# UTILISING KAUPAPA MĀORI APPROACHES TO INITIATE RESEARCH

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## Abstract

This article provides a brief synopsis of using kaupapa Māori approaches in initiating my doctoral research and collecting the data through interviews. I examine these approaches from four different aspects. The first discusses whanaungatanga as a recruitment methodology. Additional topics explored include tikanga Māori and accessing knowledge. The second considers the insider–outsider relationship and the advantages or disadvantages of holding either position. I also discuss whether these positions are a binary or dichotomy from a Māori perspective, in my role as interviewer and my interactions with Nana, the first participant. Thirdly, I look at the Māori concepts of ahi kā, ahi teretere and ahi mātao in regards to my own connections to my interviewees' tribal regions, and in seeking their agreement to participate in the research. Finally, I examine the significance of kanohi kitea in my relationships with the interviewees.

## Keywords

kaupapa Māori, whanaungatanga, insider–outsider research, ahi kā, kanohi kitea

## Introduction

My research began in mid-2009 with three main components, the core being to examine intergenerational knowledge transmission about practices associated with the Kīngitanga in the Waikato region. Generally not a topic offered through the mainstream schooling curricula, I set out to uncover how such knowledge was passed successfully between the generations

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from my participants' viewpoints and my own observations of these practices in action.

This article does not speak of the findings of my research, as the project is still in progress, but accounts for how the participants—my whanaunga—were recruited. It also details how I conducted the data-gathering phase of the project through interviews using kaupapa Māori approaches from four main aspects. I document the interview process and my relationship to Nana, my first participant, during my discussion of these aspects. This narrative is woven into the text and recalls my direct interactions and responses with Nana to exemplify the topics being discussed. I have chosen to highlight my interview details with Nana, as opposed to other participants, due to the many faceted interactions that I experienced with her. The whole process profoundly affected me and set the tone for how I would carry out subsequent interviews with the other participants.

For each of the four aspects mentioned, I provide a definition of the approach or give a kaupapa Māori research (KMR) example of its use, and then explain how that aspect impacted on my research experience. I speak predominantly of kaupapa Māori approaches and Māori concepts employed in my project and how they affected the process. I do so deliberately to highlight the benefits I gained and discuss the complexities and challenges I found. This includes my use of the terms participant and interviewee rather than the traditional research terminology of "informant" when describing my whanaunga. From a kaupapa Māori approach, my preference for the former terms denotes my whanaunga having unrestrictive involvement in the project on their conditions, and is reflective of the relationships I enjoy with them. The term "informant", on the other hand, represents to me someone who only supplies information without necessarily having to participate in the project beyond that. I also give my perspective on being classed as an insider and simultaneously an outsider during the process. An uncomfortable position to be in at times, I share my experience as a Māori perspective on this phenomenon in this continuously evolving field of research, where the right tikanga to follow still differs from expectations held in Western paradigms of research processes.

The ensuing sections are divided into four parts. The first discusses whanaungatanga as a recruitment methodology where tikanga Māori and accessing Māori knowledge are also explored. The second section considers the insider–outsider relationship and the advantages or disadvantages of holding either position as a researcher. I also discuss whether these positions are a binary or dichotomy from a Māori perspective, in my role as interviewer and my interactions with Nana. Section three examines the Māori concepts of ahi kā, ahi teretere and ahi mātao in regards to my own connections to my interviewees' tribal regions, and in seeking their agreement to participate in the research. The final section explores the significance of kanohi kitea in my relationships with my interviewees.

## Whanaungatanga as recruitment methodology

To explain the concept of whanaungatanga and the two ways it is being used in this narrative, there are three other key words that warrant definition alongside it. The first is whānau, which I define as a family group, be that immediate or extended. The second word, whanaunga, I define as a relative or relation, someone connected by blood, a kin member. Whanaungatanga, the central word of this section, is defined in *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori and Index Dictionary* (*Te Aka*) as:

Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection—a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging

… develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group … extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship. ("Whanaungatanga", n.d.)

