

# OLDER MEN GARDENING ON THE MARAE

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## Everyday practices for being Māori

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### Abstract

Like indigenous peoples globally, Māori are over-represented among the homeless population due to processes of colonialism, disruptions and continued socio-economic marginalization. This article explores how, through gardening and other everyday practices, a group of older Māori men who are homeless find respite, reconnection, a sense of belonging, and remember Māori ways of being. We consider how the regular participation of these men also contributes to the reconciliation of the marae (communal complex used for everyday Māori life) space that has been reclaimed by Ngāti Whātua (local Auckland tribe) after a lengthy hiatus. Our analysis foregrounds the importance of core values of manaakitanga (care for others), whanaungatanga (relationships based on shared experience or kinship) and wairuatanga (spirituality) for responses to Māori homelessness.

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## Keywords

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### Introduction

Following international trends, colonization in New Zealand led to massive land confiscations, economic exclusions, large-scale ruptures to communal life and identities, and mass movement for Māori from homelands to urban centres such as Auckland (Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora, & Rua, 2011; Jackson, 1992). These events have an ongoing legacy for the well-being of Māori and our participation in contemporary society (Durie, 1998). Given our history of disruption and displacement, it should be no surprise that Māori remain disproportionately affected by homelessness when compared to those from the settler society (Groot et al., 2011).

This research is located in one key site of Māori resistance to colonialism. Ōrākei marae (communal complex used for everyday Māori life) is at the heart of Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) and became a national focal point for Māori protests over land confiscations by the Crown, culminating in a mass occupation of the site for 504 days that ended with 222 arrests. Matipo, a representative from Ngāti Whātua (local Auckland tribe), reflects on the establishment of a gardening project involving homeless Māori as part of the iwi's (tribe's) reconciliation of Takaparawhau:

They are Māori and this is a marae and they have the reo [te reo Māori—the Māori language] ... They just felt at home. And they had a place to come to for their wairua [spirit] and to just be themselves ... As a people we could identify with them because we were homeless in our own land. We had nothing left. We could identify with them and how they were feeling. We almost got wiped out. So that was our aroha [love] to them. We couldn't have it that we owned all of this and we left them over

there ... We are giving respect to our ancestors by helping other people. The manaakitanga [care for others] that we got from our ancestors, we have to carry that on ... They're in town, but up here they've got the peacefulness. They're Māori so they know this. They're part of our reconciliation of our land.

This quote reflects an understanding of the importance of maintaining cultural spaces, such as marae, which preserve Māori ways of being. Further, by helping and caring for others, Ngāti Whātua is able to rebuild its connection with the land by reproducing cultural values and activities that reaffirm their traditions, honour their ancestors, and assert their guardianship over Takaparawhau. This quote invokes broader considerations of homelessness that lie out beyond conventional understandings that often reduce homelessness to a matter of housing, without adequate consideration of broader societal, historical and political influences.

Considerable effort has gone into defining homelessness to ascertain prevalence, allocate resources, and develop services often focused on addressing individual mental health, substance misuse and housing needs (Illsley, 2013; Lancione, 2013). Underlying many definitions is a continuum of housing situations, ranging from insecure housing to the absence of a dwelling. Although arising from an appropriate concern for addressing homelessness, such definitions have been criticized for pigeonholing people into reified categories that can gloss the lived nuances of homelessness (Illsley, 2013; Lancione, 2013). In order to appreciate the complexities of homelessness, researchers have moved beyond overly rigid, individual and solely deficit-focused conceptualizations of homelessness (Hodgetts, Stolte, & Groot, 2014; Lancione, 2013). Homelessness constitutes

much more than the presence or absence of particular forms of shelter or personal health issues. Particularly for indigenous people, homelessness also involves issues of colonialism, dislocation, socio-economic relations, belonging and place. It denotes spiritual disruptions to ancestral affiliations to geo-cultural landscapes, knowledge, tradition and kinship (Groot et al., 2011; Memmott, Long, Chambers, & Spring, 2003).

