

“What I reckon is, is that like the love you give to your kids they’ll give to someone else and so on and so on”: Whanaungatanga and mātauranga Māori in practice

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Mātauranga Māori (knowledge and wisdom pertaining to Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand) has long been suppressed and invalidated in psychological paradigms, and the practice of whanaungatanga (relationships, connection, and practices among a family collective) undermined in colonising practice. Utilising a mana wāhine methodology (an approach that privileges Māori women’s perspectives and analyses) and semi-structured interviews with 43 participants, we explore contemporary mātauranga Māori pertaining to whānau (extended family) practices. Inter-related yet conceptually distinct aspects of whanaungatanga were elucidated from participant accounts: Diverse and rich networks; children as integral to everyday lives; aroha (love), tiakitanga (guardianship), wairua (capacity for spirituality); and whānau support. Women (and men) participants not deemed ‘experts’ in mātauranga Māori described a lived set of practices pertaining to raising children in a down to earth, pragmatic and humorous manner.

Key words: Māori, Indigenous psychologies, mātauranga Māori, whanaungatanga, mana wāhine

Mātauranga Māori (education, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill pertaining to Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand) has long been suppressed and invalidated in psychological theories and practice, at one stage, legally prohibited through the Tohunga Suppression Act, in 1907 (Cunningham & Stanley, 2003). From colonisation through to contemporary times, an assumed universality of Anglo-European (and American) notions of psychology, and reification of these culturally-bound ways of knowing as ‘rational’ and ‘objective’ has created new barriers to validating mātauranga Māori within psychological theory and practice (Levy, 2016). However, Indigenous psychology initiatives within New Zealand *have* taken up the task of developing locally derived psychological understandings (Nikora, 2007), creating unique solutions to promote wellbeing among Māori (Waitoki, 2016), and advance Māori development (Nikora, 2007). New Zealand’s developments both align with and lead global Indigenous psychology developments (see Allwood & Berry, 2006; Dudgeon, 2017; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

Exploring how mātauranga Māori may be enacted within psychological theories and practices, first requires some articulation of how Māori approaches to knowledge are epistemologically different from Anglo-European approaches. Mātauranga Māori encompasses “theories, practices, protocols for being in the world” that are situated within relationships, bound to people and places, and aligned with Māori aspirations (L. Smith, Puke, & Temara, 2016, p. 2). Mātauranga Māori may, for instance, be identified within analyses of te reo Māori (Māori language), visible in pūrākau (personal and cultural narratives) (Lee, 2009), ceremonial, and everyday practices and skills (L. Smith et al., 2016). Mātauranga Māori not only resides among those considered experts in European and American contexts, but among community

elders, artists, and healers – those with practical experience and the values required to teach or administer this knowledge (L. Smith et al., 2016). Instantiations of mātauranga Māori are diverse, nuanced and localised to particular whānau, hapū (sub tribe, wider extended family) and iwi (tribe), within a particular historical social and generational context, dynamically infused with surrounding cultural influence.

In this article, we explore mātauranga Māori among contemporary Māori in everyday domestic settings. We focus on the domain of child rearing and reproduction, and explicitly explore practices of whanaungatanga (relationships, connection, and practices among a family collective) embedded in whānau (extended family) contexts. This allows us to prioritise *women’s* voices and cultural knowledge. Since early colonial contact, dominant culture has tended to view and represent Māori men as the natural experts in cultural matters (Mikaere, 2010; Simmonds, 2011; L. Smith, 2013). As we will demonstrate, for both men and women, practices of whanaungatanga are vital and live, but reproduction and child rearing are arenas where women’s voices feature particularly strong.

Relational processes are at the heart of whanaungatanga and directly inform the context of childrearing. Te reo Māori, for instance, offers whānau as a homonym for birth, hapū as a homonym for pregnancy and iwi as a homonym for bones, thus metaphorically stitching together reproduction with terms for kinship networks (Mead, 2003). Historically, greater numbers and wider networks signified strength among the collective (Glover & Rousseau, 2007). Whānau formed a protective support network around the parents who, in contrast to the contemporary nuclear family, were not isolated in the day to day activities of raising children (Mikaere, 2011) and gave children exposure to diversity of human relationships

and situations (Pere, 1994). This was crucially underpinned by aroha (affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy) that provided the binding or attachment to the whānau, enabling these processes to occur, and ensuring stability, loyalty, and commitment to one another (Pere, 1994).

Within whanaungatanga, a primary relationship between (birth) mother and child was often significant (Cargo, 2016), but whāngai (to raise another child as your own) by whānau who were *not* the birth parents was also a relatively common practice (Mikaere, 1994). The term whāngai translates to 'nourish', 'feed', 'enrich', culturally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically (Moorfield, 2013). Differing from Anglo-European notions of adoption, these care arrangements were not necessarily permanent, nor were they stigmatised. Instead, the child remained part of the wider whānau. The whāngai process strengthened bonds between relations within a whānau (C. Smith, 2012), relieving stressed relations, and assisting relations who were unable to conceive children (C. & P. Jacobs, personal communication, 11th April 2011; Mikaere, 1994; C. Smith, 2012).