The definition that I associate with whanaungatanga throughout this research project draws on the kinship ties between myself, my whānau and my relations, connected through whakapapa. This is the first usage and aligns with Bishop's (1996) definition, "Whanaungatanga literally means relationship by whakapapa, that is blood-linked relationships" (p. 215) This is juxtaposed to another of his definitions of whanaungatanga, which he applies to non-kin relationships, the second usage being explored here. He expands on Metge's (1990) metaphoric whānau that she terms "groupings of people who are not connected by kinship, let alone descent" (p. 73). Bishop (1996) describes how the metaphoric use of whānau in a research context aims to establish a whānau of interest with common goals or outcomes. This, he claims, "is one form of embodying the process of whakawhanaungatanga … by using the social and cultural processes that are part of whānau" (p. 219). *Te Aka* defines whakawhanaungatanga, the fourth word, as "the process of establishing relationships, relating well to others" ("Whakawhanaungatanga", n.d.), which is similar to Bishop's (1996) own definition.

From a research perspective, implicit in the process of whakawhanaungatanga is the consultation with prospective participants about the aims, outcomes and actions, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the whānau of interest members regarding the research project. These principles and practices are reflective of similar types of actions that would be taken as bona fide members of a whānau planning; for instance, a significant whānau event. Inadvertently they have applied a kaupapa Māori methodology to their research framework in the process, a

clear departure from mainstream protocols to achieve the same outcomes.

In compiling the literature review for my doctoral thesis, I was buoyed, but not surprised, by narratives continuing to favour or mention the growing use of a whanaungatanga approach in research. Bishop (1996), L. Smith (1999b), Wihongi (2002), Mead (2003), Walsh-Tapiata (2003), Kana and Tamatea (2006) and others all mention and continue to detail whanaungatanga within their projects. Examples of this include legitimising whānau-led and whānau-driven participation in research and challenging the importance of retaining distance between yourself and your participants, a generic and accepted mainstream practice. This objective distance is reiterated by Harvey's (2003) reference to how their institution offers their post-graduate students training in research methods favouring a position of outsider participant observation rather than insider participation to decrease the likelihood of transgressing the objectivity boundary. Further discussion on insider–outsider relationships follows shortly.

Given my whakapapa to the recruited participants, whanaungatanga under the kinship ties definition was the mechanism employed to recruit them. This was a straightforward process, as they also needed to trace their genealogy to either Ngāti Tīpa or Ngāti Āmaru, two of the hapū I descend from in the Port Waikato region. The interviews information sheet articulated that participants must be within the three age cohorts of 40–59 years, 60–79 years and 80+ years. I sought 12 interviewees and obtained 14 for this section of the project.

### Tika or tikanga?

I favoured Mead's (2003) words—"A researcher should always be guided by the principle of tika which is the very basis of the word tikanga" (p. 318)—in terms of deciding which protocols or processes to follow when carrying out interviews. My definition of tika or tikanga means using the correct, right or most suitable way

applicable to any given situation, often dictated by an inner knowing or gut feeling, which I would also double check with my kaumātua if I was able to. I adopted this kaupapa Māori approach of mentoring by kaumātua often throughout my interviews. The importance of being tika is reflective of Cram's (2001) sentiments: "As a researcher I am often trying to do what I know is right, with that knowing coming from many sources including my relations and my research colleagues (with overlap between the two 'categories')" (p. 35). A similar commentary recently published by Paine, Priston, Signal, Sweeney, and Muller (2013) reflected:

> The use of Kaupapa Māori principles in the *E Moe, Māmā* study and our strong focus on Māori health gain provided many of the recruitment sites with confidence that the research would be conducted in the tika or right way. (p. 128)

Using whanaungatanga as a way of recruiting participants and framing the research within kaupapa Māori provided an added measure of confidence for my participants and myself about their involvement in the research project.

### Accessing knowledge

Accounts by S. Smith (1913), Best (1923), Mead (2003) and others all reiterate the tapu of knowledge transmission and learning in traditional whare wānanga prior to the 1900s. They document how access to this knowledge was not open to the general public, but restricted to chosen individuals who had demonstrated an ability or capacity for such teachings. In general, different schools provided different teachings, each very much at the behest of their own iwi or waka confederations.

Across my own iwi and waka confederation of Waikato Tainui, eight such whare wānanga were in existence during that period bound by the same restrictions and codes of conduct. This confirms why mātauranga Māori is not

given so freely, even today. The rituals may be exercised to a lesser extent than in previous times; however, they still remain, usually in the form of a karakia.

In keeping with this tikanga, I chose to begin and end my interviews with karakia provided by the more senior person in the room unless delegated or deferred to me. C. Smith (2013) similarly explained the use of karakia in the ethical processes employed at Te Atawhai o te Ao: Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health, noting its usage to clear the path for the discussion to take place at the start of the interview, then lift the heaviness of those discussions from the participants at the conclusion.

