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**Māori Wards in Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa:
Liminal Local Government Democracy**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Māori representation within the highly contested arena of local government democracy in Aotearoa New Zealand. Limitations of the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy are considered at various spatial scales. Legislative changes to enable councils to establish Māori wards were launched in the early 2000s. Māori wards are defined locations where those on the Māori electoral roll vote for Māori ward candidates, resulting in dedicated Māori representation at elected member level. Until 2021 when the legislation was amended to remove the ability for public referenda to challenge council decisions on establishing Māori wards, however, little change occurred. Since then, 35 councils have established Māori wards for the 2022 local body elections.

The research asks how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? To explore this question, the empirical chapters are framed around three key aspects of liminality; the in-between positioning of Māori wards reflecting a time of change; this liminal space being a time where unease and discomfort is experienced by some as Indigenous disparity is addressed; and the threshold positioning of Māori wards as a place of opportunity and creativity, where new ideas and practices may be considered. Geographical concepts of (un)belonging, exclusion and deep colonising reveal challenges for Māori participation at the level of local government decision-making.

The research uses an Indigenous methodological framework, Te Ara Tika, based on a framework of Kaupapa Māori, and developed specifically for non-Māori researchers. Māori wards have been widely debated in the media, particularly at the time of changes to the Māori ward legislation in 2021. Thematic analysis of 122 media representations of the Māori ward debate constitutes part of the empirical evidence. Fourteen individual interviews with local government representatives, including elected Council members from Tauranga Moana and members of Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership, were conducted. Additionally, participant observations took place at three public meetings on Māori wards.

The way the current form of local government representative democracy impacts Māori representation is identified. The research demonstrates how local government continues to act as a tool of colonialism by privileging Western worldviews, institutions, and systems. The research finds that Māori wards are liminal democratic options that are both decolonising and deep colonising. Evidence shows that the liminal space of Māori wards is an opportunity to consider options for a way forward to reimagine local government as a place of belonging underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Ao Māori principles.

The research builds on decolonisation literatures that seek to unsettle the hegemony of Eurocentric institutions and systems within colonised countries such as Aotearoa. Providing a critical spatial perspective on the intersection of democracy, colonisation and Indigeneity, this thesis advances decolonising geographical knowledges. In particular, this research advances debates about democratic processes, exposing ways in which colonially-based local authority democratic mechanisms contribute to under-representation issues. A reimagined local government allows current hegemonic approaches to be rethought and provides insights for a shift towards genuine decolonising processes.

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Dedicated to my amazing nana, my parents Norm and Noreen, to Roger for your support during my master's degree, and all my precious children, grandchildren and great grandchildren – Love you to the max!

And a special dedication to our beautiful Josh, lost tragically during writing of this thesis.

Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini
*My success should not be bestowed onto me alone,
as it was not individual success but success of a collective*

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Glossary - Kupu Māori

The definitions used in this glossary emanate from a range of sources including:

- *Te Aka Māori Dictionary / The online Māori Dictionary* (Moorfield, n.d.);
- *The Dictionary of the Māori Language* (Williams, 2000); and
- *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori* (Ryan, 1997).

Please note that there are multiple meanings and translations available for many of these words. In most cases, I have presented the most common translation(s) of the word or those most applicable to this research.

Aotearoa	‘Aotearoa,’ meaning ‘land of the long white cloud,’ was the name applied by some Māori to part or all of the North Island in the nineteenth century (McLintock, 1966). It is now common to refer to the country as Aotearoa New Zealand or New Zealand / Aotearoa, shortened to Aotearoa for the purpose of this thesis unless New Zealand is within a quote or more well known in the context.
Atua	Ancestor of ongoing influence, spirit being, God / gods.
Awa	Rivers.
Hapū	Subtribe, usually linked to a common ancestor; pregnant.
He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tīreni of 1835	The Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand.
Hine-ahu-one	Earth-formed woman.
Hui	Gathering, meeting.
Iwi	Tribe, a large group of people sharing a common ancestry and associated with a distinct territory.
Kai	Food, to eat.
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship.
Kānohi-ki-te-kānohi	Face-to-face.
Karakia	Prayer, chant.
Kaumātua	Respected elder of any gender.

Kaupapa	Strategy, philosophy, topic, project.
Kaupapa Māori	Māori ideology.
Kaupapa Māori research	Kaupapa Māori as research, is ‘culturally safe’; involves the ‘mentorship’ of elders; is culturally relevant and appropriate while satisfying the rigour of research; and is undertaken by a Māori researcher, not a researcher who happens to be Māori.
Kawa	The values, rules and institutions through which people govern themselves / protocol.
Kāwanatanga	Governance.
Kōhanga reo	Kōhanga reo are language nests that care for young children in a Māori cultural environment. Lessons are conducted in te reo Māori, and kōhanga reo are whānau-led.
Kuia	Elder (female).
Kura	Schools.
Mahi	Work, labour.
Mana	Integrity, prestige, justice and equity.
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, cultural and social responsibility.
Mana Māori	Māori autonomy.
Mana whenua	People of the land. Authority over land and the right to occupy those lands. Land (or whenua) is a tūpuna, an ancestor, through whom mana has been acquired through whakapapa by the modern day descendants.
Māori	The Indigenous people of Aotearoa. The term Māori is problematic in that it only came to be through colonisation, as a term to describe the collective Indigenous population of Aotearoa. Prior to colonisation, communities were known by their iwi and hapū affiliations. Additionally, the term is not used in this thesis as a generalisation or to suggest ‘Māori’ are a homogenous population; however, it is employed to collectively identify the tangata whenua of Aotearoa.

Marae	A Māori ceremonial courtyard of communal buildings with an ancestral house as the focal point. It also refers to the general complex of buildings and land.
Maramataka	The Māori lunar calendar.
Marau ā-kura	Local curriculum.
Mataawaka	Māori living within the area unrelated to local iwi.
Matatika Māori	Māori research ethics.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge.
Matike Mai Aotearoa	The independent working group on constitutional transformation.
Mihimihi	To greet, or speech of greeting.
Paepae	The place on the marae where elders stand to deliver their speeches.
Pākēha	The term 'Pākēhā' is used in the thesis to mean the European settlers and their descendants and subsequent immigrants to Aotearoa who are all covered under the terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and allowed to settle here under the terms of that agreement (Came & Zander, 2015).
Papatūānuku	Earth Mother.
Pepeha	A form of words linking a person ancestrally with the communities and physical features of a particular landscape.
Pūrākau	A traditional form of storytelling that has also modified into contemporary methodology.
Ranginui	Sky Father.
Rangatiratanga	The right to exercise authority / self-determination, sovereignty, ownership.
Rōhe	Boundary, margin, territory, region.
Rūnanga	Public, community assembly.
Taha wairua	This is about who and what you are, where you have come from and where you are going. Your spiritual essence, your life force.
Take (rāranga take)	Issue, agenda, content.

Tāne-mahuta	The god of the forest.
Tangata whenua	The Indigenous people of the land.
Tangihanga	The Māori ceremony to mourn the dead.
Taniwha	Supernatural creatures in Māori tradition, similar to serpents and dragons in other cultures.
Taonga	Treasures, including physical, social, cultural and intellectual.
Tauīwi	Landed or landing people. Non-Indigenous people of Aotearoa.
Tautoko	Support.
Te Ao Māori	Māori world view. The Māori world, including Māori language, rituals, processes, practices, sites of importance, and ties to whānau, hapū and iwi.
Te Ika-a Māui	The North Island of Aotearoa.
Te Moana-a-Toi / Tauranga Moana	The Māori name for the Tauranga Moana area.
Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership (Te Rangapū)	This committee comprises 17 representatives from each of the hapū and iwi in the Tauranga City Council area to provide a forum to work with Tauranga City Council.
Te reo Māori	The Māori language.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi.
Te Waipounamu	The South Island of Aotearoa, greenstone water.
Te Whanganui-a-Tara	Wellington City.
Tika	Research design.
Tikanga	Meaning, custom, Māori protocols. It can also be described as guidelines around what is 'right', rules, methods, approaches, habits, rights, authority and control.
Tikanga Māori	The body of rules developed by Māori to govern themselves.
Tino rangatiratanga	The right to self-determination.
Tohunga	Priestly expert, skilled person, specialist.
Tone	Request, pitch.
Tuku rawa atu	Absolutely.
Tūmanako	Aspirations.

Tūpuna	Ancestor.
Tūrangawaewae	Place of belonging through whakapapa, kinship, where one has a right to stand.
Urupā	Burial grounds.
Wāhi tapu	A place sacred to Māori in the traditional, spiritual, religious, ritual, or mythological sense.
Wairua	Spirit, soul, spirituality.
Wairuatanga	The holistic wellbeing of an individual and the spiritual synergy of the collective with which an individual identifies.
Waka	Canoe.
Wānanga	Tertiary education provided in a Māori cultural context.
Whakamana	Uplift.
Whakapapa	Genealogy, descent lines, kinship.
Whakapono	Faith.
Whakataukī	Proverb, saying.
Whānau	Extended family, give birth.
Whānaungatanga	Relationships.
Whenua	Land, country, placenta.

Chapter One: The challenge for Māori representation in local government

Mā wei e tō te waka o te mātauranga?

Māku e tō, māu e tō, mā te whakarongo e tō.

Who will bear the canoe of knowledge?

I will, you will, all who listen will.

Source: Bedford & McKinnon, (2005).

This thesis critically considers the issue of Māori representation in local government democracy in Aotearoa and Tauranga Moana within the context of conflicting power relations and the ongoing colonisation of Māori. Local government in Aotearoa is highly contested, within which the struggle for Māori representation is ongoing. The proportion of Māori represented at elected member level in local government, while not monitored officially, is regularly noted as low (Hayward, 2011a; Vowles & Hayward, 2021; Webb-Liddall, 2019a). To address this issue, sweeping legislative changes to increase Māori representation in local government were launched in the early 2000s. The legislation introduced the provision of Māori wards that could be established in local jurisdictions. Māori local government wards establish areas where only those on the Māori electoral roll vote for Māori ward candidates, resulting in dedicated Māori representation at elected member level. While Māori wards were initiated as a possible solution to the low representation of Māori in local government, the same legislation included a provision that ultimately served as an impediment to the establishment of Māori wards throughout Aotearoa. Clause 19Z A-G of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA) stated that if a council decided to create a Māori ward or constituency, five percent of electors in the local district could petition the council to hold a binding referendum to approve or disapprove their establishment. This provision saw majority community votes overrule the council decision in nearly all cases where councils had decided to establish Māori wards.

Recent decades have been characterised by immense change where the substance of long held institutions and ways of thinking are being challenged. Globally, Indigenous¹ worldviews

¹ The terms 'Indigenous' and 'Indigeneity' are highly political terms. For the purposes of this research the definition of Indigenous peoples proposed by United Nations Special Rapporteur Martinez Cobo in 1987

and rights are receiving attention, and injustices are beginning to be addressed. In Aotearoa, central government has been noted internationally for its inclusion of dedicated seats for Māori, which has ensured some Māori representation at the national level (Fleras, 1985; New South Wales Government, n.d.). At local government level, however, in spite of the legislative changes in the early 2000s, such Indigenous representation is not assured. The struggle for Māori to be represented in local government is an area that has been highlighted for change, with challenges including those from the Human Rights Commission in 2010 and the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 2016. Taking steps to address this issue, in 2021 the Labour Government amended local government legislation by removing the LEA clauses (19Z A-G) that had hindered councils to establish Māori wards, enabling councils to ensure dedicated Māori representation as elected members. In this context, this research considers the complex power relations of Māori representation in the places of local government democracy in Aotearoa and in Tauranga Moana specifically.

This research follows the tradition of critical geographers who, in examining issues of social (in)justice and political (in)equality, consider such things as the importance of Indigeneity, ethnicity, class and gender. I adopt a decolonising geographical approach to deconstruct discourses associated with the democratic electoral system on which local government is founded and within which it operates. Such deconstruction sets the foundation for a new discussion of local government systems. In particular, this research advances debates about the role of the democratic mechanisms of local government in shaping under-representation for Māori. Critical geography includes a focus on the ongoing multi-scalar relations of power that continue to marginalise Indigenous bodies.

While acknowledging that there are multiple, complex debates that continue to revolve around the meaning of space and place, sense of place and human experiences of place are key concepts in geography (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Jones et al., 2015; Massey, 1994; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2009). The meanings of place are contested politically and theoretically.

applies: “those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that have developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them” (cited in Medby, 2019: 1282). For more information on the definition of Indigenous and Indigeneity, see Chapter Three. There is a politics to this word and its representation. In this thesis I have followed the examples of Johnson et al. (2007) and Coombes et al. (2012a) and made an editorial decision that the words, ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Indigeneity’ should be capitalised in the same manner that words such as ‘European’ and ‘Pākehā’ are capitalised.

Conflicts over ownership, activities in a place, and the meanings or significance of place are publicly debated and contested through policy, law, and acts of transgression (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2009). Theoretical debates are about whether the politics of place and space are “regressive or progressive,” and whether the politics of place leads to inclusivity or whether it results in power relations that “divide, marginali[s]e, and oppress” (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2009: 185). Rather than being limited to geographically defined spaces, places contain “entanglements of wider social, economic and political relations” (Jones et al., 2015: 97). The identities of places are socially constructed through the exchange of ideas and perceptions, and through representations in the media and popular culture (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Johnson, 2008a). Within this context, and employing critical engagement with democracy, this research is positioned at the intersection of Māori geography, Indigeneity and geopolitics (Gibson, 2013).

As a framework to critically examine Māori representation in local government, this research employs the concept of liminality. Liminality, theorised in social anthropology first by van Gennep in 1960 and later by Turner in 1969, refers to a ‘place’ when boundaries or borders are crossed and an ‘in-between’ space is created (McConnell, 2017). Three dynamics of the concept of liminality outlined by McConnell (2017) are used to explore the research topic. These dynamics include: liminality as a space of geopolitical transformation during times of change; liminality as a site of uncertainty, where unease and discomfort can be experienced as people and situations undergo a time of change; and, liminality as a place of creativity where new ideas and practices may be considered.

In applying liminality to the thesis topic, three key factors show that Māori wards occupy a liminal and precarious space in local body governance. Firstly, the Minister for Local Government has noted that Māori wards are an interim measure to address Māori representation while local government undergoes comprehensive review (Mahuta, 2021). Secondly, Māori wards may be disestablished if a change of government occurs following the general election scheduled for late 2023. Thirdly, Māori wards may also be disestablished through the six-yearly electoral review councils are legally required to undertake. These possibilities show that Māori wards occupy a liminal space, a place on the threshold.

The topic of Māori wards has been presented in a polarising manner through the media, and debated with strong opinions for and against, particularly around changes to the Māori ward

legislation in 2021. While the media has tended to focus on this polarisation of views, this thesis considers the in-between space Māori representation occupies in local government. The thesis investigates what happens at that liminal space to consider different ways to think about Māori representation in local government and reflect on the possibilities of decolonising local government. This investigation is situated in Aotearoa and includes a focus on Māori representation in local government in Te Moana-a-Toi / the Bay of Plenty city of Tauranga Moana.

The question the research explores is how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? To explore that question, the research aims are to:

1. Critique and challenge the limitations of the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy and its impact on Māori representation and belonging in local government at the scale of the nation;
2. Apply the unease and discomfort that characterises liminality to the status of Māori wards in local government within Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa more broadly; and,
3. Use the liminal position of Māori representation in local government and the innovative possibilities of that positioning to reimagine decolonising local government across Aotearoa.

A geographical approach to the research enables targeted focus on four particular aspects of the relationship between people and place. Firstly, the 'local' in local government relates to particular places and points towards feelings of belonging for those who live within a given locality. Secondly, in illuminating senses of belonging, a geographical approach identifies how the Westminster system of local government marginalises mana whenua; people who have been in that locality for generations with significant whakapapa ties to the land. A geographical lens highlights how the long-term connection mana whenua have to their locality is a source of knowledge potentially vital to local government decision-making. Thirdly, the concept of place is of major importance to many Indigenous peoples. For example, in Aotearoa the significance of place to identity is evident through the expression of a pepeha. A pepeha or mihimihi is a personal introduction linking a person ancestrally with the physical features of a particular landscape, locating the person in the geography of

a place or a specific locality. The pepeha acknowledges connections to such physical landscape features as a mountain or a river, while also recognising family history. Smith (2004: 12) explains that Māori attachment to place goes further than the Western concept of place as it includes “features which are peculiar to Māori interpretations of land and space” such as whakapapa, whānaungatanga, wairuatanga and atuātanga. Thus, by acknowledging tūpuna and whānau, as well as landscape features, a person identifies their tūrangawaewae, their place to stand (Gray, 2016; Mikahere-Hall, 2017; Shep et al., 2021). The fourth aspect of the research that lends itself to a geographic approach raises questions about options for a way forward for local government. A geographic lens illuminates the potential for a local government system that pertains to the cultural, spiritual, environmental, economic, and heritage expressions and realities that characterise a specific physical location.

Written out of a concern for social (in)justice, this thesis draws inspiration from decolonising literature. This research, particularly the adoption of concepts of decolonisation, is strongly influenced by the exemplary work of Professor Dame Evelyn Stokes, a distinguished scholar, historical geographer and founding member of the University of Waikato. Across a career that extended from the 1960s to the 1990s, Stokes pushed the boundaries of knowledge within the context of Aotearoa (Johnston et al., 2023). Stokes’ work played a major role in shaping much of the debate in contemporary critical geography. Indeed, such was the scope of Stokes’ interest that, while identifying as Pākehā, her writing influenced contributions to Māori geographies, Indigenous geographies, feminist geographies, historical geographies, and geographical education. These contributions were understood through Stokes’ adoption of a Māori-centred approach to scholarship, with active participation, leadership and research advancing understanding of the links between the people and the land (Bedford, 2001).²

This thesis recognises that Indigenous peoples around the world continue to experience colonisation in various ways. The research draws on key decolonising literature and theory to assist understanding and analysis. Drawing from her experience in the field of Māori education and health, Smith (2021) maintains that decolonising requires the divesting of colonial power through a long-term process that addresses all aspects of societal formation,

² For more detail on Stoke’s work, see Chapter Two.

including bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological concerns. In addition to the work in Aotearoa of Stokes and Smith, this research draws on Māori geographers such as August (2005), Martel et al. (2022), Mokaraka-Harris et al. (2016, 2017) and Simmonds (2011, 2014), who provide a narrative of the progress of Māori perspectives in geographical commentary. The thesis also draws on the politics of Indigeneity as theorised in the context of Aotearoa by Fleras and Spoonley (1999), Maaka and Fleras (2005), and O’Sullivan (2011, 2014, 2017, 2018). Additionally, the decolonising work of international geographers such as Barry and Legacy (2023); Barry and Agyeman (2020); de Leeuw (2012, 2013, 2018), Noxolo (2017), Porter and Barry, (2016); and Radcliffe (2017 a & b, 2018, 2019, 2022) provide useful insights on how the practices of Western knowledge institutions such as the prioritising of Western knowledge contribute to the marginalisation of people, places, and thinking. For example, Noxolo (2017: 318), whose research considers postcolonial theories and cultural geography with a focus on Caribbean and British cultural practices, explains how a decolonising geographical approach focuses on the way the “colonial past is still active in the inequalities of the present.” McConnell’s (2017) use of the concept of liminality underpins the application of the concept to this research. Additionally, the concept of deep colonising, as drawn from the works of Gibbs (2003), Rose (1996, 1999), and Veracini (2011), also influenced the empirical analysis. Deep colonising refers to ways in which mechanisms designed to encourage Indigenous inclusion can further entrench the colonising system by increasing Indigenous people’s acceptance of the overall colonising system in which the exclusion is situated.

Political science scholars such as Bargh (2016, 2017, 2021), Hayward (1999, 2003, 2011a & b, 2021), Webster and Cheyne (2017), Webster and Fa’apoi (2017), and Shaw (2011) have been strong advocates on issues around Māori under-representation in local government in Aotearoa. Their work has considered the structure and impacts of the Westminster electoral system, explored what the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) (see Appendix One)³ means for Māori in terms of representation in local government, and advocated for

³ The two titles recognise that there were two versions of this treaty, an English language version and a te reo Māori version. Within this thesis I refer to the Māori text of Te Tiriti o Waitangi instead of the English version (The Treaty of Waitangi) because it is the Māori version that was signed by Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson and a majority of Māori rangatira (chiefs) on 6 February 1840. It is also the text of the Treaty recognised within international law (Hayward, 2018). In this thesis, the full title is hereafter shortened to Te Tiriti unless the full version is more appropriate.

interventions such as Māori wards. In investigating the tensions around efforts to increase Māori representation in local government in Aotearoa, it is argued that the geopolitics of belonging and the concept of liminality are useful frameworks for understanding these debates. This thesis, however, goes beyond existing research to explore the liminal space of Māori representation in local government and the risks of deep colonising through mechanisms such as Māori wards that 'add' Māori to local government.

1.1 Positionality, methodology and research methods

After graduating from the University of Waikato with a master's degree in 2002 I spent nearly 20 years working as a strategic planner for local government in Aotearoa. This comprised employment at Hamilton City Council from 2002 to 2005, Bay of Plenty District Council in 2005, ten years at Waipa District Council from 2006 to 2016, and then a year contract work at Tauranga City Council (TCC) from 2017 to 2018. Working in local government as it embraced its new responsibilities to tangata whenua (Indigenous people of the land) under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), was the beginning of my professional interest in the involvement of tangata whenua in local government decision-making.

Completed within the field of human geography, my master's degree introduced me to feminist geography and associated critical perspectives on spatial concepts and experiences. As noted by Women and Gender in Geography Research Network (WGGRN) (2019: 8), feminist geographers in Aotearoa:

[a]re keenly aware of inclusive practices which enable all voices to be heard on their own terms. For scholars of Māori and Pacific heritage, feminist geographies are intertwined in anti- and de-colonising projects to (re)assert knowledges, practices and subjectivities rendered largely invisible through colonisation.

The colonisation of Aotearoa shaped current political systems, and the global push for a decolonisation of knowledge and systems that help perpetuate colonisation has incentivised this research topic. I draw from theorists' work on the geopolitics of belonging to argue that the current local government model sets boundaries around who belongs and who is out of place in relation to council decision-making. Using evidence from the literature I argue that tangata whenua will be represented within local authority decision-making when there are elected representatives who embody Te Ao Māori. Furthermore, I argue that in a local

government based on Te Tiriti, Te Ao Māori would be given equal weight along with the Western system, ensuring appropriate Indigenous representation in Aotearoa.

I align with the idea of McConnell (2017: 140) that geographers often choose to conduct research around the “marginal, the exceptional and the transgressive.” This research adopts the stance documented by Came and Humphries (2014), scholars who argue for the necessary transformation of institutionalised racism within Aotearoa. Came and Humphries (2014) highlight the validity of scholars making an ‘activist choice’ in their work. I have a strong sense of social justice, consciousness that shapes my passion to advance Māori empowerment and opportunities for self-determination. I acknowledge that there may be disadvantages to me approaching this topic as a Pākehā from Aotearoa without lived Māori experience of marginalisation and discrimination. I am, however, aware of my position, and feel that my experience and knowledge of local government offers a useful lens to this topic. Having been brought up and schooled in Western academic institutions, I recognise that I have been advantaged as a Pākehā. While I align myself in many ways with Māori, I am not Indigenous to this country. As a fourth generation Pākehā in Aotearoa, however, I acknowledge that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document of Aotearoa that established the terms and conditions of my ancestors’ settlement in this country (see my pepeha, Figure 1.1).

In terms of methodology, this research employed Te Ara Tika, an Indigenous methodological approach unique to Aotearoa that operates within a Kaupapa Māori ethical framework (Came, 2013). The qualitative methodology uses a triangulation of qualitative methods, including 14 semi-structured interviews, participant observation of three public meetings, and thematic analysis of 122 media articles.

Establishing a research whānau was of vital importance to the success of this research and ensured cultural safety for myself and my participants. My research whānau initially was to consist of three Māori employed at three councils. For various reasons, including Covid-19 restrictions, the research was narrowed to only cover Tauranga Moana, and my research whānau was reduced to a Māori advisor from TCC.

In terms of the site chosen for the research, there were several reasons why I selected Tauranga Moana. The demographics of Tauranga Moana have characteristics that make it

unique in Aotearoa. Tauranga Moana was once known as a beach city which has been experiencing huge population growth in recent years, particularly due to its “climate, environment and vibrant job market” (Selwood, cited in Houpt, 2022). Contributing to the rapid growth of the city is the appeal it has as a retirement destination. Due to a number of factors, including white sand beaches and a warm, sunny climate, Tauranga Moana has become renowned as a great place to retire. The statistics bear this out with Tauranga Moana having a higher median age than the rest of the country as a whole (40.4 years compared to median age for Aotearoa as a whole being 37.4 years) (StatsNZ, 2023). The conservative values of the majority older Pākehā population has possibly contributed to representations of Tauranga Moana as a ‘racist’ city (Kino, 2019; Shand, 2019; Spoonley, 1987; Tebbutt, 2021a). Additionally, at local government level, behavioural issues among Tauranga City Council elected members led to the appointment of commissioners to replace the elected members by the Minister for Local Government Nanaia Mahuta in December 2020 (Kelway, 2020). This decision was only the fourth time a Government had replaced a council with an appointed commission, and the decision followed an independent report that found significant governance issues in the council (Motion, 2021).

A key factor leading to my choice of Tauranga Moana for the research was that during my 2017-18 year working at TCC on contract as Senior Policy Advisor I had built relationships with elected members and key staff, including the person who became my research advisor. This gave me an opening to be able to do the research there. My TCC contact was of immense value to the research project and understood and completely fulfilled what was required in that role. For example, they advised me on the best approach to recruit participants, trialled my interview questions, introduced me and my research to prospective participants, provided guidance on the research topic, methods and analysis, and commented on research findings where appropriate.

Ko Mauao rāua ko Te Rae o Pāpāmoa ōku maunga
Ko Tauranga moana tōku moana
Ko Kaituna tōku awa
Ko Mermaid tōku waka
Ko Ngāti Pākehā tōku iwi
Ko Pāpāmoa moana tōku marae
Ko Sandra Des Forges tōku ingoa
Nō Tauranga Moana ahau
Mount Maunganui and Pāpāmoa hills are my mountains
Tauranga is my ocean
The Kaituna is my river
The Mermaid is the boat that carried some of my ancestors to Aotearoa
I am Pākehā
I feel at home in Pāpāmoa
My name is Sandra des Forges
I live in Tauranga Moana

Figure 1.1 My pepeha

1.2 The potential for change

The challenging colonial history of Aotearoa, and the Eurocentric attitude of white superiority that underlies injustices towards Indigenous people and their cultures, contributes to the struggle for Māori representation in local government. Aotearoa is an island nation in the south Pacific with a British colonial cultural infrastructure established by force in the decades following the 1840 signing of the country's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) (Came et al., 2017). Low representation by Māori in local government is of concern regarding governance rights signed up to in Te Tiriti and reflects ongoing colonisation. Pertaining to governance rights, the Māori language version of Te Tiriti, which contains the most signatures, makes it clear that the Māori nations would retain tino rangatiratanga over their lands and treasures while giving kāwanatanga rights to the British Crown. Ruru and Kohu-Morris (2020) explain, however, that while Māori may have initially

accepted the intent of Te Tiriti as a way for the British to control the often lawless British men arriving in Aotearoa, the British prioritised the English version of the Treaty of Waitangi, which documented the transfer of sovereignty of Aotearoa from Māori to the British. This saw the British transpose to Aotearoa their “dominant legal traditions of governance, including bringing to the fore their doctrine of parliamentary supremacy” (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020: 556). Following breaches of Te Tiriti, British colonial systems were instituted, and Māori culture, economy, philosophy, and spirituality were marginalised (Came et al., 2017).

Although Māori comprised 17.1 per cent of the total population in Aotearoa in 2021,⁴ and Māori are a youthful population who make up a growing proportion of new voters, their representation as elected members in local government has previously been low in relation to their proportion in the population (Hayward, 2011a; Statistics New Zealand / Tatauranga Aotearoa (Stats NZ), 2021; Vowles & Hayward, 2021; Webb-Liddall, 2019a). Between 2002 and 2021, Māori still struggled to get elected to local government councils⁵ in their own right, and most councillors for local government in Aotearoa in 2019 were noted as being male, white and aged between 50 years and 70 years (Mitchell, 2019; Vowles & Hayward, 2021). Despite changes to the original LGA and the LEA in the early 2000s to address the issue, progress to include Māori at elected member level in local government has been slow (Hayward, 2011a).

The establishment of specific Māori wards is one way to ensure representation of Māori in local government decision-making. The LEA in 2001 included the provision to allow a territorial authority to establish Māori wards or regional councils to establish Māori constituencies (see Figures 1.2 and 1.3 for Council boundaries (CoreLogic NZ Limited, 2023; Local Government New Zealand [LGNZ], n.d.).

⁴ Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups with which a person identifies or to which they have a sense of belonging. It is a measure of cultural affiliation (in contrast to race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship). Ethnicity is self-perceived, and a person can belong to more than one ethnic group (Stats NZ, 2023).

⁵ The terms local government and council are used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

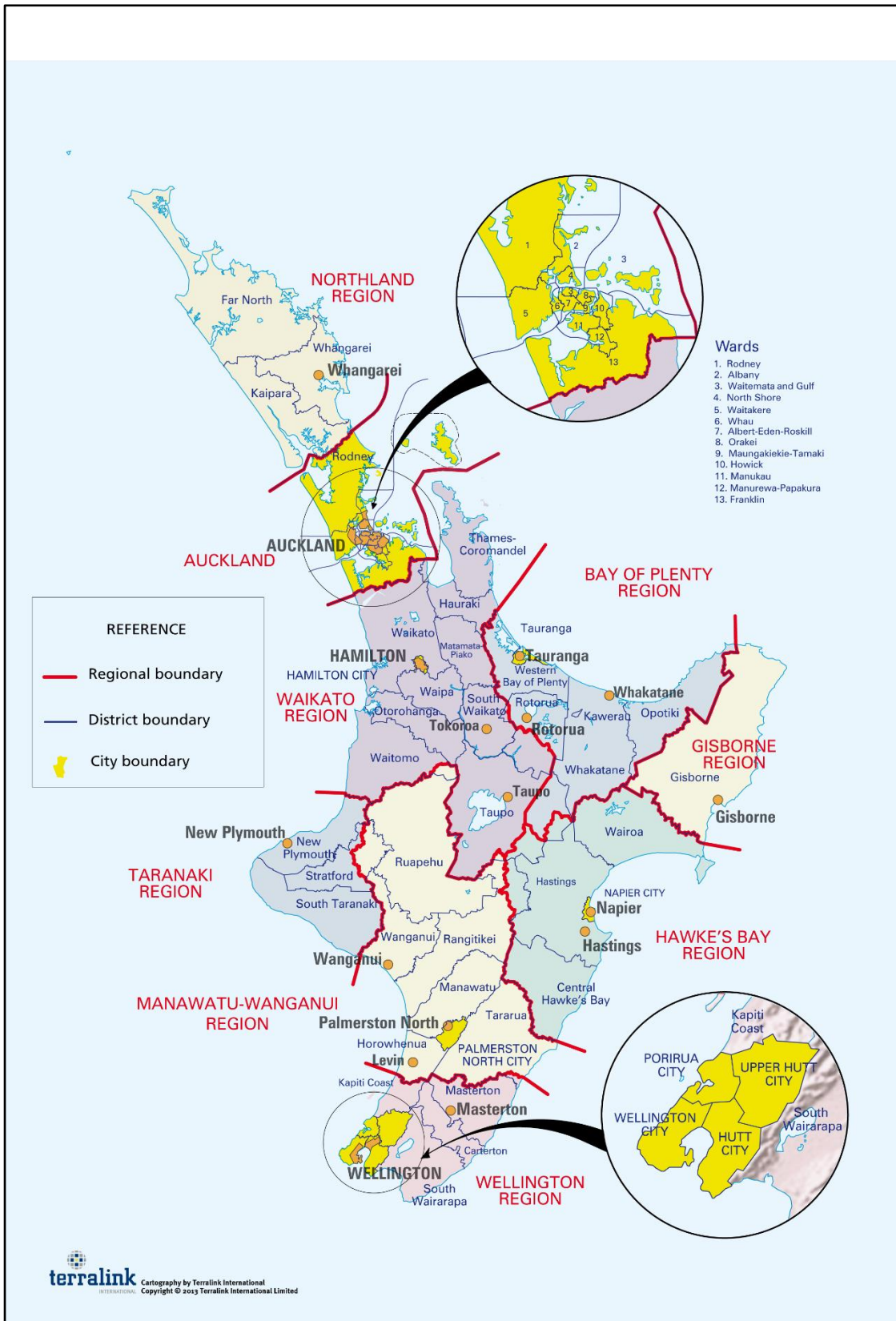


Figure 1.2 Council boundaries. Te-Ika-a Maui / The North Island of Aotearoa.
Source: Reprinted with permission, CoreLogic NZ Limited (2023). All rights reserved.

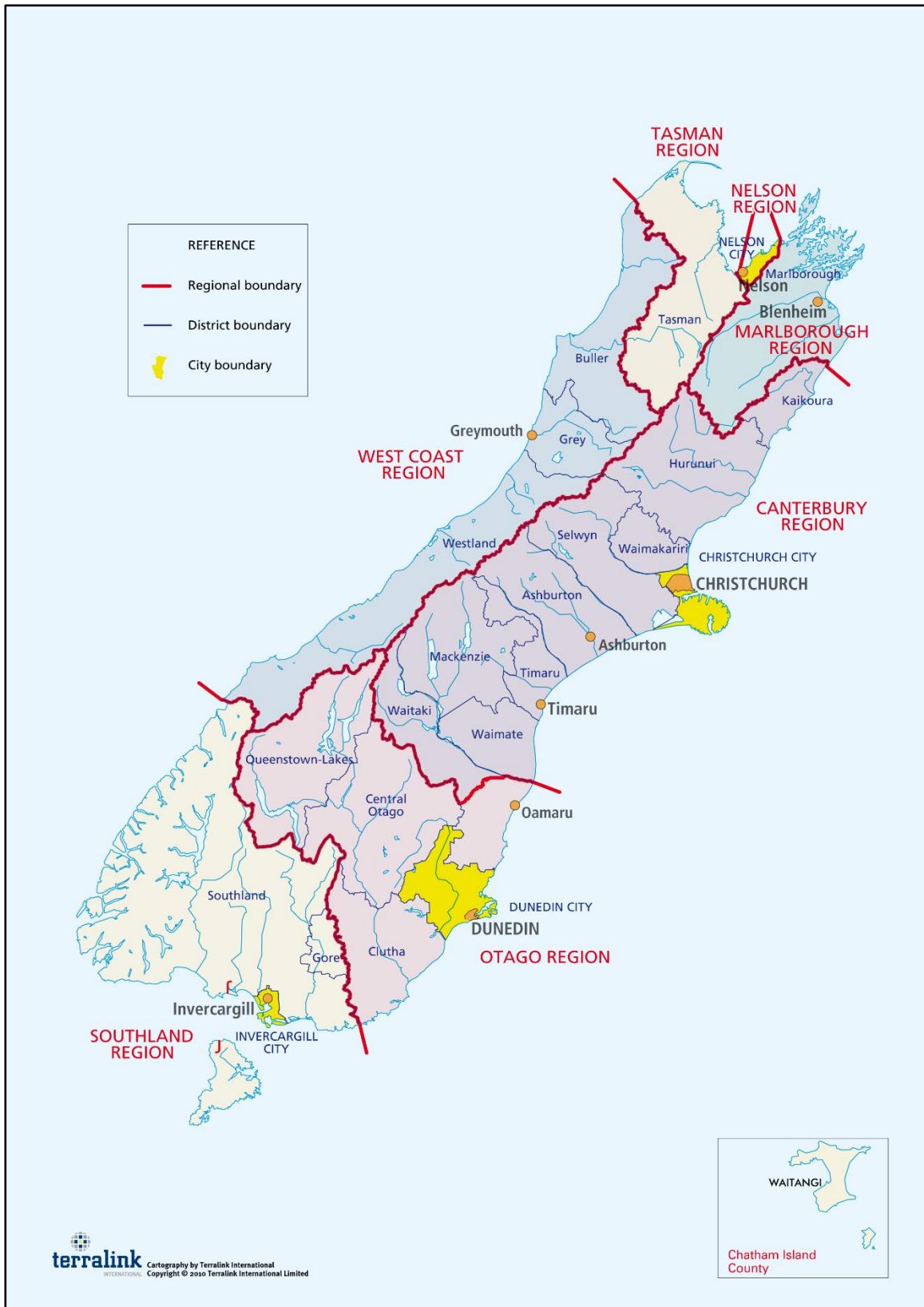


Figure 1.3 Council boundaries. Te Waipounamu / The South Island of Aotearoa.
 Source: Reprinted with permission, CoreLogic NZ Limited (2023). All rights reserved.

Despite these legislative provisions, by 2021 councils found it almost impossible to establish a Māori ward or constituency. This difficulty arose from the polling provision in the LEA (O’Connell Rapira, 2018). The landslide victory of the Labour Party in Aotearoa’s 2020 general election enabled reform in some areas that had previously proved politically difficult (Khalil, 2020; Electoral Commission, 2020). One of the early initiatives following the Labour victory was the removal of the clause in the LEA that allowed community referenda to overturn council decisions to establish Māori wards. The changes to local government legislation in 2021 resulted in 35 councils opting to establish Māori wards for the 2022 local body elections.

Figures 1.4 and 1.5 illustrate the constituencies that resolved to establish Māori wards and those that voted against their establishment for the 2022 local body elections.

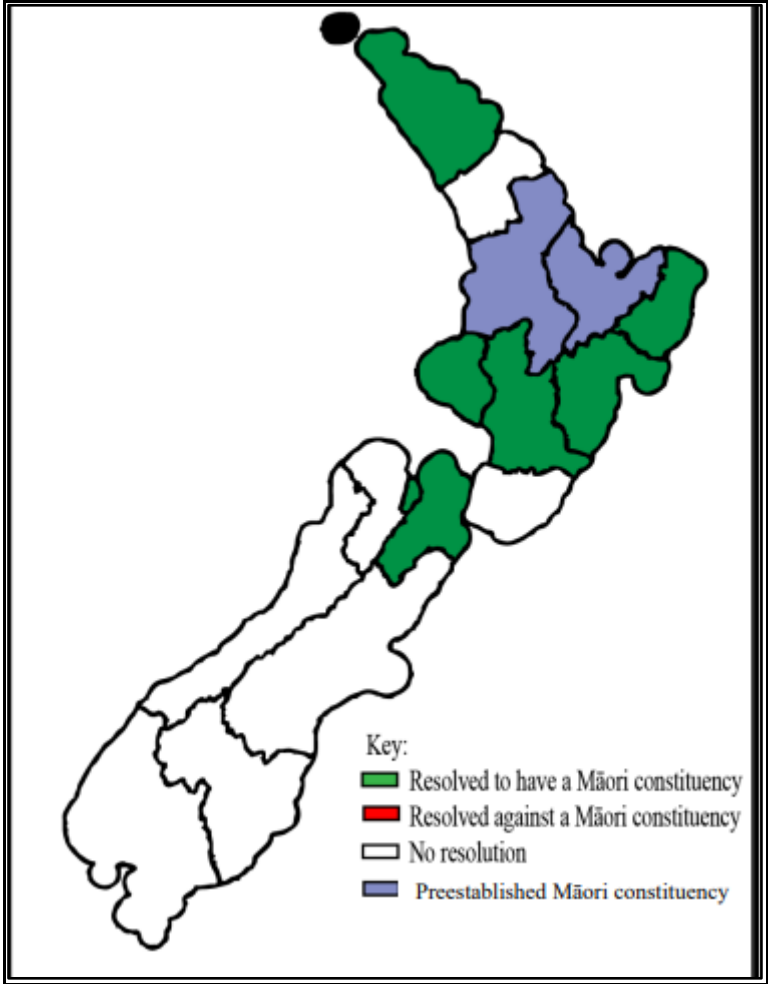


Figure 1.4 Regional Council and Unitary Authorities resolutions for local government elections 2022

Source: Reprinted with permission (see also Lucas, 2022: 32)

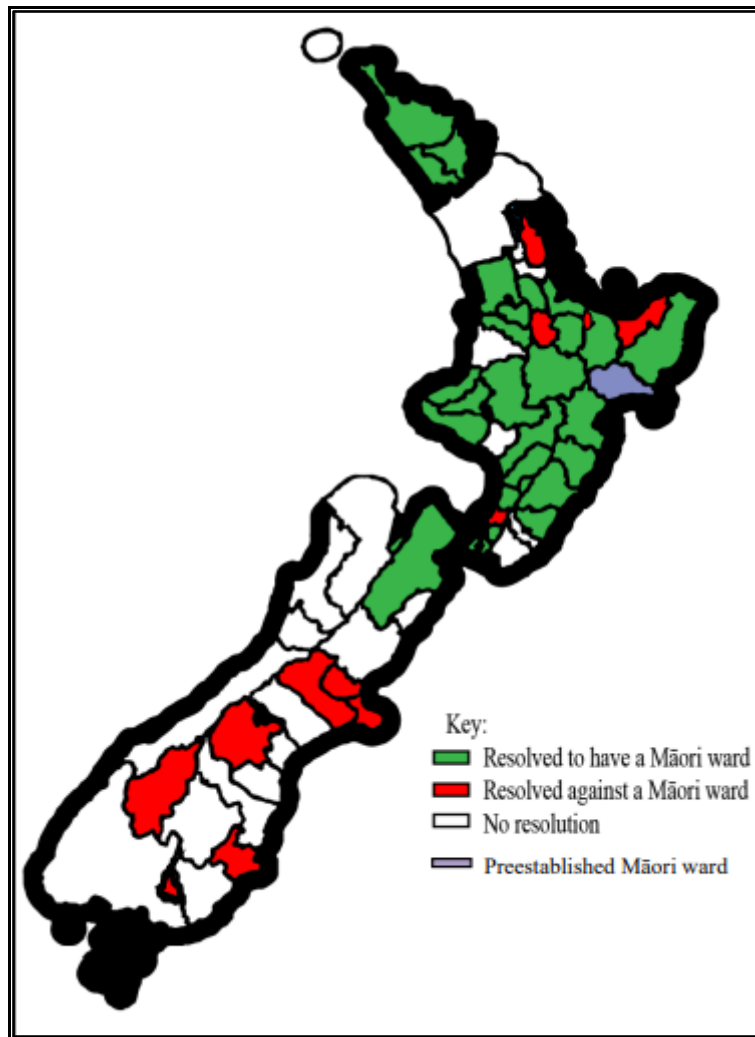


Figure 1.5 Territorial Authority’s resolutions for local government elections 2022
 Source: Reprinted with permission (see also Lucas, 2022: 33)

The research evidence shows how the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy has marginalised Māori. A key place for local government in Aotearoa is the council chamber, a space in which elected members get to vote, and a place where decisions are formalised and policies signed off that generally affect those living within the district or city covered by each local body entity. The visibility of Te Ao Māori at this key place of council decision-making will facilitate consideration of specific Māori issues and needs. The temporary measure to address this disparity, Māori wards, has been a highly contentious issue within Aotearoa. The stance people take on Māori wards is often influenced by their understanding of obligations under Te Tiriti. Arguments against Māori wards include statements that Māori wards are ‘race-based’, they undermine democracy and are divisive, that ‘we are one people’ and separate representation for Māori privileges Māori, and they challenge the sanctity of one person, one vote, and majority rule. Arguments in support of

Māori wards and for the removal of the referendum clauses in the LEA use Te Tiriti as the basis for Māori to have the right to participate in local government decision-making.

Decolonising hegemonic Eurocentric structures and institutions through a shared understanding of Te Tiriti obligations and implementation of a Tiriti-based constitution, is a valid way to address disparities. Initiatives underway during the writing of this thesis that have the potential to shape a Tiriti-based local government include work being undertaken since 2021 to consider transforming the constitution of Aotearoa, and a local government review in progress by The Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA).

This research is important given a global context within which Indigenous rights and the decolonisation of long-established systems and structures are being championed, with pressure occurring for greater recognition of Indigenous rights than has previously been evident (Lawrence, 2020; Lawrence & O’Dwyer, 2020). Headline events of 2020 from the United States of America in particular, included impassioned protests against institutionalised and systemic racism (Lawrence & O’Dwyer, 2020). In challenging what were believed to be racist norms, people in a number of countries tore down statues erected to immortalise colonial and racist ‘heroes’ (Lawrence, 2020; Lawrence & O’Dwyer, 2020). Aotearoa was not immune to such action; for example, in the city of Hamilton there were repeated calls to rename the city of Hamilton to its Māori name of Kirikiriroa. Furthermore, in 2019 there was informal pressure on Hamilton City Council to remove the statue of British army captain John Hamilton from the centre of the city (Bond, 2020; Burrows, 2020). Informal media coverage and polls were accompanied by a formal request from the Waikato-Tainui iwi to remove the statue. Waikato-Tainui claimed that glorifying colonial-era figures with statues was a constant reminder of the “devastating effects of British imperialism and its ongoing impacts” (Bond, 2020). Hamilton City Council responded to these concerns by removing the offending statue on 13 June 2020. Among reasons for Hamilton City Council’s decision to remove the statue were concerns that people were planning to forcefully remove the statue, which could have resulted in damage to the underground carpark on which the statue was located (Bond, 2020).

The removal of the statue in Hamilton was part of wider debates in Aotearoa about what should be done with colonial-era monuments and names (Bond, 2020). While Waikato-Tainui iwi argued that the statues represented a painful time in history for them, others claimed they were a legitimate part of history and should stay (Bond, 2020). The place of other statues and sites around the country has also been questioned, including the suggestion of renaming the settlements of Picton and Russell with their Māori names of Waitohi and Kororāreka respectively (Angeloni, 2020a; Bond, 2020; Tokalau, 2023).

Along with the removal of statues and place renaming, systemic processes and practices which perpetuate colonialism have been challenged (Bond, 2020). In Aotearoa, British settlers came from a long heritage of colonial domination and belief in the superiority of Western 'civilisation' (Bell, 2008). For example, the British asserted formal sovereignty over Aotearoa in 1840 relying on the English version of Te Tiriti and established a governing system similar to that in Britain (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020). This involved promoting the idea of one country with a single legislative assembly and judicial court system, ignoring the many Māori tribal boundaries and Māori governance practices (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020). Unresolved reverberations from this heritage continue to create tensions around the profile and adoption of Māori cultural norms in Aotearoa.

Critical geographers, and particularly critical political geographers, are motivated by the emancipatory potential of their subject interests. This agenda manifests, in part, through ongoing challenges to taken-for-granted assumptions, including the privileging of 'the state' (Agnew, 2013; Agnew & Muscarà, 2012). This research extends these developments in critical political geography by employing Māori wards as a focus for examination of Māori and Te Ao Māori in local government decision-making. While Māori wards have been devised as a solution to address Māori representation in local government, this research considers whether the current initiatives are sufficient to effectively support Māori inclusion. A reimagined political system that enables the inclusion of Māori in local government decision-making has decolonising potential (Hayward, 2003). Such a transformation will facilitate the voicing of alternate discourses of Māori identity in a country shaped by histories that contain dispossession, assimilation, and subjugation (Jackson, 2021).

1.3 Thesis outline

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. This introductory chapter poses the research question and establishes the research aims. The chapter emphasises the value and timeliness of conducting a thorough examination of relationships between Māori and local government given spatial and political contexts. The research takes a critical geographical approach in the consideration of Māori representation in local government in Aotearoa and in Te Moana-a-Toi / the Bay of Plenty city of Tauranga Moana, and to reflect on the possibilities of decolonising local government. Specifically, the research question asks how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? In considering that question, the research aims to critique and challenge the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy practiced in Aotearoa and consider the impact of that model on Māori representation and belonging in that place of power. Secondly, the research reflects on the example of Māori wards in local government within Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa, and explores the polarisation of views around Māori wards that depict feelings of unease and discomfort that characterise such spaces of liminality. The third aim of the research employs the potentiality that typifies liminal spaces to explore the innovative possibilities of that positioning to reimagine decolonising local government across Aotearoa. The chapter also outlines the theoretical framework employed in the research, my positionality in relation to the topic, and the research design and empirical data gathering methods used for this study.

Chapter Two explores the theoretical underpinnings of this research, drawing on decolonising theories within Indigenous and Māori geographical frameworks. Theoretical concepts of the geopolitics of belonging and liminality from within the fields of postcolonial, Māori, Indigenous, and political geography are described. This demarcation facilitates consideration of the validity of applying a decolonising approach to issues around Māori representation in local government. The second part of Chapter Two considers scholarly debates relating to Māori representation and local government in Aotearoa. These debates encompass such topics as colonisation, self-determination, Indigeneity, democracy, and representation. The literature review also identifies several areas to which this research contributes. While political scientists are relatively active in this arena, geographical research on local government in Aotearoa is not extensive. Viewing the issue of Māori representation

in local government through geographical decolonising lens adds another facet to this topic, with learnings around belonging and deep colonising applicable to similar situations in the international context.

Chapter Three describes the methodological processes utilised in carrying out this research. The methodology selected emanates from a decolonising approach, using methods to collect empirical data designed to be empathetic and to elevate individual voices. The ethical framework of Te Ara Tika was selected to frame the research methodology. Te Ara Tika embeds Te Tiriti o Waitangi and core Western ethical principles into a unique Aotearoa based framework and, as such, it enables tauiwi to undertake culturally sensitive research. I reflect on the triangulated mixed methods approach used to gather empirical data, including 14 semi-structured interviews undertaken with current and previous elected members of TCC and iwi representatives, participant observation of three meetings on Māori wards, and thematic discourse analysis of 122 media articles on Māori wards. I discuss the method of thematic analysis used to make sense of the information. My personal position and reflexivity regarding this research are addressed as I situate myself in the research and critically reflect on research relationships.

The three empirical chapters, Chapters Four through Six, detail the research findings. Chapter Four sets the context for the empirical based research, investigation that focuses on the way local government democracy works to favour Pākehā while the struggle of Māori to belong in local government is ongoing. This (un)belonging has been enabled through mechanisms such as the referendum, the majority vote, and an adversarial style of representative democracy. The chapter is split into four sections. The first section describes the place of Aotearoa within the Pacific and outlines the populating of Aotearoa, first by Māori and then by British colonisers. The second section presents background to Te Tiriti and its relevance to understanding the dynamics of Māori and Pākehā relationships. The third section focuses on the establishment of Westminster style representative democracy for local government and its impact on Māori representation. Evidence shows the current system of local government system in Aotearoa evolved on the assumption of Māori assimilation into a supposedly 'superior' British cultural model. Furthermore, local government has become a place that validates a Eurocentric model of governance and marginalises Indigenous options. The fourth section introduces Tauranga Moana, the city

where the empirical research was conducted, and identifies some of the tensions between Māori and Pākehā worldviews in relation to local level democracy.

Chapter Five examines media representation of debates around the concept and introduction of Māori wards. Material was collected from national news fora and subjected to thematic analysis. The chapter first interrogates the polarisation of views on Māori wards. Arguments against Māori wards include the defence of democracy and support for Aotearoa being 'one people.' Arguments in favour of Māori wards highlight the importance of Te Tiriti in ensuring dedicated Māori inclusion in local government. The final section exposes the ways in which Māori wards occupy a liminal local government space that is transient and open to change. The section suggests that the establishment of Māori wards has the deep colonising potential to reinforce the colonial system of local government.

Chapter Six argues that the liminal space of Māori wards, while a place of insecurity and unease for those privileged under the current system, can also be a place of promise and opportunity. For example, the current review of local government provides an opportunity to reimagine the structure and system to facilitate the introduction of a Te Tiriti-based local government. The chapter examines the meaning of Te Tiriti in terms of local level governance and discusses tensions around Māori representation in local government. The chapter concludes with a challenge to develop a local government in Aotearoa where Māori as Tiriti partners may gain a sense of belonging.

Consideration of the polarisation of views around Māori wards for local government underpins reflections on next steps for local government to advance Māori inclusion. Chapter Seven provides confirmation that addressing Indigenous disparity in the liminal space created by decolonising institutional processes creates unease and uncertainty for some, while simultaneously being a space of creativity and opportunity for others. Māori wards seemingly provide opportunity within the liminal local government space, but it remains unclear as to whether wards are a decolonising success or whether they signal a device for deep colonising. The local government review begun in 2021, underpinned by the shared understandings of Te Tiriti and establishment of a Tiriti-based constitution, will potentially avoid the situation of deep colonising and enable a reimagining of local government as a tūrangawaewae for Māori and non-Māori in Aotearoa. The chapter reflects on the opportunities for a way forward for local government underpinned by Te Tiriti o

Waitangi and Te Ao Māori principles. In considering potential future options, Chapter Seven signals how themes indicated in the thesis might be further explored to extend geographical knowledge around Indigenous participation in local governance.

1.4 Conclusion

This first chapter has presented the research question: to ask how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? It outlined the aims of the thesis that underlie the research question: to critically examine the relationship between place, colonialism, local government, and Māori. The research uses critical geopolitical and Indigenous geographies and methodologies to explore the limitations of the current (Eurocentric) model of local government democracy. The concept of liminality provides a useful framing device to understand Māori representation in local government. Further, a geopolitics of belonging perspective incorporating Te Ao Māori principles allows for the reimagining of local government under Te Tiriti. The chapter concludes by providing the layout of the thesis and chapter outlines. The following chapter presents the theories and literature used to analyse and interpret the empirical data to explore the thesis aims.

Chapter Two: Theorising Māori representation in local government

This chapter presents a review of relevant theories and literature on the relationships between colonialism and Māori under-representation in local government in Aotearoa. A decolonising geographic approach underpins the research while key concepts of liminality, deep colonising, the geopolitics of belonging, and tūrangawaewae enable a critical lens to scrutinise why Māori under-representation occurs, what political representation means, and the potential for change to occur.

The first section of the chapter outlines the politics of knowledge construction, and the ongoing global efforts to decolonise Western knowledge systems. It also examines decolonising theory through Indigenous and Māori geographical frameworks. The section describes critical geopolitics, the geopolitics of belonging, and the concept of liminality as they frame discussions around Māori representation in local government. The second section of this chapter reviews relevant literature to outline the impact of colonialism on the role of Māori in local government in Aotearoa. The section describes issues of representation and representative democracy, and their impacts on Indigenous people within a colonially imposed political system.

2.1 Decolonising geographical knowledge

Colonisation is an ongoing process of dispossession in which nation-states, usually from Europe, assume the right to take over the lands, lives, and power of Indigenous peoples in other lands (Barry & Agyeman, 2020; Jackson, 2019; Porter & Barry, 2016). All forms of knowing about and understanding the world have been influenced by colonising power relations (Radcliffe, 2017a). While decolonisation is a concept both complicated and contested, it originally meant the formal process of passing governance to the Indigenous inhabitants of a former colony (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). In places where Indigenous people are a minority in a former colony, they often continue to undergo processes of colonisation and dispossession (Barry & Agyeman, 2020; Darder et al., 2014; Huygens, 2011; Porter & Barry, 2016; Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020). Furthermore, Porter and Barry (2016: 1) argue “the fact of Indigenous dispossession in settler-colonial states is a contemporary phenomenon, and the conditions that enable it are persistently reproduced.”

A decolonising approach recognises that the forms of knowledge through which the world is explained and modelled emanate from post-Enlightenment claims from Euro-Americans that they are the holders of universal truths (Mignolo, 2011; Radcliffe, 2017a). Mignolo's (2011) version of decolonial theory describes a 'colonial matrix of power' that consists of the effective control by the West of subjectivities (through religion and education); of authority or political power (through local and international law-making and policymaking); of the economy (through use of labour and resources); and, of knowledge (through control of institutions and technologies of knowledge, such as universities, the media, and the Internet). Hence, in contemporary understandings, decolonisation refers to the ending of colonisation through the "bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Smith, 2021: 101). Decolonisation provides a means to critique colonial power, and facilitates techniques to question and undo all that colonisation has meant and still means to the way Indigenous peoples think and live their lives (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018; Jackson, 2019).

Within academia, decolonising theories emanate from Indigenous, postcolonial, critical, feminist, and radical critiques, and interrogate discourses of knowledge, subjectivity, and power (Baldwin, 2017; Naylor et al., 2018; Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020). Indigenous scholars have critiqued the Western prioritising of reason and the positioning of Western knowledge (Doxtater, 2004). Decoloniality, or decolonial critique, may be described as an interrogation of how "knowledge-making practices contribute materially and discursively to marginalise people, places and thinking, and thereby reproduce the norms and privileges of Western, 'universal' knowledges and institutions" (Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020: 2). A decolonising approach helps expose systems of settler advantage and identifies contemporary manifestations of historically rooted disadvantages faced by Indigenous people (Darder et al., 2014; Jackson, 2019). Decolonisation is, in part, about the process of valuing and promoting Indigenous voices and epistemologies (Akena, 2012; Mutua & Swadener, 2018).

