narratives of strength, resilience, and power. Immersed within the threads of kōrero, our rangatahi collaborators share how they continue to hold steadfast to Māori culture, traditions and tikanga in environments founded on colonial values.

City landscapes and urban environments offer a strikingly different surrounding to the rural lands that many Māori call home. As previously mentioned, a consequence of urbanisation was that Māori migrated rapidly from their rural homelands to major cities in search of what they were led to believe were better economic and educational opportunities for themselves and their whānau (Gagné, 2013; Meredith, 2015; Royal, 2005; Walker, 1990). Despite a more significant number of Māori now living in urban environments, many Māori generally considered the city to be a colonised place that did not look or, more importantly, feel like the homelands that Māori had left (Gagné, 2013). Māori were forced to assimilate into te ao Pākehā as Pākehā ways of living and being were regarded as the norm (Brown, 2011). The migration of Māori toward the

cities physically and spiritually separated people from their whenua, te reo Māori and Māori ways of living and being (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Within these urban contexts, experiences of racism were rampant, and Māori were given little to no space to exist as their authentic selves, reconstructing Māori identities in the process (Cormack et al., 2019). With no real connection to the whenua they were on, the city began to be associated with being a place where Māori did not belong and felt othered (Boulton et al., 2021; Gagné, 2013). Thus, these factors play an interconnecting role in why many Māori may feel unwelcome or as if they have no place within city environments (Gagné, 2013).

Generally speaking, our rangatahi Māori collaborators predominantly associated urban contexts with negative experiences. 'Home' environments, as detailed in the previous section, encompassed a sense of safety and belonging that allowed rangatahi to feel supported in their daily lives. In contrast to this, city and urban environments produced feelings of intense dislike and unhappiness within rangatahi. Some of the reasons cited by rangatahi for these feelings were that it meant coming back to features of the city that were not as common in their hometowns. For example, this included the noise associated with the heavy traffic, the bright lights throughout the city, and the constant presence of police officers. Returning to Auckland meant leaving the places rangatahi call home to come "*back to reality*". Another general feature within the kōrero of rangatahi, when speaking of living in the city, is the sacrifices that Māori often make to live in major cities away from their homes. For example, one rangatahi described living in Auckland city as a "*good opportunity*", but this came at the expense of her own happiness and her ability to "*reach my (her) full potential* ". While some rangatahi "*struggled*" with life in the city, this did not prevent them from trying to make a 'home' for themselves in te ao Pākehā.

Connecting with the Whenua of the New Area

Throughout this thesis, I have continued to emphasise that connection to the whenua is a constant within our rangatahi collaborator's stories and in te ao Māori environments. The importance of the whenua and te taiao did not change when rangatahi spoke of their lives in the cities or in te ao Pākehā. The relationship and hononga between the individual and te taiao became a protective factor for our rangatahi collaborators. It allowed them to develop a relationship with the new city environment that they were in. Whether this connection was established through physical exploration of te taiao or just by viewing some form of te taiao, this enabled rangatahi to protect and nourish their hauora and well-being, allowing them to navigate te ao Pākehā more comfortably. For this rangatahi tāne, the contrast between the industrial city landscape and the distant views of te taiao provides an analogy for his journey of navigating te ao Pākehā. As Maihi details below:

> ***Maihi:*** *I felt like real tau with this picture when I saw it, when I saw the view, I was struggling with living in Auckland but seeing this kind of brought a bit of peace even though it's very industrial, there was some sense of peace that I had with just seeing the beauty of it and that was enough, and being able to see Rangitoto in the background and just kind of surrounding Tāmaki. I was thinking about this but it's like a metaphor. I'm getting through the industrial, getting through the city to eventually get to Rangitoto, to the whenua. It's like my journey that I'm on at the moment and eventually I'll reach my destination, which is on the horizon.*

Within this rangatahi tāne's kōrero, the sheer magnificence and power of te taiao are demonstrated. As Maihi mentions, he was "*struggling with living in Auckland*" at the time, but

just being able to see a view of te taiao and admiring the "*beauty of it*" was enough to bring "*some sense of peace*" to his life. Maihi eloquently speaks of the contrast between the city and te taiao, comparing it to his personal journey that he is on in Auckland city. He describes his journey through the "*industrial*" city and how he will eventually make it to the whenua he can see in the distance. Here, the industrial city is representative of te ao Pākehā, while te taiao and more specifically, Rangitoto in the distance, is representative of te ao Māori. For Maihi, being able to see these elements of te taiao in the distance provides a guiding light and certainty for this rangatahi tāne. Knowing that te taiao and te ao Māori are there waiting for him helps Maihi to establish an emotional connection within the confines of te ao Pākehā. Seeing elements of te taiao immersed within the industrial city of Auckland provides a guide for Maihi to look too when he needs comfort and calmness. By this understanding, Maihi's connection to te taiao makes navigating te ao Pākehā more manageable and more comfortable. Despite only being able to see te taiao in the distance, Maihi's kōrero shows the power of te taiao. While we know that physically being in te taiao fosters well-being for rangatahi Māori (Centre for Indigenous Psychologies, Massey University, 2021), Maihi's kōrero demonstrates that one does not necessarily have to be immersed in it to reap the benefits that it provides. Simply being able to see features and elements of the natural environment, such as mountains, oceans or forests, helps rangatahi Māori to navigate and traverse te ao Pākehā more comfortably as Māori.

For other rangatahi collaborators, the need to be wholly immersed in and surrounded by te taiao and the natural environment was more pressing. Hinewaoriki details below how she traverses te ao Pākehā by physically connecting with nature:

Hinewaoriki: *"...even now up in Auckland - I hate Auckland as a city. There's no mountains, and I find it hard, but I go out mountain biking with my friends occasionally just to connect again. I regularly go out because obviously living in the city I've got to connect with it"*

For this rangatahi wāhine, adjusting to a city with "*no mountains*" is a "*hard*" process for Hinewaoriki to navigate and come to terms with. The lack of geographical features contributes to Hinewaoriki's feeling of "*hate*" and general unhappiness toward Auckland as a city. When living away from home, it is necessary for the individual not only to find themselves within their new landscape but to immerse themselves within their new surroundings to become familiar again. For Hinewaoriki, this manifested as going mountain biking with her friends to re-establish her sense of connection with te taiao. In engaging with te taiao, Hinewaoriki can maintain her connection with the maunga and the natural world. Retaining a relationship with te taiao and the natural environment is central to Māori ideas of hauora and well-being (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019; McLachlan et al., 2021). By this understanding, Hinewaoriki provides a powerful example of how an urban-based rangatahi Māori can alleviate feelings of dislike toward the city.

