HINE NGARO

Ruia taitia kia tū tātēkā anake
Strip off the sap, leave only the heart

HINE NGARO REPRESENTS THE MIND/INNER SELF
Nga Pou Wāhine Series Robyn Kahukiwa 2000
Chapter Three
Research Design and Methodology

...this space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a 'safe' place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance (hooks, 1990:149).

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and methodology for this thesis. The epistemology is situated in a Te Ao Marama worldview and is discussed further in this chapter. This research, like most mana wahine research, is driven from the desire to seek change in the colonial patriarchal ideologies and hegemonies in the form of self-determination. Consequently, there is no clear delineation between the theory and praxis nexus within this research. I acknowledge that the work and thoughts within this thesis need to be accessible and relevant to potentially diverse audiences for varying purposes. For example, this thesis must meet the criteria of both a Ph.D. within the academy, and at the same time contribute to the goals of tino rangatiratanga for Maori women and the protection of Papaturu. As such, I am acutely aware of the need to appeal to an academic audience as well as to construct a language that is useful for Maori. This has raised issues of how to represent voices of participants who have allowed themselves to be presented within this work and of how to make this work accessible to Maori.

In working through these issues, I have explored kaupapa Maori research and mana wahine epistemologies, adopted a mana wahine methodology, and reflected on my position as a researcher. In turn these have informed my choice of qualitative research methods and methods for interpreting data which are also discussed in this chapter.
Epistemology

This thesis is driven by a mana wahine epistemology. In order to build an understanding of this epistemology, kaupapa Maori has been explored as it provides the lens for understanding this epistemology and this thesis.

Kaupapa Maori

Kaupapa Maori is inherently about tino rangatiratanga. Kaupapa Maori is more than an epistemology or a research method. For Ngaronoa Mereana Takino (cited in Cram, 2001:40); “it is the core component of which might otherwise be thought of as divergent forms of theorising, it is a commitment to ending systems of domination and oppression and the restoration of our dignity as human beings.” Kaupapa Maori epistemology derives from a Maori worldview and is by no means a new discourse. Fiona Cram (2000:41) discusses kaupapa Maori epistemology as:

an attempt to retrieve space for Maori voices and perspectives. It is about providing a framework for explaining to tauiwi (non-Maori) what we (Maori) have always been about. In this way kaupapa Maori is not a new initiative.

Kaupapa Maori epistemology views the right for Maori to reclaim the right to be Maori within the Aotearoa/New Zealand wider society. It is a culturally defined theoretical space (Pihama, 2001). Graham Smith (1990:100) summarises contemporary expressions of kaupapa Maori theory and epistemology as follows:

A kaupapa Maori base (Maori philosophy and principles) is local theoretical positioning related to being Maori; such a position presupposes that:

- The validity and legitimacy of Maori is taken for granted
- The survival and revival of Maori language and culture is imperative
- The struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well-being, and over our own lives is vital to Maori survival.
Essentially, kaupapa Maori are fundamental principles and philosophies capable of providing an explanation of all experience as Maori. This picture of the phenomenal world is called ‘Te Ao Marama’ (Royal, 1998). All traditional whakapapa (genealogy and kinship ties) within the Maori world lead to Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatuanuku (Earth Mother) who represent the physical venue within which the phenomenal world exists. However Ranginui and Papatuanuku and Te Ao Marama also represent a philosophical orientation to the world. Charles Royal (1998:83) elaborates on this view:

Matauranga Maori (Maori knowledge) was traditionally created with the view that the earth was Papatuanuku, that the sky was Ranginui and that the world in which we currently reside is called Te Ao Marama.

Kaupapa Maori methodologies woven with mana wahine provide the epistemological framework for this thesis. Fiona Cram (2001:41) states:

As an approach to research, Kaupapa Maori provides a methodology or philosophy that guides Maori researchers. It allows us to acknowledge that the research we undertake as Maori researchers will have different epistemological and metaphysical foundations than Western-oriented research.

The following whakatauaki (Maori proverb) helps to explain the themes of this epistemological worldview.

Me ako a tatou tamariki he kawenata te Tiriti o Waitangi.
Ona putaketake he rangatiratanga, he manaakitanga, he whanaungatanga, he tohungatanga, he ukaipo. Otira, kei tua ko te aka matua, tona ingoa ko te kotahitanga.