Relatedly, many international scholars have tended to fixate on individual pathways into and out of homelessness. Researchers have demonstrated the influence of various interlinked structural (growing inequalities, unemployment, housing unaffordability) and personal (familial traumas, psychological illness, substance misuse) risk factors for homelessness (Hodgetts et al., 2014; Perreault, Jaimes, Rabouin, White, & Milton, 2013). This dominant focus can obscure group and culturally based experiences of homelessness that are associated with historical processes, including colonization and structural violence (Hodgetts et al., 2014). Studies of the everyday lives, socio-cultural practices, and relational experiences of homeless people (Borchard, 2010; Hodgetts et al., 2008; Hodgetts, Stolte, Nikora, & Groot, 2012; Lancione, 2013) constitute a broader complementary research agenda to which our research contributes.

This article explores the involvement of a group of older Māori men who are homeless, and who work in the gardens at Ōrākei marae on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is not the ancestral marae of the homeless participants themselves, but it is a culturally familiar space to them (Mead, 2003; Salmond, 1975). Such marae remain at the heart of Māori communities as sights of respite for local people and visitors, and have served as beachheads in revitalizing Māori culture and language during the 20th century (Walker, 1990). Marae remain central to the reproduction of cultural relationships and ways of being Māori. Our research in the marae space is guided by the assertion that

Māori are metaphysically orientated people with deep connections to the whenua (land) (Marsden, 2003) that are enacted through traditional everyday practices such as gardening, cooking, building, conversing in te reo Māori, and karakia (prayer).

### **Māori ways of being**

A Māori understanding of being as something that extends beyond physical existence (Marsden, 2003) is central to our research. In contrast to the dominant Cartesian dualist model of existence, Marsden (2003) advocates the view that Māori traditionally distinguished between three levels of existence: Te Korekore (the world of potential being), moving to Te Pō (the world of becoming), and then to Te Ao Mārama (the world of being). For Māori, being is made up of interwoven connections to place, social and spiritual relationships, systems of kinship, cultural practices, positioning within society, access to resources and cultural connectedness and creation narratives that emphasize a fundamental relationship between people, the natural world and a pantheon of gods (Mead, 2003). The depth of understanding of being and one's place in the world comes to the fore for Māori through practical and emplaced practices (Kawharu, 1975), such as growing food, eating communally and conversing with others. To lose one's sense of these connections through, for example, homelessness and displacement is not simply a matter of losing sight of who you are. It also involves a loss of the many support structures that are crucial to the preservation of a person's sense of existence, self, and belonging within collective structures and processes that compose the universe. As we will demonstrate, it is in everyday practical activities such as gardening, storytelling and sharing food that a Māori sense of being that centralizes social, physical and spiritual connections can be regained and brought to the fore in everyday life (Kawharu, 1975).

Relationships between people and physical and metaphysical realms were central in pre-colonial Māori gardening practices (Moon, 2005). Traditionally, gardens were a hub of activity within Māori communities (King, 2003) with substantial plantings evident among iwi and hapū (sub-tribal) groups. In maintaining a garden, Māori people maintain their collective identities as a hapū, their traditions and their shared knowledge (Walker, 1990). Today, gardening on a marae still enacts the concept of manawhenua (territorial rights), where a group's mana (authority, influence, status, spiritual power) is contingent on their ability to maintain tribal lands, knowledge and resources (King, 2003). Within the gardens, the constant togetherness and bonding of iwi, hapū and whānau (family, including extended family) members can reinforce kinship (Moon, 2005). Gardening also connects Māori with Papatūānuku (earth mother) as an eternal caregiver, and in caring for the whenua, people care for Papatūānuku, themselves and others. As Hohepa Kereopa (cited in Moon, 2005) puts it:

Whatever you do to the land, you do to yourself. So the issue of how you treat the land is really about self-respect. What this means is that you have to respect yourself before you can respect the land. (p. 36)

This interconnectedness refers to the concept of mauri (life force), which Marsden (2003) describes as “the bonding element that knits all the diverse elements within the Universal ‘Procession’ giving creation its unity in diversity. It is the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together” (p. 44). Through gardening, Māori are able to acknowledge the mauri of all things (Moon, 2005) and strengthen their connection with the atua (gods) (Marsden, 2003).

