Place attachment of Ngāi Te Ahi to Hairini Marae

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Abstract: Twelve members of Ngāi Te Ahi, a hapū from Tauranga, were interviewed to explore how they talk about their place attachment to Hairini Marae. This was organized around five key dimensions of place attachment taken from the literature—continuity, distinctiveness, symbolism, attachment and familiarity. We found that in discussing all dimensions, place attachment was equally about social and cultural relationships, history, and socialization. Place attachment for groups such as Māori is complex because it encompasses all social relationships past and present. The implication for those working with Māori is to take seriously the wider connotations of place when talking to Māori about marae, traditional homelands, and their land.

Keywords: Hairini, Māori, Ngāi Te Ahi, place attachment; sense of community

Introduction

The relationships of Māori to the land and the wider environment are increasingly regarded as an essential prerequisite to psychological wellbeing (Durie, 2001; Fullilove, 1996; Kearns, 1991; Low & Altman, 1992). The values that Māori hold in relation to land are complex and are sometimes talked about as the nourishment of spirit, history and identity. The wellbeing of the environment and the people is believed to be indivisible and enduring, and social and cultural identity is inextricably infused into the land through waiata, whakapapa, whaikōrero, and narratives.

When we look to the related academic literature on the associations between people and place, stability and wellbeing have been inconsistently explored depending on the discipline and the methodology (geography, psychology, anthropology, sociology, architecture). People-place relations have been subsumed under a plethora of abstract academic classifications: rootedness (Hummon, 1992), topophilia (Tuan, 1974), sense of place (Hay, 1998; Relph, 1978), psychology of place (Canter, 1977; Fullilove, 1996), place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992), and place identity (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Korpela, 1989; Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983). Most of these literatures have also been concerned with attachment to place in western societies and 'cultures', usually involving neighbourhoods or regions within western cities, and westerners' sense of identity within such regions. Putting the place attachment literatures and the more intricate discourses around Māori connections to the environment together seems difficult.

The aim of this research was to explore Māori discourses of their connections to traditional lands within a framework derived from the more western concepts of place attachment, to see how they gel. Māori belonging to a particular marae were asked to talk around five key concepts that came from a common framework for place attachment. The aim of this research was to find out more about attachment to place for Māori from Hairini Marae. Five dimensions of place attachment from the literature were used as a starting point but interviews explored other themes. From this we hoped to get a more complex understanding of the relations between Māori and their land and how this is talked about by some Māori.

Five Dimensions of Place Attachment

Given that place attachment involves social relationships, traditions, and history, it is no wonder that defining it has been difficult (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Within the scope of the many definitions and concepts of place attachment, there are some themes that are repeatedly discussed and which form the basis of the research here into the analysis of place in relation to Māori. These five dimensions were used to organize this study: continuity, distinctiveness, attachment, symbolism, and familiarity.

A number of authors use *continuity* to highlight place attachment, through place of birth, length of residence, life stages, important life events or frequency of visits (Breakwell, 1986; Gustafson, 2001; Lalli, 1992; Pellow, 1992; Scott & Kearns, 2000; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). The situational aspects of continuity include Gustafson's (2001) place-bound social relations and the historical, traditional and cultural aspects of the locality. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) extended the concept of continuity by describing two distinct relationships that focus on the maintenance and development of continuity: place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity. In using the term place-referent continuity, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) have conceptualized the environment as a reference or landmark for experiences and actions of the past with emotional significance. This is a theme reiterated by numerous authors, such as Korpela (1989) and Lalli (1992), and also Stephens (2002) who specifically refer to place as a container of memory. Cooper Marcus (1992) also connects continuity, identity and wellbeing to the "anchoring [of] ourselves to times, people, and places in our personal past" (p. 88).

The importance of *distinctiveness* in place attachment suggests that people value being different or unique from others (Breakwell, 1986), and will distinguish themselves in a way that is positively valued (Gustafson, 2001; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Whereas Twigger-Ross and Uzzell refer to distinctiveness as a way of using places to affirm or define identity, Gustafson uses distinctiveness to define a territorial unit in terms of physical boundaries. In Feldman's (1990) research into settlement identity, participants discriminated between city and suburban settlements. Distinctiveness in general then involves the attributes and qualities of a place and the people of that place, the way people define the type of place it is and their relationship to it, and the evaluation of similarities and differences to other places and people of those other places.