We must teach our children that the Treaty of Waitangi is a covenant and whose ‘roots’ are rangatiratanga, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, tohungatanga and ukaipo. However, beyond all of these lies ‘the parent vine’ whose name is unity (Royal, 1998:85).
Charles Royal (1998) argues that these six concepts described within the whakatauaki arise from maaturanga Maori (Maori knowledge) and that by perpetuating these six concepts one is perpetuating Te Ao Marama. I have provided interpretation of the six concepts to assist the reader in understanding a kaupapa Maori and Te Ao Marama epistemology:

**Rangatiratanga** is concerned with leadership and defines leadership as the ability to bind (ranga) groups (tira) together.

**Manaakitanga** points to the mutual elevation of mana in an encounter scenario. As one person or group encounters another and engages in a process where the elevation of mana of both parties occurs, then it is said that manaakitanga has been expressed.

**Whanaungatanga** denotes the interconnectedness of all things and this is shown as whakapapa.

**Tohungatanga** concerns expertise and skill, particularly with symbolism, and the interpretation and creation of new symbols and preservation of old symbols.

**Ukaipo** are those places where one is nourished. These places are likened to a mother’s breast.

**Kotahitanga** denotes the unity of all things in the world. The experience of separateness, duality and alienation in the world is a foreground to a much deeper plane of existence whose major feature is kotahitanga.
In summary, the kaupapa Maori epistemology I am using in this thesis commences and travels within a Te Ao Marama worldview. It works towards goals of emancipation, tino rangatiratanga and retrieving space for Maori knowledge and definitions. These goals are clearly articulated by Maori women interviewed for this thesis. As such I have chosen to locate this thesis within not only a kaupapa Maori epistemology but also that of mana wahine.

This research and research methodology is part of the larger indigenous research agenda movement. Linda Tuhiiwai Smith (1999) defines an agenda for indigenous research, describing the social movement of indigenous peoples over the last forty years as having developed themes that constitute an agenda for action; Linda states, (1999:115):

> The Agenda connects local, regional, and global efforts which are moving towards the ideal of a self-determining indigenous world...The research agenda is conceptualized here as constituting a program and set of approaches that are situated within the decolonisation politics of the indigenous people’s movement.

While this thesis is part of this indigenous research agenda by the nature of its enquiry, I remain critical of the invisibility of indigenous women within it and seek to visibly position indigenous women and integrate their voices.

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21 It is important that readers outside of Te Ao Maori (the Maori world) apply reflexivity to their understanding of this epistemology and are aware of the outsider lens that is applied by nature of their biases to the understanding of kaupapa Maori epistemology.
Figure 2.1 The Indigenous Research Agenda (Source: Smith, 1999: 117).

Figure 2.1 is Linda's representation of the indigenous research agenda and she uses descriptions from the Pacific, referring to natural elements such as tides to describe the movements and interrelationships within her research agenda. Linda defines the four represented directions; decolonisation, healing, transformation and mobilization to represent process, not so much as endpoints but points and movements which, "can connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global. They are processes which can be incorporated into practices and methodologies" (Smith, 1999:116). Similarly, the four major tides - survival, recovery, development and self-
determination represent conditions that indigenous communities experience within an indigenous research agenda.

It is important the development and movement towards self-determination by indigenous communities specifically concerning indigenous knowledge, that indigenous women are visible decision makers, central to the development and the movement. The marginalisation of indigenous women’s roles in environment and development models is often related to their lack of authority within their own societies (Awa, 1989, Badri and Badri 1994, Rocheleau 1991)\textsuperscript{22}. The failure to account for the differences between indigenous men and indigenous women within the indigenous research agenda is a failure to acknowledge the impact of colonial patriarchal ideologies’. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) agenda for indigenous research clearly articulates indigenous aspirations with regard to research, but it is not a counter hegemonic response to the oppression faced by many indigenous women within their own communities. It is important to note that Linda specifically discusses whānau Maori and engages with feminism throughout her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), but does not appear to make this link in her description of the indigenous research agenda. This thesis therefore seeks to contribute to a process of centering Maori women in the indigenous research agenda.

