FOOD HAVENS

How social enterprises are shaping healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau

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ABSTRACT

Background & Objective

This study is part of a broader effort to address health inequities, including high levels of obesity, non-communicable diseases, and mortality rates among Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa (New Zealand). This study investigates the role of food environments and social enterprise initiatives in creating healthy food spaces for Māori and Pacific Peoples. It examines social enterprise definitions in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), initiatives that promote food sustainability, and their potential impact on Māori and Pacific whānau. Manuscript One has been written to provide context and a literature review that speaks to food environments and how the body of literature can be viewed from a Māori and Pacific lens.

Research Design

Underpinned by Māori and Pacific paradigms, this study uses the Moana Māori methodology, developed and proposed in Manuscript Two. A total of 47 participants took part in this study, contributing through in-depth interviews, talanoa (inclusive dialogue) and wānanga (discussion and deliberation). Eleven participants led social enterprises focused on healthy food environments, whilst 36 end-users shared their perspectives. Data was analysed thematically.

Findings & Discussion

This study highlights the impact of social, cultural, and economic factors on Māori and Pacific communities. Key challenges include the prevalence of fast food, economic constraints, and time poverty. Positive strategies include urban home gardening, social enterprise engagement, and community support. Social enterprises, schools, marae, and churches play critical roles in promoting food sovereignty and healthier diets, emphasising the need for culturally aligned, community-led initiatives to address health inequities.

This study explores how these social enterprises address food insecurity and promote food sovereignty, focusing on community-led initiatives, the preservation of traditional food practices, and advocacy for policy change. It introduces the concept of ‘social food environments’ that integrates social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions, and proposes a Food Havens Framework to align food systems with Indigenous values. This study calls for continued support for such initiatives to improve public health. The findings of this study are also presented in Manuscript Three, which explores social enterprises as an

upstream healthcare model that may improve food environments for Māori and Pacific peoples.

Conclusion

This study extends our understanding of social enterprises and healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific communities. It offers both practical and theoretical insights into addressing health inequities, with implications for public health policy and future research on social issues impacting these communities.

MOANA MĀORI GLOSSARY

This thesis uses Indigenous terminology from both Tangata Whenua (Māori) and Tangata Moana (Pacific Peoples) communities to accurately and respectfully convey complex concepts that are foundational to this research.

Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and Pacific languages are rich in metaphor, with deep, interconnected meanings that often cannot be fully captured by direct translation.

Therefore, this glossary is offered at the fore, a deliberate choice to centre these languages and facilitate a more authentic, informed and respectful engagement with the text, ensuring that readers can better understand the nuanced concepts being discussed.

‘Akapapa (Cook Islands Māori)	Genealogical connections, related to establishing identity and heritage links.
Alofa atu (Samoan)	Sending my love or I love you.
Anga lelei (Samoan)	Kindness, calmness, dignity in interactions.
Aotearoa (Māori)	Māori name for New Zealand.
Aro’a (Cook Islands Māori)	Tender affection or deep kindly feeling.
Aroha (Māori)	Love, caring, compassion and affection.
Aroha atu (Māori)	Love flowing outward or love given.
Awhi (Māori)	To embrace, adoption or to surround.
Fa’aaloalo (Samoan)	Denotes respect, courtesy, honour.
Faka’apa’apa (Tongan)	Respectfulness and humility.
Fanau (Samoan, Tongan)	Family lineage, children or offspring.
Fonofale (Samoan)	A health model emphasising a holistic view that includes physical, spiritual, and social dimensions, important to Pacific People’s well-being.
Hapū (Māori)	Subtribe or section of a larger clan/tribe/kinship group.
Iwi (Māori)	Extended kinship group, tribe, refers to group of people descended from a common ancestor associated with a distinct territory.

Kaha (Māori)	Strength, courage.
Kāinga (Māori)	Home, village, habitat.
Kaitiakitanga (Māori)	Guardianship, stewardship or trust.
Karakia (Māori)	To recite ritual, prayer or chant.
Kaupapa (Māori)	Topic, focus, matter for discussion, purpose.
Koha (Māori)	Gift, present, offering, contribution or donation.
Kōrero (Māori)	To say, speak; narrative, discussion, conversation.
Kupu (Māori)	Word, vocabulary, saying.
Mana (pan-Pacific)	Prestige, authority, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma – mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object.
Manaakitanga (Māori)	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support – the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.
Māori	The Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Also meaning normal, usual, natural, common, ordinary.
Marae (Māori)	The open area in front of the wharenui, where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the marae.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge – the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and practices.
Mateuteu (Tongan)	Preparedness and cultural responsiveness.
‘Ofa Fe’unga (Tongan)	Showing appropriate compassion, empathy, and love.
Pacific Peoples	It is the authors choice to refer to the peoples of the Pacific as a proper noun, for the same reason that Indigenous Peoples are referred to as a proper noun.
Pa Enua (Cook Islands Māori)	Outer Islands of the Cook Islands’
Pākehā (Māori)	A non-Māori New Zealander, usually refers to a New Zealander of European descent.
Palagi (Samoan)	A white or non-Samoan person.
Papaā (Cook Islands Māori)	A foreigner or white man.
Papakāinga (Māori)	Original homeland, communal home base.
Papatūānuku (Māori)	Earth, Earth mother, wife of Rangi-nui who Māori believe all living things originate from.
Pepeha (Māori)	A way of introducing oneself, establishing your heritage.
Rangatiratanga (Māori)	Chiefly autonomy, right to exercise authority, leadership of a social group, domain of the *rangatira* (chief).
Talanoa (pan-Pacific)	A method involving open, inclusive and informal dialogue that is central to Pacific cultures, allowing for respectful and culturally safe sharing of stories and experiences.

Tāmaki Makaurau (Māori)	Auckland Region-means *the land desired by many*.
Tangata whenua (Māori)	The local people, hosts, Indigenous peoples – *tangata* (people) born of the *whenua* (land).
Tangata Moana (Māori)	A Māori-term for Indigenous peoples of the Pacific, as opposed to the colonial term Pacific Islanders
Taonga (Māori)	Treasure, anything prized; Property, goods, possessions, effects.
Tapu (Māori)	Sacred, prohibited, restricted or untouchable.
Tautua (Samoan)	Service.
Tēina (Māori)	Younger, brother, younger sister or younger cousins – junior relative.
Te Reo Māori	The Māori language.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi, founding document of Aotearoa, New Zealand (Mead, 2003).
Tika (Māori)	To be correct, true, right, just, fair; Truth, correctness, directness, justice.
Tikanga (Māori)	Protocol, correct, procedural - customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.
Tino rangatiratanga (Māori)	Self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government.
Tīpuna/tupuna (Māori)	Ancestors, grandparents.
Tuākana (Māori)	Older brother, older sister or older cousin – senior relative.
Vā (Samoan)	The relational space between people, emphasising the importance of maintaining harmony and connection.
Wairua (Māori)	Spirit or soul. Refers to the spirit of a person which exists beyond death.
Wairuatanga (Māori)	Spirituality.
Wānanga (Māori)	A place of higher learning, the process of discussion and deliberation.
Whakapapa (Māori)	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent.
Whakawhanaungatanga (Māori)	Relationship building, relating well to others.
Whānau (Māori)	A family group, extended family or a familiar term of address to a group of people – the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society.
Whanaungatanga (Māori)	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person. The use of artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools was not permitted (unless it is clearly stated and referenced, along with the purpose of use). Also, the material produced in this thesis, to a substantial extent, has neither been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma, of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

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Nā kōtou, nō tātou ia.

For you, for us.

(MaUa-Hodges, 2018, p. ii)

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & ETHICS

This research was conducted in accordance with AUT's intellectual property policies. Any third-party intellectual property included in this thesis is duly acknowledged, and permissions for use have been obtained where necessary.

The research was granted ethics approval from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 4 November 2022 (Reference number 22/291).

PREFACE

Introduction to the Researcher

As a Māori and Pacific researcher, my whakapapa (genealogy) or ‘akapapa profoundly shaped both my identity and my approach to research. Having attended different schools in my youth in Sydney Australia, Tokoroa, Mangere, Papatoetoe and Manurewa, I was immersed in a way of living where the values and traditions were strongly informed by my Māori, and Pacific heritage. Christian faith has also strongly influenced my experiences and connection to community, particularly our Pacific community. My parents both come from big families, my mum having 10 siblings with my dad having 13, each marrying Aunties and Uncles from the Pacific community (Niue, Tonga, and Samoa). This upbringing instilled in me both a strong sense and search for belonging and deep respect for whanaungatanga (kinship), manaakitanga (hospitality/generosity), fa’aaloalo (honour), and tautua (service). In later years, my grandmother, of Cook Islands Māori descent, had later found direct genealogical lines to Tonga and Samoa. In terms of genealogical links, the beautiful nature and togetherness that reside within Pacific communities have strongly protected my spirit over the years. The kaha (strength) experienced and witnessed on my Māori side has anchored me and grounded my feet throughout this journey of exploration and self-discovery.

Since primary school, I have attended roughly 9 schools. Six of those schools were in Tokoroa, Mangere, Papatoetoe, and Manurewa. Growing up, we saw our whānau/anau/aiga and neighbours growing food on their front lawn, with the recycled half-cut plastic bottles surrounding that food. These food sources and gardens come from a long line of knowledge and custodians of customary practices that have been a foundational part of Māori and Pacific histories.

I still remember the distinct, earthy aroma of mutton bird wafting through my grandparents’ kitchen—a scent that lingered in the walls and in our memories. It wasn’t quite the acquired taste for me or most of my cousins, but it was undeniably part of our shared story. There was always that pot of boil-up, hearty enough to feed a village, and the mountains of bread stacked high to stretch the kai and nourish every belly that came through the door.

But more than the food itself, I remember the immense love woven into the act of sharing it. My grandmothers embodied that love. My nana, Tekura, raised us with the unwavering belief that the table must always be set, “just in case visitors turn up…”, regardless of their relation or status. Hospitality wasn’t conditional; it was a way of life.

Preparing for these gatherings was a full production. The boys would haul out the chairs and tables, setting up and packing down with practiced ease. Our family met once a month, with no fewer than fifty to sixty guests each time—coming together to eat, to listen, and to learn life's lessons from our aunties, uncles, and grandparents. The girls knew our rhythm too, usually led by my dear Mum: setting the table, serving the food, and cleaning up afterward. We moved through every phase of food preparation—feeding, cooking, baking—and eventually, catering for large audiences with pride and precision.

Even the smallest tasks held meaning. I remember waving the tea towel to shoo away the flies, a job that seemed simple but was part of the choreography of care, and at times fun for the younger of us. Every movement, every role, was a thread in the fabric of our whānau/anau. These gatherings taught us more than just practical skills—they instilled values of service, humility, and aroha that continue to shape us. These experiences have informed the lens at which I approach this research, one that is steeped in the lessons and realities of my tipuna and the value our traditional knowledge and practices bring to the local food environments.

This academic journey has been guided by the principles of tikanga (protocol) Māori and Pacific epistemologies, emphasising the importance of community engagement, reciprocity, and the preservation of Indigenous knowledge. These values inform my research questions, shaping a focus on areas in health and well-being issues that have plagued our family within the New Zealand context since I can remember. In seeking Tino rangatiratanga (self-determination), I have also seen the power of our community, to innovate, move, and create solutions that address these issues. Centring Indigenous perspectives, allows for the research to contribute to a body of knowledge that honours and amplifies the voices of my community. It should be said, in explicit and no uncertain terms, that as a Māori and Pacific researcher, sister, daughter, Aunty, grandchild, and friend, I report to my community. If this work does not, in some meaningful way, have benefit for my community, then it is for nothing at all.

I am often reminded of the powerful words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 185):

"What happens... when the researched become the researchers?"

When the researched become the researchers, a profound shift occurs that aligns Indigenous perspectives and lived experiences of empowerment, agency, and self-determination, as articulated by Smith (1999). Being an actor within this transformation dismantles power dynamics inherent in colonial research paradigms, where Indigenous communities are often positioned merely as subjects rather than active

participants. By taking on the role of researcher, my role becomes that of reclaiming narratives, ensuring that the voice, knowledge systems, and cultural values are authentically represented and respected. This approach fosters a collaborative and reciprocal relationship between researchers and their communities, promoting methodologies that are culturally relevant and ethically grounded. It challenges and deconstructs the historical injustices of exploitation and misrepresentation, paving a way for research that not only benefits our communities, but also contributes to broader decolonisation of academic knowledge. In essence, when the researched become the researchers, it facilitates a more equitable and meaningful engagement with knowledge creation, honouring sovereignty and intellectual traditions of Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Dedicated to my grandmothers,

Aniwaihōrua and Tekuraingatau.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific families in Tāmaki Makaurau. The following chapter introduces the context in which this study is situated, introduces the methodological approach, and provides an overview of the thesis.

1.1 Introduction to the Research

Obesity has emerged as a global health crisis, escalating from a public health concern to a pandemic with widespread implications. Since the 1970s, global obesity rates have more than tripled, contributing significantly to the burden of preventable non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain cancers (Swinburn et al., 2011). Energy-dense but nutrient-limited diets and sedentary lifestyles have largely driven the crisis, alongside an increase in the availability of energy-dense, nutrient poor foods. These growing issues have garnered international attention, as efforts to combat obesity have largely failed to reverse its trajectory (WHO, 2018).

Indigenous communities worldwide experience disproportionately high rates of obesity compared to non-Indigenous populations; a disparity rooted in complex historical, socioeconomic, and environmental factors. In Australia for example, over 71% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 15 were classified as overweight or obese in 2018-2019 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, n.d.). Similarly, in Canada, First Nations individuals living in reserves and remote areas face obesity rates nearly double the national average, exacerbated by food insecurity and limited access to nutritious options. Almost half of all First Nations Families have difficulty putting enough food on the table. About one-fifth of the adult population suffer from diabetes which is more than double the national average (FNFNES, 2021).

In New Zealand, the obesity epidemic is particularly acute, ranking amongst the highest globally, with substantial disparities affecting Māori, Pacific Peoples, and low socio-economic communities (MOH, 2021; Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). These inequities highlight the need for systemic change in food environments and public health interventions tailored to vulnerable populations. These disparities are driven by the 'legacy' of colonisation, which disrupted traditional food systems and physical lifestyles, alongside ongoing challenges like poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and disconnection from food practices (Malli et al., 2023; Paradies, 2016).