With whanaungatanga having paved the way, I was satisfied that I was as prepared as I would ever be and set off to see my first interviewee, Nana, a particularly close whanaunga. I was received with the usual chitchat and banter that had always existed between us. I made a round of cups of tea and proceeded to explain the detail about my research project. We had already spoken of this by telephone and in a prior visit. I fetched the information sheet and consent form and explained these away. I checked for queries, and with no questions, announced that the interview would start proper. I produced the voice recorder and asked for approval to record our conversation. Nana shook her head "No" and preferred that I scribe our discussion. "No problem", I thought. I checked her preferred language for the discussion, as she was a prolific speaker of Māori. "Whatever" was the relaxed, nonchalant reply. Then I asked the first question about her educational experiences. We will return to this interview again shortly.

### Insider–outsider relationships

Many discussions have debated the notions of the insider–outsider relationship in research, its positives and negatives. After reading differing accounts on the topic, I experienced and

identified through my own research thoughts shared by L. Smith (1999b) about the complexities and the additional weight of expectation of being both an insider and an outsider in a project, especially for Māori and indigenous researchers. In my view, L. Smith's summary (1999a) still holds as much validity today as it did when first penned: "Kaupapa Māori is the development of 'insider' methodologies that incorporate a critique of research and ways for carrying out research for Māori, with Māori and by Māori" (p. 1). Irwin (1994) explains this further and speaks of kaupapa Māori as research "that is 'culturally safe'; that involves the mentorship of elders; that is culturally relevant and appropriate while satisfying the rigour of research; and that is undertaken by a Māori researcher, not a researcher who happens to be Māori" (p. 27). Irwin's description could just as easily be speaking of an insider's role.

I define an insider as a person who is in a position of privilege by way of kinship relationship, immediate or extended. In this vein, being classified as an insider infers access to deeper levels of information. Or does it? Furthermore, L. Smith (1999b) captures the dilemma that many Māori and indigenous researchers find themselves in, myself no exception:

> There are a number of ethical, cultural, political and personal issues that can present special difficulties for indigenous researchers who, in their own communities, work partially as insiders, and are often employed for this purpose, and partially as outsiders, because of their Western education or because they may work across clan, tribe, linguistic, age and gender boundaries. (p. 5)

Similarly to L. Smith and Irwin's statements, C. Smith (2013) comments that the best people suited for the task of undertaking KMR are most likely those who have already trodden that path and often assume dual roles in the process; being the researcher and simultaneously the whanaunga or the community member, for

instance. Inadvertently, does this then automatically qualify such a researcher for an insider's pass in the process? This may have rung true for me in my project, but in my experience was never a given straightaway. Whenever I went into my interviews, I always considered myself to be an insider. L. Smith (1999b) contends that insiders "have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis forever more, and so do their families and communities" (p. 137).

The debate about insider–outsider roles in research with indigenous participants has been well documented by both indigenous and non-indigenous writers (see Barnes, 2013; Glynn, 2013; Hill & May, 2013; Jones, 2012; Pope, 2008; L. Smith, 1999a, 1999b; Tiakiwai, 2001; Tolich, 2002). The purpose of raising the debate within this article is not to regurgitate or re-litigate previous terrain, nor champion one or the other as being the best way to progress indigenous research. It is raised here to highlight the intricacies of working in this space and being classified inadvertently or otherwise as one or the other during this research project.

In her checklist for being categorised as an insider or an outsider, L. Smith (1999b) discusses an insider's constant need for reflexivity and responsiveness. She emphasised how both insiders and outsiders also had to think "critically about their processes, their relationships and the quality and richness of their data and analysis" (p. 137). Similarly, Smyth and Holian (1999) describe an insider researcher's position as one that:

> Forces us to ground our work in everyday issues as those involved experience them, it confronts us and others with our assumptions, perceptions and their impact, it enables us to learn, reflect and act and it insists that we engage with what and who we are curious about. (p. 2)

L. Smith (1999b) also asserts that an outsider is someone who is "able to observe without being

implicated in the scene" (p. 137) and therefore able to maintain an objective critical distance, as Harvey (2003) refers to, or to keep a measured distance away from and deflect the detail that Smyth and Holian (1999) describe. In my view, the critical difference between the two is that an insider lives with the consequences of his or her actions while the outsider maintains a safe distance and may not be affected in the same way, nor held accountable at the same level for his or her actions.