Figure 2.2 is a simple representation of an indigenous women’s research agenda, building on Linda’s original indigenous research agenda. This indigenous women’s research agenda contributes three purposeful layers to Linda’s original work. They are:

- The self-determining right of indigenous women to participate in all aspects of indigenous research.
- The awareness of oppression of indigenous women due to hegemonic colonial patriarchal ideologies.
- The awareness of the position of indigenous women within the colonized societies.

\textsuperscript{22} Indigenous women and indigenous knowledge is discussed further in Chapter Four
Figure 6.2  An Indigenous Women’s Research Agenda

To include these dimensions provides different ways of viewing, defining and discussing relationships, space and experiences within an indigenous research agenda. For example, when we focus on indigenous knowledge pertaining to environment within an indigenous research agenda and then ask the same question through an indigenous women’s research agenda, we become aware of different knowledges and realities of indigenous women. Failing to specifically account for indigenous women within the indigenous research agenda means we fail to be critical of ongoing masculinist hegemony within indigenous
communities. It is on this basis that this thesis positions itself as part of the indigenous women’s research agenda and adopts a mana wahine epistemology\textsuperscript{23}.

\textbf{Mana Wahine Epistemology}

A mana wahine epistemology concerns the way Maori women define themselves and their relationship to experiences and events. Mana wahine epistemology is a knowledge system that is created and informed by Maori women’s experiences. This epistemological perspective provides space for Maori women to reclaim their experiences and make visible their voices through a framework that recognises the uha\textsuperscript{24} (essence) of their experience. Mana wahine research is for Maori women and allows Maori women, their herstories and their contribution to society to be visible and valid. It challenges and analyses the social bases of gender relations and the unequal distribution of power between Maori men and Maori women, with colonisation being a central part of that oppression.

A mana wahine epistemology places the connection between Maori women and the land originally found in the womb of Te Po and the origins of Te Ao Maori at the center. It is in the womb of Te Po where Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, was conceived. As Robyn Kahukiwa (1984:16) states, she was “born into darkness matured in darkness and in darkness became mated with the Sky”. She conceived and bore many children who lived among the world of light. The kaitiaki (guardian) role of Maori women sits in balance at the center of this epistemology creating space for Maori women to assert their kaitiaki

\textsuperscript{23} The mana wahine conceptual framework that is developed in Chapter Six of this thesis is part of the indigenous women’s research agenda as its aims are congruent with the indigenous women’s research agenda.

\textsuperscript{24} Uha describes the essence of being a Maori woman.
rights. In my view such an expression of a mana wahine epistemology recognises:

- That Maori women hold unique positions as kaitiaki, nurturers and re-builders of indigenous knowledge and have the right to protect and control the dissemination of that knowledge.
- That Maori women have the right to create and develop new knowledge based on cultural traditions.

As a Maori woman working in the area of environmental studies and science, I have drawn from a mana wahine epistemology to ask the following questions of science and knowledge:

- Whose values and assumptions underpin scientific decisions?
- Does western science or western knowledge restrict Maori women from carrying out our kaitiaki role regarding children, environment and culture?
- Is science or knowledge occurring at the expense of a diversity of views?
- Is the analysis relevant to the concerns of Maori women?
- Is our right to self-determination as Maori women impacted upon by hegemonic colonial masculinist ideologies?

I have adopted a qualitative methodological approach as it supports the mana wahine epistemology of this thesis as well as providing me with the flexibility to explore the complexities of this subject.

**Mana Wahine Research Methodology**

The mana wahine research methodology used in this thesis differs from Pakeha qualitative social science methodologies however, because of issues associated with the possibility of conducting interviews in Maori; using open ended questions and