Attachment to place parallels attachment to people in that maintaining contact is necessary to sustain the emotions and behaviours that are the source of protection and satisfaction (Fullilove, 1996; Hay, 1998; Lalli, 1992). Fullilove (1996) also describes attachment as a "*mutual caretaking bond between a person and a beloved place*" (p. 1516). A number of authors have echoed similar sentiments (Stephens, 2002; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). Stokols and Shumaker (1981) also emphasized a transactional perspective of place, where the influence between people and places is reciprocal, and Hummon (1992) perceives places to be dual in nature, involving both "an interpretive perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment" (p. 262).

For *symbolism*, Low (1992) proposed a typology of place attachment that incorporated six kinds of symbolic linkage between people and land: genealogical linkage to the land; linkage through loss of land or destruction of community; economic linkage to land through ownership, inheritance and politics; cosmological linkage through religious, spiritual, or mythological relationship; linkage through both religious and secular pilgrimage and celebratory cultural events; and narrative linkage through storytelling and place naming.

Familiarity from place attachment is about security, comfort, safety and access to resources that enable the attainment of all these things. Familiarity with place provides security, stability and predictability. Fullilove (1996) maintains that intimate knowledge of the environment is essential for survival as such knowledge allows individuals to conduct their lives in safety and comfort.

Māori and the Dimensions of Place Attachment

Most of these dimensions were developed in research with westerners living primarily in cities or small towns, although some are immediately relevant to Māori. For Symbolism, for example, Walker (1989b) and Neich (1993) also emphasized the symbolic nature of marae in reference to whakapapa, cosmology and whaikōrero, and the links with genealogy are clear for Māori. For Familiarity, as another example, Durie (2001) claimed that a secure identity for Māori demands more than a superficial knowledge of tribal tradition that it depends on easy access to the Māori world-especially Māori language, the extended family network and customary land. Familiarity with tikanga, kawa, whakapapa, and more local and intimate knowledge of stories and people also assists in feeling secure and comfortable in a place.

For other dimensions, the relevance to Māori is less clear. The research surrounding *Continuity*, for example, has been directed just at the participant's emotional and physical continuity, and questions of multi-generational continuity are not often broached in research. With Māori we might expect discourses of continuity for many generations. We also do not know how much of the Māori discourses around place involve comparisons to other places, or Pākehā places in particular, following from the *Distinctiveness* category.

The aim of this research, therefore, was to find out more about attachment to place for Māori, and to their marae in particular. The five dimensions of place attachment were used as the starting point and to obtain a comparison to other studies, but the interviews explored other themes. From this we hoped to get a more complex understanding of the relations between Māori and their land and how this is talked about by some Māori, and how the five dimensions might be broadened to include indigenous perspectives. To do this, participants belonging to the Hairini Marae were interviewed to talk about and expand upon the five dimensions of place attachment commonly discussed in non-indigenous literatures. Some background on this Marae is therefore necessary.

Brief history of Ngāi Te Ahi and Hairini Marae

Hairini is situated in the city of Tauranga, which means an 'anchorage, resting place or fishing ground' (Stokes, 1978, 1980). Continuously inhabited for well over seven centuries, the Tauranga district is one the oldest settled areas in New Zealand (Stokes, 1977). With a population of 90,906, the population growth rate for the Tauranga District since the 1991 census is greater than for New Zealand as a whole (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Tauranga is also a city known for its aged population, with people aged 65 and over making up 17.2% (15,666) of the population, and Māori 16.1% (14,112) of the population in Tauranga (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

Although strictly speaking 'marae' refers to the marae ātea, the area in front of the wharenui, this study will assume the more relaxed usage of the term to include the entire complex of Hairini Marae. The marae itself comprises of Ranginui (the wharenui), Urutomo (the dining hall), the old dining hall (formerly Urutomo and commonly known as the clubrooms), the kōhanga reo, the paetapu shelter, the ablution block, and a mattress room. Sometime in the 1940s the wharenui at

Hairini, 'Ranginui a Tamātea' was destroyed by fire (Reweti, 2000). For the next 20 odd years Ngāi Te Ahi, supported by other hapū, embarked on a labour of love, collectively fundraising, carving, creating tukutuku and milling timber. Slowly but surely a new whare was built. Ranginui was opened on March, 8, 1965. Finally, Urutomo, named after the wife of Ranginui, was opened on April 3, 1931 but condemned 40 years later by council health inspectors. The new Urutomo was opened on August 7, 1978 (Reweti, 2000).

Hairini Marae itself is situated in an area originally called Ohau, although it is believed that the name Hairini is a transliteration of the biblical city of Cyrene, a name bestowed by a missionary (Reweti, 2000). Part of a two-hectare marae reserve, Hairini overlooks the Tauranga harbour with an enviable view that extends towards Mauao (Mount Maunganui). Ngāi Te Ahi is a hapū of Ngāti Ranginui from Tauranga, from which approximately 2000 people claim descent (Reweti, 2000).