The practice of whanaungatanga was notably undermined by the impacts of warfare, land loss and confiscation characteristic of the early colonising period, reinforced by the imposition of government policies that cohered around an individual subject and restrictive regional planning regulations (Durie, 1997). Many whānau were not left with enough land to sustain them, necessitating movement to urban areas and to nuclear family configurations (Mikaere, 1994; Nikora, Guerin, Rua, & Te Awekotuku, 2004). The process of urban migration progressively shaped whānau-based practices towards a more nuclear model of family in the absence of intensive whānau support systems (Durie, 1985, 2001; Edwards, McCreanor, & Moewaka Barnes, 2007). The cumulative effect of these colonising acts led many Māori into challenging circumstances of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage (Pihama, N/D).

In a cruel twist, most Māori who moved to urban areas experienced racism and were excluded from routine aspects of Pākehā cultural life (Barrington, 2005). Inculcated within a colonising frame of institutional racism, whanaungatanga practices have been incorrectly considered a contributor to Māori under achievement, a 'problem' or 'deficiency' in a child's environment (Pihama & Penehira, 2009), supported by media representations that bolster these colonial narratives (Edwards et al., 2007). At the time of writing this article, the New Zealand government has considered removing legislation to prioritise placing Māori children in care, with their whānau (see Kirk, 2017 for discussion), a proposition that is antithetical to mātauranga Māori pertaining to whanaungatanga. Despite colonising racism, urban migration, and institutional racism, the practices associated with whānau that are threaded into a holistic concept of whanaungatanga, remain relevant in the lives of contemporary Māori (Durie, 2001; Edwards et al., 2007; C. Smith, 2010; Tangohau, 2003).

In this paper we attend to a lived set of whanaungatanga practices, through Māori participants' articulations of their mātauranga in this domain, embedded in accounts of their everyday lives. While the notion that whanaungatanga is a source of resilience has been historically invisibilised in dominant Anglo-European discourse, and invalidated in

psychological theory and practice, we hope to support the validation and development of current (including locally Indigenous derived) understandings within psychological paradigms. With this overarching objective in mind, our research questions are broad - what does it mean to have children in the context of contemporary whānau? How does this appear within everyday practices with relations, and whānau support? How does this relate to whanaungatanga as a cultural principle? We are interested in understanding Māori people of all genders' enactments, expressions, and articulations of mātauranga in this domain.

Methodology

The analysis reported here is part of a wider ethnographic study on Māori and reproduction, undertaken by the first author (Jade), from her standpoint as a Māori woman. This work was supported by the second and third authors (Ginny & Margie) who are Pākehā (of New Zealand European ancestries). The research draws upon mana wāhine research (an approach that privileges Māori women's perspectives and analyses) (Pihama, 2001). While the research has not solely focused on the cultural and social realities of women's lives, it has been conducted within a domain of knowledge where Māori women may have skill and expertise, but are not given recognition. In accordance with a mana wāhine research agenda, the research has aimed to legitimate mātauranga Māori while incorporating a critique of sexist and racist colonising forms, and employed a collaborative approach with research whānau (Le Grice, 2014; see personal communication references for research whānau contributions). Mana wāhine (Le Grice, 2014) and feminist qualitative methodologies (Clark & Braun, 2013) understand knowledge as contextual, and require researcher reflexivity to situate the study. To give some insight into my (Jade's) background, to contextualise how mātauranga Māori in this paper has been derived, and framed, I am from the hapū, Ngati Korokoro of Pakanae, Ngāpuhi iwi; and Ngai Tupoto of Motukaraka, Te Rarawa iwi, within the Hokianga region. I was raised in rural Horeke, Hokianga, until I was six, and then in urban Mairangi Bay, Auckland.

A qualitative interview design was most congruent for this project, due to the capacity of qualitative research to generate rich and detailed descriptions of meaning and experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Semi structured individual interviews allowed the exploration of participants' accounts of their everyday lives, ideals, values, challenges and aspirations, and how they were drawing on, or resisting, Māori and Anglo-European orientations. Interviews (conducted by Jade) focused on participants' reproductive histories, with questions designed to orient the interviewee to reflect on their experiences with babies, reproduction, sexual and reproductive health. Interviews lasted an average of one hour, and were hosted at the University, the interviewer's home, their home, workplace or community facility (marae). The audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed according to an orthographic style (Lapdat & Lindsay, 1999) and checked for accuracy. Pauses in participants' talk are denoted by their length in seconds, noted in brackets e.g. (1.0). Extra contextualising information is added to participant quotes in square brackets (e.g. [participants' friend]).