Geographic work concerning Indigenous peoples is often based on the work of postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha (2004), Said (1978), and Spivak (1988). These authors, along with their peers, focus on geographic nations where the colonial presence has physically left but the socio-cultural and colonising presence remain (Kobayashi & de Leeuw, 2010; Loomba, 2015; McEwan, 2009; Pihama, 2001). Postcolonial geographers explore how postcolonialism

and geography are closely linked, and how a focus on space and place helps to position historic and contemporary experiences of colonialism (Blunt & McEwan, 2003; Naylor et al., 2018; Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020). Postcolonial geographers are concerned with power relationships between Indigenous people and colonisers; for example, in relation to land and culture as well as knowledge production (Cameron et al., 2009). Indigenous geographies and postcolonial approaches enable researchers to understand “the perpetuation of colonial norms within the present” and to focus on the positive activities of Indigenous peoples (Coombes et al., 2012b: 691).

While postcolonial geography identified legacies of colonialism in society and space, decolonial scholars built on this postcolonial scholarship to consider how colonial pasts were still active in shaping the inequalities of the present (Radcliffe, 2017b). A decolonial approach encourages viewing the world from Indigenous places (Baldwin, 2017). The decolonising of geographical knowledge has been addressed by numerous writers, including Clement (2019), de Leeuw et al. (2012), Mercer et al. (2003), Meusberger and Suarsana (2015), Noxolo (2017), Radcliffe (2022), and Radcliffe and Radhuber (2020). For example, Radcliffe (2022: ix) “speaks back to the global predominance of Anglophone geography in former colonial and settler colonial countries where racialisation, the Westernising university and settler colonialism operate and are challenged.”

Indigenous and non-Indigenous geographers discuss ways of engaging Indigenous geographies and explore new ways to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the discipline. Despite good intentions, however, efforts at decolonising geography have been limited as the field of geography and the academy are founded and structured from colonialism (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Frantz and Howitt (2012) claim that Indigenous issues are often marginalised in geography and that critical human geography might usefully address its colonial legacy. Noxolo (2017) also argues that geography as a discipline is deeply implicated in each of the sections of Mignolo’s (2011) ‘colonial matrix of power.’ Again, Noxolo (2017: 318) claims that the call to decolonise knowledge is “always deeply imbricated in power, and in the contingencies of its time, location and relations of production.”

While a growing number of geographers are Indigenous peoples who bring rich Indigenous knowledges to the discipline (see for instance, Goeman, 2013; Johnson et al., 2007; Simmonds et al., 2016), “geographers working with decolonisation and anticolonialism in

specific reference to geographies of Indigenous and settler colonial subjects tend to be non-Indigenous and often White” (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018: 5). In many cases, by exploring the way settler colonial power “ascends to unquestioned normalcy and recirculates as natural and given, the decolonising project becomes one of suggesting counter realities or alternative ways of knowing and being” (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018: 6).

As an example of academic work being done to disrupt normative colonial ways of thinking and being, geographers working in the settler colonial context of Australia made the place itself, Bawaka Country, the lead author in several research publications (see Wright et al., 2012). Although there have been some attempts such as these to initiate alternative approaches to scholarship, de Leeuw and Hunt (2018: 7) note that it is important to consider how limited these attempts can be to decolonise a field which is “largely enacted by White scholars living off the spoils of colonialism, including White settler scholars, and in which Indigenous presence is largely facilitated by, or filtered through, non-Indigenous experts.” Geographers from Aotearoa who argue for decolonisation include Martel et al. (2022), Parsons et al. (2016, 2019, 2021), and Penehira et al. (2014). Outside the discipline of geography, Māori political scientists and social scientists such as Bargh (with works spanning from 2001 to current) and Sullivan (2003, 2009, 2011a & b, 2020), have spent many years arguing for Māori representation in local government.

2.1.1 Māori and Indigenous geographical approaches

In Aotearoa, the field of Māori geography is built on a well-founded history, much of which originated with the work of the late Professor Dame Evelyn Stokes, who was a University of Waikato scholar of great influence. Among her noted achievements were her work to establish Māori, gender, historical, and education geography at the University of Waikato (Bedford & Longhurst, 2005). Stokes wrote mainly as an historical geographer, and much of her work focused on the Tauranga Moana region. While of Pākehā heritage, Stokes was committed to representing tangata whenua in Māori Land Court cases, advising on issues around Māori land grievances and land development, and providing research for the Tauranga Māori Trust (Johnston et al., 2023). Stokes’ close links to Tauranga Moana and her published histories on the confiscation of Māori land in the area are of particular note in relation to the research context of this thesis. In part, due to her contribution and activism,

Māori geographies have been supported in several universities within Aotearoa, including the University of Waikato and the University of Canterbury (WGGRN et al., 2019).

Four decades ago, before postcolonialism emerged as a field of theoretical enquiry, Stokes introduced what would now be regarded as a seminal postcolonial critical analysis of Māori and Pākehā relationships. Thus, Stokes' 1959 doctoral thesis about historic settlement patterns in Tauranga County provided a first clear sign of the author's disquiet with colonial geographies and "the power of white settler societies over marginalised Indigenous people" (Johnston et al., 2023: 19). For Stokes, the influence of Western European and North American institutional and theoretical frameworks for geographical enquiry was pervasive, with such dominance marginalising Indigenous perspectives and interpretations of research. In the context of Aotearoa, Stokes emphasised that Māori research and knowledge provides a different worldview to that offered by non-Māori, and that Indigenous input has value when incorporated into geographical study within Aotearoa. Stokes (1987) also critiqued the contribution geographers made to knowledge around nineteenth century patterns of Māori settlement, noting that most used the collective term Māori rather than acknowledging iwi by name.

Stokes' respectful approach situates geographical enquiry within the context of colonialism and its effects on Indigenous peoples (Bedford & Longhurst, 2005; d'Hautesserre, 2005; Johnston, 2005). In her well known 1987 work *Māori geography or geography of Māoris*, Stokes explained that while Māori is the term used to differentiate the Indigenous people of Aotearoa from the non-Indigenous, "it is better to define Māori (or any other culture for that matter) as a state of mind, a particular worldview, having its own geography and history" (Stokes, 1987: 118). She acknowledged the effect of colonialism on geographic scholarship and critiqued the Pākehā perspective in which much of the geographic work in Aotearoa had been done to date, noting "perhaps it is asking too much to expect Pākehā academics to see their world through Māori lenses" (Stokes, 1987: 119). Stokes (1987) argues that assimilatory policies of the colonial society had failed to integrate Māori because Māori were determined to ensure their culture's survival. As Stokes (1987: 119) noted, after more than 200 years of culture contact, Māori culture has survived and "will survive because Māori people are determined to maintain it." Stokes (1987: 121) commented that "Māori geography is not something that is learned only from the written word. It is also something

that is felt from the heart of the tangata whenua, the people of the land, and the taha wairua of Māori places.”

In addition to Stokes, others making a significant contemporary contribution to the field of Māori geography include August (2005), Greensill, (2008, 2010), Mokaraka-Harris et al. (2016, 2017), Simmonds (2009, 2011), and Thompson-Fawcett (2003, 2006, 2017).⁶ While Māori geography addresses a broad spectrum of examples or experiences, the works share a commitment to Indigenous recognition. Some Māori geographers focus particularly on interactions with local government, and particularly with regional councils, on environmental matters (such as Bennett et al., 2021; Fisher & Parsons, 2020). Illustrating the challenges of local authority and mana whenua engagement, Bennett et al. (2021) recognise an ongoing Eurocentric mindset of coloniality of local government professionals in their legal obligations to engage with mana whenua. Describing the transformation of the town of Pokeno, Ryks et al. (2019) focus on the marginalisation of mana whenua from discussions around Pokeno’s reinvention. In a similar case, Simmonds et al. (2016) argue that local authorities need to recognise and provide for mana Māori and mana whenua when highlighting the development of the town of Putāruru; the authors explain that early Māori history and the meaning of the town’s name were marginalised in favour of development goals.

Literature on local government in Aotearoa within the discipline of geography is not extensive, with few geographers from Aotearoa having explored the spatial aspects of local government representation in the Aotearoa context. While geographical work on local government in Aotearoa is not prolific, political scientists have been strong advocates on issues around Māori representation in local government in Aotearoa. Their theoretical contributions are adopted to discuss local government elections and ways to address Māori under-representation, such as with Māori wards (Bargh, 2016, 2017, 2021; Drage, 2008; Drage & Cheyne, 2016; Hayward, 2011a & b; Shaw, 2011; Vowles & Hayward, 2021; Webster & Cheyne, 2017). Some focus on the colonial based electoral system (Bargh, 2021; Webster

⁶ While the academic publications of scholars such as Stokes have been accessed and used in this research, several scholars referenced here are notable for non-academic works such as reports to iwi and the Waitangi Tribunal. Recent debates (in the media) about the value of Māori knowledge and its ongoing marginalisation in the (colonial) academy argue that the university system requires publication in ‘academic’ journals / books, however, much notable work is published in other genres.

& Cheyne, 2017; Webster & Fa'apoi, 2017), while others examine mechanisms to increase Māori representation in local government (including Bargh, 2017; Hayward 2011a & b, 2017). Political science scholars have also investigated the meaning of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) in terms of representation in local government for Māori (Bargh, 2016; Bell, 2018; Chen et al., 1999; de Bres, 2010; Drage & Cheyne, 2016; Hayward, 2003, 2011b; Potaka, 1999; Sullivan, 2003). Bargh (2021) argues that Māori wards are only the beginning of a move towards acknowledging Te Tiriti obligations and relationships. Moreover, Bargh (2021) notes that the lack of good data on election participation and the numbers of Māori elected to local government reflects a lack of priority around the collection of this data. I align with Bargh's (2021: 72) reflections that rather than beginning research on Māori representation in local government by looking at data on Māori participation and election results, different questions and perspectives emerge if the study begins with the "concept of a Tiriti-based local government relationship." In her consideration of what the active opposition to Māori representation in local government indicates to Māori, Bargh (2021) argues that it depicts a lack of understanding of Crown obligations to Te Tiriti and lack of support for Tiriti-based local government relationships.

The approach of local government is mentioned and often critiqued in Māori geographical work on resource management. For example, Kelly (2020) considers a Māori approach to environmental protection and sustainable management in the context of contemporary water management, aiming to decolonise and decentralise the Eurocentric ideologies in national water frameworks and promote Indigenous knowledge. In their research based in the Hokianga Harbour, Mokaraka-Harris et al. (2016) study the whakapapa of place and how that might inform Indigenous arrangements that support identity and developmental aspirations. Similarly, investigating engagement between the Crown and local authorities and iwi on resource management matters, Bennett et al. (2021) claim that coloniality underpins many of the interactions with iwi, and that the skills of planning practitioners have not sufficiently advanced in line with the changes to resource management legislation to recognise the rights and interests of mana whenua. By researching oral histories and ethnographic records that refer to recurring encounters with volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, King et al. (2020) explain how tectonic hazards affect Māori relationships with, and understandings of, the environment. Promoting Indigenous

knowledge, Walker et al. (2021) research use of an Atua framework as a cultural lens for the co-creation of a toolkit to assess the wellbeing of indigenous forests. Governance matters concerning the environment are also the subject of works by Parsons et al. (2019), Fisher and Parsons (2020), and Yates (2021).

Various other topics covered by Māori geographers include critical research undertaken with Māori tourism providers in Aotearoa (Ringham et al., 2016), consideration of the 'geographical self' (Murton, 2012), the impacts of colonisation on Māori women's bodies and on Māori bodily rituals (August, 2005), how different understandings of 'race' affect relationships between researcher and research participants (Fisher, 2015), and Māori women's embodied relationships with the spaces of Papatūānuku (Simmonds, 2009). From the field of legal geography, Bargh and van Wagner (2020) examine Māori consultation in Aotearoa's minerals and mining regime. Addressing the experience of identifying as both Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa, Grennell-Hawke and Tudor (2018) describe how they negotiate being a hybrid cultural subject and object of belonging and not belonging on various levels within research.

2.1.2 Indigeneity and critical geopolitics

Defining Indigenous and Indigeneity is a political question (Coombes et al., 2011; Medby, 2019). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'indigenous' as 'born in a country, native.' This emphasis on birth, however, often leads to statements that suggest everyone is indigenous to some place, an understanding that erases the political history of specific Indigenous struggles over land (Kauanui, 2014). Given such erasure, this general definition does not account for the more than 370 million Indigenous people (2014 figures) who are spread across seventy countries (Kauanui, 2014). In the late 1980s, United Nations Special Rapporteur Martinez Cobo⁷ defined Indigenous peoples as "those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that have developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them" (Cobo, 1987). Indigeneity refers to the quality of being

⁷ The United Nation's World Commission for Environment and Development, chaired by former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and thus referred to as the Brundtland Commission, published the report *Our Common Future*, also known as the *Brundtland Report*, in 1987 (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Indigenous and illustrates there are some commonalities shared by Indigenous peoples, including political, economic, and cultural connections to the lands they held before colonisation and the disruption of those connections by colonising powers (Johnson et al., 2007). While the concept of Indigeneity is much contested and debated within geography and the social sciences, (see, for example, Baird, 2016; Gerharz et al., 2018), Radcliffe (2017b) notes that the concept of Indigeneity has replaced 'Indigenous peoples' in academic explorations of inequality, subjectivity and power related to ongoing settler colonialism. Indigeneity theory interacts with concepts of democracy to highlight Indigenous claims and ideas of justice (O'Sullivan, 2011). The theory examines the material and political impact of settler colonialism to identify the specificity of Indigenous disempowerment and to consider other options to the Indigenous colonial present (Baldwin, 2017; O'Sullivan, 2017). Geographers in Aotearoa addressing Indigeneity include Coombes (2007), who explores an example of a collaborative science project on the east coast of Te Ika-a Maui. Coombes' (2007) research considers the activities of Indigenous communities with conservation management, noting that inconsistency towards Māori development limits the potential of devolved management and collaboration. Similarly, Marques et al. (2021) investigate a participatory design strategy with Indigenous peoples in Australia and Aotearoa. This strategy seeks to nurture capacity building and enable environmental care and facilitate the sustainability of rural communities.

Although Indigeneity is a contested concept, the politics of Indigeneity provides a space of reconciliation that facilitates political relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state. Indigeneity goes further than the theory of decolonisation as it positions power in the hands of Indigenous people. O'Sullivan (2008: 974) claims:

Indigeneity vigorously rejects domination and subjugation as the foundation of political order. It rejects one culture positioning itself as providing the 'normal' basis for the conduct of public affairs, as it also insists that political participation is a right of peoples as much as it is a right of individuals.

While O'Sullivan (2017) attempts to address political relationships between colonisers and Indigenous people in Aotearoa, Ruckstuhl (2018) claims that O'Sullivan (2008) promotes Indigenous self-determination as existing within a colonial framework. In critiquing this approach, Ruckstuhl (2018: 107) argues that Indigenous people such as Māori have a pre-existing right to self-determination "independent of any colonising subjugation."

While geographical work within Indigenous contexts is continuing to embrace Indigenous methodologies, there are a number of issues of which researchers might usefully be aware. For example, the homogenising of Indigenous peoples' diverse opinions and aspirations, particularly by politicians and academics, has been criticised and addressed by several authors, including Coombes et al. (2011), Gibson (1999), MacDonald (2016), and Wall (1997). Use of a monolithic label such as 'Indigeneity' has been claimed to mask diversity and to be disempowering (Coombes et al., 2011). Gibson (1999: 52-53) argues that Indigenous societies throughout the world are "frequently characterised as static and monolithic, shrouding internal dynamism and heterogeneity." Gibson (1999) claims this homogenisation has been used to support colonial attempts to subsume Indigeneity within the hegemonic nation-state. Gibson (1999) warns, however, that in attempting to avoid the homogenisation of Indigeneity, people may subsequently imply that Indigenous culture is endlessly diverse and made up of a multitude of perspectives. To avoid this risk, McCormack (2011: 285) explains that Indigeneity is defined by a common history of marginalisation, loss, struggle, and conflict with a dominant other, allowing a certain unification to "legitimatised social and political action towards retributive justice."

The risks of homogenising Indigenous peoples under labels such as Indigeneity also apply in the context of Aotearoa. For example, MacDonald (2016) advises that decolonisation begins with refusing to homogenise Māori as a group. To avoid this objectification, MacDonald (2016) suggests that researchers use individual names to identify those Māori involved in politics and employ the names of specific Māori institutions rather than generalising them under a homogenising label. In her example of the way this could work, MacDonald (2016: 105) suggests that rather than using homogenising labels, political scientists and theorists should specifically name the "political actors and political institutions for which Māori is a shorthand." Thus, MacDonald (2016: 105) argues that the statement "suggesting a political relationship or conflict exists between 'Māori and the Crown'" is best replaced with the following phrase: "Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu (the corporate entity of the Ngai Tahu whanui) and the Committee of Tuahiwi Marae disagreed with the Crown." Summersby (2009) also notes three reasons why Māori hold different legal and constitutional status from other minority groups in Aotearoa: Māori are the Indigenous people, Māori hold special constitutional status under Te Tiriti, and Māori have had separate electoral representation

since 1867 (Electoral Commission, 1986: 81). While Māori are a distinct group, however, this does not imply they should be treated as a single entity as this neglects the importance of iwi and hapū (Summersby, 2009).

In addition to the work of political and Māori geographers, the intersection of critical geopolitics and Indigeneity is another approach to decolonising knowledge. Studies labelled critical geopolitics were first introduced by Gearóid Ó Tuathail in the late 1980s (Agnew, 2013; Sharp, 2011, 2013). During the 1980s and 1990s, developed countries began revisiting their colonial histories, structures, and systems (Gibson, 2013). Beginning in the early 1990s 'self-determination' came to the fore in many colonised countries, including Australia, Canada, Aotearoa, and the United States of America. Self-determination relied on initiatives of Indigenous groups to regain control over their own lives following histories of oppression and dispossession (Gibson, 2013). Indigenous political challenges identified the constructedness of the Western nation-state and systems of land acquisition, mapping, law, and governance. These systems enabled possession and control of colonised territory, and the imposition of a capitalistic economy on colonised space (Gibson, 2013). Critical geopolitics may be broadly defined as a critical exploration of the way that world politics is underpinned by assumptions about geographical divisions of the world, strategic plans, and the way the configuration of the continents and oceans influence the making of foreign policy (Agnew, 2013). These assumptions are critiqued as being socially constructed by particular people in different historical and geographical circumstances (Agnew, 2013). Ó Tuathail (1996: 107) identifies the difference between geopolitics and critical geopolitics in relation to critiques of power relations:

Geopolitics sees itself as an instrumental form of knowledge and rationality. It takes the existing power structures for granted and works within these to provide conceptualisation and advice to foreign policy decision-makers. Its dominant modes of narration are declarative (this is how the world is) and then imperative (this is what we must do) . . . Critical geopolitics, by contrast, is a problematising theoretical enterprise that places the existing structures of power and knowledge in question.

Critical geopolitics provides a conceptual framework for a geographical analysis of world politics. Such analysis includes an emphasis on seeing how the world is structured and acted on by political agents (Agnew, 2013). Critical geopolitics is therefore a useful mechanism to question how power works in practice and how it might be challenged (McConnell, 2013).

McConnell (2017) highlights “the processual notion of geopolitics,” and argues for a more nuanced understanding of transformation, emergence, and becoming. While scholars of critical geopolitics (as a field of knowledge) have developed their discipline to consider multiple viewpoints (for example, gender, sexuality, and embodiment), their discipline continues to express a particularly Western way of knowing that gives little weight to other traditions of thinking (Sharp, 2011, 2013). Critical geopolitics notably lacks attention to Indigeneity, arguably because the field of critical geopolitics is based on Eurocentric, Anglo-American knowledge. As Gibson (2013: 432) notes, there is:

[a] geopolitics of academic knowledge production itself, in which distant and seemingly marginal ‘case studies’ of Indigenous peoples struggle for visibility against knowledge about critical geopolitics produced in the ‘heartlands’ of the UK [United Kingdom] and North America, from which seemingly ‘universal’ theoretical advances emanate.

This suggests that there is a politics to this knowledge construction, and that critical geopolitics has much to gain from considering Indigenous knowledge and governance structures. As noted by Gibson (2013: 421):

Indigenous scholars writing from places as distant as New Zealand and Arctic Canada have critiqued Western knowledge’s presumed capacity to know the world in totality, the Western prioritising of reason and subsequent atomising of the world, through science, into constituent parts.

Medby (2019, 2021) explores issues of Indigenous geopolitics and exclusion in the Arctic context, while Gibson (2013) positions Indigenous peoples as agents of geopolitical change, reviewing geographical work that relates Indigenous peoples with geopolitical issues of territory, identity and subject-formation. The development and ‘normalisation’ of institutions and systems that reinforce colonialism may be destabilised by introducing the politics of Indigeneity, where Indigenous peoples are not passive actors but are actively challenging structures and systems.

2.1.3 Māori relationship to place, geographies of belonging, and the concept of liminality

This section discusses links between the geopolitics of belonging and liminal space to inform arguments about Māori representation in local government. The geopolitics of belonging posits the discussion within colonial power relations. O’Sullivan (2018) claims that the contestation of power is the main characteristic of Indigenous politics and that the basic

questions for both Indigeneity and liberal democracy concern who belongs and on what terms do they belong. Belonging may be positioned as being a geographical concept because it “connects matter to place, through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation” (Boellstorff, 2009: 772). Two key dimensions of belonging include the personal feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging that depicts forms of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion (politics of belonging) (Antonsich, 2010). Belonging has been explored within various fields of human geography in Aotearoa, including place(s) of belonging (WGGRN, 2019; Kale et al., 2018; McCreanor, et al., 2006; Morrison et al., 2020; Slade & Borovnik, 2018), the politics of belonging (Higgins & Terruhn, 2021), borders or boundaries and belonging (Barker, 2008), transitional spaces of (not)belonging (Johnston, 2019a) and belonging and the home (Basnet, 2018; Johnston, 2019b; Johnston & Longhurst, 2011; Morrison, 2010).

In Aotearoa, belonging and place are intimately woven together through the powerful relationship of Māori to place, as expressed through concepts such as tangata whenua, tūrangawaewae, and the practice of locating people through reciting a personal pepeha. Authors such as Kēpa (2007), Kidman (2012), Mead (2016), and Smith (2004) employ Māori concepts of tangata whenua and tūrangawaewae to explore Māori feelings for and attachments to place and ancestral lands. Smith (2004) explains that ‘tangata whenua’ implies people who both inhabit a place and are intimately linked to that place through centuries of occupation. ‘Tūrangawaewae’ is a ‘place to stand’ where tangata whenua status ensures that one has undisputed rights, including the right to speak, and a place where one feels secure in both a physical and a spiritual sense (Smith, 2004). Inherent in the concept of tūrangawaewae are links between people, their identity, and the land (Simmonds et al., 2016). Tūrangawaewae refers to the sense of belonging and connectedness with the land experienced when members of hapū communities have occupied a region for several generations (Kidman, 2012). Again, tūrangawaewae has been described as “one spot, one locality on planet earth where an individual can say ‘I belong here. I can stand here without challenge. My ancestors stood here before me. My children will stand tall here’” (Mead, 2016: 42). There are connections between the concept of tūrangawaewae and the geopolitics of belonging and in this thesis I consider what the place of Māori in local government is and could be.

Relating to landscapes of power and belonging, liminality occurs when boundaries or borders are crossed and an 'in-between' space is created (McConnell, 2017). This 'in-between' space is often depicted as a doorstep, threshold, or lintel of a house, where one can be neither inside nor outside. The concept of liminality was originally theorised by ethnographer and folklorist van Gennep in his 1909 text *Rites of passage*. Liminality was further developed in the 1960s by cultural anthropologist Turner (1969: 95), who presented liminality as a condition, "neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial." Liminality therefore refers to any "betwixt and between situation or object, any in-between place or moment, a state of suspense, a moment of freedom between two structured world-views or institutional arrangements" (Thomassen, 2014: 7).

In relation to stateless nations, indigenous communities and national minorities, McConnell (2017: 142) identifies three themes of geopolitical inquiry exposed through the application of the notion of liminality. Firstly, liminality opens up the developmental and transformative nature of geopolitics and the temporal fluidity of politics during times of change and transformation. Secondly, liminality is a state of ambivalence or an in-between site of uncertainty, where unease and discomfort can be experienced as people and situations undergo a time of change. Thirdly, liminality can be a place of creativity where new ideas and practices can be considered. McConnell (2017: 142) discusses the relationality of power, claiming that liminality is a threshold situation producing intense creativity and that illuminates "practices of innovation, political renewal and aspiration." Similarly, Horvath et al. (2015: 3) note that while liminality is useful to depict in-between situations that characterise times of change and uncertainty, it also characterises possibility and can be "creative in transforming the social world." Liminality is the space between binaries, such as the grey area between black and white, or warm being between hot and cold. In this thesis it depicts the space between the polarisation of opinions on Māori wards, and it enables viewing the situation of Māori representation in local government, this in-between space of Māori wards, to consider the particularities of this transitional space (Horvath et al., 2015).

The concept of liminality has been used by academics in various fields, including archaeology (Finn, 2021), anthropology (Roberts, 2018) and tourism geography (Nelson, 2020; Pastor & Kent, 2020; Rink, 2020). Liminality, having spatial dimensions in depicting an 'in-between'

space, has also been used by geographers to research a variety of topics and themes. In the field of geopolitics, McConnell and Dittmer (2018) examine diplomatic processes throughout the world using a combination of assemblage theory and the notion of liminality. Underthun and Jordhus-Lier (2018) address the temporary and transitional nature of hotel work by analysing the hotel as a liminal space for transient workers. Bloch (2021) uses liminality in relation to the car's ability to transport bodies as well as its legal liminality as a hybrid public private space. Lamond and Moss (2020) bring together academics from around the world in researching events from a multi-disciplinary perspective, placing their work within the context of Turner's (1969) theories of ritual, flow, liminality, and performance. The concept of liminality has also been used in research on crowds and carnivals, (Pielichaty, 2015; Torres et al., 2018), and on the position of refugees and ethnic groups within countries (Canzutti, 2019; Correia, 2018; Wimark, 2021). Liminality is the subject of edited collections, including those by Downey et al. (2016), Horvath et al. (2015), March (2021), Piazza (2019), and Wagoner and Zittoun (2021). The diverse ways liminality has been used as a lens to reflect on these various scenarios shows that liminality is a useful concept for geographers concerned with issues of local government, democracy, and representation.

2.2 Decolonising local government in Aotearoa

This section begins by outlining the colonial context in which the system of local government in Aotearoa is situated. Discussion then focuses on the local government system of representative democracy and its role in the ongoing colonisation and marginalisation of Māori. This section explores what representation means in terms of local government and the risks involved in introducing Māori wards to address Māori representation issues. A discussion of the concepts of liminality and deep colonisation and what they mean in terms of framing a reimagining of the system of local government concludes this section.

Initially related to the Christian faith, the concept of discovery, and an underlying belief in the superiority of the European over what was classed Indigenous primitivism underlies colonial histories (Bell, 2014; Jackson, 2019). The presiding theory of the time was that because Indigenous peoples were non-Christians, they were deemed to be not human and therefore the land they occupied was empty or *terra nullius*, subsequently being used to justify colonial powers' claims to lands belonging to sovereign Indigenous nations (Kauanui,

2014). According to Jackson (2019: 102), “colonisation was and is a very simple process of brutal dispossession in which States from Europe assumed the right to take over the lands, lives, and power of Indigenous peoples who had done them no harm.” Settler colonialism of Indigenous peoples throughout the world sought to eliminate and dissolve native societies, with the primary aim being access to territory and related economic resources (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Jackson, 2017; Wolfe, 2006). The concept of elimination included the practice of assimilation, with the goal being to subsume Indigenous difference into the colonising regime (Arneil, 2020; Wolfe, 2006). To achieve the goal of assimilation, practices by settler-colonial society included the division of native title into individual freeholds, child abduction by the state, and the religious conversion and resocialisation of Indigenous people in institutions such as missions or boarding schools (Wolfe, 2006). Assimilation, or cultural genocide, is illustrated in the Native American context by Wolfe (2006) where, in the late 1800s, assimilationist legislation sought the breakdown of tribes and the absorption into White society of individual Native Americans and their tribal land. In an Australian example, Jackson et al. (2017: 30) explain how contemporary Australian places express the colonial “ordering of space” and therefore continue the “settler-colonial project of dispossession.” These practices are ongoing and continue to marginalise and dispossess Indigenous people from belonging in their native countries.

Under colonialism, the struggle to remain a unique community bound by culture and heritage is ongoing for Indigenous people, particularly in the context of the colonising state’s efforts to eradicate such groups “culturally, politically and physically” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 597). Alongside assimilationist legislation and practices, the renaming of places with Indigenous names with European names is another of the strategies used to enable the territorial colonisation of Indigenous spaces and places (Wolfe, 2006). For example, Jackson (2019: 102) claims there is an old misogynist saying that “the namer of names is the father of all things,” suggesting that whoever assumes the right to name or define something controls its meaning and comprehension. Berg and Kearns (2016) discuss how place names underlie the way people attach meanings to place and help create group identity. In the context of Aotearoa, they use the examples of how place names such as “Mission Bay, Parnell and Remuera evoke much different symbolic imagery than do Mangere, Otahuhu or Papatoetoe” (Berg & Kearns, 2016: 25). Berg and Kearns, (2016: 25) claim “[t]he former are associated

with elite landscapes of wealthy, 'white,' Pākehā (heterosexual) families; the latter with landscapes of marginali[s]ed poor, working class, Māori and Pacific Islanders." According to Berg and Kearns (2016: 30), the process of affixing generally European names to places was part of the larger process of "Europeanising the landscape" and taking control of Māori lands. Furthermore, such naming included the process of gendering the landscape in "Western masculinist terms" (Berg & Kearns, 2016: 25). Barry and Agyeman (2020: 22) note that cities in particular, are sites where "Indigenous peoples have been rendered almost completely invisible and where their opportunities to shape urban development are highly circumscribed."

According to Jackson (2017: 10), the universalism and normalisation of everything European, and calls for one colonising law for all, have "masked the brutal racism involved in imposing a colonising system." In the context of Aotearoa, Nopera (2016: 93) notes:

The nation has rarely been imagined beyond the dominant colonial model, which focuses on the narrative of becoming New Zealanders. The hegemony of race inferiority became the foundation upon which settler identities removed Māori from the centre of Aotearoa New Zealand identity.

Arneil (2020: 375) claims that settler colonialism, as exercised by white Europeans and later colonial settler states over Indigenous peoples and lands, is "far and away the most important and profoundly damaging form of colonisation in modern history." Colonisation has been described as "an attack on the self-rule of those colonised" as it eliminates the self-determination and the political power of Indigenous people (Sheed & MacDonald, 2017: 214). Assimilation means that Indigenous peoples can belong in the settler world, but lose their Indigenous soul (Jackson, 2017).

Postcolonial scholars emphasise that colonial processes are not confined to the initial point of colonial contact, but continue into the present (Howitt, 2019; Rose, 1999; Wolfe, 2006). The discrimination and inequalities imposed through colonialism are perpetuated in contemporary conditions in various ways and the colonisation of Māori in Aotearoa is ongoing (Smith, 2021). To Jackson (2019: 102), colonisation has always been a "culturally scripted power game and by its very nature it is a privileging of one form of political power over another." Within Aotearoa, discourses of power and settler privilege are now being challenged through an increasing focus on the ongoing social, economic, and political impacts of colonialism (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Howitt, 2019; Johnson, 2008a). To Māori in

Aotearoa, decolonisation is to question and undo all that colonialism has meant and still means to the way they think and live their lives (Jackson, 2019).

2.2.1 Representative democracy and Māori

Emphasising the unequal power relations inherent to colonisation is important for this study because it helps explain how a political system can marginalise Indigenous people. For example, for Māori such marginalisation means being dispossessed of rights to partner as equals in local government politics, even within a seemingly representative democratic system. Representative democracy describes an electoral system where eligible voters periodically elect a number of representatives who are to make decisions on behalf of the individuals by whom they were elected (Jones et al., 2015). Representative democracy has been associated with self-government and freedom, notions that have equality as a core principle (see, for example, Dahl, 1989; Gilmartin, 2009; Huntington, 2016; Kymlicka, 2001; Saward, 2010; Staeheli, 2010). In Aotearoa's representative democracy, policies and laws are created, enforced, and reinforced or changed via the Westminster political system (Hayward et al., 2021; Lijphart, 2012). The Westminster system remains the norm in the national and subnational legislatures of most former colonies of the British Empire upon gaining self-government. The term 'Westminster model' comes from the Palace of Westminster, the current seat of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Lijphart, 2012). The Westminster system or Westminster model is a type of British parliamentary government that incorporates a legal system with a functioning judiciary. It involves: a legislature (parliament) responsible for debating policy alternatives and enacting legislation; an executive, providing leadership and accountability; and local governments with responsibilities prescribed by Parliament (Hayward et al., 2021).

Democracy is geographical as it relates to a jurisdiction or a space within which people are governed by the laws enacted by parliament and government (Urbinati, 2014). Many geographers have argued about the nature of democracy, how it is constituted, and the kinds of political, economic, and social relations that are required to support its establishment and continuation (see, for example, Barnett & Low, 2009; Eadson & Van Veelen, 2021; Johnston et al., 2021; Staeheli, 2010). Democracy means rule by the people, and the representative democratic system of governance is designed to ensure every citizen is able to participate in political decision-making processes (Barnett & Low, 2009; Collier,

2011; Dahl, 1989). This participation in decision-making, and the confidence that citizens have that their interests and concerns will be seriously considered by their elected representatives, are major tenets of democracy (Dahl, 1989; Jones et al., 2015; Monro, 2014). While globally, the democratic system has been promoted as a system of fairness and equity (Huntington, 2016; Olssen, 2005; Urbinati, 2006; Webster & Fa'apoi, 2017), critical geographers have challenged the validity of the fairness of democracy, arguing that those holding political, social, and economic power stand to gain from its continuation (Barnett & Low, 2004; Forest, 2009; Young, 2002).

Although the universalisation of democracy as an ideal has been “historically unprecedented,” a key question facing any critical analysis of democracy is whether the “claims of universality built into democratic theory are nothing more than culturally specific norms” which may “operate to reproduce systematic, hierarchical exclusions and inequalities” (Barnett & Low, 2004: 20). Thus, while some claim representative democracy to be a system providing fairness and freedom for all citizens of a country, Newman (2014) and Dahl (2006) argue that this system does not work well for Indigenous people, especially as it is applied at the scale of local government (see also Huntington, 2016; Pitkin, 1967; Pratchett & Wilson, 1997; Sullivan, 2011a & b; Welch, 1990).

Exemplifying the notion above that democracy generally does not produce good outcomes for Indigenous people, especially at the local level, the history of the engagement of Māori with local government in Aotearoa makes apparent the limitations of representative democracy. Māori have no tradition of a Western style of democracy and the system of democracy adopted in Aotearoa fails to express traditional Māori ways of exercising decision-making (Shaw, 2011). Before Europeans arrived in Aotearoa, Māori maintained their own structures of a form of local government (Arlidge, 1980; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014; Shaw, 2011). Consensual Māori decision-making was an example of deliberative decision-making without democracy (Arlidge, 1980). Decision-making in the Kingitanga movement⁸ is still achieved within the traditional rūnanga of the King's own tribe (Shaw, 2011).

In terms of local government in Aotearoa, several commentators have linked the lack of Māori representation to the ongoing colonisation of Māori and the assimilation expectations

⁸ The Kīngitanga (Māori King movement) was founded in 1858 with the aim of uniting Māori under a single sovereign (Papa & Meredith, n.d.).

embedded in the settler colonial system (see, for example, Bargh, 2021; Came & Humphries, 2014; Shaw, 2011; Webster & Fa’apoi, 2017). Thus, according to Came (2013a: 77), “Pākehā political, economic, ideological hegemony was systematically established by force, by Parliament, by democracy and the everyday workings of kāwanatanga.” Since the signing of Te Tiriti in 1840, “Māori land has been alienated, Māori language has been marginalised, and Māori legal, health and education systems have been diminished” (Came & Humphries, 2014: 97). In the place of Māori norms of governance, imported hegemonic British systems of law and order were normalised (Came & Humphries, 2014).

In Aotearoa, the privileges accrued to being Pākehā in a world that favours Pākehā ways of being is an expression of the racial inequalities imbued by institutional racism. Institutional racism affects access to material resources and power, ensuring advantages or privileges to one sector of the population while disadvantaging or discriminating against another (Came & Humphries, 2014). Significant gaps in health outcomes and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within neo-colonial contexts are an outcome of the ongoing impact of colonisation and institutional racism (Came & Humphries, 2014). This is obvious in Aotearoa with notable differences in most socio-economic indicators between Māori and Pākehā (Came & Humphries, 2014). For example, in June 2021, Māori made up 17.1 per cent of the total population in Aotearoa, however, they accounted for 53.1 per cent of the prison population (Department of Corrections, 2023; Stats NZ, 2021). Additionally, according to the 2018 Census, home ownership disparity was clear, with 57.9 per cent of Pākehā owning their own home or holding it in a family trust as opposed to only 31 per cent of Māori (Stats NZ, 2020).

In most cases, the colonial systems still prevail within structures and institutions in Aotearoa. There have, however, been several attempts to embrace Tiriti-based governance systems. For example, in 2015 Rotorua Lakes District Council adopted an independent board model, Te Tatau o Te Arawa (the Te Arawa Partnership Board) to work with Māori. In another example, the Three House Model (also called the Raukawa-Mihinare Model) (see Figure 2.1), has been adapted and successfully used as a governance framework by various organisations in Aotearoa including the Anglican Church, the NZ Playcentre Federation, and the Community Sector Taskforce (Davidson, 2015; Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011; Walters, 2011; Webster, 2009; Webster & Cheyne, 2017; Winiata, 2013).

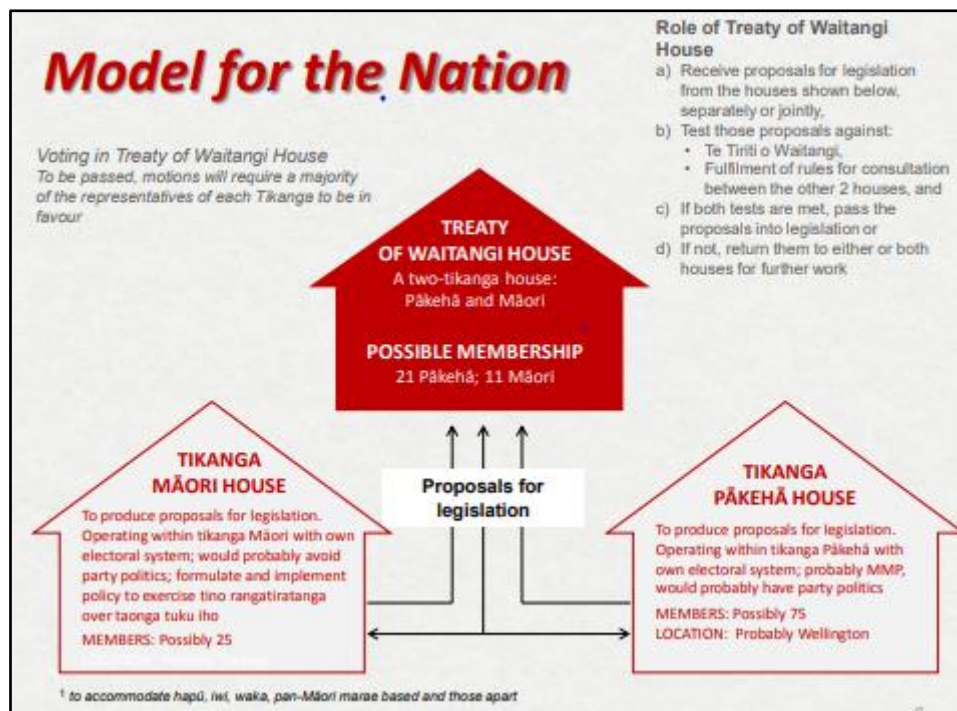


Figure 2.1. The three-house decision-making structure
Source: Reprinted with permission, Winiata (2013)

Other examples include the establishment of kōhanga reo and Māori immersion schools within the education sector, and the development of a new statutory entity, Te Aka Whai Ora / the Māori Health Authority, that will work in partnership with both Te Whatu Ora / the Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand to ensure the health system works well for Māori (Henare, 2021). Within the new Te Aka Whai Ora, Iwi-Māori Partnership Boards will have decision-making roles at a local level, and jointly agree local priorities and delivery with Te Whatu Ora (Henare, 2021). Despite these examples, in most cases there has been little attempt to redevelop systems that are founded on a Tiriti-based partnership approach as first identified by the Waitangi Tribunal in the Lands case (1987)⁹. In local government, attempts to include Māori in decision-making have been on an ad hoc basis rather than a

⁹ The differences in the Māori and English texts of the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti have led to different understandings of the meaning of Te Tiriti. These differences, coupled with the need to apply Te Tiriti in contemporary circumstances, led Parliament to refer to the principles of Te Tiriti in legislation rather than to Te Tiriti texts. It is the principles, therefore, that the Courts have considered when interpreting legislative references to Te Tiriti (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). The three principles identified by the Tribunal are the principles of partnership, participation, and protection. As noted by the Waitangi Tribunal (n.d.), in the view of the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal, Te Tiriti principles are not set in stone as they are constantly evolving as Te Tiriti is applied to particular issues and new situations.

genuine attempt to engage Māori on their terms in design of a Tiriti-based local government system.

2.2.2 Representation of Māori in local government

As noted in the previous section, the democratic process as expressed in Aotearoa is a colonial imposition that underpins low representation of Māori in local government elections and representative bodies (Bargh, 2021; Forest, 2009; Hayward, 2011a; Shaw, 2011). Representation is a key concept in geography, and it is also a central concept in the study and practice of politics. The practice and politics of representation are intrinsically linked with human geography and the relationships between people and place (Gilmartin, 2004; Shirlow, 2009). As Harvey (1990: 422) notes, “struggles over representation are as fundamental to the activities of place construction as bricks and mortar.”

Ideally, political representation expresses the will of all people while also providing the means of governance by delegating power to elected representatives (Forest, 2009).

As a key theorist on representation, Pitkin (1967) proposed four different views of representation: formalistic representation; descriptive representation; symbolic representation; and substantive representation. Major debates in political theory have revolved around descriptive vs. substantive representation. Debates concerning descriptive representation concern whether an elected body should be demographically similar to the population it represents (Drage, 2008; Summersby, 2009). Descriptive representation, or the politics of presence, “requires the physical presence of women, ethnic minorities, etc. in a representative assembly. In a sense, a body is representative when groups are present in the assembly in the same proportion as in the population” (Barnett & Low, 2009: 70). In terms of substantive representation, debates focus on whether a political representative may act independently or if they are bound by a mandate from their constituency (Barnett & Low, 2009: 70). Responsiveness, as a key component of Pitkin’s (1967) definition of substantive representation, has been argued as failing if there is no clear connection between what politicians do and what those represented want and need (Celis, 2012). This questions whether elected representatives are capable of representing people and groups of which they have no or very little lived experience, or the principles and values of that group, as diverse as they may be (Mansbridge, 1999). Alternatively, the presence of a representative of the same ethnicity or gender can have a positive effect for minority groups and engender

trust in government and improve participation and empowerment (Forest, 2009; Summersby, 2009; van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2019). For example, some representative democracies, such as India, have set quotas for minority groups and women to ensure this 'politics of presence' (Forest, 2009).

A core practice of democracy refers to the mechanism of voting, with the slogan 'one person, one vote' epitomising the idea that in a democracy, all citizens have equal opportunity to influence the electoral outcome (Achen & Bartels, 2017; Jones et al., 2015; Shaw, 2011; Urbinati, 2006). A key critique of democracy, however, is that in practice this voting mechanism can result in unjust outcomes, particularly when "a majority deprives a minority of its substantive rights or interests" (Coglianese, 1990: 1664). A keen advocate for democracy, Dahl (1989) acknowledges that, at times, democratic processes would lead to the denial of some persons' fundamental rights or interests. To ameliorate this concern, Dahl (1989) emphasises that the democratic process itself requires the protection of many basic rights and interests. Some of these rights, such as free speech and the provision of a minimum of economic and political resources, are separate to the democratic process but still required for it to operate effectively (Dahl, 1989). Furthermore, Staeheli (2008) argues that democracy could embrace the 'politics of recognition' to address social justice issues. Such recognition ensures all those who would be affected by political decisions are able to participate effectively in decision-making processes. As the crux of democracy, the vote implies egalitarianism and legitimacy. Māori find themselves, however, as a minority in a democratic country, at the mercy of the vote. As Shaw (2011: 127) explains:

The experience of Māori – historically and today – is that in climacteric determinations, voting (the essence of democracy) may undermine their very survival as a people with distinctive kaupapa (practices and purposes) of their own. Democracy is thus a mechanism that perpetuates colonisation and which holds the potential to extend the scope of colonisation.

Hence, Māori are under-represented within local government and, as such, are limited in their ability to participate in high level decision-making.

The importance of local government and what it does is often not understood or is underestimated by the general public (Mulgan & Aimer, 2004; Summersby, 2009). The 'local' in local government is relevant as local government is where decisions are made that affect some aspects of people's day-to-day lives. As noted by Dalziel (cited in DIA, 2021: 1), "local

government is one of the most important institutions our species has created for expanding human wellbeing.” Local government is an arena where people can more readily have an impact on decision-making than at central government level due to factors such as place-proximity, local knowledge, and ease of access to politicians (Siddle & Koeble, 2012). Local government may be viewed as instrumental in struggles over political recognition as it shapes conditions of inclusion and participation in local-scale governance decisions and actions (Staeheli, 2008).

Local government in Aotearoa has been given legislative mandate through the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA) and the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) to embrace the claims of Indigenous groups and rights to social justice. By responding to this mandate, local government facilitates expansion of the range of people who participate in decision-making (Staeheli, 2008). While some councils have allowed non-elected Māori to take up advisory roles and, in some cases, decision-making roles, some argue that these do not ensure fair and effective Māori representation. Indeed, it has been noted that existing ad hoc and unpredictable structures have failed to deliver fair and effective representation to all (Bargh, 2016; Hayward, 1999). There is a growing body of literature on the under-representation of Māori in local government (see Bargh, 2021; Bell, 2018; Came & Humphries, 2014; Drage & Cheyne, 2016; Hayward, 2011a & b; Mutu, 2019; Shaw, 2011; Simmonds et al., 2016; Sullivan & Toki, 2012; Summersby, 2009; Webster & Fa’apoi, 2017). For example, Bargh (2021) argues that Māori have not been able to obtain an effective level of representation in, and engagement with, local government, or participate in decision-making regarding their own affairs and resources at a local level.

By highlighting the role that Te Tiriti should play to ensure Māori are represented in local government, commentators question whether democracy is fair if the majority constantly outvotes the minority (Bargh, 2016; Hayward, 2011a). Bargh (2021) asserts that the low representation of Māori in local government exemplifies the marginalisation of Māori and Māori values within the institutions of Aotearoa, and argues that current constitutional arrangements require amendment to reflect the partnership aspects of Te Tiriti. Via similar reference to the constitutional foundations of Aotearoa, Webster and Cheyne (2017: 159) state that only “a new Treaty based system of local government that incorporated distinctively Māori ways of governance would protect the rights of New Zealand Māori to fair and effective representation that stem from the Treaty of Waitangi.”

Having examined the relationship between descriptive and substantive Māori political representation in Aotearoa's parliament and local government, Summersby (2009) considers whether elected Māori representatives are able to promote Māori interests. Summersby (2009) finds that elected Māori political representatives feel a degree of responsibility to act for Māori based on their whakapapa and life experiences. Elected Māori representatives are able to act for Māori because they understand tikanga Māori and a Māori worldview in a way that is outside the experiences of non-Māori representatives. Additionally, Summersby (2009) identifies that Māori representatives use a consensual approach to deliberation that struggles to fit within the confines of the conventional formalities of council meetings. Drage (2008) argues that although Māori are significant landowners in many parts of the country, it is Pākehā and their interests that dominate local government. Sullivan and Toki (2012) query how Māori values may be considered, and the voice of Māori may be heard, when they are constantly outvoted by the majority in decision-making processes of local government. Until Māori representation in local government is mandatory, Sullivan and Toki (2012) argue, the principle of partnership outlined in Te Tiriti is not being honoured.

While the principle of partnership reflects the purpose of Te Tiriti, where Māori and the Crown have equal roles, Bargh (2021) problematises the common focus on Māori as 'representatives' in local government rather than as 'Tiriti partners.' Bargh (2016) claims that the lack of clarity around local government's duties and obligations stemming from the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the LGA supports arguments against mandatory Māori representation on local government. Others consider whether local government entities, while important agencies in the lives of iwi and hapū, are Tiriti partners (Bell, 2018; Chen et al., 1999; Hayward, 1999; Howard-Wagner et al., 2018). For Potaka (1999), local government needs to address Tiriti relations seriously and to identify where it stands in relation to Tiriti issues. Toki (2017) claims Te Tiriti must be viewed as a living document capable of adapting to new circumstances.

Tensions of inclusion / exclusion and (un)belonging in local government are played out on a national scale in Aotearoa, with the rhetoric of an inclusive society tending to dominate competing Māori discourses. Some Western discourses criticise Indigenous and Te Tiriti rights as special privileges that contradict notions of equal opportunity (Leoni et al., 2018). By aligning with a colonialist approach, political rhetoric reinforces an understanding that

Māori are a homogenous group whose support of a Tiriti framework for electoral processes actively excludes non-Māori from their rights and privileges as citizens (Humpage 2006). The implementation of policies by city and district councillors to rectify the underrepresentation of Māori in local government through establishing Māori wards or appointing unelected Māori members to council committees has been strongly contested (Bargh, 2016; De Bres, 2010; Hayward, 2011a; Human Rights Commission, 2010; Whaitiri, 2017; Webster & Cheyne, 2017; Webster & Fa’apoi, 2017). Underpinning arguments against mandatory representation of Māori in local government is the considerable political rhetoric that has promoted the notion that Aotearoa is a united nation, with one standard of citizenship and one rule for everyone (Sullivan, 2009).

2.2.3 From deep colonising to decolonising?

While many aspects of colonial domination have been challenged in recent decades, decolonising processes are constantly under threat of entrenching colonial impacts and relationships (Gibbs, 2003; Rose, 1996, 1999; Howitt, 2001, 2013, 2019; Ngata, 2019; Veracini, 2011). Although efforts have been made in many countries to address institutional racism and colonising practices, Australian-based anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose (1999) argues that some efforts to address the impacts of colonisation on Indigenous peoples have only perpetuated colonial patterns of power inequality and Indigenous disadvantage, resulting in what she calls ‘deep colonising.’ Rose (1996) introduced the concept of deep colonising in her discussion of the disempowering of Aboriginal women in the context of legal developments relating to land claims and Indigenous tenure, arguing that practices of colonisation may be embedded in the institutions that are meant to reverse processes of colonisation.

The concept of deep colonising enables a different perspective on state activities articulated as encouraging decolonisation. Veracini (2011: 179) argues that deep colonising is useful as an analytical tool where it has been identified that actions deemed to be “progressive and decolonising for some” results in making the position of others more difficult. In the context of events in Australia, Marchetti (2006) considers how legal processes used by institutions to address the effects of colonisation use deep colonising practices. Marchetti (2006) highlights the difficulties of shifting hegemonic legal processes despite good intentions. Gibbs (2003: 19) notes that to be effective, “decolonising processes must be long term and ongoing,

involving changes in corporate culture, in hegemonic ways of seeing, and in relationships between industry and Aboriginal communities.” If genuine decolonisation is to occur, Gibbs (2003) asserts, examination of the embeddedness of colonising practices within corporate and social structures is vital.

In considering the decolonisation of local government, while most discussions of Māori engagement in local government are limited to government publications (see for example Human Rights Commission, 2010; LGNZ, 1997, 2011; Te Puni Kokiri, 2007), some contributors argue that this kind of conversation is best addressed in the scholarly realm. These scholars suggest the focus of such work should be on exploring opportunities to establish a working framework for political participation of Māori in local government (Bargh, 2013, 2016; Drage & Cheyne, 2016; Hayward, 2011a; Webster & Cheyne, 2017). These authors share the view that a new Tiriti-based system of local government that provides for the expression of Māori tino rangatiratanga (the right to self-determination) as an equal form of governance should be considered. Jackson, (in Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011) argues that the under-representation of Māori in the local government democratic space is best addressed through options that facilitate a Kaupapa Māori based model for constitutional change.

Along with discussion to consider constitutional arrangements, calls for a review of local government in Aotearoa were heeded by the Labour government via its initiation of a comprehensive review of local government. This ‘Future for Local Government Review’ being undertaken by The Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA) is:

[a]n independent Ministerial review established in April 2021 to consider how New Zealand’s system of local democracy and governance will need to evolve over the next 30 years, in order to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders, and actively embody the Treaty partnership (DIA, 2021: 3).¹⁰

As noted earlier, the in-between space of liminality is a time of uncertainty and change while also a space of opportunity. The DIA (2021) report, *Raising the platform: Ārewa ake te Kaupapa* (the Report) acknowledges that the current time of change for Aotearoa and for local government is a time of opportunity. The Report demonstrates the opportunity for looking beyond the current local government system to consider new ways of working (DIA,

¹⁰ For further detail on the review process, see Chapter Six.

2021). According to the Report, local government is not seen as a Tiriti partner. The Report stresses, however, that this relationship needs to be expressed at local level in any future local governance arrangements (DIA, 2021). The implementation of this local government review, and the scope of its terms of reference, point to a transition for Māori representation in local government, with potential for a move towards tūrangawaewae and a place of belonging.

2.3 Conclusion

There is a small body of dedicated ‘experts’ examining local government in Aotearoa. Some of these authors are from the discipline of geography, but most are political scientists who have discussed local government elections and ways to address Māori under-representation, such as with Māori wards (Bargh, 2016, 2017, 2021; Hayward, 2011a; Webster & Cheyne, 2017). This thesis begins to address Māori representation and Māori wards to add to this scholarship.

The chapter outlined the international movement to decolonise knowledge and its application to the field of geography. Focusing on Aotearoa, the work of Māori geographers was highlighted along with the work of Pākēha geographer Stokes being a key influence on this research. Concepts of Indigeneity, critical geopolitics, liminality, deep colonising, and the geopolitics of belonging and their contribution to this thesis were described.

In this chapter, literature that illustrates the colonial underpinnings of local government in Aotearoa and the barriers for Māori to participate as equals in local government decision-making was outlined. The literature shows the challenges for Māori representatives and the Māori worldview to belong in local government decision-making. The concept of deep colonising provides impetus in the literature to support a re-imagining of local government in Aotearoa and highlights the need for a discussion that is based on Te Tiriti. The following chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct research into these issues.

Chapter Three: A decolonising methodological approach

A decolonising methodological approach emanating from critical geopolitical, Indigenous, and Māori geographies guides this research into local government power relations in Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa. This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used to explore the research question and aims. The question the thesis considers is how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? To explore that question, the research aims to:

1. Critique and challenge the limitations of the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy and its impact on Māori representation and belonging in local government at the scale of the nation;
2. Apply the unease and discomfort that characterises liminality to the status of Māori wards in local government within Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa more broadly; and,
3. Use the liminal position of Māori representation in local government and the innovative possibilities of that positioning to reimagine decolonising local government across Aotearoa.

For this research, I draw particularly on the comprehensive legacy of Professor Dame Evelyn Stokes (1936-2005), whose decolonising approach serves as a valuable guide for geographical work involving Māori in Aotearoa. To undertake the research, I used Te Ara Tika, an Indigenous methodological approach unique to Aotearoa. Te Ara Tika is a set of guidelines within a Kaupapa Māori ethical framework that integrates understandings from Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) and Indigenous values (Came, 2013). The key components of Te Ara Tika are introduced in the first section of this chapter. This section concludes with discussion of the way the framework applies to the research methodology. The second part of the chapter describes the methods used to gather data to explore the thesis topic, introduces the participants, and concludes with some reflections on the data gathering and analysis process. The qualitative methodology used to undertake the research includes methods that incorporate respect for relationships between the researcher and the research participants and that give participants a voice. The research uses a triangulation of qualitative methods, including 14 semi-structured interviews, three participant observations, and thematic analysis of 122 media articles.

3.1 Decolonising geographical methodologies

Kovach (2000: 92) emphasises that “critical theory and a decolonising approach have assisted in providing an analysis for making visible the power dynamics within society, as well as developing the tools to think, write, and be in a way that furthers social justice.” Similarly, Hay (2010: 42) explains that decolonising research attempts “to use the research process and research findings to break down the cross-cultural discourses, asymmetrical power relationships, representations, and political, economic, and social structures through which colonialism and neo-colonialism are constructed and maintained.” Decolonising research requires careful consideration of the design of research projects (Radcliffe, 2022). Radcliffe (2022: 206) invites us to work collaboratively to “dismantle white privilege and Eurocentric notions of knowledge” by re-situating the implications of research for the participants within a process that is positioned within the colonial-modern world while having the ability to challenge it.