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25 It is important to note that the repeated use of the term Maori women within the context of this mana wahine epistemology does not aim to generalise or homogenize Maori women’s experiences. Rather the term refers to the diverse realities held by Maori women and may also include Maori men’s experiences where they lie outside of or in resistance to wider hegemonic colonial masculinist ideologies. I refer to some Maori men who have joined the struggle against hegemonic colonial masculinist ideologies and have joined Maori women working towards tino rangatiratanga.
negotiating and Iwi affiliation. This methodology also weaves with the Maori research strategy of whanaungatanga (establishing relationships in a Maori manner) as discussed by Russel Bishop and Ted Glyn (1999). Whanaungatanga embodies three interconnected elements (Bishop, 1995, 1996) which I have adopted throughout this thesis. Russel and Ted described these elements as firstly establishing and maintaining relationships, secondly, the need to establish Maori relationships in a Maori context that addresses power and control issues fundamental to research, as it involves participatory research practices. Finally they (Bishop and Glyn, 1999:169) discuss the need for the researchers to:

understand themselves to be involved somatically in the research process; that is physically, ethically, morally and spiritually not just as a ‘researcher’ concerned with methodology. Such positionings are demonstrated in the language/metaphor used by the researchers when recollecting their experiences.

The qualitative design utilised in this thesis places an emphasis upon understanding individual realities, herstories and interpretations rather than producing an objective vision of broad generalisations pertaining to mana wahine and GM. It is acknowledged therefore that the perceptions, experiences, constructions and representations of the research participants’ real worlds have been privileged (Halim, 1987 cited in Robinson, 1998a:409). “The point of a qualitative study is to look at something holistically and comprehensively, to study it in its complexity, and to understand it in its context” (Punch, 1998:192).

Throughout this thesis, I am continually aware of my position as a researcher being deeper than an engagement with only just the methodology. This deeper connection is reflected in the voice of this thesis that speaks of a holistic and interconnected way of knowing. To assist in communicating this holistic way of knowing I have merged the voices, stories and arguments of this thesis together through using the metaphor of weaving 26. I have chosen to use this metaphor to weave together the many parts of this thesis, to not only form a whole but to also weave a new form, this being the mana

26 This is a common metaphor used by Maori researchers and is often found in tauparapara (chants) and waiata (songs).
wahine conceptual framework. Russel and Glyn (1999:73) describe weaving as metaphor often used by Maori researchers as:

To the weaver, the methods of weaving are the tikanga (customs). To the researcher the methods of research are those tikanga of narrative; waiata, pakiwaitara (story), kauwhau (an exhortation or moralistic tale), of hui [meeting], of whitiwhiti korero (reciprocal dialogue/polylogue). To the weaver, the methodological framework underlying the weaving is called the whakapapa (Barton, 1993). To the researcher, the whakapapa, as the methodological framework behind the research project, provides the orientation. To the weaver, the paradigm within which the weaving takes place is the whariki (mat). To the researchers, the paradigm within which they make sense of their experiences, can also be represented in terms of whariki or kupenga (net) (Irwin, 1992).

Mana wahine research tailors the issues surrounding ethical research to meet the needs of Maori women. The aims of a mana wahine research methodology for this thesis are clearly articulated by a group of Maori academic women who undertook a course in 1991 entitled, ‘Kaupapa Wahine Maori’, where they considered the aims of mana wahine research to be:

1. To introduce an understanding of the heritage and herstory of Maori women, as different from Maori men whose worldviews have formed the basis of most, if not all, recorded cultural knowledge to date.
2. To explore the nature of this difference from other female perspectives, thus stimulating discussion, offering new insights and challenges, and focusing on a relatively unstudied part of this country’s indigenous culture.
3. To contribute to what is currently a very thin, shallow and fragile body of knowledge, by research, publication and the focused development of a strong exciting new discipline.
4. To return to wahine Maori particularly, what they have been denied. To rediscover what has been lost or mislaid. To uncover what has been spoiled or misinterpreted. (Te Awekotuku, 1992:52).

These aims reflect the value and importance of Maori women’s knowledge. A mana wahine research approach strives to create relationships and understandings of the status of Maori women that are relevant to Maori culture, and to effect change as a result.
Ko Au Te Kairangihau –Positionality, Ethics and Reflexivity.

Consistent with a mana wahine epistemology, I acknowledge that I occupy a subjective position as a researcher, and reject the possibility of value free objectivity and neutral science. I have therefore situated myself reflexively throughout the research process to mitigate against any false neutrality or universalising claims to knowledge traditionally associated with positivist science. As Nicola Simmonds (2000:65) notes, “The premise behind reflexivity is that understanding arises from participation and true objectivity is neither possible nor inherently valuable”.