We sought views from participants who culturally identified as Māori. Forty three Māori participants (26 women; 17 men) were recruited through advertising, word of mouth within personal networks, and the assistance of two recruiters from my hapū. Participants were interviewed in Northland, Auckland, Hamilton, and London; and identified with a range of Māori tribal regions across the North Island, however no participants from the South Island responded to recruitment advertisements. While mātauranga Māori in this article was described by participants of a range of hapū and iwi, denoting tribal variation in colonisation histories, knowledge traditions and practice, there is a concentration of mātauranga pertinent to the Hokianga region, given the assistance from recruiters. The mean age of participants was 49 years; most were parents (35 parents, 8 child free/yet to have children), and heterosexual (40 heterosexual 3 non-heterosexual). We recruited participants from a range of occupational statuses (5 not in employment, 5 students, 5 stay at home parents, 26 working and 7 retired), and a mix of rural (13) and urban (30) residents. Participants' names, the names of people they spoke about, locations, workplaces, or further specific identity details have been removed and are referred to generically. Demographic information including the participants' gender, age range, and urban/rural location is reported alongside participant quotes in order to contextualise their responses, in square brackets. Ethical approval was obtained from The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee in 2007, and ethical guidelines for Indigenous research were engaged with throughout the study (L. Smith, 2006).

Utilising thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), we examine how participants' everyday lives and practices were anchored in culturally shared understandings of the concept of whanaungatanga, while viewing participants' talk as a live organic practice that actively shapes and re-creates social worlds. This was done through a mix of inductive and deductive analytic approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2012). After Jade became familiar with the data, and generated initial codes, notions pertaining to whanaungatanga were systematically searched for, within the data. Jade drew together and interconnected ideas that were collapsed into broader themes and honed into distinctive sub-themes. While the first author initially conceptualised Māori practices of whanaungatanga alongside Anglo-European patterns of practice to emphasise the complicated assemblage of different cultural forms, the second and third authors encouraged a refinement of these notions to hone towards, and investigate, their location within mātauranga Māori. Ginny and Margie also assisted with this writing process, and refinement of themes and sub-themes.

Results

I Jade was humbled by the way participants in this study took the time to carefully explain the contexts of their reproductive lives – their everyday experiences with children and relations, and the broader purpose of these practices as it informed their approaches to raising children. A pattern of practices can be deduced from these accounts, interwoven to produce a coherent and conceptual understanding of whanaungatanga. Participants described inter-related yet conceptually distinct aspects of whanaungatanga, that we

assembled into four major themes: (i) the importance of diverse and rich networks; (ii) the central position of children in the whānau; (iii) aroha, tiakitanga (guardianship) and wairua (capacity for spirituality); and (iv) the experience of whānau support.

Diverse and rich networks

The importance of some level of whānau presence was noted across all participant accounts, whether rural or urban. Valuing whanaungatanga has persisted despite the urban migration that saw many Māori whānau shift to less intensive support networks (Durie, 2001; Edwards et al., 2007; Metge, 2001; Nikora et al., 2004; Nikora, Rua, Awekotuku, Guerin, & McCaughey, 2008). The opportunity for children to identify with diverse whānau and ordinary everyday interaction was valued, to build up an information pool for the child concerning how they might, in their turn, be a person in the world and part of a whānau. Responding to a question about whether her siblings had contributed to her children's upbringing, a participant who had two children describe their valued contribution.

My brothers – they, they're just to be around. My little brother to be funny and my older brother to be, you know, be a businessman that sort of thing just - just to have examples of of men mm... just to see what people are like, just to observe, just that background information you store away and think 'oh yes she's just like Auntie Ngahua' you know the, the sort of family oriented... You know it doesn't have to be high morals it can be the, the good things in life, you know... show kids that you can have fun eating... [or] being serious and you know telling you... 'Don't touch that guy I wouldn't let him look after my dog'... just being ordinary and kind, and yeah, and considerate and funny and fun [woman, 50s, urban].

In this participant's account, the presence of her siblings in the lives of her children gave examples of people who modelled a constellation of different possibilities and different ways of being, excelling, and enjoying life. Children's learning and behaviour were seen by participants as moulded by broader social environments and contextual influences, as well as the home (MacFarlane, 2016), and they actively sought exposure to relatives who could enrich children's lives (Pihama, N/D). Having bonds with relations was considered to strengthen whānau identity in contemporary lives (Edwards et al., 2007; Kingi & Waiti, 2011). Contrary to dominant deficit focused research and media narratives about Māori men, these whānau oriented narratives emphasised Māori men's value in childrearing, through nurturing, and educative qualities (Rua, 2015).