Method

Participants
The research was presented at a Ngāi Te Ahi hapū hui, outlining to members the intentions, utility and dissemination of the finished research as well as the contribution being asked for from those who chose to participate. In this way, participation was enlisted by using internal networks: word of mouth, conversation at social events, and the internet.

Twelve interviews were conducted either face-to-face or web-based for which questions were emailed to participants who then made email responses. The web-based interviews were designed as a more intensive type of survey, so while less interactive than interviews in person, they were still rich with information as participants were asked to provide examples and elaborations with their responses. Participants were asked beforehand to indicate a preference for interview style (in person, via telephone or via the internet). The interviews conducted in person ranged from 1-2 hours. At the time of the interview, respondents were residing in Tauranga (6), Wellington (3), Auckland (1), Paraparaumu (1), and Sydney, Australia (1).

Interview Schedule
The interviews focused on the five dimensions under enquiry—continuity, distinctiveness, symbolism, attachment and familiarity—but asked for further themes and ideas. The schedule consisted of 16 questions, with three or four per dimension to draw out the main ideas.

Six questions focussed on *Continuity* and investigated the part that Hairini has played in their lives in childhood, at present and the part they expected Hairini to play in their futures. Plans to move away from Hairini, or to move closer to Hairini at any time, the differences in the way Hairini served the different generations, and difficulties or the ease with which participants moved back into marae life after being away were also asked about. The *Distinctiveness* dimension was covered with three questions that asked participants to distinguish between Hairini and other places (other places were not specified, but rather other places in general), what this difference means to participants, and the particular times participants felt it would be important to identify as belonging to Hairini. *Attachment* (two questions) covered the importance of a connection to Hairini and how this connection was maintained. Three questions looked at *Symbolism*. Participants were asked about the things that came to mind when they thought of Hairini, what Hairini means to participants, and whether they felt Hairini reflected in any way the person they are. *Familiarity* was ascertained by asking two questions about how familiar Hairini is to participants and whether they were comfortable at Hairini in ways they could not be

comfortable anywhere else. Finally, two questions allowed participants an opportunity to gather information from the researcher and to ask their own questions.

Results

Continuity
To explore the notion of continuity, we asked participants six questions focusing on past, present and future expectations of the role Hairini played in their lives. We were interested in to discovering how people's relationships with Hairini developed over time. Childhood, the past, obligation and maintenance, change, the future, reconnection and a source of pride were themes that emerged.

Childhood. Two participants reported having very little to do with Hairini during their childhood. One participant lived and grew up closer to another marae, while the second grew up in a different city. For most participants Hairini was a place to catch up with relations and visit the whānau that lived in the vicinity of Hairini, *"...as a marae it drew us there because of all the people who lived around there"*.

One participant attended the kōhanga reo at Hairini while others remember the marae ātea as a great playground; specifically for its bullrush playing capacity (bullrush is a game). Various gatherings such as tangi and Christmas parties were another feature of childhood, and as such, helping out was a requirement. Hairini is also a place where even as children, the participants knew where they fitted in:

> *As a child Hairini was a part of who I was, a place for meeting whānau and a place that you identified with by history and whakapapa. A definite aspect of grounding and affirmation to build who you were and what life was about when you grew up in Tauranga with all its associated kawa and tikanga...At the marae there was always a place for you, no matter what.*

Not all participants remembered Hairini fondly:

> *Growing up I didn't have very good memories at all because of the people, although I had few good mates there, but I more or less stayed away.*

The past. For a number of participants Hairini was significant for more than just childhood memories, especially when whānau has passed away. The following are examples of many such comments participants made to illustrate the significance of Hairini, both the people, past and present, and the place.

> *It is one of my Tūrangawaewae...my mothers photo is in the corner of the wharenui...it's where I feel as one with the universe*

> *Hairini is my mainstay at the moment because of the people who are there who continue to hold hui up there. Plus loosing my kuia and koroua in the past 2 years have meant an even deeper connection to Hairini – both tangi were up there, so I suppose important people like them add to the value you place on something like Hairini.*

Some participants had little or nothing to do with Hairini while they were growing up but felt connected to Hairini because it was a special place to people who were important in their lives.