Breen (2007) writes that "insider-researchers are often confronted with methodological and ethical issues that are largely irrelevant to outsider-researchers" (p. 164). She gave two reasons for this. Firstly, the researcher's reflections on the nature of the data, which may be personal, can detract from focusing on the interview process. Secondly, the participants may assume the researcher already knows the answers, which can complicate or hinder the process. In this sense familiarity can pose an advantage but also a disadvantage in some scenarios. In a quick flashback to my interview with Nana, it was not evident that I had been a victim of either circumstance. If anything, Nana had become more distant rather than over-familiar in her initial reactions towards me at the start of the interview proper.

A final point from Breen's (2007) research worth mentioning is her distinction between insider and outsider positions, and how these correspond to contrasting positions about the theory of knowledge. Terms such as "co-construction", "giving voice to" and "active informants", she comments, are more likely to happen with and between researchers and participants within "epistemologies and perspectives such as constructionism, feminism, critical theory and postmodernism" (p. 164), all more aligned to conducting insider research and, in my opinion, where KMR also aligns better. This creates space to allow participants and researchers to work together to carry out their research, rather than the researcher carrying out the research on the participant. Outsider research would be conducted in direct contrast to this and more from an observatory stance.

Reflecting on my first interview with Nana, I can see how both sides came into play. If we return to my description of that interview, I decided to stop the interview after 20 minutes as I felt it was not particularly comfortable for Nana or myself; her answers were monosyllabic and curt and I felt I was being regarded as, and had somehow become, an outsider. A number of "why" questions raced through my head. Was it because I had forgotten to start with the karakia in my eagerness or nervousness to begin and did so about five minutes into the opening explanation? Did my asking about her educational experiences evoke unwelcome and long-buried memories for her that subsequently surfaced later in the interview? Did I not hear her when she told me she had nothing of interest to contribute to the interview? Did she believe that I was wasting my time with her when I should be pursuing others with higher profiles from the community to talk to, a comment she regularly made in our pre-interview meeting?

With my mind boggling over all these variables, I duly abandoned my line of questioning and suggested it was time for something to eat and set about preparing our dinner. At this point, and while she watched me getting the food ready, a normal occurrence whenever I visited previously, Nana asked me about the questions again so I resumed these. In this less formal environment, we continued to talk at length for a good six hours or so through the meal, through the dishes, through her favourite television programmes, through her catching me up on the local community gossip, and into the night. I was able to take down some good, detailed notes on our research-related conversations and her responses to my questions. I think I had become an insider again once the meal preparations began. Reflecting on that interview, I believe the formality of the occasion and my own personal conduct heavily influenced how Nana regarded me, with this classification happening intangibly. Presenting with pen and

paper and sitting opposite her, poised to write, I was regarded instantaneously as an outsider. At the kitchen sink preparing our evening meal and chattering away in the process, however, I was just the mokopuna again on a regular visit and this elicited a whole different set of more natural responses from her.

This was a vital lesson for me, and with the subsequent interviews I ensured that the interview environments were as close as possible to how I would normally behave with my whanaunga and did not create a pseudo setting that made them feel uncomfortable, particularly in their own homes. Another invaluable option I discovered accidentally was offering to take my whanaunga to one of the tribal events that we were discussing, giving ample time to talk while driving there and conducting a post analysis of the event on the way home again.

As I reflected on the application of tika in the way I conducted my interviews, I questioned my conduct with Nana from the outset. In my eagerness or nervousness, did rushing into starting the interview without initially having our karakia until her prompting have any bearing on the way the interview unfolded? She actually said to me, "E, kua whakarite koe i a tāua?" (Hey, have you blessed us?) This was, of course, my cue to do so. Part of me thinks it did, so I made sure that never happened again for any other participants.

From an insider–outsider perspective, nothing extraordinary occurred during the remaining 13 interviews. Two were conducted with pairs and four of the five participants in the 80+ years cohort preferred I scribe rather than record their interviews. The majority were conducted in a mix of the Māori and the English languages. All were recruited by way of whanaungatanga and all of them identified me as an insider from the outset. The opening statements from most of my elderly participants stipulated they had nothing of use to share with me or they did not receive a Pākehā education so would not be able to contribute much. Conversely, their narratives were fascinating.