From a Māori worldview, an attachment and connection to aspects of the natural environment have always been significant (McCreanor et al., 2006). The connection to te taiao, whether physically or visually, remains central in the make-up of the urban landscape (King et al., 2018). The importance is evidenced by the way that Māori introduce themselves, referencing landmarks and geographical features of their ancestral lands that they whakapapa too (Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ, 2021). Our identity as Māori is tied to the natural world, which provides one explanation as to why Māori often seek refuge and find comfort and stability within te taiao and the natural elements of the world surrounding them (Hamley & Le Grice,

2021). However, finding a connection with the whenua and its elements becomes challenging when we move away from familiar features to cities devoid of mountains, rivers or forests (Rameka, 2018). Familiarity with these landscapes is hard to come by in te ao Pākehā, especially when natural features are replaced with a high density of large and modern buildings. The threat of being disconnected and dislocated from environments that not only comfort us but also that ground one's sense of identity as Māori can have negative implications on the overall health and well-being of the individual (King et al., 2015). Navigating radically different city terrains can be difficult, however, it is important to note that Māori remain connected to the whenua wherever they are in the world - whether this be in the cities or in rural communities. While the landmarks and features in cities may differ from the natural state in which we find them in our rural communities, the point remains that even the whenua in te ao Pākehā has a story to tell and a history behind it.

Finding whanaungatanga in the City

Throughout their narratives, our rangatahi collaborators frequently spoke of their whānau and their families' significant presence in their lives. However, navigating te ao Pākehā often meant living some distance away from where their whānau were. As an alternative form of support, our rangatahi collaborators sought to establish whānau-like relationships within their new environments. In particular, these non-kin relationships manifested in the form of friendships with other rangatahi Māori and non-Māori living within the confines of urban cities. While navigating te ao Pākehā, finding kinship that resembled the familiar warmth and embrace of our rangatahi collaborator's own families would become one of many coping mechanisms for our rangatahi to store in their personal kete of knowledge. Deep connections and close

associations with friends were woven throughout the kōrero of our rangatahi collaborators. Our collaborators held their friends in the highest regard, often likening them to being more like whānau or kaupapa whānau, despite not necessarily being related. When speaking of their friends and the bonds that they shared, there was an abundance of love present. Friends were often described as inspirational figures in our rangatahi collaborators' lives and held a great deal of influence in shaping and moulding their identities and lives. These relationships enabled our rangatahi collaborators to feel grounded and, more importantly, helped to make living in urban cities feel more like home. The hustle and bustle of city living became bearable with friends who nurtured a space to flourish and grow. For our collaborators, having access to a network of deep connections and a community within te ao Pākehā meant that there was someone to provide physical guidance and support for our rangatahi whilst traversing the Pākehā world.

Whanaungatanga relationships represented spaces of care and nourishment for rangatahi Māori whilst navigating te ao Pākehā. Within these spaces, reciprocal relationships could occur. As Maihi describes below:

> ***Maihi:*** *Me and Awhina have connected so much and we've built each other up so much this year. We're just so tight and so connected. Yeah, we just love each other to pieces. I don't know what I would've done if she wasn't with me this year coz I could imagine it being very bland and dull and so I'm really glad that I had the opportunity to be with her this year and then Marama over here, one of my other best mates just brings the life into every situation. Her personality is so vibrant and loving and caring like a mother and I'm so.. she legit is like my mother, she always tells me what to do so I really appreciate her though and love her to*

pieces. I don't know what I would've done without these two this year coz they've really been my strongholds away from home you know.

In the above passage, Maihi reflects on his haerenga in te ao Pākehā and acknowledges the essential role that his friends have played in helping him to find comfort away from home. Within this rangatahi tāne's kōrero, the adoration and love Maihi has for his friends are ever-present. The unique and intricate connection this tāne has built with his friends is reflected in how he describes them as his "*strongholds away from home*". In his recollection of his friendship with two wāhine, Awhina and Marama, he details qualities and attributes that make these women a place of refuge in the Pākehā world. When this tāne speaks of his relationship with his friend Awhina, he highlights the reciprocal nature embedded in friendships. As Maihi describes, the deeper connection that provides the foundation of their relationship has been established through support that is both given and received without expectation. This reciprocity manifests as being "*tight*" and "*connected*" with one another. When Maihi speaks of his relationship with Marama, he reflects on how she "*brings life into every situation*" with her vibrant energy. For this rangatahi tāne, his friendship with Marama is likened to the nurture and care a mother would show her child. As Maihi details, "*her personality is so loving and caring like a mother…she legit is like my mother, she always tells me what to do*". In te ao Māori, the love between a mother and their pēpē is so significant that the bond is considered a primary relationship (Le Grice et al., 2017). For someone like Maihi, who is living away from home, having friends who exude love and provide nurturing guidance helps create a place of refuge in the Pākehā world.

Like Maihi's experience, finding whanaungatanga friendships enabled our rangatahi to draw on an immediate form of support when they encountered difficulties in te ao Pākehā. As Hinewaoriki explains below:

> ***Hinewaoriki****" I've suffered from depression before, quite a lot, and often it has actually been ,my friends that have helped me out which I call my whānau. In the past year I actually just went to counselling because my friend was like 'it might be a good idea', I didn't want to go at first but she came with me and she was wonderful"*

Within Hinewaoriki's kōrero, the importance of being able to share solid friendships with other individuals traversing te ao Pākehā is illustrated. For Hinewaoriki, it was imperative to share these relationships as they gave her a more immediately present pillar of support to help guide her through the difficult times she experienced. As this rangatahi wāhine details in the above passage, it is often her friends that have helped her out of these difficult periods by helping to provide a more accessible and convenient form of comfort and reassurance when her family cannot immediately do so. Like Hinewaoriki's whānau, her friends act as a force of encouragement, pushing her to do things that will benefit her hauora and well-being. For example, Hinewaoriki describes a situation where one friend, in particular, was able to provide support by encouraging Hinewaoriki to seek counselling when she was experiencing a period of depression. Even more importantly, this friend was then able to physically support and tautoko her friend by attending the counselling session with her as a support person. Having someone to attend these sessions alongside Hinewaoriki's was the gentle push Hinewaoriki needed to take control of her hauora and well-being. It is important to emphasise here that this is help she may

not have sought out had her friend not been there to provide that necessary push of encouragement.