Geographic engagement with Indigenous peoples remains linked to colonialism (de Leeuw et al., 2013). While efforts to decolonise geography are ongoing, they are constrained because academia, including the field of geography, is structured within a colonisation paradigm (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Knowledge is always situated and is always associated within formations and systems of power (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Consequently, studying Indigenous geographies raises numerous ethical and political dilemmas. Geographic research and engagement with Indigenous communities was traditionally developed within a Western research paradigm that had historical links to colonial practices of extraction and / or domination (Barry & Thompson-Fawcett, 2020; Stokes, 1987). These links maintained the marginalisation of Indigenous people globally (MacDonald, 2017). Research with Indigenous peoples and within Indigenous contexts has been constrained through Indigenous distrust of Western based academia, and Indigenous concerns around power dynamics and lack of cultural sensitivity (Stokes, 1987, 1998).

Geographers are increasingly being influenced by Indigenous scholars from a range of disciplines who are calling for a decolonisation of knowledge through the use of Indigenist methodologies (MacDonald, 2017). The term ‘Indigenist research’ includes Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholars who prioritise the rights of Indigenous peoples and draw on Indigenous bodies of knowledge (MacDonald, 2017). Indigenist methodologies such

as participatory visual methodology and pūrākau, place Indigenous ideologies, ontologies, epistemologies, perspectives, and purposes at the centre while being open to Western theory, research, and knowledge (Larsen & Johnson, 2012; MacDonald, 2017). These approaches encourage the recovery and promotion of traditional Indigenous knowledge systems (MacDonald, 2017).

While there is a growing number of Indigenous geographers providing scholarly criticism of existing research methodologies (see, for example, Johnson et al., 2007; Lyons et al., 2020; Simmonds et al., 2016; Stokes, 1987; Sullivan, 2020), many geographers negotiating concepts and practices of decolonisation are non-Indigenous (see, for example, Eggleton et al., 2017; MacDonald, 2017; Radcliffe, 2017a & b, 2018, 2019, 2022; Stokes, 1985, 1987, 1998). As noted by de Leeuw and Hunt (2018), non-Indigenous geographers tend to address decolonisation in three ways. Firstly, geographers explore settler colonial power and emphasise the need to decolonise the systems that reinforce settler colonial power (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Secondly, they work to decolonise themselves as geographers and to decolonise the discipline of geography (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Thirdly, decolonising geographers attempt to decolonise geographic research methods and to identify and promote anticolonial behaviours and techniques (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018).

Taking into account the decolonising of research methods noted by de Leeuw and Hunt (2018), Indigenous world views and the construction of Indigenous geographical knowledge underpin the emergence of Indigenous methodologies and ways of research by and with Indigenous people (Copenace et al., 2020; de Leeuw et al., 2012; Smith, 2021; Sullivan, 2020). Indigenous methodologies emanate from place-based Indigenous worldviews, which are often grounded in close relationships with the lands and resources of a particular place (Kovach, 2000). A key consideration when undertaking research with Indigenous communities is that their historical connections to place must be acknowledged (Walker et al., 2021).

Power and control manifest in all forms of research, and the development of Indigenous research methods is part of a decolonising process that addresses the issues of disempowerment resulting from processes of colonisation (Smith, 2021). Indigenous research is among those approaches that acknowledge power relationships in research and seek to empower research participants (Berryman et al., 2013; Dowling, 2010; Kovach, 2000;

McEwan, 2009; Ruwhiu & Cathro, 2014). Undertaking research with Indigenous people and communities includes challenges such as setting the research agenda, examining power relationships, considering ownership of research materials, and accessing research participants. The robustness of the research also relates to having a methodology that requires complete disclosure of who you are, where you are from, and why you are interested in the research (Smith, 2013).

Academics working within Māori contexts in Aotearoa have used a variety of methodological approaches to conduct their research. For example, in their geographical research to explore how Māori tribal organisations are addressing calls by other Indigenous peoples to address sustainability in a time of climate change, Bargh et al. (2014) used 'insurgent research.' Métis¹¹ scholar Gaudry (2011) explains that insurgent research is based within Indigenous methodologies. Insurgent research differs from research that uses extractive processes because it explicitly employs Indigenous worldviews, it orients knowledge creation toward Indigenous peoples and their communities, and the researcher's responsibilities are almost exclusively towards the community and participants (Gaudry, 2011).

Within the Australian context, geographers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have specific methodological and ethical issues to consider. For example, in conducting qualitative research with Aboriginal sex workers, Indigenous geographer Sullivan (2020) accessed this group through Indigenous community organisations and sex worker community organisations. Sullivan (2020) found that the research process required considerable attention to the dynamics of power and representation, noting the ongoing histories of research being conducted 'on' Indigenous Australian peoples within the discipline of geography. To be able to carry out the research, Sullivan (2020) emphasised the importance of being reflexive and recognising the researcher's power and privilege, assumptions, biases, and value judgments. In another Australian example, in conducting collaborative research centred on climate adaptation planning with the Yuibera and Koinmerburra Traditional Owner groups on the Great Barrier Reef catchments, Lyons et al. (2020) adopted a case study approach that followed Indigenous protocols of working

¹¹ The Métis refers to a group of Indigenous peoples who inhabit Canada's three prairie provinces, as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the northern United States.

together. The protocols included delivering project outputs to each group in accordance with the co-design, and regularly reviewing the way they conducted the work and the language being used (Lyons et al., 2020). The Traditional Owners reviewed and approved all the project information before making it public and retained ownership of their intellectual property (Lyons et al., 2020).

In recognition of the Australian Aboriginal and Māori cultural interrelationships with the land, in their research, Marques et al. (2021) used a design-led research approach to nurture capacity building with Aboriginal custodians. This approach contributes to the sustainability of rural communities and methods of environmental care. Marques et al. (2021) claim that to recognise and appraise the significance of Indigenous cultures and their landscapes, research design is best focused on Indigenous worldviews rather than on the ideals and values of the hegemonic Western civilisation. The work of Marques et al. (2021) combines strategies that allow for partnership building and community-based activities. In addition to the use of tools such as pen and paper, they promote use of maps, photographs, drawings in the sand, oral traditions, narratives, and storytelling. These forms of expression are very much part of the everyday lives of many Indigenous peoples and an important part of Indigenous research (Marques et al., 2021).

Indigenous Canadian geographers Copenace et al. (2020) investigate how Indigenous research methodologies may be incorporated in community-based research in ways that are ethically sound and that prioritise Indigenous ways of knowing. Their research highlights the critical part elders play when using Indigenous methodologies to examine any research topic, and demonstrate how conversation can be used as a research method (Copenace et al., 2020). Similarly, de Leeuw et al. (2012) raise concerns with the emergence of participatory and community-based research methods as “best practice” for undertaking research into Indigenous geographies, suggesting that the establishment of friendships situated outside research relationships may be a means through which research methods may be decolonised.

3.1.1 Māori geography and methodologies

Kaupapa Māori methodologies emerged in Aotearoa in the late 1970s and 1980s in response by Māori scholars to “generations of activism and resistance from Māori since colonisation

began in the 19th century” (Bargh & van Wagner, 2020: 95). In Aotearoa, Smith (2021) acknowledges the fraught history of research with Māori that has resulted in Māori hesitance towards being involved in research. This hesitation is based on historical links of research with the production of Western knowledge, the development of theories that dehumanise Māori, and practices that privilege Western ways of knowing over Māori knowledge, language, and culture (Smith, 2021). In order to address this hesitation of Māori to participate in research, Kaupapa Māori research endeavours to empower Māori participants and work with them to identify how the research can be of value (Smith, 2021).

Kaupapa Māori research emerged within a “broader cultural and political shift in Crown-Māori relations” and a reconsideration of research that involves Māori people within a reimagining of the world grounded in Māori worldviews. Such research contributes directly to “Māori political aspirations and assertions of jurisdiction” (Bargh & van Wagner, 2020: 96). Martel et al. (2022: 21) explain that the Kaupapa Māori approach to research was developed in response to the ethnocentricity of research in Aotearoa where research to investigate the Māori world had been undertaken using the “paradigms of Pākehā researchers.” Thus, “work undertaken by Indigenous researchers was legitimate only if it fitted within Western frameworks of knowledge and learning” (Martel et al., 2022). Additionally, the move for Māori to develop Indigenous approaches and methodologies assisted Māori researchers to gain access to mainstream funding and research initiatives (Walker et al., 2006).

In this context, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith became renowned for her work in the development of Indigenous research methodologies, including Kaupapa Māori research (Larsen & Johnson, 2012; Martel et al., 2022; Murton, 2012; Ringham et al., 2016). In her seminal text *Decolonising Methodologies*, Smith (2021, first published in 1999) disrupts hegemonic ideas about the benefits of the pursuit of knowledge. Smith (2021) argues for the adoption of research practices that are respectful, ethical, and sympathetic, responsibilities that contrast with racist practices and attitudes and ethnocentric assumptions. Kaupapa Māori research aligns with a critical theoretical approach in that it explores underlying assumptions that conceal and reproduce power relations within society, and it exposes the ways hegemonic cultural constructions actively support social inequalities and the ongoing oppression of Māori (Smith, 2021). Used in this way, Kaupapa Māori research critiques

dominant and Westernised hegemonies, and advocates for Māori to pursue self-determination (Bishop, 1999; Smith, 2021). The five principles of tino rangatiratanga, social justice, Te Ao Māori, te reo Māori and whānau form a framework for Kaupapa Māori research (Smith, 2021).

Māori geographers working within Māori contexts have found the Kaupapa Māori approach to research design and methodology culturally appropriate and likely to result in rich research results. Indigenous researchers have used a Kaupapa Māori approach within the field of geography to explore various issues. For example, in their research on the moral terrains of tourism in Aotearoa, Ringham et al. (2016) used a Kaupapa Māori approach that enabled the researchers to consider cultural and spiritual values and practices. This engagement allowed the protocols and values of the research community to be incorporated into the research design. The Kaupapa Māori research framework also assisted the researchers to “recognise and understand the multiple realities and power relations between the participants and researchers” (Ringham et al., 2016: 103).

A Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework has been used by several Māori geographers to research resource management issues. For example, Kelly (2020) examines the values of hapū in relation to an ancestral river and freshwater source. Relatedly, Bennett et al. (2021) employ a Braided River methodological approach comprised of Kaupapa Māori research and Narrative Inquiry. Mokaraka-Harris et al. (2016), in their investigation based in the Hokianga Harbour, use Kaupapa Māori to acknowledge Māori historical connections to place. August (2005) combines Kaupapa Māori research and postcolonial theory to examine Māori women and the ways in which their bodies are established within particular cultural spaces, such as at urupā and sites where food is gathered.

The idea that Kaupapa Māori research is undertaken by Māori, with Māori, for the benefit of Māori has been hotly debated amongst Māori researchers (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). Much of the debate has centred around claims that Māori are best qualified to undertake research with Māori, while others stress that non-Māori can be involved in research that has a Kaupapa Māori orientation (Mikahere-Hall, 2017; Smith, 2021). For example, Pākehā scholar Stokes developed ground breaking principles that provided a foundation for the development of a Kaupapa Māori research framework within the discipline of geography. Stokes (1987) raised several issues in geographical research with Māori that encouraged a

dedicated Māori approach to research. Indeed, her 1987 paper exposed the paucity of geographic work that assessed social and economic geography within the context of colonialism and its effect on Māori. Stokes (1987) noted that most writers focused on settlers with little reference to Māori. Exposing the ways in which geographers had reinforced negative stereotypes of Māori and generally ignored cultural issues, Stokes (1987: 119) critiqued the “Pākehā geography of Māoris.” Stokes’ work underpinned development of a separate field of Māori geography as she cautioned that the Pākehā academic needs the “knowledge and experience of participation in the Māori world, the appropriate skills to investigate, and articulate clearly, and communicate to both Māori and Pākehā” (Stokes, 1987: 121).

Academics have used a variety of methods while working within a Kaupapa Māori methodological approach. For example, Martel et al. (2022) used mixed methods research to develop a framework to conduct bicultural research, where a team of researchers from different cultures was assembled to work together on a project in which the participants were predominantly Māori. A mixed methods approach was also used by Jones et al. (2020) in their geographical research on Māori and cycling. The research aligned with a Kaupapa Māori approach as its primary aim was to improve outcomes for Māori, and the analysis centred on Māori realities and priorities.

Pūrākau has historically been widely used by Māori to convey messages and retain historic narratives through the generations (Simmonds, 2014). Based on this, researchers have found pūrākau to be a useful method for research with Māori. For example, King et al. (2020) used an inductive-based methodology informed by collaborative storytelling, oral histories, and ethnographic records to explore how tectonic hazards have profoundly influenced Māori relationships with, and understandings of, the environment. Johnson (2008a) also applied pūrākau as a research technique, with the research centring on four specific stories told by Māori of their experiences exercising their self-determination over the resources of their communities (Johnson, 2008a). Additionally, Coombes et al. (2011) discuss the challenges around Indigenous geographies, highlighting the importance of storytelling in the geographic imaginaries of many Indigenous peoples and its part in situating identities in country and place.

Participatory visual methodology, where the participants create drawings, is another research method favoured in Māori contexts. This methodology was employed by Eggleton et al. (2017) in their research to explore patients' experiences in general practice waiting rooms. The researcher used a traditional hui (meeting) protocol to build rapport with the participants, most of whom were Māori, many were female, and many had mental health vulnerabilities. The research methodology involved making family connections, mutually sharing ideas, using Māori concepts, and employing a culturally safe approach.

3.2 Kaupapa Māori and Te Ara Tika framework

In recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa that granted my ancestors the rights to settle here, I understand that I have responsibilities to conduct my research with integrity. Therefore, I chose to follow the example of other Pākehā researchers who desire to do research that is “acceptable, accountable and relevant to Māori” (Came, 2013: 65). Aspects of Kaupapa Māori are important to the choice of method and approach to decolonising local authority politics. Commentators such as Pihama et al. (2002) and Smith (1995) state that work undertaken using a decolonising paradigm should be owned by, and done for, Indigenous people. For these reasons, as a Pākehā researcher, I was grateful to find an approach to research that is based on Kaupapa Māori principles and that can be used by tauwiwi. To undertake this research I selected Te Ara Tika, an Indigenous methodological approach unique to Aotearoa.

For geographers concerned with decolonising geography, the ethical framework of Te Ara Tika is a useful model. Outlined by Came (2013b) and based on *Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics* (Hudson, 2010), Te Ara Tika facilitates the completion of a culturally sensitive centred research project. Te Ara Tika normalises and places Māori experience as central to the research, embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and core Western ethical principles into a unique Aotearoa based framework. Te Ara Tika guidelines are relevant to all researchers attempting to address racism, and to enable tauwiwi to undertake “acceptable, accountable and responsible research” (Came, 2013: 64). Te Ara Tika guidelines are a Kaupapa Māori ethical framework developed by a group of senior Māori researchers through in-depth debate and discussion that “integrate understandings from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Indigenous values, and draw on the significant contributions of Te Awēkotuku

(1991), Cram (1993), Smith (2021) and Hudson (2004) to the field of matatika Māori (Māori research ethics)” (Came, 2013: 65). While government-led processes of colonisation and assimilation in Aotearoa have historically served to relegate Māori to the marginalised position of exotic and other in research practice, Te Ara Tika centres the Māori experience as normal (Came, 2013).

The approach of Te Ara Tika, as detailed by Came (2013b), provides a Kaupapa Māori based approach that assists non-Māori in their research involving Māori. Although I interview Indigenous community members in this research, the research itself is not being undertaken within an Indigenous community and, as I am a non-Indigenous researcher, I chose not to employ a full Kaupapa Māori approach for this research. Te Ara Tika and Kaupapa Māori approaches to research emanate from similar perspectives. Both are action oriented with a focus on “exposing injustice and working collaboratively with others to effect change” (Came, 2013: 64). The two approaches are committed to addressing racism within the context of Aotearoa and have been developed by Māori (Came, 2013). One key difference between the two approaches is that Kaupapa Māori is designed for Māori researchers to use when working within Māori research contexts (Smith, 2021). Te Ara Tika lends itself to being used by researchers from all backgrounds “to enhance and strengthen our work with Māori” (Came, 2013: 64).

Close relationships to land and place permeate Te Ao Māori values, and hence are tightly woven through the Kaupapa Māori and Te Ara Tika approaches to research. The Te Ara Tika framework may be applied to most fields of research. Te Ara Tika is useful for geographers researching within Aotearoa as it is based on Kaupapa Māori principles, and therefore aligns to similar relationships to place as those expressed in Te Ao Māori. Te Ara Tika merges Te Tiriti o Waitangi and core Western ethical principles into a unique framework through which geographers can conduct ethical and respectful decolonising research (Came, 2013).

Considering cultural safety, for this research I was supported by my Māori research advisor. My research advisor introduced me and my research to prospective participants; provided guidance on the research topic, methods, and analysis; and commented on research findings where appropriate. The research design was endorsed by my research advisor, and ethical approval was given by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato. The Te Ara Tika framework is

described below, and the way the framework was applied to the research methodology of this project is outlined.

3.2.1 Application of Te Ara Tika ethical framework

Te Ara Tika framework is based around four key Māori elements: whakapapa; tika; manaakitanga; and mana (see Figure 3.1).

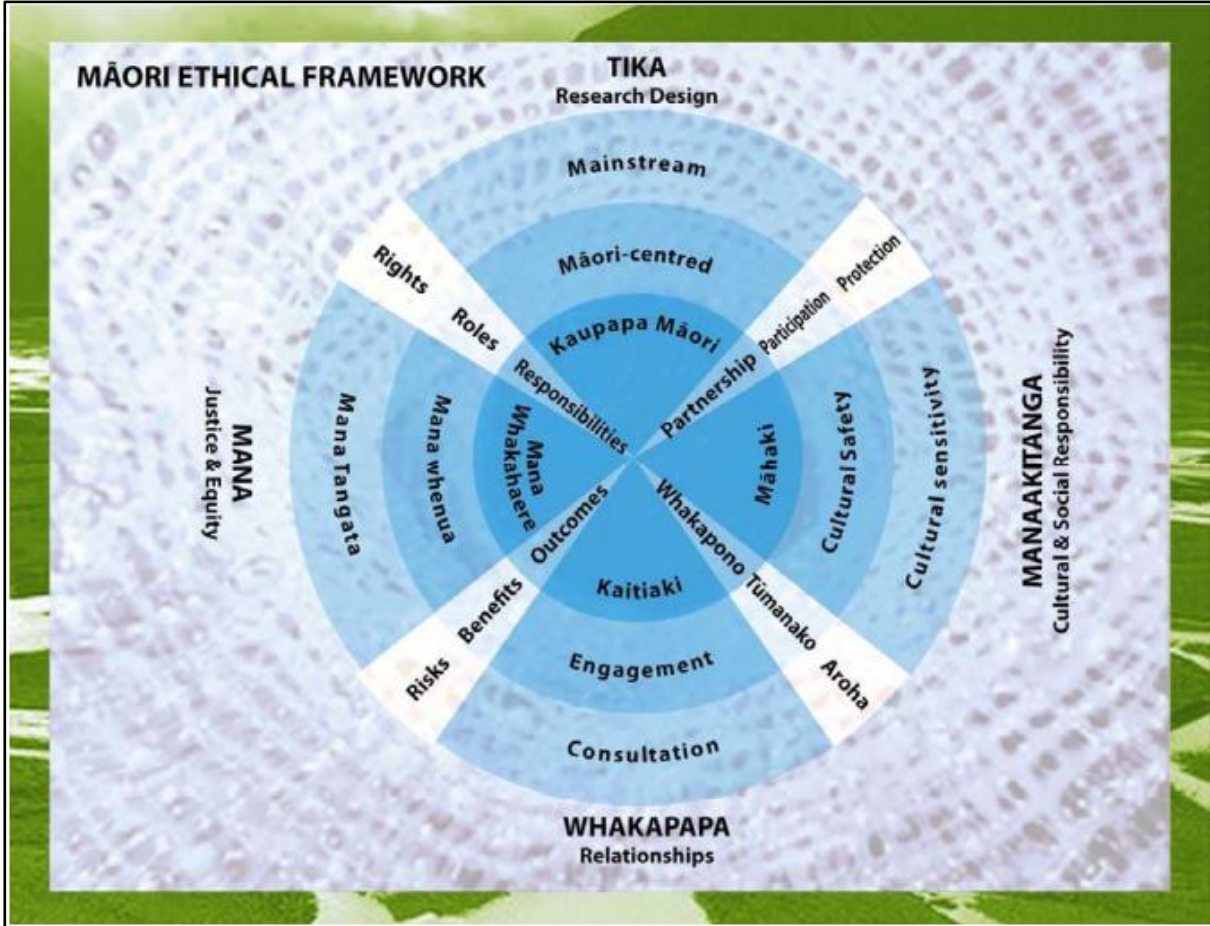


Figure 3.1. Te Ara Tika ethical framework
Source: Reprinted with permission (see also Hudson, 2010: 4)

The whakapapa element of the framework refers to the development of relationships between the researcher and participants, and includes issues surrounding Māori control of the research process (Hudson, 2010). The tika element refers to “what is right and what is good for any particular situation,” and considers the use of Māori research design approaches and Māori participation in the research (Hudson, 2010: 8). The manaakitanga element focuses on ensuring the mana of all the research parties is upheld through the research process by awareness of cultural sensitivity, cultural safety, and spiritual integrity

(Hudson, 2010). The mana element acknowledges issues of power and authority, particularly in terms of rights and risks of research. It includes issues such as ownership of data, informed consent, and reciprocity with Māori (Hudson, 2010).

Each section of the four sections of the framework is divided into three parts that designate progressive expectations of ethical behaviour (Hudson, 2010). The elements are defined in terms of minimum, good, and best practice standards. The outer circle shows the minimum standards expected to have been met by researchers before they receive ethical approval for a research project to be undertaken within Te Ara Tika framework (Hudson, 2010). The middle circle depicts good practice concepts that indicate a more Māori responsive approach to the research project than evident in the concepts in the outer circle (Hudson, 2010). The centre of the circle shows best practice initiatives that most closely align the ethical considerations with expectations of behaviour within Te Ao Māori (Hudson, 2010). The axes between the sections identify links between ethical issues and rights, roles and responsibilities, the principles of Te Tiriti, a risk / benefit / outcome continuum, and the Māori values of whakapono, tūmanako and aroha (Hudson, 2010). The way the four key elements of whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga, and mana were applied to the research project are outlined in the sections below.

3.2.1.1 Whakapapa (relationships)

The whakapapa aspect of Te Ara Tika framework emphasises the genesis and purpose of the topic being researched. In terms of research topic, while I acknowledge that I cannot whakapapa to place and people as might a Māori researcher, all researchers come to their research projects with unique personal histories, personal interests, ideologies, and contexts. Research is motivated by the researcher, and the choice of research topic and research design are drawn from the interests of the researcher (Berryman et al., 2013). Critical reflexivity and acknowledging one's positionality in relation to the topic, while important to all research approaches, are integral to a decolonising approach (Faria & Mollett, 2016; Hay, 2010; Johnson, 2008a; Ringham et al., 2016). The notion that it is possible to undertake value free, objective research has been challenged by those who claim that knowledge is situated and constructed by the way people see the world (Kitchin & Tate, 2013). Critical researchers stress the importance of acknowledging this positionality (Came, 2013; Faria & Mollett, 2016; Gough & Madill, 2012; Hay, 2010; Johnson, 2008a).

This research topic emanated from my worldview, experiences, and sense of social justice. I am a Pākehā from Aotearoa privileged to have studied for eight years in the national university system. After graduating with a master's degree in 2002, I spent nearly 20 years working as a strategic planner for district and city councils in Aotearoa. I also worked for a short period for the Office of Treaty Settlements within the Ministry of Justice. In this work I was part of a team that negotiated Treaty settlement agreements between central government and iwi groups. I acknowledge that my knowledge is situated within a country with a history of ongoing colonial violence and disenfranchisement of its Indigenous people, and that my worldview has been shaped from a position of privilege within a colonial power structure and system (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). In considering the research methodology in which to operate, it is important for me to acknowledge that I feel passionately about this topic and this emotional positionality influences my research choices.

In terms of personal knowledge of Te Ao Māori, I am continuing my journey to learn te reo Māori; although not yet fluent, I can converse in basic te reo Māori and have an understanding of tikanga. I am aware of the importance of whakapapa in Māori spaces and gatherings. In my personal experience I have been privileged to be part of the tangata whenua group welcoming people onto a marae; attended numerous marae functions including unveilings, tangihanga, funerals and whānau celebrations; and, interacted with iwi negotiation groups on formal and informal occasions as part of the treaty settlements process. I recognise, however, that my experience of Māori worldviews is limited. I am aware I could be seen to be patronising and wanting to 'fix Māori problems for them.' I also recognise that I could be viewed as an 'outsider' to Māori. I acknowledge these viewpoints and have measures in place to address such concerns. I am encouraged by the relationships I have built with Māori in my personal and professional life, and I believe that with humility and openness I can conduct this research successfully. My topic choice was consolidated following several discussions with my research advisor and my supervisors. I had previously undertaken research with a Māori social service provider organisation and felt that with the guidance of my supervisors and research advisor, this project could be undertaken within a culturally safe environment.

In awareness of the whakapapa aspect of Te Ara Tika, I was continually reflective of my positioning within the research and in the relationships with interviewees. Fostering

relationships with research participants to ensure honesty and openness is another key element to the whakapapa approach. To facilitate the forming of relationships between the researcher and the research participants I applied the following principles to my research. These principles are based on Māori cultural values as they relate to interactions with research participants:

1. “Aroha ki te tāngata – enable respect and empowerment for people within the research process.
2. He kanohi kitea – illustrate your commitment by showing up and being a face that is seen and known to those who are participating in research.
3. Titiro, whakarongo . . . kōrero – look, listen and then, later, speak. Researchers need to take time to understand people’s day-to-day realities, priorities and aspirations.
4. Manaaki ki te tāngata – being open to sharing, hosting and being generous with time, expertise, relationships, etc.
5. Kia tūpatō – being cautious through ensuring culturally safe practices.
6. Kāua e takahia te mana o te tāngata – do not trample on the mana (dignity) of people.
7. Kia māhaki – being humble. Researchers should find ways of sharing their knowledge while remaining humble” (Ruwhiu & Cathro, 2014: 5-6; Smith, 2021).

In relation to the three levels of the whakapapa element of Te Ara Tika framework - consultation, engagement and kaitiakitanga - I am confident this research sits at the Consultation level. My research advisor had input in the selection of the topic and methodology, and information sheets were provided to all participants that covered future use of the research data and reporting back mechanisms. I also provided opportunities for participants to discuss the research and have any questions answered before proceeding with the interviews.

3.2.1.2 Tika (research design)

The tika aspect of Te Ara Tika framework ensures alignment of the research methodology with the purpose of benefiting participants and bringing about positive change (Hudson, 2010). Respectful approaches to research design are part of my approach, and this research

project is centred on a transformative goal that seeks to reimagine local government to include a Te Ao Māori paradigm.

In terms of research design approaches, my research advisor was involved in practical aspects of the research design and implementation, including contacting potential participants, and reviewing drafts of interview questions. My research advisor provided feedback on the choice of methods and interview questions. I also spoke with Māori colleagues in local government for advice on the best approach to recruit participants. As the research topic was directly relevant to Māori, I chose research methods that were inclusive and empowering to participants, and Māori had key roles as research advisor and participants. As well as valuing Māori input and participation to the project, Indigenous voices were elevated within the research through reference to the work of Indigenous academics and the normalised use of te reo Māori throughout the thesis (Johnson, 2008a; Stokes, 1987, 1992, 1998; Sullivan, 2020). Pertaining to application of the tika aspect of the data collection process, the goal of the thesis is to bring about positive change. Although the research has been undertaken with an activist focus, the potential outcomes for Māori from this research are difficult to identify. This difficulty stems chiefly from the rapidly evolving political climate in which the research is being undertaken.

Based on the evidence provided, I assert this research sits between the two outer levels of the tika element: Mainstream and Māori-centred. The dichotomy of Mainstream and Māori is, however, limiting because it does not recognise research methodologies that are not Mainstream or Māori, such as queer feminist research methodologies. This research project was designed with careful consideration of institutional ethics requirements and the desire to ensure all participants feel valued and safe in their participation (see Appendix Two for a copy of ethics approval). Within this context it can be noted that formal university requirements do not always align with Māori scholarship. For example, the style of writing and presentation required to undertake doctoral scholarship does not necessarily align with Kaupapa Māori preferences and desired outcomes.

3.2.1.3 Manaakitanga (cultural and social responsibility)

The manaakitanga aspect of Te Ara Tika framework is associated with cultural and social responsibility and respect for people (Hudson, 2010). It includes obtaining appropriate cultural advice and respecting confidentiality (Hudson, 2010). The use of Māori protocols

and research whānau support align with the middle level of the manaakitanga aspect, and are the goals I strove to incorporate in my research.

To complement guidance from my research advisor I was guided by my experience-based intuition for each given situation. This intuition was informed by my employment experiences in local and central government, my previous interaction and relationships with Māori, and knowledge obtained through formal education and scholarly readings. A key principle that guides research with Māori is humility. Through involvement with Māori in my working and personal life I have learned that a stance of humility on my part serves me well in gaining respect and acceptance. As Soohoo (2013: 209) states, “humility means blurring of the Self so that the Other may be more visible. It means respecting the possibility that Others have something more to say than you have.” Another key consideration I embraced when working with Māori was acknowledging the influence of the past and the contribution of elders, and ancestors of the iwi and whānau represented by those physically present (SooHoo, 2013). For example, Jones and Jenkins (2008: 136) argue that when working with Māori it is important to acknowledge the power of the past to Māori and to keep in mind that “it is the past, Māori believe, that shapes us in the present, and into the unknown future.”

The manaakitanga aspect of Te Ara Tika encompasses hospitality, confidentiality, and humility. For each interview or meeting with all participants I offered them drink and food. We went through the consent forms together and I answered any questions they had and confirmed their contribution to the research would be confidential. Once again, humility was a key aspect of manaakitanga, and a key tool in my interactions with the research participants. Adopting a stance of humility in research is one way to address Mutua and Swadener’s (2004: 20) call to “explore ways to decolonise research and create spaces of liberatory praxis.” Humility may be understood as knowing one’s place, displaying reverence, and showing respect (Komea, 2004). It is a virtue of deference, an assumption of not knowing, and an act of listening without judgment. I applied the following aspects of an attitude of humility in my research contact with Māori: On entering another’s space I knew my place as an outsider in an attitude of respect and reverence; I assumed an attitude of not knowing and listened without judgement; I acknowledged that “some things are not meant to be known by outsiders, for example, sacred knowledge,” and respected that stance

(Soohoo, 2013: 201); I learned to wait and respect timeframes, embracing “the Māori term mā te wā which means all in due time” (Soohoo, 2013: 203); I respected the possibility that Others have something more to say than myself and listened for the meaning behind the words as well as what was spoken; and, I avoided “trampling on the mana (ascribed power, prestige, authority) of the people” through following protocol, being led by my research whānau, and respecting and valuing the opportunity to meet participants (Soohoo, 2013: 212).

In consideration of the three levels of the manaakitanga aspect of Te Ara Tika framework, I believe I have demonstrated the research aligned with the middle tier, or the Cultural Safety level. Although I recognise that I have much to learn about Te Ao Māori, I feel confident that use of Māori principles and protocols, the level of whānau support for the project, and the cultural sensitivity aspects of the methodology ensured cultural safety aspects were well addressed.

3.2.1.4 Mana (justice and equity)

The fourth aspect of Te Ara Tika framework explains that mana in the Māori context acknowledges issues of power and authority in relation to rights, risks, and outcomes of a project. It addresses participants’ rights and ensures their risks are appropriately identified and communicated through informed consent and transparency to ensure protection of their mana.

Approval for this project was given from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato / Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato Te Wānanga o Ngā Kete prior to beginning the research. Among the ethical concerns were those associated with addressing the issue of Māori representation in local government and potentially raising expectations for Māori regarding involvement in local government. These concerns were of particular relevance given a range of efforts were already underway nationally to address Māori participation issues. I was reluctant for this research to disrupt or undermine historic efforts and existing goodwill that had been built between individual councils and iwi. Another concern was that I wanted to ensure that the

important work being done by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ)¹² and individual councils to address Māori representation would not be undervalued and jeopardised by this research. Ensuring cultural safety for participants and myself was also an issue; hence, from the outset, Kaupapa Māori values and principles were integrated in the research approach and in the recruitment of specialised support from a Māori research advisor.

Other ethical concerns included the issues of vulnerability and awareness of homogenising Māori in discourse. Firstly, I recognised that any discussion of race, ethnicity and power may provoke feelings of vulnerability for both participants and researcher. During the course of the research, I wanted to hear the voices that have been “silenced, marginalised and displaced.” I acknowledged, however, that this would also make me “vulnerable, open to being unsettled by what I hear, and open to the realities of colonisation and settlement” (Howitt, 2019: 12). I was also aware that research on experiences and thoughts on Māori representation in local government while people are actively participating in local government governance may encounter sensitivities. I acknowledged that people may be reluctant to say anything that could disrupt the current state or jeopardise relationships established between elected members and Māori governance members. Another ethical consideration of which I became aware as the research progressed was the danger of viewing Māori as a homogenous entity. It became important for me to comprehend the complexity of the Māori community and the multiplicity of views valued by that community (Coombes et al., 2014).

To address these concerns, potential harm was minimised by conducting interviews in a manner of openness and humility that respected participants’ ideas and valued their contributions. As a social researcher, I carefully considered the ethical treatment and care of research participants who gave so generously of their time, knowledge, and experience. To ensure the protection of participants, rights for participants were written into ethics applications and participants were provided with information sheets (see Appendix Three). Participants were also given the opportunity to discuss any concerns with me prior to

¹² Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) is the sector voice for all 78 councils in Aotearoa. As part of its commitment to lead policy on local government and local democracy, LGNZ undertakes and commissions research, including a survey of elected members after each local government election. LGNZ has been a strong advocate for the establishment of Māori wards, motivated by the frustration of councils whose attempts to set them up were thwarted by the referendum clause in the Local Government Act.

conducting the interviews and written and signed consent forms were obtained and kept for my records (see Appendix Four).

In assessing to which level of the mana aspect this research aligned, I consider it to be at the initial level of Mana Tangata. In the context of Te Ara Tika framework, mana relates to the quality of relationships between researcher and participants, ensuring individuals participating in research are appropriately informed of risks to their individual or collective mana. Issues of power and authority are acknowledged in relation to rights, roles, and responsibilities, and are considered alongside the risks, benefits, and outcomes of the project. The main reason the Mana Tangata level was selected for this project is that the higher level requires greater involvement of mana whenua in the research relationship than was included in this research. In regard to the Mana Tangata level, the manner in which the requirements of rights and risks were met in the research have been outlined, including the identification of risks to participants, potential benefits of the research, and transparency of consultation ensuring the mana of participants was upheld.

3.3 Research methods and thematic analysis

Qualitative research methods were employed to obtain the empirical evidence to fulfil the thesis aims. Additionally, I endeavoured to source secondary data regarding the stated ethnicities of elected members in local authorities in Aotearoa from sources including Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), The Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA) and Statistics New Zealand / Tatauranga Aotearoa (Stats NZ). The data collected included information about the number and types of votes for each ward or constituency, voter turnout, the number of women standing as candidates and the number of women elected. There was, however, no information available on the ethnicity of candidates standing for election or successfully elected to local government (DIA, 2019). This lack of statistical data on Māori representation in local government is noted by Bargh (2021) and Vowles and Hayward (2021) (see Chapter Five).¹³

¹³ Vowles and Hayward (2021) note that robust data on the ethnicity of local government candidates and councillors is unavailable. Data on those of Māori descent and Māori roll location is available from electronic electoral rolls; these rolls are, however, only available to social science researchers in public employment in New Zealand.

As noted earlier, methods of research continue to evolve. One aspect of this evolution is the maturing of approaches to examining the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and adapting methods to interrogate power relationships and empower participants (Smith, 2021). Te Ao Māori methods of data collection, including participatory visual methodology and pūrākau, align with three key strands of qualitative human geography research methods (Winchester & Rofe, 2010). These methods include such oral techniques as interviews and focus group, textual analysis, and observation approaches (Bargh & Van Wagner, 2020; Smith, 2021). This research used the method of semi-structured interviews as it emphasises building relationships and trust between research participants and the researcher (Howitt & Stephens, 2010). Participant information sheets (see Appendix Three) were provided to potential participants several weeks prior to the interviews to ensure they had the opportunity to carefully consider their participation. The forms described the nature of the research and the rights of participants. Before the interview session, consent forms (see Appendix Four) were provided and discussed to ensure participants were well informed about the research and their rights.

Te Ara Tika framework was useful to this research in terms of research design and ensuring cultural safety for the researcher and participants. It also had application to the data collection and analysis phases. The framework guided selection of semi-structured interviews to be the main method used for data collection. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed people to freely talk about what mattered to them. This consideration of participants' rights to talk openly ensured participants felt comfortable and safe with me. Consideration of the four aspects of Te Ara Tika during data collection and analysis ensured a respectful approach to the interview process and protection for the participants and myself.

3.3.1 Collecting research data

To gather data for the research I used a triangulation of three methods: collecting 122 media articles around Māori wards; completing 14 semi-structured interviews; and, undertaking three occasions of participant observation. The process of media data collection for debates around Māori wards involved my review of online news websites, in particular those of

*Stuff*¹⁴ and the *Bay of Plenty Times*. The *Stuff* website collects news items from multiple other sites / sources so it was a primary point of reference each day. The *Bay of Plenty Times* website identified articles of Tauranga interest. I also purchased a subscription to hard copies of the *Bay of Plenty Times*. This gave me access to articles not available on the newspaper website. In total from all sources, I collected 53 hard copy articles and 69 electronic articles between 30 August 2019 and 26 August 2021. There were many articles and commentaries about the Māori ward debate, particularly around the time of the announcement by the Minister of Local Government that legislation around Māori wards was going to change to enable councils to establish Māori wards without the threat of reversal of the decision by public poll. Several people or groups with strong opinions on the issue of Māori wards are cited regularly in the media and their comments are used in the research. These include Andrew Judd,¹⁵ and groups such as Hobson's Pledge,¹⁶ the New Zealand Centre for Political Research (NZCPR),¹⁷ the New Zealand Taxpayer's Union and LGNZ. Once I had sourced an electronic article, I copied the text into a Word document to retain it in my files as they were sometimes removed from the web after a short time.

During this research, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit rich qualitative data from participants. The use of semi-structured interviews, which are a well-established method in human geography research, enables researchers to gain insight into how people experience life situations (Dowling et al., 2016; Dunn, 2010). A key benefit of employing interviews is that they facilitate understandings of "interpretations, experiences and

¹⁴ *Stuff* is the website of Stuff Limited, a key news website and media company in Aotearoa. Stuff Limited also owns many newspaper and magazine titles – including the *Sunday Star-Times*, *The Press* and *The Dominion Post* – as well as *Neighbourly* and *Play Stuff* (Stuff, 2020). *Stuff* covers communities all around the country and employs around 380 journalists (Stuff, 2020).

¹⁵ Andrew Judd was elected Mayor of New Plymouth in 2013. During his term of office, he sought to introduce Māori wards and he also advocated for half of all council representatives to be people who self-identified as Māori (Newman, 2020). Some members of the New Plymouth community ostracised Judd on his stance on these issues to the point that he did not stand for office again. Since resigning from local politics, Judd has been campaigning nationally for Māori to be better represented at council level than is currently the case (Minto, 2016).

¹⁶ Hobson's Pledge, led by former National Party and ACT leader Don Brash, lobbies for 'one law for all,' arguing that New Zealand should be a politically homogeneous state (Hobson's Pledge, n.d.; Matthews, 2018; O'Sullivan, 2021a). Hobson's Pledge urges people to vote against establishing Māori wards in referendums. Hobson's Pledge also co-ordinates and financially supports mail drops and petitions to force polls in districts where Māori wards had been voted in by councils (Bennett, 2018; Fleming, 2021a; Lawrence, 2021; Salvation Army, 2018).

¹⁷ The New Zealand Centre for Political Research (NZCPR), headed by former ACT Minister of Parliament Muriel Newman, has been a strong opponent of unelected Māori representation on councils and Māori wards (Edwards, 2016; NZCPR, n.d.).

spatialities of social life” (Dowling et al., 2016: 680). Semi-structured interviews have a pre-determined question order but are sufficiently flexible to be adapted during an interview to follow participants’ responses (Dunn, 2010). They have the potential to provide in-depth subjective information that can flesh out other data, support or refute hypotheses, and lead to further research questions (Dowling et al., 2016; Dunn, 2010).

My Tauranga City Council (TCC) based Māori research advisor provided guidance as to how best to conduct the research, gave feedback on the choice of research methods, and ensured issues of cultural and political sensitivity were addressed. A list of questions pertinent to the participant community being interviewed was developed (see Appendix Five), and these interview questions were piloted with my research advisor to determine whether the questions elicited relevant responses. My intention was to interview elected members of TCC, previous elected members of TCC, key TCC staff, and members of Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership (Te Rangapū). Te Rangapū comprises 17 representatives; one from each of the hapū and iwi in the TCC area. Its role is to provide a forum for tangata whenua within the TCC area to discuss and debate local authority concerns. Members of Te Rangapū have formal recognition by TCC and are thus able to meet with TCC to discuss and develop concepts, procedures, policies, and projects that will impact on Tauranga Moana tangata whenua (TCC, n.d.a).

Participants were recruited through my research advisor at TCC who also facilitated initial introductions with Te Rangapū and TCC elected members. After speaking in person to the TCC Mayor and the Chair of Te Rangapū, my research advisor sent information sheets on my behalf to the members of both groups about the research. Interested members contacted me via email or phone to discuss and arrange interviews to take place in a location and at a time that was convenient for participants. In total, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with five TCC elected members and two previous TCC elected members, two senior TCC staff, four members of Te Rangapū, and the former Mayor of New Plymouth, Andrew Judd. All elected members and previous elected members interviewed were Pākehā; there were no elected members on TCC who self-identified as Māori at the time the research was in progress.

The interviews centred on participants’ views on Māori and local government representation. In addition to asking participants for their views around Māori elected

member representation to local government, the interviews explored related topics including democracy, Te Tiriti, Māori wards, the referendum clause in the Local Government Act, and ideal local government structures. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and each was subsequently transcribed. Participants were informed of their right to decline from having their interview recorded or to stop the audio-recording at any time during the interview. Participants were able to review their interview transcripts and suggest changes up to a month after receiving their transcripts.

The participants represented a range of positions and levels of local government experience. At the time of the interviews, five of the elected members were existing Councillors of TCC. The subsequent removal of Councillors, and their replacement by Government appointed Commissioners in February 2021, meant that at the time of writing the five interviewees were no longer acting as elected members of that Council.¹⁸ Their contributions, however, are still valued as the opinion of elected members at the time (2019-2020) and, as such, they will be referred to as elected members in the thesis. I also interviewed two people who had been TCC Councillors but were no longer sitting Councillors at the time of the interviews. These are referred to as ‘previous Councillor.’ The interviewees include Andrew Judd who was visiting Tauranga to participate in a public presentation on Māori wards. Apart from Judd, who chose to be identified in the research, all other participants are presented in a way that ensures anonymity. Due to the small size of the participant community and the sensitive nature of the issue, all interviews were conducted under a promise of strict confidentiality, therefore in the following they are referred to by a pseudonym that reflects the cultural diversity of the participants (see Table 3.1).

¹⁸ Ongoing disruption at TCC resulted in the replacement of the Council by Government appointed Commissioners on February 9, 2021 (Motion, 2021b). Reasons given by the Minister for Local Government for the appointment of Commissioners included poor behaviour and infighting among elected officials, leaks of confidential information, and the inability to set rates at a realistic level (Evans, 2022). The Government decision to retain the Commissioners until 2024 has been controversial in Tauranga Moana, with concerns around the loss of democracy conflicting with claims that the Commissioners are doing a good job (Chiang, 2022).

Table 3.1 Interviewees and pseudonyms

Tauranga Interview Participants	Pseudonyms	TOTAL Participants
Members of Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana	Tama Rawiri Hone Manaaki	4
Tauranga City Council Councillors	Jane Mark Arthur Michael Bill	5
Previous Councillors of Tauranga City Council	Sally George	2
Tauranga City Council key staff	Kylie Eruera	2
Andrew Judd	Andrew Judd	1

The third research method I used to triangulate data was participant observation. During the research information gathering period I attended several meetings in Tauranga Moana on Māori wards, including a meeting on 29 January 2021 organised by Hobson’s Pledge. This meeting was organised to protest pending changes to national legislation that would remove the clause enabling citizens to demand a referendum to challenge council decisions to establish Māori wards. I also attended a public debate on 30 March 2021 on Māori wards between Buddy Mikaere and Margaret Murray-Benge.¹⁹ I employed media articles and notes from these public meetings as part of the data collection as they provided rich data in terms of the challenges and conflicts around Māori ward debates.

3.3.2 Thematic analysis of the data

Following transcription of the recorded interviews, and the organisation of participant observation notes and media articles into Word documents, reflexive thematic analysis was undertaken. Reflexive thematic analysis methods are widely used in counselling and psychotherapy research (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data to find meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Thematic analysis and the Te Ara Tika framework work well together as both

¹⁹ Buddy Mikaere is a published historian and member of Te Rangapū. He is also a consultant specialising in tangata whenua and cultural issues arising from development applications under the Resource Management Act 1991. Margaret Murray-Benge is a Western Bay of Plenty District Councillor, who opposes Māori wards.

stress researcher positionality and reflection, and they both favour the flexibility afforded by qualitative methods.

While recognising there are multiple types of thematic analysis, including coding reliability approaches and codebook approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2019), I decided to employ reflexive thematic analysis in this research. This form of thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method that involves the researcher recognising their own subjectivity in the process of analysis and continually reflecting on their place in the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021a). Braun and Clarke (2021b: 39) explain that the development of themes “requires considerable analytic and interpretive work on the part of the researcher.” Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2021b: 39) report that “themes cannot exist separately from the researcher – they are generated by the researcher through data engagement mediated by all that they bring to this process (e.g. their research values, skills, experience and training).” While noting that Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasise that their six-phase model (see Table 3.2) is not a set process, I chose to adhere to the tenets of the six-phase process; my application of it to the research is outlined below.

Table 3.2 Phases of thematic analysis
Source: Braun and Clarke (2006: 87)

Phase		Description of the process
1	Familiarisation with data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	Producing the report	Selection of relevant extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

3.3.2.1 Familiarisation with data

Repeated immersion in the data is key to the initial stage of thematic analysis. In this first phase, I became familiar with the interview and participant observation data through transcribing all interview recordings and meeting notes myself. During the transcription process I took notes of key points and possible themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were emailed to interview participants for them to check and edit as they chose. Viewing transcripts also allowed participants to give final approval for me to use their material for this research. Most transcripts were approved as transcribed, while some participants made minor changes. Following final approval of the transcripts by participants, I read the transcripts as a complete data set and identified common ideas or statements that related to the research questions. These ideas were compiled into a list of potential thematic codes. In terms of the media material, key quotes were also collated and analysed under the same codes as the interviews. Notes from the participant observations were summarised and used to triangulate the interview and media data in terms of commonality of messages.

3.3.2.2 Generating initial codes

The second phase in the process of thematic analysis is the generation of initial codes (see Table 3.3). This involves coding the information in a meaningful fashion and collating all data related to that code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following generation of an initial list, I reread all the interview transcripts to refine the list of codes to align with the research goals.

These initial codes would be refined into themes in following phases of analysis. I chose not to use a software programme to assist me in the analytical work as I enjoy data and textual analysis and it gave me first hand familiarity with the voice and contribution of each of the participants. By reading through each interview transcript and noting the comments that aligned to the codes I had identified, and adding codes to the list where necessary, I was able to note issues of interest. Having established these initial codes, I completed another transcript review, cutting and pasting extracts that related to each code into the spreadsheet, carefully noting the source of each extract. This process of organising the data into the 36 code headings fed into the identification of themes, each of which was comprised of a combination of similar codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 3.3 Initial coding from interviews

One Māori representative for Tauranga?	Mandatory Māori representation?	Unelected Māori representatives?	Ideal local government setup
Māori worldview	Barriers to Māori being elected	Democracy meaning	Relevance of local government to Māori
Tauranga City Council building	Wording of documents	Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty Regional Council	Role of Te Rangapū
Democracy not Māori way	Importance of local government to Māori	Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Civics
Few Māori elected	Why Māori representation necessary	How to change the system	Constitution
Different model	Non Māori elected members speaking for Māori?	Co-governance	Representation
How democratic system serves Māori	Māori wards	Ward model	Relationship / Tūrangawaewae
Removal of referendum	Tauranga specific	Resourcing	Low rates of Māori voting
Reason for standing	Colonialism / racism	Enabling for equity / inclusion	Council agenda turn around

3.3.2.3 Searching for themes

I found compiling a thematic map important to help draw the codes together under relevant themes (see Figure 3.2) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

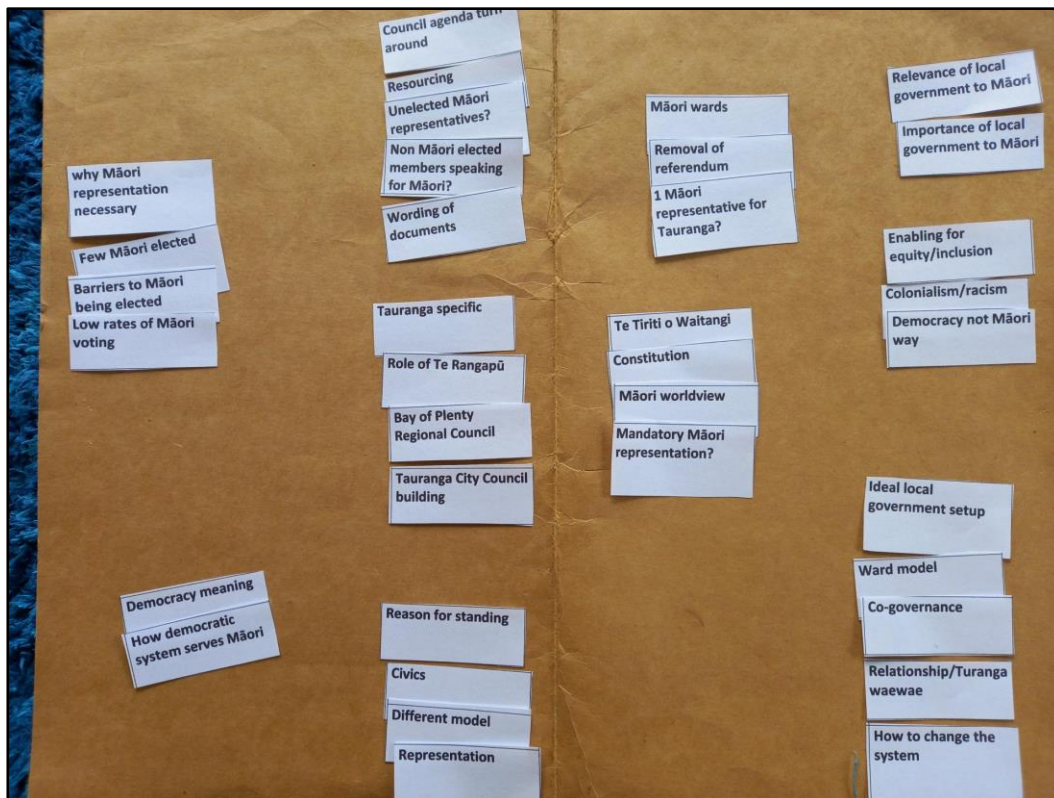


Figure 3.2 Thematic mind map from interview data

This involved thinking about which codes fit under which themes and how they related to other themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The determination of what counts as a theme requires the judgement of the researcher and a certain degree of flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), a “theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” In the search for themes, I took the approach of inductive analysis, meaning I coded the data “without trying to fit it into a pre-existing code frame” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83). The initial themes drawn from the interview codes are tabulated below (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Initial themes from interview codes

Reason for standing	
Thoughts on Māori representation	Why Māori representation is necessary Few Māori elected Barriers to Māori being elected Low rates of Māori voting
Issues with current set up	Unelected Māori representatives? Resourcing Council agenda turn around Wording of docs Non Māori elected members speaking for Māori?
Tauranga specific	Tauranga City Council building Tauranga specific Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty Regional Council Role of Te Rangapū
Democracy	Democracy meaning How democratic system serves Māori
Māori wards	Māori wards One Māori representative for Tauranga? Removal of referendum
Importance of local government to Māori	Relevance of local government to Māori Importance of local government to Māori
Issues with current system	Democracy not Māori way Enabling for equity / inclusion Colonialism / racism
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Constitution Māori worldview
A way forward	Ideal local government set up Ward model Co-governance How to change the system Relationship / Tūrangawaewae

3.3.2.4 *Reviewing themes*

This phase involves refinement of the key themes already identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ensuring clear distinctions between the themes while also bringing together the material within each theme into something meaningful are key facets of this phase. This phase included reviewing the data set for accuracy and completeness.

3.3.2.5 *Defining and naming themes*

Once the thematic map was complete, I clarified and refined the themes for analysis and began analysing the data within each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analysis consisted of going back to the material collated under each theme and sorting it into a coherent narrative

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). As well as writing up a detailed analysis of each theme and its accompanying ‘story’, this phase provided an outline of how this ‘story’ related to the research aims (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Any sub-themes were detailed to provide structure and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further refinement of the names of each theme was undertaken to ensure clarity and to provide interest for the reader (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.2.6 *Producing the report*

The sixth phase of thematic analysis was writing up the information into a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 93). Several examples and extracts were included to provide interest and the ‘voice’ of the interviewees. Braun and Clarke (2006) stress the importance of the write-up of the report to ensure the narrative is more than a description of the data, and that it makes an argument in relation to the research aims.

3.3.2.7 *Analysing media articles*

As noted earlier, a key method used in this research was the collection and analysis of 122 media articles around Māori ward debates. Following the data collection period, all the media articles collected were analysed and themed using the thematic analysis approach outlined above. After developing themes according to the content of the articles, I identified themes that related to the scholarly literature and theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter Two. I then rearranged the themes with the key points I had identified in the literature to ensure consistency. This shows it was a two-way process – one theme set developed from the data and the other from the literature (see initial themes in Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Initial themes for media articles

Reasons against Māori wards	Democracy
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Future models
New legislation	Possible issues
Referendum	Alternate means of representation
Tauranga	Introduction
Andrew Judd	Constitution
Reasons for Māori wards	Relationship / Māori worldview
Representation	Hobsons Pledge

3.3.3 Triangulation of research data

While triangulation has had its critics (such as Fielding & Fielding, 1986), and there are various ways of conducting triangulation, originally, Denzin conceptualised triangulation as the combination and use of several research methodologies in the study of the same issue to enhance and validate research findings (Denzin, 2007; Flick, 2022). Triangulation uses a variety of methods to collect data. For example, in-depth, semi-structured interviews can be used with another method or several other methods (Longhurst, 2009). This research project employed a mixed methods approach using three methods to obtain research data. The methods used were semi-structured interviews, analysis of 122 media articles and participant observation at three public meetings on Māori wards.

In order to conduct the triangulation of data from the three methods used in this research, I first analysed the interview transcripts using thematic analysis as outlined above. This resulted in initial broad themes that were further refined after mind mapping and repeated reading of material. Following analysis of the interview material, I read through the vast amount of media articles I had collected searching for common themes that may or may not align with those identified in the interview data analysis. I went back and forth between the two sets of themes to draw alignment and come up with a common set of themes to make sense of the data. I also went through the media articles numerous times to identify quotes that would substantiate or illuminate the themes. The third part of the triangulation involved transcribing the public meeting recordings to identify alignment or convergence in themes coming through and refining the common themes further, as well as adding quotes where applicable. This triangulation of three sets of data revealed similarities in the major themes such as polarisation of views for and against Māori wards, calls to not diverge from democratic process and sentiment that honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi means assured Māori representation in local government.

3.3.4 Reflections and research dilemmas

During the course of the research there were several events and issues that affected the research design and timeframes. This research was well underway, and interviews were being planned to be undertaken during 2019 and 2020. Progress was disrupted early in 2020 due to a personal family tragedy, and then again constrained by the limits placed on social

interaction by responses to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Apart from experiencing the confinements of successive lockdowns, social distancing protocols reduced academic interactions to online communications rather than kānohi-ki-te-kānohi meetings. Aside from these limitations to conducting interviews, the realisation that elected members and decision-makers had more important priorities to deal with in the immediate future due to Covid-19 ramifications than participating in this research project put a hold on the data gathering phase for many months. During this time, other parts of the project were prioritised, however, family commitments, looking after my own wellbeing following close family tragedy, and a global pandemic were unforeseen challenges.

To address the issues noted above, modifications were made to the research design, including the decision to focus solely on Tauranga Moana rather than conducting research in sites outside Tauranga Moana. Additionally, during the research process I became aware that the Minister of Local Government was commissioning a review of local government that could revise the way local government was structured. This re-imagining of local government was an important focus of my research topic and it was an encouragement that my research could make an important contribution to the forthcoming discussions.