It has therefore been imperative to consider my position including physical characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity and orientations regarding field adjustment, intellectual training and stimulation throughout the conduct of this work, as all have an impact on my experience generating information (Momsen and Kinnard, 1993). In the process of exploring and making visible the concerns of the research participants in this research, my own position as a Maori and Indian single parent will have hued what I have considered important and relevant to the study. In particular Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discusses that in positioning myself as an indigenous woman I am claiming a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences. I write, therefore, from the position of an indigenous Maori and Indian lesbian, situated in Aotearoa. I write from the context of the colonised first world, a similar perspective to indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, the US and Western Europe. Linda discusses this issue further (Smith, 1999:13):

Despite the very powerful issues which locate many First World indigenous peoples in Third World social conditions we still, comparatively speaking, occupy a place of privilege within the world of indigenous peoples. That does not mean that indigenous peoples from the First World have better ideas or know anything more. It may mean that such things as access to food and water can be played out in vastly different ways within the First World than is possible within developing states.
Linda also discusses the issue of indigenous intellectuals or academics and the issue of western educational institutions preventing us from writing or speaking with an ‘authentic’ indigenous voice. She goes on to discuss the seemingly impossible situation when those from a more traditional position are criticised as not being able to be understood because they do not make sense. Linda (Smith, 1999:14) contends that:

Our talk is reduced to some ‘nativist’ discourse, dismissed by colleagues in the academy as naïve, contradictory and illogical. Alternatively it may be dismissed as some modernist invention of the primitive. Criticism is leveled by non-indigenous and indigenous communities. It positions indigenous intellectuals in some difficult spaces both in terms of our relations with indigenous communities and within the Western academy.

Furthermore, Linda notes that others have addressed this issue with regard to post-colonialism. She notes that:

Many indigenous intellectuals actively resist participating in any discussion within the discourses of post-coloniality. This is because post-colonialism is viewed as a convenient invention of Western intellectuals which reinscribes the power to define the world. For each indigenous intellectual who actually succeeds in the academy, however – and we are talking relatively small numbers – there is a whole array of issues about the way we relate inside and outside of our own communities, inside and outside the academy, and between all those different worlds (1999:14).

I also bring to this thesis the lens of being takatapui, that is being Maori and being lesbian. There is minimal literature available to Maori lesbians discussing and analysing issues from the framework of being takatapui. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku is one of the most outspoken Maori lesbians writers with recent contributions from Leonie Pihama (2001) who discusses, Nga Wahine Takatapui in her doctoral thesis. I believe my assertion of being takatapui can be seen as further marginalising my position within the academy and Te Ao Maori. However, I tend to agree with Leonie’s analysis of the impact of asserting ourselves as takatapui and the need for mana wahine theory to be inclusive of all forms of sexuality. With regard to outing ourselves as takatapui she states (2001:267):
This is, in my view, a difficult position to take as ‘a minority’ within an oppressed community. However, in my experience it is also a powerful place to be in that as a political Maori woman academic I find my understandings and expectations of theoretical need is expansive...It is argued that any theory of mana wahine needs to be inclusive of all forms of sexuality and not be restricted to some colonial agenda that reduces Maori sexuality to an acceptable heterosexuality.

I am aware and have reflected upon the issues that Linda and Leonie discuss and the continuous need for reflexivity as an indigenous Maori Indian academic within this research process, throughout the development of this thesis, and the ethical decisions I have had to make. Throughout this research process I became increasingly aware the ethics and values that I hold and the relationship these had to shaping and guiding the process of this thesis. A personal value that became fundamentally important to this work was the valuing of diversity through unity. This became particularly apparent when interviewing Maori women and acknowledging the diverse backgrounds, sexualities, and values they hold. In addition my position as a Maori Indian takatapui academic is located on the margins, given this location it became important to me to support the work of other women also occupying this space. Therefore this has led me to incorporate the work of wahine takatapui academic, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and her guidelines for undertaking Maori research.

The principles of ethical conduct for researchers in the Maori community developed by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991)\textsuperscript{27} were studied and used as a basis for understanding and adopting Fiona Cram’s (2001:42) guidelines for conducting Maori research. These guidelines are listed in Table 1 below.