> *I always go back to my grandparents. I have learned that Hairini is an important place to my whānau- it represents their tūrangawaewae, their connection to the land and the hapū. Both my grandparents passed away recently and their tangi were held at Hairini and so for me Hairini will always be a place of special significance.*

Other participants recalled the social atmosphere of the old wharekai, building the new wharekai, *"remembering how Hairini looked 40 years ago,"* and the fact that the wharenui had burnt down and *"it took 21 years to rebuild."*

Obligation and maintenance. Two participants reported feeling a responsibility to play a role where Hairini is concerned,

> *I must continue to make a concerted effort to play my part in keeping our marae alive for future generations.*

> *I know I have to be there, or if I can't be there I should be there…Everybody has their different roles but I don't think everyone realizes how hard the work is.*

One participant, while already contributing significantly to programmes run from the marae, felt that they wanted to do more. They did not see their marae activities as overwhelming and told us that *"you do get a break, it's not your whole life."* In contrast, another felt that with family and a fulltime job, devoting time to the marae was not always easy.

Three participants returned to the Tauranga area to visit whānau and to maintain links with various people, offering support at Hairini where they could such as orating at tangihanga and pōwhiri. One participant commented that Hairini is *"a definite place of reconnection."*

Four participants told us that although they did not live close to Hairini (one resides in Australia and three outside of Tauranga), Hairini continued to be an important place to them, however it was usually for whānau occasions (hui, tangi or birthdays) that they would go back now and these would be attended depending on other priorities.

One participant felt that they played a role in maintaining the marae both culturally and physically:

> *Physically being the upkeep and maintenance of the marae and culturally being that I want to learn and maintain Ngāi Te Ahitanga. I want to be with what ever kaumātua are still here and I want to be able to learn our kawa and tikanga proper. I want to be able to pass this on to my mokopuna and whānau katoa.*

Change. In discussing continuity, the impact of change was evident. Participants spoke of their progressive roles at Hairini as they grew older and the expectation for certain people to take on particular tasks.

As a child all I remember of the place is kōhanga reo and playing with lots of cousins, and as I got older I was going to tangi and doing dishes, older again it was learning about the history and finding your roots, and no doubt it will change again.

I think as you get older your role on the marae becomes clearer and it might be that you are expected to undertake specific duties on the marae- for example, as the kaikaranga, kaikōrero or kaimahi.

Three participants also commented on how priorities have changed and the impact on the way things are carried out at the marae. Whereas marae used to be about community and helping out, life has become more individualistic and pressured by outside influences.

It is not the functions on the marae that have changed but rather the influence of Pākehā ways that have changed the way the generations do and see things. Instead of coming to the marae to help out, things like lifestyles have changed the way people think i.e. busy playing sports, or work commitments but mostly just can't be bothered.

At one time if there was a tangi at one marae and there happened to be a social at another, the social would be cancelled. Now there'd be someone dead here and a social happening there, although now days if you cancel a social you'd lose a lot of money, things like that have changed.

Other things influenced social involvement at marae in particular the way the marae is run according to a business plan.

A few years ago there was the marae committee and it was simple. You had your marae hui, you all found out what was going on and how much you had in the bank. It was simple, but now we have this hapū runanga and of course to me it's all Pākehāfied- it's a business plan now.

Other changes were noted. One participant recalled a time when parenting was a collective responsibility now it is only expected of the parents. Due to lifestyle changes and the movement of young people away from Hairini some participants deliberated on how to encourage them back to Hairini to fulfil roles such as ringawera, kaiāwhina, kaikōrero and kaikaranga, which are integral to the survival of the marae and the concept of Ngāi Te Ahitanga.

The future. All participants expressed a desire for Hairini to play some part in their lives in the future. One participant who currently resides some distance from Tauranga articulated the wish to move back to live in the area before retirement, while another felt that distance was not an issue, *"it doesn't matter whether Hairini is 2 miles down the road or 300 miles... it will never change for me in terms of my life experiences…they will never diminish."* Another participant felt that the *"extent my mother chooses to associate with Hairini, the marae will always be important to me and my whānau."* All other participants were consistent in their expectation that Hairini would be there for them and their children to use, a place they can take their kids to and be comfortable in, whether they were raised there or not. *"I hope that my children and their children and their children will have the link to the past that I have here,"* and *"I'd like to move back to Tauranga at some stage for my tamariki to be able to grow up in their own rohe and learn our tikanga and kawa."*

Participants also mentioned that Hairini was a place of reconnection with known whānau, a good place to be introduced to unfamiliar whānau, and an environment where people could learn the kawa of the rohe. Most emphatically expressed was that in feeling comfortable at Hairini, there would always be a place where they and their children belonged.

> *Knowing that it's there to use. Your whānaungatanga and your family- it's a place where you can come back and meet all your extended family, and it's a time when you can introduce your children and your grandchildren to that part of your family who don't even know they're related, and getting to know who's who in your family. That's the biggest thing about going to the marae for me.*

> *I want my family to live the marae, to have no inhibitions about going to the marae. I want my family to feel comfortable and at home there.*

Reconnection. All participants apart from one found it easy to reconnect after spending time away from Hairini as they had kept in touch with whānau, or had never been away from Hairini. Two participants spoke of their observations of others, of how they knew people who felt whakamaa about coming back, and those who had been away, or had never been away but did not have any link to the place.