This thesis will explore the complexities of obesity and social enterprise, focusing on food environments and their role in shaping health outcomes for Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand. Particularly in South Auckland, where the intersection of socio-economic and ethnic disparities is most evident. The role of social enterprise represents an underexplored yet potentially transformative dimension of solution-finding for addressing the global obesity epidemic (Smith et al., 2015).

Obesity: A Global Pandemic

The global obesity rates, which have tripled since the 1970's, has also meant the increase in associated preventable non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and several cancers. The staggering rates of obesity and diet related NCDs have been driven in large part by unhealthy diets (Branca, 2019).

Several studies have suggested that these rates are attributed to the availability and promotion of energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods. In concert with decreasing physical activity, this has meant a calorie surplus that can lead to weight gain (Swinburn, 2008; WHO, 2018). According to Swinburn et al. (2011), there have been little to no exemplary populations that have managed to reverse the obesity epidemic.

New Zealand is ranked the third highest country for obesity (OECD, 2019) with 1 in 8 children considered obese (MOH, 2021). Among other risk factors, such as air pollution, tobacco use, excessive alcohol intake, and physical inactivity, that contribute to mortality from preventable non-communicable diseases (Chan, 2017), food environments have been linked to staggering rates of obesity and associated NCDs (Gortmaker et al., 2011; Swinburn, 2008; Swinburn et al., 2011). These food environments are referred to as obesogenic environments, which tend to promote the overconsumption of unhealthy food and drinks whilst limiting opportunities for physical activity and access to nutrient-rich foods (Tupai-Firestone et al., 2016; Swinburn, 2008).

The New Zealand Context

In New Zealand, various inequities exist within ethnic groups and social classes. For example, overweight or obesity disproportionately affect Pacific Peoples (88.7%), Māori (77.2%), and individuals living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods (47.8%) (MOH, 2024). The exposure to obesogenic environments can disadvantage these population groups who have lived in areas that have increasing access to, and availability and promotion of cheap, nutrient-poor foods.

Prior to the rapid increase of obesity in the 1970's, New Zealand saw the introduction of American fast-food chains (KFC, McDonalds, Pizza Hut); Coca-Cola; and a proliferation

of burger bars (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). The correlation between the continual rise in obesity and arrival of fast-food chains raises concerns around sustainable food environments. It has been argued that the increasing uptake of unhealthy foods (Mackay et al., 2022) and the increase in spending at restaurants and takeaway bars (RANZ, 2018) have contributed to high levels of diet-related non-communicable disease (Cammock et al., 2021a; Cammock et al., 2021b).

Auckland is home to the world's largest Pacific population and home to almost a quarter (23.4%) of the Māori population living in New Zealand (Raymond, Leon-Anderson, & Auckland Unlimited, 2021; Auckland Council, 2021). Within the Greater Auckland Region, the highest population of Māori and Pacific whānau can be found in what was previously known as Manukau, colloquially referred to as South Auckland. For this reason, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) is an ideal setting for the recruitment of participants and data collection for this study.

Health and Well-being for Māori and Pacific Peoples in New Zealand

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide an all-encompassing history of Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa. However, some of the historic junctures that have influenced and shaped Māori and Pacific health transformations are discussed below. From the outset, the hurt and disadvantage felt by these distinct peoples are recognised and acknowledged, and this cuts through the heart and purpose of this research.

In a Te Ritorito Hui commissioned by Superu NZ, Justice Joe Williams spoke of the Treaty of Waitangi and its relationship to whānau (family), hapū (subtribe), and iwi (tribe) well-being. In his address, he argued that after years of intergenerational disadvantage that resulted from the unjust confiscation of land, and dismantling of social order within Māori society, iwi today cannot make significant improvement to Māori well-being alone, as the "loot is small" (Superu NZ, 2017). By loot, he meant the small proportion of capital and resources that were returned to Māori which may be in danger of becoming "like corporate funds". He argues that government alone cannot make this significant improvement to Māori health and well-being and that this can only be achieved through partnership between government and iwi entities. In all, a collaborative approach is called for.

Following World War II, New Zealand experienced significant industrial growth. As a result, immigration was needed to fill the labour shortage generated by the industrial expansion. Over time, Pacific migrant workers were brought to New Zealand, and the New Zealand government implemented several immigration schemes to encourage workers from the Pacific Islands. However, a stagnant New Zealand economy and

economic restructuring of the 1980s meant significant job losses affected New Zealanders, especially Pacific Peoples (Wright & Hornblow, 2008). Popular and state-supported racism towards Pacific populations in New Zealand saw Pacific Peoples falsely perceived as overstayers who took jobs away from “New Zealanders” (Krishnan et al., 1994), even though the majority of overstayers were from Europe or North America (New Zealand History, n.d.). Several events led to the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. By the 1980s, mortality and morbidity statistics began to show the growing disparity between Pacific and Pākehā/Palagi/Papa’ā (New Zealanders of European descent) ethnic groups (Bathgate, 1994).

Māori and Pacific Peoples have distinct experiences that have led to significant disadvantage in Aotearoa. For Māori, while the effective coming together of iwi and government has been an ongoing aspiration and challenge, solutions that go beyond these institutional boundaries, or even overlap, may serve in improving health and well-being outcomes. It is said that Pacific communities want approaches tailored to Pacific values and aspirations, recognising that the community itself can drive their own solutions. Similar convictions are expressed through the notion of tino rangatiratanga which are likened to self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, and power (Moorfield, 2011). This study explores catalysts for success and extends beyond explanations of failure (Kingi et al., 2017, p. 80).

Food Havens – A Closer Look at the Food Environment

Given the significance of food and its implications for obesity and health related issues across the world, efforts to improve diets need to focus on creating healthy food environments (Sacks et al., 2025). Food environments, as defined by Swinburn et al (2013, p. 2), are the “collective physical, economic, policy and sociocultural surroundings, opportunities and conditions that influence people’s food and beverage choices and nutrition status”. This definition is useful in capturing any given food environments at the macro level.

In efforts to further define a healthy food environment that is culturally appropriate for those disproportionately affected (e.g., Māori and Pacific Peoples in New Zealand), Tonumaipe’a et al. (2021) proposed a new term *Food Havens* which is defined as “a place or space where people have high availability of healthy food and beverages that are accessible, convenient, affordable, and desirable” (p. 6).

Considering recent discussions in academia and the media, it has been argued that healthy food environments, newly coined as ‘food havens’, may be a strength-based

approach that addresses issues such as food sovereignty, food insecurity, obesity and associated non-communicable diseases (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021; Conn et al., 2021; Cammock et al., 2021b; RNZ, 2021). The concept of having a food haven looks to address immediate dietary needs by providing high availability of healthy and affordable food options. It also serves as a powerful mechanism for combating systemic inequities underlying food insecurity and advancing or reclaiming food sovereignty (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021).

Food Havens and Systemic Equity: Bridging Food Insecurity and Food Sovereignty

Food insecurity, as defined by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is "a situation where people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active life" (FOA, 2008). Addressing food insecurity within Food Havens highlights the importance of ensuring not only the availability of healthy options but also the accessibility, affordability, and cultural appropriateness of these foods for marginalised communities.

Food Havens can disrupt this cycle by ensuring that healthy food is not only present but also affordable and desirable for marginalised communities. The primary objective of the food haven is to encourage whānau, community, business, government and non-government entities to make changes within their immediate control, which may in turn create healthy spaces and places that are embedded in cultural values that are mana (authority) enhancing (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021).

Food Havens align with the principles of food sovereignty by fostering community control over food systems (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). Food sovereignty emphasises the right of communities to define their own agricultural and food policies, prioritising local production, and decision-making grounded in cultural and environmental values. In this way, Food Havens may empower Māori and Pacific communities to reclaim autonomy over their food environments by weaving Indigenous agricultural practices, fostering local food networks, and building resilience against global food market disruptions. For example, initiatives that support Maara kai (traditional Māori gardening practices) or Pacific community food gardens can serve as practical applications of food sovereignty within the framework of Food Havens, bridging the gap between health equity and cultural empowerment.

This dual approach (i.e., addressing immediate food insecurity while fostering long-term food sovereignty) positions the Food Havens as a transformative strategy for creating systemic change. By enabling communities to regain control over food production and

distribution, Food Havens contribute not only to improved health outcomes but also to the restoration of cultural identity and the reduction of socioeconomic inequities (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021).

Addressing Structural Barriers Through Social Enterprises

Structural barriers such as urban zoning laws, economic constraints, and corporate dominance in food production disproportionately affect marginalised communities, including Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa. Cammock et al. (2021b) highlights structural barriers to healthy food environments within the New Zealand context. These structural barriers are presented below:

Table 1. Structural barriers to healthy food environments (adapted from Cammock et al., 2021b)

Structural barrier	Description
Prioritisation of economic growth over health	The global food system has shifted to focus on the production of processed, cheaper, and easily accessible food, often at the expense of nutritional value. This trend is driven by market forces and government policies that prioritise economic growth.
Trade liberalisation and deregulation	Urban expansion is leading to the loss of land that could be used for growing fruits and vegetables. This is contributing to food insecurity, particularly in urban areas, and making it more difficult to access fresh, healthy food.
The power of the food industry	The food beverage industry is a major economic driver, making it difficult for governments to intervene with regulations that might impact their profits. This has led to a situation where the industry largely self-regulates its efforts to tackle the obesity epidemic.
Urbanisation and loss of productive land	Urban expansion is leading to the loss of land that could be used for growing fruits and vegetables. This is contributing to food insecurity, particularly in urban areas, and making it more difficult to access fresh, healthy food.
Inadequate government intervention	Despite calls for greater regulation of the food industry, governments have been slow to implement policies that promote healthy food environments. This includes measures such as taxing sugary drinks, restricting junk food advertising, and supporting the development of sustainable food systems.
Food insecurity and social inequities	Food insecurity is a major barrier to healthy eating, particularly for low-income families and vulnerable groups. This is often due to insufficient money to buy food, rather than a lack of physical access to shops.
Shift from home-cooked meals to takeaways	People are eating out more often and consuming more fast food and sugary drinks. This trend is linked to factors such as busy lifestyles, convenience, and affordability.
Lack of empowerment and adequate resourcing of social entrepreneurship	There is a need for greater support and resourcing of community empowerment and social entrepreneurship to create innovative solutions to address the obesity epidemic and promote sustainable food systems.
Zoning laws, and building for a housing crisis	Zoning laws, and building practices that are working to address a housing crisis means that there is often limited availability of space for fresh food markets or community gardens, but also, we are seeing the development of smaller houses and smaller kitchens, that may affect peoples 'eat-at-home' practices.

Social enterprises are uniquely positioned to challenge these barriers by leveraging innovative, community-led solutions. Social enterprise may contribute significantly to achieving social impact initiatives that work to serve and improve whānau health and well-being. The support of social enterprises by governments have increased and is said to offer a viable option for financially sustainable avenues for public service provisions (Powell & Osborne, 2020). This study seeks to explore community and business initiatives, that serve as social enterprise, with a goal of creating social impact in addressing health and well-being for Māori and Pacific Peoples in relation to food. This research will have a specific focus on social enterprise operating in or serving predominantly Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau in general, and South Auckland in particular.

Social Enterprise and Impact

Social enterprises play a crucial role in addressing societal challenges through innovative, sustainable business models that prioritise social impact over profit maximisation (Kumar & Tiwary, 2020). In the context of food environments, these enterprises have the potential to drive positive change by tackling issues such as food insecurity, nutritional imbalances, and environmental degradation (Veleva, 2021; Conn et al., 2021). Defined broadly, a social enterprise is an organisation that uses market-based approaches to solve social issues, often blending non-profit and for-profit elements to generate both social and economic value (Kerlin, 2010). Social enterprises differ from traditional businesses in that their primary goal is to create positive societal change, while financial sustainability is considered means to that end, rather than the end in itself (Dees, 1998). The hybrid nature allows social enterprises to operate in sectors where government interventions and market forces may have failed to address pressing societal needs, particularly within marginalised communities. By integrating business practices with social objectives, these organisations can create sustainable solutions that address the root causes of food-related challenges (Kumar & Tiwary, 2020). One key aspect of social enterprises in food environments is their ability to leverage social relationships and community engagement to co-create social good.

In the context of Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, social enterprises have become powerful vehicles for advancing health equity and promoting well-being. Social enterprises focusing on healthy food environments provide culturally relevant solutions to healthy food environments, food insecurity, obesity, and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These organisations often emerge from within the community and are grounded in Indigenous values of relationship building, reciprocity,

hospitality, ensuring that their social impact extends beyond economic growth to include cultural preservation, sustainability, and community empowerment (Henry, 2017; Tamasese & Waldegrave, 2003).

The concept of social impact refers to the measurable effects that an organisation's activities have on individuals and communities, particularly in terms of well-being, empowerment, and social change. In the case of social enterprises for healthy food environments, the impact can be multifaceted, addressing economic, environmental, and social challenges simultaneously. For example, a social enterprise focused on urban agriculture may not only provide affordable, nutritious food to local residents, but also create employment opportunities, foster community engagement, and promote sustainable land use practices (Tan, 2018; Genter et al., 2013). Social impact can be understood as the positive transformation that occurs when enterprises address issues such as poverty, inequality, and health disparities, fostering long-term sustainable benefits for society (Santos, 2012). Social enterprises can contribute significantly to reducing health inequities by providing access to affordable, nutritious food and supporting sustainable food systems (Roy et al., 2014).

Social enterprises in New Zealand are uniquely positioned to address these challenges due to their embeddedness within the communities they serve. They often operate within obesogenic environments, where access to healthy, affordable food is limited, and unhealthy food options are more readily available (Swinburn et al., 2011). By creating healthy food environment or food haven social enterprises in Tāmaki Makaurau, comes the ability to foster environments that support the well-being of Māori and Pacific whānau (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). The food havens identified in this study, not only improve individual daily dietary choices, but also engage communities in initiatives that build food sovereignty and resilience, empowering them to take control of their health outcomes.

Social value created by these enterprises extends beyond health. Social enterprises in Indigenous communities often play a role in decolonisation efforts by prioritising self-determination and cultural identity (Peredo et al., 2019; Peredo & McLean, 2010). Indigenous entrepreneurship principles in this sense, emphasises the interconnectedness of social, cultural, environmental, even spiritual goals (Henry, 2007, Tonumaipe'a et al., 2023; Henry, Spiller, & Wolfgramm, 2013). Social impact of these enterprises is multidimensional, contributing to economic, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being of the communities they serve.