\textsuperscript{27} See Appendix Two for a copy of the principles of ethical conduct for researchers in the Maori community developed by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku.
Table 1. Suggested guidelines for undertaking Maori research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A respect for all people</td>
<td>Allowing people to define their own space and to meet their own terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He kanohi kitea</td>
<td>The importance of meeting with people face to face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titiro, whakaronga...korero</td>
<td>The importance of looking and listening so that one develops understandings and finds a place from which to speak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaaki ki te tangata</td>
<td>Collaborative approach to research, research training and reciprocity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia tupato</td>
<td>Politically astute, culturally safe and reflective about our insider/outsider status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata</td>
<td>Not trampling on the mana of the people. It is about sounding out ideas with people, about disseminating research findings, about community feedback that keeps people informed about the research process and the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaua e mahaki</td>
<td>Not flaunting your knowledge and it is about sharing knowledge and using our qualifications to benefit our community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was granted ethical approval for conducting interviews by the Human Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Wellington for the period 18 July 2001 until 30 September 2002\(^\text{28}\). This approval was given for gathering information via interviews with Maori women.

\(^{28}\) See Appendix Three for a copy of ethics approval given to this research.
Methods/Generating Information

“Qualitative techniques are essentially descriptions of people’s representations and constructions of what is occurring in their world” (Robinson, 1998a:409). Susan Plowman in her article on qualitative research cites Susan Smith (1995:19):

Qualitative methods range from passive observation and personal reflection, through routine participation to active intervention. … The common project, one of subjective understanding rather than statistical description; the primary goal, an ability to emphasise [and] communicate … rather than to generalise, predict and control. To this end, qualitative research is organised in a variety of ways, from semi-structured interview schedules to open-ended attempts to absorb the entirety of a life-world. Generally, there is a dynamic relationship between theory building and empirical inquiry.

Qualitative methods were of particular importance to this research as they best gather the voices of the research participants. The methodological advantages I experienced while obtaining qualitative data were:

- The ability to develop and word the questions,
- The ability to clarify terms that were unclear,
- The ability to probe for additional information,
- Freedom for interviewees to explain their views, and
- The development of a relationship between myself and the interviewee.

Information Generation – Interviews

One of the most effective qualitative methods for generating information is through interviews (Tolich and Davidson, 1999), with interviewing now one of the most commonly recognised forms of qualitative research. Within mana wahine methodologies, interviews are an important part of making visible the voices of those engaged in counter hegemonic struggles. I felt it was very important to contribute to the decolonisation of Maori views within the GM debate by conducting interviews with Maori women outside of the current masculinist hegemony. The interviews and this thesis are an opportunity to construct space for the visibility of their views. Given this I decided to conduct semi-
structured, open, in-depth interviews. I also decided where possible to create the opportunity for the interview to take place in the natural surroundings, outside of a confined space such as an office or a building. The purpose of this was to provide a space that was congruent to the topic of discussion, for example: Maori women, the environment and GM. Therefore, I provided space at the beginning of the interview for this to develop.

I used my existing networks within Te Ao Maori to develop the initial participant list. These were mainly Maori women in environment, education, GM, science and technology areas, who are working towards goals of tino rangatiratanga, steeped in tikanga Maori (Maori culture) and who have been discussing perspectives regarding Maori concerns within the GM debate. During the process of establishing interviews I was given names of other Maori people thought appropriate for inclusion in this study. This is similar to the ‘snowballing’ method for selecting participants. Through this process I was able to interview and transcribe interviews with eleven women and carried out additional interviews with Maori people recorded in the form of written notes.

I intended for the tape-recorded interviews to be between 20 – 40 minutes in length. The interview times ranged from 20 minutes to over an hour in one instance. By way of introduction to the interview I prepared an information sheet\(^{29}\) which introduced my research topic, invited participation in the study and outlined interviewees’ participation. The information sheet also explained that I would be using a tape recorder to record the interview and that a transcribed copy of the interview would be given to the interviewee to check before the interview was incorporated into the research. I also outlined that information gathered from participants may be used in publications, papers and in presentations. I obtained participants’ agreement and informed understanding of participation on a consent form\(^{30}\). It was also important, within this process, to provide the participants with the freedom to withdraw from the project at any time, without question, before the data was analysed.