> *Can only answer from observation of others because I have never been away. Although I think this question could even apply to those who have always lived here but have not taken a fully active part in Marae life. From those who have lived away, I would say the reconnection may be difficult if the whānau here have stopped or don't come to the Marae. For those who have stopped, it is probably just as difficult to return because they have not kept the link. Some probably find it difficult to slot Marae life into their normal life routines.*

One participant spoke of how she had been away for a considerable amount of time and while coming home was difficult, marae life was easy to adjust to:

> *I was away (overseas) for 17 years. I found it hard in my everyday life. Everything was faster, shopping was different. I had to adjust to the accent of NZers and Māori. One thing I was able to do really quickly was to get back into the life at the marae. That was because when I came home my parents needed someone to drive them around, including to the marae. Mind you as children we'd always gone to the marae, so it was a simple thing to get back into, like something lying dormant inside.*

One participant who resides in Wellington told us that they found it difficult to reconnect at Hairini as they *"always have to renew acquaintances and tread carefully around the views of those who live there, but after a while the comfort zone rises."*

Source of pride. For other participants Hairini is a deeply personal place that instils pride over the course of a lifetime:

> *I have a deep sense of pride in being Māori and contribute this to the environment in which I was raised and includes my participation in marae life from childhood through to adulthood.*

> *It reflects my Ngāi Te Ahitanga and therefore who I am and what I have become and the place I am making for myself and my family in this world.*

Distinctiveness

Three questions explored this dimension from which the following themes were apparent: comfort, belonging and people.

Comfort. For three participants in particular emotional comfort was an important factor in distinguishing Hairini from other places. *"It's a wonderful safe zone." "Hairini is where I'm from; it's where I feel comfortable."* Knowing the area and the people seemed to contribute to feeling comfortable at Hairini as well as participating in marae life.

> *For me it's (Hairini) different because of my feelings towards Hairini. I probably feel the most comfortable at Hairini because I spend more time there than at other marae…which means that I will continue to participate predominantly at this marae than other marae.*

Belonging. Here belonging is seen as a unique, exclusive connection to Hairini. Eight participants reiterated the importance of belonging to Hairini. *"There's a belonging." "It's somewhere I really belong and love."* Three participants tied their sense of belonging to their ancestry:

> *"I've got my house but Hairini is my home - where I belong and a connection to my ancestors," "It's where I grew up, physically and spiritually," "no one can take away my sense of belonging with my tipuna before me."*

Another participant felt that familiarity and connection with Hairini gave them some greater status, *"other places I'm just a visitor or a tourist because I'm not familiar to that place."* Other participants commented along a similar vein:

> *Hairini is home, I grew up here. Our whānau are also from Te Kuiti where we also have land holdings. However, we have never lived on the land and would not call Te Kuiti home. Our ahi ka i.e. 'occupation of the land' has not been initiated. Hence the difference is that we do not have any history with the land or the people.*

> *The difference is I know Hairini is my identity. I know where I can stand without interference.*

> *My dad was born there (not Hairini specific), married and buried there as with other whānau members - and I was born and married there, probably will be buried there. It's like the umbilical cord remains attached.*

Hairini is also described in comparative terms. Belonging to Hairini is different as *"other places I'm just a visitor or tourist because I'm unfamiliar to that place," "what makes it special compared to other places is that its part of me, it's my place."* Hairini is also different compared to other marae:

> *Some marae do not enjoy the same picturesque location (the view of the maunga and the moana), considerable space or the large numbers of whānau that affiliate to the marae… Hairini is such an efficient facility located in superb surroundings with good people.*

People. The use of this theme describes the way participants use Hairini as a relational tool. One participant commented that as part of their every day job there was an expectation that they share their whakapapa with others when consulting with the Māori community. Another participant felt that whenever they met new people or when asked where they were from it was a particular time when they would identify themselves as belonging to Hairini as people usually knew someone from that area and it *"helps you to become more familiar with people and more connected to others as well as your own."* In this way participants are also allowing others to become familiar with them and place them within a Māori sphere as well as within a Ngāi Te Ahi context.

Attachment

All participants reported that a connection to Hairini was important, with most commenting on the following themes: belonging, connection and participation.