1.2 Research Objective and Question

The overarching research question is: What role do social enterprises, and their initiatives play in creating healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland)?

In addressing the overarching research question this study will explore the following:

- The role of social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship
- Definitions and analyses of social impact literature
- The role of healthy food environments and sustainable food systems
- Potential impacts for Māori and Pacific whānau

1.3 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research lies in its potential to address critical health inequities faced by Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), particularly concerning the high prevalence of obesity and related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). By investigating the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments, this study offers a novel contribution to the discourse on social impact and Indigenous entrepreneurship. Social enterprises, as mechanisms for promotion of positive social change, are uniquely positioned to address public health challenges by creating accessible, culturally appropriate food environments that align with community values and aspirations (Sonnino & Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

This research is also significant in exploring healthy food environments that contribute to sustainable food systems, particularly in areas disproportionately affected by ‘obesogenic environments’ that encourage unhealthy dietary choices (Swinburn et al., 2011). By analysing these environments through the lens of Indigenous frameworks, the study aims to identify solutions that promote health equity for Māori and Pacific families in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, the research holds the potential to contribute to the growing body of literature on social impact, entrepreneurship, and sustainable food systems, offering valuable insights into how social enterprises can drive systemic change in public health.

In practical terms, the findings of this research may inform policy development and community initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes by, for, and with Māori and Pacific Peoples. By emphasising culturally grounded, community-driven solutions, this study highlights, the importance of collaborative efforts between social enterprises, government agencies, Indigenous communities, and the private sector to create lasting improvements in health and well-being (Tapsell & Woods, 2010; Roy et al., 2014)). Thus,

the research not only advances academic understanding but also has the potential to shape future interventions and policies that address the complex relationship between food environments and health disparities.

1.4 Māori and Pacific Approach to Research

This research is grounded in the principles of Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research methodologies, which are critical to ensuring that the research process, analysis, and outcomes are meaningful, empowering, and aligned with the values and aspirations of Māori and Pacific communities (Smith, 1999; Vaioleti, 2006; Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019). Although the Māori and Pacific story is in no means homogenous, this work is grounded on the shared values, practices, and protocols, generally accepted and expected within these communities (MPP, 2022a; Mead, 2003).

Kaupapa Māori methodology is integral to this research as it reflects Te Ao Māori, a Māori worldview, that centres the needs, values, and aspirations of our tangata whenua (Māori or Indigenous of Aotearoa New Zealand) (Smith, 1999). This research is committed to principles of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and manaakitangata (care and respect), ensuring that Māori actively shape the research and its outcomes. Central to this methodological framework, is the acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of all things. Whakapapa (genealogy) and whanaungatanga (relationships) are pivotal in the research design (Spiller et al., 2015), as they may be key to understanding the role of social enterprises in creating health food environments.

This research utilises Māori data collection methods such as wānanga, which allow for collective engagement and knowledge sharing, creating space for Māori voices to guide the research process. This methodological framework, also ensured that participants had options in the way in which they participated. If participants felt uncomfortable to take part in wānanga, or in the group setting, for any reason, participants had the option of having an in-depth interview with either a support person, or individually.

The research was also underpinned by a Pacific approach, centred on the use of Talanoa as a key methodological approach. Talanoa is a dialogical, open, and informal methods that aligns with the relational and communal values inherent in Pacific cultures (Vaioletli, 2006). It allows for deep engagement with participants, where stories and experiences are shared in a respectful and culturally safe environment. This approach recognises that importance of relationality in Pacific research, valuing the lived experience and perspectives of Pacific Peoples as essential knowledge (Manu'atu, 2004; Vaioleti, 2006).

Talanoa, in this research, also emphasises the concept of vā – the relational space between people – which is nurtured and respected to maintain harmonious relationships

(Ka'ili, 2005). This relational space underpins the research process, ensuring that trust, respect, and reciprocity are maintained throughout. Pacific concepts of health and well-being, which are holistic and include physical, spiritual, and social dimensions, are embedded in the exploration of social enterprises and their potential to create culturally resonant healthy food environments.

Both Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies converge in this research to ensure the voices of Māori and Pacific whānau are not only heard but also central to shaping the studies direction and outcomes. By placing Indigenous frameworks at the core, the research aims to provide culturally responsive solutions that address the unique health challenges faced by Māori and Pacific communities, ultimately contributing to sustainable, community-led change.

1.5 Thesis Overview

This thesis explores the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific families in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland, New Zealand), addressing issues of social inequity in health, particularly around obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Through Māori and Pacific research methodologies, the study provides a comprehensive examination of how community-driven business initiatives create food havens that can counter the prevailing obesogenic environments affecting our peoples. An overview of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the research context, focusing on the rising rates of obesity and diet-related NCDs in Māori and Pacific populations, exacerbated by unhealthy food environments in New Zealand. It provides a background to the issues, introduces the concept of food havens, and outlines the research question: What is the role of social enterprise in fostering healthy food environments *for Māori and Pacific families in Tāmaki Makaurau?*

Chapter 2: Food Environments

This chapter delves into the concept of food environments, highlighting the distinction between unhealthy (obesogenic) and healthy food environments. It introduces the notion of food havens, spaces that provide accessible, affordable, and culturally appropriate healthy foods. The chapter also discusses the New Zealand food system and how it disproportionately affects Māori and Pacific communities. This chapter provides a prelude for the author's manuscript titled *Food Havens not swamps: a strengths-based*

approach to sustainable food environments (Co-authorship contribution can be found in Appendix 1).

Chapter 3: Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

This chapter provides a foundation for understanding social enterprises and their role in addressing social issues, including health inequities. The chapter discusses Indigenous entrepreneurship and its alignment with Māori and Pacific values, emphasising social change and community well-being over profit. The chapter also explores the concept of social impact within the context of Māori and Pacific communities. It discusses how social enterprises, particularly those focused on food environments, can have a transformative impact on health and well-being. The chapter also introduces the framework for assessing social value creation.

Chapter 4: Research Design

This chapter details the methodological framework, which is grounded in Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies. It provides a prelude to the manuscript titled *Weaving Indigenous Research: Māori and Pacific paradigms for Te Moana Māori methodology.* There are multiple co-authors for this paper also; again, I was the lead author and principal researcher (see the signed declaration of co-authorship in appendices). The manuscript is heavily focused on the development of a Te Moana Māori Methodology, combining Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, emphasising an Indigenous epistemology and valuing Māori and Pacific traditions and knowledge systems. Beyond the manuscript, this chapter will provide detail on the research processes and practices as they evolved.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter provides a prelude to the manuscript titled *Upstream healthcare through social enterprise: fostering healthy food environments for, by, and with Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand.* It presents the key findings from the research, including the social enterprises' aspirations and motivations, their role in fostering healthy food environments, and the social impact these initiatives have had on Māori and Pacific whānau. It also discusses how these social enterprises are contributing to the creation of sustainable food systems.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter synthesizes the findings, relating them to the existing literature on social enterprise, food environments, and health outcomes for Indigenous communities. It

explores the potential for social enterprises to address food sovereignty and food insecurity in Māori and Pacific contexts and discusses the broader implications for public health, social policy, and social impact.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The final chapter summarises the key contributors to the thesis, both theoretically and practically. It highlights the role of social enterprises in sustainable food environments that support Māori and Pacific well-being. The chapter concludes by offering recommendations for future research and practice, particularly in the areas of policy development and community-led health interventions.

CHAPTER 2 FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

2.1 Introduction

Recent literature on social enterprise, food systems, food environments, and public health has built upon and critically reoriented foundational understandings of community wellbeing and development. Earlier frameworks often emphasised market-driven innovation and individual entrepreneurship yet lacked engagement with Indigenous and Pacific epistemologies. In contrast, contemporary scholarship has seen the integral value of relationality, sovereignty, and place-based ethics. To illustrate, Hutchings et al. (2020) advance a Kaupapa Māori approach to food systems that is underpinned by notions of whakapapa and intergenerational responsibility, while Johansson-Fua (2021) articulates a Pacific research paradigm rooted in relational ethics and cultural integrity. These works challenge dominant models with Indigenous values and collective agency, offering transformative alternatives to colonial and neoliberal logics. Positioned within this evolving discourse, the literature reviewed in chapter's 2, 3, and 4, contributes to a more decolonial understanding of social enterprise and public health as it relates to Māori and Pacific food environments.

The concept of food environments has gained significant attention in academic literature due to its crucial role in shaping dietary behaviours and health outcomes (Mackay et al., 2022; Swinburn et al., 2011; Cammock et al., 2021b; Conn et al., 2021). Food environments refer to the physical, economic, policy, and socio-cultural surroundings that influence people's food and beverage choices and ultimately influence their nutritional status (Swinburn et al., 2013). These environments are particularly important in understanding the distribution of obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and several cancers, which disproportionately affect marginalised communities globally (WHO, 2018).

Much of the early work on food environments was conceptualised by Glanz et al. (2007), who proposed a model of healthy nutrition environments based on three dimensions including availability, quality, and price. The model has been foundational in framing the relationship between food access and public health. Later, scholars like Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton (2010) extended the model to include more comprehensive definitions of food environments emphasising their multi-faceted nature, which includes community, organisation, consumer, and informational environments. These dimensions provide a structured way to assess the multiple layers that affect food choices, particularly in marginalised communities where access to healthy food is limited.

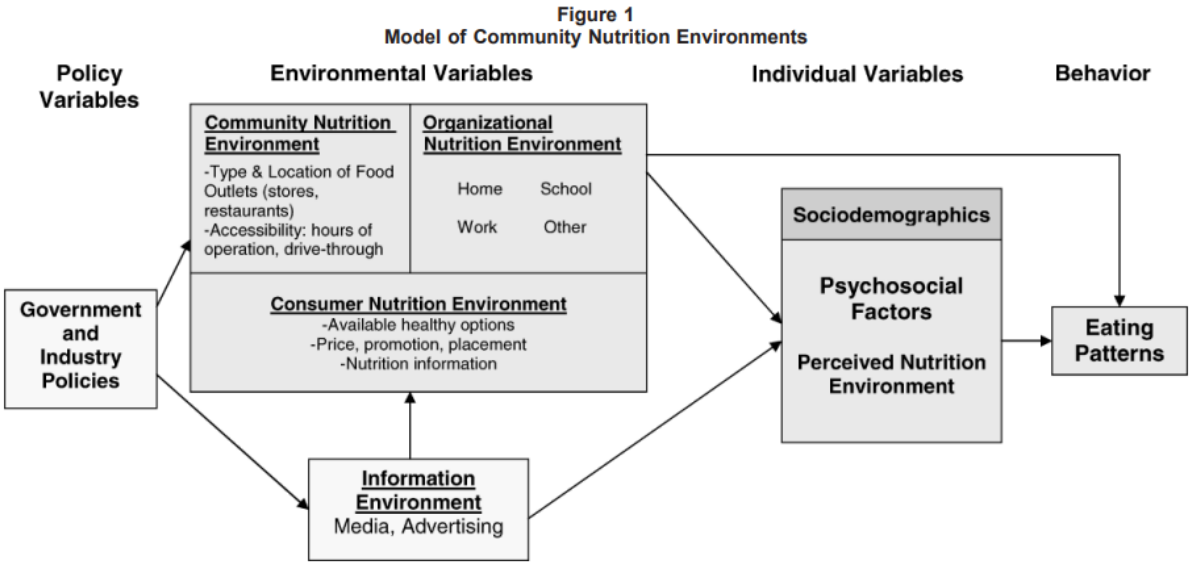
The increasing prevalence of terms like ‘food swamps,’ ‘food deserts,’ and food mirages in the literature highlights the various ways in which unhealthy food environments manifest, often reinforcing socioeconomic and ethnic disparities (Cummins & Macintyre, 2002; Rose et al., 2009). However, while much of the existing literature focuses on unhealthy food environments, there is a growing movement toward identifying solutions through the creation of healthy food environments. One such concept is the food haven, a strengths-based approach that seeks to empower communities by creating spaces where healthy food is available, affordable, and culturally appropriate (Tonumaipe’a et al., 2021).

2.2 Models of Food Environments

The food environments literature has been expounded from the work of Glanz et al. (2007), who conceptualised a model of healthy nutrition environments based on three dimensions, including availability, quality, and price.

Following several studies that examined schools as important sources of children’s food; racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in nutrition and overall health; the prevalence of fast-food restaurants and poor-quality foods in minority neighbourhoods, Glanz et al. (2005) proposed a conceptual model of nutrition environments (see Figure 1). The model offers a guide to developing nutrition environment measures to support studies that connect environment measures with eating behaviours.

Figure 1. Model of Community Nutrition Environments (Glanz et al., 2005, p. 331)



The model of community nutrition environments purports that policy, environmental, individual variables, and individual behaviour can impact a population group's eating patterns, which in turn can adversely affect the risk of chronic disease. The model identifies four key areas of nutrition environments including community nutrition, organisational nutrition, consumer nutrition, and information environment.

Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton (2010) later extended the model and used the term nutrition environments interchangeably with 'food environments' to include four key domains of food environments. These are presented in Manuscript One (p.25).

Table 2. Types of Food Environments (Ohri-Vachaspati & Leviton, 2010, p. 411)

Food Environment	Description
Community Food Environment	The geographical distribution of food outlets, including the number, type, access, and hours of operation.
Organisation Food Environment	Generally, affects groups such as families or students, occurring in settings such as homes, schools, worksites, churches, and health care facilities.
Consumer Food Environment	Refers to what consumers encounter within and around retail food outlets: nutrition quality, price and affordability, promotion, placement, variety, freshness, nutritional information, and nutritional labelling.
Informational Food Environment	Media and advertising operating at national, regional, neighbourhood or food outlet levels.