Gardening is a deceptively simple activity to grasp, but one rooted in complexity. Gardening refers to a site for basic human sustenance and

aesthetic enjoyment, and in growing social ties, relationships reproduce traditions, knowledge and connections (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010; Moon, 2005). Māori gardens provide spaces to connect and re-connect with the very essence of what it means to be Māori. Gardens manifest emplaced memories, histories, heritage, group identities and ways of being. This reflects the Māori concept of pūtahi (confluence), whereby aspects of the world are not broken down into smaller distinct components or categories. Rather, everything must be viewed within the larger context in which they are situated (Ritchie, 1992). At its core, pūtahi is about holism and totality, and the rejection of methods of atomization and reductionism that pervade much of Caucasian science. Likewise, and as we will show, space and action cannot be meaningfully separated from each other, as they are interdependent (Tilley, 1994). Spaces, such as gardens, are produced and reproduced through day-to-day practices of Māori cultural rituals and communal values (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

### **Gardening project, our approach and interactions**

This project was initiated with a pōwhiri (welcoming ceremony) at Saint Matthew's church in August 2012. Members of Ngāti Whātua, the Auckland City Mission (ACM—partners in the gardening project), and a group of homeless Māori men (“Streeties”) engaged the research team in whaikōrero (formal oration), waiata (song) and hongī (pressing of the noses to symbolize the breath of life). Following the formalities of the pōwhiri, a conversation about this research was facilitated by the authors and colleagues. This continued the building of connections through dialogue, reciting of whakapapa (genealogy) and tribal links, and general rapport building, after which we shared a meal to symbolically close the event and acknowledge ongoing relationships.

As a result of the initial pōwhiri, we were invited to spend time with Ngāti Whātua and the Streeties at the Ōrākei marae garden. Our fieldwork involved weekly visits between October 2012 and April 2013, which enabled us to get to know the participants and contribute to the garden by getting our own hands dirty digging holes, clearing weeds and planting vegetables. These activities allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the people on the marae, and for them to get to know us as people first and researchers second. After each visit, we individually completed field-notes on our observations and conversations, and then shared these notes with the wider research team. We engaged in a range of informal conversations with participants (identified using pseudonyms) and conducted audio-recorded interviews with five homeless Māori men (aged 54 to 69 years), three representatives from Ngāti Whātua, and one representative of the ACM. Three of the homeless men (Miro, Tōtara and Rātā) were considered to be kaumātua (male elder of status) by Ngāti Whātua representatives. Recorded interviews were conducted using a mix of Māori and English languages, were conversational in

style, and were conducted after we had been participating at the garden for four months and had built up meaningful relationships with the participants. Additionally, photography provided a means of documenting spaces, practices, relationships and events at the garden.

During all our engagements with participants, a priority for us was observing and participating in Māori practices that were put in place by Ngāti Whātua representatives and the Streeties. Consequently, we conducted this research in a manner that respected and contributed positively to the mauri of the research site through an emphasis on engagement, participation and relationship building. Concurrently, we embraced the ethnographic turn in social research and developments in indigenous psychologies that advocate for the use of case-based methods characterized by closer, more engaged and reciprocal relationships between researchers and participants (Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Groot, & Tankel, 2013; Hodgetts et al., 2010). Figure 1 depicts our research in action with Māori men of a similar age caring for each other and their respective whakapapa.

Tiniwai guided our interactions with the



**FIGURE 1.** Research in action depicting Tiniwai Te Whetu (researcher, left) and Tōtara (participant, right). Photo by Mohi Rua, November 2012.

Streeties because he is of a similar age and is respected by them for his Māori cultural knowledge and expertise. His presence also assisted us as researchers to become accepted into the marae space where the Streeties and Tiniwai recognized each other's mana, which was an invaluable aspect of our research. To accompany an elder in a marae setting is to be seen to be acting under their stewardship, which made this research project possible. This was important, as central to our research approach was an effort to minimize the disruptions research can have to participants' everyday lives (Hodgetts, Rua, King, & Te Whetu, 2014). We drew less on our training as social scientists and relied more on our personal and cultural skills as Māori men. We had all learnt how to engage respectfully with older Māori men from childhood and knew not to pressure these men for recorded interviews.