Belonging. Once again belonging was a robust theme, although in this context it is more about a connection to Hairini the place, and is more emotive, than in a later section (under Symbolism) where 'reasons' for belonging were more emphasised. Of Hairini, two participants said

> *…it gives one his/her sense of belonging…it is knowing where I come from*

> *…as a people you know we all belong to the same place- we're all Ngāi Te Ahi and I think that's where the connection is.*

The emphasis in these comments is on the comfort and security derived from belonging.

Connection/Link. This theme overlaps strongly with continuity. Here a connection to both the marae and people is articulated as something that has to be preserved and passed on. For many participants, Hairini was a place that connected them to whānau who had recently passed away, or to a long line of ancestors. It was a connection they wanted to maintain for their children.

> *It is my connection to mother's and my people. It is knowing where I come from and to be able to tell my children and their children where we come from.*

> *There are actually tūpuna up there from Mataatua and Takitimu.*

> *For me it's about maintaining a connection to my grandparents and my whānau.*

It is through relatedness to people that a connection with the marae and the land becomes infinitely important.

> *The connection is integral to what makes us a hapū, and what keeps us together. The marae is alive because of the people who continue to look after it and the people who keep going back to it. You cannot distinguish the people from the place. It's part of the same sentence in whakapapa...you say who you are (that reflects your whānau), and your people connections, then you say where you're from (that reflects exactly which part of that whānau you are from, especially now when we are living all over the place and different whānau have settled elsewhere).*

> *...immeasurable connection to Ngāi Te Ahi and Hairini. The place/whenua identifies ahi ka 'occupation' of the land. Our tipuna are laid to rest in Ngāi Te Ahi urupā and this strengthens our relationship to the land. The whakapapa of our tīpuna, Tamahika, Ngaruinga, Pomare, Te Aongahoro, Mokohiti, Titihuia, Tutauanui, Pehiriri etc provide the mana whenua from which we can stake a claim to the land.*

In the above comments, obligation, responsibility and direct connectedness are evident. As well, for those involved the above lineage provides tangible proof through ancestry of a personal, meaningful connection to Hairini. Two participants reported that their connection, due to distance or infrequent visits, seemed more emotional than tangible, although Hairini was still important to them*, "as it is part of my being,"* and *"it's the place where family meet which will always be important to me."*

Participation. It is assumed that attachment to place requires contact with that place to sustain the satisfaction and protection associated with attachment affords. In this study, participants maintained their attachment in two ways; practically and therefore physically (being there in person), and socially which could be done from a distance.

Five participants felt their connection was maintained by through participation in the administrative/functional side of marae life, that is, by attending wānanga, representing Ngāi Te Ahi at various raupatu, iwi or Tauranga Moana hui, or simply providing the labour (ringawera), without which the marae would not function.

Seven participants maintained a connection to Hairini by keeping in touch with whānau, attending occasions such as birthdays or tangi held at the marae, other events held locally such as kapahaka, or just going over to see what was going on. One participant reported using other media but did not specify what this media may be. A number of participants also commented that due to distance being at the marae was often difficult. The comment was made that *"people know who you are no matter how long you have been away...your family name is your passport."*

Symbolism

To explore the dimension of symbolism with participants, three questions were asked: what Hairini meant to participants, the things that came to mind when participants thought of Hairini, and whether participants thought Hairini reflected in some way the person they were. Responses to these questions are presented under the following themes found: people, feelings, the physical environment, the social environment, belonging and values.

People. The theme of 'people' encompassed the variety of ways in which Hairini symbolised various activities, like catching up with relations, talking about whakapapa and ancestry, as well as memories of the people that participants associated with Hairini. In discussing Hairini it was difficult for participants to distinguish between people and place as each of these aspects bought about connotations or memories of the other.

When asked "When you think of Hairini what things come to mind?" all participants mentioned people. Specific aunties, uncles, koroua, kuia, parents or grandparents were named as well as 'whānau' in general. Five participants related specific memories of the people they mentioned, such as the kaumātua with his tokotoko whom children used to be scared of and the aunty that yelled a lot, while others listed specific people that came to mind and their relationships to those

people, or used terms such as family, people, tūpuna or whānau in place of names. Three participants mentioned people who had always been around Hairini but who had passed on.