Many participants spoke about cherished memories with uncles and aunts: "You know, you can't put a price tag on some of these, like uncle Wiremu. Those characters... And it does rub off on you Jade you know... I bloody miss them dearly (M10) [man, 40s, urban]. The identities and characters who comprised a set of familiar whānau figures provided a memorable source of love and attachment for this participant, and others. A strong and meaningful interconnection between this participant's identity and the memory of his late Uncle is

evident, inscribed through a whānau relationship (Rua, 2015). Aunties and uncles were considered to play an important part in raising children - consistent with ancient proverbs that considered their contribution as sustaining and refining the work done by the parents (Metge, 2001), and contemporary narratives of affection from mātua rautia (multiple parents) (Pihama, 2014). “[These relationships] get them to to really socialise and build their own bonds with (1.0) you know the family yeah... Just getting used to different people... know that they’ll be safe with them” [woman, 50s, urban]. Teaching her children about engaging with diverse people was seen as important to this mother of two, preparing her children for their future adult lives. Contemporary literature on whānau suggests connection in relationships functions to give children an important sense of belonging and ability to develop trust (Jenkins & Harte, 2011). The first and prior accounts articulated by Māori women extend this, demonstrating how they attend to the relational environment around children as a learning context. Tuākana and tēina dynamics (relationships between older and younger siblings) were a key part of this learning context, particularly in whānau with many children, in urban and rural settings.

Oh we had a wonderful childhood. Um I was ah the sixth, the sixth, fifth child... We were self-contained in our little family because we were all friends... But um I think we were well prepared for adult life by our older brothers and sisters and my Mum and Dad... You always had somebody to look out for you. You never really - we were very lucky because we never really knew any um hardships or we were never lonely or we we had um we were very resilient [woman, 70s, rural].

This participant, who herself experienced infertility and adopted a child, spoke positively of her experience growing up in the context of many siblings who formed close friendship bonds; these strong whānau relationships brought about strength and resilience. Collaboration and lifelong relationships implicit in the contemporary practice of whanaungatanga translates to social capital, whereby connections among people who have strengths, skills, and resources can facilitate opportunities, growth and enterprise (G. Smith, 2011). This is a resource that becomes more enriched by the population of many whānau members.

In addition to the aforementioned rich networks of tuākana, tēina, aunties and uncles, close bonds and support between children and grandparents were ever present across participants’ accounts. One participant who had two children described how her grandfather lived with her childhood whānau and cared for her as a child, illustrating the primacy of the relationship between tūpuna (grandparents, ancestors), and mokōpūna (grandchildren).

We had, oh my grandfather lived with us until he passed away. So, yeah he used to look after us a lot when we came home from school, always have something on the stove, something cooked for us, feed us [woman, 40s, rural].

Traditionally, the relationship between a tūpuna and mokōpūna is a special one (Durie, 2001; Edwards et al., 2007; C. Smith, 2010), a haven and safe space (Pihama, 2014), with

ongoing continuance and relevance in contemporary lives. Routine practices of male nurturing through whanaungatanga have also been noted in contemporary lives (Rua, 2015), extended in this instance, to an example of grandfathering, evidenced within an historical account in this participant’s childhood memory. Levels of support provided by grandparents varied depending on the whānau circumstances. Sometimes grandparents took a greater role in raising the children than the parents, through whāngai, for short time frames, or permanently in their care (Durie, 1985; Metge, 2001; Pere, 1994). For instance:

My wife and I only had two children and we adopted two children... And um (2.0) ah four mokōpūna of our own but with um (2.0) with my... stepchildren you know we, we have ah two other mokōpūna too... Um (2.0) when we were growing up there was no distinction between whāngai... [and] the children of ah of the parents... My um my own family my mother and father had... us and they um brought up... [some] of their grandchildren as their own. So (1.0) you know we lived as [siblings]... But um you know that’s how the whānau was brought up [man, 70s, rural].

For this participant, whāngai was practiced in his experience of parenting, where he and his wife adopted two children, and his practice of grand parenting, where he had mokōpūna through his step children. Further studies have noted the contemporary practice of whāngai as a solution to assist stressed whānau or those who were not in a position to care for their children (C. & P. Jacobs, personal communication, 11th April 2011; Mikaere, 1994; C. Smith, 2012). Whanaungatanga in its inclusiveness and pragmatism rendered whāngai a common sense practice, oriented to the care of children and mokōpūna. The diversity of relationships, characteristic of whanaungatanga in everyday contemporary life, was an important rich resource that increased with greater numbers, and had direct positive bearing upon childhood development, attachment, belonging, trust; also yielding positive impacts for all, including social capital that could scaffold opportunities for growth, and facilitate resilience.

Children as integral to everyday lives

Consistent with the features of whanaungatanga that outline close involvement of extended whānau of various ages and generations in the context of raising children (Pihama, N/D), many participants described experiences of being around children as a continuous feature of their lives from childhood. One participant, who had three children, established familiarity with children through experience with her sisters’ children.

Jade: And what do children mean to you?

Participant: They mean everything, you know, because (1.0) because you know me being, looking after like millions of kids, well not millions I only brought up like thirteen of my sisters’ kids but um yeah they mean everything eh. (2.0) They’re the best thing you could have, a kid. The best thing you could have [woman, 20s, urban].