Ohri-Vachaspati et al. (2010) critique the instruments used to assess food environments and examine 48 instruments (including measures and indicators) available from both researchers and practitioners, they propose that the selection of instruments is highly dependent on the context. Ohri-Vachaspati et al. (2010) identified notable gaps in these instruments that call for the cross-validation of instruments, testing for reliability, and to develop cost effective and shorter forms of more detailed and expensive instruments. They argue that a one-size-fits-all instrument is inappropriate in many contexts, however, they do provide a guide in considering the type of instrument one may adopt. This guide entails three key considerations such as 1) the purpose the assessment will serve, 2) user needs for detail and accuracy, and 3) the available resources to users (Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2010). The primary purposes for assessment of food environments as proposed by Ohri-Vachaspati et al. (2010) are detailed in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Primary Purpose of Assessment of Food Environments (p. 411)

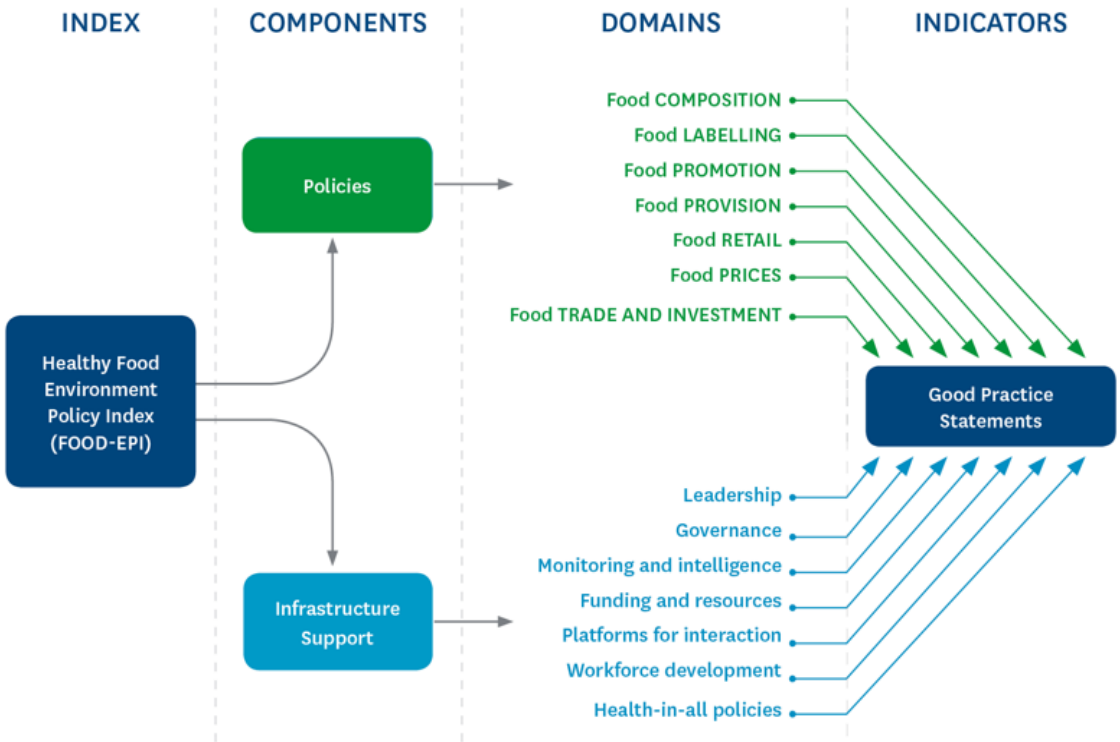
Needs assessment and planning	To identify priorities for action in a particular community.
Population-level surveillance	To monitor trends in access, availability, quality, and affordability of food.

Research	To gain a better understanding of the most important factors in environments affecting obesity and chronic disease.
Evaluation	To improve programs or policies and to assess their effectiveness.
Advocacy	To engage stakeholders and decision makers to affect policy and environmental changes in the food environment.

2.3 Food Environment Policy in New Zealand

The Food-EPI (Health Food Environment Policy Index) was developed by the International Food Network for Food and Obesity/Non-communicable Diseases Research, Monitoring and Action Support (INFORMAS)) to evaluate the degree of implementation of food environment policies for national governments against international best practice (Mackay et al., 2022). This model is outlined in Figure 2, is a practical framework for assessing the political and policy landscape that shapes food environments.

Figure 2. Food-EPI Framework (Swinburn et al., 2013, p. 14)



While the Food EPI-Framework provides a robust tool for policy evaluation, it is not without limitations. Critiques of the EPI-Framework include its reliance on expert opinion, challenges in achieving consistent benchmarks across diverse socio-political contexts, and the difficulty of translating high-level policy evaluations into actionable community-level interventions (Vandevijvere et al., 2015). The framework is valuable for

identifying policy gaps, monitoring progress, and encouraging government accountability in improving food environments – and essential step for driving meaningful improvements in food environments through effective policymaking and leadership (Swinburn et al., 2013).

The Food EPI complements the theoretical models of food environments (see section 2.2). While frameworks such as those proposed by Glanz et al. (2005) and Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton (2010) focus on understanding the structural dimensions of food environments – such as community, organisational, and consumer food environments – the Food EPI translates these dimensions into actionable policy targets (Swinburn et al., 2013, p. 14). To illustrate, the assessment of consumer food environments, including the access to affordable and nutritious foods, directly informs policies that target retail food outlets or regulate marketing practices. Similarly, understanding organisational food environments, such as those in schools or workplaces, aligns with government-led initiatives to improve institutional food procurement and nutrition standards.

This connection between theoretical and policy frameworks emphasises the need for an integrated and multi-level approach to addressing food environments. By linking environmental factors shaping food choices with policy-driven interventions, researchers and practitioners can more effectively identify points of convergence to create healthier, more equitable food systems (Cammock et al., 2021b; Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021; Swinburn et al., 2011). Further, within the Aotearoa New Zealand context, where disparities in food environments disproportionately affect Māori and Pacific populations, these frameworks provide a foundation for targeted policy actions that align with the principles of equity and responsiveness.

By situating the Food EPI (Swinburn et al., 2013) within the broader discussion of food environment models, this section bridges the theoretical understanding of nutrition environments with the practical challenges of policy implementation. This integrated perspective highlights how political and systemic action, informed by robust environmental models, is essential for addressing the complex interplay between food environments, public health, and equity (Vandevijvere et al., 2015).

2.4 Food Systems and The Interface of Food Environments

Food environments do not exist in isolation but are intimately linked to the broader food system, which encompasses all processes involved in feeding a population from production to consumption, and disposal (FAO, 2018). Food systems have come under scrutiny for their environmental, social, and health-related implications. Researchers have recognised the need for a holistic approach to understanding the complex interplay

between food systems, individual dietary choices, and the broader food environment (Rose et al., 2009; Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2010; Cammock et al., 2021b). Understanding this interface illustrates the interconnectedness of individual diets, food environments, and food systems.

As aforementioned, there is a plethora of literature on unhealthy food environments and their metaphoric representations such as food swamps (Rose et al., 2009) and food deserts (Cummins & Macintyre, 2002), and food mirages (Breyer & Voss-Andreae, 2013). Dominant literature on food environments continues to be tied to ideas of unhealthy food environments and understanding these for the purpose of healthy protection measures. Although the policy agenda of understanding unhealthy food environments is ongoing and necessary, the food haven was offered as a strengths-based approach to understanding healthy food environments to address inequities among low-socioeconomic and ethnic groups in Aotearoa (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021).

The EAT-Lancet Commission report provides a useful reference for sustainable food systems which encapsulates two end points of the food system; that is, final consumption of food or diets, and sustainable food production (Willet et al., 2019). The food system is encompassing of a web of systems including production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food (FOA, 2018). The food environment has been identified as the interface between people's individual food acquisition, consumption, and the wider food system (Turner et al., 2018).

Short, Guthman, and Raskin (2007) argue that many initiatives seem to assume that 'if you build it, they will come', with the underlying assumption that once healthy food is available, the food problems among low-socioeconomic groups will cease to exist (p. 365). However, one of the key issues within these environments, and in health, is that engagement is especially important to effective implementation of healthy spaces (Kingi et al., 2017). Unless trust, common understandings, and agreed parameters of an initiative can be established, effective outcomes may be compromised (p. 69). Take the community garden for example. Community gardens have been identified as a healthy eating strategy for low socio-economic populations (Gillies et al., 2021); however, studies have suggested that without community engagement, gardens become unsustainable despite the best intentions of these initiatives (Ohmer et al., 2009). Jackson and Ronzi (2021) and Davies et al. (2022) argue that interventions of this nature should be community-led and emphasise the importance of the sharing of power and decision making of running the project with the community as key determinants of success and engagement.

These healthy eating strategies and initiatives present the challenge of bridging the gap between structural characteristics (the food environment and attaining affordability and access to healthy foods), and social characteristics (engagement within the community). Studies suggest that social enterprise and the initiatives they implement may have the ability to bridge this gap in achieving enhanced connectedness, well-being, and self-confidence (Calò et al., 2018). Studies have explored the role of social enterprise, and their role in addressing socio-economic issues, such as food insecurity (Lindberg et al., 2019); and sustainable food systems (Berno, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2017). The following sections will explore the intersection of structural and social characteristics in healthy eating strategies and the role of social enterprises in bridging these gaps.

The models of food environments (Ohri-Vachaspati & Leviton, 2010; Glanz et al., 2007) highlight the inequities that exist within the wider food systems. The Food EPI provides a tool for policymakers to evaluate food environments (Swinburn et al., 2013). These works provide a foundation for exploring the role of social enterprise in understanding its ability to address both social and structural challenges by creating Food Havens.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This section of the literature review explores the multifaceted concept of food environments, focusing on their critical role in shaping dietary behaviours and health outcomes. Food environments are defined as the physical, economic, policy, and socio-cultural contexts that influence what people eat, with significant implications for public health, particularly in relation to obesity, and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and several cancers. These environments are crucial to understanding how food access affects health, particularly in marginalised communities where disparities in access to health food contribute to poorer health outcomes (Swinburn et al., 2011; Mackay et al., 2022).

The chapter builds on the foundational work of Glanz et al., (2007), who introduced a model of healthy nutrition environments based on availability, quality, and price. This model has since been expounded and expanded to include community, organisational, consumer, and informational environments, providing a comprehensive framework for evaluating how food environments impact dietary behaviours particularly in low-income and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. This chapter also reviews the Food-EPI (Health Food Environment Policy Index), developed by INFORMAS to evaluate national food environments policies. This index measures how well countries are implementing policies designed to improve food environments, offering a key framework for comparing New Zealand’s policy initiatives against global best practices (Mackay et al., 2022).

The chapter also discusses the interface of food systems and food environments, laying a foundation for understanding how food environments are shaped by complex socio-economic and structural factors. It sets the stage for further exploration of social enterprises and community-led initiatives that can foster healthier, more equitable food environments for Māori and Pacific communities. This section also serves as an introduction to Manuscript One, titled *Food Havens, not Swamps: a strengths-based Approach to Sustainable Food Environments.*

CHAPTER 3 FOOD HAVENS

3.1 Prelude to Manuscript One

Manuscript One was published in earlier stages of this PhD research and has been included in this final thesis due to its significant relevance and instrumental role in shaping the trajectory of the study. While initially developed to explore foundational aspects of the research question, the articles provided critical insights that informed the methodological framework and conceptual underpinnings of this thesis. Its publication not only contributed to academic discourse in the field, but also allowed for early engagement with peer review processes, refining the research focus and ensuring its alignment with broader scholarly discussions (see Cammock et al., 2021b; Swinburn et al., 2011).

The decision to include Manuscript One into the final thesis emphasises its enduring relevance to the overall research aims. Manuscript One addresses key research questions that remain central to the thesis, offering grounding and practical considerations that have influences subsequent analysis and discussions. By including this work, the thesis acknowledges the iterative nature of doctoral research, where earlier contributions serve as building blocks for more comprehensive exploration and synthesis.

As noted by Wilson (2008), Indigenous research paradigms view knowledge as relational, and evolving, with each contribution building upon previous ones to enhance collective understanding. Similarly, Kovach (2010) emphasises the importance of reflexivity and the interweaving of prior work to honour the research journey and its developmental stages. This reflects the cohesive development of the research and highlights the article's value in bridging early-stage exploration with the final, holistic presentation of findings.

The following manuscript also provides the Indigenous context and understanding of food spaces and environments that seem to be scant in the literature and adds new knowledge to the food systems and food environments discourse. This manuscript also provides a base for theoretical discussion in the methodology chapter of this thesis, as well as framing of participant stories and themes in the findings and discussions sections.

3.2 Manuscript One [Published and formatted for Health Promotion International]

Food Havens not Swamps: A Strength-Based Approach to Sustainable Food Environments

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Summary

The current paper provides a critical review of food environments' literature, with a focus on the metaphoric typology that has been developed over recent decades. This has tended to focus understandably on harmful food environments using well-known metaphors: that of food deserts, food swamps and food mirages. The purpose of the review was to consider the current typology in relation to what constitutes healthy food environments, and the implications for population groups in low socioeconomic environments who are often disadvantaged by current food systems and unhealthy food environments. The paper posits a new term, alongside the notion of the food oasis, that of food havens. Oasis indicates a small place of plenty in a setting of scarcity. Haven extends the boundaries of plenty in society by positing places and settings of refuge and safety, even sanctuary from which health and well-being can be attained and supported. We argue for focusing on creating such sustainable food environments so as to proliferate and promote examples of what needs to be done urgently in the fight to transform global food environments for the health of people particularly those that are vulnerable and the planet. Elements of the food haven as proposed in this paper have been drawn from Indigenous perspectives—these include Māori and Pacific worldviews. Future research should consider what food environments might look like in different contexts and how we might move away from food swamps and deserts to food oases and havens; and utilize these positive motifs to go further in creating whole sustainable food environments encompassing all of society.

Key words: food environments, sustainability, food system

INTRODUCTION

With global obesity rates tripling since 1975, obesity is a major risk factor leading to preventable non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and several cancers. The staggering rate of global obesity and diet-related NCDs are significantly driven by unhealthy diets (Branca, 2019). Studies have suggested that these rates have largely been attributed to increasing intake of calories, availability and promotion of cheap, energy dense and nutrient-poor foods and are concurrent with decreasing physical activity (Swinburn, 2008; WHO, 2018). Previously considered an issue in high income countries, obesity is now on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, specifically in urban settings (WHO, 2018). There has been little to no success nor exemplar populations in which the obesity epidemic has been reversed (Swinburn *et al.*, 2011).