For many young people, the idea of attending therapy or counselling is daunting. A complex array of factors can hinder young people from seeking and accessing help for mental health difficulties. Barriers include the financial cost of services, distance from health services, transportation to and from services, and navigating the overwhelming and often confusing health system itself (Martel et al., 2020). Further barriers that prevent young people from seeking help from services may include the lack of comfort with services, not knowing when or how to seek help, the stigma and shame associated with seeking help and a belief that clinicians will have negative, discriminatory or patronising attitudes towards them (Stubbing & Gibson, 2021). These barriers are compounded for rangatahi Māori, who, in addition to the obstacles mentioned above, face the intergenerational impact of colonisation and are attempting to navigate mental health services founded on Western values (Lindsay Latimer et al., 2021). Each of these, or more likely a combination of these barriers, can often intertwine and deter rangatahi Māori from seeking the help they need.

In the above passage, Hinewaoriki describes her reluctance to seek help, stating that she "*did not want to go at first*" to speak with a counsellor about her difficulties. Despite her initial hesitancy to speak with someone, the interaction between Hinewaoriki and her friend reveals the importance of developing meaningful relationships and deep connections with other rangatahi Māori within te ao Pākehā. Here, Hinewaoriki's friends, whom she refers to as her whānau, play an important advocacy role in her hauora and well-being. When rangatahi reached out for help, close friends were most commonly the ones they turned to for help (Kingi et al., 2017). When

close friends became concerned about the well-being of their friends, more often than not, they would encourage their friends to tell someone else, such as a counsellor, by accompanying them to speak with someone who could assist. For Hinewaoriki, having someone by her side while she traversed a Pākehā health system helped Hinewaoriki to feel empowered to take responsibility for her health and well-being and to break down those barriers rangatahi often encounter when accessing mental health services for young people. Hinewaoriki's whanaungatanga connections have helped her to find belonging and comfort in a foreign healthcare system. Friendship then becomes an obvious vessel for ensuring the survival and safety of rangatahi Māori whilst they navigate te ao Pākehā.

Theme Summary: Weaving together the threads

Navigating te ao Pākehā has not always been easy for rangatahi Māori (Borell, 2005; Brown, 2011; Cormack et al., 2020; Gagné, 2013; King et al., 2018). Despite this, our rangatahi collaborator's have found ways to embrace and centre te ao Māori, whilst navigating te ao Pākehā. Through their kōrero, it was apparent that each of our rangatahi had employed various methods to keep their Māoritanga alive. One of these methods involved making connections with the whenua of the new area that they were living in. As our rangatahi collaborators have demonstrated, the strength of te taiao is truly magnificent. Both being able to see te taiao, and immersing oneself in te taiao had a positive impact on rangatahi Māori. Te taiao was a tool which our rangatahi drew on in this new environment to help them find peace and to combat feelings of dislike for the city - this made navigating the city easier. The second method which our rangatahi drew on, involved finding whanaungatanga in the city. Again, as our rangatahi have displayed, the sheer strength of finding meaningful connections and relationships in new

environments should never be underestimated. When rangatahi Māori navigated te ao Pākehā, the friendships that they had made were places of refuge and safety from the daunting city life. The relationships that they had established with friends, would become immediate sources of support for rangatahi to draw on. This proved to be crucial aspect for our rangatahi collaborators who lived far from their whānau. When rangatahi Māori navigate te ao Pākehā, it is apparent that drawing on tools from te ao Māori such as te taiao and whanaungatanga, helped our rangatahi to move through the city, whilst maintaining aspects of Māoritanga. This is not new knowledge and is consistent with current literature (Centre for Indigenous Psychologies, Massey University, 2021; Rangiwai, 2018). This is a testament to the knowledge and strength of our rangatahi Māori.

Honouring our Past, Fostering our Future: The Pursuit of Tino rangatiratanga

Thus far on this thesis journey, our rangatahi collaborators have shared stories of adversity and struggle. Despite the significant obstacles experienced throughout their lives, they have continued to dream of a future in which Māori are thriving, flourishing and empowered. With these hopes and aspirations for the future of Māoridom, our collaborators are incredibly aware of the significant amount of work that needs to be done to turn these dreams into reality. Here, this theme explores the ways in which our rangatahi collaborators have fought for, and pursued tino rangatiratanga in their daily lives. Rangatahi Māori have immeasurable capability and capacity; this section is a testament to the brilliance of rangatahi and the mahi that they are engaging in to pave the way for succeeding generations of Māori.

The term tino rangatiratanga is often likened to self-determination, sovereignty, independence and autonomy (Lindsay Latimer et al., 2021; Te One & Clifford, 2021). Tino

rangatiratanga lays it's roots in te ao Māori, as such, there is no single term in te ao Pākehā that can encapsulate the entirety of all that the term means. The term can be used to refer to Māori control over all things Māori (Te One & Clifford, 2021), the centrality and prioritising of mātauranga Māori (Lindsay Latimer et al., 2021), and the pathway to healing colonisation's impact on Māori outcomes (Graham, 2021). A fundamental aspect of tino rangatiratanga is the challenging of Eurocentric values and colonial practices which have historically, devastated Māori ways of living, being and existing in the world.

Tino rangatiratanga and Indigenous self-determination can be exercised through multiple diverse avenues (Te One & Clifford, 2021). Our rangatahi collaborators engaged in acts of tino rangatiratanga in different environments, and on a range of scales. For Aotea, the pursuit of tino rangatiratanga involved engaging in hui with other Indigenous peoples:

> ***Aotea****: The conference was beautiful. We got to meet some Aboriginals, a lot of First Nations People, Native Americans, Canadians, South Africans, Māori of course, yeah just everyone from around the world indigenous and its just beautiful to see the similarities that we go through and also the trials and tribulations that we all face that are pretty similar as well*

Here, this rangatahi wāhine recollects the time she travelled overseas to attend a conference with Indigenous youth from around the world. This was a particularly significant moment in time for Aotea, as the gathering of Indigenous youth at this conference provided an opportunity to engage in kōrero and to whakawhanungatanga with each other. The experience also allowed Aotea to whakamana iwi Māori. In sharing time and space with other Indigenous youth, they were able to find ways of relating and connecting with each other based on their

lived experiences. Aotea describes the beauty in learning about the similarities that the Māori culture shares with other Indigenous cultures. But there is also a sense of understanding in knowing that the trials and tribulations that Indigenous people are similarly subjected to. At first glance, this interaction may seem ordinary and almost mundane. However, when considering that these rangatahi are able to freely discuss knowledge in relation to being Indigenous and that knowledge is passed down through generations, it becomes clear that the sharing and exchanging of Indigenous knowledge is a powerful and bold challenge to Eurocentric practices. Historically, these Eurocentric practices have acted to divide, isolate and conquer Indigenous communities (Walker, 1990). The mere fact that the Indigenous youth from different communities were able to unite as a collective for this conference, is a strong challenge to colonial oppression.