Growing up as a sibling to older sisters who had children

gave this participant opportunities to contribute to raising a total of thirteen nieces and nephews, providing experiences that facilitated her positive evaluation of children. While having (some) children is a cultural norm in Australasia (Sha & Kirkman, 2009), it is especially so among Māori (Glover, McKree, & Dyal, 2008). Māori reproduction has long been considered 'excessive' in comparison to Pākehā reproduction (Glover & Rousseau, 2007; C. Smith, 2004; Turia, 2004), despite population statistics following relatively similar historical trends (see Le Grice, 2014). However, it is likely that 'family size', measured by an individual women's total fertility rate may be conflated with 'whānau size' that is defined in relation to the wider contribution a woman (or man) might make to their nieces and nephews, grand children/nieces/nephews. From this basis point, we can read this participants' account in context, and understand how a richer and wider whānau context can provide an immersive and educative experience supporting the norm, of bearing children. With greater children around in a whānau context, there is greater accessibility to learning about parenting through 'hands on' experience caring for younger siblings and those in the wider whānau (Tangohau, 2003). The potential visceral and affective pleasures associated with learning about babies, children, and parenting was explained by the following participant:

Because we were so young you know, [holding my younger brother] was fascinating (Jade: mm) and soft and lovely and we really loved them. Mm (Jade: Yeah, yep). Yeah we really did... We were allowed to hold and you know watch (Jade: yeah) that was enough... Oh it was lovely, it was, it made you happy - it made me happy to hold my little brother (Jade: yeah yeah) mm and he was a dear little boy with this, the happiest little face you could imagine (laughing) and we all thought he was lovely (laughing) [woman, 50s, urban].

For this participant with two children, her memory of being a child, holding her baby brother, and feeling aroha, reinforced the positive and special quality of babies and children. Contemporary literature suggests Māori view children favourably, as a gift (Hiroti, 2011), one that enhances a person's mana (a spiritually and socially contextualised notion of power) (Glover et al., 2008). Having these opportunities may be not be limited to Māori, however the connection of these experiences within a broader context of close extended family networks, and interconnection with further positive notions of whanaungatanga, may inform a mundane notion that children are a positive feature of everyday life. The norm of childbearing, and notion of children as integral to everyday lives, was illustrated by participants' descriptions of experiences learning to care for and raise children with wry humour and laughter, illustrating the specialness of it by emphasising how many children they had contributed to raising, or from an early age.

Aroha, tiakitanga, wairua

In addition to providing a system of support for children and a ready-made network of relationships to aid with developing identity and interactions, the dynamics of whanaungatanga ran deeper, providing a positive context for experiencing and teaching aroha, tiakitanga (guardianship,

protection), and wairua (capacity for spirituality).

[I've] been brought up in a family, whānau environment with aunts and uncles everywhere. It was good. I don't think I ever had a bad day. I don't think any of our family did. There was always food on the table, there was always love and care. It was choice (awesome). There were parties but they were singing parties [with] guitars and that. They were really good, we used to look forward to them [man, 50s, rural].

This participant, a parent of two children, spoke about the joy and fun of his childhood, growing up in the context of a closely connected whānau. Whānau provided aroha and manaakitanga (the process of respecting someone's mana by support, care, generosity, hospitality) marked by the sharing of food, love, care, and entertainment. Theories of attachment developed in European contexts emphasise the importance of the primary caregiver providing a stable and reliable template for children to understand themselves as loved and valued (see Bretherton, 1992 for a review of Bowlby and Ainsworth's work). In a New Zealand Māori context, my participants' accounts attest to a need for attachment patterns to be considered in a broader whānau context. With many people available and engaged in a whānau, circumstances that may be considered 'whānau wealthy' (Cargo, 2016), there may be greater resourcing to provide tiakitanga to ensure children are protected, kept safe (C. Jacobs, personal communication, 12th June 2013), nurtured and fed, to ensure they do not go hungry (Pihama, 2014). Effective tiakitanga is crucially underscored by the unconditional love and commitment (Jenkins & Harte, 2011) that is integral to binding whānau together (C. & P. Jacobs, personal communication, 11th April 2011; Pere, 1994). Speaking about growing up in a whānau context of strong relational bonds, another participant described what he wanted his three children to experience.

Jade: What experiences did you have as a child that you wanted your children to experience?

Participant: (3.0) Love (2.0) there was always a lot of that around especially growing up like we did. There was always people over so you always got someone to play with, yeah. Everything. I hope my kids have everything, get the best out of life that they possibly can... What I - what I reckon is, is that like the love you give to your kids they'll give to someone else and so on and so on [man, 20s, urban].

Contemporary accounts of whanaungatanga have noted its function in teaching children how to care for, and love, others (Jenkins & Harte, 2011; Tangohau, 2003). This participant constructs a continuous cycle of love reverberating across the generations, enacted through experiences being around, and spending time among, relatives. This man described the importance of being a recipient and bearer of love, congruent with contemporary understandings of Māori men's identities as relationally constructed, interdependent, and oriented to affection and intimacies (Rua, 2015). Another account, from a participant with many children, similarly presented aroha and wairua as infusing extended family relationships due to strong whānau bonds and connections.

