
Mana wahine me te tino rangatiratanga: Māori women's dignity and self determination

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*Me aro koe ki te hā o Hine Ahu One
Pay heed to the dignity of women (Traditional).*

*Ko Hine Titama koe, matawaia te whatu i te tirohanga atu
The eyes water to behold the dawn maiden Hine Titama (Traditional).*

Introduction

This paper discusses issues of Mana Wahine – the dignity of Māori women and Te Tino Rangatiratanga or self determination as it relates to a kaupapa Māori intervention programme developed over three years in Manukau City. The programme was the subject of my Master of Education (Māori specialty) thesis and the wāhine who took part in the study were all participants in the programme. The purpose of the paper is to raise the debate around issues of sovereignty, autonomy and the dignity and worth of Māori women, all of whom are precious and vital to Māori society thriving and striving into the future. The abstract that follows explains the purpose of the Masters thesis.

Abstract

The thesis examines the process evaluation of a kaupapa Māori intervention programme. The programme was developed and piloted over a period of two years. The participants of the programme were primarily Māori women who self identify as problem gamblers. The programme facilitator's goals included:

- To employ Māori strategies for Māori by Māori
- To empower Māori women to find their own solutions
- To reduce the impact of harms associated with gambling
- To facilitate healing.

The framework for the programme has been designed and intended for delivery by Māori, as a kaupapa Māori intervention. The Pōwhiri Poutama framework also intends to be decolonising and emancipatory.

It is argued that in order to facilitate healing Māori must design and deliver their own interventions utilising Māori frameworks and to also evaluate and assess their usefulness in Māori terms, ensuring that Māori autonomy and self determination are recognised and programmes developed and funded accordingly with the principals of the Treaty Of Waitangi.

Māori health services will therefore be more effective and adequate to meet the health needs of Māori people. Although this programme has been designed for use within a health and treatment service, it is designed from a Māori world view and an educational and interventionist perspective, which is holistic and all embracing of a kaupapa Māori doctrine.

The two opening whakatauki or proverbial sayings both allude to the innate dignity and beauty of wahine Māori. The first whakatauki acknowledges the Earth-formed-maiden who became the progenitor of the human race when she was brought to life by Tāne-Nui-A-Rangi. Tāne as the male essence sought the Hine or female essence in the pubic regions of his mother Papa-tuu-aa-nuku, and bringing forth the first breath of life from Hine she uttered the phrase 'Tihei Mauri Ora'.

Hine-Ahu-One was also the mother of Hine-Titama, who as the dawn maiden was pursued by her father/husband Tāne in his other personification as Tama Nui Te Raa. Each day Tama/ Tāne rises as the Sun and pursues his lover/daughter Hine Titama across the heavens into the underworld where she becomes the Great Mother of the Night, Hine Nui Te Pō, and so the daily cycle of life/death/ life is perpetuated.

Hine Titama, te atakura, te haeata, te tohu o te awatea.

Dawn maiden, the red tinge on the horizon, the sign of daybreak (Herd, 1995).

I began my article with reference to these two female deities as they relate to our creation stories and a common sense of identity for Māori women. When I was invited to write an article for this journal and the kaupapa of Mana Wahine was proposed, I initially thought 'this will be easy'. However on reflection and planning of the article, I have had to reframe my thinking about this topic and how to approach it firstly as a wahine Māori and secondly in my work with wāhine Maori. The creation stories are integral to the kaupapa of this paper in that they provide a starting point or reference and will continue to do so throughout the paper.

Ko Taranaki te maunga.	Taranaki is my mountain
Ko Waitara te awa.	Waitara is my river
Ko Te Atiawa te iwi.	Te Atiawa is my people
Ko Mururaupatu te whare.	Mururaupatu is my house.
Ko Kaipakopako te marae.	Kaipakopako is the meeting place.
Ko Paratene te whanau.	Paratene is my family.