3.4 Conclusion

The first part of this chapter introduced a decolonising Indigenous approach to research and choice of methodology. It outlined the four key aspects of Te Ara Tika framework identified by Hudson (2010) and applied by Came (2013b) and considered how those aspects were applied to the methodology of this research project. The triangulation of methods utilised within the project that aligned to the selected methodology were described, including a detailed description of the thematic analytical methods used to make sense of the data.

The following chapter is the first of three chapters that present the findings of the research. The chapter describes the context of the debates on Māori wards. This context includes a brief outline of the history of Aotearoa, and discussion of the establishment of the local government system. The research area of Tauranga Moana is described, with attention being given to the politics of local government in that location.

Chapter Four: Race and representation in local government – framing the need for change

This chapter provides the context to consider how and in what ways Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation. The chapter shows how the legislation, practices, and processes of local government in Aotearoa, through mechanisms such as the referendum, the majority vote, and the adversarial style of representative democracy, have resulted in Māori and Te Ao Māori being marginalised within local government decision-making. Using this evidence, I argue that local government democracy has been an instrument of colonisation that works to favour Pākehā interests while Māori struggle to find a place to belong in local government. This chapter illustrates McConnell's (2017) first aspect of liminality, the fluidity of politics, set within this time of change where long-established colonial institutions and systems are being challenged to decolonise. The chapter also depicts the liminal place of Māori within local government decision-making spaces – a place on the margins – 'an in-between space that is neither here nor there' (Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1960).

To geographers, places are entanglements of social, economic, and political relations whose social construction is shaped, in part, by people and media representations (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Johnson, 2008b; Jones et al., 2015). Writing and knowledge is produced in such places, and many of these places have been built on, or have engaged in, ongoing colonial violence toward Indigenous peoples (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). In recognition of these influences, this chapter begins by outlining the geographical and political contexts of debates around Māori representation in local government. This outline includes a description of the place of Aotearoa in the Pacific; its settlement by Māori and subsequent colonisation by Britain; a summary of the history of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its implications for local government; and, information on the struggle for Māori representation in local government in Aotearoa. A brief outline of the location of the place in which the research was conducted, Tauranga Moana, follows. Within these contexts I use the evidence from thematic analysis of media articles, interview data and participant observations to argue that Māori have struggled to obtain effective representation at local government level. The

research undertaken in Tauranga Moana exemplifies the discourses regarding Māori in local government and sets the scene for discussion on Māori wards in the following chapter.

4.1 Aotearoa and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

According to King (2004), to Māori the idea that history began with Pākehā arrival in Aotearoa is amusing and / or offensive. This notion implies that there was no history until Europeans “observed and recorded it” (King, 2004: 7). Māori stories of creation and the arrival of Māori in Aotearoa are depicted and transmitted through myths and legends that align in many ways with the stories of other Pacific Polynesian cultural groups (King, 2004). The stories differ depending on who is doing the telling and from which part of Aotearoa they originate. Traditions around the genealogy of the creation differs between iwi, hapū and tohunga, with each tradition being valid for its particular community (Marsden, 1992; Reilly, 2018). One of the most well-known Māori legends of the creation of the world aligns with that told by Te Rangikāheke of Te Arawa, written in 1849. In this version, in the beginning Ranginui (Rangi) and Papatūānuku (Papa) were so tightly joined in embrace that the Earth was dark, and the vegetation grew wild (King, 2004; Reilly, 2018). They produced many children who became as atua and who were the ancestors and embodiment of all known phenomena, living and non-living (Murton, 2012; Roberts et al., 2004). Their sons were unhappy at dwelling in darkness and many of the sons decided to prise Rangi and Papa apart to enable the Sky to be above and the Earth below (King, 2004; Reilly, 2018). Following the separation of Rangi and Papa, Tāne-mahuta, the god of forests and of birds, created the first woman from the Earth, Hine-ahu-one, and had children with her, beginning a line of “men-like-gods and god-like-men” (King, 2004: 10). These creation legends illustrate the framework for an all-encompassing knowledge system that connects all things on earth to the gods and the universe through their whakapapa, allowing the concepts of past, present, and future to manifest in their connections to the material world (Murton, 2012).

The common account of Māori settlement taught in primary and secondary schools in Aotearoa is based on the merging and manipulation of various tribal traditions and migration legends²⁰ (King, 2004; Stokes, 1985). Planned colonisation of Aotearoa by Polynesians

²⁰ From 2023, Te Takanga o Te Wā and Aotearoa New Zealand’s histories will be part of the local curriculum for all kura and schools’ marau ā-kura (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

eventuated at least 800 years ago (King, 2004). According to Walter and Reilly (2018), the founding ancestors of Māori came from a homeland called Hawaiiki in a number of migration waka, establishing themselves in the islands they called Te Ika-a Māui and Te Waipounamu (King, 2004). The basis of pre-contact Māori society was the whānau, which consisted of immediate and extended family (Mika & O’Sullivan, 2014). These groups of whānau, or hapū, constitute larger groups of related hapū called iwi. Iwi can trace their heritage to a common ancestor after whom iwi are often named (King, 2004; Mika & O’Sullivan, 2014). By the time of James Cook’s visits in the eighteenth century, Māori had well-established settlements throughout the country (King, 2004).

After subsequent visits by Europeans and the establishment of sealing and whaling stations in Aotearoa in the 1820s, increasing numbers of Europeans, including missionaries and traders, began arriving to settle (King, 2004). By 1839 the European population in Aotearoa was such that the British Colonial Office sent instructions to the first governor of Aotearoa, British naval officer Governor Hobson, setting out the need for a treaty to acknowledge a form of sovereignty with Māori. The instructions sent to Hobson implied that British law would benefit the ‘natives’ of Aotearoa (Stokes, 1992). Treaties are used between countries and people for a variety of reasons, including to establish trading relationships, to delineate the terms on which foreigners could settle in a country inhabited by Indigenous people, and to outline conditions for purchase of land (Russell, 2003).

In Aotearoa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti) was signed on 6 February 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and Māori (Crocker, 2014; Jefferies et al., 2002; Koroī, 2017). Debate continues as to interpretations of the meaning of the Treaty. While recognising the incidence of such debates, in this thesis I draw on the interpretations of noted Treaty scholar Dame Anne Salmond and of the Waitangi Tribunal. In Article One of the Māori text of Te Tiriti, when the rangatira gave absolutely (tuku rawa atu) all the Kāwanatanga of their lands to the Queen, this did not amount to a cession of sovereignty (Salmond, 2022). In Article Two, when the Queen ratified and agreed to “te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa,” she promised to uphold the absolute authority of the rangatira and Māori people generally over their lands, dwelling places and taonga (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2002;

Salmond, 2022: para 19; Stokes, 1992). Article Three of Te Tiriti explains how the powers in Articles One and Two, Kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga (the Governor and the Rangatira), were to engage with each other. In exchange for their agreement to Kāwanatanga, the Queen promises to look after “nga tangata Māori katoa o Nu Tirani” (all of the Indigenous people of Aotearoa), and to give to them “nga tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki nga tangata o Ingarani” (all the tikanga exactly equal to those of her subjects, the people of England) (Salmond, 2022: para 22). This is a pledge of equality and balance between the tikanga of the everyday inhabitants of Aotearoa and the Queens’ subjects, the people of England (the settlers) as individuals, and of equal return in the exchanges between the rangatira and the Queen (Salmond, 2022). To Māori, in addition to being a binding agreement with the Crown, Te Tiriti was a reaffirmation of their sovereignty, and a means by which Britain was permitted to enter Aotearoa and to take authority over the 2000 or so Europeans who had arrived in Aotearoa (Stokes, 1992). It was also a guarantee that Māori could retain their lands, forests, and fisheries. Over the next few months after the signing on 6 February 1840, copies of Te Tiriti were signed by tribal leaders throughout Aotearoa, the bulk of the copies signed were the Māori version (Stokes, 1992).

As settlers arrived in Aotearoa and pressure for land grew, the Government began to acquire land in ways that breached Te Tiriti (Crocker, 2014; WGGRN et al., 2019). Grievances associated with land acquisition were such that during the mid-1800s, bloody battles occurred between British forces and Māori. These military encounters stemmed from the desire of British settlers and the British government to acquire Māori land to expand European settlement in Aotearoa and the rights of Māori to remain on their ancestral lands (Shep et al., 2021). The Crown contrived to acquire land through what were predominantly exploitative trade relations. Over time, the vast majority of Māori land was alienated through the Crown purchase of Māori land and the confiscation of millions of hectares of Māori land following what has become known as ‘the New Zealand wars’ (Stokes, 1992).

While Te Tiriti provided an agreement for the ownership and sale of lands, ongoing breaches of Te Tiriti and confiscation of Māori lands by successive colonial governments generated public pressure for recognition of the Crown guarantees of Te Tiriti (Stokes, 1992). In one explanation of why the breaches occurred, Salmond, (2022) argues that European understandings prevailed over the Māori interpretation of Te Tiriti. Thus, settlers accepted

that “there could be only one sovereign over a country, and only one owner (or group of owners) with exclusive rights over a block of land” (Salmond, 2021a: para 50). This reasoning was enforced by the efforts of the British in the New Zealand Wars, in confiscating land, and in shaping decisions of the Native Land Court. In response to such enforcement activities, the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 established the Waitangi Tribunal. Formed as a permanent commission of enquiry, the Waitangi Tribunal was charged with addressing land issues and claims and with making recommendations to the Government (Stokes, 1992). Stokes (1992: 184) summarised the bulk of Māori claims against the Crown as “seeking redress for loss of language, culture, land and resources.” An Amendment Act in 1977 extended the jurisdiction of the Tribunal from its initial start date of 1975 to the date of the signing of the Treaty (Stokes, 1992).

Across the world there has been ongoing conflict around whether Indigenous people, on signing a Treaty, surrendered their political independence (Russell, 2003). To address this issue in Aotearoa, two documents are significant: He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene / the Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand 1835 (see Appendix Six) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi 1840 (Hayward, 2018). He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene recognised Māori as an “independent sovereign nation,” while in Te Tiriti o Waitangi it was understood by some that Māori ceded sovereignty to the Crown (Hayward, 2018). Much debate, conflict and division has arisen from the fact that the Māori and English versions of Te Tiriti differ in interpretation, with some interpreting the English version to say that the Crown gained sovereignty over Aotearoa but failed to secure for Māori the right to exercise tino rangatiratanga (Bargh, 2016). These queries around sovereignty have been clarified by the Waitangi Tribunal, which said in its 2014 report: “The rangatira who signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840 did not cede their sovereignty to Britain; that is they did not cede authority to make and enforce law over their people or their territory” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014: xxii). The Tribunal also recognised that Te Tiriti embodied the principle of partnership; that the honour of the Crown implied acting reasonably and in good faith in Te Tiriti matters; and, that the Crown was obliged to actively protect Māori Treaty rights (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.).

In countries where the settlers and their descendants comprise the majority of the contemporary population, it is often challenging to consensually apply understandings of

treaties to the sharing of land and the limits of citizenship (Russell, 2003). The contractual obligations signed up to by representatives of Māori and the British Empire have ramifications as to the place of Māori in local government (Jefferies et al., 2002; Koroi, 2017). Unless given force by an Act of Parliament, the obligations of Te Tiriti do not produce legal requirements for the Crown (Te Puni Kokiri [TPK], 2001). Without legal enforceability, however, adhering to the obligations of Te Tiriti is a matter of conscience for compliance, or protecting the “honour of the Crown” (TPK, 2001: 15). From relatively early in the colonial period, official government policy was one of assimilation of Māori into the Anglo-Celtic Pākehā culture (Bargh, 2021; Collier, 2011; Webster & Fa’apoi, 2017). Following the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852, the establishment of the local government system in Aotearoa under a colonial Westminster system was welcomed by Pākehā settlers as a form of community level democracy (Woods, 2006).²¹

By the mid-twentieth century there had been a significant shift from Māori being a predominantly rural population to an increasingly urban one (from 11.2 per cent urban in 1936 to 68.2 per cent in 1971 and over 90 per cent in the 1980s) (King, 2004). As a result of this urbanisation, a reinvigoration of Māori cultural tradition occurred amongst those who had been dislocated and alienated from their traditional bonds of whānau, iwi, hapū and language (King, 2004). Furthermore, politically, Māori gained additional representation at Parliamentary level, particularly from the 1990s. Despite such growth, however, it remained difficult for Māori to obtain political voice at elected local government level (Bargh, 2013; King, 2004). When compared to the Pākehā population, Māori have higher socio-economic disadvantage with significantly higher incarceration rates, lower home ownership rates, negative health statistics and greater material hardship (Borell et al., 2018; Walters, 2018). These statistics give important context for Māori representation in local government decision-making.

²¹ Governor Sir George Grey issued a proclamation to bring the New Zealand Constitution Act (UK) 1852 into operation, establishing a system of representative government for the colony. The Act created a General Assembly – an appointed Legislative Council and a House of Representatives elected every five years by males aged over 21 who owned, leased, or rented property of a certain value – and six provinces with elected superintendents and provincial councils. By British standards, the property qualification was modest, allowing most male settlers to vote (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2020).

4.2 Local government democracy and the struggle for Māori representation

In this section I argue that the institution of local government in Aotearoa is a Western imposed structure that marginalises Māori and continues to colonise by privileging Western ‘universal’ norms and practices. According to Barnett and Low (2004: 20), democracy is a set of processes and procedures which, they contend, is underpinned by culturally specific norms. Barnett and Low (2004: 20) question whether democracy “is inherently Western in its essence,” a query which has implications for non-Western and Indigenous people. While appearing legitimate through the election process, Urbinati (2006: 4) argues that “representative democracy is an oxymoron.” This argument is exemplified by the media and interview comments in this research around Māori representation in local government. The effect on Māori representation of democratic processes such as the power of the vote, majority rule, the Western system marginalising a Te Ao Māori worldview, and the impact of an adversarial form of governance over a consensual one, ensures Māori are being dispossessed of rights to partner as equals in local government politics. This marginalisation, relegating Māori to a liminal place in local body politics, is discussed below.

Local government in Aotearoa is highly contested, and within which the struggle for Māori representation is ongoing. While the proportion of Māori in the total population of Aotearoa as at 30 June 2021 is 17.1 per cent (Stats NZ, 2021), and while the ethnicity of elected members is not monitored officially, the percentage of Māori represented at elected member level in local government is regularly noted as low (Bargh, 2021; Hayward, 2011a; Mitchell, 2019; Vowles & Hayward, 2021; Webb-Liddall, 2019a). For example, Vowles and Hayward (2021: 7) comment that while there is a lack of availability of robust quantitative data on Māori representation in local government in Aotearoa, “elected councillors in New Zealand local government are predominantly European [Pākehā], middle aged men.” The lack of comprehensive data on Māori enrolment and election results in general wards is noted by Bargh (2021). While some data exists on election results in Māori wards and constituencies, this too is incomplete and inconsistent. The only regular survey on Māori representation in local government is undertaken by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ). The most recent LGNZ survey results show that increasing Māori representation has been a feature of local authority elections since 2004, with the 2019 cohort having the highest proportion of Māori members since records began in 2002 (LGNZ, 2020). Despite rising

Māori representation noted by these surveys, Vowles and Hayward (2021) argue there is an issue of Māori under-representation in elected positions in local government, with Māori representation as elected members to councils still lagging behind their representation in the wider population. Vowles and Hayward (2021) show that the under-representation of Māori is confined to those who most strongly identify as Māori by their registration on the Māori electoral roll. When compared to the rest of the voting population, Vowles and Hayward, (2021) claim that after the 2019 local body elections, those on the Māori roll were under-represented in local councils by a factor of about 50 per cent despite Māori being over-nominated in standing for election to local government. The 2019 local government elections saw many areas reporting increased numbers of Māori candidates, reflecting the importance of local government to Māori. Despite this importance, few Māori achieved electoral success (Bargh, 2021).

The decision to review the Local Electoral Act (LEA), the Local Government Act (LGA) and other local government legislation, was made in March 2000 (see Figure 4.1, DIA, n.d.). Among the sweeping legislative changes were initiatives to increase Māori representation in local government. The reviewed LEA and LGA enable a local authority to establish Māori wards in the case of a territorial authority, or constituencies in the case of a regional council, by passing a resolution to that effect. This dedicated representation follows the national level government model, where the existence of seven Māori seats allows voters of Māori descent who choose to be on the Māori roll to elect members of Parliament for their respective constituencies (Geddis, 2021). Māori local government wards operate in a similar fashion, establishing areas where only those on the Māori electoral roll vote for the Māori ward candidates. Māori wards cover an urban area, a district or a region, and candidates for election as Māori ward representatives do not have to be of Māori descent (DIA, n.d.a).

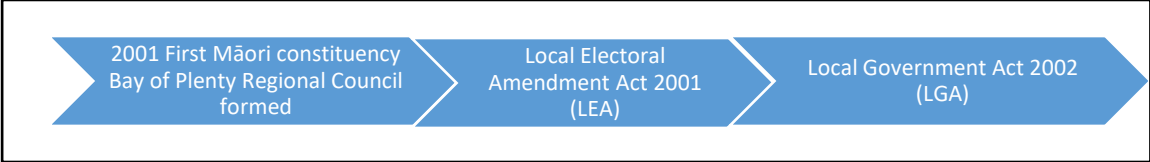


Figure 4.1. Timeline of key Māori representation legislation
 Source: Sandra Des Forges

While the amendments to the LEA in 2001 were intended to enable the establishment of Māori wards, clauses 19Z A-G of the LEA stated that if a council decided to create a Māori

ward or constituency, five percent of electors enrolled as eligible to vote at the previous triennial general election of the territorial authority or regional council could petition the council to hold a binding referendum to approve or disapprove their establishment. This provision was widely acted upon where, upon a council voting to establish a Māori ward, a petition with the required five per cent of signatures was submitted to the relevant council and the ensuing referendum produced a majority vote against the establishment of a Māori ward. Additionally, while the LGA requires councils to have processes in place that effect Māori participation in decision-making, some argue that the legislation is not clear on how Māori aspirations can be integrated into formal decision-making processes or how Māori involvement will be resourced (Bargh, 2013; Hayward, 2011a). This lack of specificity in the LGA in terms of processes available to effect Māori participation has underpinned a broad spectrum of mechanisms for Māori representation employed by councils. Some of the processes to ensure Māori representation currently being used by councils throughout Aotearoa include independent Māori Boards or standing committees and the appointment of unelected Māori representatives to council committees. Despite these initiatives, evidence shows that the representative democratic system of local government may not serve Māori well (Shaw, 2011).

Participation in decision-making, and the confidence that citizens have that their interests and concerns will be seriously considered by their elected representatives, are major tenets of democracy (Dahl, 1989; Jones et al., 2015; Monro, 2014). Descriptive representation, or the politics of presence, considers whether an elected body should be demographically similar to the population it represents (Drage, 2008; Summersby, 2009). O'Sullivan (2011) notes that the politics of presence recognises that the attendance of Indigenous people can be as important as their ideas in influencing decision-making. While O'Sullivan (2011) acknowledges that Indigenous voters will not necessarily support an Indigenous candidate, he claims that among the diversity of Indigenous political positions there are likely to be commonalities of culture, background, and experiences. In addition to these commonalities, Indigenous people such as Māori also share the severing of their political, economic, and cultural connections to their land (Johnson et al., 2007). In practice, local bodies in Aotearoa are far from being reflective of the diverse ethnicities of their communities, with elected members predominantly being Pākehā, able-bodied, heterosexual, middle class males

(Mulgan & Aimer, 2004; Webster & Fa’apoi, 2017). Some commentators discuss the ways in which Māori wards increase the visibility of Māori in local government, and how Māori wards are an encouragement for Māori to participate in local government. For example, O’Connell-Rapira, director of ActionStation²² (2018) claims:

And that’s the thing about representation. It’s hard for kids to believe they can grow up to be what they can’t see . . . In short, almost all the people I saw in positions of power in our ‘representative democracy’ didn’t much look like they represented me.

Karetai, one of three Whakatāne women who campaigned for Māori wards in the Whakatāne district, noted that the presence of Māori on councils can decolonise the space of local government:

If we have more Māori representation on council, then they are actively decolonising that space just by being there . . . By being present other people are forced to think further about the discussion and decisions that are being made; people have to check themselves . . . There are only benefits to having Māori at the table, no disadvantages (Karetai, cited in Jones, 2020).

Councillor Marr (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangitihī, Te Ātiawa) has held one of the Māori seats on the Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty Regional Council since they were established. He says in that time the seats have been beneficial, not just for the region, but as an example for wider Aotearoa.

We have made a better space for Māori in all Māori seats across New Zealand. Unfortunately, councils and Pākehā people don’t see it that way sometimes. The thing they need to understand is we’re not getting power. The seats mean we’re getting representation. We’re getting opinion, we’re getting a say (cited in Webb-Liddell, 2019a).

Karetai and Marr note that having Māori representation on councils decolonises the space and makes ‘a better space for Māori.’ For Pitkin (1967), responsiveness is a key-component of substantive representation. Substantive representation ideally describes a clear connection between what politicians do and what those represented want and need.

Mansbridge (1999) claims that elected representatives may not be capable of representing

²² ActionStation is an independent, crowdfunded, community campaigning organisation whose mission is to tautoko and whakamana all in Aotearoa to act together to achieve a society, economy and democracy that serves the everyday people and the planet (ActionStation, n.d.a & b).

the principles and values of people and groups of which they have no or very little lived experience.

Low Māori representation and lack of a Māori voice at the decision-making table of local government supports the colonising attitude that only non-Māori know what is good for Māori, and that in essence, Māori need 'looking after' by the colonisers. While local government elected members may do their best to represent the diversity of their communities, if Māori do not have an equitable role in decision-making processes their perspectives and needs may be rendered invisible. The question of whether non-Māori councillors²³ can adequately represent interests and concerns particular to Māori is addressed by various commentators in the media, with several citing that non-Māori councillors are not able to represent Māori worldviews effectively (Judd, 2018). For example, Judd (2018) questions his ability, as a non-Māori elected council member, to speak on behalf of Māori:

Could I, in all honesty, speak on behalf of an Indigenous people? Strangely I was comfortable having the rural community at the table with the recognition that those communities have a different take on outcomes compared to the city folk. I'm not a farmer so I wouldn't think of speaking for them.

Hemara-Wahanui, general manager of Ngaruahine Iwi, South Taranaki, notes:

The outcome is really important to us, we want the very best for our district and our community . . . The ways they [local authorities] reach into our lives is huge, from potholes to street lights, cemeteries, water, rates, libraries and swimming pools (cited in Groenstein, 2019).

These comments raise issues of whether non-Māori can represent a Māori worldview of which they have no experience, including history, tikanga, values, and responsiveness around issues that affect Māori communities. These comments also raise issues of descriptive representation and how those elected to local government do not reflect the demographic profile of those they are elected to represent. Several comments note that if Māori do not see people on council who bear any resemblance to them or reflect their values, they may not be interested in voting or participating in local government. For example, Gillespie (cited in Lawrence, 2021), argues that democracy does not ensure

²³ The term 'councillors' is used throughout the thesis interchangeably with the term 'elected members' as they both represent the same thing – those members of local government elected by their communities to serve as community representatives in councils.

representation for all sectors of society, and that the overwhelmingly older and Pākehā voter turnout in local body electorates generally preserves the status quo, in which Māori are not widely represented. Hayward (2021) says the system of electing local government has been set up to exclude minorities:

First Past the Post, when it's used in local government elections, produces some of the most disproportional results you could ever get in an election. It makes it really hard for groups like Māori to get elected. The electoral system is distorting how to get there . . . these barriers stopping Māori people from being elected also have an effect on the numbers of Māori who then turn out to vote, and mean that Māori communities are distancing themselves from the 'official' forms of local government that have been set up . . . If nobody in council looks like you and talks about the issues that you find important, why would you turn out to support them?

As Forest (2009: 256) notes, “the choice of an electoral system reflects the institutionalised political values of a society – or at least the values of those in a position to choose the system.” Furthermore, Young (2002: 17) argues:

In the real world some people and groups have significantly greater ability to use democratic processes for their own ends while others are excluded or marginalised. Our democratic policy discussions do not occur under conditions free of coercion and threat, and free of the distorting influence of unequal power and control over resources. In actually existing democracies there tends to be a reinforcing circle between social and economic inequality and political inequality that enables the powerful to use formally democratic processes to perpetuate injustice or preserve privilege.

Several aspects of the democratic system act as barriers to Māori representation in local government, including the mechanism of voting and majority rules. In terms of the mechanism of voting, Verdonk (Salvation Army, 2018), reporting on behalf of the Salvation Army's²⁴ Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit in support of Māori wards, explains that voters are more likely to vote for someone who represents them and can share the same experiences with them, which often means that Māori are excluded. Thompson-Evans, one of five of Hamilton City Council's Maangai Māori,²⁵ claims:

²⁴ The Salvation Army is an international movement and an evangelical branch of the Christian Church (Salvation Army, n.d.).

²⁵ Maangai Māori, meaning the voice of Māori, were first appointed to Hamilton City Council in 2018. Maangai Māori were appointed, with full voting rights, to five Council committees. Following a review process, which included feedback from current and past elected members, Maangai Māori now sit on eight committees and an advisory group. This participation aligns with the Council's new governance structure. The Maangai Māori

I sometimes get the sense that when you can't see somebody there that your vote will translate to, or your voice will be carried through to, it's a lot less likely that you will vote. When you see somebody there that you know your voice will carry up to, it's a lot different (cited in Leaman, 2021).

Evidence suggests that Māori turnout in local body elections is lower in Māori wards and constituencies than general ones; however, ethnicity data on voters in general wards and constituencies is not currently collected (Bargh, 2021). Reflecting on Māori voter turnout, O'Connell Rapira (2018) comments on her personal experience as Māori:

And why would we vote? Our colonial past means there is a deep, intergenerational distrust of the government that will require the healing of historic injustices and the restoration of tino rangatiratanga to truly undo. Why would we feel compelled to participate in a system that doesn't look like us?

A letter to the editor of the *Gisborne Herald* (2020) typifies alternate views on this issue:

If Māori in Gisborne feel the need for more of them to be on council, all they have to do is put up candidates when elections come around and hope they get a majority vote to win. Just like all candidates do. Simple as that and democratic.

In response to a similar statement, Glentworth (2020) notes:

In theory this is true, and we have had wonderful candidates who are Māori successfully win seats on council. This also, however, leaves things to chance and the whim of the voters in any given year. We see worthy candidates at each election who are unsuccessful through no fault of their own. A dedicated Māori ward guarantees a Māori voice at the table.

In addition, Ngāmotu (New Plymouth) Councillor Moeahu says he has to work extremely hard to get voters to see past his ethnicity: "For non-Māori, you can be average and get on council. The truth is if you are Māori you have to be extraordinary to get on council" (cited in Persico, 2020a). These comments support why Māori wards are necessary as the Western style of local government democracy is failing Māori. As Coglianesse (1990: 1664) states, in practice the mechanism of voting can result in unjust outcomes, particularly where the majority overrides the substantive rights or interests of a minority.

For some commentators in Aotearoa, the 'same political right' or the idea of equality implies that everyone is treated the same and has the same rights, exemplified in the phrase 'one

represent and are chosen by iwi (Waikato-Tainui) and maataawaka (Māori not of Waikato-Tainui descent) organisations (Hamilton City Council, 2020).

person, one vote.’ The key principles of majoritarian democracy are freedom and equality, which means that every citizen is entitled to vote for whoever they choose and each vote is given equal weight (Dahl, 1989; Gilmartin, 2009; Huntington, 2016; Kymlicka, 2001; Saward, 2010; Staeheli, 2010). Some commentators, including the ACT Party,²⁶ have promoted the idea that any deviation from this principle, or any system that treats one person or group differently from another, is unfair. This view, however, fails to recognise that the governmental institutions in Aotearoa are based on the British Westminster system. This system reflects the values and culture of the majority Pākehā population, which Sullivan (2011b) argues is ‘taken-for-granted’ preferential treatment for the majority.

The right to vote underpins constitutional arrangements from which the rules and regulations by which people are governed emanate. The rules of governance are applied by elected members and express the values those elected believe are according to the will of the people. Sullivan and Toki (2012), however, query how Māori values can be taken into account if Māori are not part of decision-making processes. Radcliffe (2022) explains that hegemonic Pākehā values are hard to define as they have been normalised. Politically, however, these values embrace ideas of equality, democracy and the power of the majority to overrule the opinions of the minority. Decolonising geographers such as de Leeuw and Hunt (2018), Noxolo (2017) and Radcliffe (2017a) argue that the colonial past continues to influence current inequalities. Similarly, Martel et al. (2022) note that in Aotearoa, the Māori worldview has been marginalised and devalued in favour of that of the coloniser. As Radcliffe (2017a: 329) claims, “power relations in the colonial present permeate all forms of knowing about and understanding the world.”

The focus of the next section is on Tauranga Moana to show the struggle for Māori to be represented and included in the decision-making arena of local government at local level.

4.3 Tauranga Moana, local government democracy and Māori (un)belonging

The Tauranga Moana area was among the first in Aotearoa to be settled by Māori over seven centuries ago, and it has been continually occupied and occasionally fought over since (Stokes, 1980). The climate is mild and moist with high sunshine hours, and the harbours

²⁶ ACT was founded in 1993 as the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT, n.d.a).

provide safe anchorage, all of which favoured settlement of a large Māori population (Stokes, 1980). The names of local places are imbued with historical meaning and often commemorate Māori stories of the past (Stokes, 1980). Due to its safe harbours, the name 'Tauranga Moana', which means safe anchorage or resting place, was given to the area (Stokes, 1980). The earliest known settlers who arrived in Tauranga Moana were Māori from the Takitimu, Te Arawa and Mataatua waka (canoes) in the 12th century (Black, 2005). Their descendants make up the three iwi of Tauranga Moana Harbour: Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Pūkenga and Ngāti Ranginui (Black, 2005)²⁷ .

In November 1769 Captain James Cook was one of the first Europeans to sight the Tauranga Moana area and described fortifications and plantings evident on the land and around larger villages (Stokes, 1980). Following the arrival of missionaries and early settlers to Aotearoa, Samuel Marsden became the first European visitor to the Tauranga Moana District in July 1820 (Stokes, 1980). In 1834 missionaries of the Church Missionary Society selected a site on Te Papa peninsula in Tauranga Moana district to establish Te Papa Mission House, known today as The Elms, as a central location to access the local population and the Rotorua and Thames Valley districts (Stokes, 1980).

The colonisation of the Tauranga Moana District followed the European colonisation practice of dispossessing native inhabitants of their territory (Stokes, 1980). While Māori had lived in the region for several centuries and established their settlements there, the pressure of new European arrivals caused disruption and eventual resistance by Māori towards the alienation of their land (Stokes, 1980). Eventually, forcible confiscation and dispossession of prime Tauranga Moana land occurred following military action, culminating in the battle of Gate Pa in 1864 (Mikaere & Simons, 2018; Stokes, 1980). Writing in the 1980s, Stokes (1980: 14) reported that the confiscation of tribal land remained a "deeply-felt grievance." Misunderstandings, and European belief in the benefits of their society over that of Indigenous peoples, have created ongoing tensions still evident in Tauranga Moana (Kino, 2019).

²⁷ For maps of Tauranga Moana iwi see Tauranga City Council webpage <https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/community/tangata-whenua/resource-management-processes/iwi-and-hap%C5%AB-contacts>

Acknowledging that background, and focusing now on Māori inclusion at the level of local governance, Tauranga City Council (TCC) has three formal mechanisms for tangata whenua to participate in Council activities and decision-making processes. Of these, Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership (Te Rangapū), comprises 17 representatives from each of the hapū and iwi in the TCC area. Its role is to:

[p]rovide a forum for tangata whenua within the Tauranga City Council area to discuss and debate local authority concerns and allow the Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership to implement initiatives to advance and protect the interests of Tangata whenua; and to provide an opportunity for Council and the Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership to discuss and develop Council concepts, procedures, policies and projects that will impact on Tauranga Moana tangata whenua (TCC, n.d.a.).

In 2002 the Tauranga Moana Tangata Whenua Collective was established to facilitate ways of working closer with the TCC (Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana, n.d.). The name was changed in 2018 to the Te Rangapu Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Partnership to refer to the mana whenua who have territorial rights in Tauranga Moana (Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana, n.d.). Te Rangapū representative Tama explains the role of Te Rangapū is to:

[r]epresent iwi and hapū members from all iwi and hapū within the territorial authority area of Tauranga City Council. And our purpose is to represent when required to support and to work on behalf of our constituent hapū and iwi in all issues and matters to do with Council, in particular the use of our land, waterways etc. resource consents, all the business of Council.

In Te Rangapū representative Hone's view, the establishment of Te Rangapū facilitates consultation:

[t]o save the Council money [laughs] of engaging us separately, under the new LGA Act and that they needed some sort of mechanism for us to engage, and we wanted that too, you know, and it was all about getting representation on there, into the decision-making.

Questions to members of Te Rangapū on how important they think it is for Māori to be involved in local government elicit a range of responses. For example, Tama says: "In Māori we would say tino whakahirahira, which means super important . . . It's the highest superlative you could put on something." Similarly, Manaaki claims:

Incredibly important, always was, why wouldn't it be? . . . Again, according to the principles of the Treaty we're meant to be partners. If we're not around the table we're not living by what we believe was the founding document of our country . . . we're partners.

For Hone, local government is also of much importance:

[r]eal relevant because it's here . . . it's important because it makes the local rules here and we need input to that. We need a tāngata whenua point of view . . . and some people are scared of it, but we see it as a plus for the city, especially going forward.

Furthermore, members of Te Rangapū are strongly in favour of Māori representation in local government. For example, Rawiri claims:

We need to be involved to the maximum extent possible. I believe in the maxim that what is good for Māori is good for the whole community and that is my starting point. If we do not have a profile or the ability to participate then we are doing our whole community a disservice . . . If you're looking at major infrastructure projects like roading and that kind of thing, you're not going to get anywhere with central government unless you can demonstrate you've got a firm relationship, a supportive relationship, with your local iwi groups . . . Government's not interested unless you can clearly demonstrate that you have all those issues online, being considered, part of the project . . . So, that's why I think it's important that Tauranga have that kind of representation, so you can progress those big infrastructure projects.

Tama's reasons on the importance of local government to Māori relates to how local government deals with issues of specific importance to Māori:

The biggest problem our people have is homes, housing, adequate affordable liveable housing, a home with all the housing infrastructure available to it. And I'm talking about the development on our own Māori land . . . It needs a big change from local government in their attitudes, policies, structures and most importantly, the relationship with tangata whenua . . . The issues we deal with are the quadruple bottom line issues, which is about economic, social, cultural, and housing if you like . . . All the issues to do with those four main points somewhere or another interact with council, either local council or regional council, so it is pretty much very high in terms of those four things, and . . . Our relationship exists or not in terms of how we can develop ourselves without having to fit in to certain standards and criteria which are not, or don't meet our standards, our way of life, our tikanga etc, especially the culture, especially with the infrastructure, the destruction of our lands and waterways, these sort of things, you know. There are ways that we can do things better.

Tama also refers to the requirement in the LGA to include Māori in decision-making:

Local Government Act LGA 2002 says that Māori must . . . be part of the decision-making process of Council, now I don't see any evidence of that currently really. Not strictly to the letter of the law. They say they do, they say you are on our working parties and we listen to what you say and you're allowed to have one person on the committee of ten, and so on and so on. But I don't see it working in the way that the legislation intended it to . . . It still needs to improve a bit more. There are still mistakes being made. There are still things like, woops sorry, we should have been in touch earlier but we've already done it. You know, what's done is done and we have no way of turning the clock back.

The view of interview participants above clearly demonstrates the importance to Māori of participating in local government. These examples demonstrate that the Pākehā majority view in local government has marginalised Māori wants and needs that align with their tikanga, and that Māori have not had a place to belong in local government.

In contrast to the positive comments on the enthusiasm of Māori to be involved in local government, the opinion of staff member Eruera is circumspect:

I think it's divided opinion out there, and I think understandably so. I mean you're asking people to participate into a system that's never really served them, never really involved them, never really valued them, never really wanted them. And so it takes a certain type of person to be willing to step into that and to stick their neck out . . . So do Māori want representation? Well, you know, it's kinda [sic] a dollar each way. It's kinda [sic] like do we want to be on the governance board of the local prison? Everything they're going to be talking about there has a negative connotation. So do you really want to be in there? Do you want to be a director or a CEO of a cigarette company? That's the kind of dilemma that it puts forward on some people . . . the argument that comes with that is that if you're not involved, then how do you invoke change? How do you make things better if you're not part of the solution?

This statement identifies the dilemma for Māori when asked to be part of a colonising system of local government that makes it difficult for them to participate through mechanisms such as the referenda clauses in the LEA and the construct of representative democracy. When I ask all interviewees why they think Māori representation in local government is necessary, some Councillors identify that a Te Ao Māori perspective differs from theirs and they think Māori representation will add value to Council. For example, elected member Mark commented:

It's beneficial to the city if we proactively engage with tangata whenua because they add such a different perspective and insight into things, and at the end of the day most of like New Zealand's culture is very much Māori culture.

When I ask members of Te Rangapū about how non-Māori elected members can represent Māori, they stress that non-Māori elected members struggle to represent Māori views. For example, Hone notes that non-Māori elected members cannot represent Māori views because:

They don't know what the culture is, unless they were born into it or had a Māori wife or husband for the last 20 to 30 years, got Māori kids, cause more than likely they'd be going to the marae, see how it works, and that's why it's so important for us to be at the decision-making table and workshopping with them and let them know what it's all about.

Providing an alternative point of view, Councillor Arthur thinks Māori are already well represented on Council and that specific Māori representation is not required:

I think representation is [important]. I think that like every other group the people that are governing need to be able to look at things from different aspects to what their own personal view is, and from that angle, I think that Māori are well represented. There are a lot of people that are listening to different hapū and iwi groups and putting forward their aspirations based on conversation had with them, so I think that there is already reasonable representation. If you mean do I think that someone of Māori descent is required to have adequate representation, then no, I don't think that's the case.

Councillor Michael avoids a direct response to the question, saying:

So I think that Māori representation is important . . . in short, the question is what does that mean? What do we mean by representation and what do we mean by Māori and is there a singular Te Ao Māori voice? . . . So the short answer is yes, but . . . it's a conversation we need to have.

As with representatives of Te Rangapū, Council members also had a range of opinions on whether non-Māori elected members could represent Māori views. For example, elected member Mark asserts:

I think that in all reality we [non-Māori elected members] can't, I mean, Māori they do have their own unique worldview. They have their own culture, their own kaupapa. So, yeah look, I think it would be very hard unless, say for example, myself, I was sort of more immersed in that world, then perhaps I could speak with some authority.

TCC elected member Jane was more definite than Mark in her views of representation:

You know I don't think they [Māori] are well represented, because it's pretty hard to represent a view of someone if you don't understand that perspective . . . it's very difficult to represent a worldview that you don't fully understand.

Given issues around the ability to understand others, previous Councillor George acknowledged the need for ongoing support:

I think what we need to do is, we can't speak for them. I think what we need to do is support them and give them every opportunity that we can to express their views and . . . if necessary we can represent their views, but that's only a fallback position.

In contrast to this position, elected member Arthur believes non-Māori have the knowledge needed to represent Māori adequately:

I'm out in the community meeting with different members of different hapū and discussing what they feel we need to do and what their thoughts are, what their feelings are about things . . . I see that Māori have aspirations as do many other people in the city. I don't see that they're particularly different. We all use the same roads and the same water and the same parks. Provided that we're all balanced against the overall outcome for the city, I think it's relatively easy to meet different hapū members . . . One thing I have noticed about people in governance is that some Councillors tend to not much time on the ground . . . to meet Māori in the community and bring their aspirations back to the Tangata Whenua Committee and then have the Tangata Whenua Committee discuss and then bring that in a formal sense to Council.

Councillor Arthur reiterated his position on representation by commenting on assumed standards of speaking for others:

Well, it comes down to whether a person believes that another person can represent them at all. If we break the community up into various identities, male and female, or trans or by race groups, or by any of the myriad other groups that we might have for example, political lines, and suggest that a person in a governance role can only represent those of the same group, there is no end to the number of people required on a governance team. To assume that somebody on the governance team is unable to see a position from another point of view is almost offensive actually. That if we're having open and honest discussion, provided that the whole city is looked at, and balanced, then there is no reason that the committee couldn't for example be all women, and then it wouldn't be reasonable for me to say that they can't represent me as a man. That would be unreasonable. Similarly, the other way around. There are some aspects of life that perhaps that representation should be the other way but we're looking after roads and parks and pipes and parking on the streets and things like that that affect everybody anyway.

While this Councillor raises valid points around representation, the issue of whether women and minority groups receive adequate representation is a topic that merits investigation in future research. Councillor Arthur, however, avoids the issue of Tiriti obligations relating to Māori representation and negates any consideration that Māori may have a different view on these issues. This Councillor did not address the issue of whether they could represent the views of Māori. They seemed comfortable, however, with specific Māori concerns undergoing a lengthy process that involved being filtered through Tangata Whenua Committee and TCC decision-making processes, the latter of which contains no Māori representation and no power for Māori to vote on decisions. This view saw all power in the hands of a Council, however well-meaning, with little understanding of Te Ao Māori. This aligns with the politics of presence and the question of whether Māori need to be physically represented by Māori (Barnett & Low, 2009). Apart from Councillor Arthur, most other Councillors interviewed felt non-Māori could not represent a Māori worldview unless they were exposed to it through family ties.

These views illustrate ways in which Western knowledges and practices may be prioritised over the perspectives and values of Indigenous people (Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020). These examples also express the (un)belonging of Māori and relegation to a liminal place within the context of powerful institutions such as local government (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Furthermore, in relation to (un)belonging and exclusion, Antonsich (2010) describes two aspects of belonging – ‘place-belonging’ and the ‘politics of belonging.’ In terms of belonging for Māori in decision-making places in local government, these comments above raise questions on whether Māori are being invited to belong in local government or are being excluded by the local government practices of representative democracy.

Councillor Arthur argues that he can represent views other than his own. I question, however, how he can represent a worldview of which he has no lived experience. Listening to and promoting Māori aspirations is different to providing insights from a worldview based in tikanga Māori and lived experience. Councillor Michael agrees that Māori representation in local government is important, while around a direct answer to questions relating to the representation of others. Of relevance is Michael’s recognition of the importance of conversations around representation. Judd (2015) provides an alternate perspective that that offered by Councillor Arthur:

This systemic under-representation might not matter if local government only dealt with building regulations and roads. But councils deal with water and land consents, telling local stories in libraries and museums, and managing parks and reserves. These issues are of major cultural significance to tangata whenua as these are crucial parts of their taonga.

The following discussion on the contested but commonly held belief in the partnership principle of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as first identified by the Waitangi Tribunal in the Lands case (1987)²⁸ is stressed by a number of participants as a basis for Māori representation (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). TCC staff member, Kylie, for example, argues for the prioritisation of Māori knowledge:

You need a Te Ao Māori perspective. You need people who represent Māori electors, and you definitely need the Māori worldview to come and be part of that at the table and part of the decision-making and . . . You can't guarantee it through the normal processes . . . If you go back to the Treaty of Waitangi, you know, we're partners, and . . . local government is required to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in decision-making processes, it's required to do that, and what better way than around the council table where you get to vote.

Similarly, when asked if Māori representation was necessary, Councillor Jane asserts:

Yes I do. The main reason would be because they're a Treaty partner. This nation was formed on a Treaty partnership and that got lost along the way, so I think we're scrambling to try and catch up and get back to where it could have been, which is why I think it's so hard for some people, because we've been able to have immigration into the country over the years after the Treaty was signed where people didn't know on what basis they were free to come and live here. And so I think it just turned into another colony . . . We have a Tangata Whenua Committee but the challenge there is they recommend to Council but then they don't get a vote in the decision which, it doesn't really, I don't think that's very robust.

Previous Councillor George, concurs with that view:

Yes I do. I think it's critical . . . So in terms of going forward, in terms of protecting the life that we love, the country that we love, the environment that we love and the

²⁸ The differences in the Māori and English texts of the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti have led to different understandings of the meaning of Te Tiriti. These differences, coupled with the need to apply Te Tiriti in contemporary circumstances, led Parliament to refer to the principles of Te Tiriti in legislation rather than to Te Tiriti texts. It is the principles, therefore, that the Courts have considered when interpreting legislative references to Te Tiriti (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). The three principles identified by the Tribunal are the principles of partnership, participation, and protection. As noted by the Waitangi Tribunal (n.d.), in the view of the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal, Te Tiriti principles are not set in stone as they are constantly evolving as Te Tiriti is applied to particular issues and new situations.

values that we have, one of our best mechanisms to protect that is the honour the Treaty and bring Māori forward into governing roles, and if we don't do that, we're in a lot of trouble and people just don't realise that . . . Tangata whenua aren't a threat to us, they can only strengthen, that partnership can only strengthen us all . . . Since I've been elected, I've been onto a lot of maraes and listened to a lot of the kaumātua and kuia and spent time in discussion. They have a passion for our country like no other and for our environment like no other and they just want to see the best thing happen for the environment and the people as a whole, but they just want to play their part as custodians of that environment and culture and, they have in the past always shown a willingness to share, to their detriment probably, so I don't see it as a threat. They just want to play a reasonable part and have reasonable representation and have control to a large extent over their own affairs.

In terms of a place for Māori to belong in local government, there is strong support from most interview participants for Māori wards to ensure Māori representation. In contrast to the view expressed by the majority of interview participants, Councillor Arthur argues that specific Māori representation is not required in order to have adequate Māori representation in local government. That Māori struggle for representation at elected member level in local government challenges Councillor Arthur's confidence in the system's ability to include Māori and ensure a sense of Māori belonging. Through the exclusion of Māori from participation in local government decision-making, the system itself has enabled boundaries that create an 'us' and 'them' binary (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). Māori wards may not be an ideal system to address the issue; under the current local government system, however, Māori wards are the only mechanism to ensure Māori representation on councils.

4.3.1 Democracy and Māori representation

Local government is an arena that exemplifies struggles over political recognition as it defines conditions of inclusion and participation in decision-making. As such, local government sets boundaries around who can be included in decision-making, how those included can participate in debates, and the access participants have to resources (Staeheli, 2008). According to O'Sullivan (2018), the basic questions for Indigeneity and democracy concern who belongs and on what terms they belong. To Yuval-Davis et al. (2006), the politics of belonging are concerned with boundaries of the political community that separate populations into 'us' and 'them.' Those boundaries require constant maintenance by hegemonic political powers. Such maintenance faces ongoing contestation by political

agents outside of the hegemony (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). The legislation, practices, and processes of local government are mechanisms used to create boundaries that ensure Māori and Te Ao Māori are marginalised in local government. Among those mechanisms are lack of flexibility in the democratic system, the referendum mechanism within the LEA 2001, the majority vote, and the physical environment of councils.

Issues of representation and difficulties in belonging in local government for Māori are apparent in Tauranga Moana. For example, in discussing their thoughts on establishing Māori wards for Tauranga City, Councillor Bill replies: “Brilliant. I think it’s maybe a first step towards recognising our Treaty partner as a partner rather than as just a token something that you say . . . without giving them any decision-making power.” Councillor Bill explains the effect of the democratic system on Māori:

I think at a local government level it’s systemically excluded them for a number of years, and I don’t believe that’s intentional but the systems and processes at Tauranga City has resulted in an outcome that has prevented Māori from being represented at the decision-making table for decades.

This statement reinforces Shaw’s (2011) observation that democracy has been shown to not work well for Indigenous people, particularly at local government level. In drawing out interview participants’ views of democracy and its application to local government in Aotearoa, I ask what democracy means to the participants. Te Rangapū representative Tama explains that, “in today’s world, democracy is ensuring that everyone is represented and treated fairly in all aspects of their lives within their society.” For previous Councillor Sally, democracy is “listening and then relaying the view and not having a personal view . . . Democracy is I think it’s all about numbers, it’s a numbers game. It’s not about quality.”

Most participants are clearly of the view that the democratic system marginalises Māori. For example, when asked how the democratic system serves Māori, previous Councillor George states:

It doesn’t . . . You know they went from a strength of power from about the time of signing the Treaty and before to being marginalised to the point where they were almost destroyed. Now they are slowly coming back to play their rightful role . . . I mean they’ve been marginalised. If you read the history of what our colonial governments did from the Treaty for the next 100 years, they’ve been absolutely marginalised and quite deliberately.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Te Rangapū representative Rawiri:

Clearly, it's not working the way it should be, and I mean the clear indicator of that was stats, and you can take any social indicator you want, how come Māori are in the bottom rankings of all of it? Employment, education, health, and you know, any one you want to look at. There's a disparity, and you know it can't all be explained by a kind of racist view of you're stupid and lazy. There's got to be something operating inside the system that creates that disparity.

TCC staff member Eruera describes how the process of democracy is an alien environment for many Māori:

I mean the bare fact of it is the entire process is a foreign process. The entire environment is a foreign environment, so from that point of view they're always going to start from an excluded point of view, so you've got to go and learn what are all the rules and regulations about even standing for Council. You've got to learn all the rules and regulations about how that all goes, Electoral Act and all those sorts of things, so it's always a foreign process . . . What is challenging is that the two worlds operate differently. For Māori we can have consensus, you look for consensus, when you consult and you keep consulting until you feel that you have exhausted the value that you can get from that as opposed to saying, well here's the endline, you need to fit consultation in before the endline . . . Again, nothing wrong with from my eyes, either system, and the value that we have and the opportunity that we have with either co-governance or just Aotearoa as a whole is to actually marry up both worlds, so you still want to be able to keep things moving but equally sometimes that means that our processes put pressure on our own selves . . . It was much more consensual, much more consensus-based process . . . So, to some degree there's this inherent way of doing and thinking things that does sit with you that I guess has been evolved over thousands of years, so when we think about the voting process that's an unnatural process for Māori and then at the end of the day it's a 'my way or the highway' system.

The adversarial aspect of democracy and the way that clashes with a Te Ao Māori way of decision-making is highlighted by several participants. This area of concern is identified by staff member Kylie says:

I mean tangata whenua do consensus decision-making generally that's how they prefer, so you've got a kind of clash of cultures in that we do have voting and . . . so, I mean if you were working towards true Treaty of Waitangi partnership model you would have more of a Te Ao Māori way . . . The projects would be discussed right at the beginning and you'd have that consensus and local government's not set up for that.

Te Rangapū representative, Hone, stresses the hapū aspect of Māori governance:

It's hard because . . . democracy you have your own individual processes and rights and all of that . . . You know, it's all about the individual having a say, and fundamentally Māori, we have a say as people not as individuals . . . so democracy is good and bad I think . . . As long as the hapū has a say in there and has the influence there within that group, cause that's what it's all about is hapū.

The dynamics of hapū relations is also noted by Councillor Michael:

Their [hapū] process is deliberative rather than adversarial debate driven, the very approach we use sometimes to talk about how we move forward is antithetical to that cultural way of working. I've got far more sympathy with that come together, have a bit of debate, go away, think about it, come together have a bit of a hui, go away think about it, come back and have another battle on the paepae, go away think about it, come back, break some bread, have some kai.

Addressing another aspect of the way the representative democratic system of local government contrasts with Māori governance processes, Te Rangapū representative, Manaaki comments on disconnection between governance protocols.

There's no doubt in my mind it's because Māori are complacent – you know, we just don't get out and vote, but therein lies the problem - why? Why don't we? I think a couple of things, I don't think that type of system and the position and the way it's set up is attractive for Māori. You don't want to be singled out, you know, vote for me and lobbed into a group of 11, it's not where we want to be, we just don't . . . We start with a big feed - you talk business . . . Why would anyone want to join this thing that doesn't represent anything that we find valued, so you have no one putting their hand up, you have no one voting, we're just not interested, they're not interested in the whole concept of it, the way in which its run . . . That's what I was saying about a deeper understanding of our culture and tikanga Māori if they want to, if they understood . . . All I know is that there's a disconnect – we are terribly not interested.

Media excerpts align with Shaw's (2011) argument that Westminster style democracy often does not work for Indigenous people globally, particularly at local levels. For example, Rush (2021), one of three Eastern Ward councillors on Wellington City Council, explains the impact of democracy on Māori:

The current system, as democratic as it may appear to the purist, is a thin veneer hiding huge inequality, and is not working for chunks of our country. It is clearly not the equality envisaged by the chiefs and Hobson, on behalf of the Crown, at Waitangi.

Furthermore, Dallas (2021), *Stuff's* editor for the Manawatū region, reiterates that democracy is not working for Māori:

Democracy is the assurance tangata whenua has at least one seat at the table. Surely no further evidence is needed to show that 11 Pākehā speaking for Māori is not where any local body authority should be, not this year or in two years' time.

Talking of the effect of the democratic system on Māori, Verdonk (Salvation Army, 2018) explains that people who voted against Māori wards:

[a]rgued that Māori wards are 'racist' because they give a special place to Māori. However, this argument ignores the fact that the whole system was created by Pākehā and is biased towards Pākehā . . . The system isn't reflective of Māori; it doesn't place importance on the family, on doing things together, on Māori values. Why vote in a system that doesn't represent you, serve you or include you?

This commentary supports the claim made by Shaw (2011) that the system of democracy in Aotearoa does not enable or facilitate traditional Māori ways of exercising decision-making. As noted by participants, in the Māori world decisions arrived at on behalf of the hapū or iwi were the outcome of consensus-forming discussions among the elders (King, 2004; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014; Stokes, 1987). This aligns with the view of Summersby (2009), who identified that Māori representatives use consensual approaches to decision-making, and that the way things are done in the current local government system differs from the traditional Māori worldview and practice. As noted above, in local government democracy people need to stand up and push for election in an individualist sense while Māori resolve decisions as a collective. Thus, the electoral process of putting oneself forward and lobbying for votes clashes with the consensual aspect of Māori culture.

The thoughts of interview participants on reasons why Māori struggle to get elected to local government also refers to the fact that Māori represent a minority in the wider population. Te Rangapū representative Tama, for example, highlights the significance of numerical imbalance:

Three reasons. The first obvious one is numbers . . . [The] reason is that because of the system of local body elections, most wards or at large areas are by, I'll say by coincidence, are heavily weighted in numbers towards a non-Māori population advantage.

Councillor Mark also identifies issues relating to numbers of candidates:

Well, first of all, Māori are still a minority of the population . . . so of course they're starting off on the back foot when it comes to straight out majority rules, democracy, so that's clearly a disadvantage.

Te Rangapū representative Manaaki also talks about the majority rule aspect of democracy:

That's the problem with democracy . . . I don't think that type of system and the position and the way it's set up is attractive for Māori . . . How can you have a say, a meaningful say, in a system based on numbers where you're a minority? You will never ever have the numbers to win. So, democracies great – it's fine for the people who are the majority. If you are a minority, it's an impossibility to get the numbers to push anything of meaningful through in your favour. You're behind the eight ball, so we've now got the vote . . . so I'm one of twelve including myself . . . so I'm meant to celebrate democracy.

TCC staff member, Eruera, shares thoughts on the majority vote:

The voting process is an interesting one because people say to me, you know, that Māori should be able to stand on their own two feet and be voted in. Well that's very convenient to say now that Māori are 15 per cent [17 per cent (Stats NZ, 2021)] of the population, because nobody was saying that when Māori were 85 per cent of the population, and in fact at that time . . . my assumption is that Māori didn't have the vote at that time . . . so our democratic process means that the most popular person wins, often based on pre-election promises that may or may not be founded with good information.

Eruera's comments are reiterated by the observations of previous TCC Councillor George:

The population just don't have the numbers for one. There's our history, the lack of understanding of our true story, our true history . . . Then the other barrier is people don't, too many don't accept the Treaty as being a cornerstone of our country and our society.

Te Rangapū representative Tama adds:

They [Māori representatives] represent a minority in the overall Council structure, elected members Council structure. Therefore where issues arise that involve a tangata whenua impact or effect, it would be hard for that individual to adequately represent the tangata whenua view, to ensure that tangata whenua issues are being addressed properly . . . Well, history tells me very few are aware, the majority aren't, and therefore history also shows that there are very few major decisions that are made taking full account of Māori, the importance of Māori input and adherence to Māori tikanga.

While a minority of participants held different views, such as Councillor Arthur, the majority of interviewees argued the need for some form of Māori representation at elected member level in local government. Discussion of how local government democracy impacts Māori representation prompts six of the 14 participants to highlight areas where the Māori

worldview diverges from the Pākehā world. The following examples that show how the Māori worldview has been disrespected by councils in the past. These examples depict why it is important for a Te Ao Māori worldview to be voiced at the decision-making table of local government. Key localised examples from Tauranga Moana of divergence includes the use of jet skis on rivers, encroachment on Māori land, and waste disposal. As Te Rangapū representative Manaaki notes:

There is some divergence in simple things like use of jet skis on the river . . . bailing up and down and the noise and the wake, so in the Pākehā world, and the Council back the majority of the city, jet skis are an accepted part of society, in our culture it's . . . insensitive . . . Taniwha, you know, special parts of the river . . . so we do diverge, there's a disconnect there. Even simple things like the national cycleway . . . So you go there, it's on the wrong side of the road, what's happened is they want to take more of our land and we've hardly got any because the city's encroached . . . They need our land . . . so those problems come up . . . The city is built on our land and there's always going to be encroachment . . . but where do you get the fact that we've got very little of our land left . . . A divergence of understanding there . . . and Council not understanding it, it's not an unwillingness . . . that understanding's not there, so when they see it on a plan they just give it a tick, so there's a disconnect. There's still not an entrenchment of how important our land and our water is to us. It's just treated like another asset, and it means more to us than that.