[Speaking about his daughter's sense that something

was wrong with her sister overseas, going to visit her and finding her isolated and unhappy]: The wairua side was very strong. This one kept picking up vibes [about her sister overseas]. 'It's not good. I don't like it and I'm going.' (Laugh) Come hell or high water she put it in, her time at [work], off she went. Oh yeah those sorts of ah things we have and those sorts of things we fix up ourselves because of the strong ah thing from the whānau [man, 70s, urban].

This participant describes an acute sensitivity to wairua, a connectedness, that enabled his daughter to manaaki (respect someone's mana by support, care, generosity, hospitality) and tiaki (guard, keep, protect) her whānau. The approach taken within this participant's whānau to nurture and acknowledge the wairua of their children is consistent with contemporary Māori understandings that the development of children's wairua is important (Cargo, 2016; Jenkins & Harte, 2011). Wanting to recreate the nurturing emotional environments characterised by the love they had experienced as children was a central feature of these experiences of whanaungatanga. Contrary to popular Pākehā discourse and representations of Māori men as problematic, abusive and risky, within mātauranga Māori pertaining to whanaungatanga, the predominant articulated practices of these men centred on teaching children how to love and care. This is consistent with wider contemporary literature that situates whanaungatanga processes as central to men's identities as relationally interconnected beings (Rua, 2015). The theme, aroha, tiakitanga, and wairua illustrated some of the deeper dynamics associated with whanaungatanga among Māori whānau. Whānau is a learning context for unconditional love, attachments that bind people together through commitment and protection of one another, the development and strengthening of wairua sensitivity that reverberates across past, present, and future generations of kinship networks.

Whānau support

Among the diverse and rich networks that support the capacity for whānau to be a learning context, whānau support for parents was a normalised feature of everyday life. As this participant describes:

So I went straight from high school to uni[versity] because I thought well what else am I going to do? (Laughing)... so I had my son in the first semester and then I came back and... my mum had him at [Māori oriented workplace] with her which was you know which was great because he was in a whānau orientated environment and I'd feed him, express milk and go off to my class because Nanny would have him and then I'd come back and take him again... At the time it was just like mm didn't think anything of it [woman, 20s, urban].

For this participant, a woman who became a parent when she was at university and then had another child, having her mother's support to look after the baby while she attended university lectures meant her plans for education were not disrupted. The location of her mother in a whānau-oriented environment, where children were present and part of the

routine context, made the introduction of her children a relatively unobtrusive possibility. In neoliberal discourse, unplanned, early childrearing is often considered to indicate 'poor reproductive choices', the ideal being to 'wait' until education is finished and a career established (Breheny & Stevens, 2007; Macleod, 2011; Wilson & Huntington, 2005). Contravening these neoliberal assumptions, this participant was supported by her whānau in her ambitions to be a mother and a student working towards a career. While Māori reproductive actions and choices are often pathologised (Le Grice, 2014), the mātauranga evident here supports the notion that community support for young childbearing functions to minimise/obliterate negative outcomes for mother and child (Macleod, 2011; Rawiri, 2007; Rimene, Hassan, & Broughton, 1998).

Whānau support can take many forms, and may include a more intensive level of support, known as atawhai (to show kindness to, raise, or adopt temporarily among relatives) (C. Jacobs, personal communication, 12th June 2013). One participant, a mother of four children, described: "*because she was working and then I felt that she wasn't capable of looking after her daughter... I brought her and my granddaughter up together and we stayed together. I nurtured her through... bringing her up with... her mother there [woman, 50s, rural].*" As grandmother to the child, this woman described leading the care arrangement, her lived experience of atawhai. The practice of atawhai has been traditionally favoured to Anglo-European forms of adoption, as it provides an enriching environment for the child, who is able to maintain everyday contact with the parents alongside whānau who assist them to raise the child (C. Jacobs, personal communication, 12th June 2013). Resourced through mātauranga Māori, this woman articulated a solution to an issue of a child's wellbeing that did not require the involvement of courts or procedures to remove the child from the care of their parents.

The practice of whāngai offered an even more intensive level of whānau support for young Māori parents:

One was my um son's girlfriend... I actually went and pleaded with her to keep the baby and um (2.0) and when the baby's born I'll take it... I said 'all you have to do is carry this baby when the baby's born I'll come and take it off your hands. You don't have to see it, you don't have to do nothing. As soon as it's born I'll take it and bring it home and it can be our baby'. And um I was prepared to do that but she didn't want to have a bar of it... So even though I'm heartbroken and I often think about this child ... and I think well we'd have a mokōpūna that age, a teenager, and I I think of that and the lost child that we you know I believe that child's up in heaven somewhere, you know, and um I just think it's very sad. Very sad [woman, 50s, urban].