The violent legacy of colonialism has had a profound impact on the health and well-being of the Māori people (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). New Zealand has a dark history in terms of the suppression of mātauranga Māori (Walker, 1990). Historically, the sharing of Māori knowledge has not always been welcomed, in fact, many of our tūpuna were primarily educated from a te ao Pākehā perspective and subjected to physical punishment at schools for speaking te reo Māori (Calman, 2012). Māori knowledge has been criticised, pathologised and ridiculed through various avenues (Te Huia, 2015). In contemporary times, non-Māori academics have continued to dismiss the value of mātauranga Māori as a 'valid' science and have disregarded the significance that te ao Māori has on well-being (Waitoki, 2022).To be able to freely and openly discuss aspects of Indigenous cultures in a room filled with Indigenous youth, where our concerns are prioritised, and our own forms of knowledge are front and centre, is a powerful pathway to tino rangatiratanga. Spaces like this foster a safe environment in which Indigenous solutions can be dreamt up to decolonise ways of being that have been forced upon us. For

example, Indigenous cultures often look to the Māori culture and the mahi that has been done with te reo Māori revitalisation for solutions of how they can revive their own languages (Cunneen & Tauri, 2017). So, when Aotea describes the beauty of being able to attend an Indigenous conference, there is power in the synergies of Indigenous cultures and beliefs, and there is strength in knowing that mātauranga Māori is being shared and also preserved for future generations. Māori knowledge is critical to ensuring that the Māori culture and practices are protected and maintained (Waitoki, 2022). When our rangatahi Māori speak and engage in our culture today, it is tino rangatiratanga in action.

For some rangatahi collaborators, the pursuit of tino rangatiratanga materialised in a more frontline role. For Maihi, this occurred in spaces of resistance:

> ***Maihi:*** *Just hearing about the Ihumātao protest and what had gone down there I knew that I couldn't… you know, I and so that for me was a really big thing that had happened for me. Me going out there to protest, to understand te ao Māori, to understand the kaupapa but also to meet, to whakawhanaungatanga, to meet new people as what Māori would do, you know share whakawhanaungatanga and I think it was like a big thing for me"*

Within this passage, this rangatahi tāne speaks of his presence at the Ihumātao land occupation and protest. Here, Maihi eloquently describes feeling a sense of urgency to be present on this whenua and to be a part of this collective action. This need to be on the whenua could also be associated with the spiritual and wairua connection that Māori share with the land (Cain et al., 2017). Maihi's words emphasise how pivotal of a moment it was for him to be able to play a role in this resistance. For this rangatahi tāne, multiple aspects of the protest coalesced to make

this moment so special. As he details in his kōrero, he was able to stand in solidarity with those at Ihumātao to stop the desecration of the land, he was able to learn about te ao Māori and engage in whakawhanaungatanga with other Māori. The process of meeting new people and sharing whanaungatanga with people who share the same values as Maihi would introduce Maihi to people who would eventually become pillars in his life.

The act of showing up and holding space for a cause that actively resists colonial oppression is a powerful form of tino rangatiratanga in action. As Maihi has alluded to within his kōrero, the Ihumātao environment allowed him to learn more about te ao Māori, in turn, revealing to this young rangatahi more about his identity as a Māori living in an urban environment. To claim a Māori identity is political by nature (Stuart, 2003); some have even said that to wake up in the morning as Māori is a political act in itself (Greaves et al., 2018). Political resistance is embedded in our history as Māori (Greaves et al., 2018). Through collective action, Māori have achieved many successes within the realm of te reo Māori, education, treaty settlements, and political and cultural representation. Historically, these events have contributed to a raised political consciousness among Māori about the injustice and mistreatment that we have suffered at the hands of the colonial oppressor (Stuart, 2003). Greaves et al. (2018) stated that this political resistance throughout history had led political consciousness to be a central element of what it means to identify as Māori today. For Maihi, an urban-based rangatahi tāne, this raised consciousness came through discovering and rediscovering Māori histories and culture through a University paper - a common experience for many tauira Māori in the academy (McIntosh, 2006). So when Maihi heard about the protest that was taking place at Ihumātao, he felt an innate sense within himself to show up, and offer his support for the cause by situating himself on the whenua. Ihumātao is symbolic of the struggle of Māori to have their land returned

to their care and protection, a struggle that continues many years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which guaranteed Māori tino rangatiratanga or the unqualified chieftainship over their lands, villages, and taonga (Wynyard, 2019). For Maihi, it is emblematic of his generation's fight to tautoko and support causes our ancestors fought tirelessly for. Learning about colonisation in the classroom is a vastly different experience from "*going out there to protest, to understand te ao Māori, to understand the kaupapa*". For Maihi, this was an unforgettable lived experience in which the content he had learned in the classroom would become content that he experienced in real life. Being physically present on the whenua allowed Maihi to engage in whakawhanaungatanga and to create nurturing bonds through kotahitanga with Māori and non-Māori from different walks of life (Hancock & Newton, 2022). Through the kōrero of other people, Maihi was able to learn about the kaupapa at Ihumātao and the hītori of the whenua. This invaluable knowledge provides a deeper, more nuanced understanding that could not necessarily be taught or learnt within the confines of a classroom. The depth of learning that occurs when one is physically at a protest like Ihumātao, soaking up the atmosphere, sharing in whanaungatanga and nourishing the wairua is a part of the beauty of the lived experience. Physically being on the whenua in spaces of resistance and activism helped Maihi to increase his socio-political consciousness and awareness of Māori and Pākehā (Greaves et al., 2018).