Conceptually, our analysis involved extracting general arguments out of detailed considerations of specific events, such as planting and growing food, cooking, conversing and reminiscing at lunchtime in the garden (de Certeau 1984; Simmel, 1903/1997). Following Lefebvre (1974/1991), we treat such daily emplaced practices of reconnection as the starting point for social analysis. Our engagements with particular practices, material things and the marae garden space provided a basis for developing a theoretically informed interpretation from the bottom up. Reflecting the centrality of Māori culture to the garden and participants' ways of being, our analysis also exemplifies the importance of indigenous researchers drawing upon cultural concepts germane to participant groups in order to extend understandings of the everyday lives of these groups. Using Māori cultural concepts as central theoretical elements in our research contributes to an interpretation more relevant to our participants and their sense of self, place in the world and everyday lives (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002).

### The gift of the marae as a space of care, belonging and being Māori

Street homelessness is a harsh, socio-economically marginal and unhealthy situation that involves the conduct of everyday life within what has been termed a broader *landscape of despair* (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Stolte & Hodgetts, 2013). In this landscape, people who are homeless are often deemed to be out of place and their efforts to conduct everyday activities such as socializing, eating and toileting are constantly being disrupted and subject to official scrutiny. In contrast, Ōrākei marae offers a *space of care* and respite from the perils and disruptions of street life and this landscape of despair. This marae provides a culturally patterned *space of being* (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Tolia-Kelly, 2006) in which our homeless participants can engage in everyday activities without fear of disruption, and in doing so re-engage with Māori ways of being. We document how their actions contribute to the reconciliation of the whenua and the enactment of cultural traditions that belong on the marae.

Time spent at the marae involved more than simply planting, cultivating or consuming food. It took the Streeties away from their daily struggles on the streets. It engaged them in aspects of Māori ways of being that are more difficult to re-enact on the streets of the settler society that make up the landscape of despair (Conradson, 2003; Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora, & Leggat-Cook, 2011). The following excerpt is taken from our reflections to demonstrate how the Streeties transition from being homeless within a landscape of despair, to being Māori emplaced within the marae space of care and being:

There was a transition of reo across space. English was used in the city ... but as they [the Streeties] got into the van to go to the garden, the language slowly changed to te reo Māori, and is totally immersed in te reo Māori by the

time they were working in the gardens. (Field-note, Pita King, 21 February 2013)

The movement from the city (a space dominated and textured primarily by settler values, practices, and evidently language) to the marae (a traditional space where Māori culture, values, practices and language dominates) is evident in several participants' accounts. This reflects Walker's (1990) proposition that marae function as sites of cultural revival for Māori where people can resist colonial domination of Māori ways of being. The marae allows the Streeties to re-connect with their heritage within the context of the broader landscape of despair. As Rātā (Streetie) remarks: "Marae are our rules. Outside here is other people's rules." Ōrākei marae constitutes a cultural enclave for the Streeties that allows them to re-enter the Māori world.

Takaparawhau is not simply a location where the people of Ngāti Whātua happen to be. It is one of the last remaining spaces where a traditional cultural way of life is being practised in central Auckland. As Miro (Streetie) reflects:

The gift of the marae. It's like being at home on the marae, any marae will comfort you and that's like being at home. It's normal. There's no tension. The thing about it it's being open with each other, it's being like that on the marae. It's the people themselves.

Miro's account locates people as creators and shapers of spaces. Building on Conradson's (2003) notion of drop-in centres as spaces of care, the marae provides such space for more than just "dropping in"; it is a place to "join in" and "belong in". The culturally textured nature of the marae as a space offers the Streeties a more intimate and recognizable form of interaction than what they experience with traditional social services. This refers to Heidegger's (1927/1962) use of the term *dwelling*, which speaks to the unique connection a person has with a particular place of

familiarity and belonging. In light of this, the marae is not a space that the Streeties simply occupy in a spatial sense; it is a place in which they dwell, a place where they belong, a space of being.