As I had discovered with Nana, a significant feature of each interview was the time spent simply sitting, listening, talking and sharing a meal with each participant, particularly those in the 80+ years cohort. This raised for me the importance of another Māori concept, manaakitanga, and whilst I was the visitor to the interviewees' in their own homes, it was important for me to carry out my role as a good host in ensuring the provision of refreshments for the duration of the interviews.

From both an insider and outsider perspective, it was important to start with "small talk" and a cup of tea or a meal, making small talk or debating the tribal politics of the day. Inevitably the conversations included catching up on personal, whanaunga and whānau orientated events and developments that required a degree of openness and another level of scrutiny, a role that I believe both insiders and outsiders alike could find difficult to fulfil unless they had well established relationships with their participants or were well informed about tribal or topical matters.

The shortest interview took four hours and the longest just over six hours. Two of the participants in the 80+ years cohort have passed on in the last three years and I certainly treasure the decisions I made to spend the time I did with each of them. Nana marked her 90th birthday mid-way through 2013 but sadly passed away prior to Christmas 2013, meaning only two participants in this cohort now remain. The thesis is nearing completion; however, I still feel a deep connection to all of these participants. It is not an obligation but more an acknowledgement of gratitude that they chose to share their knowledge with me as whanaunga, and participate in my project.

Unlike a time-bound contract with a finite start and finish date, I believe an insider's role is infinite. Each time I return to the north, I make a point of taking the time to see each of my participants, if possible. Every time I leave, I never know whether I will see them again, especially the two remaining participants in

the 80+ years cohort. This ongoing, obligation-free process, I believe, continues to affirm my insider role as opposed to being an outsider, in line with L. Smith's (1999a, 1999b) and others' definitions.

## *Binary or dichotomy? A link to Māori epistemology?*

At face value it was hard to pinpoint what prompted the difference, during my interview with Nana, in the way or reasons why I was perceived firstly as an insider, then as an outsider, and finally as an insider again. In hindsight, one conclusion I came to was the formality or informality of the environment that I unwittingly created. In trying to analyse this phenomenon, I initially classified the experience as a binary, creating an informal environment at the beginning and at the end of the interview. I also considered part of the experience to be a dichotomy: my role once the interview proper had begun and when the environment, along with my conduct, took on a more formal tone. Extending this debate further to consider linkages to Māori epistemology or knowledge systems, Edwards (2012) explains mātauranga Māori as follows:

> The late renowned tohunga Māori Marsden refers to enquiry into valid belief as explained through a Māori worldview as Māori epistemology, a component part of the field of Māori philosophy. Marsden goes on to explain that epistemology includes the nature of right and wrong, that he describes as ethics (Marsden, 2003: 27, Royal, 2008: 33), and forms part of Māori philosophy. Marsden (2003) identifies that mātauranga was exercised in wānanga and that from te kākano (the seed of thought) came mōhio (ways of knowing) which gave us mātauranga (knowledge). (p. 38)

Following Edward's take on Marsden's explanation above and from a holistic viewpoint, elements of good and evil, and right and wrong, exist in all things. Walker (1987) reinforces this notion through his account of the creation narratives and the origin of knowledge: "The letting in of light after the separation of earth and sky is the analogue to the Genesis story of the tree of knowledge. The gaining of knowledge is good, but it also introduces its binary opposition of evil" (p. 42). These two accounts reinforce for me the importance of balance from a Māori worldview and have been considered in my application of a dichotomy and binary to my interview experience with Nana.

Re-visiting this interview again, I found the following to be the key learnings for me from this experience. Together, my simultaneous classification as insider and outsider can be complementary and provide an equilibrium or balance, as in a dichotomy. They can also represent a binary, being of two distinct rather than strictly opposite parts. Keeping with this train of thought, I did not consider it a negative to be cast as an insider or an outsider throughout the interview, but when it did happen to me, what was important was having a level of equilibrium restored before the end of the process.

From a KMR approach, this is what I term "applying tika to the process" and that is what transpired. I do not believe I accessed any additional privileges in my brief time as an outsider; however, this was definitely the least enjoyable of the positions from an emotive stance. I was very fortunate, nevertheless, when Nana opened a door into her upbringing and the many experiences that constituted her life of over 80 years while affording me insider status. From a research project perspective it was more advantageous for me that day to have insider status to learn, debate and consult with Nana about her experiences. From a tikanga perspective, however, being cast as an outsider was an invaluable lesson, which slightly readjusted my ego in a positive way.