For Kawiti, tino rangatiratanga is actioned through the instilling of te reo Māori me ona tikanga into the next generation of rangatahi Māori. As this tāne mentions below:

> ***Kawiti:*** *there's me and a handful of my cousins and friends who speak te reo Māori, who carry our tikanga with us wherever we go, whatever we do and we look around at some of our friends and family and we feel sorry. We feel sorry and we're angry with just basically the*

way the world is because.. and this is the impact and this is just one way to try and contribute towards our young men, the moulding of future leaders and towards instilling of our reo and our tikanga Māori and in that sense we're not only honouring our past but our future in the same sense, - we're fostering our future. And that's the perspective I look at it from and yeah that's really probably the thing that drives me the most, in terms of this kaupapa. And because of the kaumatua and kuia I was fortunate of growing up with who spoke te reo. All of them were te reo Māori fluent. All of them were te reo Maori born. Some of them could barely speak Pakehā. I was fortunate to still be around kaumatua like that and that stuck with me, that sticks with me and comes with me wherever I go, i roto i te whatumanawa. I guess that's the kind of "dream". You know everyone has their dream on what they want their life or the life of those around them to be and I guess that's probably a part of mine for my own hapū and iwi, - wider iwi.

Kawiti is fortunate to have been raised in a te ao Māori context, and this is a birthright of which many Māori have been deprived. Because of this, he now carries with him a strong knowledge of tikanga, fluency in te reo Māori and confidence in the realm of te ao Māori. Knowing how fortunate he is to have this knowledge, the realisation has not only ignited but fuelled Kawiti's passion for sharing this knowledge with other rangatahi and tamariki. Within the rural environment that he grew up in, Kawiti details how it was common to hear te reo Māori being spoken by the kaumatua and kuia, whom he was surrounded by. Considering the success of Māori language suppression through the vehicle of colonisation, the transmission of this knowledge from the elders to this rangatahi tāne is a blessing that follows Kawiti wherever he goes. While Kawiti acknowledges that he is lucky to have been raised in this environment, he is also incredibly aware that not all rangatahi Māori have been able to experience this growing up.

For this rangatahi tāne, there is not only value in knowing how to speak te reo Māori but also in the whakaaro contained within te reo Māori. Having firsthand experience of the fruits that te reo Māori bears, it is understandable why Kawiti displays righteous anger for rangatahi Māori who have had this birthright taken away from them and, therefore, have not been able to share the same experience that he has lived. This provides the drive and motivation that Kawiti has toward kaupapa that instils te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into future generations. This tāne's elders have instilled te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into him, and now Kawiti sees it as his duty and his life's work to restore this birthright to impact those around him positively. Ultimately contributing towards young Māori by moulding future leaders and ingraining the same valuable knowledge into succeeding generations.

The devastating impact of colonisation on te reo Māori has been well documented within academia (Calman, 2012; E. Cooper, 2014; Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011; Walker, 1990), as well as throughout this thesis. One does not have to look too far back in the timeline of New Zealand's history to be confronted with legislation that actively suppressed the Māori language and punished those for speaking the reo (Calman, 2012). The decline of te reo Māori continues to be an issue today, so much so that some consider the Māori language to be an endangered language (L. R. Rameka & Peterson, 2021). For Kawiti, the anger of potentially losing te reo Māori provides a guiding light to instil this knowledge into rangatahi Māori from one generation to the next. The ability to converse in te reo Māori not only allows that individual to rejuvenate the native language of Aotearoa but also provides a means of transmitting Māori customs, values, knowledge and skills (L. R. Rameka & Peterson, 2021). Possessing this knowledge, therefore, becomes central to the development and maintenance of a positive sense of identity, belonging and acceptance in te ao Māori.

Within Kawiti's kōrero, his intentions to contribute to the betterment of rangatahi, more specifically, young Māori men, is a bold challenge to Eurocentric systems and a powerful act of tino rangatiratanga. It is worth noting that these are the same Eurocentric systems that attempted to disrupt the transmission of Māori culture, forcibly removed te reo Māori from the mouths of its speakers, and perceived Māori culture as being inferior to European ones (L. R. Rameka & Peterson, 2021). As a rangatahi, Kawiti understands the importance of immersing young Māori in this knowledge as early as possible. In a sense, this rangatahi tāne is equipping the future of Māoridom with the needed knowledge to navigate who they are and the histories which have contributed to their creation. The knowledge that was shared with him by his kaumatua is now knowledge that he is sharing with other rangatahi Māori - honouring our past and fostering our future. The rejuvenation and preservation of te reo Māori are paramount to Māori health and well-being (Durie, 1994). The language provides a window to the Māori culture and Māori cultural identity. While our ancestors began the fight for te reo Māori many, many years ago, the protection of te reo Māori and the continuation of this knowledge from one generation to the next now lies in the hands of rangatahi Māori.

Kawiti recognises that as a Māori speaking individual, he is a custodian of Māori culture. Even at his young age, this rangatahi is aware of his responsibility to help guide other rangatahi to relearn te reo Māori. While this is a heavy responsibility to carry, it can also come with many rewards, such as the increase in the number of Māori speaking individuals and ensuring the survival of the Māori language. The ability to speak and converse in te reo Māori has long been considered a central aspect of Māori identity (Te Huia, 2015). While the ability to converse in te reo Māori is not a pre-requisite to claim a Māori cultural identity, colonisation has resulted in

Eurocentric ideas that perpetuate the notion that one must be able to speak Māori to be Māori (Borell, 2005; Graham, 2021; Moeke-Pickering, 1996; Te Huia, 2015). Kawiti's work is centred around the idea that because of colonisation, not all Māori have shared the same experience that he had growing up. This acknowledges and highlights that Māori are diverse and not one homogenous population (McIntosh, 2006). The ability to speak and understand te reo Māori is something that enables rangatahi Māori to be able to navigate both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā with comfort and ease (Te Huia, 2015). By this understanding, te reo Māori deeply embedded within our blood. It is teachers like Kawiti who hold the keys to unlocking a language that is embedded in our DNA as Māori.