It has been widely understood that food environments, particularly, unhealthy food environments, have been linked to the staggeringly high rates of obesity (Gortmaker *et al.*, 2011; Swinburn, 2008; Swinburn *et al.*, 2011). These unhealthy food environments have fostered unhealthy diets through the availability of cheap, heavily promoted, energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods (Nieto, *et al.*, 2019). The food environment is associated with the kinds of foods people eat (Ver Ploeg *et al.*, 2009). Several studies explore the connection between food environments and diet (Gustafson *et al.*, 2012; Mckinnon *et al.*, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2014). The structure of the food environment, be it healthy or unhealthy, will either provide opportunities or challenges to healthy food intake and physical activity. Given the association between the food environment and its effect on population health, particularly, the overwhelming rates of obesity and associated NCDs, there is a critical need to understand the role of food environments and its influence on people's food choices. There have been calls to provide culturally acceptable foods to improve food choices within current food environments (Short *et al.*, 2007). The concept of food sovereignty assumes that the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods in parallel to the right to define their own food systems (Huambachano, 2019; Patel, 2009). The food sovereignty movement is integral to reclaiming Indigenous knowledge of food and agriculture ultimately bringing the needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food to the centre of food systems and policies, displacing the dominance of the market and corporate demands (Patel, 2009). One example of these movements can be found in community led pantries or Pātaka Kai that have sprung up in recent years across New Zealand (see, for example, Pātaka Kai, 2020). Since food environments

are the interface between people's food acquisitions and consumption and the wider food system (Turner *et al.*, 2018), this paper has drawn from aspects of Indigenous knowledge to identify a healthy food environment definition that is culturally embedded.

The aim of this paper is to explore the typology associated with food environments and expand positive motifs associated with food environments, ultimately with the goal of developing wholly sustainable and health food environments that would favourably influence people's food choices to invoke healthy food intake. In doing so, we provide a literature review on current definitions of food environments, moving toward a new concept for healthy food environments, that of the *food haven* within a whole system change approach.

DEFINING FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

Glanz *et al.* conceptualized a model of a healthy nutrition environment, one that measured 'food environment quality' scores using three dimensions—availability, quality and price (Glanz *et al.*, 2007). The term 'nutrition environment' has been exchanged with 'food environment' to fit within a context that relates access, availability, affordability and price of food to the environment (Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton, 2008). Expounded from the work of Glanz *et al.* (Glanz *et al.*, 2007), Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton posit four types of food environments (Ohri-Vachaspati and Leviton, 2008, p. 411) (Table 4).

Several researchers have included and extended the dimensions of the food environment to include aspects such as, desirability, convenience, media and advertising, policies, barriers, nutritional quality, nutritional information, use, adherence to guidelines and practices (Glanz *et al.*, 2007; Herforth and Ahmed, 2015; Ohri- Vachaspati and Leviton, 2008; Swinburn *et al.*, 2013; Vandevijvere *et al.*, 2019).

Swinburn *et al.* defined food environments as 'the collective physical, economic, policy and sociocultural surroundings, opportunities and conditions that influence people's food and beverage choices and nutrition status' (Swinburn *et al.*, 2013, p. 2). This definition is useful in capturing key drivers of people's food choices and nutritional status from a macro level. Operationalizing such a concept has called for further definition and association with wider systems and concepts. For example, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations describes food environments as comprising the food available to people in their surrounding as they go about their daily lives and the nutritional quality, safety, price,

convenience, labelling and promotion of these foods (p. viii); with the addition that food environments are considered the 'interface' or 'link' between food systems and diet (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2016, p. 21). Food environments present at least two mechanisms for affecting behaviour and food choices including perceptions and actual physical characteristics about the environment (Ohri-Vachaspati *et al.*, 2010). According to Herforth and Ahmed (Herforth and Ahmed, 2015), food environments circumscribe how income can be spent on food. As an extension to definitions of the food environment, Turner *et al.* posit the food environment as the interface that mediates people's food acquisition and consumption within a wider food system (Turner *et al.*, 2018, p. 95).

Table 4. Types of Food Environments

Domain	Description
Community Food Environment	The geographical distribution of food outlets, including the number, type, access and hours of operation.
Organizational Food Environment	Generally, affects groups such as families or students, occurring in settings such as homes, schools, worksites, churches and health care facilities.
Consumer Food Environment	Refers to what consumers encounter within and around retail food outlets: nutritional quality, price and affordability, promotion, placement, variety, freshness, nutritional information and nutritional labelling.
Informational Food Environment	Media and advertising operating at national, regional, neighbourhood or food outlet levels.

These definitions bring to the fore the role of food environments within a wider system—the food system. Over time, food environments have been shaped by the food system that is composed of many elements such as the environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions and activities relating to production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food (Willett *et al.*, 2019). The food system has been described as monolithic, with systems and shifting subsystems that are complex in nature (De Savigny and Adam, 2009). The world's food system has concentrated on increasing production and reducing costs (Chan, 2017). This shift toward industrialization has predominantly addressed issues such as food insecurity (Pinstrup-Anderson and Watson, 2011) and has also fuelled a market-driven world economy (Bliss, 2019). Consequently, food environments have been created that are detrimental to healthy diets, with diets moving toward foods that are cheap, processed, energy-dense, nutrient-poor and convenient. This has been coined as the *nutrition transition* where countries, particularly low- to middle- income, move from

undernourishment to higher levels of overweight and obesity due to increasingly nutritionally poor food diets (Lee *et al.*, 2011).

The EAT-Lancet commission have called for a 'Great Food Transformation', which would entail a shift toward healthy diets based on sustainable food systems that consider both the planet and human health (Willett *et al.*, 2019). The discussion of food transformation from unhealthy to healthy diets can be found in the literature concerning food systems (Lartey *et al.*, 2018); food environments (Lartey *et al.*, 2016; Swinburn *et al.*, 2013) and recommended dietary intake (Willett *et al.*, 2019). The connection between food systems, diet and food environments has become an important association for understanding and addressing several health concerns (Conn *et al.* 2019; Dangour *et al.*, 2017; The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016; Turner *et al.*, 2018).

METAPHORS FOR THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT: FOOD DESERTS, FOOD SWAMPS, FOOD MIRAGES AND FOOD OASES

The term *obesogenic environment* refers to a food environment that promotes weight gain and is not conducive to weight loss, consequently fuelling the obesity epidemic (Swinburn *et al.*, 1999). These environments tend to encourage overeating, consumption of unhealthy foods, physical inactivity and consequently, promoting weight gain (Lee *et al.*, 2011). US national studies in the early 1970s confirmed preliminary research that found a link between poor diet, nutritional outcomes and deprivation (Lowe *et al.*, 1973; Abraham *et al.*, 1974). Subsequent studies have suggested that challenges in nutritious food availability, accessibility and affordability can curtail a healthy diet (Bodor *et al.*, 2008; Jetter and Cassady, 2006; Pitt *et al.*, 2017). It has been well documented that healthy food options are more expensive than less healthy foods (Jetter and Cassady, 2006; Kettings *et al.*, 2009; Rao *et al.*, 2013; Wiggins and Keats, 2015), although the notion has been contested by some academics who argue that an affordable healthy diet is possible (Lee *et al.*, 2016). Wiggins and Keats (2015) found that there is a decrease in the price of processed foods, whereas the price of fruit and vegetables have increased across the board in many countries such as United Kingdom, South Korea, China, Brazil and Mexico. The connection between geographic food access and health outcomes has become an interdisciplinary focus shared by researchers in public health (Sushil *et al.*, 2017); geography (McEntee and Agyeman, 2010; McKenzie, 2014); marketing (Wijayaratne *et al.*, 2018) and economics (Yeonwoo and Cubbin, 2019). Bodor *et al.* (2008) identified limited access and availability of supermarkets as a barrier to consuming healthy foods. Additionally, Breyer and Voss-Andraea suggest other

pathways such as food prices to be associated with poor diet-related health outcomes. These barriers to healthy food diets are characteristics of harmful food environments (Breyer and Voss-Andraea, 2013).

Harmful food environments have exacerbated the purchase of nutrient-poor and energy dense foods compared to the purchase of nutritious foods. Consequently, diets and health outcomes have affected the most vulnerable members of society. Harmful food environments have been characterized using 'environments' metaphors: these are food deserts, food swamps and food mirages (Cooksey-Stowers *et al.*, 2017; Everett, 2011; Ver Ploeg *et al.*, 2009). They can be considered as types of obesogenic environments. The categories that are commonly explored in the literature include the food deserts and food swamps (Cooksey-Stowers *et al.*, 2017; Reel and Badger, 2014; Rose *et al.*, 2009; Ver Ploeg *et al.*, 2009). Food deserts refer to geographic areas that have limited access to affordable and nutritious food (Cooksey-Stowers *et al.*, 2017). Food swamps refer to geographic areas with an overabundance of exposure to unhealthy food and beverages compared to healthy alternatives (Rose *et al.*, 2009). Some researchers posit the food mirage as referring to geographic areas that have limited access to affordable healthy options as opposed to the lack of supermarkets (Breyer and Voss- Andreae, 2013). That is, in food mirages, full-service grocery outlets appear to be plentiful; however, food prices are high, making healthful foods economically inaccessible for low-income households (p. 131). Research suggests that harmful food environments tend to have higher concentration of fast food outlets and convenience stores offering cheap, calorie dense and nutrient poor foods; limited access to supermarkets and grocery stores with fresh produce and healthy options; and inferior quality relative to produce sold in affluent communities (Sloane *et al.*, 2006). Although food deserts and food mirages are separate phenomena, generally, they refer to food environments that require longer travel distances to purchase affordable healthy food (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013; Cummins and Macintyre, 1999; Rose *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, the extra transportation costs (including fuel for a vehicle, or money for public transport) to attain healthy affordable food can also increase the cost of food (Gray and Hinch, 2019).

Neighbourhoods with high socioeconomic deprivation have been particularly negatively affected by the conditions of food deserts, food swamps and food mirages. Among those disproportionately affected by harmful food environments are young people (Day and Pearce, 2011; Hager *et al.*, 2017; Powell *et al.*, 2007). Day and Pearce found that primary and intermediate schools (with children aged between 5 and 12) in New Zealand had a high proportion of fast food and

convenience stores within proximity to the school (Day and Pearce, 2011). Significant racial disparities are also associated with harmful food environments (Hager *et al.*, 2017; Haynes-Maslow and Leone, 2017). For example, in the US, residents in low-income neighbourhoods who were predominantly non-white, tended to live in areas where fast foods and available energy-dense foods were prolific (Franco *et al.*, 2008; Larson *et al.*, 2009). Supermarket availability in African-American neighbourhoods was found to be about half of that in white neighbourhoods (Powell *et al.*, 2007). These associations between food outlets and population groups that are most affected have led to calls for economic and urban planning and health decision-makers to work together to improve the conditions for neighbourhoods considered as living with the harmful effects of food deserts, food mirages and food swamps (Powell *et al.*, 2007).

Food deserts

Cummins and Macintyre (2002) posited that food deserts are areas where foods are relatively unavailable and expensive. Other definitions include food deserts as being areas that have no access to food outlets or they only have limited access to low-quality food (Guy and David, 2004); and areas in which access to healthy and affordable food is limited due to the absence of food retailers, such as in low- income urban neighbourhoods (Gregory *et al.*, 2011). The metaphoric reference to food *deserts* would suggest that these particularly food environments are barren geographic areas with little to no healthy food options. These food deserts are places where transportation limitations combined with scarcity in supermarkets force its residents to pay inflated prices for inferior and unhealthy foods at smaller markets and convenience stores (Wrigley, 2002; Short *et al.*, 2007). Walker et al. (2010) identified food deserts in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as geographic areas in which large chain supermarkets were not accessible within 0.5 miles of residents (Walker *et al.*, 2010). McEntee and Agyeman defined food deserts in rural Vermont as areas where food outlets were more than 10 miles out from residents (McEntee and Agyeman, 2010). Slater *et al.* defined food deserts as areas where low socio-economic groups in Winnipeg live greater than 500 m from a grocery store, resulting in large proportions of the population living in food deserts (Slater *et al.*, 2017).

Food oases

Critics of food deserts have argued that current studies concerning the focus on grocery stores and full-line supermarkets as the sole indicator of good food access are insufficient (Hubley, 2011; Raja *et al.*, 2008). It is argued that this focus overlooks

the already existing small full-service food retailers that are neither classed as grocery stores nor full-line supermarkets (Short *et al.*, 2007). In considering these other potential offerings of healthy foods, the metaphor of *food oases* has been developed to describe neighbourhoods that have good access to healthy food outlets (Short *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, Wang *et al.* argue that there is a need to include community gardens and food hubs as they can have an impact on healthy and unhealthy food accessibility (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Short *et al.* highlighted the complexities found in culturally acceptable foods as important elements to consider as part of people's food choices regardless of the presence of a full-line supermarket and grocery store (Short *et al.*, 2007).

Food swamps

As an extension to food deserts literature, Rose *et al.* coined the term food swamps to describe neighbourhoods with prolific availability of fast food and junk food compared to healthier options (Rose *et al.*, 2009). In addition, recent studies have suggested that food swamps may better predict obesity rates than food deserts (Cooksey-Stowers *et al.*, 2017; Rose *et al.*, 2009; Ver Ploeg *et al.*, 2009). Food swamps refer to neighbourhoods that have higher density of outlets selling unhealthy foods. The disproportionate number of fast food and convenience stores tends to be in low socio-economic environments, making them the most convenient and affordable choices (Pearce *et al.*, 2009; Sushil *et al.*, 2017). Rose *et al.* argue that the abundance of unhealthy food outlets found in low-income neighbourhoods hinders the visibility of healthy food outlets and exposes consumers to unhealthy food options leading to lack of uptake or access to healthy foods (Rose *et al.*, 2009). This means that access to unhealthy food retailers is significantly higher in more deprived areas than in less deprived areas. A recent study that explored the dietary behaviours of urban adolescent girls in Baltimore City USA found that they consumed more snacks and desserts than those who did not live in a so-called food swamp (Hager *et al.*, 2017). Yang *et al.* suggest that food deserts and food swamps share characteristics that overlap with neighbourhoods having both poor access to healthy food and excessive coverage of unhealthy food outlets (Yang *et al.*, 2020).