Feelings. The emotive content of some responses was overtly evident suggesting that Hairini for some participants was a place that triggered emotive feelings, reflections and thoughts- *"I love sitting in Ranginui. It is so beautiful and warm and I am at home here."* For another participant, Hairini bought about memories of *"being happy, sad, serious, proud."* Other responses were equally evocative:

> *My memories are always of the marae and they are wonderful memories full of happiness.*

> *...a place where I grew up so it will always hold a special place in my heart.*

The physical environment. This theme deals with references to buildings, the vista and environment, and memories to do with the physical 'space' that Hairini occupies, and what this signifies for participants. The physical buildings and the different functions they served were described or recollected by a number of participants, particularly the old wharekai Urutomo, condemned in the 1970s. Two participants referred to the spectacular views afforded by the marae across the Tauranga harbour out toward Mauao. Although only cited by one participant in the interviews, the dividing up of the area of Hairini was an issue also raised as motorways have made it more difficult to access the urupā and created less of a family feeling about the area, *"It's noisy, it's crowded because of all the development going on. The traffic is faster. It's becoming a busy urban area"*.

The social environment. Cultural expectations, personal responsibilities, social occasions and politics comprise part of the social environment of Hairini. Weddings, birthdays, raupatu hui or tangihanga were mentioned by five participants. While childhood itself is not an event, the process of growing up and specific childhood memories were reflected on by five participants, *"remembering how Hairini looked 40 years ago," "where we used to play," "growing up, kōhanga reo," "the old wharekai Urutomo," "my nanas tangi...I was 6"* and *"bull rush on the marae ātea."* Childhood featured greatly in responses and for one participant Hairini was *"one of my special places for childhood memories."*

Two participants spoke of the effect and impact upon their lives of events at Hairini .

> *Our whānau have celebrated and shared weddings, birthdays, tangihanga, visits by distinguished visitors etc at the marae and left imprints of happiness, sorrow, pride and all those other emotions that contribute to a healthy wellbeing.*

> *...the place stirs memories of whānau, hui, whānau passed on, and how those events helped form an essential part of me that remains with me today.*

For other participants, obligation and responsibility was also part of the environment:
> *It means having to go and cook for others and clean up after others*

> *I think of the marae now as a meeting place where I have to be if something's going on...*

One participant also commented on the effectiveness of Hairini as political forum, where issues raised *"are reflective of the hapū/whānau base of Ngāi Te Ahi. These views have been debated in a hapū forum."*

Belonging. This theme reflects the way participants place themselves within a Māori conceptual universe, in this instance as related to Ngāi Te Ahi. Using concepts such as tūrangawaewae as a place of belonging, participants described how they positioned themselves in this world, how they are linked to the past and the future, and to other people and to Hairini, in all, creating a sense of belonging.

Eight participants used the terms *"tūrangawaewae", "sense of belonging"* and *"home"* to describe what Hairini meant to them (for example, *"health, my home, where I come from"*). In mentioning 'tūrangawaewae' participants also tried to explain what this concept meant to them, *"it is another home for me," "it is my foothold on where I am from and where I belong."* Tūrangawaewae refers not only to the physicality of 'home' but also to the genealogical link to whānau, *"our wahi noho, our ancestral link to our tūpuna," "it's not just part of my history, but the history of my whole whānau and it will be my whakapapa for my kids and the next generations to come."*

The connection to home and the link that Hairini provides for each generation is eloquently commented on below.

> The Hairini marae represents the centre of the universe for Ngāi Te Ahi. The wharenui Ranginui provides a portal to the past; whakapapa connections to the whole of Māoridom and the world. In respecting this it also provides a basis to build a future as there are many lessons contained in the whare.

Values. When asked "Does Hairini reflect in some way the person you are?" nine participants answered positively, and six of these referred to the specific cultural values and responsibilities instilled in them because of their time spent at Hairini.

> Simple things like removing shoes before entering a house, not sitting on tables or putting your feet on them, [or] stepping over people and respecting your elders are things I learnt there and still do now.

The following is reflective of how strongly these values are felt.

> My Kaupapa, my very essence is based on strong Māori values. Aroha, pono, tika, manaki, whakawhānaungatanga. This might sound stupid but those are not just words, they are ways of being.

Three participants, however, did not feel that Hairini influenced them to this extent. Two participants reported that the person they are today is more a reflection of the parenting they received and their family, *"Hairini didn't make me as a person, my family did that"* and *"it was more the family that helped shape me- parents and all the cousins."* A third participant had a slightly different perspective.

> While I grew up in and around the marae during my childhood years, my teenage years were spent outside the district. During my teenage years, I can't recall that I missed being away from the marae. When I'd hear about

tangihanga etc. back here, I'd make some excuse not to come back. I don't think however that this is a reflection on the person that I am.

Familiarity

Two questions explored familiarity and comfort with the following themes emerging: comfort and belonging.