One way for the Māori language to survive and for Māori identities to flourish is for Māori-speaking individuals, like Kawiti, to foster environments that are welcoming for non-Māori speakers in Māori environments. However, it is also important for non-Māori speakers to be vulnerable in their pursuit of learning te reo Māori. The acquisition of te reo Māori and knowledge of tikanga, which comes in tandem with the reo, can often intertwine to create a sense of belonging and comfort in Māori environments (Te Huia, 2015). To feel like one belongs in these environments is a key aspect of whether or not one might claim a Māori identity (McIntosh, 2006). Feelings of whakamā and embarrassment at not being able to converse in te reo Māori are also barriers that play a role in whether or not one might choose to claim a Maori identity.

Theme Summary: Weaving together the threads

In engaging in conversations with our rangatahi collaborators, it is apparent that these rangatahi Māori are paving the way for other rangatahi to explore their identity within. These

rangatahi have picked up the wero and are now turning their dreams and aspirations into a reality. Not only is this their hopes for the future of Māoridom, but the manifestation of their ancestor's wildest dreams too. Through their various actions, whether it be engaging in hui with Indigenous young people, the act of protesting, or instilling te reo Māori and tikanga into future generations, our rangatahi are doing magnificent things on a magnificent scale. Each of these rangatahi Māori, in their way, is doing something for iwi Māori. For Aotea, her fierce pursuit of tino rangatiratanga is in the sharing of mātauranga Māori and support for other Indigenous cultures. For Maihi, tino rangatiratanga manifests itself in the form of showing up and holding space in environments of activism and protest. Lastly, for Kawiti, the fight for tino rangatiratanga is in the way he carries te reo Māori me ona tikanga and shares this with the next generation of rangatahi Māori. Fighting for and pursuing tino rangatiratanga in their daily lives is a testament to the brilliance of our rangatahi Māori. If our future is in the hands of rangatahi, then our future looks promising.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis is a Kaupapa Māori exploration of the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori. In chapter one of this thesis, I delved into an exploration of who rangatahi Māori are. To do so, it was essential that I first provide an overview of the contextual factors that have played a role in creating contemporary Māori identities. This required me to journey through the historical and contemporary impact of colonisation and the role that this has played in conceptualisations of Māori identity at present. Within this final chapter, I aim to tie the threads of this thesis research project together. Here, I provide an overview of the main findings in relation to my research objectives, emphasising the key findings as they relate to the aim of this thesis. Following this, I discuss the strengths and limitations of this research project. This chapter concludes with implications and recommendations for future research involving rangatahi Māori.

Overview of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

This thesis explored four key research objectives. It aimed to understand how whanaungatanga and identity intertwine to support the hauora and well-being of rangatahi Māori. The following section provides an overview of the main findings in relation to the four key research objectives.

Explore how Rangatahi Māori Support their Hauora and Well-being through Te Ao Māori

One of the pivotal findings revealed within this research is that rangatahi Māori saw significant value in drawing on aspects of te ao Māori to support their hauora and well-being. When times became difficult for our rangatahi Māori, and deep mamae was present within their

lives, utilising aspects of te ao Māori such as their knowledge of tikanga became a powerful tool to help them navigate through their pain. In stepping into the realm of tikanga Māori, some of our rangatahi were able to recite karakia which allowed them to connect to wairua, to their tūpuna, to ngā Atua Māori and to the natural environment. For our rangatahi Māori, it was clearly embedded within their narratives that karakia allowed them to connect with and draw strength from their tūpuna and the Atua. This was of great benefit to the hauora and well-being of rangatahi Māori, especially in relation to the pain associated with whakamomori and the loss of life. Similarly, the data also revealed that for those rangatahi Māori who were not brought up with knowledge of karakia or tikanga Māori, simply talking to the Atua in times of need produced the same support to hauora and well-being as reciting karakia did.

When rangatahi Māori were met with mamae, establishing a connection with te taiao, the natural environment, also provided a way of alleviating the pain in their lives. Being immersed in te taiao, or simply in just seeing te taiao in all of its different forms, proved to be a powerful and effective way of attending to and bolstering rangatahi hauora and well-being. In situating oneself within te taiao, our rangatahi were connected with a place in which they could manage their hauora and well-being. It is again important to emphasise here that irrespective of whether our rangatahi had high levels of knowledge in relation to te ao Māori, establishing a relationship with te taiao simply requires us to be present.

What these findings indicate for rangatahi Māori is that aspects of te ao Māori such as knowledge of tikanga Māori, and establishing and maintaining a relationship with te taiao are crucial to the hauora and well-being of rangatahi. Through rangatahi Māori kōrero, it is evident

that hauora is not solely about the physical well-being of the individual, infact it transcends beyond to incorporate the wairua too. These findings are echoed within a steadily growing literature base which supports the holistic nature of te ao Māori (Carlson et al., 2022; Durie, 1994; McLachlan et al., 2017). Rangatahi experiences of supporting their hauora and well-being through the vehicle of te ao Māori brings to light the endless potential that te ao Māori holds.

Explore how Rangatahi Experience, Express, and Seek out Whanaungatanga in their Daily Lives.

As our rangatahi collaborators have demonstrated, whanaungatanga can be found in the most mundane sites of everyday life. Within this research, discussion of whanaungatanga was interwoven into rangatahi conceptualisations of the home. The data revealed that rangatahi Māori consider whanaungatanga to be a core component of the home - afterall, it is the basic cement that holds things Māori together (Ritchie, 1992). Within rangatahi understandings of home, there was often a nostalgic element in which rangatahi would associate everyday encounters and interactions with their whānau as part of their home. Rangatahi would often seek out these connections in their daily lives as they were a crucial source of belonging, well-being and facilitate an environment in which they could express their identity as Māori. Returning to the people and the places that rangatahi call home, often provided the opportunity to engage in whanaungatanga and deeper connections. For some, whanaungatanga looked like attending a family reunion or being in a learning environment with whānau engaging in whakapapa. These small acts of whanaungatanga echoing the sentiment that whanaungatanga and the process of whakawhanaungatanga can be found in the simplest of interactions.

Discussion of whanaungatanga and whakawhanaungatanga also trickled into other aspects of rangatahi everyday lives. For example, rangatahi also expressed whanaungatanga in the space of protest and activism. Rangatahi discussed the significance of being able to meet other like-minded people who had united for a common cause, and to engage in whakawhanaungatanga with them. Being able to meet new people and share knowledge of te ao Māori in these special moments together would become a pathway to lifelong friendships for some of our rangatahi. Whanaungatanga then became a vehicle for the exchanging of knowledge of te ao Māori and the continuation of Māori cultural values. It is clear that whanaungatanga is multi-layered and can be expressed in many different ways, some obvious and some unexpected. It is important to not overlook the simple practices mentioned above, that occur within everyday encounters, experiences and activities.