A waste management example of disconnect is noted by TCC staff member Eruera:

One of the topics that came in front of Te Rangapū . . . was around recycling, and in particular, around waste management and landfills, and one of the assumptions we made as a Council was that because Tauranga as a Council does not put its waste into a landfill then that is good from a Māori perspective, and if we stop the statement there it probably is, but what we found is when we put that before a Māori perspective there were more questions and the question was, if we're not putting our waste into a landfill, where are we putting it? And the answer in this case was, 'well we ship it over the hill to Waikato and we put it in their landfill', and immediately . . . tangata whenua say 'well, that's not acceptable', so it's bringing in that next layer to move in the decision-making that comes, so in that case what tangata whenua were able to say was, 'yes we're not happy with waste going into the whenua, but equally and probably worse, is to send our waste to someone else's whenua' . . . to take an easy way out and say we don't want the landfill, we'll take it to someone else's place, is just as unacceptable as having it, so we've just got to do better . . . For Māori we've got to persevere and do the best we can with whatever situation we have until we find the answer that going to work for us. So, there's the two different worlds at play.

A clear issue of different worldviews that could impact on the quality of Māori input to decision-making are strict Council agenda turn-around timeframes, where Council and Committee members receive the meeting agenda two working days prior to the relevant meeting.²⁹ This issue was raised by several participants. Councillor Michael observes:

We talk about appreciating their culture, but we don't recognise that decision-making on a marae is not you know, get the agenda as we do on Council, sorry I'm quite passionate about this, we get the agenda on a Thursday night, right, sometimes that agendas got 800 bloody pages in it, Tuesday we have a debate and make a decision. You do not make decisions on marae like that, right, the Māori way of decision-making.

Staff member Kylie also points out that:

It would be great if we got agendas out two weeks beforehand . . . but the reality of working in councils, it's not ever going to happen. They have a meeting on a Tuesday and they get the agenda on a Thursday so two clear working days and the weekend too . . .

These views on agenda timeframes are supported by Judd:

Because what I've come to observe . . . is that Māori have got day jobs. They don't have all the resources that a council has. Culturally completely different to how a council is run. They need to have their own hui and talk it through and consider it, but when council just ramroad [*sic.*] stuff through cause they didn't fit our model, our way of doing things. And then they got blamed for not fitting our way of doing things. No respect of difference or understanding of difference.

This perspective is reiterated by TCC staff member Eruera:

It's probably the greatest difficulty that they have is that the council timeframes are different from tangata whenua timeframes so that makes it difficult to have as good a connection as possible . . . I do raise that issue because I think it's something that we are going to have to address at some stage, is for example when an agenda is put out on a Thursday ready for a Wednesday meeting the next week. For your average Councillor, they read their agenda, they read the paperwork and their reports, they formulate their opinions and they're there presenting that. For one tangata whenua representative representing, in our case 17 iwi and hapū, and then anyone else who may or may not need to be considered depending on the subject, for them to try and

²⁹ The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 states that agendas must go out two clear working days before meetings of Council and committees.

have a good handle on anything specific beyond generic advice can be quite difficult and they don't have an opportunity to go out and consult.

These examples highlight the importance to Māori of being represented at decision-making level in local government. This evidence supports Shaw's (2011) observation that the representative democratic system of local government may not serve Māori well.

In practice, local bodies in Aotearoa are far from being representative of the demographic composition of their communities, with elected members predominantly being white middle class males, many of whom are closely associated with local property and development interests (Mulgan & Aimer, 2004; Webster & Fa'apoi, 2017). This thesis argues that while local government elected members may do their best to represent the diversity of their communities, if Māori do not have an equitable role in decision-making processes, their perspectives and needs may be rendered invisible. Interview participants note that decisions are being made by councils where specific Māori views and values are not always taken into consideration. These views contrast with the views expressed earlier of participants who could not understand that Māori would have different wants and needs than other people in the community.

4.3.2 Tauranga Moana, racism and Māori wards

Geographers argue that place is crucial to defining who belongs, and that place itself is an expression of power and contestation (Johnson, 2008b; Jones et al., 2015). These 'landscapes of power' express dominant ideologies and depict cultural norms (Johnson, 2008a; Jones et al., 2015). They also express the status of a place and encourage a sense of loyalty to the dominant discourse (Jones et al., 2015). These underlying messages are often inherent in the public buildings of local government in Aotearoa, reiterating the dominance of the colonial power while largely ignoring the power of Te Ao Māori.

To determine the extent to which Māori embraced a sense of belonging in local government in Tauranga Moana, I discussed with interview participants how the Council building makes them feel, the relationship between Council and tangata whenua, racism in Tauranga Moana and barriers to Māori representation. Thinking of the aspects of the TCC building that reflect Māori culture, Te Rangapū representative Tama said: "They've added a few design patterns if I recall, a few things, but not a lot." Several participants note that as the current buildings

are not meeting national health standards, TCC is in the process of developing a new civic centre to house the Council (TCC, 2022). One participant, Te Rangapū representative Manaaki, is vocal about the Euro-centricity of TCC buildings saying:

The buildings that the Council have. . . there's not a shred of Māori recognition or culture anywhere to be seen . . . when they get their own building . . . then we will have massive input into what they need . . . So when it comes to fitting out a building when they get it, I am quietly confident they will take into consideration mana whenua's perspective.

Highlighting the feeling of inclusion that can be evoked by simple design features of a building, staff member Eruera comments:

At the moment we're sitting at the University of Waikato [Tauranga Moana campus] and . . . I noticed straight away a lot of the Māori patterning that's in and around and it just gives me a sense of place that you know there's a place for you, and those patterns may not necessarily be directly related to me, but they're just a little subliminal signal that, hey there's a place for you here, and that just eases a little bit of tension and it's hard to explain that but it is what it is.

Following on from discussion about the TCC building, several comments around the readiness of Tauranga Moana to accommodate Māori wards are encouraging. Attempts by TCC to bridge the gap between themselves and tangata whenua are discussed, with Te Rangapū representative Tama complementary about the evolving relationship:

When I first started in the late 90s, I rated the relationship between tāngata whenua and Council specifically . . . was probably a one out of ten or even a minus one out of ten. And now I believe it's about halfway, a five, maybe a five to six. We've still got a bit of a way to go.

TCC staff member Kylie explains that sometimes they used alternative venues such as marae for Council meetings:

You know, we can always go out to marae and have meetings and we do, with the Tangata Whenua Committee . . . go out for meetings on marae, so I think that going out to places where Māori feel comfortable is the way to go . . . You know, the old 'go to where the people are' type thing.

Councillor Mark also talks of their experience of having Council meetings at marae:

I've sort of learned a few basic sort of skills and mihi [personal greetings] and so forth and so it becomes less daunting as you go along . . . but overall they definitely always make you feel hospitable. There's always a good kai at the end. I love my kai, so it's

always good. You always have that to look forward to . . . We've also been to other marae for the general Tangata Whenua Collective meetings and they've always been very inclusive meetings that have had a good spirit around them and there's always been great hospitality and, you know, I think Māori are up to some quite vigorous discussions and even debates on the marae, on the paepae I think they call it, and so, you know, that's a good place to have those discussions, and I think they're quite happy to be open and frank about their feelings and also hearing Council perspectives which might be a bit different to them.

This attitude by Council towards holding meetings on marae is not extended towards the wider community, however, as TCC staff member Eruera notes when talking of the idea of holding an election candidate's evening at a marae:

I'll give you this example that was influenced by the Electoral Act. There was a tono, a pitch, to have a candidate's evening held at a marae, and really at the end of the day what they were trying to do was to create a different environment, but the fear and unease that was expressed as that was considered, and by good people, I'm not saying that these aren't good people, but because it's something different there's a whole lot of barriers that go up about, 'oh well, that's excluding to the public', well the marae's open to the public, 'oh yeah but people don't feel comfortable going to the marae', well no, I don't feel comfortable going to the library, I don't feel comfortable going a public toilet, I might catch something. There's all these barriers for everybody, and guess what, for Māori, and especially in the early days when Māori are speaking a different language and going in to see some dude in a wig and a gown who's sitting there presiding over the House of Lords or whatever else you want to put around as examples, that's always been a foreign environment for Māori.

The views above suggest that to participate in local government, Māori need to suppress their cultural values and accept assimilation to European ways. Thus, as Antonsich (2010) and Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) suggest, if Māori want to participate at the decision-making table of local government they are expected to make the conscious effort to cross a cultural boundary into an area outside their comfort zone. These views illustrate the way European or Pākehā values underpin the local government environment in Aotearoa and the difficulty for some to imagine different worldviews or perspectives (Parsons et al., 2019; Radcliffe, 2022).

In terms of Māori election to local government, racism sits alongside the representative democratic process, majority rules and the Eurocentric election system proving challenges, as a barrier identified by interviewees in Tauranga Moana. Tauranga Moana has received

some negative publicity in recent years for being a ‘racist’ city. For example, Kino (2019) states: “Take away the beach and the mountain and the pretty little waterfalls and what’s left is an ugly town filled with racists. Not just closet racists, but open racists too.” Kino backs up her statement by referring to the overwhelming support for Andrew Hollis in his bid to be elected to TCC (Kino, 2019). She says that despite well qualified Māori candidates standing for TCC in the 2019 local body elections, none were elected, while Hollis, well known for making controversial statements around Te Tiriti o Waitangi, received the most votes (Kino, 2019; Shand, 2019). For example, Shand (2019) cited comments from Hollis’s social media pages where Hollis called the Treaty “past its use-by date” and “a joke.” In addition, former Race Relations Commissioner Susan Devoy shares Kino’s view that in Tauranga Moana there is:

[n]o longer a racist underbelly, racism has reared its ugly head . . . I’m not sure what the solution is to the racism in Tauranga Moana. It feels complex, generational. But what I do know is that if we don’t call out the racism now, it’s only going to escalate (quoted in Kino, 2019).

A 2021 example highlighting racism in Tauranga Moana includes media coverage of the Steering Committee spokeswoman for the Tauranga Ratepayers Alliance³⁰ Kim Williams, when speaking at the launch event for the Steering Committee, greeted people using six words in te reo Māori. In response to her language use, Williams was jeered, told to “speak English” and advised that “we don’t want to hear that” (Wilson, 2021a: 1). In another example of anti-Māori sentiment, Christina Humphreys, former Western Bay of Plenty District Councillor, initiated a petition to “return democracy to New Zealanders who don’t identify as Māori.” Local media reported that more than 2500 people signed the petition (Tebbutt, 2021a: 1).

While media coverage has highlighted racist sentiment emerging from within Tauranga Moana, the media also notes some positives. For example, in 2020 and 2021 the media covered policy decisions made by TCC to address Māori grievances and concerns. These include the Otamataha / The Elms Apology and Restitution,³¹ and TCC approval of the

³⁰ Tauranga Ratepayers’ Alliance is a group formed in response to the appointment of unelected commissioners to TCC in place of elected councillors.

³¹ In May 2018 the Anglican Church of Aotearoa made a public apology to the collective of local tangata whenua, and in particular to Ngāi Tamarāwaho and Ngāti Tapu, for a historic “betrayal of trust” by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Conchie, 2018). In recognition of the apology by the Anglican Church, and in

Property Acquisitions and Disposals Policy. This Policy, a first of its kind in Aotearoa, gives tangata whenua right of first refusal over surplus Council land (*Bay of Plenty Times*, 2021; Conchie, 2018; Johnsen, 2019). The TCC was also among the first councils in Aotearoa to adopt a recommendation to establish Māori wards for the 2022 local body elections (Gillespie, 2020; Shand, 2020). In another positive for Tauranga Moana, Toi Moana / the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the boundaries of which encompass Tauranga Moana, was the first in Aotearoa to establish Māori ward seats. This establishment occurred prior to amendments to the Local Government Electoral Act 2001 that allowed the public to vote in opposition to the establishment of Māori wards (Webb-Liddall, 2019a). Despite these positive actions, interview evidence supports the view that Tauranga Moana has race relations issues, as several interview participants referred to Tauranga being a city full of racist old white men. For example, Councillor Michael states that, for him, representative democracy:

[i]s about representing certain values and certain aspirations which I believe are pretty universal, but I'm not here to represent a group . . . I am here to ensure that no group uses its power . . . that no group should have special favours, and the group that's most favoured in this city is the rich old white pricks.

Previous Councillor Sally explains:

I don't think that, my personal view, that Tauranga is ready for a Māori ward because I think a lot of locals are still of the generation that have very little understanding, acceptance and tolerance, even of multi culture. That's multi culture full stop. There are a lot of older locals that still carry a lot of, not racist because that's not the word, but a lot of ignorance. I mean I think about my parents as my closest example, and a lot are like them . . . At the moment I think Tauranga's still stuck between the old way and the new way of understanding Māori culture and multi culture actually and we're stuck in the middle.

Referring to 'old white men', previous Councillor Kylie claims:

I think that younger people coming through have much more, they're much more educated I suppose and have much more idea that Māori are the tangata whenua of the country and . . . that the Treaty should be honoured, so I think there's quite a strong feeling about that, but you know we'll probably need a generation to die off, and Tauranga seems to have a disproportionate amount of racist old white men really,

acknowledging the shared history of the land, in 2019 TCC made the decision to gift a \$1 million section at 11 Mission Street, which adjoins The Elms historic building, to the Otamataha Trust (Johnsen, 2019).

in my limited experience, really quite nasty and they seem to also have the means and time and energy to go for it really, but they're quite racist in their attitude.

Te Rangapū representative Manaaki argues:

We're one of the highest Māori populations in the country, and especially Tauranga and Rotorua, the Bay of Plenty. So shouldn't we be leading in trying to work out how we can do this a bit better, local government . . . more representative of their constituents, because for too long . . . since time began Tauranga's always been a racist city. It's National³² run, right wing, you know . . . It's all about the economy and finance and protecting your land values, everyone loves capital gains . . . Everyone moves in cause they want a piece of the action, but when it came to things Māori they have never, you know, it's a racist city.

Racism and the model of local government are also noted by Councillor Michael, who comments on issues around Māori election to local government:

Um racism . . . because I'm not daft, tribalism's everywhere, you know, it's part of the human condition and as we sort of get more knowledgeable and more understanding of the world, we sort of fear some things less, but I think we're pretty much wired biologically to fear difference . . . I think it's the models . . . different groups at different stages on different journeys . . . Māori [are] more advanced than some groups in terms of deliberative decision-making, in terms of operating for the good of everyone to a certain extent, not all Māori, not everywhere, it's not a universal thing.

Further reference to racism in Tauranga Moana comes from Councillor Jane:

I think you know, when representation is done better, like if we do partner up, I think all ethnicities benefit. Because I think it brings an understanding instead of suspicion and mistrust, and working together, and there's a lot of other ethnicities out there that face racism of all kinds, even in our city sadly, so I think it provides a platform for a lot of that to actually fade away because when you have understanding, when you have empathy for another situation, people are so much more reasonable.

TCC elected member Jane outlines why racism may be present in the Tauranga Moana community:

They're [Māori] on the backfoot because anyone whose been around in the last 50 years, as things came back up into the public sphere, the Waitangi Tribunal and all that sort of stuff, where it all came to the fore, there was a lot of anger, a lot of emotion, and I think a lot of people grew up with a lot of angry people, I know I did, so you felt guilty for being white and being in the country, and there's been such a clash at that

³² The National Party was formed in 1936 by merging the two main conservative parties of the time (Te Ara, n.d.a).

time that still sits in our city, and I think that's created a worldview for some who perhaps haven't taken the time to get to know why that happened or understand where that's coming from. I think that creates fear and mistrust in the community, that all Māori want is to take all the land back and then charge everyone to use it. So, you know they want the beach and then they'll charge people to go on beaches. They want the mountain back and charge you to go up it or fly over it. I think there's been a lot of mistrust and a lot of negative stories over those decades where I'm not sure that, certainly here, I'm not sure that there's been a healthy view of the fact that Māori are people that can not only represent their own people but represent everybody, and their worldview brings huge value to decision-making.

Jane notes that racism in the Tauranga Moana community is built around suspicion, mistrust, and fears that, if given any measure of power, Māori will "take all the land back and then charge everyone to use it . . . So you know they want the beach and then they'll charge people." This belief is indicative of similar beliefs in parts of wider society in Aotearoa. Theoretically, this fear can be related to power struggles, where, as Bell (2008) notes, the unsettling of colonialism is uncomfortable for some. This discomfort is also indicative of liminality, a place of uncertainty during a time of change (McConnell, 2017).

A way forward, as mentioned by Councillor Jane, is if people can have "empathy for another situation" and build working relationships with each other out of respect. Perhaps the solution is a matter of waiting for a generation to die off, as noted by previous Councillor Kylie above, where "younger people coming through have much more, they're much more educated I suppose and have much more idea that Māori are the tangata whenua of the country and . . . that the Treaty should be honoured."

The view from several academics is strongly in favour of changing the legislation to remove barriers to Māori being elected to local government. For example, Te One (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga) (2020) asserts that many Māori do stand as candidates in local body elections, but they struggle to gain a support base if they champion Māori political rights. Interviewees also note the racist element in society, both in the wider population and Tauranga Moana specifically, and how that affects Māori representation in local government. Councillor Mark notes:

I've always thought that you know, a really decent Māori candidate should be able to get on [to Council] but, the other thing we know of course, we also know there's a certain residual amount of racism to a larger or lesser degree in the population, so clearly that's an impediment.

Councillor Arthur, however, argues against specific Māori representation on Council, suggesting that Māori aspirations for Tauranga Moana should be similar to those of the rest of society. Arthur says that if a Māori candidate wants to be elected they need to appeal to the majority and not focus on Māori issues:

If somebody of Māori descent lobbies on a non-racial basis and comes to the party with good policy on things that affect the city, there should be no difference whatsoever, but if a Māori candidate puts their campaign together on the basis of Māoridom, then 83 per cent of the population don't care, because it's not relevant to 83 per cent of the voters. So, it could well be that if Māori want to be represented, then they have to have more than just Māori based policies . . . I think it comes down to what the message is, knowing your town, 83 per cent of our town are worried about their own interests and they're not worried about Māori interests, they don't know what it's like to have a marae next to a fertiliser plant, they don't know what that's like so it's not on their list of things to worry about, so making sure that policy matches what the city wants is the way to be voted to win a majority and I think that some training in that, certainly by local government would help our local Māori representatives win a seat in a general election, and not in their own.

By highlighting that Māori interests may differ from those of the non-Māori public, this statement demonstrates why dedicated Māori representation in local government is necessary. Councillor Arthur claims that Māori candidates should not speak from a Māori perspective; in other words, their world should be assimilated into the wider Eurocentric view, "as a cat assimilates a mouse" (Interviewee Rawiri). To try to explain the views of people they knew who spoke against Māori representation in local government, Councillor Mark adds:

I guess one of the things, and some people do get concerned about this, and I think we have to put this on table, is that some people are concerned that the partnership means that the tail wags the dog, particularly when it comes to, like resource consents and having to get tangata whenua permission for all this sort of development, and that is the concern a lot of people have about it and even, to the extent of like, potentially you can see some people viewing it as a bit of a gravy train, you know, for example having cultural observers or what do they call them, cultural monitors, in earthworks and, effectively people just sitting there like watching. You can sort of understand why some people feel it's like an added cost that really is not particularly helpful or advantageous, so that's just an example, but what I'm saying is, you can see where some of the concerns come from, and you look at some of the budgets that you have to budget for cultural sensitivities, you know and you almost get the feeling that this is the tail wagging the dog and a bit of, I think when it gets really extreme, some people

call it brownmail, you know, so I think there is a concern about that, yeah, I think it's something that I guess Māoridom probably need to be a bit careful that they don't go overboard because they might incite a backlash. That'd be my advice, because you know, if it brings unnecessary complexity and cost to development, I don't think that's a good thing either.

These views and the language used are expressions of a colonising viewpoint that marginalises a Māori worldview and Māori place in society. While Councillor Mark is openly expressing views with which they are familiar, and expressing views typical in the community, the way the views are expressed and the words used are racist. For example, the term, 'tail wags the dog' implies to me that the Pākehā majority is the 'dog', which is the important part that makes decisions and does all the work, while a Māori worldview is relegated to the 'tail', a not so important and sometimes useless appendage. Furthermore, their comments on Māori cultural advisors as being a "bit of a gravy train . . . effectively people just sitting there like watching," illustrate what Stokes (1987) claimed was a lack of understanding of a different worldview to that of the Pākehā majority. These comments depict a view that the advisors sit around doing nothing, which belittles Māori cultural tradition and beliefs. Their further comments on the role of cultural advisors as bringing an "unnecessary complexity and cost to development" clearly shows a Eurocentric colonising viewpoint that anything Māori is unnecessary. Their views that "some people call it brownmail" and that "Māoridom probably need to be a bit careful that they don't go overboard because they might incite a backlash" are again reiterating the colonising assimilationist view where they really would like anything Māori to go away or become assimilated to the majority system. This racist element in Tauranga Moana is also noted by Councillor Bill as being a barrier to Māori being elected to local government:

I think there's a few things, historically Māori are a group that have been discriminated against and stereotyped, so there's still a part of society that's got that view of Māori either at the forefront or back of their thinking so there's very large parts of society that would never vote for a Māori elected member because of the colour of their skin or the funny syllables in their name just because it's different. I think people also have their biases so they tend to vote for people who look similar to them and there tends to be a lot of people that are similar to them and the way that they think and their worldview, so when you have a majority of people with probably small biases rather than large biases, but when a lot of people have those biases, it effectively, you know, it's the tyranny of the majority, it blocks out minority groups from representation . . . I think there's also some structural issues as well in terms of, a lot of wealth and

influences generally in Pākehā circles which might be a hangover from, you know 150 years ago or whatever, land was confiscated from Māori and all their wealth and homes was taken from them by the government despite their being citizens, so since then there's always been a wealth disparity between I guess the settlers or Pākehā and Māori. I think that gets perpetuated through the generations, so Māori also have less means to stand for election, fund signs and probably have less influence at Council levels, because probably they haven't been operating at, well not as many operating at those circles, yeah probably people's biases and then ah, almost the class structure of New Zealand are the two biggest barriers for Māori.

The view of Councillor Bill contrasts with the views of Councillor Mark where they recognise that discrimination has occurred and still occurs where people will not vote for Māori due to bias. Councillor Bill speaks of the tyranny of the majority blocking Māori from representation and how Māori may find it difficult to stand for election due to cost and influence through class structure. Again, Councillor Bill recognises that the process of colonisation has impacted Māori from representation in local government. The statements of Councillor Mark, however, depict attitudes that support the retention of mechanisms such as the referendum clause that keep Māori from participating and belonging in local government. The views of these two Councillors illustrate the way (un)belonging and exclusion of Māori has played out within local government, leaving Māori in a liminal in-between place in terms of representation (McConnell, 2017; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

4.3.3 Who should speak for Māori?

Another aspect of (un)belonging relates to attitudes that Māori need Pākehā to speak for them and represent them. For example, the potential workload of the Māori ward representatives was raised as an issue by several Councillors and previous elected members during interviews. Previous Councillor Sally argues:

The reason at that time that I probably wouldn't have supported it [Māori wards] is because there's a lot of iwi and hapū and you would have had two [possibly one in the case of Tauranga Moana] people, and they would have to get the view of all of the iwi and hapū and that can take a long time, so the process would have been too drawn out and it would have become prohibitive rather than helpful.

The potential workload of the one Māori ward councillor is also noted by Councillor Jane:

We have like 11 hapū, so it's hard for one person to be able to represent the voice as a whole – as it is for us - and it's no different within mana whenua, around here, gosh there's some very varied views, so it would be good for them to be able to represent a

general view or a common view if that is possible . . . potentially the fact that we have three iwi here and probably 11 or 17 hapū but one person can't represent all so I think that a challenge.

A similar concern is raised by Councillor Mark:

Even one [Māori ward seat] would be better than nothing . . . again the big challenge for that person will be getting the mandate for the wider tangata whenua views, bringing that to the meeting, and then also reporting back. To me, that's an added responsibility that probably most of us standard Councillors don't necessarily have, although in theory we represent the community so we should be doing the same thing.

As illustrated above, several interviewees raise concerns that Māori ward representatives may struggle to represent the range of views from their constituency. All general ward councillors are, however, in a similar situation where they may need to represent a range of views from within their own ward. When I question Councillor Mark further to ask how the role of a Māori representative representing the whole iwi would differ from that of a ward Councillor, for example from the Pāpāmoa area, the Councillor replies:

It shouldn't differ really much at all, so for example, see I'm a bit different in that I'm an at large Councillor, so I sort of cover the whole city, but in many ways, I don't then have that direct accountability. The ward Councillors though, they are the ones that are very much on the ground in that community, in their suburbs, so they're the ones that should be much more proactive in finding out the community's interests and putting those through to our debates and the votes. So that side of it should really be no different to a Māori representative, they should really be doing the same.

Another issue raised by previous Councillor Sally is around the perceived conflict that could arise from having a member from a different hapū as the Māori ward councillor:

The other thing that worries me . . . was that if you had two representatives. If you went out and did have Māori wards and what say you ended up with two from the same iwi, and then the other two or three (iwi) miss out, and what say they disagree and how are they going to vote? How are they going to represent a real diverse range of things because there will be times when you're talking about a piece of – a rōhe that's in their marae zone and then it would be something happening in their backyard if you like, I suppose in some ways it's the same as being a ward Councillor, but I don't necessarily think they'd be able to give a holistic collective view of something at times because they'd be, it's be too personal.

In these examples non-Māori are formulating reasons why Māori wards may not work, rather than trusting Māori ward representatives and their supporters to address the issue.

Drawing from his background of research in Māori education, Glynn (2015) observes what can occur when one ‘partner’ holds a more powerful position than the other:

Such dominant partners can claim to speak for, and on behalf of, the less powerful partner. They appropriate the right to define (unilaterally) what the issues or grievances are, how the less powerful partner thinks and feels, what they need, and what the appropriate solutions to address those issues and grievances are. Such partners often abuse the power they have by imposing their solutions on the less powerful partner with little or no consultation.

The views expressed above illustrate Glynn’s (2015) point where Pākehā are demonstrating a paternalistic view to explain why Pākehā should keep making local government decisions for Māori. As Young (2002: 123) observes in relation to the inclusion and representation of structurally disadvantaged groups, many “objections to practices of the specific representation of structurally disadvantaged groups derive from the assumption that groups do not have one set of common interests or opinions.” This observation aligns with that of Boynton, representative of Te Rōpū Tautoko Māori³³ when discussing her campaign in support of Māori wards in her district of Whakatāne:

Unfortunately, it’s the ingrained, inter-generational attitudes and stereotypes of what Māori are and how the English culture is more superior to Māori, therefore Māori don’t know what’s good for them, therefore Pākehā are the only ones able to say what’s good for them (cited in Brett Kelly, 2021).

The views above expressing distrust in Māori to solve these issues align with the view of geographers and other critical social scientists who use a decolonising approach to critique the positioning of Western knowledge and reason above the knowledge and worldview of Indigenous people (see, for example, de Leeuw and Hunt (2018) and Radcliffe and Radhuber (2020)). In contrast to these views, Te Rangapū representatives are supportive of Māori wards and have already considered practical solutions to issues that may arise. For example, Te Rangapū representative Rawiri notes:

My expectation is that those [Māori ward] councillors will have the same staff support and resources that all the other councillors get . . . And Tauranga . . . I’m sure other councils have their own iwi forum groups like Te Rangapū, and that that’s the sounding

³³ The Aotearoa Catholic Te Rōpū Tautoko exists to co-ordinate and manage engagement between the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa, represented by the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand (Te Rōpū Tautoko, n.d.).

board . . . So any councillor who's representing a Māori ward, if you've got that kind of system operating in the background, there's no excuse for them not to know what the issues are and what the consensus is, I was trying to look for another word, you know, what the general view is of the Māori electorate on particular issues and what's important to them, so you know, here's your playbook, go for it.

Another Te Rangapū representative, Hone, also gave consideration to this issue:

The one seat again, we're just going to have to compromise and get the best person available whether they're Ngāti Pūkenga or Ngai Te Rangi or Ngāti Ranginui, you know what I mean, and we're just going to have to be bold enough, mature enough for debate at the table and not take it personally and get the best person, it takes a lot . . . but we've got to be mature at the table in picking this person cause it's going to be vital that we're all behind him or her . . . Tauranga Māori here are probably the most advanced in New Zealand with Council and all of that, our Rangapū group probably was the first of its kind in the country, you know, and this Council has been progressive on that front . . . This Council's been the most progressive over I think, the last 20 years to get to where we are, it's been a long hard fight you know for the Māori ward, I think we've had three goes at it over, you know you have a go at it every six years. I think this was our third shot at it I think it was, a lot of discussion eh?

While respecting the fact mentioned by Hone that TCC resolved to put in place a Māori ward for the 2022 local body elections, Te Rangapū representative Manaaki laments the fact that it was a non-Māori who inspired change:

All respect to TCC, they've made a first step . . . I think there's a genuine want by some of them to advocate for Māori . . . [talks about the Councillor who advocated for Māori wards) I said to him, don't you think it's ironic that it's something I've been saying for 30 years, no-one listened? The day a Pākehā stands up and says it, it got passed . . . You need to look at the whole system, but until someone like you said 'oh gee there's no brown faces here', they go 'oh well we'd better go out and see if we can set up some wards.' So what do you think he did different today that we haven't been doing for decades? It's the messenger, it's who said it, it's wrong . . . Not in a month of Sundays was a racist Tauranga city going to say we'll have Māori wards . . . and I think it's so sad because our whole city is based on the goodwill, I don't know if you know much of the history but we gave most of this land, we were into this, and how short they forget, and it's so sad, and we've never forgotten, but now we're trying to re-educate modern New Zealanders saying desperately, read the history books.

Statements such as previous Councillor Sally's, where she voted against Māori wards because she couldn't see how one Māori ward councillor could represent the Māori ward, reveals patronising attitudes that demonstrate little respect or faith in Māori to develop

solutions to these issues or make good decisions. The views of Te Rangapū representatives show that Māori have already considered these issues and formulated solutions.

When talking of barriers for Māori election to local government, financial considerations and the amount of money required to run for election in local government was noted by several interview participants. For example, previous Councillor Sally claims:

For a lot of councils like our Council, it's a full-time job and it's very well paid but there are other councils where the monetary incentive is not there . . . long travel and like only part-time and even though you got paid mileage. I think for some people it just won't be attractive enough . . . It's a huge commitment for not a lot of money. I think that would be a barrier . . . it's just a popularity competition. The more money you've got the more you're going to get in. It's wrong, completely wrong.

Similarly, Councillor Arthur notes that:

Māori tend to fall into a lower socio economic zone and I think that elections are not as important as they are, if I use Maslow's hierarchy then it could be that they are not quite as far up the scale as other groups, um, I don't know about literacy or not, but I just would think that voting is less important sometimes than putting food on the table . . . and that could be an aspect. Maybe it comes back to those first few points of low socio-economic background. It's expensive to run . . . during the election campaign I met a lot of really well qualified good quality candidates who were not selected by the population, and whether that was just through bad marketing or whatever it was, well, I don't know.

Councillor Arthur, who claims Māori may not be "quite as far up the scale as other groups," is the same person who is against Māori wards saying people should all be treated equally. This Councillor also previously said Māori were not getting elected to local government as people will not vote for Māori campaigning on Māori issues, comments which contradict his assertion that he had "met a lot of really well qualified good quality candidates who were not selected by the population." Raising what they perceive as another barrier, Councillor Arthur mentions aspects of iwi identification:

I think that there's a definite avoidance of people from different iwi. So, if someone from one iwi was running and I'm from another there could well be a tribal aspect of support or not support so that could well be an issue. I don't know this because I haven't seen the statistics of it.

This view of Councillor Arthur is an assumption as he does not know this through evidence and no other participants note this as an issue. While the issues of time commitment,

competing priorities, and potential inter-tribal conflict have been raised as issues that could impact Māori representation to local government, some Māori are looking at how to address similar issues. For example, Te Rangapū representative Manaaki notes that:

Māori have to be responsible for building up our young people . . . I think there is obviously, there's a part for Māori, our side, to try and work out what it is that would make it more attractive for our talented people to work in conjunction with local government. We need to sit down with that very question and say hey, we're not showing up, Māori aren't showing up, what do we need? And give it a real good go. And then try and fashion it that way and see if we can make it happen organically.

The view of Te Rangapū representative Manaaki aligns with O'Sullivan's (2011) 'politics of Indigeneity' where Indigenous actors are seen as powerful agents of change rather than powerless bystanders. To O'Sullivan, the politics of Indigeneity addresses the political relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state (Maaka & Fleras, 2005; McCormack, 2011). The politics of Indigeneity questions where power ought to lie and how it relates to political inclusion and national sovereignty (O'Sullivan, 2011). As noted above, respondent Manaaki explains how Māori are taking responsibility to prepare to participate in the local government structures that have previously marginalised them. Further means to address Māori under-representation are supported by Councillor Bill:

I do think we should also be able to have some things in our legislation to right some of the wrongs of the past so, historically for decades or a century we've had under-representation by Māori which has probably contributed to a growing disparity between outcomes for Māori and Pākehā, so some sort of proactive means to, even if Māori are over representative in the short term until outcomes are more equal, I think that would be, politically impossible but good for recovery . . . I think Māori are still facing a lot of backlash when really what they're getting is breadcrumbs, so it'd be good if society could get past this and actually treat our Treaty partners as equals rather than . . . at the moment I don't think they're getting equal treatment. I think everything that has the word Māori in it gets extra scrutiny, it's hard to get over the line so I think it's definitely a black mark on the New Zealand brand.

Councillor Bill supports the implementation of measures that mean that "even if Māori are over representative in the short term until outcomes are more equal." As a caveat to this support, Councillor Bill recognises that such measures are "politically impossible" in light of backlash against Māori wards. I suggest that equity is better measured by outcomes, such as whether Māori are being elected to local government in their own right to speak for Māori.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter used concepts of liminality, (un)belonging, and exclusion to frame the discussion of Māori representation in local body politics. Using a critical decolonial lens, the chapter explored how institutions and practices, such as those in local government in Aotearoa, contribute to marginalise some people, places and thinking, and prioritise Western, 'universal' knowledges and institutions. The chapter outlined the place of Aotearoa in the Pacific, the history of Māori migration, and provided a brief summary of Māori creation stories that underpin Māori tikanga and value systems. Taking a decolonising approach enabled systems of settler advantage to be exposed while also highlighting the historically-rooted disadvantages faced by Māori in terms of participating in local government at the higher level. The complex power dynamics of representation was discussed, including why Māori representation is necessary and whether Māori need to be represented in local government by Māori. The evidence portrayed the (un)belonging and exclusion experienced by Māori in local governance and highlighted the need for change to occur in local government to address disparity issues. Aspects of the democratic system that effectively keep Māori from having a voice in decision-making were outlined, including the mechanism of voting and majority rules. The research evidence shows that contributing to the struggle for Māori representation in local government are issues such as racism in the community, the colonially imposed democratic system and socio-economic barriers. These barriers function to perpetuate colonisation as they favour the Pākehā community and hinder Māori access to the power and resources of local government.

Finally, the political climate in Aotearoa was summarised, and the racialised history of the city of Tauranga Moana was briefly described. In the context of Tauranga Moana, while media coverage has highlighted racist sentiment emerging from within Tauranga Moana, news coverage also notes some positives. Despite these positives, interview evidence supports the view that Tauranga Moana is known as a racist city full of old white men. The view of Māori interview participants clearly demonstrates the importance to them of participating in local government as they outline areas where local government has been overlooking their specific cultural wants and needs. Furthermore, illustrating the liminal state of Māori representation, the evidence depicted the way Māori have been marginalised from local government and Te Ao Māori often not considered in decision-making at that

level. Some respondents note that non-Māori elected members will struggle to apply a Māori worldview to decision-making when they have little understanding of that worldview. Others fail to see why a Māori view could differ from the majority view and do not understand why Māori representation is required. Māori participants stress the divergence of worldviews as another reason why Māori representation is necessary, while Councillors such as Arthur refuse to acknowledge there would be any divergence. The principle of partnership drawn from Te Tiriti is regularly referred to by respondents as a reason why Māori representation is necessary.

The chapter outlined the necessity for Māori wards based on the challenges to Māori to be elected to local government in their own right. The following chapter considers Māori wards and reflects on the polarisation of views around their establishment as expressed in the media and interview excerpts.

Chapter Five: System failure: Tracking the Māori ward debates

He iwi kē koutou, he iwi kē matou, engari

i tenei wa, tatou, tatou e

You are different, we are different, but we are able to work together

In this chapter I use a decolonising approach, as exemplified in the work of the late Professor Dame Evelyn Stokes (1987, 1992, 1998), to argue that while Māori wards are a positive first step to address Māori representation in local government, they are situated within a political system that is not working for Māori. The chapter uses the concept of liminality to frame discussion around the establishment of Māori wards, and how this in-between place of uncertainty is leading to unease and discomfort. Such discomfort is particularly evident among those who are concerned about losing any privileges they may enjoy within the current local government system (Thomas, 2021).

In the first section of the chapter, examples are drawn from media articles on Māori wards to demonstrate the polarisation of views. Noting that the media has the power to create and reinforce binary divisions of Māori / non Māori and incite emotional responses, I critically engage and analyse the racialised power of media articles to sway opinion in Aotearoa and Tauranga Moana. Alongside media analysis, careful analysis of the views of interviewees shows a complex story relating to Māori wards. Māori representation in local government matters; various challenges, including legislative ones, have, however, hindered Māori from being represented in local government in meaningful numbers. Although strongly promoted as a means to address these challenges, Māori wards have proved a polarising issue whenever they have been raised as an option by councils throughout most of Aotearoa. Until legislative changes in February 2021, it was almost impossible for councils to establish Māori wards in their constituencies. Amendments to the Local Electoral Act (LEA) in 2002 were intended to enable the establishment of Māori wards. Clauses 19Z A-G of the LEA, however, stated that if a council voted to create a Māori ward or constituency, five percent of electors in a local government electoral district could petition the council to hold a binding referendum to approve or disapprove their establishment (Sullivan, 2011b). This provision was widely acted upon, and between 2002 and 2021 only two of the 24 councils that tried to set up Māori wards under the LEA process were successful, these being Waikato

Regional Council and Wairoa District Council³⁴ (Geddis, 2021; Johnsen, 2021a). Although there was some support for removal of the referendum rights during this time, there were also fervent advocates for the retention of the referendum provision. Those in support of its retention argued that Māori wards were not democratic and they would divide communities by race (Bauld, 2021; Brash, 2021; Newman, 2018a & b; Whyte, 2018). In February 2021, however, the legislation was revisited and the referendum clauses were removed. This legislative change was the catalyst for 35 councils to establish Māori wards in time for the 2022 local body elections.

The second section of the chapter focuses on Tauranga Moana and debates on Māori wards in that locality. As each district within Aotearoa has its own history and unique situation, examples from Tauranga Moana cannot be extrapolated to infer similarities elsewhere. Evidence from participant observation of public meetings, analysis of media excerpts around Māori wards, and interview data is triangulated to strengthen the validity of research findings.

The potential threat to democracy posed by Māori wards is the subject of the third section of the chapter. The section covers the debates on Māori wards as presented in media around the enactment of the amendments to the LEA in February 2021. This media coverage includes material on debates about the contested process of changing the legislation and the consequences of the amended legislation. The evidence shows that opinions expressed by interviewees and those in media articles tend to align to two polar positions: either anti Māori ward rhetoric based around the defence of democracy or support for Māori wards to enable a move towards a Tiriti-based local government relationship.

This leads to the next section which focuses on the ways that calls for homogeneity and 'one law for all' marginalise and exclude Māori from places of power in local body politics. The fifth and final section in this chapter explores the different mandate Māori ward councillors would have and how dedicated Māori representation may enable a Te Ao Māori worldview to be expressed in the local government decision-making arena. The chapter concludes by

³⁴ Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty Regional Council was the first to establish Māori wards, however, it did this under a unique piece of legislation, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Māori Constituency Empowering) Act 2001 (Hayward, 2002). This legislation was enacted prior to the Local Government Electoral Amendment Act 2002 that amended the Local Electoral Act 2001 to enable the public to petition for a referendum to approve or disapprove their establishment (Hayward, 2002).

highlighting the key findings of the chapter that emerged by taking a decolonising view on the differing perspectives around Māori wards.

5.1 Māori wards and the referenda ‘shield’ defending democracy

The polarisation of views presented in the media around the issue of Māori wards and removal of the referendum clause is supported by the interview evidence.³⁵ The following collage of headlines in the media provides a snapshot of media interest at the time the legislation was being revisited (see Figure 5.1).

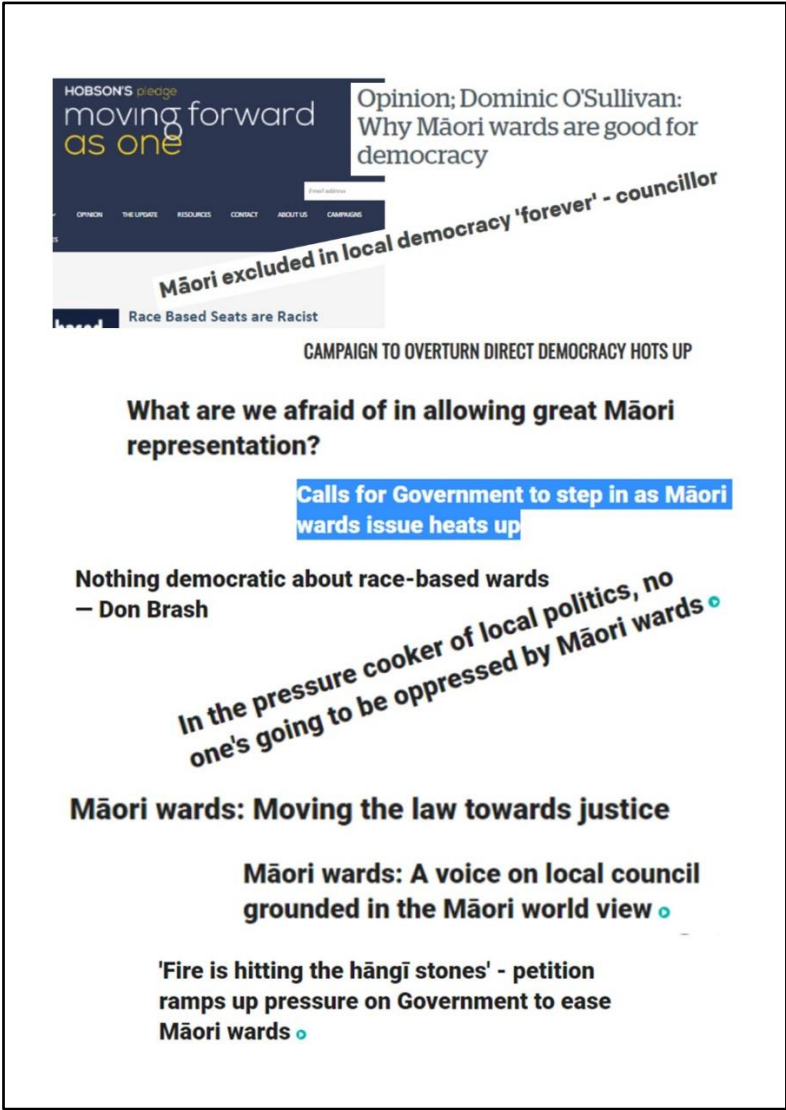


Figure 5.1 Newspaper headings depicting the polarisation of views on Māori wards
Source: Various newspapers

³⁵ Interviews were conducted prior to the changes to the legislation in February 2021 to enable council decisions on the establishment of Māori wards to stand without the prospect of challenge from petition for a referendum.

Some arguing for retention of the referendum clauses in the LEA say Māori wards are ‘race-based’ and they undermine democracy (Brash,³⁶ cited in Mitchell, 2020). Others, such as Bargh (2021), argue for the establishment of Māori wards as a means to include Māori in local body governance and to honour obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti).

The systemic under-representation of Māori in local government is of ongoing concern to many, including politicians and academics, and attracted the attention of the Human Rights Commission in 2010 as well as the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 2016 (Sullivan, 2011; United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2016). During the first decades of the 2000s, pressure from various politicians and local government representatives, such as Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), came to bear on the Government of Aotearoa to remove the LEA referendum clause. These attempts at legislative change included: a Private Members Bill in 2011 from Te Ururoa Flavell (the then Leader of Te Pāti Māori / the Māori Party) that would require all councils to introduce Māori wards; a petition from the former Mayor of New Plymouth, Andrew Judd, in 2016 calling for a law change for every district council in Aotearoa to establish Māori wards; and, a Private Members’ Bill in 2017 from Marama Davidson (the Co-Leader of the Green Party) which sought to remove referendum rights by aligning the process by which councils establish Māori wards to that of national-scale general wards (Bargh, 2021; Keith, 2016; Shaskey, 2017). These efforts at change did not, however, result in legislative change. Despite the challenges presented by sustained opposition and use of the mechanism of the referendum clauses in the LEA, by the end of 2020 nine councils had resolved to establish Māori wards for the 2022 local government elections (Geddis, 2021). In at least seven of these cases, as soon as the resolutions were made by the councils, efforts were underway in the respective communities to gain signatures to petition for referenda to be held to stymie the council decisions (Geddis, 2021). Eventually, in February 2021 a majority Labour government, with support from the Green Party and Te Pāti Māori, was able to change the legislation and remove the clauses enabling referenda on Māori wards (Wade, 2021). This action was hotly protested by numerous public figures who argued in defence of democracy and the sanctity of ‘one person, one

³⁶ Former Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the New Zealand National Party from October 2003 to November 2006, former Leader of ACT New Zealand from April to November 2011, and current Hobson’s Pledge spokesperson.

vote' majority rule, and in opposition to what they call 'race-based' Māori wards. For example, Brash (cited in Mitchell, 2020) strongly supports the maintenance of electoral referendum: "What the referenda show is, overwhelmingly, most New Zealanders do not want separate Māori wards." In addition, Brash said local Māori wards were racist because they separated a group based on race; "I want a country, irrespective of ancestry, that has the same political right" (Brash, cited in Matthews, 2018).

The referendum clause is used politically to separate who belongs in local government from who is excluded. Geographers argue that means such as exclusion are used to maintain authority and separate populations into an 'us' and 'them' scenario (Trudeau, 2006; Yuval Davis et al., 2006). Thus, as Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) state, the politics of belonging requires the maintenance of structures and systems by hegemonic powers, such as a legislative referendum requirement, to exclude what they perceive does not belong. Belonging becomes politicised when places become sites of conflict between competing groups, and tangible or symbolic boundaries or borders are erected as a way of regaining or maintaining authority and solidarity (Kidman, 2012; Trudeau, 2006; Yuval Davis et al., 2006).

The inclusion of the referendum clause in the LEA has served to exclude Māori from local government knowledge and power, and related decision-making. Judd's (cited in Webb-Liddall, 2019a) views on Māori wards have had national exposure as he has travelled the country advocating for removal of the referendum clause. He attributes the support for the referendum clause as being an expression of racism:

We grab all the Māori culture when it suits us, we have the tokenistic karakia at the council meeting, we have some carvings, we have the onsite local Māori person, but the truth is we're not partners, we're not sharing or partnering or understanding. Legislation allows us to petition partnership. Whether you think seats are or are not the best solution, to empower yourself to petition is empowering your racism and empowering a Pākehā system . . . We've tweaked legislation to suit our white supremacist system right to the point of being able to petition the Māori voice should a council like New Plymouth try to put in a seat for Māori.

The points raised by Judd address those raised by Brash as to the status of the referendum, equality, and political rights. Furthermore, in our interview, Judd empathises with Māori and how it must feel to have a referendum called for to protest establishment of a Māori ward:

What I observe how it must be to be Māori, how must it feel? Culturally, who you are spiritually, historically, to observe your community demanding a poll to have a binding referendum to decide whether you are worthy or not to have an elected voice at the table . . . I'm not suggesting that Māori would do this but just saying if the roles were reversed, would you sit in silence and say it's democracy if it's your voice that's getting petitioned and removed? We wouldn't dream of that. Why not? Why wouldn't we want a law that allows us to be excluded and petitioned because we're Pākehā? Because we'd say it's racist. But why do we think it's okay to do it to Māori? We don't do that for any other reason. We don't have any ability to petition and exclude because you're female, your gender identity, your political beliefs or your Christian values whatever, no, we'd say we're ahead of the world. We're New Zealand. Kate Sheppard. We won the vote, but we'd better have a petition to keep those Māoris out . . . it doesn't apply to anything other than Māori, so it's inherently racist either way, and divisive. It should be removed yesterday.

Drawing from her background in criminal law and justice, youth justice, and Māori legal issues, Quince (2020) explains that “Māori have been given an invitation to the dance, where the venue, playlist and menu are set by the hosts, and the hosts are unlikely to look like them or share their values or experiences.” Judd's observations regarding the appropriation of Māori culture are supported by Matthewman (2017). Matthewman (2017) draws on studies in sociology that show that while many Pākehā support use of the symbolic aspects of Māori culture such as the Māori version of the national anthem and the use of haka at international sporting events, they oppose challenges to the existing structure of economic power. Thus, as Australian geographers Nelson and Dunn (2017: 29) argue, “[r]acism is deeply embedded within economic, social, and political processes.” For Australian geographers Forrest and Dunn (2007: 701), racist attitudes are also associated with a “form of national ethnocentrism” where being Australian (or a ‘New Zealander’) can be closely linked to Anglo-Celtic culture. Such cultural linkages involve the separation and exclusion of other groups because of their cultural difference. Forrest and Dunn (2007: 705) argue that “critical social theorists have referred to the normalcy of racism: a context of White privilege associated with a way of life and thinking where racism is not consciously seen, or is considered an exceptional aberration.”

Several commentators state that the question of Māori wards should be redirected to Māori, asking why the non-Māori majority should use a referendum to decide on an issue that predominantly involves Māori (see Bennett, 2020; Dean, 2020; O'Connell Rapira, 2018). For

example, Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty councillor Marr (cited in Webb-Liddall, 2019b) believes it should be up to Māori to decide whether they want Māori ward seats, not the general public, who often fail to understand why they are necessary. Similarly, the previous president of LGNZ, Cull (cited in Dean, 2020), queries why Māori are not the ones being asked what they want:

There are quite a lot of questions in the local government sector as to why when a geographical ward is proposed the people affected are asked, whereas when a Māori ward is proposed everyone is asked, even those that are not affected. And that is not seen among a good number of our members as fair or equitable at all.

Puketapu hapū³⁷ kaumātua Knuckey (cited in Persico, 2020b) says consulting on Māori wards is a waste of time while the law allows citizen-initiated referenda on the issue. Knuckey says the ward idea needs to be thrown out completely, with the issue sent back to Māori registered on the electoral rolls to ask what it is they want to represent them in terms of local bodies; “I’m about Māori democracy – that we have a say in our local affairs” (Persico, 2020b). Kake, a member of Northland Regional Council’s Tai Tokerau Māori Advisory Committee (cited in Botting, 2020), is in favour of the establishment of Māori wards and says that any referendum or polling on Māori wards should be for those on the Māori electoral roll to decide, not the general electoral population.

The referendum mechanism, therefore, was used efficiently by those against the establishment of Māori wards and the comments above explain why the removal of the referendum clauses from the LEA is a polarising issue. I now turn to the context of Tauranga Moana to depict how the referendum mechanism is viewed as a type of shield with which to defend Western understandings of democracy.

5.2 Māori wards in Tauranga Moana – fairness and equity or ‘fascist’ and a threat to democracy?

On 25 August 2020, the Tauranga City Council (TCC) opted to establish a Māori ward for the 2022 local body elections (Local Government Commission, n.d.; Shand, 2020). The debate by Council on the issue began with a presentation by Councillor Abrie, who showed that not one Tauranga City Councillor since the City Council’s establishment 28 years earlier was of

³⁷ Puketapu is a Hapū of Te Atiawa that arrived on the Kāpiti Coast in large numbers from Taranaki. Puketapu settled on the whenua Te Uruhi which is now known as Paraparaumu.

Māori descent, with the majority of Councillors being older white males (Shand, 2020). Abrie moved a motion to establish Māori wards, arguing that councils, as representatives of the Crown, need to ensure Māori are at the decision-making table:

Is it fair we have 11 elected members here under the Crown without a formal voice for our Treaty partner . . . Is it our obligation to put in processes for tangata whenua to have a vote? For those planning to vote against the recommendation, to vote down what our Treaty partner has requested, I urge you to explain your reasoning.

Media coverage of the meeting quotes several people, including Tauranga City Councillor Hollis, who had previously been cited by the media for making public statements about burning the Treaty during his election campaign (Bargh, 2021). Media reports cite Hollis (cited in Shand, 2020) arguing against Māori wards, saying that they are insulting and that a “decision based on the luck of the draw of being born to a set of parents [to represent at council] is the opposite idea of democracy.” In contrast to the view of Hollis, Councillor Baldock is quoted saying there is a cost to not having Māori representation. Baldock argues that “the only way we get to better future is we do the right thing today” (cited in Shand, 2020). Immediately following the decision by TCC to establish a Māori ward for the 2022 local body elections, a group calling themselves Concerned Citizens raised a petition calling for the Council to conduct a referendum on the matter.

During this time of significant media attention around Māori wards, I attended a meeting in Tauranga Moana on Māori wards. Held on 29th January 2021 at the Tauranga Yacht Club, this public meeting was organised by Western Bay of Plenty Councillor Murray-Benge, with speeches by Hobson’s Pledge members Brash and Costello, and former New Conservative member Ikilei (see Figure 5.2). Promotional material advised that the meeting was being held to gather signatures for the petition to demand a poll be taken to overturn the decision to establish a Māori ward by TCC (Fleming, 2021b). In response, Mikaere, Iwi representative, Māori historian and former Waitangi Tribunal director, invited people to attend the meeting in protest to show support for Māori wards. The resulting protest involved a large group of people, both Māori and Pākehā, who stood at the back of the room with placards. In his speech, Brash proclaims he passionately believes that all people should have equal political rights and that “creating separation based on ethnicity was not the way” (Fleming, 2021a). Brash (cited in Fleming, 2021a) also claims that “New Zealanders don’t want it [Māori wards] and Māori did not need to be consulted for every decision that was made.” Murray-Benge

(cited in Fleming, 2021a), also arguing against Māori wards, comments that people should think about how they can support their Māori colleagues to get to the table and that “we must work together to see each other as equals.” Protester and Tauranga Moana homeless advocate, Carlton, (cited in Fleming, 2021a) contests the views of Brash and Murray-Benge: “You can’t have equality in democracy without equity and this [Māori wards] was a way to address structural imbalances in Tauranga.” Carlton added that 20 per cent of the population were Māori but they had no local government representation.



Figure 5.2 Protesters tearful at meeting opposing Māori wards
Source: Sunlive (2021)

The protesters were passionate about getting Māori wards through in Tauranga Moana. In response to some of the rhetoric expressed, particularly by Brash, several protesters became angry and interrupted scheduled speakers. Due in part to interjections, the local newspaper reported the meeting as heated and emotional. The meeting provided an expression of the polarisation of views on Māori wards in the community, with strong emotions for and against. While highlighting the extremes, the media reports were balanced, with a range of views reported.

Media coverage in Tauranga Moana of Councillors' reactions to the move by the Government in February 2021 to remove the clauses in the LEA that enabled referenda against council decisions to establish Māori wards showed clear division of views. For example, Councillor Robson's reaction provided fuel for an emotive headline: "Māori wards law change 'fascist', says former Tauranga Councillor" (Motion, 2021a). In the article Councillor Robson³⁸ (cited in Motion, 2021a) claims: "I believe this is ill-considered and takes us down a bad path . . . it is fascist and an abuse of power and even worse than that, it is not going to deliver results." Providing an alternate view, Councillor Abrie (cited in Motion, 2021a) explains that Aotearoa should honour the partnership on which it was founded. Deputy Mayor Salisbury (cited in Motion, 2021a) adds that introducing Māori wards is a good start but more could be done to improve Māori representation.

During the period that central government was considering changes to the LEA, I attended a fund-raising debate on Māori wards. This debate was held on 30 March 2021 and was organised by the Greerton Lions Club. The debate was between Māori wards supporter, Mikaere, and opponent of Māori wards, Murray-Benge (Tebbutt, 2021b). In his allocated ten minutes speaking slot, Mikaere (cited in Tebbutt, 2021b) stressed that the decision to establish a Māori ward by TCC was made democratically by a Council elected to represent the city. He said that Māori wards were necessary because while the current Councillors would like to represent Māori views in decision-making, they were unable to do that effectively as they did not have the lived experience of Māori (Tebbutt, 2021b). To support her stance that Māori wards are a threat to democracy, Murray-Benge (cited in Tebbutt, 2021b) argued that politicians and Māori radicals were trying to destroy democracy by allowing Māori wards:

In a democracy, there is a risk if one stands for election one might lose, but that is a democracy, and there is no way our society will survive if we turn our backs on the fundamental principle and do what radical Māori want.