Comfort. While most participants felt they could be more comfortable at Hairini than other places, there were particular reasons for this. One participant felt she could be very honest in expressing herself at Hairini:

> *Yes. I feel comfortable in expressing how I really feel even though my thoughts may not be shared by others. Anywhere else I would certainly think twice about opening my mouth or to be careful about what I say. For instance, I think I may have criticized (although constructive) people older (kaumātua) than me at a recent wānanga, something I would never do anywhere else.*

Other participants felt they could be comfortable anywhere but there was something different about Hairini, "*I walk tall and proud at Hairini. I do at other places too but not to the degree of Hairini," "I'm comfortable anywhere, only difference is I know where my tūrangawaewae is.*" Another participant felt that this difference was due to the fact that you know you have family around, there is security in knowing that you are related to everyone you see around you, while another participant felt that being comfortable at Hairini made it easier to be comfortable at other places too.

However, there was one participant who felt dissimilarly: "*Often I feel my infrequent visits make me uncomfortable and I purposely avoid being involved in any decisions that impact locally on Hairini*".

Belonging. Once again a sense of belonging was a feature of many responses within most of the dimensions. In this sense, belonging is as permanent as the landscape. It defines who participants are and who they are not: "*I belong and I am part of the land here. I (my whānau included) hold ahi ka as a 'haukainga' of Ngāi Te Ahi. I am not a foreigner in Tauranga Moana*".

Belonging and being familiar with the people and the place of Hairini instils comfort and confidence. There is also an absence of fear in making mistakes.

> *Most definitely and the reason for this is that I know who I am, where I belong and what my role is. I can comfortably walk alongside our kaumātua knowing that if I do something wrong, they'll tell me so.*

Discussion and Conclusions

Although these interviews started with the five dimensions from the literature, many new themes and connections arose. Of particular interest for the idea of place attachment applied to Māori, in these cases it is very clear that place is a social concept as much as a physical one. Some themes about the environment and surroundings were mentioned, but much more was focused on the people, the socialisation and the social relationships as being part of what is their attachment.

The social dimension of place was presented above under the labels of belonging, people, the social environment, and comfort.

What is also clear are the complex relationships between all these factors, how they link and connect to each other. This was especially apparent when discussing what they thought about when they thought of Hairini and there was a wealth of emotion terms linked to the physical and social surroundings. This was also clear in the memories and continuity of Hairini being predominantly a social phenomena, that Hairini was a marker of memory for Ngāi Te Ahi, with reference to the past and childhood, recollections of play, visiting, remembering the families who lived in the area, grandparents who had passed away, parents who had passed, the wharenui burning down, the old wharekai, and the drawing of people to the marae because of those who lived around there.

Hairini as a place is not only imbued with meaning, it is a standing, living testament to those of the past and present and a symbol for the future. In whakapapa, in dialogue and in thought, your connections are a reflection of who you are, where you come from, who you are related to, the mountain and river you associate with, the lands you can stake claim to and a pretty good indication of where you will be buried. People and places are inter-twined at Hairini as the entire complex is a reference to ancestors of long ago, photos hang in the wharenui of those both recently and long departed, and ever present is the knowledge, comfort and security of belonging within this sphere. These findings are analogous with the literature presented throughout (Durie, 1987; Fullilove, 1996; Hummon, 1992; Ross, 1991; Stephens, 2002; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Welch & Riley, 2001).

These findings also emphasize the importance of Hairini marae beyond the physical space it occupies. Hairini is 'used' by Ngāi Te Ahi to represent their connection to each other, to their ancestors, to other places of spiritual and emotional significance, and as a way to represent themselves to others. The significance of Hairini was by no means reduced by distance or by infrequent contact. In fact, to sustain their belonging and connectedness required minimal effort on the part of participants as their belonging to Hairini is intricately embedded into their histories and social environment. Personal responsibilities to whānau and collective responsibilities as tāngata whenua of ahi kaa occupation, while at times were viewed as obligatory, were also perceived to be positive by participants in light of the permanence of their bond with Hairini. Such responsibilities to Hairini are passed to succeeding generations with the expectation of continuity and protection.

For psychologists working with Māori or alongside Māori, the signs of attachment to traditional lands, even when living as far away as Sydney, are complex sets of practices, thoughts and relationships, not any simply determined liking for a place. Talking about oneself and the people who are close involves entwining the place with the people, with childhood memories and adult experiences of tangi and hui. Most saw the changes occurring, but the majority saw the continuity and the future, and placed their talk usually within the context of children and future generations—a theme that also went through discussions of most of the five dimensions.

Finally, the results of this study also emphasize the problems of Māori out-migrating for education and employment (Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekotuku, 2004). While for all participants the values that have been instilled at the marae are very much alive, there is a danger that the practical requirements of running a marae cannot be met, because the presence of people in numbers (ringawera and kaiāwhina) and the ability and knowledge of others (kaikōrero and kaikaranga) are in short supply.

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