Food mirages

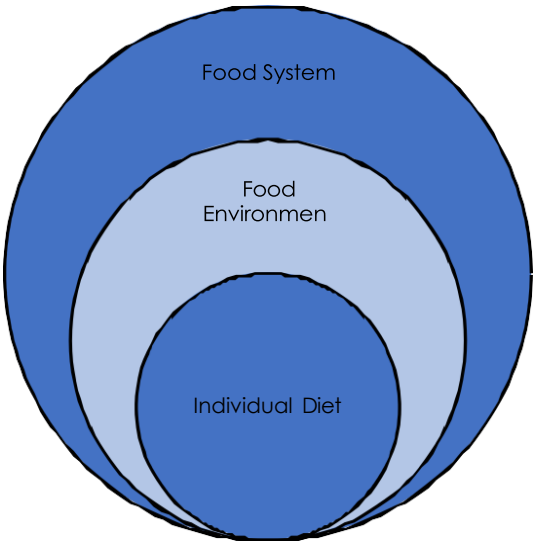
Some researchers have been critical of the term food deserts, particularly of the assumption that food access is the result of neighbourhood proximity to supermarkets and grocery stores (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013; Everett, 2011; Short *et al.*, 2007). These studies have extended the spatial analysis to focus on food

price data and affordability. Consequently, positing the term *food mirages* refer to food access limitations that arise from the lack of affordable, healthy food options rather than the absence of supermarkets (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013). Although the food mirage and its impact on health is like that of the food desert, the limitations of time, distance and cost are a result of infrequent shopping trips and less fresh produce (Everett, 2011). In an area described as a food mirage, grocery stores in proximity to neighbourhoods offer food with prices beyond the means of low-income households, meaning that a longer journey to acquire affordable nutritious food is required (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013). The metaphoric reference to the food *mirage* is useful in understanding a food environment that is not quite what it seems. That is, although it appears that there exists several grocery stores that offer healthy food choices in the area, nutritious foods are still inaccessible to those with low incomes.

FOOD HAVEN: DEFINING A HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

In this paper, we have discussed metaphors relating to food environments such as deserts, swamps, mirages and oases. These types particularly relate to community food environments (see Table 4), whilst touching on some aspects of the consumer environment including price and affordability. We propose the metaphor of the 'food haven' as a further positive conduit for healthy food environments. The food haven concept posits a focus on sustainable food environments, with potential for further advocacy for policy makers, communities, business and individuals to work towards; and a metaphor appropriately representative of a food environment required to challenge current limitations that significantly affect low-socioeconomic groups in society. Additionally, and vital in our own context of Aotearoa New Zealand, elements within the food haven definition as proposed in this paper have been drawn from Indigenous knowledge, particularly from Māori and Pacific perspectives.

Figure 3. The interface between individual diets, food environments, and food systems.



As illustrated in Figure 3, diets are influenced by food environments, and food environments are influenced by food systems (Lartey *et al.*, 2018). Short *et al.* argue that many of the interventions for food environments assume that 'if you build it, they will come', that once healthy food outlets are built, the inequalities among low-socioeconomic groups will no longer exist (Short *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, dominant literature of food environments remains tied to ideas of harmful food environments that are to be understood for the purpose of health protection measures. Although this policy agenda is ongoing, we feel that it is equally necessary to focus on modelling healthy food environments with the intention to develop healthy food environments to scale as well as considering complexities within distinct population groups.

In defining food havens, and acknowledging similarities with the idea of the food oasis, we have taken into consideration the wider food system, healthy dietary intake and aspects of current food environment literature that provide opportunities and challenges for food choices and decisions, particularly in low-socioeconomic groups. Haven is defined as a place of safety, refuge or sanctuary (Collins Dictionary, 2020). A food haven as proposed in this paper is defined as:

A space or place where people have high availability of healthy food and beverages that are accessible, convenient, affordable, and desirable.

A term befitting a food environment that should be designed to benefit its most vulnerable members of society was at the fore of the 'food haven' concept. The food haven implies that for those most vulnerable to adverse effects found in food swamps, food deserts and food mirages, there may be places of sanctuary where healthy food options are accessible, convenient, affordable and desirable irrespective of socio-economic status. We recognize the important value of

Indigenous knowledge, particularly in encapsulating deeper meanings concerning what is meant by 'space' and 'place' within the food haven definition. The following provides a breakdown of the food haven definition as proposed in this paper.

Space—Vā

Within Indigenous worldviews specific to Pasifika (Pacific Peoples), the concept of Vā carries with it deeper meaning that highlights the importance of relationships (Ioane, 2017; Kalavite, 2019). Anae (2010) describes Vā as caring for the space that exists between people to cultivate relationships. Space is the literal translation of V-a from a Samoan worldview (Ioane, 2017). Kalavite describes Vā as being central to Tongan culture that expresses a total commitment or obligation to the collective welfare (Kalavite, 2019). According to Wendt (1999), Vā is described as:

. . .the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates, but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships and the contexts change (p. 402).

In this sense, the collective well-being has greater value than individual endeavours, ensuring that relationships are paramount. In essence, Vā is the relational space that effectively governs relationships between people, land and the environment (Ioane, 2017). This space can either be harmonious or disharmonious (Kalavite, 2019). The cultural values encapsulated in keeping good Vā as discussed by Kalavite (2019) from a Tongan perspective include the following (Table 5).

Table 5. Core Values of Vā (Kalavite, 2019, p.176)

Fetokoni'aki and feveitokai'aki	Cooperation, consensus and maintenance
'Ofa or *fe'ofo'ofani*	Mutual love, caring and generosity
Faka'apa'apa or *Faka'apa'apa'aki*	Mutual respect
Fatongia, faitongia or *fua kavenga*	Responsibilities, commitment and obedience
Fakato-kilalo	Humility and generosity

*Terms in the Tongan language.

When we refer to space within the food havens definitions, we refer to a space that is deeply relational, that carries with it a collective responsibility, duty, and care that can allow a healthy food environment to prosper and provide positive outcomes for all members of the community within the space. The term 'space' serves as an invitation to groups within society (be it small or large) to take action in current food environments making improvements that are within immediate control of governing

bodies and individuals. Realizing this space will depend on the context and culture from which it exists.

Place and Papakāinga

The term ‘place’ can also be understood based on the place attachment theory that describes the bond that occurs when connecting individuals and their meaningful environments (Giulani, 2003). At the group level, this bond between individuals and meaningful environments can be identified as areas in which groups may practice and preserve their cultures (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Scannell and Gifford present a framework of place attachment that includes three dimensions: person, place and process (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Although focusing on the bond between place and person, we acknowledge that there is a cognitive element to the food haven. Additionally, the relationship between food and place is integral to Indigenous food cultures that have historically been shaped by the natural environment and agriculture (Chrzan and Brett, 2017; Huambachano, 2019). This inter-weaving of person, place and process can be found in the example of the papakāinga. The contemporary concept of papakāinga within mātauranga Māori (Indigenous knowledge from a Māori worldview) has guided the deeper meaning of ‘place’. Papakāinga is defined as home base, village or communal Māori land (Moorfield, 2011). Papa refers to Papatūānuku (which is the mother earth) or the embodiment of earth (Kake, 2019). The literal meaning of kāinga is home, residence, village, settlement, habitation, habitat or dwelling (Moorfield, 2011). Henare describes kāinga as the ‘primary place of habitation in which the whānau and hapu carry out their everyday activities’ (Henare, 2003, p. 146). Aligned with Pacific understandings of kāinga, for Māori, it is traditionally understood as a place where activities were purposeful in enhancing the spiritual, social, cultural and economic well-being of individuals as well as the group in order to sustain the community (Kalavite, 2019; Nicholson *et al*., 2015). Archaeological evidence from the early 14th century suggests that the papakainga of old were always near food sources such as springs and rivers, ensuring that sites would provide a healthy food environment, much like dwellings throughout the Pacific during this time (Henry and Crothers, n.d.). The papakainga in this sense can refer to a place including home, village, habitat or dwelling that connects people to land that provides nourishment and sustenance concerning spiritual, social, cultural and economic needs. The papakainga provides a useful example of a ‘sense of place’ that is based on the connection between place and identity where one can truly feel at home (Easthope, 2004).

The term ‘place’ is intentionally fluid, in that it includes a geographic area, or setting such as home, school, place of work, church or healthcare facility, thus categorizing such food environments that may be considered either community or organizational as proposed by Glanz *et al.* (Glanz *et al.*, 2007). The papakainga allows fuller understanding of a place that is deeply connected to identity that encapsulates the enhancement of spiritual, social, cultural and economic well-being of individuals and the collective. The term ‘place’ within the food haven implies the location of significant kinds of spaces that are located within healthy food environments to achieve optimal well-being much like the papakainga of old. One example can be found at the Auckland Papatoetoe Food Hub that focuses on providing healthy *kai* or food made up of food donated from the local supermarket food bank together with food sourced from local community gardens. These are places where culture, food and language are celebrated with multi-use sites that provide programs and classes that engage and empower the community while also offering nutritious, affordable and desirable foods (Auckland Council, 2020). With these definitions of place, food ‘havens’ provide symbolic representations of relationships, active participation and advocacy. Also, it provides opportunities for new ideas about food systems and policy to emerge, which take into consideration inclusion of contextualized traditional and grassroot approaches to food options for all.

Healthy food and beverages

The term ‘healthy food’ implies nutritional adequacy and is based on the work of the EAT-*Lancet* commission that explored sustainable food systems in addressing challenges in sustainability for human health and the environment. As a result, the EAT-*Lancet* Commission report presents a healthy reference diet that connects diet to a sustainable food system (Willett *et al*., 2019). The food system entails a myriad of shifting dynamics that go beyond the scope of this paper; however, we have adopted the definition of the healthy reference diet as defined by the EAT-*Lancet Commission* (Willett *et al*., 2019). The EAT-*Lancet* healthy reference diet includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, low to moderate amount of seafood and poultry and includes little to no red meat, processed meat, added sugar, refined grains and starchy vegetables, whereas replacing saturated and trans fats for unsaturated fats (Willett *et al*., 2019). Micronutrient rich foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, pulses and nuts are not equally affordable nor accessible to everyone, whereas unhealthy foods high in salt, sugars, saturated and trans fats

have become cheaper and widely available (Branca, 2019). A recommended dietary shift as suggested in the healthy reference diet would require a 50% reduction in unhealthy food (including red meat), with a simultaneous increase in legumes, nuts, fruits and vegetables by 100% (Lucas and Horton, 2019). The Commission's healthy reference diet would lead to optimal health and well-being as well as environmental improvements and would likely reduce premature deaths worldwide by 19–23% (Lucas and Horton, 2019; Willett *et al*., 2019). When considering 'healthy' foods, we propose the healthy reference diet as a benchmark or point of reference when identifying what might constitute as a healthy or unhealthy food environment.

Accessibility, convenience, affordability and desirability

We feel that it is important to consider other forms of healthy food production and sources such as community gardens, small full-line grocery stores in future studies to measure accessibility, affordability and convenience. Affordability concerns the purchasing power of individuals. Availability in this paper refers to the presence of healthy foods within a context, and accessibility relates to individuals and the time and distance it takes to acquire healthy affordable foods. Convenience refers to the hours of operation, type of vendors, quality, food safety and level of processing of foods (Turner *et al.*, 2018). Desirability carries with it deeper meaning. Short *et al.* posit the dimension of cultural acceptability within the food environment that encapsulates the experience including language and targeted marketing of a particular group in a community (Short *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, desirability would include promotional information, branding, advertising, sponsorship, labelling, and policy regulations that influence peoples individual food choices (Turner *et al.*, 2018). The intersection between these external factors found in the consumer food environments, information food environment (Glanz *et al.*, 2007) and preferences, tastes, attitudes, culture, knowledge and skills will shape the desirability of individuals (Turner *et al.*, 2018). These external factors would need to be conducive of an environment that promotes, endorses and encourages healthy dietary intake.

CONCLUSION

The critical review on food environment metaphors discussed in this paper aims to provoke debate and forward motion toward more sustainable and healthy food environments. This review comes as a response to food environment research that have established, challenged, and expounded on food deserts. With the consideration of low socioeconomic groups that are known to suffer significantly from food deserts, food swamps and food mirages, this paper proposes the term *food haven* as a further step toward a whole food environment transformation that is

conducive to healthy affordable dietary intake irrespective of socioeconomic status. The review also acknowledges definitions of food environments that assume the intersection between people's food acquisition and consumption as part of a wider food system; and place and space as drawn from Indigenous concepts aiding with a strength-based contextualizing of the transformation process. In doing so, we propose the *food haven* as a further benchmark for individuals, communities, organizations and government in efforts to shape behaviours, practices and policies in collectively creating healthy food environments.

CHAPTER 4 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4.1 Introduction

The role of social enterprise in addressing complex social issues has gained increasing attention in recent years, particularly within the context of Indigenous and marginalised communities. Social enterprises operate at the intersection of entrepreneurship and social impact. By social impact, we mean the “intended or unintended social consequences, both negative and positive of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions” (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6). While the study of social enterprises is relatively underdeveloped, it offers a promising framework for understanding how entrepreneurial activities can create lasting social change and improvement in inequity (Powell et al., 2019).

This chapter explores the concept of social enterprise, its theoretical underpinnings, and the ways in which it intersects with Indigenous entrepreneurship. It will also examine the potential of social enterprises to contribute to the creation of healthy food environments and enhance the well-being of Māori and Pacific whanau in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This chapter will explore how social entrepreneurship and emancipatory entrepreneurship provide pathways for marginalised communities to gain autonomy and improve their social and economic circumstances.

The study emphasises the importance of context in defining and understanding social enterprises within the Indigenous landscape, especially as it relates to Māori and Pacific Peoples, where enterprises often prioritise social, cultural, and environmental outcomes. Theoretical frameworks from both social and Indigenous entrepreneurship are explored to understand how social enterprise can serve as vehicles for social change and community empowerment.

4.2 Entrepreneurship

Before one can delve into the literature and theoretical frameworks that inform the concept of social entrepreneurship, one must first understand the concept of entrepreneurship. While there exists a plethora of definitions on entrepreneurship that are yet to be universally accepted, there is consensus that entrepreneurship is intertwined with definitions of ‘entrepreneur.’ Tan et al. (2005) argue that the term ‘entrepreneur’ should be “devoid of moral, social or contextual implications”, pre-empting the arrival and need for a definition of social entrepreneurship (p. 344). The term

entrepreneur has a whakapapa of its own. The word itself originates from the French word *entreprendre* and means ‘to take into one’s own hands.’ The French economist Jean-Baptiste Say described the entrepreneur as one who ‘shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield.’ The literal translation from the French is “one who undertakes” to encompass the concept of value creation (Dees, 1998).