I am the eldest daughter of Ngāhina Ina Paratene and William Percy Herd. My parents married in 1963 and I was born a short time later in 1964 in Auckland. My mother's people are from Te Atiawa confederation of Taranaki. Some of them joined with Te Rauparaha when he left Kawhia in the King Country in the early 1800s and made his way down through North and South Taranaki, Horowhenua, Otaki and Wellington regions and across the strait to Nelson and the Marlborough Sounds where he eventually settled. This time became known as Te Hekenga Nui (The Great Migration). My grandmother was born at Parihaka Pā around 1900. Mum was born in 1933 and was the youngest daughter of 11 children. The family had market gardens and other lands which were leased to farmers around Lepperton, Bell Block and Waitara.

My father was born in 1926 in Brewood, Staffordshire, England and moved to New Zealand in the early 1960s. His ancestors came across to England with the Norman invasion lead by William the Conqueror in 1066. The Herd family has a crest and a cemetery plot in the local church in Brewood. Dad is the youngest son of seven children. His father was an engineer who bought a hotel on retirement and became a publican.

My parents met in a housie hall and enjoyed many forms of gambling, so my claim to fame around gambling is that I was born and raised into it. My interest in this area stems from my work, however my background is quite different and this has enhanced my current career development.

My whole story is a bit long winded for this paper, but the abridged version is that I left school in 1980, moved to Sydney, Australia for 10 years, came back to New Zealand in 1990 with two babies who I enrolled in Kohanga Reo while I went to a Te Reo Māori course at Auckland Technical Institute. Kahu Tapiata, Maaki Howard and Keith Ikin were my teachers and after I completed that course, they encouraged and supported me to apply to a teacher training programme.

I was accepted as a student in the Kura Kaupapa Māori teacher training programme at Auckland College of Education under the tutelage of some amazing wāhine toa including Tuki Nepe, Hine Taumaunu, Erana Wineti, Mere Lodge and Rawinia Penfold. I was able to combine raising my tamariki who were by then at a Kura Kaupapa Māori nearby, and I then completed the Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Auckland before being recruited by Te Wānanga Takiura o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, as a lecturer of Māori Art. I did this for four and a half years and enjoyed that very much. I was then offered a job in a totally different field, which presented a new and interesting challenge for me.

For the past five and a half years I have worked in the problem gambling field in Auckland as a counsellor, initially for Te Atea Mārino, Regional Māori Alcohol and Drug Service at the Waitematā District Health Board and following that as a Public Health Project Co-ordinator at Hapai Te Hauora Tapui Ltd. My background in Māori education and Kura Kaupapa Maori has supported me well in this field.

Wāhine tupono: A kaupapa Māori intervention programme

The topic of my Master of Education thesis, begun in 2000 and completed in 2005, was the evaluation of a Kaupapa Māori intervention programme developed to support wāhine Māori who experience gambling problems. As an education thesis I also examined the schooling experiences of 11 wāhine Māori who were involved with the programme either as participants or developers/facilitators. The findings of my research highlighted some key factors in the successes of these wāhine and underpinned the resilience of wāhine Māori when faced with daunting odds.

The intervention programme is based on an indigenous framework 'Pōwhiri Poutama' which is utilised by many Māori counselling services and is designed to be emancipatory and decolonising. The pōwhiri ritual and the poutama model combined to form a staircase or scaffold that leads to higher learning and knowledge. The poutama design found in many wharehau refers to the attaining of higher learning and wisdom by Tāne who had

populated the earth with various creatures including humans and realised a need to bring knowledge to those of the human variety. Much like the story of Moses who goes to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God, Tāne climbed to the summit of Manono in the highest heaven, overcoming many obstacles to become the receptacle for the three baskets of earthly and celestial knowledge. These three kete when returned to Te Ao Turoa or the earthly plane and became the source of all human knowledge according to Māori tōhunga or experts. Each of the baskets contained elements which support the understanding of human development and potential.