\(^{29}\) See Appendix Four for a copy of the information sheet

\(^{30}\) See Appendix Five for a copy of the consent form.
I conducted my interviews around Aotearoa between late July and September 2001 and returned a brief summary of the transcript to research participants as soon as possible after each interview. This required me to complete the fieldwork in a short space of time.

Pilot interview

Prior to commencing the interview process outlined above I conducted a pilot interview. This provided me with the opportunity to test my equipment, obtain feedback on my questions, interview method and manner. I chose a Maori woman who had a solid knowledge of the issues for Maori regarding GM. I obtained her consent to participate in the pilot interview and she agreed to discuss the interview and provide feedback on completion of the interview.

Research Journal

Along side the interview method, I developed a journal that was used throughout the process of this thesis. In this I recorded ideas, expanded upon others' ideas, reflected upon the research process and tested assumptions and beliefs relating to my research. The journal recorded my whakaaro (thoughts) and images of the interviews and provided me with a space to reflect on the interviews. Immediately after the interviews I also recorded the ahua (appearance) of the interview in particular noting the mood, how I felt the participant responded to me, if I thought the interview was relevant and any lessons I learnt for future interviews. The style of the journal was very much created in a stream of consciousness style. It was an important part of the whariki (mat) which has woven this thesis.

31 See Appendix Six for a list of research participants.
**Methods/ Interpreting Information**

Textual analysis of the transcribed interviews was used to interpret the information collected. As part of the analytical process, I reflected on my own positioning and the validity and relevance of my analysis. The interviews were transcribed to aid the identification of themes, commonalties and inconsistencies in the experiences and perceptions of the participants. I employed coding methods to assist in analysing the information and in developing the themes. The centrality of coding to the research process is described by Martin Tolich and Carl Davidson, (1999:140) as:

> The process of categorising and sorting data. Codes serve as short hand devices to label, separate, and organise data. By providing the pivotal link between the data collection and its conceptual rendering, coding becomes the fundamental means of developing analysis.

In working with the interview transcripts I used positive coding to identify themes and strengthen the data collection process. Positive coding allowed me to perform one of four distinct functions as outlined by Martin and Carl (1999:142):

1. It identified interesting data representing a research theme.
2. It threw up interesting data that appears to be outside an established research theme.
3. It signaled that more data on a theme is needed.
4. It flagged an entry as worthy of storage within a thematic file.

I developed thematic files, as presented in Chapter Six, by reading all the transcripts and by recording the frequency with which specific topics were discussed. In preparation of a close textual reading of the interviews, I copied and pasted sections into thematic files, using removable plastic tags to designate the file’s theme label. The identification of thematic headings provided an opportunity for a two directional analysis. The first was to allow me to revise data collection questions, themes and prompts and the second was towards drafting themes and text. My analysis was mainly concerned with drafting themes and text. I then read the marked thematic transcripts numerous times. This
process was inductive, involving continual reading, re-reading and cross referencing to identify important issues (Crang, 1997). I identified common and conflicting statements and inferences. Through the identification of metaphors and images used by the research participants I searched for assumptions that were underlying such statements or inferences. I also searched for what was not being said or was marginalised, obscured or made invisible by different participants. Quotations that best represented themes, commonalities and inconsistencies and best described the experiences and perceptions of the participants were identified and presented in Chapter Six.

To be congruent with the mana wahine epistemology and methodology of this research has meant that the interpretation and representation of the voices of participants is critically important. I chose to present quite full narratives of the participants within the text for three reasons. Firstly by allowing participants to, “tell their story in their own words claims authenticity and authority for their representation of an actual social world” (Atkinson in Tolich and Davidson, 1999:162). Secondly, the use of their quotes and narratives may represent a collective account as common themes are seen to emerge, and thirdly, “quotes and narratives allow the reader to determine whether [A researcher’s] interpretation is warranted” (Fetterman in Tolich and Davidson, 1999:162).