The notion of value creation stemmed from works of Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter who identified the entrepreneur as having the ability to identify commercial opportunity – whether material, product, service, or business, and organise the venture to implement it (Martin & Osberg, 2007). Among the wide range of definitions on entrepreneurship, there exist several core characteristics associated with the ‘entrepreneur’ as identified by scholars. These include the innovator (Schumpeter, 1983); high achiever, risk bearer, and dedicated (McClelland, 1976); arbitrageur (Kirzner, 1978); organiser and initiative taker (Shapero, 1975); strategic thinker (Carland et al., 1984); value creator and opportunity aware (Kao and Stevenson, 1985); leader, holistic persistent, and committed (Timmons & Spinelli, 2004).

These definitions of entrepreneurship outlined above reflect a predominantly Western, Eurocentric lens that overlooks the relational, cultural, and collective dimensions integral to Indigenous worldviews. While the French etymology and the works of economists such as Say and Schumpeter emphasise value creation, resource efficiency, and individual initiative, these conceptualisations risk framing entrepreneurship as a primarily individualistic, profit-driven endeavour. Such framings are at odds with Indigenous realities of entrepreneurship (Peredo et al., 2018), where the creation of value often centres on the well-being of the collective (whānau, hapū, iwi) and aligns with principles such as manaakitanga (care and hospitality), whanaungatanga (relationships), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship of resources) (Spiller et al., 2011). The notion of entrepreneurship as “devoid of moral, social, or contextual implications” (Tan et al., 2005, p. 355) is problematic when considered through a Kaupapa Māori and Pacific lens, where moral and social obligations are inseparable from action (Tapsell & Woods, 2010; Henry, 2007; Spiller et al., 2011).

The Western focus on shifting resources for greater yield often neglects the intergenerational stewardship and cultural responsibility embedded in Indigenous approaches to entrepreneurship. The tensions between Western definitions of entrepreneurship and Indigenous worldviews are particularly relevant to the concept of social enterprise, which seeks to integrate economic viability and social goals. While Western entrepreneurship often prioritises profit and individual achievement, social

enterprises inherently challenge this by placing social and collective well-being at the core of their purpose (Peredo et al., 2018; Henry, 2007).

Indigenous approaches to entrepreneurship provide compelling frameworks for understanding a social enterprise as a vehicle for collective impact and cultural sustainability (Spiller et al., 2011). Social enterprise aligns more closely with Indigenous perspectives, where economic activity is inseparable from cultural and moral responsibilities (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). This alignment highlights the potential for Indigenous values to enrich social enterprise models by embedding intergenerational stewardship and culturally grounded approaches to value creation, ensuring outcomes that are not only economically viable but also socially and culturally meaningful.

4.3 Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship signals the necessity to drive social change for the transformational benefit of society (Martin & Osberg, 2007). According to Martin and Osberg (2007), the word 'social' acts as a modifier for entrepreneurship. The concept of social entrepreneurship has been evolving in the private, public, and non-profit sectors of recent years and continues to grow. Although academics generally agree that social entrepreneurship at is core, is about 'addressing social needs', there is yet to be a consensus on a definition that reflects the process to achieve this. While there is little consensus of a definition for social entrepreneurship, due in part to the diversity and heterogenic nature of categorising social enterprises, a few definitions are offered below:

Table 6. Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship

Source	Social Entrepreneurship Definition
Zahra et al., 2009	Social entrepreneurship features actions and processes taken on to discover, define, exploit opportunities to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organisations in an innovative way
European Commission as cited in OECD, 2022	Social entrepreneurship is the process through which specific types of actors – the 'social entrepreneurs' – create and develop organisations that may be either social enterprises or other types of organisations. It also designates a field including a broad set of initiatives with a social impact dimension in a spectrum ranging from for-profit to non-profits
Roberts & Woods, 2005	The construction, evaluation, and pursuit of opportunities for social change.
Martin & Osberg, 2007	Social entrepreneurship consists of 3 components: Identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that cause the exclusion, marginalisation, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lack the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own. Identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony.

	Forging a new, stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large (p. 35).
Zhao & Mao, 2021	Social entrepreneurship refers to an innovative organising process to identify and find opportunities to solve social problems. Social entrepreneurship aims to solve problems with prioritised social goals, continuous innovation, and result-orientation and should be a necessary characteristic of social enterprises (p. 12).
Tan, Williams, & Tan, 2005	A social entrepreneur is an individual or entity who seeks to address societal needs by creating value for society or a specific community through innovative means. This involves taking on calculated risks and actively engaging the society or community that stands to benefit from the endeavour, ensuring that the outcomes serve both social and economic purposes.

Social entrepreneurship and it's several definitions may be considered ambiguous, however, generally, the entrepreneur themselves will decide whether an enterprise places more emphasis on financial or social returns (Mulloth & Rumi, 2021). Thus, understandings of social entrepreneurship and the social entrepreneur are inextricably connected and so definitions for social entrepreneurship are logically linked to the social entrepreneur. By implication, defining either term would in some part define the other. According to Dees (1998), social entrepreneurs are a species of the genus entrepreneur, they are entrepreneurs with a social mission (p. 3). This implies that social entrepreneurs are a specific type of subset within the broader category of entrepreneurs, distinguished by their primary focus on social impact. According to Tan et al. (2005), the 'social' aspects of 'social entrepreneurship' involves degrees of altruism held by the social entrepreneur. These descending degrees of altruism include a social entrepreneur's ability to innovatively (p. 359):

1. Profit society alone, in a way that involves that society, at risk of personal loss.
2. Profit society alone, in a way that involves that society, at risk of foregoing personal profit.
3. Profit society by profiting oneself, in a way that involves that society at risk of incurring personal loss.
4. Profit society by profiting oneself, in a way that involves that society, at risk of forgoing personal profit.
5. Profit himself by profiting society, in a way that involves that society, at risk of personal loss.
6. Profit himself by profiting society, in a way that involves society, at risk of foregoing personal profit.

These descending degrees illustrate the spectrum of a social entrepreneur's motivation, ranging from purely altruistic benefit to society at personal risk, to self-benefit that concurrently profits society, highlighting the hybrid nature of their ventures. The

definitions of social entrepreneurship, while valuable for framing its core principles, often reflect an individualistic perspective that may not fully resonate with Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous approaches to entrepreneurship are inherently relational and collective (Peredo et al., 2019). Māori and Pacific values that inform entrepreneurial practice emphasise the interconnectedness of social, cultural, spiritual, economic well-being, challenging the dichotomy often presented between financial and social returns (Henry, 2007; Spiller et al., 2011).

Definitions such as those presented by Martin and Osberg (2007) or Tan et al. (2005) emphasise innovation, risk, and altruism but often frame social entrepreneurship as an individual endeavour to disrupt unjust equilibria. These framing risks marginalising Indigenous entrepreneurial practices, focusing on collective resilience, intergenerational equity, and cultural continuity (Tapsell & Woods, 2010; Henry, 2007). Cultural continuity is described as a community's ongoing effort to maintain, restore, or adapt key elements of its heritage and cultural identity within structures that often challenge and threaten its persistence (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). The focus on individual altruism and calculated risk-taking overlooks the structural barriers and systemic inequities faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs, for whom addressing social needs is not merely a choice but a cultural obligation.

Expanding definitions of social entrepreneurship to centre Indigenous values and relational ethics is essential for creating inclusive frameworks that authentically reflect the diverse ways social change can be enacted (Peredo et al., 2018; Dana & Anderson, 2007). Such an approach ensures that social entrepreneurship is not only a tool for addressing inequities but also a mechanism for preserving and enhancing cultural integrity and community well-being.

4.4 Indigenous Entrepreneurship

Indigenous Peoples have turned to entrepreneurial activities as a means for improving their environments and circumstances for many years. Although Indigenous entrepreneurship is considered an emerging field of study, it has undoubtedly been in existence for many years. Māori and Pacific Peoples have a rich history as explorers and navigators, exemplifying expertise in survival and innovation (Frederick & Chittock, 2006; Spiller et al., 2015). These qualities of adaptability and ingenuity are reflected in contemporary Indigenous entrepreneurship, where cultural values and traditional knowledge play a crucial role in shaping business practices. In Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, Indigenous entrepreneurship often prioritises community well-being, sustainability, and the preservation of cultural heritage alongside economic goals,

creating enterprise models rooted in Indigenous worldviews (Spiller et al., 2011; Scheyvens et al., 2018; Henry, 2007).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is a major research program initiated in 1999 to analyse entrepreneurial activity, aspirations, and attitudes across various countries. The GEM report provided findings into the levels of entrepreneurship among 35 countries, categorised into three stages of economic development including factor-driven, efficiency-driven, and innovation-driven economies (Frederick & Chittock, 2006). Frederick and Chittock (2006) carried out surveys in Aotearoa New Zealand with 1807 adults including Pākehā, Māori, and Pacific Peoples. The 2006 report found that the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand (Māori) are some of the most entrepreneurial people in the world (Frederick & Chittock, 2006). In-depth considerations for Pacific Islands nations in the region, and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa have been excluded from the GEM reporting, even in 2023 (GEM, 2023). Though, Frederick and Chittock (2006) do provide some insights on Pacific Peoples and the prevalence of entrepreneurial activity in New Zealand.

Table 7. Differences in prevalence rates across Aotearoa New Zealand (Frederick & Chittock, 2006, p. 21)

Ethnic group	Nascent	New Business Owners	Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEEA)	Established Business Owners	Overall (Nascent, New and Established Business Owners)
Pākehā	9.4%	10%	17.6%	10.8%	28.2%
Māori	7.8%	8.07%	17.7%	6.5%	24.2%
Pacific Peoples[1]	12.64%	5.44%	17.6%	N/S[2]	17.6%

Although impossible to draw comprehensive conclusions about Pacific Peoples within the GEM study, the limited data suggests Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand have similar rates of engaging in early-stage entrepreneurial activities as other ethnic groups (Frederick & Chittock, 2006).

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans in New Zealand, Māori had long been involved with entrepreneurial activity adopting a bartering system and regular trading patterns among whanau and hapu, and within and between iwi (Te Ara, 2010). This entrepreneurial spirit persisted and evolved during the earliest era of European contact, aligning closely with principles of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. These practices were deeply rooted in a collective commitment to Māori communities, characterised by efforts carried

[1] An estimate based upon preliminary data and averages between national and cross-national data.
[2] Not specified.

out for, with, and by Māori (Henry, 2007, p. 547). As Māori are part of the broader Pacific Peoples, their navigation and exploration journeys across the Pacific were inherently entrepreneurial, innovative, resourceful, and grounded on shared purpose. This deep historical connection emphasises that entrepreneurial activities have long been integral to the cultural and social fabric of both Māori and Pacific Peoples, reflecting a legacy of adaptability and collective well-being (Anderson et al., 2015).

As Dana (2006) suggests, the perceived value of a resource may not be shared by a person from another culture. Thus, entrepreneurship may not be defined based on opportunity, but on the cultural perception of opportunity (p. 3). This can be applied to social entrepreneurship. That is, the perceived value of a social endeavour, and the entrepreneurial activity that follows will depend on the culture of the social entrepreneur. For the Indigenous entrepreneur, culture, social and entrepreneurial endeavours tend to be centred on tino rangatiratanga, or self-determination, collectiveness, kinship ties, and community well-being.

Dana & Anderson (2007) provides a definition describing Indigenous nations as peoples whose ancestors were living in an area prior to colonisation by other people, or within a nation-state, prior to the formation of the nation-state (p.4). Peredo et al. (2019) describe Indigenous social innovation as activities that are grounded on traditional knowledge and practices, distinct cosmology and culture, and struggles for decolonisation and Indigenous resurgence. The decolonising and Indigenous resurgence endeavours also lend themselves to notions of emancipation, particularly within the field of entrepreneurship.

Pacific values offer a rich foundation for informing Indigenous entrepreneurship by emphasising collective well-being, relational ethics, and cultural continuity (Spiller et al., 2015; Scheyvens et al., 2018). Much like the worldviews and values of Māori in New Zealand, Pacific worldviews that shape entrepreneurial activity are grounded on values such as reciprocity, community cohesion, and stewardship (Spiller et al., 2011). The concept of vā (the relational space between people and the environment) highlights the interconnectedness of relationships and that entrepreneurial activities should strengthen community ties and foster mutual respect (Anae, 2010). Similarly, the value of reciprocity or fa’aaloalo (Samoan translation) ensures that economic ventures are not solely profit driven but more importantly contribute to the social and cultural fabric of the community (Tamasese & Waldergrave, 2003).

Communal responsibility is a key value in Indigenous entrepreneurship as it related to Pacific peoples where success is measured not by individual gain but by the benefit it brings to the collective (aiga or extended family, village, and island communities)

(Scheyvens et al., 2018). Stewardship, or the careful management of resources for future generations, further reinforce sustainability as a core tenet of Pacific entrepreneurship, ensuring that economic activities do not exploit natural resources but instead honour the spiritual connection between people and their environments (Spiller et al., 2011).

In practice, Māori and Pacific values reshape entrepreneurship to be less about competition and more about collaboration, partnership, and shared prosperity (Spiller et al., 2011; Henry, 2007; Scheyvens et al., 2018). Indigenous entrepreneurship can create models that challenge mainstream frameworks, offering pathways for economic development that are culturally aligned, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable. These approaches demonstrate the way in which Indigenous values can reframe entrepreneurship as a vehicle for decolonisation and community empowerment.

4.5 Emancipatory Entrepreneurship

Rindova et al. (2009) suggests that entrepreneurship "requires a bit of emancipation" (p. 478), highlighting the need for entrepreneurs to break free from conventional norms, limitations, or societal structures to create transformative change. This perspective frames entrepreneurship as an act of liberation, where individuals or groups challenge the status quo to pursue new opportunities, redefine value, or address systemic barriers. In this sense, entrepreneurship becomes not just a tool for economic innovation but also a pathway for social and cultural empowerment, particularly in contexts where existing systems perpetuate inequality and marginalisation (Rindova et al., 2009).

Business activities can often be a poor fit for the circumstances of those they are meant to benefit (Peredo & McLean, 2010), which has seen the emergence of social entrepreneurship, particularly in the Indigenous and emancipatory space. Entrepreneurship has been argued as being a construct that goes beyond opportunity recognition which is then actioned by venture creation for the purpose of wealth creation (Rindova et al., 2009).