## Ahi kā, ahi teretere, ahi mātao

The insider–outsider binary or dichotomy found in Western theory, in my opinion, somewhat resembles the Māori concepts of ahi kā, ahi teretere and ahi mātao. Walker's (1987) definition of ahi kā explained, "A tribe which maintained its domestic fires alight on the land was proof of continuity of occupation, indicating that ownership rights had not been extinguished" (p. 43). Basically, as long as you kept your home fires lit, others would know that land was spoken for. The definition of ahi kā I am using here refers to the importance of maintaining home fires, keeping them burning and maintaining a strong association with your hapū and whanaunga. This can be difficult to maintain from afar. An insider would be similar to the concept of ahi kā, where a person has maintained their home linkages and connections to their hapū and whanaunga.

Kana and Tamatea (2006) spoke of their continual return to a home area as researchers and, by doing so, adding their contributions to the home fires. This in turn built up their reputations and their contributions to the shared vision of a research project. A final factor they noted regarding ahi kā was the importance of representing the stories of the respective whānau of those home fires. I have been living outside of my own tribal region now for the past 10 years. My mechanism for retaining my ahi kā has been to ensure an annual return to visit my hapū and whanaunga by attending at least one of three major fora on the tribal calendar held within the Waikato Tainui region: poukai at my own marae, regatta or coronation.

From a kaupapa Māori approach, this concept of ahi kā also translates to a mechanism of authenticity for me in these contemporary times. I know the regimes my whanaunga will be going through, for instance, in the 24 hours beforehand to ensure the catering requirements for poukai day are met. It is of little consequence to send a koha to help with the day, although it will still graciously be appreciated, when you know the best support you can contribute is to be there in person to physically help out in the kitchen and dining room, as that is the commodity that will be most sought after. Although my absence may be duly noted if I do not manage to return for that event, I will not suffer dire penalties as a result. I place extra significance on this event, as it is the one opportunity I get annually to re-engage with my whanaunga and re-affirm those whakapapa links to the younger generations. More importantly, all of this activity contributes to keeping my ahi kā burning bright.

Ahi mātao refers to the consequences of a person not tending their home fires, and letting that flame diminish, even become extinguished, by not maintaining their kinship ties and connections. Ahi teretere represents the intermediary state between ahi kā and ahi mātao. It refers to a flickering flame when members of a whānau do not return regularly to maintain their ahi kā, thereby placing their ties at risk of becoming ahi mātao and consequently extinguished. An outsider could either be ahi mātao or ahi teretere, a person who is in danger of losing or has lost their home linkages and connections to their hapū and whanaunga. Someone like myself, who lives away from these home fires, could also be viewed as an outsider, guilty of not returning more often, or ensuring the ahi kā continues to burn brightly.

My analysis of interviewing Nana could fit with ahi kā, ahi teretere and ahi mātao. I like to believe that by having returned at least twice or more times a year leading up to the interview, this put me firmly in the insider or ahi kā category with Nana for the majority of that interview. This was also my self-classification for being an insider for the remaining interviews for this project, bearing in mind L. Smith's (1999a, p. 1) earlier remarks as well.

## Kanohi kitea

Kanohi kitea signifies to me another level of expectation and obligation to nurturing and maintaining whanaungatanga. In this case, it refers to someone who returns on a more regular basis to their tūrangawaewae or iwi. It highlights the importance of literally being seen in the flesh by your kin. Others define it as the face-to-face interaction with people, or as Bishop (1996) comments from a research perspective, "become[ing] a 'known face', a kanohi kitea … an essential step in establishing the trust that is a necessary feature of any research relationship" (p. 111). From a kaupapa Māori approach, the notion of trust has implications at many levels, which is why, in my research experience, kanohi kitea circumvents most of these. It is an honest instrument for gauging how members of a research whānau or group are feeling about aspects of a project and its progress or lack of, with emotions being hard to hide in the flesh. Words of pono and tika come to my mind synonymously when thinking of kanohi kitea.

Kana and Tamatea (2006) refer to kanohi kitea as a validation mechanism for researchers to be further accepted by their research communities and participants. Similarly, it also stood for accountability and representation measures within their research projects.