I riro iho ai ngā kete o te wānanga, ko te kete tuauri, ko te kete tuatea, ko te kete aronui (Traditional).

This portion of a much longer tauparapara or incantation recalls the names of each of the baskets and implicit in the names are the meanings or clues to their contents.

Programme development

To address the need to acculturate the participants of the programme, a workbook was developed to support the wāhine in their attainment of knowledge over the eight week course. Worksheets were designed to encourage wahine participants to become more aware of their origins through whakapapa, karakia and whakatauki. Mana Wahine affirmations developed by Rose Rangimarie Pere were included as well as a self help kit utilising Māori models of practice including Te Whare Tapawha, Rangi Matrix and the Pōwhiri Poutama. Each of the wahine keeps a journal and visual diary and records their observations or takes notes from weekly meeting sessions.

The Poutama begins with Karanga (the call of welcome) and works through the stages of a ritual encounter on the Marae Atea or Māori meeting complex. Each of the stages of Mihimihi (story telling), Whakapuaki (opening up), Whakatangi, (weeping) Whakaora (healing and cleansing), Whakarata (celebration), and Whakaotinga (conclusion) has a significance in ritual encounter and for wāhine engaging with the programme for the first time. Demographically speaking the wāhine come from many diverse realities. As urban residents some may have lost touch with their whānau, hapu and iwi origins and live in the city interacting with Māori from other areas. Most have an idea of the area their parents originate from, but have had very little interaction with their whānau still living in the rural areas. Some have reconnected with their whānau since engaging with the Wāhine Tupono programme. The wāhine also spoke to me about their schooling experiences and most reported that they either left school early due to lack of family support or needing to support their family financially. Some thought school was not great and some experienced racism, sexism and bullying at the hands of teachers or other students. A few had hard family lives and were compelled to leave home as well. Pregnancy was a common reason for leaving school for a few. As a result many struggled through life, and have not achieved a level of satisfaction in their personal lives or in their relationships with their whānau.

Mana wahine Maori - Maori women's status

There has been much debate in recent times in the popular media regarding the status of Māori women on the marae. Wāhine Māori who are trained in tikanga and kawa of the

marae understand the intricacies and responsibilities of our role and do not need to explain this to anyone except our own daughters or tamahine. Linda Smith shares some of this knowledge with us in her publications.

Women have the power to make things noa, to intervene in the states of tapu-ness. This power tends to be conceptualised as an indication of the passive role of women, but the freedom that is contained within this role suggests that it is extremely active and dynamic (Smith, 1988: 43).

A recent incident that raised controversy was that involving Josie Bullock, a Pakeha female probation officer, who refused to move to the back row during a Pōwhiri ceremony at a Department of Corrections facility. She was disciplined by her superiors, and then later sacked for speaking to the media. Since her sacking she has spoken to numerous media sources including an article in the Listener, where she defended her right to fight against sexism in institutions. The article implied that she was a champion of Māori women's rights, which I found offensive. I don't disagree that sexism is rife in Government organisations or even in Māori organisations; however, it is not Ms Bullock's place to champion Māori women's rights. Josie Bullock was also the probation officer case worker for two of the support group participants and they were highly critical of her inability to relate to them as Māori wāhine and also her arrogance and 'matronising' attitude. I find it incredulous to this day to see her basking in media attention and being asked her opinions on this subject continually. I ask myself why are Māori women not being invited to speak (although we speak out anyway) and why do we allow someone like this to continually contribute to the debate and effectively silence the voices of wāhine Māori? To this end I have begun to encourage the wāhine to speak out in public forums and to gain confidence through participating in training programmes, so that at some stage in the future they will be able to silence the voice of the 'other' who would dare speak on their behalf.