In an interview following their debate, and referring to the views propounded by Murray-Benge, Mikaere said that in his view the debate was "probably the saddest 20 minutes of my life and I'm never getting that back" (Tebbutt, 2021b).

³⁸ Councillor Robson is referred to as 'former' in the article as the reporting occurred after the replacement of TCC by Commissioners.

From my observations of the meeting, attendees seemed more open to hearing the views of the speakers and the meeting felt less confrontational than the previous meeting in the Tauranga Yacht Club. The audience participated by asking questions of the speakers, and all speakers were respected. This meeting and the views of the speakers were reported by the media. The meeting was referred to in the headlines as ‘the great debate’ and a ‘hot issue’; headlines that stir controversy and division. Headlines that use the word ‘hot’ to describe a meeting on Māori wards not only draws attention to the fact that Māori wards are a polarising issue but add fuels to debates about Māori wards. The fact that the first meeting I attended on 29 January 2021 supported by Hobson’s Pledge was held in the Tauranga Yacht Club, a place that exudes material privilege, exemplifies the rhetoric of exclusion and marginalisation while presenting a façade of belonging to those who affiliate with yacht clubs. Another debate planned between opponent of Māori wards, Councillor Andrew Hollis, and Andrew Judd, a national advocate for Māori wards, did not eventuate, as Hollis withdrew from attending, citing political conflict. This was also newsworthy as both speakers were high profile speakers whose views on Māori wards had been regularly reported in the media.

Representative democracy has previously been associated by academics with self-government and freedom, notions that have equality as a core principle (see for example, Dahl, 1989; Gilmartin, 2009; Huntington, 2016; Kymlicka, 2001; Saward, 2010; Staeheli, 2010). Concepts of equality and equity compete in the views of those cited above. Where Brash and Murray-Benge stress how people should have equal political rights and treat each other as equals, Councillor Abrie and Carlton focus on the outcomes of the current system. Councillor Abrie notes that it had been 28 years since Tauranga Moana had a Māori Councillor while Carlton adds that Māori wards are a way to address structural imbalances in Tauranga. The polarisation of views around Māori wards and the referendum mechanism is further demonstrated by the courage of Councillor Abrie to convince TCC to support establishment of Māori wards as opposed to the actions by some to immediately draw up a petition to call for a referendum on the decision.

These arguments are addressed in the literature. For example, Sullivan (2011) states that democracy is a contested concept based on ideas of equality and individual liberty, where equality means that everyone is treated the same while liberalism equates to individual

freedom. In this way, equality means “everyone has the same rights and everyone is treated the same: hence the notion of one person one vote” (Sullivan, 2011b: 171). Critiques of representative democracy suggest, however, that democracy is underpinned by culturally specific norms that are Western in essence and that “operate to reproduce systematic, hierarchical exclusions and inequalities” (Barnett & Low, 2004: 20). Mechanisms to address inequities such as Māori wards or dedicated Māori seats, recognise that Māori hold a unique place within the constitutional framework of Aotearoa under Te Tiriti (Sullivan, 2011b). In order to achieve true equity, Kymlicka (1995) argues that sometimes differential treatment, such as a Māori ward, is needed to address unequal outcomes.

In contrast to these views, and upholding the sanctity of democracy, in the debates above Murray-Benge claims that “politicians and Māori radicals” are trying to destroy democracy by allowing Māori wards. Suggestions by Murray-Benge that protesters are “politicians and Māori radicals” homogenises those arguing for Māori wards and seeks to marginalise Māori ward supporters who are represented by a wide spectrum of the community, many of whom are Pākehā. In contrast to Murray-Benge’s concerns around the protection of democracy, Mikaere states that it was a Council democratically elected to represent Tauranga Moana that decided Māori wards would be the best way in the current system to ensure Māori representation. Mikaere also notes that Māori wards are necessary because non-Māori councillors struggle to represent Māori views in decision-making as they do not have the lived experience of Māori. This debate shows that within the current local government system, through lack of representation at elected member level, Māori are being excluded from the right to partner as equals in local government politics (Bargh, 2021). The collage of headlines (Figure 5.3) below is a snapshot of media portrayal of Māori ward debates.



Figure 5.3 Collage of headlines around Māori ward meetings in Tauranga Moana

Source: Various newspapers

Councillor Hollis’s comment that a “decision based on the luck of the draw of being born to a set of parents (to represent at council) is the opposite idea of democracy,” overlooks the processes of privilege by being born Pākehā. As noted by Quince (2020), “Māori have been given an invitation to the dance, where the venue, playlist and menu are set by the hosts, and the hosts are unlikely to look like them or share their values or experiences.” The views of Councillor Hollis illustrate the view of one of critical whiteness studies’ pioneers, McIntosh (1988), who wrote that dominant groups have difficulty identifying their own privilege. This difficulty might be an expression of reluctance on the part of members of dominant groups to address inequities through fear of losing some of their own privileges. Drawing on her research on the ongoing legacies of colonisation and practices of decolonisation, Bell (2014: 6) notes that:

Structurally, present-day white New Zealanders . . . occupy the positions in our societies that were created by the labour of the early settlers. We still constitute the dominant culture of our societies, and our political and economic institutions are largely governed by people like us.

For example, in her discussion on the meaning of 'Māori representation,' Bargh (2021: 71) claims that while "it is implicit in the very notion of Māori representation that Māori have representation as part of a broader political system," this is not the 'norm' in local government.

Interview responses on the referendum provision in the LEA cover opinions for and against its retention. For example, a member of Te Rangapū, Tama, discusses how some people in Tauranga Moana instigated a petition for a referendum as soon as Council had voted for the establishment of a Māori ward:

Now look what's happening with the people trying to get a petition going, and that was the worst legislation that was ever created back . . . where the wards were set by the Council, but the final tickbox could be a referendum if they got enough people to support it, that was the worst thing that could ever happen to us [Māori].

Councillor Mark questions why the referenda legislation exists:

Any other kind of ward system we set up can't be challenged by a poll, that's my understanding . . . so clearly there's an inconsistency there, so in my view we either make a poll a possibility for all of the wards including Māori wards so it's consistent, or we take away that sort of unique situation.

Councillor Jane expresses disappointment that the drive for a petition was initiated by fellow Councillors:

They could soon remove the barrier, I mean the poll, the five per cent poll, I think that needs to go. And . . . I guess I'm really disappointed in some of our elected members who are trying to instigate a poll to have a referendum, that's disappointing to me, certainly a couple of them are actively involved in trying get that petition going. And I think again it comes from mistrust, I don't see it any other way.

Addressing the perceived threat against democracy, supporters of Māori wards argue that under the current system, democratically elected councils undertake six-yearly representation reviews and if they decide a Māori ward is best for their community, it must be a democratic decision. This review of the representation arrangements for all councils is required every six years under section 19Z (and following) of the LEA, including reviewing the number of councillors, how they are elected, and whether to establish Māori wards or constituencies (Local Government Commission, n.d.). The formula set out in the LEA takes into account a district or region's Māori electoral population, the general electoral population, and the number of councillors (Groenestein, 2021). The resulting number of

Māori wards often does not reflect the proportion of Māori in a community as the number of Māori wards is based on the number of people registered on the Māori electoral roll, which excludes those Māori who choose to register on the general roll. Considering this issue, during our interview, Judd argues that, in the context of the six-yearly representation review that councils conduct, Māori wards are a part of the democratic process:

But the deeper question is around the actual process we (councils) were having to undertake which is called a representation review. It's not a question of democracy. It's called a representation review, representation, that's the key word . . . Parliament is the House of Representatives. We have representatives of our district called electorate seats. . . So, representation is important because we have representative democracy in New Zealand. But further to that aspect was, what does representative democracy mean? Well, it means the right and ability to have somebody be your voice at the table who understands your issues because they live in your part of your world, but more importantly it's somebody that you can have access to, that you can connect with, who understands that issue . . . let's be honest . . . Even democracy itself isn't a perfect outcome.

As part of the representation reviews undertaken by councils, the legislation (S19v LEA) provides an opportunity for councils to establish wards. These local council wards, such as rural wards and Māori wards, are based around 'communities of interest',³⁹ which are an identifiable geographic area that has a sense of community identity and belonging (Rotorua Lakes Council, n.d.). This aligns with another point made by Judd (cited in McCulloch, 2018) when addressing a Parliamentary select committee:

To highlight out the Māori seat is divisive. It's cruel . . . If you're in the rural seat, you're also considered a minority - so that minority has an easier pathway to the table than the Māori minority . . . You either have a petition and polling for all council decisions of its seats, or none.

Similarly, TCC staff member Kylie argues:

I'd like to see it (the legislation) changed and . . . I'm hoping that the Minister will very quickly remove it and I see it as a racist piece of legislation . . . Council can make decisions about everything else, the number of councillors, the ward boundaries,

³⁹ A community of interest is an identifiable geographic area that has a "sense of community identity and belonging," which can be reinforced by: distinctive "physical and topographical features" (e.g. mountains, hills, rivers); similarities in economic or social activities carried out in the area; distinct local history of the area; and "dependence on shared facilities and services in an area," for example, schools, recreation and cultural facilities, retail outlets, transport and communication links. Identifying communities of interest is important to ensure any Ward boundaries appropriately group communities of interest together (Rotorua Lakes Council, n.d.).

community boards, STV⁴⁰ [Single Transferable Voting], you know, all of that stuff, and why shouldn't its decisions stand and people can make submissions about it?

TCC staff member Eruera also questioned how the Council decision can be overturned by a referendum:

It seems strange that governors can be asked to make that decision only to have it overturned by a referendum . . . That absolutely is so obvious and embarrassing for us as a country to know that there's this legislative loophole that is one rule for Māori wards to be considered. I mean if you put Māori wards there, the councillors of the day decide on that and on another day they may or may not decide on that just like they do on every other committee on every other thing, but at the moment a council can decide to have committees and subcommittees . . . They are elected to make those decisions. You go for Māori wards, you're elected to make that decision, but as soon as that decision's made, the referendum is available. I mean I can't think of any other reason that that is like that except for the racism of the ability to undo that decision, so that's ridiculous.

The contradictions of the defending democracy supporters are exposed by the arguments above, where a democratically elected council could vote to establish Māori wards in their district or constituency, yet have that same decision petitioned by the community and overturned. As noted by TCC staff member Eruera: "I can't think of any other reason that that is like that except for the racism of the ability to undo that decision."

Furthermore, Te Rangapū representative Rawiri comments on how the referendum mechanism relates to the democratic process:

One person one vote and everyone with the right to vote. In respect of Māori wards this does not change in my view. The law to create Māori wards was brought into being by a democratically elected government and any calls to say that it is undemocratic must fail on this ground alone.

Discussion around Māori wards as part of the six-yearly representation review undertaken by councils was given considerable airing in the media. For example, co-chair of New Plymouth District Council's Te Huinga Taumatua iwi committee, Brown (cited in Persico, 2020a) says he is sure the Council will support a Māori ward. He is, however, equally sure

⁴⁰ In its simplest form, STV means that voters are able to rank candidates in order of preference. With STV, voters can rank as many or as few candidates as they wish. To get elected, candidates need to reach a quota of the votes (DIA, n.d.b).

there are enough “rednecks”⁴¹ to push through another petition: “We can make that decision, but be aware, until that legislation is changed, we will not win ultimately.” In a published discussion about Māori wards between Miller and Ellingham, news directors for the *Manawatū Standard* (Miller & Ellingham, 2018), Ellingham argues:

One person – one vote. It’s a simple foundation upon which our democracy is based, and it’s one that won’t change if Māori wards are introduced in Palmerston North and Manawatū. Critics argue such wards are undemocratic, but this isn’t true . . . Nobody loses their vote if a Māori ward is created and the choice to join the Māori electoral roll is entirely in the hands of voters. No-one will be forced to sign up. A Māori ward councillor will have just one vote around a council table – just like they do when representing geographical wards, and we don’t hear anyone arguing that is a form of apartheid. What’s gained is a guaranteed voice for Māori at the heart of local government, one not constrained by Māori being a minority in the wider population. Yes, of course Māori can stand for election, just like anyone else. But have a look around council tables. They’re hardly overflowing with Māori faces, so something’s not right.

Several academic commentators also address the referendum issue through media contributions. For example, Associate Professor Quince wrote an item for *Stuff* that expressed their opposition to the referendum mechanism:

Where minority interests are at stake, a referendum relies upon perception of those interests by the majority – in particular, whether those with less skin in the game can consider the interests of those who have a lot . . . For Māori, referendums are not likely to advance our interests, until the general populace is well versed in the ongoing harms of colonisation, and the Crown obligations deriving from Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This requires better public education, as well as the ability of voters to put themselves in another’s shoes (Quince, 2020).

Similarly, writing for the online magazine and news website *Spinoff*, Dr Te One (lecturer of Māori Studies, cited in Mitchell, 2020) wrote about the challenge of changing the referendum system:

I think there is perhaps fear over what it might mean if Māori have representation, a reluctance to change a structure that some people are very familiar with . . . The expectation is that Māori will be included in not just consulting on things that local

⁴¹ The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines ‘redneck’ as “a poor white person without education, especially one living in the countryside in the southern United States, who has prejudiced (unfair and unreasonable) ideas and beliefs” (*Cambridge University Press*, n.d.).

government have already decided, but actually being a part of the decisions that are made.

As clarified by Ellingham above, nobody will lose their vote if a Māori ward is created, and a Māori ward councillor will have just one vote around a council table. The question is, as noted by Quince above, whether “those with less skin in the game can consider the interests of those who have a lot.” For example, in an opinion piece cited in media outlet *Stuff*, Glentworth (2020) writes:

I don't understand what drives people who are strongly opposed to this proposal to be as anti-Māori as they appear to be. What do they fear? What do they think is going to happen if we allow one more voice at the table? We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain, by including a voice that will be driven by cultural values that include manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, kotahitanga, and whānaungatanga.

From their legal background, Dean (2020), in an opinion piece in *Spinoff*, supports the ideas expressed by Glentworth:

It just doesn't make sense to have the non-Māori majority decide on an issue that involves only Māori . . . This law [the referendum clauses] is flagrantly contrary to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Tiriti guarantees Māori participation and representation in governance, but the local poll veto routinely stops Māori representation in its tracks. Te Tiriti is also meant to establish a partnership relationship, but how can this be if one partner is stopped from sitting at the table?

Providing a contrasting view, however, from our interview Councillor Arthur explains why he supports the referenda legislation:

I think that the problem is that we've got a race-based decision, that we are making a decision on the basis of race. And it's the only part of our legislation that is like that, and because of that it needs a bigger mandate. It can't have a minority mandate, and so I think that in that case it is appropriate, and I think that we [Council] actually made a mistake, that we should have put it straight to a poll. That would be the right thing to do, and if the majority of Tauranga thought that having a Māori ward established was the right thing to do, then we would know at the next election, but we decided to do it a different way, and that will push it onto people that perhaps aren't aware of what's going on because there's a lot of people that don't care about what goes on in Council, and when they find out there will be a strong issue I think in the community, so having a group of people able to raise a petition to make it a referendum decision I don't think is a bad idea, I really don't.

In this juxtaposition of views, Councillor Arthur argues that because Māori wards are a 'race-based decision' the decision needs a bigger mandate, hence it needs to go to referendum.

Alternatively, Dean queries why the non-Māori majority gets to vote on an issue that predominantly affects Māori. These statements illustrate the way the referendum legislation had been used to exclude and marginalise Māori from places of power and decision-making in local government. The referendum has been used as a barrier or boundary that, aligning with the observation of theorists Yuval-Davis et al. (2006), separate populations into 'us' and 'them.' Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) note the way such boundaries require constant maintenance by hegemonic political powers to separate who belongs and who does not belong.

Moving away from the issue of the referendum mechanism to debates around the topic of Māori wards, Frykberg (2018), an independent philanthropy and community consultant with governance roles in a number of trusts and social enterprises, explains in an opinion piece in *Stuff* why Māori wards are an important mechanism to ensure a Māori voice on councils:

Tangata whenua voices are often drowned out, crowded out, and excluded by the weight of demographics, and this is particularly true in local government. Māori wards are one way of ensuring tangata whenua representation and Māori voices at the council table when the electoral system fails to deliver this.

Explaining his point of view on Māori wards, however, interviewee Councillor Arthur comments:

I disagree with them in their entirety. I feel it is tokenism. That Māori voice would be one on a council. There is a risk of it, of that voice being shadowed regularly, that people are just there just because of who their ancestors were, and not because of any other reason. They didn't ask for a majority in the community to think that they were the right person, and I think that there are issues with not being biased and keeping an open mind in the way that a councillor is supposed to.

Councillor Arthur goes on to say:

I don't think it [Māori wards] gives any mana to that candidate. I don't think it allows them any of the feel-good feeling that comes from winning a seat. I think that will not necessarily be there, and it also doesn't mean that we will have a fully open-minded candidate sitting at the table, and it becomes one vote. It means if they think they are represented [laughs] it doesn't mean it at all. Anyway, I think that there's some mistakes in there and I would hate to think that somebody got on and it became a view of tokenism . . . If I live in a rural area I can decide to move to an urban area and vote in that ward. I can't decide to move into the Māori ward. I can't vote on that, I can't decide on that, I've got no say in that area. I've got no vote in that area. I don't think comparing urban and rural even comes close to measuring something on the

basis of race. It's never worked particularly well in the past, not for Māoridom but race-based policy. If we look at America in the early parts of the 1900s, they had plenty of race-based policy and it was moderately horrific. Going this way I'm not convinced that it's the right thing to do, but no it doesn't compare with an urban and rural, I mean it would be similar to saying in Tauranga we've got ward councillors from Mount Maunganui and Pāpāmoa, well . . . they still swear the same oath as I do, and I trust that they're open minded and they're not constantly pushing for their own community. They will to some extent because of the next vote, but if they want to, they can run in a different ward just by moving there, and they can't run in a Māori ward just because of who their ancestors are.

As noted above, Councillor Arthur claims that the Māori ward representative elected to Māori wards will only be there because of their ancestors. Yet, the same logic provides historic privilege for Pākehā councillors who are elected because of their ancestors and the privilege of living in a country where systems and processes align with those of their upbringing and value and belief systems. As highlighted by Parsons et al. (2019: 98), the dominance of the Pākehā worldview and values means Pākehā have an advantage in being elected to local government as the electoral systems are "orientated to Pākehā norms and reinforce Pākehā dominance." The hegemonic view that everyone has the same choices is not true for those of a minority population, as "the reality is that those choices are determined by majority peoples" and if the minority choices differ from those of the majority, they are overruled (Penehira et al., 2014: 106). For Parsons et al. (2019), formal decision-making choices such as those made regarding local government are "consequences of power struggles, political compromises, and the expression of particular values," and such institutions are "laden with power implications," with institutional rules where "specific social groups are privileged or advantaged over others." Such institutions maintain the status quo, by offering advantages to their supporters to "ensure unwanted changes are blocked" (Parsons et al., 2019: 96). The predominance of a Pākehā worldview and values means Pākehā have advantages within institutions such as local government where Pākehā norms are prevalent and dominant (Parsons et al., 2019).

Councillor Arthur has concerns that a Māori ward Councillor may not 'have an open mind' and may be biased. This statement disregards the fact that all ward councillors are elected by their constituents to represent their ward as well as their wider community. If there are issues of importance to their ward, they need to raise those issues and ensure they are

heard. If, as this Councillor suggests, they should not do that, then this notion conflicts with the premise of representative democracy and the election of representatives who will speak for the wants and needs of their constituencies.

In another point above, Councillor Arthur says that Pākehā “can’t run in a Māori ward just because of who their ancestors are.” Claims that dedicated Māori seats undermine the principle of equal votes, and that the Māori seats would deny someone a place on council because of race are incorrect, as the legislation states that people do not have to be Māori to stand for election in a Māori ward, therefore no one can be denied a place in council because of race (Mutu, 2004; DIA, n.d.a). The argument of the anti-Māori ward, pro-democracy groups that Māori wards decisions need to go to a referendum as they are race-based negates that the system is currently skewed in favour of the Pākehā majority. It also negates any reference to Te Tiriti and what that document means in terms of Māori rights to participate in local government decision-making. Additionally, Māori ward representatives will be nominated and go through the same vetting and election process as all candidates.

In general, academics cited in the media support Māori wards, and explain why they are necessary. For example, Gillespie, with a background in law (cited in Lawrence, 2021), notes that voter turnout in local body electorates is overwhelmingly made up of older Pākehā. Gillespie (cited in Lawrence, 2021), claims that this generally means Māori are not widely represented, and that democracy does not “ensure representation for all sectors of society.” O’Sullivan (2021a), writing as a political scientist, in an opinion piece to *The Conversation*, explains why majority rule struggles to work for Māori:

In the absence of Māori wards, Māori citizens vote as part of the general population. But their distinctive concerns are often obscured and subsumed by those of the non-Māori majority . . . On the one hand, one person, one vote of equal value demands that political rights be expressed in identical fashion. Equality doesn't allow for difference. It doesn't matter if other voters' racism stops Māori being elected, or if other voters just don't share culturally framed Māori views of what councils should achieve. Democracy requires the tyranny of the majority to prevail.

These statements depict the marginal status of Māori in local government where their distinct needs are ‘obscured and subsumed’ among those of the wider population. As noted by O’Sullivan, “[e]quality doesn’t allow for difference” and treating everyone the same or as ‘equals’, as Brash demands, means Māori struggle to have a voice and the tyranny of the

majority prevails, leaving Māori in a marginal and liminal space. The diversity of views confirms that equity, not equality, is the core of the argument for Māori inclusion within a Western local government democracy.

The meetings on Māori wards and the analysis of media articles and interview responses emphasise the challenges for Māori to participate in local government decision-making, particularly while the referendum clause remained as a legislative option. Attitudes that supported the prioritising of Western worldviews over Indigenous ones such as Māori are clearly evident, along with expectations that Māori will assimilate to the Western institutions and practices in order to 'belong.' The evidence also shows the way Māori are pushing back on those expectations and expressing the ways their worldview differs in many ways from the hegemonic Eurocentric worldview underpinning local government in Aotearoa. Their requests for their voice to be heard and Te Ao Māori to be included as a valid worldview of value to local government decision-making are evident in the triangulation of research methods.

5.3 Māori wards and the supposed 'threat' to democracy

The results of a general election held on 17 October 2020 confirmed a majority government for the Labour Party and created conditions for the legislation around Māori wards to be revisited. On 1 February 2021, the then Minister of Local Government, Nanaia Mahuta, announced that she proposed to progress new legislation through Parliament to remove the ability for citizens to initiate a petition to require a binding referendum on Māori wards (Radio New Zealand, 2021a). This proposed legislative change was inspired, in part, by a petition organised by ActionStation, a crowdfunded independent community campaigning organisation. Initiated in early December 2020, and signed by 10,000 people, the petition called for Parliament to make the process of establishing Māori wards for city, district, and regional councils the same as the process for establishing general wards (Radio New Zealand, 2020). On 25 February 2021, the Labour Government, supported by the Green Party and Te Pāti Māori, enacted under urgency the Local Electoral (Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2021 (see Figure 5.4). In addition to removing the referenda clause of the LEA, this legislation nullified petitions asking for referenda that had been or were being undertaken in communities (Geddis, 2021). This legislative change enabled

council decisions made in 2020 for Māori wards to stand for the 2022 local body elections.

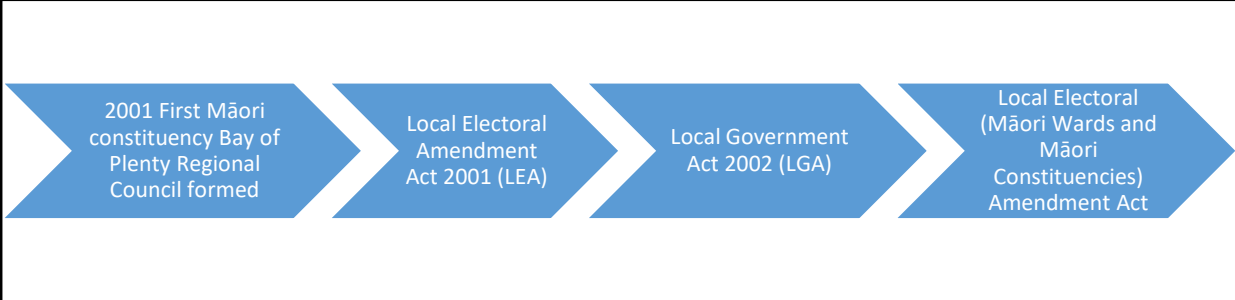


Figure 5.4 Timeline of Local Government legislation regarding Māori wards
Source: Sandra Des Forges

As noted earlier, the referendum mechanism is used by the democracy-defending anti-Māori ward groups who want to retain the status quo. This became evident when the legislation was changed to remove the referendum option. The polarisation of views between those arguing in defence of democracy and those wanting Aotearoa local body politics to progress towards a Tiriti-based model became more pronounced following the change to the legislation. Several commentators from Opposition political parties argue that the new bill is rushed through, with only two days for submissions and little time for public consultation. For example, such criticisms are expressed by ACT Leader Seymour (cited in *Scoop*, 2021a), National’s local government spokesperson Luxon (cited in Small, 2021a), National Minister of Parliament Bridges (cited in Adams, 2021a) and Opposition Leader Collins (cited in Small, 2021a).

Opponents of Māori wards also raise concerns about the ‘lack of democratic process’ evident in what they call a rushed process of the legislation through Parliament. For example, Hobson's Pledge spokesperson Brash (cited in Scotcher, 2021) tells the Māori Affairs Committee at Parliament during the hearing of public feedback that it is “scandalous” that the legislation is being rushed through. Brash says it is “unforgivable” that there was no hint of this change in Labour’s election manifesto and there was not sufficient time given for public consultation. Brash (cited in Scotcher, 2021), comments: “I got an email advising me make a submission at 12:10pm on Wednesday to submit by 5pm Thursday. I mean it’s an outrage.”

Outlining the reason given by the Government for the urgency, Law Professor Geddis says that the Government wished to enact the Bill by 22 February to stop further binding referenda occurring (Geddis, 2021). The Minister of Local Government, Mahuta, also states

that the Government rushed through the law change under urgency because the 22nd of March 2021 was the deadline by which the legislation would need to be passed to avoid local referendums on Māori wards having effect for the 2022 local body elections (Small, 2021b). Mahuta adds that the legislation is an intermediate step to be followed by further legislative changes to “develop a permanent mechanism for local authorities to consider the establishment of Māori wards and constituencies” (Mahuta, 2021). While acknowledging that there were strong reasons for removing the referendum process in relation to Māori wards, Geddis (2021) found the process used to change the legislation somewhat questionable, claiming that the use of urgency to amend the legislation meant that the public consultation process was not robust. Geddis (2021) acknowledged that unless the legislation was changed urgently, for those councils where enough signatures were received to trigger a referendum, public resources would be wasted on holding unnecessary referenda. Secondly, he states that the Labour Government had concluded that the original legislative approach including the referenda clause had been an error that needed to be amended (Geddis, 2021).

In response to the types of criticism offered by Geddis (2021), individuals and groups, both for and against Māori wards, are vocal in expressing their views on amending the legislation (Brettkelly, 2021; Democracy Action, February 2021 Bulletin; New Zealand Taxpayers Union, n.d.; Te Ao Māori News, 2021). ACT Leader Seymour (cited in Desmarais, 2021), for example, claims that the principle of Māori wards signals that people’s membership of an ethnic group is more important than their character, noting that the new legislation is “better described as the Apartheid Bill.” In response, Green Party Co-Leader Shaw (cited in Desmarais, 2021) calls Seymour’s comparison of the Māori Wards Bill to apartheid “offensive and ignorant . . . the idea is . . . no comparison and utterly offensive . . . Apartheid was a system developed by a white minority to keep control over a black population in South Africa.” National Leader Collins (cited in Hogan, 2021) pledges to overturn the Māori wards legislation should National return to power in 2023. Soon after that announcement, Te Pāti Māori co-leader Waititi (cited in Hogan, 2021) calls out National’s pledge to overturn the Bill: “Their line of thinking is archaic. Some of the speeches I heard [opposing the Bill] would be a speech I would have heard in the 1960s.”

Along with those voices opposing the change, several elected members of various councils, when required to vote on the Māori wards issue in their councils, are cited in the media protesting as they think it is not a democratic decision unless the proposal first goes out to communities for consultation. For example, former Northland Regional Council (NRC) Deputy Chair and Councillor, Bain, walked out of a council meeting in Whāngarei saying he cannot support the “broken democracy” of bringing in Māori constituencies (Jones, 2020). Brash (2021) also opposes “local councils foisting race-based wards on their cities and districts without the agreement of their ratepayers.” New Plymouth District councillor Chong (cited in Harvey, 2021) adds:

It’s a sad day for democracy. Referendums are so important. It keeps councils in check with what people really want. Do the people of New Zealand really have a say any more? I can’t believe there are elected officials that think a decision not to listen to the citizens of New Plymouth is a good thing. It’s not. If the majority of people want this that’s fine, but I’d rather let the people of New Plymouth decide this.

The comments of National Member of Parliament Luxon (cited in Small, 2021b), reinforce the sentiments of Chong:

I’m not sure why this change is so critical and the most pressing priority right now with everything else that is going on in the local government sector . . . Most importantly it is a shameful, arrogant and undemocratic process with no meaningful public consultation . . . National is not opposed to communities establishing Māori wards, but the people affected by the decision should have a say in it.

In response to the above and similar criticisms, commentators stress that it is time to listen to Māori and what they want in terms of local government. In response to Luxon’s comment that “National is not opposed to communities establishing Māori wards, but the people affected by the decision should have a say in it,” it may be argued that the people most affected by the establishment of Māori wards are Māori and their voice should be listened to. For example, explaining why the government made the decision to remove the referendum clauses from the LEA, New Zealand Media and Entertainment (NZME) contributor Wilson (cited by Brett Kelly, 2021) argues:

If you allow people who are not being favoured by a particular proposal, i.e. non-Māori, to have a say over something that is particularly for that minority group, there’s a real risk that they’ll say ‘nah, we’re not going to let that happen’ . . . That has been happening in New Zealand and that’s why the government has gone, well, if we’re

going to let non-Māori decide on a representation model for Māori we're not going to get anywhere.

Apart from arguments around the referendum, other rhetoric against Māori wards concerns defending democracy. For example, Gisborne District Councillor Bauld (2021) claims:

Some things are plain. Under our current system, good candidates for council get elected. Poor candidates do not. If you are broadly supported and respected by the community, you get elected. If the community thinks you're hopeless, you don't. Trying to muck around with that system in order to tilt the scales in favour of your own racial politics, hmm, a very dangerous game . . . The general goodwill of the community is what makes democracy viable as a system of governance. Lose that goodwill by shoving pious "woke" ideas down everybody's throat and you endanger everything.

Bauld's suggestion that under the current system "good candidates for council get elected, poor candidates do not" reinforces the notion that the reason Māori candidates are not elected is because they are not "good but hopeless." Bauld's concern that by enabling Māori wards, the Government will "endanger everything," exemplifies the belief that the privileged may lose something through the destabilisation of the place of power they inhabit in the current Eurocentric system (McIntosh, 1988). The sentiments of Bauld exemplify the disquiet and unease typical of liminality as people and situations undergo a time of change (McConnell, 2017). As critical geographers observe regarding the presumed fairness of democracy, the choice of electoral system reflects the institutionalised political values of society and those holding political, social and economic power stand to gain from its continuation (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018; Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Forest, 2009). Aligning with the position of decolonising geographers, I argue that to decolonise local government, the power relations underlying it need to be challenged (Huygens, 2011; Muller et al., 2019; Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020).

While opponents of Māori wards have sought to retain the LEA referendum clause in the 'defence of democracy', others say Māori wards will be good for democracy. Supporters of the Māori wards legislation change are pleased with the rapid change in circumstances and express relief at the amended legislation (Angeloni, 2020b; Muir, 2021; Slater, 2021).

Ngāmotu (New Plymouth) Councillor Moeahu (cited by Harvey, 2021), for example, comments that Mahuta's announcement is an "amazing outcome. It demonstrates true leadership. I think there is something happening within our community and our country

Aotearoa. And I just think if a few of us are committed – there’s nothing we can’t achieve together.” Member of Parliament Allen (cited in Angeloni, 2020b) provides support to the sentiment of Moeahu: “This is about doing what’s best for our democracy, and our democracy says that if we get the right people around the table, better decisions will be made.” Referencing the impact of colonisation on Māori to argue for the necessity of Māori wards, Verdonk (Salvation Army, 2018) claims:

We need to create a new future—one that addresses the very real hurt many Māori carry, in a system that didn’t acknowledge (and still doesn’t acknowledge) their culture—a system which only generations ago beat their language and their culture out of them; causing very real and deep hurts. We need to listen, hear these hurts, and hear what hasn’t worked . . . For too long they have been drowned out and not listened to. That time must come to an end—we all deserve a better future for Aotearoa . . . Māori are tangata whenua and we have an obligation under the Treaty to ensure they are represented in the political arena. We happily include ‘rural wards’ to ensure that rural needs are represented in council. So why can’t we ensure our Treaty partners are represented?

Moon (2020) reiterates this viewpoint:

Supposedly if Pākehā has an abundance of “so-called” intelligence then why are “we” unable to recognise that a system built on European colonisation, actively works to privilege Pākehā, at the expense of Māori wellbeing . . . I knew Māori had been treated abysmally, and their culture obliterated through colonisation. What I did not fully appreciate was how the British colonialists kept moving the goalposts to favour Pākehā.

In our interview, Judd also relates colonisation to the reasons why Māori struggle to be represented within the local government democratic system:

We have normalised the way we treat Māori. We have normalised colonisation to the point of calling it ‘defending democracy.’ But you’re not defending democracy, you’re defending Pākehā privilege and exclusion of Māori. You’re maintaining our worldview by excluding the Māori worldview. What is wrong with us?

In contrast, in an opinion piece for *Stuff*, Brash (2021) comments:

We are on a very dangerous path if we are attributing a separate constitutional status to those who chance to have a Māori ancestor – today, with ancestors of other ethnicities too of course. That path would take us to a very dark place.

Clearly, the view of Judd above contrasts with views expressed by Māori ward opponents (see variety of views in further newspaper headlines Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5 Further newspaper headlines

Source: Various newspapers

O'Sullivan (2017) notes that although Māori are being provided some opportunities for representation in local government, there remains strong objection from a vocal minority to such 'privileged' forms of representation. For example, right wing groups such as Hobson's Pledge, the New Zealand Taxpayer's Union, and the New Zealand Centre for Political Research (NZCPR), claim that initiatives such as Māori wards undermine democracy and provide special treatment for one sector of the population (Butler, 2016; Newman, 2018a & b; Sullivan, 2009). Alternatively, others claim that Māori wards provide a step towards the type of working relationship agreed to in Te Tiriti (see, for example, Bargh, 2021).

5.4 Belonging and Māori links to place

Commentators opposed to Te Tiriti led political representation for Māori use the defence of democracy and the idea that Aotearoa is a united nation that flourishes under a system of one law for all (for example, Butler, 2016; Newman, 2018a & b; Sullivan, 2009). Those espousing this view include ACT Leader Seymour (cited in Radio New Zealand, 2021a), who says the plan to remove the referendum barrier to facilitate the establishment of Māori wards is “deeply divisive” and that “New Zealand’s electoral system should focus on our common interests and treat voters equally.” Seymour adds that the political party he leads “believes in the inherent dignity of each and every individual. Making laws that give people different rights based on who their great grandparents were is fundamentally divisive” (*Scoop*, 2021b). These sentiments imply people in Aotearoa should be politically homogenous (Brash, 2004; Seymour cited in *Scoop*, 2021b). In contrast, Howitt (2019: 2), while commenting on the Australian context from a background in geography, challenges the attitudes of those arguing for ‘one law for all’:

In the discourses of power, the capacity to take is easily assumed by the powerful. What is taken is easily assumed to be settled. And what is settled is easily assumed to be possessed . . . The settlers’ myth is that things are settled, and the past is erased by myths more convenient to those in power . . . There is no need, say the settlers’ discourses, to revisit history, to stir up old memories, because, say the powerful, things are already settled. The privileged and powerful in settler societies ask ‘Why can’t we just move on? Let’s focus on the future, not the past. Let’s get it right from now on, but let the past be.’

The theory on the position expressed by Howitt (2019) is clear. Thus, sociologist, Matthewman (2017) points out that “calls for ‘one law for all’ and a ‘level playing field’ are calls to perpetuate the status quo.” Glentworth (2020), in her *Stuff* opinion piece, agrees:

We are one people: On the surface, this sounds like a worthy statement, it evokes togetherness and unity. But scratch a bit deeper and it is about erasing a culture. The best response to this was one I heard at a meeting about Māori wards six years ago at the Council Chamber – If we are one people, why can it not be Māori?

In response to the ‘one people’ argument, some commentators explain that Māori wards are not about dividing the community but about acknowledging different worldviews. For example, Short, Manawatū District councillor and the chairwoman of the council's marae consultation committee, Ngā Manu Taiko, reflects on the importance of identity:

People like Don Brash think we are all the same, that's like saying a seagull is the same as a kiwi because it's a bird. Sometimes we do need to take a stand for the uniqueness in our communities because we live in New Zealand (Short, 2018).

Stressing norms of homogeneity, some commentators cannot understand why Māori may have different local government needs to anyone else. For example, 'Concerned Citizen' representative⁴² Fellingham (cited in Hutchinson, 2020) claims there "isn't a Māori view of what roads should be repaired or what sports facilities get built so it makes the requirement for a separate Māori ward really not necessary." Brash (2021) states that "local government is primarily about issues like local roads, libraries, water supply, drainage and similar matters: it is entirely unclear why there would be a distinctive Māori view on any of those issues." Theoretically, these views illustrate geographer Glynn's (2015) critique of the statement supposedly uttered by Governor Hobson at the signing of Te Tiriti in 1840, "He iwi kotahi tātou" (We are all one people) promulgated by Brash and Hobson's Pledge.⁴³ This statement implies that people are all the same and that what an individual wants and values is what others want and value (Glynn, 2015). This illustrates that the hegemony of Pākehā values that underpin everyday life in Aotearoa makes it difficult for some Pākehā to imagine different worldviews or perspectives underpinned by different values (Parsons et al., 2019; Radcliffe, 2022). Brash and others who presume to represent the dominant European ethnic group in Aotearoa tend to imagine belonging within the rhetoric of sameness, which marginalises any recognition of difference (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006).

In order to belong, those not of the dominant group are required to assimilate to the culture, values, language, behaviour and religion of the dominant group (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). Commentators argue that local government decisions impact Māori communities and values in ways that non-Māori need to know (see, for example, Cameron, cited in Moon, 2020; Jackson, cited in Johnsen, 2021a; Mikaere, cited in Gillespie, 2021). Māori representation has the potential to enable councils to make efficient and effective decisions about issues of relevance to Māori.

⁴² Concerned Citizens is a group of people from Tauranga Moana formed to protest the decision of TCC to establish a Māori ward. The group has the backing of national lobby group Hobson's Pledge, which paid for advertising space for a petition form in *The Weekend Sun* (Hutchinson, 2020).

⁴³ Māori historian, Keenan (2017), based on his research, claims it is highly unlikely this statement was ever made by Governor Hobson.

East Coast Member of Parliament, Allan, illustrates the importance of Māori participating in local government at elected member level:

We've got Māori communities who are very centred around their marae, who live up the [East] Coast and in areas that have very particular considerations that are important for us [Ministers of Parliament] when we're making decisions for the entire Gisborne district (Allan, cited in Angeloni, 2021).

For meaningful partnerships to be developed with local authorities and iwi and hapū, the linkages mana whenua have to place are relationships that benefit from being protected and acknowledged (Simmonds et al., 2016).

Mikaere (cited in Gillespie, 2021) explains that Māori wards mean that Māori issues can be discussed, whereas previously those issues were often not voiced. For example, Moon (2020), a member of Rongomou Community Action committed to challenging racism and working in support of Māori wards, comments on the "frustration of someone speaking on your behalf who misconstrues and misrepresents your view." A similar sentiment is expressed by Labour Minister of Parliament, Jackson (cited in Johnsen, 2021a):

So many decisions are made at local level and people forget how important local councils are in terms of the rates, in terms of the everyday happenings in the suburbs, so I've always encouraged our people to get involved, but they almost give up when it's election time because they get shut out by the majority.

The opportunity to develop understanding of Māori knowledge by enabling Māori wards is expressed by Gisborne councillor Akuhata-Brown (cited by Radio New Zealand, 2021b):

This [Māori wards] is about understanding the wealth of knowledge, the Maramataka, mātauranga and Te Ao Māori tikanga, and actually our true ancestral, generational gifted knowledge . . . It was also an opportunity for people to learn from such knowledge.

These examples show Māori are outlining the different needs of their communities, while in some cases those opposing Māori wards deny those different needs may exist. Expressing a contrasting option to those advocating for 'one law for all,' O'Sullivan (2008: 982) explains that "it is the attempt to impose homogeneity rather than accept diversity that is socially divisive," with Māori efforts to obtain respect for their own way of life and cultural values being elementary to their citizenship. Views aligning to the 'one law for all' approach to democracy and objections to a differentiated citizenship are "often underpinned by undemocratic insecurities and prejudices which position cultural homogeneity as the social

ideal from which political life ought to stem” (O’Sullivan, 2017: 74). Calls that we are ‘one people’ feed into the colonialist view that Indigenous views need to be assimilated to the institutions and systems of the colonisers; as O’Sullivan (2021b) notes: “political homogeneity inevitably also means cultural homogeneity. There would be no room for Māori to be Māori.” As Stokes (1992: 176) argues:

In the 150 years since 1840, whether they signed or not, the treaty has been perceived by Māori tribes as a binding agreement with the Crown, but the Pākehā population, descendants of European (mainly British) settlers, have until recent years largely ignored it, arguing that the New Zealanders are one people. Māori respond that New Zealanders may be one nation, but are two peoples.

Glentworth’s question as to whether the ‘one people’ of Aotearoa can be Māori disrupts those using the ‘we are one people’ statement against Māori wards. Thus, Glentworth’s question challenges assimilationist views that expect Māori to be part of the Western imposed democratic system of local government. In response to the call that ‘we are one people,’ Wano-Bryant (cited in Shaskey, 2021) makes the distinction clear that it is “oneness but not sameness.” For Wano-Bryant (cited in Shaskey, 2021), “oneness is about recognising the distinct and sovereign rights of Māori and Pākehā within all of our laws, processes, policies, and way we do things as a community.” For example, institutional structures and processes established by colonists, who employed English language, law and values, whether by intention or not, continue to marginalise Māori tikanga, mātauranga, and reo. Furthermore, these governance norms act to assimilate Māori into the society the colonisers established (Came, 2013; Greensill, 2010; Maddison, 2013; Young, 2002). Thus, Rangihau (1992: 189) explains that when:

Pākehā say we are all one people, they seem to mean that you’re brown and a unique feature of the Indigenous scene. But they want you to act as a European provided you can still retain the ability to poke out your tongue, gesticulate and do Māori dances. That is Māori culture. The other part says to me, we want you to become part of us and lose all your institutions and all those things which are peculiarly Māori.

As Ross (2020: 1) notes, “colonisation happens at both macro and micro level.” Despite the pressure for Māori to assimilate to conform to “colonial institutions and the ways and values that underpin them, Māori continue with a desire to be Māori” (Ross, 2020: 1-2). These views clearly depict Glynn’s (2015) repositioning of the one people argument to a more inclusive focus, using the whakatauki “He iwi ke, koutou, he iwi ke mātou” (You are different,

we are different, but we can work together). The diversity of views on Māori wards and attitudes towards the homogenising of Māori under the hegemonic Pākehā regime leads to discussion around the different mandate Māori wards councillors will have.

5.5 A different mandate

Some commentators opposed to Māori wards focus on how, given there are already Māori councillors in local government, there is no need for Māori wards. For example, this argument is expressed in a press release from the ACT Party (*Scoop*, 2021a):

So far, Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta has said the problem to be solved is 'Increasing Māori representation,' she says this is essential to ensuring equity in representation. Except Māori representation on council is reported at 14 per cent, the same as the proportion of the wider population that identifies as Māori.

The figure of 14 per cent Māori representation is difficult to confirm as statistics are not collected on Māori representation in local government (Bargh, 2021; Vowles & Hayward, 2021). Furthermore, there are currently councils such as TCC with no Māori councillors (as of September 2022). Additionally, commentators in support of Māori wards focus on how the members elected to Māori wards have a different mandate to those elected to general seats. For example, Judd (cited in Webb-Liddall, 2019a) notes: "There is a difference between being Māori and representing Māori. Plenty of councils across New Zealand have members with Māori ancestry, but their policy doesn't necessarily reflect Māori people, because they weren't elected to do that." Short (2018) also focuses on the different mandate Māori ward councillors have:

A candidate elected in a Māori ward by Māori electorate voters has the mana to represent Māori and present a Māori perspective to council issues as required by legislation. A person elected via voters on the general roll, even if of Māori ethnicity, does not have that mandate.

From his experience as Toi Moana / Bay of Plenty Regional Councillor, Marr explains that Māori ward councillors who have been voted in by Māori do not have the pressure of appealing to Pākehā voters:

Māori elected by the wider community have to be nice in how they speak because they have a whole lot of Pākehā people who voted for them as well. I can say what I truly believe, I can be more ruthless and I don't have to please the people I don't represent (cited in Webb-Liddall, 2019a).

The focus on the mandate of Māori ward representatives and the importance of having representatives dedicated to Māori constituents, challenges the view expressed earlier by Councillor Arthur, who was concerned that Māori ward representatives may be biased and not 'have an open mind.' It also addresses the suggestion that non-Māori councillors struggle to speak for Māori as they have little understanding of a Te Ao Māori worldview. As Councillor Short recalls, a Māori ward councillor "has the mana to represent Māori and present a Māori perspective to council issues as required by legislation."

Phillips (1995) argues that there are two aspects to political representation. Firstly, descriptive representation refers to elected members belonging to a similar group to those electing them. The second aspect is accountability, which are the mechanisms used to ensure the elected representatives of a group act according to the desires of the electors. For Phillips (1995: 86–88), accountability is "always the other side of representation, and, in the absence of procedures for establishing what any group wants or thinks, we cannot usefully talk of their political representation." The aspect of accountability or responsiveness is an important argument in support of Māori wards and separate Māori representation, as the evidence has shown the challenges faced by non-Māori elected members who seek to represent a Māori worldview and values. Sullivan (2003: 143) notes that representatives elected to Māori wards have a mandate to "promote and protect Māori rights and Māori interests within council and the wider community and therefore bring Māori concerns into the mainstream of local government politics." Summersby (2009) shows that the statements and actions of elected Māori representatives are shaped by their whakapapa and Māori identity. Drawing on shared group experiences, descriptive representatives with shared experiences are able to promote policy issues in a way that is representative of the group's values and worldview (Summersby, 2009). The mechanism of a separate Māori electoral roll superimposed over the general roll ensures Māori legislators are accountable to the Māori voters by whom they were elected (Phillips, 1995). The important rationale for the Māori seats, therefore, is the mechanism of accountability they provide to ensure the commitment of the Māori representatives to their constituencies, rather than simple descriptive (or proportional) representation (Phillips, 1995; Summersby, 2009). This section has emphasised that Māori wards are a mechanism through which Māori may have a dedicated voice mandated by the Māori community by whom they were elected.

5.6 Conclusion

Findings from Māori ward media debates, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation confirm that the current local government system is failing Māori. The mechanism of the LEA referendum clause, and the strong opposition to its removal in the legislation, illustrates that it has been working to exclude Māori from accessing power and resources through election to local government. The chapter explored how arguments for 'one people' should be treated as the assimilationist underpinnings of the colonial hegemonic mindset on which are based the systems and institutions in Aotearoa. Media articles show that those aligning with such sentiments see Māori wards as being an erosion of democracy and their rights and privileges while giving extra rights and privileges to Māori. Those who support Māori wards see the lack of Māori representation in local government as the ongoing colonisation and disempowering of Māori. Academics view the exclusion of Māori from the production of knowledge and decision-making as democracy not working in the way it was intended in regard to providing representation for Indigenous people, and for Māori in terms of Te Tiriti obligations. Māori commentators tend to focus on the benefits to the wider community that could accrue by involving them in decision-making within formal council structures.

The chapter depicts examples of exclusion, marginalisation, and (un)belonging for Māori in local government. Geographers explain this exclusion and racist attitudes as a form of national ethnocentrism where the idea of being a 'New Zealander' is linked to Anglo (or Anglo-Celtic) culture which requires the exclusion of those who are culturally different (Forrest & Dunn, 2007). White privilege is not recognised or consciously seen by those who belong to the majority group. The politics of belonging requires the maintenance of structures and systems by hegemonic powers, by using mechanisms such as the referendum requirement, to exclude what they perceive does not belong (Yuval Davis et al., 2006).

This chapter highlighted the liminal political space Māori wards occupy as a place of unease and uncertainty for some, particularly for those who are privileged within the colonial based local government systems and processes. This leads to considering a third aspect of liminality, where liminality can be a place of creativity, and where innovation, political renewal and aspiration can be explored. The space of Māori wards and some of the creative opportunities it may lead to are considered in the following chapter, including the possibility

of constitutional transformation and a reimagining of local government emerging from the local government review currently underway.

Chapter Six: Liminality and opportunities for Māori representation

Rapua te huarahi whanui, hei ara whakapiri i nga iwi e rua i runga i te
whakaaro kotahi

*Seek the broad highway that will unite the two peoples
toward a common goal*

The whakatauki above speaks of promise. To address local government representation options, it is appropriate to reflect on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti), including how the two language versions have been interpreted by national and local government and how these interpretations then impact the perspective of people towards Māori wards. While the previous chapter focused in part on the research undertaken in Tauranga Moana, this chapter explores national-scale conditions across Aotearoa and considers options for local government to be reimagined to become a tūrangawaewae. This chapter takes a macro scale approach for analysis that includes discussion of media representations and political commentary on Te Tiriti, partnership, constitutional transformation, and the local government review. It also includes interview responses drawn from Tauranga Moana, noting that interviews were conducted prior to the changes to the legislation in February 2021 to remove the clauses enabling council's decisions to establish Māori wards to be challenged by referenda.

By taking a decolonising approach, the fraught politics of the meaning of partnership in relation to Te Tiriti obligations is discussed as integral to understanding the polarised views on Māori wards. This discussion is illuminated with input from theorists including Radcliffe and Radhuber (2020) de Leeuw and Hunt (2018), and Simmonds et al. (2016), as well as Stokes (1987), who emphasises the importance of Māori worldviews and highlights the effect of colonisation on Māori. Decolonisation critiques colonial power, and attempts to disentangle all that colonisation has meant and still means to the way Indigenous peoples think and live their lives (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018; Jackson, 2019). Under the present local government system, it is not the numbers or proportion of Māori elected to councils that should be the focus of attention; rather, critical engagement is best focused on transforming the local government system itself and addressing its role in perpetuating colonisation and assimilation processes.

The chapter begins by emphasising the importance of the ‘local’ in local government and the value mana whenua can bring to local government discussions and decision-making, while acknowledging their marginalisation from such arena for the most part. The chapter then considers Māori wards as a first step towards imagining decolonisation for local government in Aotearoa. The contested meanings of Te Tiriti, and the implications of Te Tiriti for local government, are discussed and various options for a Tiriti-based local government are considered. Options for Te Tiriti approaches to moving forward from the marginalised space Māori presently occupy in local government include investigating new systems of representation such as proportional population-based representation, co-governance, or changing to a Tiriti-based structure and system. The chapter then considers work being undertaken on transforming the constitution of Aotearoa. It also discusses the local government review currently being undertaken by the Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA), and how both of these efforts have the potential to impact Māori representation in local government. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how a system based on Māori principles such as whakapapa and whānaungatanga could enable a move for local government towards being a tūrangawaewae.

6.1 Putting the ‘local’ into local government

While the issue of Māori representation in local government is a national one that impacts communities across Aotearoa, the impact differs between councils because each locality has specific arrangements for Māori engagement. For example, Rotorua Lakes Council has a partnership model with the iwi of Te Arawa that is unique for local government in Aotearoa. Other councils have consultation arrangements with groups representing tangata whenua within their local areas. The links Māori have to place, and particularly the long-term commitment mana whenua can bring to local government, is raised by several commentators. For example, Day, the first Māori female deputy Mayor of Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington City) (cited in Mitchell, 2020), says the two iwi of Wellington, Te Āti Awa Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, are mana whenua, so they have:

[a] deep connection with the place that they are connected to through whakapapa . . . They have a long-term view of our whenua and, by having them at the table, I believe all councillors will benefit in making decisions in the best interests of Te Whanganui-a-Tara.

Gisborne district councillor Akuhata-Brown (cited in Johnsen, 2021a) says that she does not whakapapa to the region she represents and so is unable to bring the mātauranga of the land to the council table as could a mana whenua representative:

There's actually local people who are from the land that have generational knowledge passed down to them, and who have always had to come to council to make submissions, to constantly battle in this space to be heard . . . When it comes to set knowledge about landscape, around how our awa have moved, even with regard to whenua that have been used as dumps, all of these things that come up for council to deliberate on . . . we keep talking about who sits around those tables [and] having mana whenua, having people from the local iwi and hapū, sit at the council table with that knowledge, in my view, is going to be such a benefit.

These comments highlight the strong connection Māori have to place. Such connection is ancestrally linked to landforms, and the sense of belonging is “woven through life by whakapapa, narratives, physical landscapes, common practices and values” (Mokaraka-Harris et al., 2017: 1). These places where ancestors have stood and where generations will potentially stand in the future embed a geographical position to Māori whānau, hapū and iwi (Mokaraka-Harris et al., 2017; Thompson-Fawcett & Quigg, 2017). The experience of displacement from their land and places of significance shared by some Indigenous communities may also enhance and strengthen the feelings of connection to such places (Mokaraka-Harris et al., 2017).

These connections are strengthened through processes of colonisation, conditions of control that have alienated and marginalised Indigenous people from their places, rights, and worldviews (Mokaraka-Harris et al., 2017). Local government and the rights to participate in decision-making over ancestral localities are areas where such marginalisation has occurred for Māori. This issue needs to be addressed in partnership with Māori to arrive at a structure and process that embraces and is embedded in a Māori worldview and brings together both Tiriti partners in a working relationship.

6.2 Are Māori wards the first step towards imagining decolonisation?

In arguing in support of the establishment of Māori wards as a key mechanism to ensure Māori representation in local government, the previous chapter highlighted the liminal space Māori wards occupy during the transitional phase while local government undergoes comprehensive review. Since changes to local government legislation in 2021, there are now

35 councils with Māori wards established for the local body elections later in 2022 (votelocal, n.d.). Twenty-nine are territorial councils and six are regional councils. Supporters of Māori wards often comment that Māori wards are a start, but they are not the ultimate solution to Māori representation in local government. For example, Kohi Māori constituency Councillor Iti (cited in Jones, 2020) says that although Māori wards are not a “fix-all panacea” they are a:

[s]tart to get more Māori around council tables before the real mahi begins . . . The mahi is working with the whole community, including councillors and staff, to navigate councils towards being fit-for-purpose organisations that can provide essential services, infrastructure and resource management for the wellbeing of all our communities, Māori and non-Māori alike . . . We will still have to overcome many challenges to get to that place, especially with the shifting-seas we operate in, but this is certainly the kind of step-change needed to get the waka in the water.

Interview participants support Iti in commenting that Māori wards are a start; for example, Te Rangapū representative Rawiri explains:

Oh well, you know, it's [Māori wards] a start. The local examples here are the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and over the hill, Waikato Regional Council, and you know, they've both got Māori wards, and you know, did the world stop? No. Are they making better decisions because they've got a more rounded perspective on issues? Yes.

Councillor Jane also comments on Māori wards: “I think it's one tool available to us. It's a pretty blunt tool but it is a tool, so it's not the answer but it is a part of the solution.”

Similarly, previous Councillor George states: “I think Māori seats are just a small step in the right direction.” Te Rangapū representative, Manaaki, stresses that while falling short of an ideal solution, Māori wards are a useful initial step:

We're one of the highest Māori populations in the country, and especially Tauranga and Rotorua, the Bay of Plenty. So, shouldn't we be leading in trying to work out how we can do this a bit better, local government, more representative of their constituents? . . . Look, I think it's a great step if we could get it [Māori wards], it's an interim step . . . I'm for it, and again, anything to get more Māori representation around the table, I don't care how, and if that's a mechanism today, I'm for it, it still falls way short of what's required but it's a step.

Tauranga City Council (TCC) staff member Eruera also argues that under the current local government structure, Māori wards are the best solution to include Māori in decision-making:

So, in the purist model, a Māori ward probably doesn't hit the mark. But, within the construct of Western government systems, and within the construct of the Local Government Act, and what are possibilities, then really Māori wards is the highest level of governance involvement offered to Māori, besides of course just being voted in and following that process . . . so Māori wards, at the end of the day within the Local Government Act structure, it's the highest regard given to Māori governance . . . It's about the opportunity to remove myths, so if you have Māori around the table what's the worst that's going to happen, lo and behold you're going to get some decisions that are driven by Kaupapa Māori that tend to be about looking after people, looking after the environment over economic benefit.