Explore how rangatahi Māori enact identity in urban environments when living away from their home.

For rangatahi Māori dwelling in urban environments and living away from home, identity was expressed in a multitude of ways. One way in particular that featured prominently within rangatahi kōrero was the establishing of a connection with the whenua of the new area that rangatahi were dwelling in. Rangatahi emphasised the salience of the whenua and more broadly te taiao, in relation to their hauora and well-being noting that it brought them a sense of peace and comfort in foreign environments. But in connecting and reconnecting to te taiao and the whenua of a new environment, it allowed rangatahi to feel a sense of comfort in being able to express their identity as Māori and draw on this relationship to maintain their well-being. Immersing themselves in the natural elements not only fostered well-being but also carved an

environment in which rangatahi felt safe enough to express themselves as Māori within te ao Pākehā. Connecting with the whenua of a new area then became an enabling environment to be able to express one's identity positively as Māori.

The enactment of identity in urban settings was also fostered by finding whanaungatanga relationships within the city and within te ao Pākehā. Whanaungatanga relationships revealed themselves to be spaces of care and nourishment. From within these relationships, rangatahi Māori were wrapped in a blanket of love, offering them a safety net from the stressors that accompany city living. Here, this sense of protection and refuge paved the way for rangatahi to explore their identity. The safer the individual feels, the more they will be able to thrive as Māori. Thus, whanaungatanga relationships were thought to be central in helping our rangatahi to express their identity as Māori. These experiences of identity expression were not always clearly visible, in fact, they often required rangatahi Māori to unravel multiple layers of their identity.

In both of these examples, it is clear that feeling a sense of belonging and safety in the environment that rangatahi were in, provided the optimal environment for rangatahi to safely lean into their identities and to figure out what a Māori identity entails. It then becomes increasingly obvious that fostering these spaces of safety and belonging are important for our rangatahi Māori (L. Rameka, 2018).

Explore the Ways that Rangatahi Māori are Safeguarding Tuakiri Māori and Mātauranga for the Future of Māoridom.

Of great significance to all of our rangatahi Māori is the safeguarding of tuakiri Māori and mātauranga Māori for the future of Māoridom. Rangatahi saw high value in focusing on and prioritising Māoridom to ensure the preservation and continuation of Māori knowledge and Māori identity for the future generations. The data revealed that each of our rangatahi Māori were engaging in acts of tino rangatiratanga to protect both a Māori identity and mātauranga Māori. Whether acts of tino rangatiratanga were carried out on a smaller scale or a larger scale, there is much to consider here in relation to how these acts contribute to the continuation of iwi Māori.

Rangatahi Māori devoted themselves to various acts of tino rangatiratanga, for example, some rangatahi engaged in hui with other Indigenous youth to discuss and exchange various ideas and forms of knowledge that prioritise Indigenous well-being. Ensuring that our knowledge lives on and in return, harnessing support from other Indigenous people from around the world. Other rangatahi Māori dedicated themselves to instilling te reo Māori and tikanga into the next generation of rangatahi Māori. In doing so, preserving and maintaining our language and our customs for the succeeding generations of rangatahi. For other rangatahi, tino rangatiratanga and the protection of our Māori identities and the safeguarding of mātauranga Māori involved the act of protesting. Showing up and physically holding space for a cause that protects the core of te ao Māori is a tough act of protest, not only for the current generation of Māori, but also for the rangatahi who follow in our footsteps. For all of our rangatahi, acts of tino rangatiratanga existed on varying levels of grandness. But perhaps the most salient act of tino rangatiratanga for each of our rangatahi, was to proudly claim a Māori identity. Being Māori was a superpower for our rangatahi, a strength that they could draw on to support their own hauora and well-being. Young people play a crucial role in the revitalisation and the resurrection of our language, the

perpetuation of our tikanga, and the preservation of our mātauranga Māori. Higgins (2021) likens this journey of cultural preservation to that of a relay race where we carry the baton and hand it on to the next generation. Through their actions, rangatahi are sharing the passion and value for their identity as Māori and mātauranga Māori. In handing on the baton in the relay race, it is important that the same passion is passed on to the next generation, to ensure that the relay carries on well into the future.

Strengths and Limitations of the Research

Prioritising Rangatahi Māori

The greatest strength of this research was engaging with the rich and enlightening kōrero shared by rangatahi Māori. To understand the needs of Māori in contemporary times, it is essential to prioritise and whakamana the lived experiences, ideas and perceptions of rangatahi Māori (Pihama, 2001). In doing so, I centre rangatahi experiences of being and existing whilst simultaneously validating them as kaitiaki of solutions to concerns that directly contribute to their hauora and well-being. The perspectives of rangatahi Māori have been prioritised throughout the entirety of this research, and their narratives have provided a guiding light for the direction of this thesis. By rangatahi Māori, for rangatahi Māori and with rangatahi Māori throughout its entirety. When we prioritise rangatahi Māori, we show them that we value their perspectives and experiences – rangatahi are bearers of knowledge that have a lot to teach us as researchers.

Contributing to the Existing Database of Mātauranga Māori

Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu

Although it is small, it is a treasure

As emphasised throughout this thesis, what it means to claim a Māori identity in the 21st century is constantly changing and developing with time. Māori identities are diverse and are in a constant state of being constructed and reconstructed (McIntosh, 2006). As with a Māori identity, mātauranga Māori is also a constantly evolving knowledge system (Royal, 2012). As such, it is important to tell the stories of our rangatahi Māori and share the wealth of knowledge that they bring. Referring back to the title of this thesis, it is important to honour our past and foster our futures. Following in the footsteps of our ancestors, our tūpuna built on the collective wisdom of their tūpuna, and just like them, our rangatahi collaborators are growing this collective knowledge base of mātauranga Māori. Attending to the whakatauki at the beginning of this section, this thesis is small, but it is a treasure. Whether the contribution is something big, or something small like this thesis, it all contributes to the continuation of mātauranga Māori and the betterment of iwi Māori. This thesis, is a contribution to the continuation of our culture.