This mother, who was anticipating a first mokōpūna, described the tensions associated with an offer to whāngai the child and her son's girlfriend's decision to seek an abortion (see Jade Le Grice, 2014 for further discussion about tensions associated with individual choice, whanaungatanga, and protection of new life in relation to Māori and abortion). Describing the process of whāngai as an assumed pattern of practice, this participant articulates the mātauranga Māori

associated with child care practices as an everyday concept. Whāngai is broadly considered as a traditional framework for whānau wellbeing (Pihama, 2014), likened to a Māori process of adoption where the child is raised by another member of the whānau, and is often considered as a possible solution for people who are not in a position to care for a child (Jahnke, 2002; C. Smith, 2010). Demonstrated in this account, the practice of whāngai is situated within a broader cultural context where new life is considered in relation to the wellbeing of the wider whānau (Turia, 2007), and all generations take responsibility for ensuring that (Pihama, N/D). The mātauranga Māori associated with whānau support contravenes dominant colonising and racist deficit-focused assumptions about whanaungatanga and neoliberal imperatives to delay reproduction, premised on individualised, nuclear patterns of family life. Wider whānau support made possible within a flourishing whanaungatanga dynamic, allowed support for parents through assistance with childcare relief, living with the parents to provide more ensconced support (atawhai), or taking on greater guardianship responsibilities (whāngai). This facilitated whānau members, who had become parents in their accomplishments and aspirations, minimising negative outcomes for mother and child.

Discussion

Whanaungatanga is a concept that has long been invalidated through everyday colonising dynamics (see Le Grice, 2014 for a nuanced account of this), New Zealand psychological research, theory, practice and institutional policy (see Kirk, 2017). The present research sought Māori articulations and reflections of everyday domestic experiences among whānau, with a view to validate, deepen and develop psychological knowledge, mātauranga Māori, in this domain. Although this knowledge is holistic and interconnected, for ease of communication we focussed our analyses on four themes (i) diverse and rich networks; (ii) children as integral to everyday lives; (iii) aroha, tiakitanga and wairua; and (iv) whānau support. Māori participants in this study (women in particular), spoke about diverse and rich networks among their whānau that comprised a rich learning resource for their children's development. These articulated practices of whanaungatanga created a sophisticated tapestry that provided a resource for children's identity development, be supported to learn relational skills, and develop trust and a sense of belonging. This psychological context was premised upon, and facilitated by, enduring key early relationships that operated as a source of resilience, through tuākana and tēina, grandparents, and those related through whāngai. With children forming an integral part of everyday life, whanaungatanga provided a live context for gaining experience with children, allowing exposure to mātauranga Māori, the practices of raising and caring for children, and developing mastery in these skills within home spaces, with positive valence.

Specific mātauranga Māori pertaining to care and creating a nurturing environment – aroha, tiakitanga, and wairua – were implicitly and explicitly taught by men and women in the context of whanaungatanga, experienced and learned by children they nurtured, in cyclical fashion. In a process of

cultural knowledge exchange, the mātauranga described by participants in the current study was also intergenerationally demonstrated, communicated within an environment of love and positive affect, and taught to the children in their lives. Teaching unconditional love (indicated in the title of this paper), was powerfully configured as enduring through relationships that last a lifetime through strong whānau bonds, opening sensitivity to one another's wairua, creating opportunities to support one another in difficult situations, and pass on to future generations. The normalcy of care for children beyond the biological parents through practices of everyday support, atawhai and whāngai, enabled intergenerational and flexibly oriented whānau support that could be tailored to suit the needs of individual parents and support them in their pursuits. Rather than being considered individuals, solely responsible for making their way in the world, participants described a relational nexus where they were supported in their goals for individual achievement in education and career by a background of whānau involvement and investment in theirs and their children's lives.

Mātauranga Māori pertaining to whanaungatanga was clearly evident in descriptions of the everyday lives and practices of Māori who are not deemed 'experts' in mātauranga or tikanga Māori. As the second quoted participant mentioned, these are not regarded as 'high morals'; nor complicated academic theories couched within inaccessible language. Participants in the current study, many of whom were not fluent in te reo Māori, demonstrated articulations of this mātauranga in English, that was connectable to cultural common sense understandings anchored in te reo Māori (see Le Grice & Braun, 2016 for the pūrākau study that assisted us in this understanding).