The garden space is not open to the Streeties by chance. It is a space textured by Ngāti Whātua who have a strong tradition of extending manaakitanga to other groups. In continuing this practice through the gardening project and other initiatives, the iwi is able to reaffirm their own collective identity, traditions and ways of being. Matipo explains: "A good thing for us, I guess, think you've done right by your tūpuna [ancestors], that we're still doing it, nothing can beat us, we're still helping people that need our help." This quote reflects an understanding expressed by all three Ngāti Whātua representatives that their resilience as an iwi does not reside solely in their ability to maintain themselves. It is also contained within their tradition of manaaki (hospitality) towards others. Karaka (a marae representative) reflects on the importance of maintaining Ngāti Whātua as an iwi that cares for others:

Coming back here [marae], it's reconnecting back to where they're [Streeties] from, and now, they're like tangata whenua [people of the land/hosts] ... Yea, really just part of us, everybody knows them. I'm leaving [retiring from formal employment in the garden] in two weeks, and I was saying to everyone, "While I'm gone, you have to maintain that manaakitanga for all those who come through here." That must be maintained when I leave.

The manaaki that is passed down from the older generations to the younger exemplifies the iwi's contribution and commitment to addressing structural and systemic histories of dislocation and disruption that Māori have endured through colonization. The enactment of manaakitanga is central to the transformation and continuation of this place into a space of care and being.

## Identity and being

Maintaining a positive sense of self while living on the streets is often difficult, as people are placed at risk of losing themselves to the streets (Snow & Anderson, 1993). Navigating this risk to oneself is widely recognized as being central to surviving street life (Hodgetts, Radley, & Cullen, 2006). For Māori, one's traditional sense of belonging and self is anchored in whānau, hapū and iwi links, often centred around one or several marae, and reinforced through reciprocal acts of manaakitanga that speak to the collective caring of the social group (Mead, 2003). For the Streeties participating in this project, such links have been ruptured. However, they preserve the self by enacting their knowledge of how to conduct themselves somewhere new. In doing so they demonstrate the importance of their *knowing how to being*. We use this grammatically incorrect phrase in English purposefully here to invoke the collective knowledge Māori obtained from childhood and draw upon throughout life to locate our participants' cultural identities relationally and purposefully in their conduct at Ōrākei marae (Rangihau, 1992). The grammatically correct phrase "to be" implies a completed state of knowledge and identity, whereas "how to being" invokes an aspirational and ongoing process consistent with a Māori worldview. How to being also summons processes central to how these men become part of the marae and the marae becomes part of them through the enactment of everyday cultural practices in this space. The knowledge/practice nexus our participants take form through is central to the texturing of the marae as a space of being Māori.

Access to Ōrākei marae affords opportunities for our participants to enact their cultural knowledge of how to being in cultural practices that are familiar and comfortable to them. In the process, the marae garden becomes a physical manifestation of ways of being Māori men, where they can contemplate existential

questions regarding who they are, where they are from, and where they are going through the act of gardening:

I get strength in knowing my te reo and in being here. To me it's very important ... being able to be Māori here is important to my confidence. Know the differences between who I really am or who I am supposed to be in this world of ours. Half the time I am lost [on the streets]. Now, what is my purpose and can I find it here? ... I miss the old days where everything was always set out, especially as a child, Māori way of growing up. Always take the lessons from our korouas [male elders] and kuias [female elders]. Just the structure in life that's hard to keep going. That's what I notice here is rebuilding that confidence in what you were taught back at home ... And at least we know that we contribute to the whenua here. And I have faith in this marae and what they are trying to bring back that structure and we contribute to that, you know. (Miro)

With the marae comes Māori ways of being and preserving the self. Contained within participant accounts is the passing down of cultural knowledge from their elders that locates them within the Māori world. Being on the marae for these men means remembering or re-connecting with one's traditions and heritage through material practices. Through involving themselves in the day-to-day happenings of the marae, the Streeties are able to bridge the gap between the "then" (youth on the marae) and the "now" (current Māori self on the marae) that homelessness has created. Gardening also facilitates the manifestation of identity through self-reflection and cultural reconnection to place. Within the settler world, these men are homeless. However, on the marae these men are referred to as koroua and kaumātua, a reflection of the cultural admiration and reverence the people of Ngāti Whātua have for these men.