I recall a conversation I had with Ms Bullock about a training programme I was running to educate providers and those in the corrections department about the effects of problem gambling on Māori. Initially she indicated an interest in the course, but did not attend. It's a great pity she did not as she may have gained a deeper understanding of the ongoing related issues for Māori people. She has also recently appeared on Willie Jackson's current affairs show on television and was shown to be grossly ignorant of Māori political history and protocol, which is not an uncommon thing for many Pakeha New Zealanders.

Women who have strong whānau links take it for granted as part of being Māori. Women whose experiences of whānau have been more problematical are more cautious and tentative (Smith, 1988: 39).

One of the main barriers to Māori women succeeding has been our own internalised sexism and racism messages. The ones that tell us we are not good or pretty or smart enough to have everything we want. Māori women who are not validated as they grow up become unsure of themselves and make poor life choices. Some of the participants of the programme mentioned this in their interviews, which I cannot publish here due to the fact that they did not give me permission to reproduce their stories outside of the thesis. As a programme developer I can attest to this knowing from my own experience. I was raised well in many respects but also recall that my parents did not affirm us all the time as young people and that the level of expectations differed between my brother and me.

We have lived through the processes of colonisation by church, by trade, by the gun, by the law and by the more subtle hegemonic processes of internalised self-abhorrence. (Smith, 1988: 47).

My experience in the education and health fields has been positive and uplifting due to the support and encouragement of the wāhine Māori who were my teachers and mentors. I also noticed that the students most affected by internalised invalidation messages were wāhine who were on their own with children to raise and had not completed secondary schooling. Not finishing school was a common theme among the participants of the study and also the programme developers.

When Māori women control their own definitions, the fundamental unit of identity which can make sense of different realities lies in whakapapa. Whakapapa is both individual and group oriented (Smith, 1992).

Some of the wāhine who were interviewed said this was one of the sad things about growing up in the city, that they did not know their extended family from the rural areas their parents migrated from. They don't know the customs when going on to a marae and have no connection with their own marae. One of the assignments we set for them in group is to identify the areas they come from, the name of the marae and whare and their grandparents and parents' names. For some this was a challenge as two of the wāhine were adopted into Pakeha families and one was raised by her elder siblings as their parents both died. This research project helped one wāhine identify her hapu and iwi which she previously thought was something else, and through her research found a great uncle who was still living and able to tell her some of her family history. Her pride in relating this event was evident.

Aspects of tikanga and traditional custom are taught in the programme. Waiata Māori and karakia are integral to the programme and also to welcoming new participants by mihimihi and telling our stories, so that they at once feel safe and in familiar territory. The process of welcoming others on to the marae removes stigma and shame and empowers those arriving with a sense of knowing and belonging.

Māori people have sought to define identity in terms of our relationship to the land. We are tangata whenua. This definition is one which is shared by a number of minority and racially different indigenous populations (Smith, 1988: 46).

Te Mana Whakahaere – control and authority

The programme was originally funded by the Problem Gambling Committee through the Problem Gambling Purchasing Agency. At a problem gambling symposium in 2002, the facilitators presented the programme to the conference around issues of self determination and recommended that funding be placed with a kaupapa Māori organisation. The funder who was present at the conference heard our strong message and approached us after our presentation to tell us that he would be happy to talk with us about how we could manage the process of moving the funding across to the agency I was working for. This meant that I was now the programme coordinator and my colleague would continue her role as counsellor for the agency she was working for and would facilitate the referrals for wāhine Māori to the group. This arrangement had worked well until the Ministry of Health took over the role of funding problem gambling services in 2004. Essentially the Ministry did not know what

to do with the programme. There were two directorates looking after gambling. The Public Health directorate and the Mental Health directorate were separate and the intervention was being serviced by a provider from each category. The Māori public health provider decided that the programme did not match their strategic service priorities and so the decision was made by the Ministry of Health and the provider to return the funding to the counselling service provider. The consultation process excluded the two facilitators and is a new bone of contention which will be played out over time in regards to funding and control of the resources developed by ourselves and owned collectively by Te Iwi Māori.