Regarding my interviews, I think kanohi kitea was another reason I was afforded insider status at the beginning of the interview with Nana. I hold kanohi kitea as one of the most important aspects of communication with my participants. It is another reason why I continue to seek them out each time I am in the vicinity, particularly the two remaining participants in the 80+ years cohort. They are growing more fragile each time I see them, yet neither can suppress the happiness they shower me with when I visit. It is a genuine expression of whanaungatanga and aroha that I never tire of experiencing.

## Conclusion

Using kaupapa Māori approaches has been successful and beneficial in the initiating phases of my research project. My application of whanaungatanga drew on my kinship ties, whereas Bishop (1996) and others have emphasised the non-kin relationship varieties. The participants decided whether they ultimately felt well informed and comfortable enough to be involved in my research project or not and whether they felt the outcomes would be beneficial, not only for themselves, but also for our whanaunga and the wider community. Like knowledge, certain rituals from the traditional schools of learning still hold court today, mostly in the form of karakia in order to start an interview or research project off in the right direction and conclude it in a befitting manner. Being guided by tikanga Māori and utilising Māori concepts of manaakitanga and aroha continued to foster the project along its way, in conjunction with the reassuring mentorship of kaumātua.

During my first interview with Nana, I had the pleasure of being equally positioned as an insider, an outsider, and then an insider again, all in the space of the same interview. I may have taken my insider status for granted at the beginning of the process, but that was swiftly replaced by a healthy respect for knowing how it felt to be located as an outsider as well. In all brutal honesty, perhaps my ego wore the brunt of that reality check and in hindsight invaluable lessons were gained from holding both positions. These positions constituted both a binary, at the beginning and end, and a dichotomy once I had announced the interview start proper, but of most importance to me from a Māori perspective was restoring an equilibrium or making things tika before the interview process ended.

My research project afforded me an authentic way to contribute to keeping my ahi kā burning, through encouraging me to whakawhanaunga with my relatives and keep those whakapapa links strong. This is critical

as I live outside of my tribal rohe, have done so for the past 10 years, and want to continue being an active and contributing member of my hapū. Whanaungatanga has not only provided the participants and myself with the korowai of strength, protection and security for the project but also the caution in carrying out the interviews. This caution presented in many forms, causing discomfort at times, whilst evoking joy and laughter at others. It also allowed for a wide range of very fluid relationships to be experienced throughout: insider–outsider, informal–formal and binary–dichotomy.

The one thing that is irreplaceable from my perspective, however, is the notion of kanohi kitea and the significance of being seen in the flesh, the level of trust being placed upon me by my participants and my commitment to them as whanaunga. Underpinning all the examples spoken of in this narrative were the kaupapa Māori approaches evident throughout the research, illuminating the benefits to be had no matter the challenges faced and the curiosities aroused.

## Acknowledgements

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| ahi kā | maintaining your tribal home fires |
| ahi mātao | the tribal home fire that has grown cold or been extinguished |
| ahi teretere | the flickering, intermediary flame of the tribal home fire |
| aroha | love |
| hapū | sub-tribes |
| iwi | tribe, tribal |
| kanohi kitea | the "seen" face |
| karakia | prayer, sacred chant |
| kaumātua | elders |
| kaupapa Māori | Māori centred |
| kaupapa | topic, project |
| Kīngitanga | Kingship movement |
| korowai | cloak |
| manaakitanga | hospitality |
| marae | physical, communal meeting place of significance |
| mātauranga Māori | Māori knowledge |
| mōhio | ways of knowing |
| mokopuna | grandchild |
| nana | grandmother |
| Pākehā | New Zealanders of European descent |
| Paimārire | an utterance expressed at the start or end of a prayer or salutation by followers of the Paimārire faith |
| pono | honest, true |
| poukai | annual celebrations held at selected, mainly Waikato Tainui marae since 1884, where current tribal affairs are also discussed |
| rohe | region |
| tapu | sacredness |
| te kākano | the seed of thought |

| | |
|---|---|
| tika | correct, right |
| tikanga | protocol |
| tohunga | knowledgeable person, expert |
| tūrangawaewae | place of belonging through whakapapa, kinship, where one has a right to stand |
| waka | canoe |
| whakapapa | genealogical ties |
| whakawhanaunga | to establish, build relationships |
| whakawhanaungatanga | process of establishing, building relationships |
| whānau | family |
| whānau whānui | extended family |
| whanaunga | relations, relatives |
| whanaungatanga | relationships |
| whare wānanga | higher houses of learning |

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