More broadly, the Streeties' involvement on the marae demonstrates how people, place and



objects are fundamentally linked within the social fabric of everyday life (Hodgetts et al., 2010), meaning that in matters of identity, these aspects of life cannot be meaningfully separated from one another, reflecting the notion of *pūtahi* (Ritchie, 1992). Moreover, our interactions with everyday objects in such places reproduce cultural ways of being that reaffirm our sense of self and locate us within a broader socio-cultural landscape (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Objects, such as carvings and other traditional forms of artistic expression, communicate various meanings, histories, connections and relationships (Te Awekotuku, Nikora, Rua, & Karapu, 2007). The presence of these objects (see Figure 2) in the garden add to the texturing of this place, creating a familiar setting for the Streeties by marking this garden as a distinctively Māori garden.

The marae and participation in the garden add cultural fibres to a thread that reaffirms the Streeties' identities as valuable Māori men. Research by Boydell, Goering, and Morrell-Bellai (2000) found that people who are homeless tended to view their identities prior to being homeless with positive nostalgia, whereas their current identities as homeless persons are

sometimes undervalued. These men remember a better time in their lives and have circumvented, to a certain degree, the devaluing of the current self through being involved in the gardening project. The threat of becoming disconnected and dislocated from the people, places and objects that ground one's sense of identity can have negative implications for the overall health of people (Durie, 1998; Stolte & Hodgetts, 2013). By engaging with the marae gardening, the men are able to fulfil their cultural needs and form interconnected networks of relatedness that locates the self within a complex socio-cultural world. Our participants spoke to the need for Māori to maintain physical, emotional and spiritual connections with the *whenua*. Gardening aided them in transcending the physical task of planting and nurturing plants to enhance the *mauri* of this place and enact their connections to *Papatūānuku* (Marsden, 2003). Moreover, gardening serves as a medium of remembering cultural, familial and spiritual connections that may have been lost while on the streets.

These men were welcome to make such connections as is reflected in *Ngāti Whātua* affording them considerable autonomy in the



FIGURE 2. Kaitiaki (guardian) of the garden. Photo by Mohi Rua, November 2012.

garden due to their extensive cultural knowledge of how to being and act in this space. The Streeties planned their own patches within the garden and contributed to the space in its entirety in ways that are particularly meaningful for them. The reconnections and relational work that resulted was not lost on the marae staff who recognized the importance of the gardens in bringing these men back into the Māori world of the marae:

Probably re-connection ... it's reminded them of whanaungatanga [relationships based on shared experience or kinship]. The practices that they used to do when they were young, what they thought, from their tūpuna. You know, I still garden the same way my mother did. (Karaka)

The actions that take place in the marae gardens constitute a continuation of actions that stem from the Streeties' earlier lives with their whānau. By joining in collective action in the marae garden, the Streeties re-form hapū-like links with one another and the people of Ngāti Whātua, which anchor their place on the marae. As Karaka notes, "They can be part of a hapū again where they can be cared for and care for others." This is an important statement as it captures how the Streeties are not simply recipients of care. Rather, they are able to sustain their mana as people who care for others through their contributions to sustaining the garden and providing food to the local food bank. In this regard, they receive and offer care simultaneously (Bowlby, 2011). The Streeties make genuine and valuable contributions to the marae that further texture the already significant site of Takaparawhau as a Māori space of being. By becoming involved on the marae, the Streeties were able to anchor themselves to cultural traditions and ways of being that have been rarefied through processes of disconnection and dislocation that are associated with colonization and homelessness (Groot et al., 2011).