As outlined by Eruera, while Māori wards 'probably don't hit the mark' within the Western style local government system, Māori wards are the only option to ensure involvement in local government decision-making currently offered to Māori. As noted earlier, until recent changes to the legislation, councils struggled to establish Māori wards due to the public pressure for referenda to overturn their decisions. Mechanisms of the local government democratic system such as the majority vote and the adversarial style of politics served to marginalise Māori from local government realms of power. These statements acknowledge that while not a final solution to Māori representation issues, Māori wards are a first step. This aligns with the view of Mercier (2020) that decolonisation itself is a threshold or first step. This liminal space is an ideal opportunity for creative thinking where a range of options may be considered. Prior to discussing some of those options, it is useful to explore what Te Tiriti o Waitangi means in terms of local government.

6.3 Te Tiriti o Waitangi, local government, and the concept of partnership

In this section, the concept of partnership as drawn from Te Tiriti is discussed in order to consider what the obligations of local government may be in relation to Te Tiriti. This includes reflecting on how a decolonising approach will involve a re-centering that respects a shared understanding of concepts such as partnership. In Aotearoa, the lack of clarity around a shared understanding of the obligations of Te Tiriti stem from the differences between English and Māori language versions of the treaty document. In terms of Tiriti partnership, Salmond (2021b) explains how, in the 1987 'Lands' case',⁴⁴ the Court of Appeal

⁴⁴ The 1987 court case was brought by the New Zealand Māori Council, which asked the Court of Appeal whether the government's plans to transfer land to state-owned enterprises breached the principles of Te Tiriti. In its determination, the Court had to establish the meaning of the 'Treaty principles.' This was the first official attempt to define Te Tiriti principles in some detail (Te Ara, n.d.b). The principles included ideas of

effectively rewrote Te Tiriti, as the judges ruled that Te Tiriti established a ‘partnership between two races’ based on ‘fiduciary’ principles, not unlike a business partnership. Querying the binary created between Māori and non-Māori as signatories to Te Tiriti in the Lands case, Salmond (2022) argues that after many generations of intermixing, Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa are intertwined and clearly do not represent a Māori / non-Māori binary as presented by the Court of Appeal. This relates to Stokes (1987) view of the Māori / non-Māori binary, where she argues it’s best to think of Māori and Pākehā as worldviews.

The consensus view of academics, activists, historians and legal scholars is that ‘rangatiratanga’ in Te Tiriti means sovereignty for iwi and hapū, and ‘kāwanatanga’ means governorship, or lesser power, for the Crown (Godfery, 2022). Honouring this view, Godfery (2022) argues, will require constitutional revolution, change which would impact the current marginalisation of Māori from decision-making roles in local government. Among politicians, Bennett, Member of Parliament for New Plymouth (2020), claims that Te Tiriti formed a partnership between the Crown and Māori, which meant equality between the Crown and Māori, hence equal and fair local government representation. Aligning with that view, Green Party co-leader Shaw (cited in Desmarais, 2021) argues that Te Tiriti should have already “flowed through . . . into our governance arrangements.” Another citing the partnership aspect is academic Gillespie (cited in Lawrence, 2021): “One of the core things [in Te Tiriti] is partnership, and it’s how you enact those partnerships and it’s making sure you have broad representation.” When questioning interview participants on Te Tiriti and what it means to them, previous Councillor, George, stresses that mechanisms to include Māori in local government are Tiriti-based rather than race-based:

So, in terms of going forward, in terms of protecting the life that we love, the country that we love, the environment that we love and the values that we have, one of our best mechanisms to protect that is to honour the Treaty and bring Māori forward into governing roles, and if we don’t do that, we’re in a lot of trouble and people just don’t realise that. There’s [sic] some mischievous people out there that say it’s racism. It’s got nothing to do with race, it’s a Treaty. We have treaties that have been signed with Britain, with America, with France, with Germany, with Russia, they’re not race-based. They’re treaties with people, and the Treaty of Waitangi was with the occupying

active protection, partnership, the duty to consult, good faith, the right to development and self-regulation, the principle of redress and recognition of tino rangatiratanga (Ruckstuhl et al., 2014).

people of New Zealand at the time. It's got nothing to do with race, and those that say that, it's quite mischievous.

This aligns with the thoughts of Te Rangapū representative, Manaaki:

Honestly I think if there was a combination between the current system and tikanga Māori, so bringing them together, and again that's what I say about this democratic process and we've entrenched ourselves and we've gone the Pākehā way of politics, but we've got our own, and I do think, at first instance, if you can sort of meet in the middle for starters. If you could somehow merge the two and come up with these, look I don't know, that's an ideal merge, it's got to work better than two polar opposites, so if we can merge them and blend them.

Evidence shows that the understanding people have on Te Tiriti obligations serves to justify their stance on Māori wards. In other words, people embrace the interpretation of Te Tiriti that best fits their worldview; this worldview-interpretation shapes the position held on Māori wards and Māori place in contemporary society in Aotearoa. Godfery (2022) states:

Few politicians can agree on quite what our founding document means. At one end, Te Pāti Māori and the Greens pursue the textual meaning of Te Tiriti, the Māori language version reaffirming Māori sovereignty while carving out modest powers for the Crown. At the other end, ACT and the National Party pursue the textual meaning of the English language treaty where the chiefs who sign apparently surrender their sovereignty to Her Majesty . . . What ACT and parts of the National Party ignore, of course, is that few chiefs signed the English language version, rendering the Treaty of Waitangi a dead document. The courts deal with that fact in an admirably centrist manner, choosing to ignore both language texts in favour of extracting principles like partnership – which is an approximation of co-governance – and active protection (Godfery, 2022).

Illustrating the disagreement highlighted by Godfery, Brash (2021), co-spokesperson for Hobson's Pledge claims:

The Treaty was not in any meaningful sense a constitution. It simply involved Māori chiefs ceding sovereignty to the Crown; being guaranteed in turn the ownership of their property; with the additional benefit that all Māori would have the rights and privileges of British citizens.

Similarly, ACT Leader Seymour (cited in Desmarais, 2021) stresses: "The same applies to their [Māori] interpretation of the Treaty. ACT says it gives the same rights and duties to every person, but they want to make it a partnership between two collectives where your membership of an ethnicity is more important than your dignity as a person."

The polarisation of views around Te Tiriti and what it means in contemporary society are also reflected in the views of interview participants. For example, Councillor Arthur, who takes a stance against Māori wards, aligns with Seymour's view:

Well, this is one of the Treaty aspects, is Māori have exactly the same rights as any other British citizen or member of the Commonwealth if you like now. That it was the first time in history anywhere that such a Treaty was performed. That the people in a new country were given the same rights as British citizens and the rights and benefits that go with it. I think it's a really good thing. It really was the first attempt to prevent division in a country.

Councillor Arthur's comment concerning Māori being given the same rights as British citizens shows disregard for the culture and people that were already in Aotearoa. It also assumes that the process of colonisation was benign, with only benefits accruing to the Indigenous peoples – a view vehemently refuted by Māori scholars such as Jackson (2021):

Colonisation is a process of dispossession and control rather than a historical artefact, and now it takes on new forms. These forms may be less obviously violent, but they still deny Indigenous peoples the right to be fully free in their own lands.

Te Tiriti alters the dynamic of local government, ways to think about if, and how, Māori are best represented. For example, Bargh (2021) claims the Local Government Act (LGA) lacks clarity around local government's duties and obligations stemming from the principles of Te Tiriti. Furthermore, Bargh (2020) problematises the common focus in the LGA on Māori as 'representatives' in local government rather than as 'Tiriti partners.' The issue of how the principles of Te Tiriti imply a partnership, and hence Māori representation in local government, was raised in the media by several Māori ward commentators (including Bennett, 2020; Judd, 2015). Miller, news director for the *Manawatū Standard* (Miller & Ellingham, 2018), summarises this viewpoint: "Without igniting an emotive historical debate, surely we can agree the Treaty promised a level playing field, a partnership between Māori and the Crown." Interviewees, when asked whether they think Māori representation in Council is necessary, highlight Te Tiriti principle of partnership. For example, Councillor Mark comments: "First of all it's definitely necessary, absolutely, not only because of the Treaty obligations." In response to a follow-up question on what a Tiriti-based form of local government may look like, Councillor Mark notes:

I guess you have to go back to the principles of the Treaty. Again I'm not well versed in this but I understand the principles of the Treaty . . . are now put into legislation . . .

and clearly the buzzword is partnership . . . and assuming we then have to adhere to those principles, then I would basically think that those principles should apply to local government, and so partnership is absolutely required.

In response to my question to Councillor Bill as to why Māori should have a local government ward when other cultures in Aotearoa may also want representative council wards, Bill explained his thoughts on the distinction between people in Aotearoa:

I'd argue that there's tangata whenua who were in New Zealand originally, then the settlers came, and that includes immigrants like myself, we all came under the Crown represented by effectively Queen Elizabeth, so the distinction isn't between ethnicities, the distinction is between Māori people who were here in New Zealand originally, and then all the settlers which includes people from England, South Africa, India, China, wherever the case might be, so the two systems really is the two sides to the Treaty. One side is for the settlers, one side is for tangata whenua.

The partnership aspect of Te Tiriti in relation to establishing Māori wards is also discussed by Councillor Jane:

The main reason would be because they're a Treaty partner. This nation was formed on a Treaty partnership and that got lost along the way, so I think we're scrambling to try and catch up and get back to where it could have been, which is why I think it's so hard for some people, because we've been able to have immigration into the country over the years after the Treaty was signed where people didn't know on what basis they were free to come and live here. And so, I think it just turned into another colony . . . My understanding would be that Māori would have partnership rights, so for all the decisions that we are making, they should be a part of that decision-making not consulted . . . but they would actually be a partner to the decision-making.

Councillor Jane also thought a partnership approach would benefit all in Aotearoa:

I do think that if we were to find a better way of partnering, I think it would make our city and our country as a whole, it would be a whole lot more understanding, and I think it would be good then for - it would spill over into all peoples, so you know, other people who have immigrated here, it's one of those things, it's like all boats float, so I think you know, when representation is done better, like if we do partner up, I think all ethnicities benefit. Because I think it brings an understanding instead of suspicion and mistrust, and working together.

TCC staff member Kylie responded to questions about the partnership aspect of Te Tiriti, by making reference to decision-making processes:

If you go back to the Treaty of Waitangi, you know, we're partners . . . local government is required to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in decision-

making processes, it's required to do that, and what better way than around the Council table where you get to vote?

While arguing that councils are not part of the Crown, Councillor Michael talks about the partnership aspect of Te Tiriti and how a relationship may be the best way to express that commitment:

You know, there were arguments that TCC is part of the Crown - well that's not true. There's a really, really great document produced by TPK [Te Puni Kokiri] that talks about the Treaty and it's been designed for policy writers, it's quite educative but it has this sort of parallel narrative where it talks about where we are in terms of our legal system and also where the Waitangi Tribunal is . . . it's relationship, it's akin to a partnership, we've gone back to this . . . focused on one word, partnership, and got all knotted up, I go back to the TPK doc. I think we're in that sort of space . . . I think the Treaty exists, I think it's a significant part of our constitutional inheritance . . . I think Māori by virtue of the Treaty do have a relationship with the Crown, my reading of it is that all of us are subjects of the Crown, but that Māori have had explicit things guaranteed to them in a form that, and many of those things are implicit in the subject Crown relationship but needed to be made explicit on a particular day in 1840 to give people comfort that they would stand the test of time. Have those things been adhered to? No . . . Ultimately, you've got to find some way of working with each other.

While Councillor Michael admits that Te Tiriti has not been honoured, he claims that TCC is not part of the Crown, implying that the Council has no Tiriti obligations. In contrast to Councillor Michael's view that TCC is not part of the Crown, Dr Te One (2020), observes in *Spinoff*:

Local governments receive their powers from the Crown and are therefore expected to uphold the governing principles and responsibilities the Crown has. This includes responsibilities to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which is referenced in important local government legislation, including section four of the Local Government Act 2002.

These differing understandings of Te Tiriti concerning sovereignty and partnership obligations underpin views towards Māori representation in local government and mechanisms such as Māori wards. As noted by Godfery (2022), to honour the meaning of rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga and the realms those concepts applied to as stated in Te Tiriti, a constitutional revolution or a re-centering or rethinking of systems, institutions and processes would be required. Bell (2008: 852) claims that colonisation has resulted in white settlers establishing institutional arrangements around themselves, occasioning "discourses

and practices of domination and marginalisation of Indigenous peoples.” While hegemonic political processes in Aotearoa have become ‘normal’ and seemingly unchallengeable (Bargh, 2021; Huygens, 2011), Bell (2014: 852) claims the contemporary challenge is to “modify our modes of relating to make way for, or give way to, the Indigenous project of re-centering.” Bargh and Jones (2022) argue:

Stale colonial views have held dominance over our unique systems of government and politics for too long, not reflecting the Tiriti partnership and tending to shut Māori out of decision-making. For too long, tired ideas have allowed injustice and a privileged minority to dominate. Stale views from far away have held dominance over our unique systems of government and politics. Such ideas have led to ‘stale, pale, male’ political dominance and decision-making. At a local government level, this has produced representation that does not reflect the Tiriti partnership at the heart of our democracy.

Interviewee Judd explains why, in terms of Te Tiriti, Māori should be well represented in decision-making roles in local government:

We have to backtrack the whole discussion around that question and that is, do I have a connection in my heart to Te Tiriti o Waitangi? Do I understand our past? Do I know what was taken and how it was taken? Do I truly appreciate what benefits I’ve received through systematic privilege? So, until I can unravel those questions for me, I truly couldn’t answer that question because my initial reaction was, no, they should stand [for local government] like anyone else. The best person for the job. All the clichés that you hear. If you’re good enough like anyone else, they can stand just like I had to stand. Until I unpacked that and started to realise what partnership means in a Treaty sense . . . when the fact is at local government, that’s where the relationships and the rubber legislatively hits the road. For whatever form, RMAs [Resource Management Acts], building consents, wahi tapu sites, anything that affects us as a community is where Māori should be at the table.

These statements demonstrate the need for clarity around what Te Tiriti means in contemporary society and how interpretations can be applied to the way institutions and systems operate. To some interview participants, such as Councillor Michael, the term ‘relationship’ is a better reflection of what Te Tiriti means than ‘partnership,’ and the analogy of heteronormative marriage is used to describe how both partners in a relationship need to work together to make it work while allowing room for change and growth. As TCC staff member Eruera notes:

Undoubtedly the most crucial thing is for decision makers to spend time with Māori, and I know that's a little bit generic but how you develop a relationship. So, we have a commitment through the Treaty of Waitangi to have this relationship, and just like a marriage, every day you're working with your husband or your wife . . . you have to spend time with your partner in order to have a partnership, and first of all create it and then have it as a living partnership.

Te Rangapū representative, Manaaki, focuses on an inclusive process to design a local government that will draw Māori participation:

We need to have input on the structure of council to make it more attractive for Māori . . . We need meaningful input on how we structure local government to be more inclusive of tangata whenua. There's absolutely no doubt. And then once we start getting that right, our people will come.

As outlined above, a mutual understanding of Te Tiriti will provide a framework for shared decision-making based on the recognition of rights and a respect for the exercise of tino rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga. As Webster and Cheyne (2017: 159) argue, “[o]nly a new Treaty-based system of local government that incorporated distinctively Māori ways of governance would protect the rights of New Zealand Māori to fair and effective representation that stem from the Treaty of Waitangi.” Giving effect to the relationship established in Te Tiriti will open opportunities for respectful and innovative collaboration, and by working together, benefits may be shared. This may mean local government undergoes structural changes in future towards an inclusive model. Mercier (2020: 15) claims that “decolonising does not mean the removal or withdrawal of colonial occupiers so much as a fundamental shift in the ideas, knowledges and value sets that underpin the systems which shape our country.” As Bell (2014) argues, acceptance of Indigenous autonomy is the first step in destabilising the settler worldview and moving towards a new way of seeing the world. To address that shift in mindset, Bell (2008: 852) comments that “the recovery of Māori involves a significant shift on the part of Pākehā, that we must make space in some way for Māori culture and politics to flourish, to be more ‘central’ in our shared society.” Decolonisation itself has been described as a threshold to “something else, something altogether different” (Mercier, 2020: 29). This liminal threshold space enables the ability to “play and imagine” with ideas such as the “centring of Indigenous peoples, even in Western structures” (Mercier, 2020: 29). A de-centering, or change in perspective to respect

and include Māori values and views, may lead to a productive consideration of a partnership approach to designing local government.

6.4 Options for a Tiriti-based local government relationship

In considering the logistics of how a Tiriti-based partnership and relationship in local government might work, interview participants suggested several options, including systems based on proportional representation,⁴⁵ population-based Māori ward seats, seats for hapū or iwi, and ‘equal’ co-governance. Under current legislation, the number of Māori ward seats that a council can establish aligns to a proportional representation model that usually translates to one or two Māori ward seats for councils. In discussing Māori wards, among the five councillors and two previous councillors interviewed, opinions vary from five who totally support Māori wards with some saying one Māori ward seat isn’t enough, to two who disagree with them, and one of those strongly opposed. Several interviewees relate the number of Māori wards to the proportion of Māori in the population, or proportional representation. For example, Councillor Mark says they have “always thought that one Māori seat around the table, even that is not quite representative of the population. Technically there should be two out of 11. I would say two would be more representative of the population.” Te Rangapū representative Rawiri favours representation being in proportion to the Māori proportion in the population: “So let’s say if there are ten councillors, Māori make up 20 per cent of the population, there should be two right, it should be as straight forward as that.” In Te Rangapū representative Tama’s view, Te Tiriti means some type of proportional representation in local government that provides acknowledgement of equal partnership:

I would apply the principle of proportional representation. Where it is applied to Council structures it should be ‘equal’ in governance and ‘equitable’ in the operational areas . . . Now you have to go back a step further, a step more backwards. New Zealand’s electoral system is based on ethnicity right, not just people. Now what is the whole purpose of having a main electoral roll and a Māori electoral roll if it didn’t mean at the end of that process, the conclusion of applying it all the way through equally and equitably, that you end up at the very end with, obviously to me, with equitable and equal representation. Now we know it’s not there. We have 17 per cent,

⁴⁵ An electoral system in which voters cast ballots for parties rather than candidates, and representatives are selected from lists generated by parties in accordance with the proportion of votes received by each party.

whatever the figure is in the TCC area, and we don't have as of a given any Māori representation to reflect that percentage, that's the answer, it's as simple as that . . . We have it in central government.

Tama's focus on proportional representation is couched within the current local government system which fails to reflect the partnership agreement signed up to in Te Tiriti. From the media excerpts, Te One (2020) argues:

Māori are only three per cent of the population in our city and that is too few to warrant a Māori seat. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not based on population. Partnership is not dependent on population.

As Te One notes, the minority status of Māori in the population does not affect their status as tangata whenua and Tiriti partner, nor the rights of partnership, which includes Māori rights to participation and representation within decision-making bodies such as councils.

Calls for the consideration of new models of local government have been in evidence for over a decade. Jackson (cited in Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011), for example, argues that the decolonisation of local government relies on an examination of governance structures. For Jackson, the reimagining of governance structure provides for the emergence of a co-designed structure with Māori. Bargh (2021) argues that rather than thinking of Māori as representatives to local government, Māori should be considered to be Tiriti partners and attention should be paid to what such partnership means in terms of local government. Furthermore, Bargh (2016) argues that legislators should investigate whether an independent board model, such as the Te Arawa Board model developed in Rotorua, better enables local government to uphold its Tiriti of Waitangi duties than do current governance models. Bargh (2016) also suggests that legislators should investigate how the use of models of representation based on tikanga Māori might enhance the exercise of tino rangatiratanga by Māori. In examining options to address the underrepresentation of Māori in the local government democratic space, central government may usefully develop culturally appropriate solutions. Such discussion may consider whether the issue is best addressed through changes to the colonial Westminster model of governance (Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011).

The second option raised by respondents as a method through which to address low Māori representation was hapū or iwi based representation. Rather than thinking in terms of a

proportional representation model, Judd's views around local government structure drew on the importance of councils having an appropriate Māori voice:

However, I would extend it out, not a percentage seat to the Māori around the table, it should be a rōhe iwi seat partnership model, so there's seven iwi in our rōhe so we're only talking one seat cause you then lead into this, well who's going to speak for Māori then, cause we're all different and rightly so . . . I would argue that needs to be underpinned with supportive committees under it to include wider inclusion of hapū where there's a construct, just as we do for other regions on council.

When asked what rights of Māori he recognises in terms of representation or participation in local government, Judd commented on the importance of the Treaty and a seat for each iwi:

One-hundred percent rights. Māori shouldn't be population pro rata, it should be Treaty-based . . . so it should be viewed, I would say, by an independent government body who is non-political to truly take a snapshot of representation reviews to make sure that communities are being fairly reflected around the table, but in terms of the Treaty, that shouldn't be part of this question. That should be legislated permanently, absolutely it does . . . So, for me that is a seat at the table permanently for each of the iwi in the room.

Reflecting on how they think an ideal local government structure may work, Te Rangapū representative Hone comments:

Again, just to get it through for me we'd have to do it the normal way and just get six seats and get people to sit there, it would be for me, preferable to have hapū in there, if it was hapū representation, I mean you'll have 17 hapū?

Judd (cited in Ashworth, 2021) mentioned something similar:

Most councils have multiple iwi in their rōhe and there should be a seat for each iwi . . . It might seem radical to some because you've had the privilege of a system that suited you. But you have to be radical, you have to dismantle the system that was put in place – and that's not to be fearful, that's actually really exciting.

The idea of some type of iwi or hapū based local government representation bears merit as hapū is the basis of traditional Māori society. Local government, however, struggles to recognise iwi and hapū, retaining a 'business as usual' inflexibility (Bell, 2018). While there will be challenges in applying a model to allow for the representation of 17 hapū in Tauranga Moana, if that is the model favoured by Māori, then a model could be co-designed that incorporates that type of representation. Judd suggests that the government should legislate for councils and iwi to come up with a local based model to identify what best suits each

locality and individual situation. This could be some type of iwi-based approach to local government with the actual mechanisms unique for each locality. Apart from proportional representation and hapū or iwi-based representation, the system most often raised favourably by respondents was a co-governance arrangement, usually envisaged with half seats for each of Māori and non-Māori. While co-governance is a term receiving wide media scrutiny and is a topic of high interest in Aotearoa at the time of writing, it is an option to incorporate a Tiriti-based approach to local government (Adams, 2021b; Brett Kelly, 2022; Malpass, 2021).

6.4.1 Co-governance for local government?

Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of Aotearoa during the writing of the bulk of this thesis, enjoys much respect among her international peers (Grant, 2021). Within Aotearoa, however, her support is divided. While this support is filtered through sexism, racism and misogyny, Labour party policies have been both critiqued for being race-based and divisive, and celebrated as being progressive (Adams, 2021b; Malpass, 2021; Williams, 2017). Among the contentious issues are accusations that Labour is backing a covert 20-year plan to establish Māori sovereignty through implementing recommendations of the *He Puapua Report*⁴⁶ without widespread community consultation (Neilson, 2021). The proposed establishment of a Māori Health Authority, proposals to change the delivery of water services and infrastructure through a new governance model that involves iwi, and changes to local government legislation to enable the establishment of Māori wards in local government, are among Government policy changes that arouse strong feeling among parts of the community (Johnsen, 2021b; Wilson, 2021b). The concept at the centre of these ‘controversial’ proposals is ‘co-governance.’

Within Aotearoa, the terms co-governance and co-management are often used interchangeably, however, co-management is most appropriate in cases where the final decision rests with the local authority (Vance, 2022). The Government explains that “in resource management work, the terms ‘co-governance’ and ‘co-management’ are both used to describe negotiated arrangements between iwi, central government, local government,

⁴⁶ The *He Puapua Report* is a 123-page report from the Declaration Working Group on a plan to realise the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa. Aotearoa became a signatory to this Declaration in 2010 under a National government (Key, 2010; Lynch & Malpass, 2021).

and / or local groups to achieve effective management of an environmental or conservation resource” (Office of the Controller & Auditor-General, 2016a). In co-governance arrangements, local authorities usually manage the development, membership, and disestablishment of joint committees, however, the creation and membership of the committees are agreed between councils and iwi and provided for in Treaty legislation when they are part of a Treaty settlement (Tukaki, n.d.). Relating to the management of natural resources as part of or after a Treaty settlement, co-governance usually means that there are equal numbers of iwi representatives and council members involved, with councils retaining final decision-making powers over the management of natural resources in keeping with councils’ responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the LGA (Tukaki, n.d.). As well as those co-governance arrangements that arose from Treaty of Waitangi settlements, other co-governance arrangements in Aotearoa are voluntary, however, all involve iwi and local authorities (Tukaki, n.d.; Vance, 2022).

Some co-governance arrangements in Aotearoa are mandated through Treaty settlements set up by former Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Chris Finlayson, during his time as a Minister in the National Government between 2008 and 2017. One such co-governance arrangement operates within the Waikato River Authority. The Waikato River Authority is a statutory body formed in 2010 under section 22(1) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010, and section 23(1) of the Ngati Tuwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010 (Waikato River Authority, 2019). The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 created the Waikato River Authority as a co-governance and co-management framework between the Crown and River Iwi to be the custodian of the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River and to oversee the implementation of the clean-up of the river (Office of the Controller & Auditor-General, 2016b; Waikato River Authority, 2019). The Authority has ten board members, with five appointed from each River Iwi (Tainui, Te Arawa, Tuwharetoa, Raukawa and Maniapoto) and five Crown-appointed members. The Regional Council nominates one Crown member, one is nominated by the territorial authorities, and the Minister for the Environment appoints one of two co-chairpersons while iwi choose the other (Office of the Controller & Auditor-General, 2016b). The purpose of the Authority includes; setting the primary direction through the vision and strategy to achieve restoring

and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for generations to come; promoting an integrated approach to implement the vision and strategy; and, to fund rehabilitation initiatives for the Waikato River in its role as trustee for the Waikato Clean-up Trust (Office of the Controller & Auditor-General, 2016b). The Authority is required to monitor its activities and achievements and initiatives funded by the Trust, and report on the results of the monitoring at least once every five years to the Crown and River Iwi (Office of the Controller & Auditor-General, 2016b).

As with the issue of Māori wards, co-governance is a concept that arouses vehement opposition. For example, Seymour and the ACT Party are calling for a referendum on co-governance arguing that “co-governance means some representatives are democratically elected and others get a seat at the table because of who their ancestors were,” and that “co-governance is everywhere but nobody has ever asked whether we want it” (ACT, n.d.b). Alternatively, Vance (2022) claims that some of the reactions against co-governance or co-management arrangements are because people fear losing long-held customs and hierarchies. For example, the uncertainty and concern raised by some is remarked on by the Chief Executive of the Waikato River Authority, Penter (cited in McConnell, 2022). Penter remembers that at the time of establishment of the Waikato River Authority there was uncertainty and concern expressed around a co-governance entity being given authority, and critics warned of an end to democracy on Waikato River (McConnell, 2022). For example, ACT Member of Parliament David Garrett told Parliament shortly before the Bill passed its final reading that a “50 / 50 Crown to Māori split on the Waikato River Authority effectively gave “veto” powers to Waikato-Tainui . . . It represents the abandonment of the cornerstone of democracy: one person, one vote.” Penter, however, added that “what happened after the Authority was set up, it demystified co-governance and showed this is a worthwhile form of governance, to bring together different interests and be inclusive of iwi Māori.” Godfery (2022) notes that “instead of ripping apart the fabric of New Zealand society, these [co-governance] arrangements passed without much notice, and none of its opponents can point to a single governance failure in the years since.” Historian Moon (cited in Matthews, 2022) argues that “while there is no mention of co-governance in the Treaty . . . it could be seen as an interpretation of what the Treaty intended.” Dunne, previous leader of United Future political party (2022) notes that “co-governance is not a

new idea. It has been at the heart of many of the successful treaty settlements of the past 30 years. In the specific instances where it has been applied, it has generally worked well.”

Similarly, Finlayson explains that the concept of co-governance is nothing new and that “it’s time to accept it and go with the flow” (Brett Kelly, 2022). Finlayson’s advice for dealing with the “sour right” behind negative co-governance rhetoric is “to leave those losers behind and move on. They don’t like tangata whenua. They dream of a world that never was and never could be” (Brett Kelly, 2022). While some of these examples above were the result of negotiations for the settlement of claims of historical breaches of Te Tiriti, Bargh and Jones (2022) argue that there is no need for these type of arrangements:

[t]o be tied to historical wrongs. They each seek to restore respectful, balanced relationships between people and with the natural environment. They ought to be the kinds of relationships that are business as usual in Aotearoa.

When asked what they think Treaty-based local government may look like, interviewees often raise some type of co-governance model, or half seats for Māori and half seats for non-Māori. For example, Hone from Te Rangapū says:

Definitely half and half seats. That’s the most critical if we were to have proper decision-making governance responsibilities within town there’s got to be half and half seats. I mean, ok we’ll go with it and do the democracy thing and vote for our seats and all that but to me it’s definitely got to be half and half, and that could take another hundred years eh? . . . As you know we just got the council to vote for a Māori ward, that was one of our first takes [issues] on the table, you know, and back then, just getting it across the table talking about it was hard . . . It was all about getting into the decision-making right to the table and even though we voted for one ward, we believe it should be half and half, you know, that’s the goal.

TCC staff member Kylie also stresses half and half representation for committees and council:

If you could have your committees being truly 50 / 50 and eventually you’d have your council at 50 / 50, then that’s the way . . . Well I think . . . again if you were going to go with the Treaty of Waitangi you would say that half seats would be for iwi and then half would be for non-iwi, and you could mandate that and then have elections based on that, yeah . . . I think that younger people coming through have much more, they’re much more educated I suppose and have much more idea that Māori are the tangata whenua of the country and that they do need, that the Treaty should be honoured.

The view of Te Rangapū representative Manaaki on a possible local government structure draws on concerns around the Treaty:

Ultimately, we want equal representation. That's the line and that's what we think we are owed under the founding, if one accepts that the Treaty is the founding document of our country, that's what we negotiated. Is that ever going to be a possibility? Not in my lifetime probably, but it's an ideal, it's, we firmly believe it's where we should be.

Focusing on the issue of partnership as depicted in Te Tiriti, Te Rangapū representative Tama also claims:

We should by right, by the right of the Treaty and the legislation for central government, we should have our own ethnicity based seats on Council through whatever system . . . The Treaty of Waitangi talks about partnership, now for me if you apply the philosophy of partnership, if you like, that comes from the Treaty we should have equal partnership. We seldom if ever have equal partnership. It's that democracy thing coming through again.

Similarly, when considering an ideal local government model, TCC staff member Eruera, explains in detail:

I guess my thought patterns always start with our obligations as a nation to the Treaty of Waitangi . . . In a purist sense of the Treaty of Waitangi then, I would always support that it should be purely a co-governance model, which would mean actually that you would have equal numbers on each side with equal rights, and in fact you would have to review the system that we actually operate in . . . And I say that, again I have to reference back to the Treaty of Waitangi, because does that mean that you need to have every other disposition at that table? I don't think that's what co-governance in a New Zealand sense is talking about. It's talking about what has been guaranteed by the Treaty and not been delivered upon and that is having Māori involved in decision-making, not at the point where everybody can vote scenario, but actually at the point of the decision being made. There's no way to replace that voice, that perspective than to have someone there who knows and experiences that voice and perspective . . . In terms of actually, in the governance structures and things, there's two trains of thought, within the current structure ideally it would be co-governance, ideally it would be trusting tangata whenua to have 11 people alongside 11 elected governors, and some people are uncomfortable with that from a democratic point of view, but the fact is you have to overlay the whole democratic process with the Treaty of Waitangi. It is our point of difference from other government systems around the world.

Judd (cited in Ashworth, 2021), clarifying his observation that it was a “baby step” for Minister of Local Government Nanaia Mahuta to amend the legislation to remove the ability for referenda overturning Māori wards, advocates for 50 / 50 partnership relations:

I’m now asking you [the Minister of Local Government] to truly step up and actually mandate true partnership around every council – actually around every community public entity, 50 / 50, there is no other way the partnership can work, 50 / 50. Until we get there, until you mandate true partnership with Māori, nothing will truly change.

For Tīpā Mahuta (cited in McConnell, 2022), co-chair of the Waikato River Authority, “co-governance is on the way to us being able to do things for ourselves, but that’s not something wider New Zealand is okay with . . . co-governance is something we’ll have right now, until we can have some limited self-governance.” Mahuta explains co-governance in Tiriti terms, saying that the second article of Te Tiriti talks about tino rangatiratanga and that relates to hapū and iwi, while the Crown works on kāwanatanga (state services) (McConnell, 2022). Bargh (2017: 15) argues that “legislators should look into how Māori can better exercise their tino rangatiratanga by using forms of representation sourced in tikanga Māori.” Dunne (2022) acknowledges that in terms of local government, there is an opportunity to develop an overarching co-governance framework as a replacement for the current ad hoc, case-by-case approach, and that considered public discussion on the overall process is “timely and should not be feared.” Dunne (2022) proposes that an:

[i]ndependent external group, comprising distinguished and respected New Zealanders, and no current or former politicians . . . shape and lead the consultation process, with the outcome being a full report setting out clear conclusions and recommendations for the Government to consider.

This proposal has the potential to lead to discussion as to how to apply a Tiriti-based relationship to the structure and process of local government. To address the normalised acceptance of the Westminster model of local government, Bargh (2020: 3) suggests that the discussion around Māori representation in local government could emerge from a “different starting place,” beginning with the concept of a Tiriti-based local government relationship. This different starting place could be a national discussion around a Tiriti-based constitution which would then underpin development of a new local government framework.

6.4.2 Constitutional transformation?

In colonial settings such as Aotearoa, constitutional arrangements often serve to perpetuate structural racism against Indigenous people (Came et al., 2021). Instead of a single overarching constitutional document, as in many countries with a heritage of Westminster-style government, the constitutional framework in Aotearoa encompasses a range of formal documents including Acts of Parliament, legal documents (Letters Patent), decisions of the Courts, and generally accepted practices or ‘conventions’ (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, n.d.; Palmer et al., 2016). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been ongoing discussion about developing a constitution for Aotearoa that addresses Te Tiriti as the founding document of Aotearoa and that incorporates understandings about governance based on both Te Ao Māori and Western values (Bargh, 2021; Collier, 2011; Davidson, 2015; Godfery, 2016; Keane, 2011; Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011; Palmer et al., 2016; Webster, 2009; Webster & Cheyne, 2017; Winiata, 2013). For example, Palmer et al. (2016) claim that:

New Zealand needs a constitution that is easy to understand, reflects our shared identity and nationhood, protects rights and liberties, and prevents governments from abusing power. The current constitution is vague, jumbled and unclear. It can be easily overridden or changed according to political whim . . . [We propose] a modern, codified constitution that is accessible and clear, and it aims to stimulate debate about who we are as a nation, and how we should be governed.

Interviewees also considered a unified constitution for Aotearoa. For example, Te Rangapū representative Manaaki argues:

According to the principles of the Treaty we’re meant to be partners. If we’re not around the table we’re not living by what we believe was the founding document of our country . . . we’re partners . . . if we don’t protect ourselves constitutionally, meaning we’ve got constitutional rights in legislation that we can fall back to protect us because of the things, I won’t say promised in the Treaty, but outlined in the Treaty, then we’re on a real slippery slope here . . . there was a written agreement between us, there was a Treaty . . . when we invited the British in we invited the others including yourselves, although it’s 2020 you’re still part of that invitation to come in . . . We need a constitution saying that Māori have this position within this country and they are protected.

Judd expresses similar sentiments:

We are really British in our systems. It's a template of Britain. I mean just look at chambers of councils. Very British. We're not Britain, and I think there needs to be a serious conversation about transitioning to our own constitution where the Treaty is at the foreground and where Māori sovereignty plays a massive part of it. I'm not scared of that. I'm excited by it. You know, I actually think that direction will take us through because our country's changing anyway.

Other interviewees' views on a constitution for Aotearoa varied. Te Rangapū representative, Tama considered options for a constitution for Aotearoa:

Yeah I believe we should have it refined. I don't think we need to throw away the old and start with a fresh piece of paper. Maybe we need to re-define the Treaty in today's language . . . like the American . . . Independence declaration . . . they've refined it subsequent but . . . their declaration is . . . a lot better than our Treaty of Waitangi, because theirs was done with a lot of thought by, mainly by the people who sought the declaration, not imposed upon it, ours was the other way around. We didn't develop that. The society and the ethnic group who came in and imposed it on us . . . re-define it to the extent of a better interpretation, a more modern interpretation of what the different articles mean, self-government, things that, the ownership of our lands and seas and mountains, you know, that's too loose, much too loose. What does it mean? So we need to have another document which, yeah which is a fine tuning, refining of our current Treaty into a more constitutional document . . . We need to create a new constitution starting with the Treaty up front, and then refining it, adding to it.

While Tama was strongly in favour of a Tiriti-based constitution, Councillor Bill agreed with the idea of a new constitution that reflects Aotearoa and Te Tiriti:

We're sort of a constitutional monarchy at the moment. Yeah, I mean personally I like the idea of being a republic and having our own constitution. I don't think politically we're there yet and I think technically everything's still under the Governor General . . . I do like the idea of having a constitution probably based on the Treaty or the principles of the Treaty.

Constitutional transformation is required prior to any major restructuring of hegemonic institutions and systems such as local government. According to Mulholland and Tawhai (2011), the under-representation of Māori in the local government democratic space is best addressed through options that facilitate a Kaupapa Māori based model for constitutional change. Such an approach would address the normalised acceptance of the Westminster model, a structure that expresses colonial notions of democracy and representation (Bargh, 2021).

The importance of a Tiriti-based constitution has been recognised by Māori through the formation in 2010 of Matike Mai Aotearoa, the independent Working Group on constitutional transformation. Matike Mai Aotearoa was established by the National Iwi Chairs' Forum, which is a collective of 71 iwi entities from across Aotearoa (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). The Working Group is supported by the Iwi Chairs' Forum and various iwi and Māori organisations, and has received funding support, including that from the J. R. McKenzie Trust, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, and the United Nations Small Grants Fund for Projects Implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). The Terms of Reference for the Working Group were to:

Develop and implement a model for an inclusive Constitution for Aotearoa based on tikanga and kawa, He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tirenī of 1835 [the Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand], Te Tiriti o Waitangi of 1840 and other Indigenous human rights instruments which enjoy a wide degree of international recognition (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016: 7).⁴⁷

Since 2010, the Matike Mai Aotearoa Working Group has led a five-year process involving 252 hui and discussions with various leaders and experts in Māoridom to seek advice and invite discussion on a different type of constitutionalism based upon the above documents (Bishop, 2022; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). The 2016 report that resulted from the Matike Mai Aotearoa deliberations recommended six models for a new Māori and Crown constitutional relationship (Jackson, 2019; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016; Mutu, 2018). According to the work of Matike Mai Aotearoa, a co-designed Tiriti-based constitution would potentially impact electoral systems and reshape local government structure and systems (Jackson, 2019; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016; Mutu, 2018). In Matike Mai Aotearoa, three 'spheres of influence' are proposed as the basis for future government. In the 'rangatiratanga sphere,' Māori would make decisions for Māori, while in the 'kāwanatanga sphere' the Crown would make decisions for its people (Bishop, 2022; Came et al., 2021). The sphere in-between the two, the 'relational sphere,' would reflect the Tiriti relationship through favouring "a conciliatory and consensual democracy rather than an adversarial and majoritarian one." The spheres would be expressed through institutional or organisational

⁴⁷ These documents include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and declarations and statements that have been drafted by Indigenous peoples and Indigenous governing structures, such as the constitution in Bolivia, the Sami Parliament in Norway, and the various forms of Native American government (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016).

structures such as an “iwi / hapū assembly, a Westminster-style parliament, regional assemblies, or a forum of some kind for iwi / hapū-Crown (tribe-subtribe-Crown) decision-making” (Bishop, 2022). Three of the proposed models are based on a tricameral model, consisting of an “Iwi / Hapū assembly (the rangatiratanga sphere), the Crown in Parliament (the kāwanatanga or governance sphere), and a joint deliberative body (the relational sphere)” (Fenton, 2018: 63) (see Figures 6.1 to 6.3, Matike Mai, 2016: 68).

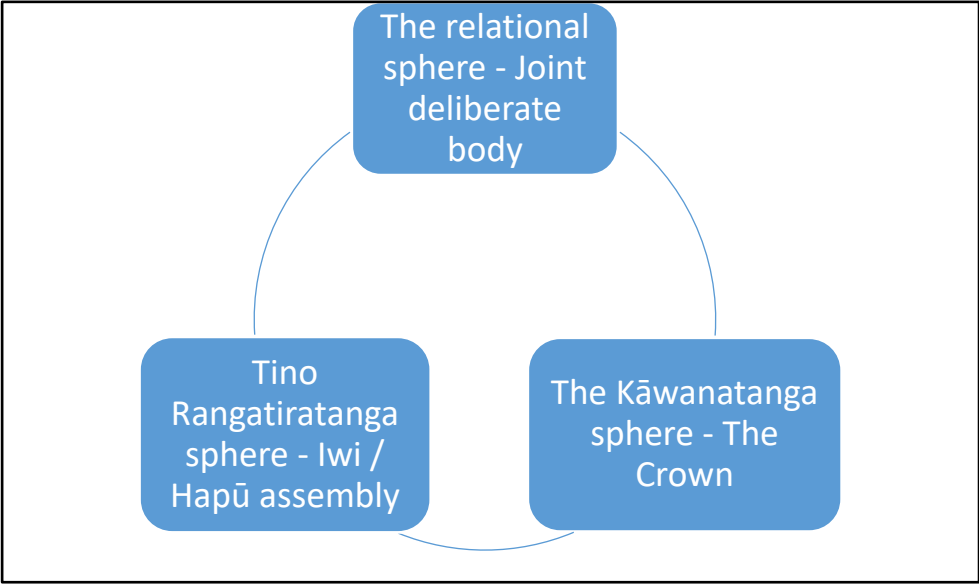


Figure 6.1 Model 1
Source: Sandra Des Forges

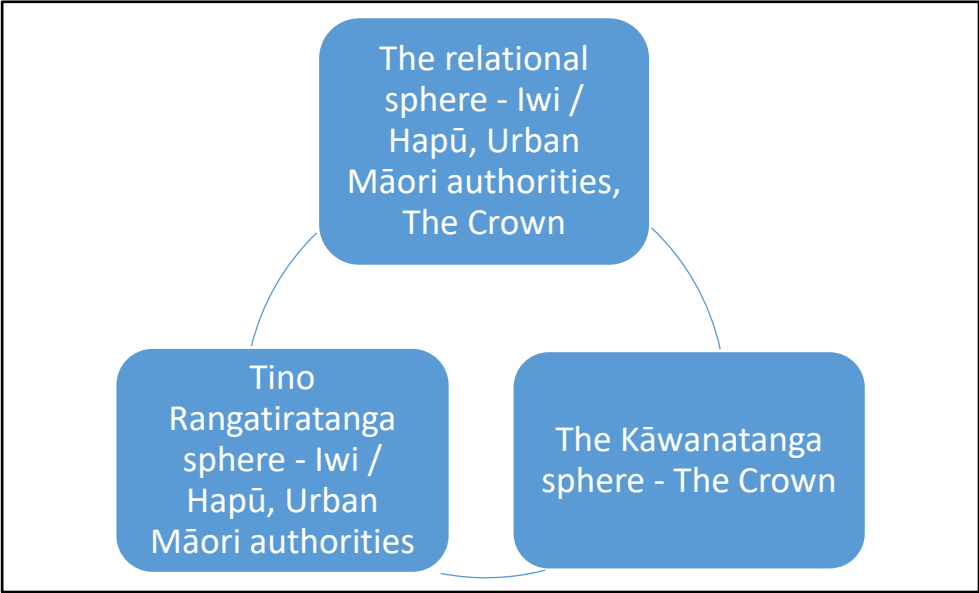


Figure 6.2 Model 2
Source: Sandra Des Forges

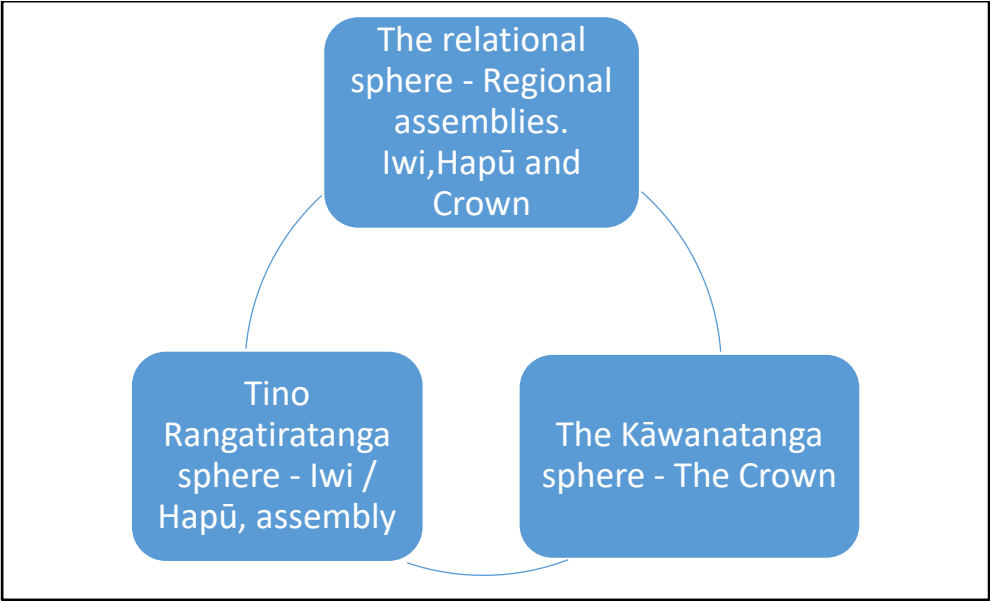


Figure 6.3 Model 3
 Source: Sandra Des Forges

The multi-sphere model divides the relational sphere into a mana motuhake sphere consisting of a “constitutionally mandated set of direct Iwi / Hapū / Crown relationships,” and a relational sphere in which Crown and Iwi / Hapū assemblies might meet annually (see Figure 6.4, Fenton, 2018: 63).

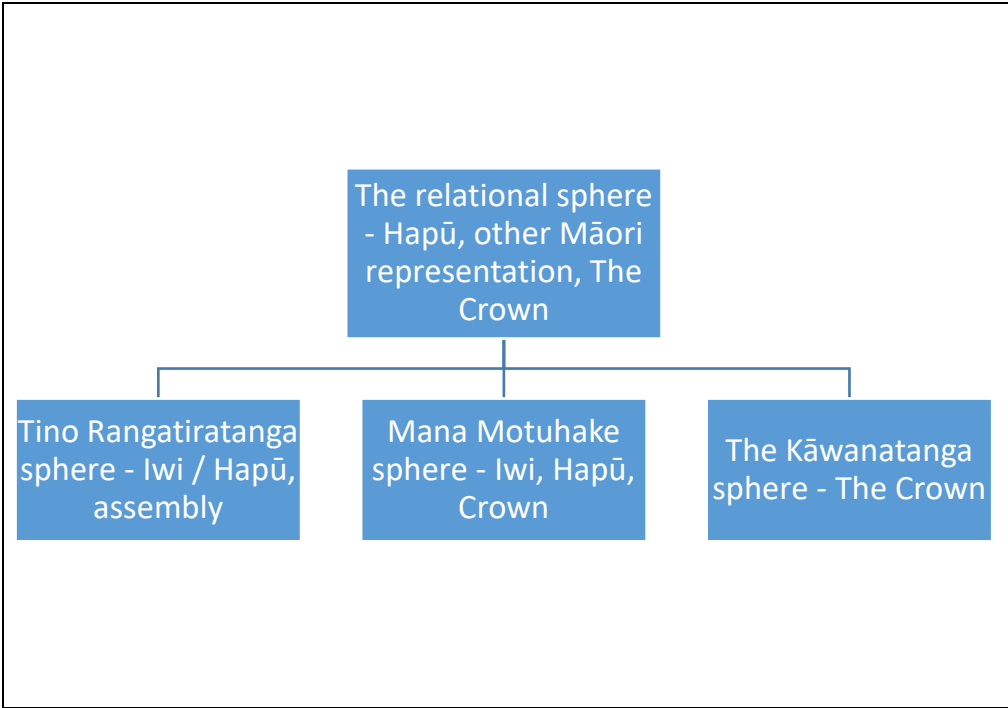


Figure 6.4 Model 4
 Source: Sandra Des Forges

The unicameral model is made up of one sphere, where the Crown and Iwi / Hapū assemblies make decisions together (see Figure 6.5, Fenton, 2018).

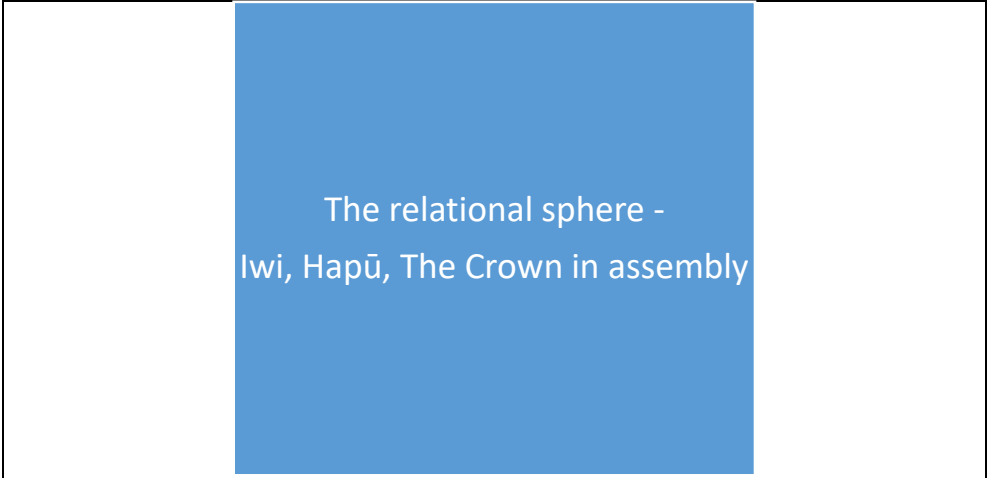


Figure 6.5 Model 5
Source: Sandra Des Forges

The bicameral model comprises an Iwi / Hapū assembly and the Crown in Parliament, with no relational sphere (see Figure 6.6). As of November 2021, implementing the outcomes of the report remain a work in progress.



Figure 6.6 Model 6
Source: Sandra Des Forges

Following this initiative by Matike Mai Aotearoa, in 2013 the government of Aotearoa established the Constitutional Advisory Panel to undertake national conversations about constitutional arrangements in Aotearoa (Came et al., 2021). Health commentators Came

et al. (2021: 59) argue that “Te Tiriti is recognised as the legitimate foundation for constitutional government in Aotearoa,” and support the “Indigenous aspirations expressed in the Matike Mai report.” Moreover, Came et al. (2021: 67) argue that to achieve constitutional transformation, the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 needs to be realigned with international law and that only Te Tiriti, the Māori text, should be recognised. Such recognition would have “a cascading impact across public sector legislation, policy, and practice” (Came et al., 2021: 67). For Mutu (2020: 280), the benefits of constitutional transformation honouring the findings of Matike Mai would accrue to all people living in Aotearoa:

Constitutional transformation that recognises and normalises mana and rangatiratanga and leaves the Crown to look after its own people is a solution for which our ancestors fought. My generation continues that battle in the hope that my mokopuna will live to see the Rangatiratanga sphere and the Kāwanatanga sphere working together as equals, the dispossession and trauma of Māori remedied, White privilege shared for the benefit of all and Papa-tūā-nuku and all her descendants restored to full health.

In alignment with these sentiments, the chief executive of Ngāti Toa (Modlik, 2022) argues:

The time is here for an honest, open, and rational dialogue about resolving, not ignoring, our confused constitutional roots. The ideas of partnership and co-governance are a logically consistent response to that confusion, and to the broken promises of guaranteed tino rangatiratanga, protection of existing property rights, and equal treatment as citizens. How that partnership or co-governance manifests is entirely up to us!

The evidence above serves to challenge the way the settler colonial power has ascended to “unquestioned normalcy” and suggests alternative ways to address social justice issues (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018: 6). Institutions such as local government are founded on certain values and express particular power relations, where “specific social groups are privileged or advantaged over others” (Parsons et al., 2019: 96). Parsons et al. (2019: 96) state that to understand these “patterns of advantage (and disadvantage)” it is necessary to query who will benefit from a particular policy or institution. This question could usefully be asked of the mechanism of Māori wards. To decolonise local government and other colonising institutions and systems within Aotearoa, it is necessary to “recognise that colonisation is a deceptive lie as much as a crushing oppression” and to have faith “that we can still be brave enough to change an imposed reality” (Jackson, 2019: 101). Addressing this reality through

national conversations around a Tiriti-based constitution is a start (Jackson, 2019). Aligning with the fluidity and opportunity encompassed in a liminal state, decolonising local government in Aotearoa involves what Radcliffe (2022) calls opening avenues to reimagine and transform institutions, structures and ways of thinking.

6.4.3 Review into the future of local government

Work to revise constitutional arrangements is ongoing, while the failings of the current system of local government in Aotearoa have been pointed out by several commentators (Forbes, 2020). For example, Asquith, Massey University academic and local government commentator (cited in Forbes, 2020), explains: “The local government system as it stands in New Zealand isn’t fit for purpose . . . most of the local government structures now in place could be traced back to the reforms of the late 1980s, but it was not relevant or applicable in 2020.” These calls for a review of local government were the catalyst for a response from the Labour Government which, in 2021, initiated a comprehensive review of local government to be undertaken by the DIA. This ‘Future for Local Government Review’ is an:

[i]ndependent Ministerial review established in April 2021 to consider how New Zealand’s system of local democracy and governance will need to evolve over the next 30 years, in order to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders, and actively embody the Treaty partnership (DIA, 2021: 3).

Local government spokesperson and leader for the National Party, Christopher Luxon, said the Party supports the review as it is an important opportunity to think strategically about the future and the relationship between central and local government (Akoorie, 2021). The emphasis in the review on examining ways in which the local government system in Aotearoa can “most effectively embody the Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership” suggests that a reimagining of local government to respect and include Te Ao Māori could be realised (DIA, 2021: 33). The emphasis on Te Tiriti within the review is underpinned by the findings of the Waitangi Tribunal in 2019 that the partnership aspects and rights to self-government under Te Tiriti for Māori have not been observed in a local authority system which is dominated by non-Māori (DIA, 2021). This finding reaffirms the claim of this thesis that local government is a place where Māori have been marginalised. The opportunity to reimagine local government is reiterated by the statement that the independent two-year Ministerial review is “an invitation to look beyond existing (local government) structures” (DIA, 2021: 9). Being

conducted in three stages, the review involves comprehensive consultation with “local and central government, iwi, the business sector, community organisations, young people, and the wider public” (DIA, 2021: 7). The report claims that the engagement processes will “actively seek out new or less frequently heard voices” and will not put pressure on diverse communities such as iwi and Māori (DIA, 2021). The engagement process will include “online and in-person workshops and wānanga, webinars, online surveys and crowd sourcing opportunities, stakeholder conversations, and local government meetings” (DIA, 2021: 59).

The first stage was completed in September 2021 with the development of an interim report (DIA, 2021). Following additional public engagement, the second report will provide draft findings and recommendations and is due to be submitted by 28 October 2022.⁴⁸ The third stage involves formal consultation and submissions, with a final report due in June 2023 (Future for Local Government, n.d.).

The Future for Local Government Review interim report released in 2021, *Ārewa ake te Kaupapa - Raising the Platform*, explains that any redesigned local governance will need to address issues such as breaking down mistrust and clearly defining functions and roles. Among the initial findings, the interim report recognises that “current (local government) arrangements do not ensure that diverse communities are adequately represented or involved in decision-making. As a result, local authority decisions do not effectively represent all community interests” (DIA, 2021: 10). This statement alludes to the challenges for Māori to be elected to local government and be represented in decision-making. Concerning future local governance systems, the interim report stresses:

New and better systems of local governance are needed, in order to address challenges in the current system and maximise wellbeing . . . In a reshaped system of local governance, iwi and local authorities can be stronger partners – by working together at local and iwi rōhe levels they can boost shared prosperity and wellbeing; changes to representation and electoral arrangements should be considered in order to strengthen local democracy, decision-making, and leadership (DIA, 2021: 10).

The statement above recognises a change of perspective to consider iwi rōhe rather than imposing Eurocentric boundaries across local government areas. Commenting on Te Tiriti, the report states:

⁴⁸ At the time of writing, the second report had been published for comment but has not been included in the thesis as it was published after the thesis was drafted.