Participants in this study described and conveyed this mātauranga Māori in a down to earth, pragmatic, (and funny!), manner – making the interview interaction an enjoyable process. Participants overwhelmingly understated descriptions of their knowledge by the use of prefaces such as "*what I – what I reckon is,*" or finishing in a way that assumed mutual understanding "*but you know that's how the whānau was brought up.*" Participants also understated articulations of their lives that were divergent from dominant understandings about Māori "*so, yeah, he used to look after us a lot,*" and the central importance of children to their lives "*but um yeah they mean everything eh.*" The interviews were also filled with laughter, through delight in recollections "*we all thought he was lovely (laughing)*", explaining sheer determination "*It's not good. I don't like it I'm going. (Laugh) Come hell or high water...*" or outlining the pragmatics of a situation "*well what else am I going to do? (Laughing).*" Jokes conveying extremes were also made with a deadpan expression "*don't touch that guy I wouldn't let him look after my dog!*" These rhetorical strategies surrounding accounts of mātauranga Māori demonstrate how an understanding of this is not solely reserved for an elite few, excluding some or most Māori from a knowledgeable position. Mātauranga Māori is not a shiny silver tea set that only a few individuals with a royal bloodline are able to access from a locked cabinet that enables elites to maintain tradition and practices from a bygone golden era. Continuing this metaphor – mātauranga Māori is the much loved, dependable, robust

and diverse set of everyday kitchenware that can be found in Māori homes, drawn on in the context of love and laughter to feed and nourish people.

Developing Mātauranga Māori, as articulated from the vantage points and perspectives of Māori women, offers redress from historical misrepresentation of mātauranga Māori by western ethnographers who sought accounts from Māori men, considered to be the 'natural experts' on Māori society (Mikaere, 2010; Simmonds, 2011; L. Smith, 2013). This study contributes to mana wāhine objectives that seek to rectify the incorrect colonial notion that Māori women are less valued in cultural life (Pihama, 2001). Here, we have explored mātauranga Māori associated with whanaungatanga, a domain typically considered 'domestic' and thereby women's work. In doing so, we also show mātauranga Māori associated with whanaungatanga as firmly ensconced within the repertoire and practices of Māori men. The analysis has provided space to explore the everyday and ordinary practices of Māori men's and women's lives, their continuing richness, and considerations for raising children: how to produce an emotionally and socially enriching experience for children's development; how to resource within whānau to provide a supportive context that enables care for children, and conducive circumstances for their parents' success.

On the basis of this work, we would like to ask psychologists, researchers, and policy makers, previously unfamiliar with Indigenous psychologies to reflect on Māori they encounter, theorise, and make decisions about, in their work lives as potential bearers of mātauranga Māori. To reflect on how Māori men are cognisant of creating a nurturing environment for the children in their whānau, contrary to limited representations and expectations of Māori men as emotionally impoverished, deviant, and of risk to children (Rua, 2015). To reflect on how Māori women enact and practice a down to earth expertise and wisdom, handed down across generations, and characteristic of an inherent strength.

Raising children, as Māori, is a huge task within a colonising context, particularly when children are very likely exposed to individual, structural and institutional racism (Le Grice, 2014), presenting complex challenges and invalidations to be overcome. Indeed the current government proposal to de-prioritise the placement of Māori children in whānau care, in the wake of circumstances of violence and trauma, adds an institutional overlay to social issues wrought by colonisation – further marginalising, invalidating and imposing harm to Māori people whose lives are interpellated through mātauranga Māori. We need to reaffirm the significant undertaking Māori women (and men) are tasked with when raising children, attending to their developmental, social, and emotional needs. By attending to mātauranga Māori – our wisdom, strength and resilience within harsh colonising conditions (past and present) – we can challenge and resist deficit-focussed representations of Māori. Sourcing answers to the challenges faced by whānau and communities among ourselves allows us to reclaim the power, agency, will, and determination to guide our aspirations, claim our tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty), and control our own destinies.

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Glossary

Aroha - affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy

Atawhai - to show kindness to, raise, or adopt temporarily

Hapū/hapu - sub tribe, to be pregnant, conceived in the womb

Iwi - tribe, strength, bone

Mana - a spiritually and socially contextualised notion of power, associated with the concept of tapu

Mana wāhine - an approach that privileges Māori women's perspectives and analyses

Manaaki(tanga) – respect/the process of respecting someone's mana by support, care, generosity, hospitality

Māori – Indigenous people/person of New Zealand

Mātauranga Māori - education, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill pertaining to Māori

Mātua rautia - multiple parents

Mokōpūna - grandchild, descendant - child or grandchild of a son, daughter, nephew, niece

Pākehā – New Zealand European people/person

Pūrākau – Personal and cultural narratives that are encoded with a rich resource of mātauranga Māori

Tapu - the restricted and controlled access to other human beings (Tate, 2010)

Te reo Māori - Māori language

Teina/tēina - younger sibling/s of the same gender.

Tiaki(tanga) – to guard, keep, protect/guardianship, protection

Tino rangatiratanga – sovereignty

Tuakana/tuākana - elder sibling/s of the same gender

Tūpuna - ancestors, grandparents

Wairua – capacity for spirituality, soul, the spirit of a person which exists beyond death

Whānau - extended family, also means to be born or give birth

Whanaungatanga – relationships, connection, and practices among a (family) collective

Whāngai – to raise another child as your own, also means to nourish or feed.

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