### Food and the enactment of Māori culture

Participant accounts also illustrate how the Māori self is not confined to an individual's body. The self extends out into the world through spiritual connections to place and the use of everyday objects that relationships and culture are lived through (see Heidegger, 1927/1962). The role of everyday material objects, such as the boil-up pot and barbeque facilities created by Ngāti Whātua for the Streeties (Figure 3), offer important insights into how Māori ways of being are reproduced through the everyday practices of these men. Much attention has been given to Māori high cultural objects, such as carvings, weaved objects and other such artworks (Te Awekotuku et al., 2007). We would argue that the use of everyday objects within the marae gardens is central to the enactment of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and cultural connectedness, and therefore deserves our attention. Below, we explore how identities, culture and togetherness were lived through the use of everyday objects, such as the boil-up pot (Figure 3), which permit the reproduction of traditional Māori cultural values through food sharing practices during lunchtimes in the gardens.

For Māori, the sharing of food is part of many formal and informal meetings, where hosts demonstrate and build upon their already established mana by providing for others, while building bonds between people (Salmond, 1975). Thus, the consumption of food is not simply the taking in of an inert substance, as food embodies expressions of identity, gift giving practices, and culture (Graham, Hodgetts, & Stolte, in press). The Streeties continue their traditions during lunch in the garden as a way of expressing their cultural connectedness and identities. Lunchtime at the gardens is a time when bonds between people are created and maintained, and where culturally embedded ethical values, such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, manifest. Through a lifetime



FIGURE 3. Garden barbeque and boil-up pot cooking lunch. Photo by Mohi Rua, November 2012.

of navigating Māori spaces of being, our participants have built the capacity to know how to being, which in turn continues to reproduce such spaces and selves in the world.

Rimu (a marae caretaker) constructed the barbeque (Figure 3) and subsequent lunch space for the Streeties and people of the marae. This barbeque and surrounding area represents a physical manifestation of *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga* that embodies the connection and the relationship Rimu has with the Streeties and the marae. This gesture of caring for others has facilitated the Streeties in reproducing further acts of care towards others, such as our research group, through the medium of food. The connections and relationships between people on the marae are lived out through mundane objects, making the barbeque and boil-up pot a part of the people who are connected to them (Heidegger, 1927/1962). The following is taken from our field-notes:

We broke for lunch. The kai [food] came from the garden and was cooked on the barbeque Rimu had built. Miro was head chef and had brought a few sausages along. He was saying that the people from the marae would come

along and use the barbeque. He didn't say this in a way that came across as "This is our BBQ!" but in more of a way to compliment the facility that had become a socially shared space for anyone who wanted to come and cook a feed. (Field-note, Pita King, 21 February 2013)

As people on the marae congregate around the barbeque and take part in lunchtimes in the gardens, the Streeties are embedded within the marae landscape. The preparing and sharing of foods that one became familiar with as a child provides a focal point for care and relationships and is a basis for extending hospitality, care and connection.

Māori spirituality and cultural sustenance are also brought to the fore at lunchtime. It is through daily activities such as lunch breaks and the use of mundane objects that these men can realize themselves as interconnected within the physical, cultural and spiritual world of Māori (see Heidegger, 1927/1962). As noted by Kauri (an ACM representative), the lunch setting facilitates the enactment of the heritage of the Streeties and is a culturally familiar and comforting mundane event. At lunchtimes the

Streeties re-embed themselves within marae life away from the landscape of despair where preparing and sharing such meals is all but impossible:

To be able to come here, you know ... Might do a kai, put the jug on, cleaned up afterwards. So they're playing a useful part and all of that's been washed with, I guess, the aroha and the comfortableness of a marae setting. It's all in that context, which is healing, it's soothing, it's strengthening. (Kauri)

Within the Māori world, the sharing of food comes second to the strengthening of relationships. As Hohepa (cited in Moon, 2005, pp. 24–25) notes: “It was the joining together that was more important than the food ... it was more than just about what we were eating. It was one of the ways we connected with each other.” These cultural practices are epitomized by the Streeties' actions in the way in which we, the manuhiri (visitors), are invited to eat first. In the process, cultural needs take precedence over personal hunger. The formation and continuity of these relationships centre around material objects that provide the opportunities to enact cultural and spiritual practices surrounding food and its consumption.