On one level, Te Tiriti o Waitangi was an agreement to share authority in Aotearoa. It recognised the existing rights of iwi and hapū to manage their own affairs, including full authority over environmental, social, cultural, and economic relationships. And it recognised the Crown’s right to govern for the benefit of all New Zealanders. On other levels, Te Tiriti was about relationships, and about expectations of prosperity. It was an agreement to establish new relationships, or deepen existing ones, in ways that would create conditions for commerce, trade, and sharing of knowledge and ideas, to the benefit of Māori and non-Māori alike. Through much of New Zealand’s history, the Treaty relationship has not lived up to that original promise. Instead, the government progressively asserted authority over Māori communities, undermining their systems and institutions of self-government, transferring land and other resources out of Māori hands, denying Māori economic opportunities, and leaving a legacy of entrenched inequality (DIA, 2021: 33).

This statement acknowledges the failings of governments to honour the promises outlined in Te Tiriti. The admission that Māori systems and institutions of self-government were undermined leading to “entrenched inequality” is a step towards a reimagining of local government. The report acknowledges the significant role of local authorities in the marginalisation of Māori interests, reporting that “early local authorities were dominated by non-Māori, and typically showed little interest in Māori rights or views” (DIA, 2021: 34). Furthermore, the report explains that “The Waitangi Tribunal has found that the Crown’s devolution of powers to local authorities without appropriate safeguards harmed Māori communities and was in breach of rights under Te Tiriti” (DIA, 2021: 34).⁴⁹ Thus, the report reiterates that Māori wants and needs were disregarded by the Crown when local government was established, and that Māori communities were harmed through such marginalising action.

Through this report, the DIA identifies the challenges for Māori to feel a sense of belonging to the current local government system:

At a local government level, the Treaty relationship still falls short of meeting Māori aspirations and expectations. Current statutory and institutional arrangements do not provide for adequate Māori representation or input into decision-making, or for sufficient protection of Māori rights, interests, and wellbeing (DIA, 2021: 35).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Waitangi Tribunal, Te Mana Whatu Ahuru (2019, Part IV, chapter 19.1); Waitangi Tribunal, *The Wairarapa ki Tararua Report*, (2010: 888); Waitangi Tribunal (2008, p 1405), He Maunga Rongo.

⁵⁰ Waitangi Tribunal (2008, pp 1575, 1591), He Maunga Rongo; Waitangi Tribunal (2019, part IV, chapter 19.1), *Te Mana Whatu Ahuru*; Waitangi Tribunal (2010, pp 897, 1062) *The Wairarapa ki Tararua Report*.

Noting the potential benefits of moving to a Tiriti-based partnership, the report adds:

In a fully functioning Treaty relationship, local government and iwi are natural partners: both are intimately concerned with wellbeing of people and places, and both have intergenerational responsibilities. With new approaches, they can become powerful allies in creating conditions for mutual benefit and shared prosperity that endure into the future (DIA, 2021: 33).

The DIA (2021: 37) argues in the report that “any future local governance arrangements will need to give authentic expression to the Te Tiriti relationship at a local level, and also support iwi and Māori aspirations for the wellbeing and prosperity of their people, and the health of the natural environment.”

The Local Government Review builds on the liminal concept of change to consider how “New Zealand’s system of local democracy and governance will need to evolve over the next 30 years in order to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders, and actively embody the Treaty partnership” (DIA, 2021: 3). The findings in the interim report depict the effect of colonisation and the imposition of Eurocentric systems and processes such as the representative democratic system of local government on Māori. Coloniality has underpinned local government in Aotearoa and the embeddedness of local government within a colonial based system has affected relationships between Māori and local government (Bennett et al., 2021). For example, Professor of Indigenous Research, Hokowhitu (2016) depicts some of the devastation colonisation wreaked on Māori, including loss of up to 90 per cent of the population. The ongoing task for Indigenous people has been to “reclaim their humanity” while still undergoing control and manipulation by the coloniser in the name of social cohesion (Hokowhitu, 2016: 165). Similarly, Mercier (2020: 21) comments on the relevance of ongoing challenges to colonial norms: “To see a truly decolonised Aotearoa, however, decolonising actions will also have to transform the European systems and frameworks that are the deep institutions of colonisation.” Geographers Muller et al. (2019: 399) reiterate this perspective, explaining that to decolonise Western institutions and procedures “it is crucial to understand and challenge the power relations that underlie it.”

Analysis of the approach of the government in undertaking local government review appears to demonstrate good intentions and attempts to acknowledge previous

governmental failings to honour the promises outlined in Te Tiriti. As Thomas (2020: 50) notes in respect of sharing Māori ways of doing things such as learning te reo Māori or Māori weaving, “good intentions aren’t enough unless they are backed with respect and care, and an understanding of the broader structures and systems that perpetuate colonialism.” It is difficult at this early stage to determine whether this review will be yet another process with a deep colonising outcome or whether a genuine decolonising of local government will be achieved. I agree with Muller et al. (2019: 400) who argue that addressing decolonisation of local government requires “recognition of Indigenous sovereignties as mechanisms of decolonisation.” Embracing Māori ways to create new solutions has the potential to result in a decolonised local government system that embraces all in Aotearoa and avoids deep colonising outcomes.

6.5 Towards tūrangawaewae – a place for Māori in local government

Discussions around a Tiriti-based constitution and the review of local government currently underway are a forum for engagement with the sentiments of Salmond (2022), who argues that instead of seeing Māori ways as an either / or in terms of local governance “it’s time to bring them together for new institutional forms of order for Aotearoa-New Zealand.” Salmond (2022) notes that “grounding constitutional reform on the idea of distinct ‘races’ has its challenges.” These challenges are nuanced given that a whakapapa-based approach to Te Tiriti is occurring in an environment in which an increasing number of people in Aotearoa have whakapapa that includes Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, and many other non-Māori ancestors. Salmond (2022) also considers whether, rather than thinking in terms of Māori and non-Māori being separate, using ancestral ideas of separate lines of descent, while remaining distinct, such strands can be woven together to create a fine cloak. The challenge is that many proposed governance structures, such as those outlined in *He Puapua*, also assume that ‘Māori’ and ‘non-Māori’ are distinct and separate categories of person and that ‘Māori’ will be represented by their own governance structures (Salmond, 2022). Salmond (2022) argues: “Given the entanglement of whakapapa over the past 200 years or so, however, and the composition of the contemporary population of Aotearoa New Zealand, this is also clearly not the case.” These views align with Chief Justice Durie, who, when giving his Waitangi Day speech in 1989, outlines the importance of Te Tiriti for Māori and Pākehā:

We [Māori] must not forget that Te Tiriti is not just a Bill of Rights for Māori. It is a Bill of Rights for Pākehā too. It is Te Tiriti that gives Pākehā the right to be here. Without Te Tiriti there would be no lawful authority for the Pākehā presence in this part of the South Pacific . . . We must remember that if we are the Tangata Whenua, the original people, then the Pākehā are the Tangata Tiriti, those who belong to the land by right of that Tiriti (Durie, quoted in Borrows, 2019: 45).

While recognising Stokes' (1987) statement that Māori is a worldview, the connection of a Māori worldview and local government are envisaged within the concept of *tūrangawaewae* and the sense of belonging and connectedness with the land hapū communities experience when they have occupied a region for several generations (Kidman, 2012). This reinforces the idea that, while acknowledging that local government boundaries do not currently align with traditional iwi and hapū lands, local government could eventually become a place where Māori feel comfortable and where they feel they belong – a *tūrangawaewae* of sorts.

Partnership with *mana whenua* requires the building and protection of relationships with iwi and hapū in “ways that recognise and provide for the diversity of *mana whenua* relationships with place” (Simmonds et al., 2016: 103). These partnerships have the potential to “demonstrate meaningful and effective Treaty partnerships at the local government level” (Simmonds et al., 2016: 92). The focus on *mana whenua* relationships and representation aligns with the concerns of several commentators around the need for two different types of Māori representation: seats for *mana whenua*, Māori with iwi affiliations in the region, and seats for *Mataawaka* Māori, those Māori from outside the area who have moved to the region (Bargh, 2017, 2021; Mutu, 2004; Simmonds et al., 2016; Te One, 2018). This issue could usefully be part of the local government review discussion.

A decolonising view means changing perspective from prioritising hegemonic Western ways of viewing the world in order to be involved in the process of the divesting of colonial power (Smith, 2021). Indigenous theory, as discussed by Radcliffe (2017a: 330), seeks to “pinpoint the specificity of Indigenous disempowerment and to provide analytical and political alternatives to the Indigenous colonial present. This stance removes decolonial approaches from the realm of the metaphorical to examining the material and political costs of settler colonialism.”

Interview participants argue that Māori wards are a first step towards further changes in local government. The system itself must be challenged in relation to the concept of deep colonising. The normalisation and increasing acceptance of Māori wards and co-governance structures should not necessarily be read as a sign that the systemic norms of local government politics have shifted. Rather, their situatedness within a colonial democratic structure arguably replicates and reinforces rather than transforms the local government system. The establishment of Māori wards, even though perhaps done with the best intent, “can be one of the most pernicious of deep colonising practices because it reinstates the patronising authority of the dominant culture” (Howitt, 2001: 149). Processes used by institutions to address the effects of colonisation reflect the difficulties of shifting hegemonic beliefs and processes despite good intentions Marchetti (2006).

6.6 Conclusion

Since the changes to the legislation in February 2021 that removed the referendum clauses from the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), many councils have established provisions for the introduction of Māori wards or constituencies via 2022 local body elections (Local Government Commission, n.d.; votelocal, n.d.). The legislation has been amended to enable establishment of Māori wards to ‘add’ Māori representation to local government structures and processes that have, historically, marginalised Māori. This chapter has argued that Māori wards are a first step, and options for moving forward from this liminal space for Māori in local government were discussed. Discussion included consideration of proportional population-based representation, and co-governance underpinned by a Tiriti-based structure and system. The evidence showed the way people used their interpretation of Te Tiriti to justify their political stance on Māori wards. This evidence outlined the importance of a move away from the principles of the English language version of the Treaty of Waitangi as outlined in the 1987 Lands Case to an understanding of the Māori language version of Te Tiriti and clarity around terms such as sovereignty and partnership. Following discussion of Te Tiriti and what it means for local government, the work of Matike Mai and the journey towards constitutional transformation was discussed as a Tiriti-based constitution is necessary to underpin any meaningful changes to the local government system. In addition to legislative changes around Māori wards, the review of local government structure has the

potential to enable local government to meet its obligations under Te Tiriti, resulting in a tūrangawaewae where all belong.

In the following and final chapter, I summarise the arguments and empirical evidence with concluding thoughts on the research question and aims. I also raise issues for further academic consideration that relate to this topic.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion - The liminal space of opportunity

Kotahi te kōwhao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro mā, te miro whero me te miro pango.
There is but one eye of the needle through which all threads must pass, the white, the red and the black alike.

Kingi Pōtatau Te Wherowhero (the first Māori King 1858).

Ma whero ma pango ka oti ai te mahi . . .
With red and black the work will be complete . . .

The whakatauki above depict two aspects of the thesis. Firstly, they portray the coming together of various strands of research practice, including identifying research goals; amassing and analysing relevant literature; selecting theoretical perspectives through which to undertake the research; choosing a methodological framework, and choice of appropriate methods to gather research evidence; and, to analyse and extract meaning from it to make complete a woven together whole. Each of these strands are expanded upon below to summarise the goals of this research, how it was undertaken and to present the research findings. Secondly, the whakatauki relate to the bringing together of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in a local government unique to Aotearoa, fit for purpose and that encourages a sense of belonging for both parties. The research examines Māori representation in local government from the meaning of Te Tiriti in terms of relationship and partnership and how Aotearoa could be working in the spirit of Te Tiriti to make local government a tūrangawaewae – a place for all to stand and feel they are welcomed and belong.

The research builds on a range of national and international scholarship and decolonisation literature that unsettles the status quo of hegemonic Eurocentric institutions and systems such as local government, and that strives to reclaim and assert Indigenous voices and ways of knowing. Local government democracy, representation and power relations in Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa are critically examined using theories and concepts emerging from a range of disciplines, including Māori, social, geopolitical and cultural geography and Indigenous studies. Dynamics of liminality are used as a framework to explore the impact on Māori representation and belonging in local government of the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy.

The research question asks how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? This final chapter is framed around the three research aims that underlie that question: to critique and challenge the limitations of the Eurocentric model of local government democracy practiced in Aotearoa, and its impact on Māori representation and belonging in local government at the scale of the nation; to apply the unease and discomfort that characterises liminality to the status of Māori wards in local government within Tauranga Moana and Aotearoa more broadly; and, to use the liminal position of Māori representation in local government and the innovative possibilities of that positioning to reimagine decolonising local government across Aotearoa. The chapter firstly, at the scale of the nation, shows the geopolitical place of Māori representation is on the threshold of change and transformation. Relating to this dynamic place of change, secondly, at the scale of Aotearoa as well as the local scale of Tauranga Moana, liminality is used to frame discussion around the unease and unsettling-ness people are experiencing through mechanisms to address inequity such as Māori wards. Thirdly, Māori wards depict the liminal position of Māori representation in local government as a place of creativity, where new ways of thinking and reimagining can be explored. These opportunities for transition towards something appropriate in terms of Māori representation in local government are considered to identify options for a way forward underpinned by Te Tiriti and Te Ao Māori principles, and to reimagine local government as a tūrangawaewae for all. A summary of the evidence in relation to the research question and three research aims is reflected on in the context of contributions to broader agendas of decolonisation. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the research process, thoughts on what the research adds to geographical scholarship, and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Colonialism and local government democracy

Places are socially constructed representations of the intersection of social, economic, and political relations (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Johnson, 2008b; Jones et al., 2015). Writing and knowledge is produced in such places, of which many have been constructed and involved in ongoing colonial violence toward Indigenous peoples (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). The confronting colonial history of Aotearoa is shaped by different beliefs and worldviews that

contribute to a polarisation of views around Māori representation in local government. The traditional Māori worldview is based on creation beliefs and legends that frame value systems that differ in some respects from those of hegemonic Eurocentric paradigms. For example, in terms of obligations to extended family connections; attitudes to land ownership, environmental stewardship, governance structures and practices; and, relationships to place. For Māori, whakapapa and whānaungatanga define a person's obligations and decision-making processes to each other (Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014; Summersby, 2009). This view contrasts with a Eurocentric individualistic worldview where each look after their own, and wider social obligations and allegiances are not strictly observed.

Globally, a Eurocentric attitude of white superiority underlies historical injustices that continue to impact Indigenous people and their cultures. In Aotearoa, one of the impacts of that attitude is the struggle for Māori to have a voice that carries weight in local government. Conflicts between those advocating for greater Māori representation in local government and those saying that processes to add Māori to the local government structure threaten the democratic process have been ongoing for decades. Evidence shows that, while Māori make up around 17 per cent of the overall population in Aotearoa, councillors elected to local government have been predominantly Pākehā, middle aged, heterosexual men, and that Māori are underrepresented in council decision-making spaces (Bargh, 2021; Mitchell, 2019; Stats NZ, 2021; Vowles & Hayward, 2021). To address this issue, the Local Electoral Act (LEA) and the Local Government Act (LGA) were reviewed in the early 2000s to encourage councils to embrace initiatives to increase Māori representation in local government. Clauses 19Z A-G of the LEA, however, stated that if a council decided to create a Māori ward or constituency, five percent of electors in a local government electoral district could petition the council to hold a binding referendum to approve or disapprove establishment of Māori wards. The referendum provision was widely acted upon, and during a 20-year period, only two of the 24 councils who tried to set up Māori wards were successful (Bargh, 2016; De Bres, 2010; Human Rights Commission, 2010; Whaitiri, 2017). In light of this, various high profile international and national commentators and politicians appealed to the government to address low Māori representation at elected member status in local government, however, little was achieved during that period to address disparities.

The research demonstrates the importance of dedicated Māori representation in local government to ensure a Māori view is being heard and to address power disparities. Local government struggles to facilitate Māori values as exemplified by factors such as the council agenda turn-around time, the majority vote and the adversarial nature of local body politics not being conducive to the traditional consensual nature of Māori decision-making. Local government exemplifies Indigenous struggles over political recognition as it defines who can be included and participate in decision-making and who has access to resources (Staehele, 2008). This relates to the politics of belonging and who belongs and on what terms they belong (O’Sullivan, 2018; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) explain that the politics of belonging requires the maintenance of structures and systems by hegemonic powers to exclude what they perceive does not belong, while those not of the dominant group are required to assimilate to the culture, values, language, behaviour, and religion of the dominant group.

Practices of local government that marginalise Māori and Te Ao Māori include systemic processes such as the lack of flexibility in the democratic system to embrace difference, the referendum mechanism within the LEA 2001 (prior to February 2021), the majority vote, and the physical environment of councils. Evidence shows that the overwhelmingly older and Pākehā voter turnout in local body elections generally excludes Māori representation, showing that democracy does not work well for all people (Hayward, 2021; Lawrence, 2021). Marginalisation of Māori was also evident through the design of Tauranga City Council buildings reflecting hegemonic Eurocentric cultural values.

In terms of elected member representation, concepts of accountability and responsiveness are integral to ensuring elected representatives are capable of representing Māori views at the decision-making table of local government. Academics such as Mansbridge (1999) note that elected representatives struggle to represent principles and values of people of whom they have no or very little lived experience. The view that everyone is equal and has equal say marginalises minority populations, as minority choices are overruled when they differ from those of the majority (Penehira et al., 2014). The research considered how and in what ways Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation. By increasing the number of Māori in local government through Māori wards, there will be more representatives acting in the interests of Māori, and Māori will see

people on councils who can represent their worldview and values. In terms of the different mandate held by Māori ward councillors, Māori ward representatives will be able to promote and protect Māori rights and interests because they have an understanding of tikanga Māori, and a Māori worldview, combined with shared experiences (Simmonds, 2009; Sullivan, 2003).

The research undertaken in Tauranga Moana illustrated concepts identified at the scale of local body politics in Aotearoa such as the polarisation of views on Māori wards and the challenges for Māori to be elected to local government. The research found that Tauranga Moana has a racist reputation. This aspect was highlighted by several interview participants, Māori and non-Māori, who referred to Tauranga being a city full of 'racist old white men.' Interviewees identified racist bias within the community, citing mistrust and fear towards Māori, with comments like 'tail wag the dog' and 'brownmail' reflecting racist attitudes towards Māori representation at elected member level. On a positive note, Tauranga City Council (TCC) has recently been taking steps to address historic injustices as well as being among the first councils in Aotearoa to vote for establishing Māori wards under the amended local government legislation in 2021.

Considering Māori representation in local government in Tauranga Moana, some interviewees note that non-Māori elected members struggle to apply a Māori worldview to decision-making when they have little understanding of that worldview. One non-Māori interviewee, however, fails to see why a Māori view would differ from the majority view and does not understand why dedicated Māori representation is required. This view shows that it is difficult for some Pākehā to imagine or value different worldviews or perspectives other than those of their own dominant group (Glynn, 2015; Parsons et al., 2019; Radcliffe, 2022). Māori participants, however, stress the importance to them of Māori participation in local government, outlining areas where local government has overlooked their specific cultural wants and needs. Examples of how their view has been marginalised in local government decision-making include the use of jet skis on rivers of cultural significance and waste disposal issues. These examples demonstrate the conflict of worldviews and systems that marginalise Māori from a sense of belonging in local government.

Aligning with Barnett and Low's (2004) observation that democracy is a set of processes and procedures underpinned by culturally specific norms, the institution of local government in

Aotearoa is a Western imposed structure that marginalises Māori by privileging Western 'universal' norms and practices. For example, McIntosh (1988) states that dominant groups have difficulty identifying their own privilege, possibly due to a reluctance on their part to address inequities through fear of losing some of their own privileges. Arguments around how citizens are all one people and should be treated as such emanate from the assimilationist underpinnings of the colonial hegemonic mindset on which are based systems and institutions in Aotearoa.

Postcolonial scholars note that colonising processes are continuing into the present (see Howitt, 2001, 2013, 2019; Rose, 1999; Wolfe, 2006). In Aotearoa, for example, institutional structures and processes established by British colonists, including local government, continue to marginalise Māori. Within local government, this means that, through tools such as the referendum, the majority vote and the adversarial style of representative democracy, Māori struggle to belong in local government, and have previously been marginalised and relegated to occupy a relatively powerless space within local government decision-making. Local government in Aotearoa has been dominated by a European mindset and a prioritising of Western systems and processes over Māori tikanga, mātauranga and te reo Māori.

In relation to the research question, evidence shows that Māori wards are required to address disparity as the Western style of local government democracy is failing Māori. While democracy is a contested concept that depicts notions of equality, the normative ideal of equality as highlighted by commentators such as Brash and Seymour focuses on equal treatment rather than equal outcomes (Dahl, 1989; Gilmartin, 2009; Huntington, 2016; Kymlicka, 2001; Saward, 2010; Staeheli, 2010; Sullivan, 2011). Arguments by those against Māori wards state that democracy means voters should have equal political rights and treat each other as equals. These views are balanced by those who highlight the inequitable outcomes of the democratic system. For example, it has been 28 years since Tauranga Moana had a Māori councillor. Mechanisms to address such inequities, through Māori wards or dedicated Māori seats, Kymlicka (1995) argues, are sometimes needed to address unequal outcomes.

The legislating of Māori wards is a mechanism to address disparity within a colonially imposed governance system. The research shows that Māori wards are evidence of a local government system that has failed Māori and a system that needs review and

transformation (Bargh, 2021; Hayward, 2011a; Shaw, 2011). Since changes to the local government legislation in 2021, 35 councils established Māori wards in time for the local body elections in September 2022. This demonstrates strong local government support for Māori representation and the recognition that Māori wards are the only way in the current system to address electoral inequity.

7.2 The liminal space of Māori wards

The geographical concept of liminality describes a state that is neither here nor there, but situated betwixt and between (Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1960). The concept of liminality is useful to consider the rhetoric around Māori wards for local government. The notions of in-betweenness and ambiguity that define Māori wards elicit a sense of uneasiness in those who wish to maintain the perceived status quo. Changes to legislation in 2021 enabled councils to establish Māori wards without the mechanism of community referenda. This move was highly controversial and resulting media articles provided rich material for this research. A polarisation of views around Māori wards was identified in the research findings. Those standing against Māori wards use emotive arguments that Māori wards are ‘race-based’, they undermine democracy, that Māori wards are divisive, that they privilege Māori, that ‘we are one people’ and equal, hence there is no need for separate representation for Māori, and for the sanctity of one person, one vote and majority rule. Supporters of Māori wards and the removal of the referendum clauses uphold Te Tiriti as the basis of the right for Māori to be involved in local government decision-making and argue for ‘oneness but not sameness’ (Bargh, 2021; Wano-Bryant, cited in Shaskey, 2021). Academics in general also tend to view the exclusion of Māori from decision-making positions in local government as democracy not working in the way it was intended in relation to providing representation for Indigenous people and for Māori in terms of Te Tiriti obligations (Bargh, 2020; Shaw, 2011; Vowles & Hayward, 2021).

Around the period of the enactment of the amendments to the LEA in February 2021, there were numerous articles and commentaries in the media about the Māori ward debate, with a polarisation of views apparent. Opponents of Māori wards seek to retain the LEA referendum clause in the ‘defence of democracy’, while others say Māori wards are good for democracy (Angeloni, 2021; Muir, 2021; Slater, 2021). Demonstrating the way Māori wards

occupy a liminal space in local government, the Minister of Local Government stated that the enabling of Māori wards is a transitional in-between phase to address the immediate issue of Māori disparity while local government undergoes an extensive review process.

The research illuminates the paradox of Māori wards being a mechanism to assist Māori representation in local government while also potentially reinforcing a colonising system.

The literature shows that attempts to 'decolonise' hegemonic systems and institutional processes often result in perpetuating colonial systems and entrenching colonising practices (de Leeuw et al., 2013; Gibbs, 2003; Marchetti, 2006; Rose, 1996, 1999; Veracini, 2011).

Processes used by institutions to address the effects of colonisation, Marchetti (2006) argues, reflect the difficulties of shifting hegemonic beliefs and processes despite good intentions. A shift to address Māori representation is occurring in local government, however, unless the underlying political structure is transformed, it may represent a longer term shift from colonising practices to deep colonising. Concerns around deep colonising show that while Māori wards are a positive move to enhance Māori representation, their establishment enables the hegemonic system of local government itself to remain unchallenged. To address the apparent disparities, the hegemonic systems underlying local government must be acknowledged and a new way of thinking embraced.

7.3 Local government as tūrangawaewae?

The issue of Māori representation in local government has been addressed in a variety of ways in Aotearoa in order to facilitate change, but initiatives remain embedded in the hegemonic Western colonial paradigm. This colonialist approach assumes that local government structures and democratic election processes are the way the world works and are unalterable. To address the concerns around Māori representation in local government, Bargh (2021) suggests discussions could begin with the concept of a Tiriti-based local government relationship. This different starting place could be a national discussion around a Tiriti-based constitution which would then underpin development of a new local government framework. The global context shows it is timely for development of a local government system that reflects Aotearoa's bicultural heritage, respects Te Tiriti obligations and is fit for purpose in the unique context of Aotearoa. Interview participants note that Māori wards are a first step towards addressing disparities. To address that idea, the

research considers several options for a way forward, including proportional population-based representation, a type of co-governance, constitutional transformation, and a review of local government resulting in a Tiriti-based structure and system.

Under current local government legislation, a proportional representation model is used to determine the number of Māori ward seats that a council can establish. Several interviewees also relate the number of Māori wards to the proportion of Māori in the population. Hapū or iwi based representation is another option raised by interviewees to address low Māori representation in local government. This relates to the hapū being the basis of traditional Māori society (Bell, 2018). Apart from proportional representation and hapū or iwi-based representation, the system most often mentioned by interviewees is a type of co-governance arrangement, or half seats for each of Māori and non-Māori. While co-governance is a term receiving wide media scrutiny and is a topic of high interest in Aotearoa at present, it is an option to incorporate a Tiriti-based approach to local government (Adams, 2021b; Brett Kelly, 2022; Malpass, 2021). Co-governance arrangements are not new to Aotearoa, with several being established as part of Treaty settlements during the time Chris Finlayson was Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations as a Minister in the National Government between 2008 and 2017. The Waikato River Authority is a useful example of such a statutory body formed with an equal number of members appointed from each River Iwi and Crown-appointed members. While initially uncertainty and negativity were expressed by some quarters that this structure was undemocratic, the Chief Executive of the Waikato River Authority notes that this arrangement is worthwhile and inclusive of iwi Māori. Several commentators note that co-governance could be an example of what was intended in Te Tiriti, and that some of the reactions against co-governance are driven by fears of losing long-held privileges (Bargh & Jones, 2022; Dunne, 2022; Godfery, 2022; Vance, 2022).

The way the two language versions of Te Tiriti have been differentially understood has exacerbated historical breaches of Te Tiriti and underpinned colonising practices (Moon, 2021). These different understandings of Te Tiriti, particularly around concepts of sovereignty and partnership, have shaped much of the polarisation and rhetoric around Māori representation in local government. The research shows that the way people understand Te Tiriti serves to justify their stance on Māori wards. One of the obstacles to a

uniformity of views on Te Tiriti is that people use the version that suits their purpose, and that the Waitangi Tribunal tries to make Te Tiriti “all things to all people” (Moon, 2021). Interviewees have varied views on what the obligations are for local government under Te Tiriti as well as different understandings of sovereignty and partnership framed in Te Tiriti. The conflicting understandings of Te Tiriti, even at national parliamentary level, demonstrates the need for clarity around what Te Tiriti means in terms of obligations and relationship. Came et al. (2021) argue the importance of a move away from the principles of the English language version of the Treaty of Waitangi as outlined in the 1987 Lands Case to an understanding of the Māori language version of Te Tiriti and clarity around terms such as sovereignty and partnership. Some interview participants prefer to use the term ‘relationship’ than ‘partnership’ to reflect what Te Tiriti means. One interviewee likens the Tiriti relationship to a marriage where some infidelity has occurred, highlighting the importance of communication and building relationships. The principle of partnership drawn from Te Tiriti is regularly referred to by interviewees as a reason why Māori representation in local government is required. Much rhetoric and academic comment has focused on the low representation of Māori in local government. While acknowledging the importance of highlighting this issue, the focus on increasing the numbers of Māori elected to local government negates the fact that the principles signed up to in Te Tiriti were not based on population structure but were agreed on a partnership basis.

A solution evolving from the debate on Māori representation may be linked to discussions around constitutional transformation for Aotearoa and resulting partnership arrangements for a new local government model emanating from those discussions. To avoid the situation of deep colonising, Mulholland and Tawhai (2011) argue that constitutional transformation is required prior to any major restructuring of local government. In 2010, Matike Mai Aotearoa – the independent working group on constitutional transformation – was established by the Iwi Chairs’ Forum. Since then, a five-year process involving 252 hui and discussions with various leaders and experts in Māoridom has been undertaken (Bishop, 2022; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). The 2016 report resulting from these discussions recommended six models for a new Māori and Crown constitutional relationship (Jackson, 2019; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016; Mutu, 2018). The unicameral, bicameral, and tricameral models are based on three spheres of

operation – the kāwanatanga sphere, the rangatiratanga sphere, and the relational sphere. The sphere in-between the two, the ‘relational sphere,’ would reflect the Tiriti relationship through favouring “a conciliatory and consensual democracy rather than an adversarial and majoritarian one” (Matike Mai, 2016: 68).

Alongside the Matike Mai work, the Government of Aotearoa in 2013 initiated national conversations about constitutional arrangements and established a Constitutional Advisory Panel (Came et al., 2021). A new Tiriti-based constitution that transforms and underpins systems, processes and institutions going forward would frame discussion around such things as Māori wards and co-governance. It is imperative that the constitutional transformation work of Matike Mai be progressed emanating from a Māori perspective, rather than based on what Pākehā think Māori want. Commentators state it would be a brave government to embrace the Matike Mai proposals, and the polarisation of views on Māori wards and co-governance show that Aotearoa may not yet be ready for the conversation.

In addition to opportunities to address local government disparity through clarifying Te Tiriti meanings, co-governance opportunities and constitutional transformation, the Labour government in 2021 initiated a comprehensive review of local government to be undertaken by The Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA). The independent two-year Ministerial review is being conducted in three stages. The first stage was completed in September 2021, a milestone marked by the publication of an interim report (DIA, 2021). One of the goals of the review is to consider options for local government that will “actively embody the Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership” (DIA, 2021: 3). Key observations summarised from the first report include statements that recognise that the partnership aspects and rights to self-government under Te Tiriti for Māori have not been observed, with domination of local authorities by non-Māori (DIA, 2021). The report notes that Māori interests have been marginalised in local government. Furthermore, the DIA (2021) report explains that through devolving powers to local authorities without appropriate safeguards, Māori communities have been harmed and rights under Te Tiriti breached.

The initiatives outlined above are opportunities for Māori representation in local government to move from a liminal place of unease and discomfort to a place of innovation, renewal and transformation. The thesis reimagines local government as a

place of belonging for Māori through a Tiriti-based co-designed local government system – a tūrangawaewae or a ‘place to stand.’ While recognising Stokes’ (1987) statement that Māori is a worldview, the concept of tūrangawaewae depicts the sense of belonging and connectedness with the land Māori experience when they have occupied a region for several generations (Kidman, 2012). The links Māori have to place, and the long-term commitment of mana whenua to a place, provides the potential to “demonstrate meaningful and effective Treaty partnerships at the local government level” (Simmonds et al., 2016: 92). This thesis argues that constitutional transformation as envisioned by Matike Mai and a local government review that reimagines local government in terms of embodying the Tiriti partnership has the potential to result in local government being a tūrangawaewae for all people in Aotearoa.

7.4 Contribution to geographic scholarship

This research contributes towards an improved understanding about Māori political representation, subsequently adding to international knowledge on the importance of representation of minority and under-represented groups in governing bodies. While electoral reforms undertaken in Aotearoa in 2001 had the potential to ensure an increased proportion of Māori councillors in local government, anecdotally Māori representation at elected member level in local government has remained low (Bargh, 2017, 2021; Vowles & Hayward, 2021; Mitchell, 2019). Statistical information about elected members who identify as Māori or have Māori descent is not collected officially, and in-depth research on Māori representation in local government is sparse. This thesis, therefore, sought to investigate the issue of Māori representation in local government using thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews and participant observations in Tauranga Moana, and of Māori ward debates as presented in the media.

Previous literature has focused on Māori representation in local government and the need to address disparity. This research argues that the focus should move away from representation to take a multiscale approach. This approach considers the importance of the local and locality when contemplating decolonising the institution of local government, and attends to the scale of the local alongside the scale of the city and the nation. This research is also contributing to a small body of work that views the topic of Māori representation in

local government from the perspective of Te Tiriti rights and responsibilities as a starting point. This research adds to the body of work on the intersection of democracy, colonisation, and Indigeneity within the field of geography. It demonstrates the way concepts of (un)belonging and exclusion work within a framework of three key aspects of liminality to make sense of this controversial topic. Of particular note, the research illuminates the prospect of deep colonising by adding Māori wards and other mechanisms to the current system without addressing the root causes of the deficit. These causes include lack of clarity and a shared understanding of what was promised in Te Tiriti, and the lack of courage of governments to take a stand for what Te Tiriti means and to reconstruct and rebuild institutions and systems accordingly.

7.5 Theoretical and methodological reflections

A geographical approach was used to investigate Māori representation in local government using concepts of liminality and the geopolitics of belonging, along with Māori concept of tūrangawaewae. The three dynamics of concept of liminality as identified by McConnell (2017) were useful to envision Māori representation in local government in terms of marginality, unease, and opportunity. A geopolitics of belonging framework encouraged alternative ways of viewing Māori representation in local government, and the term tūrangawaewae enabled a Māori sense of belonging to be depicted.

In terms of methodology, the Te Ara Tika methodological framework provided a specific Māori methodological framing to the research practice. It ensured that all aspects of the methodology aligned with Kaupapa Māori principles and values, and placed Māori experience as central to the research. The range of methods used for the research was limited as the research was undertaken during a time of Covid-19 restrictions. One on one semi-structured interviews were selected for this limited situation as face-to-face group meetings were discouraged by government regulation during this time. The interview method enabled interviewees to share more than they may have been comfortable with in a group setting. Focus groups, however, had the potential to broaden the range of responses through interaction of participants. In approaching the interviews, I found the practice of humility valuable in building mutual respect and enabling an openness to discussion with all participants. The triangulation of the three methods used in the research - analysis of media

articles, semi-structured interviews, and participant observations - enabled coverage of the topic across spatial scales: from macro level national debate through the media articles; to the micro level of people's individual, community, council, and city attitudes and views. These in-depth methods enabled the establishment of a snap shot of the local government experiences at both the national level and in Tauranga Moana. Once the information was gathered, reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke, (2021a), served well to structure the identification, analysis, and reporting of the themes within the data to find meaning. Furthermore, this thematic analysis aligned well with the Te Ara Tika framework in terms of reflection and being conscious of my positionality within the research.

7.6 Further research

There are several directions for further academic work emanating from this research. For example, this research focused on Māori and their rights to local government representation. There is, however, documented under-representation⁵¹ of other sectors of the community in local government (such as women, youth, disabled, non-Pākehā ethnicities, and members from the diverse gender and sexuality spectrum community). Further research could take an intersectional approach to explore how the majority rules model of democratic local government system impacts these other sectors. Further research might also consider the resources people need to stand as a local government candidate in terms of education, knowledge of the electoral system, and financial support, in order to understand if these factors hinder Māori representation in local government. Additionally, education on civics in schools was raised by some participants as an opportunity for people to recognise the importance of local government and gain familiarity in how to participate. Of direct relevance to the research topic, future research might usefully document and analyse the impact of the recently established Māori wards following the local government elections in September 2022. For example, the majority of Māori being on the Māori electoral roll and voting for Māori candidates suggests that the rest of the candidates are being voted for by predominantly non-Māori. It would be useful to learn whether those general candidates feel a responsibility to represent Māori or whether they will leave Māori

⁵¹ Statistically under-representation, means “a group of people who are not represented in a given situation (in this case, the profession of teaching) at the same level as they are represented in the larger population” <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/multiculturalism-in-special-education/33681>

representation to the Māori ward representatives. In many cases, councils will only have one or two Māori ward councillors in a council of up to twelve councillors. While Māori wards are a start to get dedicated Māori representation on councils, further research could explore how Māori representation nationwide is affected by the establishment of Māori wards.

Another topic for future research involves the local geographical aspect of mana whenua and the contribution they might make as partners in local government based on their long historical ties to an area (Bargh, 2021). A decolonising lens might usefully be employed to explore how the long term connection mana whenua have to their locality is a source of contributory knowledge to local government decision-making. The examples presented in Chapter Two illustrated the way an ongoing Eurocentric mindset of coloniality of local government had marginalised mana whenua from participation in decision-making discussions. Recognition and provision for mana Māori and mana whenua are opportunities for a level of local knowledge and expertise to enhance local body relationships and decision-making.

7.7 Conclusion

The three empirical chapters presented research evidence to show that Aotearoa is experiencing change. The research question asked how, and in what ways, do Māori wards decolonise local government and encourage greater Māori representation? In response to the research question, the research found that while Māori wards are viewed as a first step by some towards addressing low Māori representation in local government, they are embedded within the colonial representative democratic system which has marginalised Māori. The liminal space created by decolonising structures and processes to address Indigenous disparity creates places of unease and uncertainty for some. Discomfort and angst are being expressed by some against change, as evident in the opposition to Māori wards and co-governance. This liminal space, however, can be a time of creativity where new ways of thinking and practice can be considered (McConnell, 2017). This is, therefore, a timely opportunity to consider reframing of local government to represent the uniqueness and diversity of Aotearoa's geographies.

The research considered the limitations of the current Eurocentric model of local government democracy and depicted how Māori representation in local government has

been marginalised. Māori wards are promoted as a means to address that disparity and encourage guaranteed representation for Māori in local government at the elected member level of decision-making. Examining the rhetoric around Māori wards for local government through thematic analysis of media commentary and interview transcripts revealed the unease and unsettling-ness people experienced within the liminal space of uncertainty exacerbated by the idea of Māori wards. Finally, the research used the innovative possibilities of the liminal position of Māori representation in local government to consider options for a way forward for Māori in local government, including constitutional transformation and a comprehensive review of local government. Decolonising hegemonic Eurocentric structures and institutions through this shared understanding, and implementation of a Tiriti-based constitution as Matike Mai suggests, is a valid way forward. For local government, the review underway, underpinned by the shared understandings of Te Tiriti and a Tiriti-based constitution, will potentially avoid the situation of deep colonising and enable a reimagining of local government as a tūrangawaewae for all people in Aotearoa. For a final word on the topic, TCC staff member Eruera explains:

We need to take it another step further and say, actually we need to stop and co-design the entire governance structure together. I want to make the point too, that doesn't mean that Māori should, can or would do that without Pākehā either. Actually the Treaty is saying we do that together . . . Actually your nirvana is co-design of a governance system together . . . There's a whole heap of opportunities around what co-design might look like if we were brave enough and strong enough to do that . . . We need to get away from figuring out that we can slap one over top of the other and have some sort of cake that we're all going to be able to eat. And actually, putting them side by side respecting their ability to function autonomously, and to realise that we've actually come somewhere where we could use those two things to improve each other but actually, in addition to, not instead of.

Appendix One – Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Māori and English versions)

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI - MĀORI VERSION

Ko Wikitoria te Kuini o Ingarani i tana mahara atawai ki nga Rangatira me nga Hapu o Nu Tirani i tana hiahia hoki kia tohungia ki a ratou o ratou rangatiratanga me to ratou wenua, a kia mau tonu hoki te Rongo ki a ratou me te Atanoho hoki kua wakaaro ia he mea tika kia tukua mai tetahi Rangatira – hei kai wakarite ki nga Tangata Māori o Nu Tirani – kia wakaetia e nga Rangatira Māori te Kawanatanga o te Kuini ki nga wahikatoa o te wenua nei me nga motu – na te mea hoki he tokomaha ke nga tangata o tona Iwi Kua noho ki tenei wenua, a e haere mai nei.

Na ko te Kuini e hiahia ana kia wakaritea te Kawanatanga kia kua ai nga kino e puta mai ki te tangata Māori ki te Pakeha e noho ture kore ana.

Na kua pai te Kuini kia tukua a hau a Wiremu Hopihono he Kapitana i te Roiara Nawi hei Kawana mo nga wahi katoa o Nu Tirani e tukua aiane amua atu ki te Kuini, e mea atu ana ia ki nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga o nga hapu o Nu Tirani me era Rangatira atu enei ture ka korerotia nei.

Ko te tuatahi

Ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa hoki ki hai i uru ki taua wakaminenga ka tuku rawa atu ki te Kuini o Ingarani ake tonu atu – te Kawanatanga katoa o ratou wenua.

Ko te tuarua

Ko te Kuini o Ingarani ka wakarite ka wakaae ki nga Rangatira ki nga hapu – ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa. Otiia ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga ne nga Rangatira katoa atu ka tuku ki te Kuini te hokonga o era wahi wenua e pai ai te tangata nona te wenua – ki te ritenga o te utu e wakaritea ai e ratou ko te kai hoko e meatia nei te Kuini hei kai hoko mona.

Ko te tuatoru

Hei wakaritenga mai hoki tenei mo te wakaetenga ki te Kawanatanga o te Kuini – Ka tiakina e te Kuini o Ingarani nga tangata Māori katoa o Nu Tirani ka tukua ki a ratou nga tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki nga tangata o Ingarani.

W. Hobson Consul & Lieutenant Governor

Na ko matou ko nga Rangatira o te Wakaminenga o nga hapu o Nu Tirani ka huihui nei ki Waitangi ko matou hoki ko nga Rangatira o Nu Tirani ka kite nei i te ritenga o enei kupu, ka tangohia ka wakaetia katoatia e matou, koia ka tohungia ai o matou ingoa o matou tohu. Ka meatia tenei ki Waitangi i te ono o nga ra o Pepueri i te tau kotahi mano, e waru rau e wa te kau o to tatou Ariki.

THE TREATY OF WAITANGI (TRANSLATION FROM MĀORI TO ENGLISH)

Victoria, the Queen of England, in her concern to protect the chiefs and the subtribes of New Zealand and in her desire to preserve their chieftainship and their lands to them and to maintain peace and good order considers it just to appoint an administrator one who will negotiate with the people of New Zealand to the end that their chiefs will agree to the Queen's Government being established over all parts of this land and (adjoining) islands and also because there are many of her subjects already living on this land and others yet to come.

So the Queen desires to establish a government so that no evil will come to Māori and European living in a state of lawlessness.

So the Queen has appointed me, William Hobson, a Captain in the Royal Navy to be Governor for all parts of New Zealand (both those) shortly to be received by the Queen and (those) to be received hereafter and presents to the chiefs of the Confederation chiefs of the subtribes of New Zealand and other chiefs these laws set out here.

The first

The Chiefs of the Confederation and all the Chiefs who have not joined that Confederation give absolutely to the Queen of England for ever the complete government over their land.

The second

The Queen of England agrees to protect the chiefs, the subtribes and all the people of New Zealand in the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their treasures. But on the other hand the Chiefs of the Confederation and all the Chiefs will sell land to the Queen at a price agreed to by the person owning it and by the person buying it (the latter being) appointed by the Queen as her purchase agent.

The third

For this agreed arrangement therefore concerning the Government of the Queen, the Queen of England will protect all the ordinary people of New Zealand and will give them the same rights and duties of citizenship as the people of England.

William Hobson Consul and Lieutenant-Governor.

So we, the Chiefs of the Confederation and of the subtribes of New Zealand meeting here at Waitangi having seen the shape of these words which we accept and agree to record our names and our marks thus.

Was done at Waitangi on the sixth of February in the year of our Lord 1840.

A translation by Professor Hugh Kawharu, 1975.

THE TREATY OF WAITANGI – ORIGINAL ENGLISH VERSION

Her Majesty Victoria Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland regarding with Her Royal Favour the Native Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and anxious to protect their just Rights and Property and to secure to them the enjoyment of Peace and Good Order has deemed it necessary in consequence of the great number of Her Majesty's Subjects who have already settled in New Zealand and the rapid extension of Emigration both from Europe and Australia which is still in progress to constitute and appoint a functionary properly authorized to treat with the Aborigines of New Zealand for the recognition of Her Majesty's Sovereign authority over the whole or any part of those islands – Her Majesty therefore being desirous to establish a settled form of Civil Government with a view to avert the evil consequences which must result from the absence of the necessary Laws and Institutions alike to the native population and to Her subjects has been graciously pleased to empower and to authorize me William Hobson a Captain in Her Majesty's Royal Navy Consul and Lieutenant-Governor of such parts of New Zealand as may be or hereafter shall be ceded to her Majesty to invite the confederated and independent Chiefs of New Zealand to concur in the following Articles and Conditions.

The Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand and the separate and independent Chiefs who have not become members of the Confederation cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual Chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or to possess over their respective Territories as the sole sovereigns thereof.

Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession; but the Chiefs of the United Tribes and the individual Chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Preemption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective Proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them in that behalf.

In consideration thereof Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the Natives of New Zealand Her royal protection and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects.

William Hobson, Lieutenant Governor.

Now therefore We the Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand being assembled in Congress at Victoria in Waitangi and We the Separate and Independent Chiefs of New Zealand claiming authority over the Tribes and Territories which are specified after our respective names, having been made fully to understand the Provisions of the

foregoing Treaty, accept and enter into the same in the full spirit and meaning thereof in witness of which we have attached our signatures or marks at the places and the dates respectively specified. Done at Waitangi this Sixth day of February in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty.

Source: Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga / Archives New Zealand (n.d.)

Appendix Two – Copy of ethics approval

Division of Arts, Law, Psychology & Social Sciences

The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

Te Piringa – Faculty of Law
Dr Nathan John Cooper
Tel: +64 7 838 4463
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www.waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Sandra des Forges
Lynda Johnston

School of Social Science

3 December 2019

Dear Sandra

Re: FS2019-40: Māori Representation in Local Government: Critical Geographies of Democratic Processes

Thank you for submitting your amended application to the ALPSS Human Research Ethics Committee, and for thoroughly addressing the committee's comments. Approval is now granted for your research, and I wish you every success.

Please do continue to liaise closely with your supervisor, and ensure that you get back in touch with this committee if your research changes.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Cooper'.

Nathan Cooper, Chair
Division of Arts, Law, Psychology & Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix Three – Information sheet for interview participants

Māori Representation in Local Government: Critical Geographies of Democratic Processes.

Researcher: Sandra Des Forges, PhD Candidate, Geography Programme, University of Waikato

Background

I began Doctoral studies in the Geography Programme at the University of Waikato in May 2019. My supervisory panel consists of Professor Lynda Johnston (Chief Supervisor) and Dr Colin McLeay (co-supervisor).

The purpose of the research is to critically examine representation of Māori in the local government democratic process and to explore alternate models of advancing Māori involvement in local government. Findings from the research will form part of Sandra Des Forges' PhD thesis at The University of Waikato and may appear in academic publications and presentations.

Your involvement

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with key people involved in local government including elected members and key staff, and members of Māori governance boards / committees who participate in council decision-making. The interviews will last between 30 and 60 minutes. Your interview will take place at a time and place that suits both of us and your privacy is guaranteed. If permission is granted, your interview will be audio-recorded to aid in putting the information together. If requested, transcripts of your interview will be returned to you for review and editing. I understand that your participation requires some of your time and trust, and I appreciate your willingness to participate.

Participants' Rights

As a participant you have the right to:

- decline to participate;
- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from any or all parts of the research;
- withdraw from the study up until three weeks following receipt of the focus group transcript;

- decline to be audio-recorded;
- ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time;
- ask for the erasure of any materials you do not wish to be used in reports of this study; and
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.

Confidentiality

Your answers will be treated completely confidentially. Your name and any other identifying characteristics or those of your organisation will not be disclosed in any resulting publications or any other reports produced in the course of this research. Pseudonyms (fake names) and generalisations will be used in any reports or published research so as to protect your and your organisation's identity. All of the information (including digital recordings and information on paper) will remain secure at all times in a locked cupboard in my home office. Data contained on computer databases will be accessible by password only. Data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email alpss-ethics@waikato.ac.nz , postal address, Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences , University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

The results

A short report derived from the main findings from the research will be prepared for you and other people who might be interested. Upon its completion, my thesis will be available at the University of Waikato's Central Library and on the Australasian Digital Theses Programme. The results of this research may be used in conference and seminar presentations, academic books and journal publications. The recorded interviews will be transcribed.

If you have any queries about this study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Lynda Johnston.

Thank you for your time reading this sheet and considering this invitation. Please contact me if you are interested in participating in the research as an interview or focus group participant, or if you have any questions about it. I look forward to hearing back from you!

Appendix Four – Interview consent form

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

DIVISION of ARTS, LAW, PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and I understand the Information Sheet and am willing to take part in the research project **Māori Representation in Local Government: Critical Geographies of Democratic Processes**. I understand that the purpose of the research is to critically examine representation of Māori in the local government democratic process and to explore alternate models of advancing Māori involvement in local government. Findings from the research will form part of Sandra Des Forges’ PhD thesis at The University of Waikato and may appear in academic publications and presentations.

I have received a copy of the Information Sheet describing the research project. Any questions that I have relating to the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions about the research at any time during my participation, and that I can withdraw my participation at any time up to three weeks after the interview.

During the interview, I understand that I do not have to answer questions unless I am happy to talk about the topic. I can stop the interview at any time, and I can ask to have the recording device turned off at any time.

When I sign this consent form, I will retain ownership of my interview, but I give consent for the researcher to use the interview for the purposes of the research outlined in the Information Sheet.

I understand that my identity will remain confidential in the presentation of the research findings.

Please complete the following checklist. Tick [X] the appropriate box for each point.	YES	NO
I agree to be interviewed.		
I agree to having my interview audio recorded.		
I wish to receive a copy of the interview transcript.		
Taking part in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up until three weeks following my interview and to decline to answer any individual questions in the study.		

“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this information sheet and signed consent form. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that my identity will remain confidential and anonymity guaranteed. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information and I am satisfied with the answers that have been provided.”

Signature of participant: _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions at any point during this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

Your details (for my records)

Name: _____

Age: 18-24 • 45-49 •
 25-29 • 50-54 •
 30-34 • 55-59 •
 35-39 • 60-64 •
 40-44 • 65 and over •

Phone number: home _____ cell: _____

Email: _____

Gender: _____

Iwi affiliation: _____

Organisation represented: _____

Occupation: _____

Appendix Five – Interview schedules

Interview kaupapa

Interviews will be semi structured and will follow the course of conversation allowing participants to voice their opinions. The questions below will provide some guidance for conversations, however, kōrero will be directed by the participants.

Interview Questions with Māori Representatives

Personal Experience

How long have you been involved in the xx Committee / Board?

What is the Committee / Board's role in regards to Council?

What is your role in regards to interaction with Council?

Thinking back now to the first time you entered the Council building in your Committee / Board capacity, what were your observations?

What are your observations about how Māori are represented in the Council building itself?

In terms of language used in Council meetings and Council documents – how is that for you?

General Observations

What would be your ideal Council environment in terms of:

- Décor?
- Room layout?
- Meeting protocol?
- Language used?

What are your observations about how the participation of unelected Māori representatives in Council / Committees is accepted by:

- elected members?
- Council staff?
- the wider district / city community?

Wider Focus

Thinking in general more now - Do you think Māori representation in councils is necessary? Why / why not?

What are your observations about how non-Māori elected members can represent Māori interests?

What are your expectations of Iwi representation on councils?

What barriers, if any, do you see that may hinder Māori being elected to councils?

Ideally, how many Māori would be required at the Council decision-making table to influence outcomes for Māori?

What do you think is the best way to improve Māori representation in your council?

Does your council have voting by FPP (A voting system used in single-winner elections in which the candidate with the most votes wins, without necessarily receiving a majority of votes) or STV for local body elections?

If FPP, what are your thoughts on whether introducing voting by the STV method would affect the outcomes of elections for your area?

What do you think about establishing Māori wards for your District / City?

Do you think something should be done at national level to make Māori representation mandatory on councils? Why / why not?

What could be done?

Imagine we didn't have this current system, if you could imagine a different system to represent Māori in local government, what would it look like?

Interview questions with elected members and staff

Personal Experience

How long have you been an elected member on Council for?

Do unelected Māori have voting rights at your Committees / Council?

General Observations

What are your observations on how well unelected Māori representation on Council / Committees is accepted by:

- elected members?
- the wider district / city community?
- Council staff?

What are your observations on having unelected Māori representation on Council / Committees?

Do you think Māori representation in Council is necessary? Why / why not?

What are your observations on how well non-Māori are able to represent Māori interests on Council?

What are your expectations of Iwi representation in council?

Have you been to Council or Committee meetings on marae?

How did you feel in that space? Please explain.

What do you think is the best way to improve Māori involvement at governance level in your council?

Does your council have FPP or STV voting?

If FPP - What are your thoughts on whether introducing voting by the STV method would affect the outcomes of elections for your area?

Has your council attempted to establish Māori wards for your District / City? What happened?

What do you think about establishing Māori wards for your District / City? Why?

Wider Focus

What barriers, if any, do you see exist to Māori being elected to councils?

Do you think something should be done at national level to make Māori representation mandatory on councils? Why / why not?

What could be done?

Imagine we didn't have this current system, if you could imagine a different system to represent Māori in local government, what would it look like?

Appendix Six – He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tirenī

HE WAKAPUTANGA O TE RANGATIRATANGA O NU TIRENI THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF NEW ZEALAND 28 OCTOBER 1835

- is an international declaration
- recognises the sovereignty of the Independent Tribes of N.Z.
- was signed on 28 October 1835
- was witnessed by the Crown Resident

1. Ko matou, ko nga Tino Rangatira o nga iwi o Nu Tirenī i raro mai o Hauraki kua oti nei te huihui i Waitangi i Tokerau i te ra 28 o Oketopa 1835, ko wakaputa i te Rangatiratanga o to matou wenua, a, ka mea ka wakaputata e matou he Wenua Rangatira, kia huaina ko te **Wakaminenga o nga Iwi o Nu Tirenī**.

2. Ko te Kingitanga ko te mana i te wenua o te wakaminenga o Nu Tirenī ka mea nei ko nga Tino Rangatira anake i to matou huihuinga. A, ka mea hoki e kare e tukua e matou te wakarite ture ki to tahi iunga ka atu, me te tahi Kawaranga hoki ka mea i te wenua o te wakaminenga o Nu Tirenī. Ko nga tangata anake e mea nei e matou e wakarite ana ki te ritenga o o matou ture e mea nei e matou i to matou huihuinga.

3. Ko matou ko nga Tino Rangatira ka mea nei ka huihui ki te runanga ki Waitangi a te ngahuru i toni tau i toni tau ki te wakarite ture, kia tika ai te wakawakanga, kia mau ki te rongo, kia mutu te he, kia tika te hokohoko. A, ka mea hoki ki nga tauwi o runga, ka wakarere te wawai, ka mahara ai ki te wakaranga o to matou wenua, a, ka uru matou ki te wakaminenga o Nu Tirenī.

4. Ka mea matou ka tuihuhia he pukapuka ki te ritenga o teni o to matou wakaputanga nei ki te Kingi o Ingarani hei kawea atu i to matou aroha nana hoki i wakaae ki te Kara me matou. A, se to mea ka aawai matou, ko tiki i nga pakuha e noho nei i aia, e noho mai ana ki te hokohoko, kaia ka mea ai matou ki te Kingi kia waiho hei matou ki a matou i to matou Tamakihanga hei wakakahoretia to matou Rangatiratanga.

Kua wakaatia katoatia e matou i toni ra, i te 28 Oketopa 1835, ki te aroaro o te Reireni o te Kingi o Ingarani.

1. We the hereditary chiefs and heads of the tribes of the Northern parts of New Zealand, being assembled at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, on this 28th day of October, 1835, declare the independence of our country which is hereby constituted and declared to be an Independent State under the designation of the **United Tribes of New Zealand**.

2. All sovereign power and authority within the territories of the united tribes of New Zealand is hereby declared to reside entirely and exclusively in the hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes in their collective capacity, who also declare that they will not permit any legislative authority separate from themselves in their collective capacity, nor any function of government to be exercised within the said territories, unless by persons appointed by them and acting under the authority of laws regularly enacted by them in Congress assembled.

3. The hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes agree to meet in Congress at Waitangi in the autumn of each year for the purpose of framing laws for the dispensation of justice, the preservation of peace and good order, and the regulation of trade. They also cordially invite the southern tribes to lay aside their private animosities and to consult the safety and welfare of our common country by joining the Confederation of the United Tribes.

4. They also agree to send a copy of this Declaration to His Majesty the King of England to thank him for his acknowledgement of their flag, in return for the friendship and protection that they have shown and are prepared to show to such of his subjects as have settled in their country or resorted to its shores for the purposes of trade, they entreat that he will continue to be the parent of their infant State, to protect it from all attempts upon its independence.

Agreed to in its entirety by us on this 28th day of October, 1835, in the presence of His Britannic Majesty's Resident.

- was the forerunner of the Treaty of Waitangi
- has a flag to symbolise tribal rights to trade as independent nations
- has been ignored by NZ governments and the education system

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