Small Sample Size

This research utilised a sample size of four rangatahi Māori, each coming from diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their identity journey. Within qualitative research, a smaller sample size has allowed for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of rangatahi Māori experiences. While some may consider this small sample size a potential research limitation, a smaller sample size is appropriate in this context as it enables the harnessing of

higher information power and more in-depth analysis and exploration of knowledge pertaining to the identities of rangatahi. While our rangatahi Māori possessed multiple and broad experiences of identity, these experiences may not represent the entirety of rangatahi Māori. Despite this, as I have emphasised throughout this thesis, contemporary Māori identities for rangatahi Māori are constantly in a state of flux (McIntosh, 2006). Thus, what it means to claim a Māori identity is changing and evolving.

Future Research

While this research has focused on identity and whanaungatanga in relation to rangatahi Māori, there are several directions in which future research could be extended to cover. This research centred on four rangatahi Māori between the ages of 17 and 22, however, future research should consider that this is toward the upper limits of what is generally agreed upon as rangatahi status. Within this research I looked at older aged rangatahi Māori, one might contemplate whether these findings would differ for rangatahi who are situated toward the younger end of the age range. What can insights gained from younger rangatahi Māori tell us about how young people enact identity and express whanaungatanga? Would younger rangatahi express and enact their Māori identity in different ways? This is one potential direction in which future research could extend to.

Implications for Future Research

Acknowledge the Diversity of Rangatahi Māori

For anyone who works with young people and rangatahi Māori, it is essential to acknowledge the diversity that exists amongst rangatahi Māori. As has been found in completing

this thesis, rangatahi Māori are incredibly diverse in their experiences and identities. To be able to interact and influence rangatahi Māori, we as researchers must understand what it means to be a rangatahi Māori in the 21st century (Tipene-Clarke, 2005). First and foremost, this begins with acknowledging that rangatahi Māori are unique and therefore have their unique contributions to make. The tremendous diversity that exists within rangatahi Māori is a powerful tool to utilise. When done correctly and respectfully, it can offer insight into how we can effectively support the needs and aspirations of rangatahi. In acknowledging their diversity, it is also important to recognise rangatahi in the context of their whānau, hapū and iwi. Future research and practice should consider this diversity in their mahi.

By Rangatahi Māori, For Rangatahi Māori

As I have continued to detail throughout this thesis, rangatahi Māori are kaitiaki and innovators of mātauranga Māori. Because of their young age, rangatahi Māori are often not given enough credit for the wealth of knowledge and creativity that they possess (Tipene-Clarke, 2005). In Kaupapa Māori research, when research is "by rangatahi Māori, for rangatahi Māori," we whakamana and uplift the belief that rangatahi Māori are capable of making their own decisions too. Rangatahi Māori offer a fresh perspective and contemporary take on solutions to problems that directly concern their hauora and well-being. There is endless possibility when we take a step back and ask ourselves what we can learn from our rangatahi. Therefore, the future production of resources for rangatahi Māori hauora and well-being should be heavily based on insights synthesised from rangatahi kōrero. This is to ensure that resources produced reflect the contemporary mātauranga and that the resources produced are relevant to rangatahi Māori - by rangatahi Māori, for rangatahi Māori (Fleming, 2011). Potential resources could include

workshops where rangatahi Māori are encouraged to engage in whanaungatanga with other Māori. This workshop could also be located in a marae setting to foster and encourage the connection to whakapapa and, therefore, instil the urge to learn more about their identity as Māori. In the development of resources for rangatahi Māori, it is also essential to develop resources for whānau members of rangatahi, and for those who work with rangatahi Māori and young people too (Schwencke et al., 2021). Today, they are rangatahi Māori, and tomorrow, they will be our leaders. It is time for rangatahi to take hold of the reins, with the guidance and support from kaumatua and kuia.

Know our Roles and Responsibilities as a Researcher

In working with rangatahi Māori; there are roles and responsibilities that researchers must consider before taking up the wero. For example, consider the analogy of a pōwhiri on the marae. In a marae setting, there are different roles and responsibilities that each individual has. The kaikaranga, or the caller, welcomes visitors onto the marae. Some give whaikōrero on the marae. Others play the role of the ringawera, who prepare the food in the kitchen for visitors. Everyone has their role when it comes to the marae, and everyone has a purpose that contributes to the success of the pōwhiri. Not one of these roles is more important than the other, but they all contribute to the continuation of Māori culture. Like individuals' roles in pōwhiri on the marae, as researchers, we have a role to play when engaging with rangatahi Māori. As a researcher working with the knowledge and experiences shared by rangatahi Māori, it is the role of the researcher to tell their stories in mana-enhancing ways that whakamana our rangatahi Māori. To do so, it is the researcher's responsibility to engage in whakawhanaungatanga with rangatahi Māori and develop relationships with them (Tipene-Clarke, 2005). In doing so, there is great

potential to foster and create a space where young people feel comfortable to offer their insights and share their experiences with us. When we do research with rangatahi Māori, rather than doing research on them, we are met with different perspectives that we as adults may not perceive in the same way (Carlson et al., 2022; Fleming, 2011). Working in partnership with young people, therefore, challenges us to rethink the research process and question how our mahi will contribute to the betterment of rangatahi and meaningful change for iwi Māori. Lastly, as a researcher working in the realm of hauora and well-being, it is our role to remind them how grateful we are to be able to bring their knowledge into the academic sphere - this is integral to support their well-being.

Final Word

This thesis has provided an in-depth, Kaupapa Māori exploration of the interaction between whanaungatanga and identity, and how this supports hauora and well-being for rangatahi Māori. This study has weaved together the threads of whanaungatanga and identity, detailing the importance of this relationship to the hauora and well-being of rangatahi Māori. As this thesis journey comes to an end, I refer back to the whakatauki from the beginning of this thesis. *E kore au e ngaro, he kākano I ruia mai I Rangiātea, I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea.* In reminding our rangatahi Māori of their potential, of their identity as Māori, of the values embedded in te ao Māori, we are nourishing the soil in which they are in and fostering their future growth. As our rangatahi Māori navigate this world and continue to grow, we must listen to them and understand that they are kaitiaki and custodians of our culture. If the future of Māoridom lies in the hands of our rangatahi Māori, our future is in safe hands. Attending to the title of this thesis, in honouring our past, we are fostering our futures. So while

this thesis has come to an end, it is important to remember, the journey of potential for our rangatahi Māori is only just beginning and is in good hands.

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