My reaction and first thoughts when confronted with the lack of involvement in the decision making process are encapsulated in this passage from 'A Healing Place: Indigenous Visions for Personal Empowerment and Community Recovery'.

The first step forward for those who control resources is to begin to trust the people. Where there are signs of readiness or enthusiasm to take responsibility, national and state programs should be flexible enough to respond promptly. Program guidelines must be drawn up in ways which facilitate innovation rather than forcing communities to fashion plans to fit neatly into departmental boxes. If administrative or agency boundaries do not accommodate worthwhile ideas, then these structures and rules should be changed ... for power and responsibility to be reinstated, it must first be relinquished by its former gatekeepers and guardians (Hazlehurst, 1994).

While the discussion was going on around us, uncertainty of the future forced us to take measures to protect the programme and in August 2005, the facilitators, participants and supporters formed a charitable trust, which in May 2006 was incorporated and now holds legal status. Ultimately we see the trust running the support group and having autonomy from any external agencies. This was the goal three years ago and it is getting closer to being realised as we enter into new discussions with the organisation that now holds the funding for this programme. It is our intention that the trust be 'umbrellaed' by them until the time it is able to run its own affairs independently.

We believe that there should be little or no interference from the umbrella organisation except to manage the finances, so that development is not hindered.

E Tu Wāhine Pono – Let Māori women stand in truth.

Wāhine Tupono Trust

The wāhine who have been involved with the programme for over three years, have expressed an interest in supporting other wāhine Māori affected by problem gambling. Together, we the facilitators, supporters and group participants formed a charitable trust in August 2005. The aims of the trust are very similar to the goals of the support group, but expand a bit more on those original goals:

1. To promote and support the well-being of wāhine Māori and their whānau.
2. To reduce the harm of problem gambling within Māori communities through education and awareness raising activities.
3. To lobby and advocate on behalf of Māori communities affected by problem gambling via media and community events.

4. To encourage the education of and use of Te Reo Māori me ngā tikanga.

The Trust wishes to be self supporting in the future and not dependant on external agencies for its funding and it also does not want to use pokie machine funding to support its aims. One of the trustees must be a graduate of the support group, having attended for at least one full session of eight weeks. The other three trustees are well respected researchers and workers in the problem gambling field. Dr Lorna Dyall and Dr Laurie Morrison, who have both completed doctorates on Māori problem gambling, and Kataraina Tuhaka, a senior health promotion adviser for the Problem Gambling Foundation are three of our four current trustees. I am the chairperson and Dianne Richards is treasurer.

The trust recently received a grant from Te Puni Kokiri for Whānau Development Sport Cultural fund of \$5,000 to run some wānanga toi or art workshops and to develop a three-year strategic plan for the future activities of the group. Our first wānanga took place at the Waimango Papakainga Trust in Orere Point. This wānanga was enjoyed by wāhine and their whānau members and they learned to paint with well known artist Theresa Reihana. The trust hopes to hold an exhibition of the artworks of the wāhine and promote the trust's activities to the wider public.

The thesis findings were presented at several conferences last year and also accepted by the Healing Our Spirits Worldwide Conference. The fifth gathering is to be held in Edmonton, Alberta in Canada in August 2006. It is our intention to take some of the Wāhine Tupono to the conference and a fundraising dinner is being held to support this goal. Some of the wāhine have appeared on television to talk about their gambling problems, in the hope that it will discourage other wāhine from gambling, and are now part of an advisory group for consumers that are undertaking training to be able to get their messages across more effectively in future.

Mana Wahine for me is not elevating the status of women above men. It is about that complementary, co-operative respectful relationship between all our peoples that honours them. That to me is Mana Wahine. And it is something we must all cherish, celebrate and preserve for our survival of our people as tangata whenua (Tariana Turia, 2006).

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