Lunchtime in this setting reflects how mundane moments in the garden have broader cultural significance for our participants and their sense of belonging. While on the streets, the kinds of food available and the lack of facilities required to prepare food can disconnect Māori who are homeless from being able to reproduce cultural traditions themselves. However, on the marae, these cultural practices were observed in the gardens on a daily basis. Participants could take their time in preparing their food, free of the fear of being moved on. Their sense of self is strengthened through re-joining the tradition of the marae, and is lived through people, place and objects. Lunchtime for these men also provides opportunities to re-enact and reproduce Māori spiritual practices

surrounding the consumption of food. These include karakia that connect these men back to and strengthen their relationship with the atua (Marsden, 2003). Within the Māori world, the sharing of food fulfils “social obligations to the gods and the manuhiri” (Marsden, 2003, p. 9), meaning that no expense is spared in extending hospitality through kai to people. As articulated by Karaka when pointing across to the barbeque:

That there that is for them. It's there so they can have their kai and share their kai and get to know everyone. It's important to do that cos they're Māori and there's a lot to sharing food for Māori.

Through such cultural practices, we see the broader reproduction of Māori culture and the cultivation of a place for these displaced men within their own traditions and cultural heritage.

## Discussion

Ngāti Whātua's efforts to reclaim their land, re-texture it as a distinctively Māori space, and invite the Streeties to be a part of the process have wider implications. Traditionally, the success of Māori gardens was not only measured in instrumental advances in feeding people, but also in terms of the social advances and nurturing human connectedness (Kawharu, 1975). Culturally patterned relationships and material acts documented through our analysis constitute a process through which the marae garden is reproduced as a Māori space of being. In this place, our homeless participants can cultivate a sense of re-connection and self as Māori men who belong. By taking part in gardening on the marae, these Streeties were able to carve out a place to belong by contributing to the reconciliation of this place. Gardening provided a vehicle for weaving the Streeties back into the material, social and cultural space of a marae.

Gardening on a marae brings normality, predictability, and flow, and aids in the process of remembering cultural traditions and ways of being that can become lost for our participants when they are living on the streets. The marae is a place to belong, where great pride is taken in being able to contribute in order to solidify one's place within the socio-cultural world. The marae is a Māori space of being that offers routine and respite from the stresses of life on the streets. Ōrākei marae is experienced by the Streeties taking part in this research as a judgement-free space (Trussell & Mair, 2010) in which they have some control over their daily activities and are treated with respect. The creation of such a sense of control and reciprocity is increasingly recognized as important in addressing homelessness (Johnson, Hodgetts, & Nikora, 2012).

Finally, we have explored homeless men's gardening activities on a marae to shed new light on the reproduction of culturally patterned ways of being through emplaced day-to-day practices. We have shown that there are novel ways in which the issue of Māori homelessness can be addressed through the building of genuine, meaningful and ongoing relationships between homeless organizations and local iwi. By creating a garden space, our participants are able to re-enter the Māori world and mutually benefit from engaging in reciprocal acts of care that supports their well-being and the well-being of others. Particularly for homeless Māori, the marae is a place where a sense of self can be strengthened through participation in the daily on-goings of marae life. The marae is where these Streeties can find a place to stand and belong for a time.

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the photographic and verbal materials produced through our interactions with them.

### Glossary

aroha	love
atua	god/gods
hapū	sub-tribe
hongi	pressing of the noses to symbolize the breath of life
iwi	tribe
kai	food
kaitiaki	guardian
karakia	prayer
kaumātua	male elder of status
koroua	male elder
kuia	female elder
mana	authority/influence/status/spiritual power
manaaki	hospitality
manaakitanga	caring for others
manawhenua	territorial rights
manuhiri	visitors
marae	communal complex used for everyday Māori life
mauri	life force
Ngāti Whātua	local Auckland tribe
Papatūānuku	earth mother
pōwhiri	welcoming ceremony
pūtahi	confluence
Takaparawhau	Bastion Point
tangata whenua	people of the land/hosts
Te Ao Mārama	the world of being
Te Korekore	the world of potential being
Te Pō	the world of becoming
te reo Māori	the Māori language
tūpuna	ancestors
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
wairuatanga	spirituality
whaikōrero	formal oration
whakapapa	genealogy

whānau	family (including extended family)
whanaungatanga	relationships based on shared experience or kinship
whenua	land

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