**Methods in the Development of the Mana Wahine Conceptual Framework**

The critical focus areas of the mana wahine conceptual framework were developed from summaries of indigenous and Maori peoples’ concerns with regard to GM (Chapter Five), mana wahine epistemology (Chapter Two and Three) and the information gathered from the interviews (Chapter Six). Within the interviews I asked participants to identify relevant areas. The critical focus areas of the framework are broad, therefore for others to engage with the framework it is necessary for them to make it relevant and specific to their field. For the purpose of engaging with the mana wahine and GM I have applied and developed questions to focus my analysis on mana wahine and GM. These questions are informed from the theory and literature review and the discussion of the participants presented within this thesis. These questions are presented at the end of Chapter Six.
I developed criteria to select the questions for inclusion in the framework. These criteria were designed to assist the framework meet its aims. Every potential question for inclusion within the framework was tested against these criteria. On placing the potential question against the criteria, if the answer was predominately yes to the six criteria then the question remained relevant to this mana wahine analysis of GM. The criteria required me to ask if each question was:

- Pertinent to Maori women
- Made visible the concerns of Maori women
- Challenged colonial patriarchal ideologies and Maori masculinist hegemonies
- Relevant to questioning GM
- Supportive of a decolonising agenda

In addition to the above criteria, an important check on thinking and analysis was to send the first draft of the mana wahine conceptual framework back out to the Maori women who participated in this research. In the covering letter I sent with the draft framework to research participants and explained that I was asking them to decide if the content of the draft mana wahine conceptual framework was acceptable or to amend it if there were any questions that needed to be included or excluded. I received 4 responses to the draft framework; all gave approval of the framework as it was and suggested alterations. The alterations are incorporated in the framework as it appears in Chapter Six.

**Limitations**

I believe that there were few limitations in my research because I am a Maori woman discussing an issue with which the research participants (all Maori women) were all involved. Most of my research participants belonged to a roopu of wahine Maori called, Nga Wahine Tiaki o Te Ao, who formed out of concern for the inability to exercise their kaitiaki rights regarding GM. They were granted interested persons status in front of the RCGM. It could be argued that through the use of snowballing and engaging with
participants who mostly had connections to Nga Wahine Tikai o Te Ao that I was engaging with a limited sample group who shared similar views and concerns. It is important to note that it was never the intention of this research to conduct a sample based approach of Maori women’s views with regard to GM. The epistemological intention of this research was to give visibility to Maori women who already have views with regard to GM and were being marginalised within the debate.

Limited funding made it impossible to conduct further field research and gather more information. As discussed, I conducted face to face semi-structured open interviews with Maori women who were based throughout Aotearoa. I had to travel throughout the country and needed to find money to cover the costs. Ideally, I would have liked to have interviewed Maori women from all over the motu. However this limitation made me ensure that the Maori women I interviewed were of varying ages, sexual orientation, understandings of te reo, and political positioning so that I got a range of views. It was never my intention to interview a representative group of Maori women nor for this research to purport a representative sample, but to ensure that diversity as a principle within information collection was ever present.

In addition the duration fo the interviews was at sometimes a limitation, although the tape recorded interviews lasted between 20 minutes – over one hour in some cases it would have been beneficial to spend more time with the participants prior to the interview to allow for more informal discussion. Where time permitted I did engage with the participants for periods of ranging from 20 minutes to two hours prior to beginning the tape recorded interview.

While discussing the limitations, I wish to draw attention to the construction and presentation of results from the use of the information gathered from the research participants. I am aware that there is potential especially when working thematically for me as the researcher to weave a story that is incongruous with the information gathered and the context within which that information was provided. My sense of responsibility to the Maori women participants however meant that sharing transcripts and the draft
framework and writing additional comments has ensured the integrity of what I present and its accurate reflection of the way the participants see themselves. The breadth of my discussion of mana wahine in Chapter Two is an acknowledgement of the amount of information gathered in the research process, together with my desire to portray the research participants in a way that is representative of their realities, while countering my own authority within the text.

Summary

The mana wahine epistemology I have adopted is the lens through which to view this research. On the completion of interviews with Maori women, I believe the epistemology from which the interviews were interpreted, assisted in maintaining the integrity of research respondents’ discussion.

The approach and methods I adopted to collect and interpret Maori women’s views with regard to GM were without major limitations. The only limitation already discussed, was that of limited funding which I believe was of minor consequence. My research approach and methods enabled me to draw out diverse, richly textured opinions and discussion which supports a critical discussion of mana wahine and GM. The information gathered has also enabled me to further critically develop a mana wahine conceptual framework to analyse GM and draw appropriate conclusions.