The emergence of emancipatory entrepreneurship draws on a desire for change and associated human emancipation. Emancipatory entrepreneurship has been described as a 'doing' exercise with the potential to effect socio-economic change within impoverished and marginalised communities (Rindova et al., 2009). Academics within the field have argued that entrepreneurship researchers should aspire to attain social relevance without compromising theoretical rigor (Shepherd, 2015; Laine & Kibler, 2022). Rindova et al. (2009) conceptualise emancipatory entrepreneurship using 3 core elements including seeking autonomy, authoring, and making declarations. These elements and their connection to emancipatory entrepreneurship are reflected below:

Table 8. Core Elements of Emancipatory entrepreneurship (Adapted from Rindova et al., 2009, p. 480)

Core Element	Views from Emancipatory Perspective
Seeking Autonomy	Actors seek to escape from or remove perceived constraints in their environment. Constraints are perceived in a variety of environments – economic, social, technological, cultural, and institutional.
Authoring	The rules of engagement with key resources providers should reflect change-creating intent. Organisational arrangements can be designed to preserve emancipatory potential.
Making Declarations	Making declarations about intended change is essential to mobilise support and generate change effects.

Henry (2017) drew the connection between Māori entrepreneurship and emancipatory entrepreneurship describing the participants of the study as being from diverse backgrounds and outlooks who share common views about the importance of revitalising Māori culture and language. To build on this, it is important to recognize that Māori entrepreneurship, as described by Henry (2017), aligns with the emancipatory entrepreneurship frameworks by challenging conventional capitalist norms and prioritising social and cultural revitalisation. This form of entrepreneurship is not merely focused on economic gains but also on the preservation and empowerment of Māori identity, values, and language within a post-colonial context. By incorporating the principles of whakawhanaungatanga (relationship-building), manaakitanga (care and support), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship of resources), Māori entrepreneurs exemplify how social imaginary and emancipatory entrepreneurship intersect.

Similar notions of emancipatory entrepreneurship among Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, and in the region, extend beyond individual success and draw upon collective well-being and community development. Emancipatory entrepreneurship can be seen as a mechanism through which Pacific entrepreneurs break free from historical and systemic barriers (Collins & Friesen, 2011). Emancipatory entrepreneurship strongly aligns with key Pacific values such as collectivism, reciprocity, and the central role of community well-being (Collins & Friesen, 2011). Entrepreneurs within these settings, often operate in environments where businesses are not just economic ventures but platforms for social changes, cultural preservation, and empowerment (Spiller et al., 2011). A study on Indigenous entrepreneurship and customary land in Fiji illuminates emancipatory goals that challenge conventional economic frameworks, promote self-determination, strengthen communities through collective action, and maintain cultural integrity (Scheyvens et al., 2018).

4.6 Social Imaginary Theorising of Entrepreneurship

In addressing the dearth of theoretical studies in the emancipatory entrepreneurship literature, Laine and Kibler (2022) develop the concept as a social imaginary theorising of entrepreneurship through hermeneutic analysis. In doing so, emancipatory entrepreneurship is considered a practice-oriented theory. Social imaginary is described as forming an "integral part of daily life providing people with a set of ideal categories and concepts which provides the cultural toolkit guiding their subsequent thinking and acting" (Dey & Mason, 2018, p. 84). In other words, social imagining is considered pretheoretically in nature and enables people to make sense of the inner workings of their social worlds.

Similar convictions can be found in social theory. Social theory is generally defined as the study of scientific ways of thinking about social life (Neuman, 2019). However, there are distinct differences between social imaginary and social theory. For example, social imaginary is the way in which people make sense of their social worlds without explicit engagement with rational theory and thus can legitimise social action. One can discern the social imaginary and transform it, albeit, theorising in an ambiguous manner (Laine & Kibler, 2022; Taylor, 2004).

Social imaginary theorising offers a valuable lens for understanding and transforming social food environments. Social imaginaries refer to the shared visions, assumptions, and values that communities collectively possess about how the world works and how they fit into it (Taylor, 2004). These imaginaries are not merely individual beliefs but are deeply embedded in social, cultural, and political life, shaping perceptions of community identity, relationships, and interactions with broader systems, such as food systems. In the context of food environments, social imaginary theorising provides insights into the cultural and structural dynamics that influence food practices, norms, and access, particularly within Indigenous communities.

Social imaginary theory and food environments

Social imaginaries influence how communities envision their ideal food environments including the distribution of food resources, the meaning of food in social and cultural contexts, and the role of food in sustaining community well-being. For Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa, New Zealand, food is not merely a commodity for individual consumption but is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, ancestral knowledge, and collective well-being (Smith, 2012). Social imaginary theorising allows for a deep understanding of these connections by highlighting how cultural values and historical experiences shape the food systems within these communities.

One key contribution of social imaginary theorising is its ability to reveal the underlying power structure and inequities within existing food systems. Food environments in marginalised communities are often shaped by dominant social imaginaries that prioritise industrialised, profit-driven food production and distribution, which frequently marginalises local foodways and perpetuates food insecurity. In contrast, Indigenous communities, including Māori and Pacific Peoples, may hold alternative social imaginaries centred on food sovereignty, where control over food production and distribution is reclaimed and aligned with cultural values, practices, and local knowledge (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). These alternative imaginaries offer a framework for reimagining food environments in ways that address inequities and foster cultural sustainability.

For example, food deserts—areas with limited access to affordable, healthy kai—are not merely logistical failures; they reflect deeper social imaginaries about who is seen as deserving of food resources and how food systems should be organised (Guthman, 2011). Social imaginary theorising challenges these inequitable constructs by proposing alternative visions where food environments are shaped around principles of equity, sustainability, and community empowerment. This approach is particularly relevant in efforts to improve access to kai in low-income Māori and Pacific communities, where mainstream food systems have historically failed to meet both the nutritional and cultural needs of these populations (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019). Social imaginary theorising also aligns with the Food Havens' concept that reimagines safe food spaces with the interweaving of Indigenous beliefs and practices around food (Tonumaipe'a, et al., 2021).

Additionally, social imaginary theorising fosters a participatory and future-focused approach to transforming food environments. It encourages communities to critically reflect on their shared visions and aspirations for healthier, more equitable food systems. By engaging with these collective imaginaries, community-led initiatives, social enterprises, and policy reforms can be better aligned with the values and needs of local populations. For instance, Māori and Pacific communities may envision food environments that reflect whanaungatanga (relationships and kinship), where food production and distribution are communal activities that strengthen social bonds and support long-term Hauora (health and well-being) (Durie, 1998).

Social enterprises that align with such imaginaries not only address immediate food security challenges but also reinforce the cultural values that sustain community resilience and intergenerational well-being. Initiatives such as community gardens, culturally appropriate food programs, and projects supporting food sovereignty reflect and promote positive social imaginaries of communal responsibility, equity, and sustainable food systems (Māhina-Tuai, 2020). These initiatives help to transform food

environments by empowering communities to reclaim control over their food systems and promoting cultural, social, and environmental sustainability.

Social imaginary theorising provides a powerful framework for understanding and reimagining food environments. By examining the collective visions and aspirations of communities, particularly marginalised groups, we can design food environments that are not only healthier and more equitable but also reflective of cultural values and sustainable practices. In doing so, social imaginary theorising contributes to the development of food systems that promote resilience, equity, and well-being for all communities.

4.7 Social Impact for Māori and Pacific Peoples

There has been increasing recognition of the need to examine the health and well-being outcomes of social enterprises (Roy et al., 2014). Health geographers, including Munoz et al. (2015), have investigated the role of non-clinical spaces in promoting health, highlighting how social enterprises can create “well-being-enabling” environments. These spaces offer end-users opportunities to engage with their surroundings in ways that support healthier lifestyles. Similarly, it is argued that social enterprises can function as public health interventions, broadening their societal influence (Roy et al., 2014). Roy et al. (2014) further outline a causal chain linking trading activities to enhanced health outcomes for individuals and communities. Collectively, these studies point to the capacity of social enterprises to generate meaningful health impacts through innovative service delivery and community-focused approaches.

Within the context of Indigenous entrepreneurship, these insights resonate strongly with kaupapa Māori and Pacific approaches, where social value creation is a fundamental objective. Grant (2008) highlights the influence of socio-cultural norms, neoliberal reforms, and the Treaty of Waitangi on the evolution of social enterprises in New Zealand, illustrating the importance of historical and political considerations. Cave (2013) adds to this by emphasising the significance of cultural identity and connectedness, shedding light on the challenges Pacific entrepreneurs face when navigating Anglo European market structures.

Indigenous methodologies provide essential frameworks for understanding the social impact of enterprises. For instance, Uluave (2014) draws on the Tongan practice of *Toulanganga* as a model for community engagement, demonstrating how culturally grounded approaches can promote collective well-being. Conn et al. (2021) use participatory action research combined with Pacific epistemologies to investigate youth entrepreneurship in Fiji, underscoring the role of cultural competency and youth

empowerment. Similarly, Cahn (2008) examines the integration of *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way) with business principles, illustrating how culturally informed practices enhance the sustainability and success of micro-enterprises.

The challenges Indigenous entrepreneurs face is well-documented. Gray et al. (2019) analyse a Tongan social enterprise, highlighting the need to balance creative entrepreneurial initiatives with strong business management capabilities, particularly in regions affected by climate change. These findings stress the importance of capacity building, skill development, and culturally specific strategies to ensure long-term viability.

Table 7 provides an overview of key social impact factors shaping social enterprise across the Pacific, reflecting the diverse contexts, frameworks, and cultural practices that influence these endeavours. For example, Grant (2008) explores the role of socio-cultural norms, neoliberal reforms, and the Treaty of Waitangi in shaping New Zealand's social enterprises. Eti-Tofinga and Selvarajah (2017) build on this by analysing how change enablers and organisational culture foster cultural transformation within Pacific social enterprises through the Cultural Change Enabling (CCE) Framework. The framework specifically addresses the shift from a social welfare logic to a combined social and commercial culture, a transition many social enterprises are undergoing as they seek to enhance their financial sustainability while maintaining their social missions (Eti-Tofinga & Selvarajah, 2017). Eti-Tofinga and Selvarajah (2017) identify four key dynamic capabilities that contribute the enablers of cultural change (shift from social welfare logic to social and commercial culture) as it relates to social enterprise:

Table 9. Capabilities that enable cultural change within social enterprises

Capability	Function
Entrepreneurial Capability (ENTCAP)	The ability to identify and exploit market opportunities while aligning them with social mission is essential for generating revenue and achieving financial sustainability.
Financial Capability (FINCAP)	Effectively managing financial resources, diversifying income streams, and ensuring the enterprise's long-term financial viability.
Adaptive Capability (ADAPCAP)	The ability to respond to changing environmental conditions, such as shifts in market demand, government policies, or cultural expectations.
Strategic Capability (STCAP)	Aligning the enterprise's actions with its overall strategy and effectively communicating its mission, objectives, and strategies to stakeholders.

Cave (2013) highlights opportunities and challenges for Pacific entrepreneurs in New Zealand, particularly in maintaining cultural integrity within Anglo-European market systems. Conn et al. (2020) and Cahn (2008) delve into research areas like sustainable food systems, non-communicable diseases, and the integration of cultural practices such as *fa'asamoa*, demonstrating how these factors contribute to enterprise sustainability and address critical social issues.

Gray et al. (2019) examine internal factors like opportunity identification and climate change adaptation in Tongan social enterprises, while Uluave (2014) showcases the value of *Toulanganga*—a concept rooted in collective effort and resource sharing—as a model for Pacific social enterprises. Together, these studies highlight the culturally embedded strategies that enable Māori and Pacific social enterprises to respond effectively to challenges and achieve significant social impact.

Table 10. Social Impact Factors across the Pacific

Social impact factors	Purpose	Key Concepts	Source
Socio-cultural norms, neoliberal reforms, Treaty of Waitangi settlements, New Zealand's role as international citizens	To theorise how these factors shape the development of social enterprise in New Zealand	Ingenuity, a culture of contracts, Treaty of Waitangi international citizenship	(Grant, 2008)
Change enablers, organisational culture, entrepreneurial, strategic, financial and adaptable capabilities	To examine the relationships and influences of change enablers for cultural change within social enterprises, particularly Pacific Island nations	Cultural Change Enabling (CCE) Framework, social welfare logic, commercial logic	(Eti-Tofinga & Selvarajah, 2017)
Cultural identity, connectedness, resource mobilisation, challenges of operating within an Anglo-European market economy	To explore the challenges and opportunities for Pacific cultural entrepreneurs in New Zealand	Otherness, cultural hybridity, resource mobilisation, cultural sustainability	(Cave, 2013)
NCDs, climate change, sustainable food systems, youth empowerment, Pacific epistemologies, participatory action research (PAR)	To understand how Fijian youth are engaging in social entrepreneurship to address health and environmental challenges	Talanoa, co-design methodology, social media influencers, sustainable food enterprises	(Conn et al., 2020)
Samoan culture (*fa'asamoa*), integration of cultural and business concepts, livelihood outcomes, micro-enterprise sustainability	To investigate how the interplay between *fa'asamoa* and business practices influences the success and sustainability of micro-enterprises in Samoa	*Fa'asamoa* as a motivating factor, valuable asset, and support mechanism	(Cahn, 2008)
Internal factors influencing opportunity identification, climate change adaptation, sustainable development, social enterprise capacity	To analyse the internal factors that contribute to effective opportunity identification in a Tongan social enterprise operating in a climate-threatened context Opportunity identification process, entrepreneurial and business management skills, climate change adaptation strategies	Opportunity identification process, entrepreneurial and business management skills, climate change adaptation strategies	(Gray et al., 2019)
Toulanganga (collective effort and resource sharing), Pacific cultural values, social enterprise management, social and economic benefits	To examine how the Tongan concept of Toulanganga can be applied as a model for community development and engagement in Pacific social enterprises in New Zealand	Toulanganga as a metaphor for collaboration and resource sharing, impact of cultural values on social enterprise practices	(Uluave, 2014)

The Social Value Creation (SVC) perspective focuses on the beneficiaries of social enterprises and is based on the premise that social enterprise is created for the very purpose of providing care to its beneficiaries (Andre & Pache, 2016; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2019). “Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by adopting a mission to create and sustain social value…” (Dees, 2001, p. 4). However, this becomes problematic when exploring what is meant by social value as opposed to market value as the underlying philosophical foundations are not often disclosed (Lautermann, 2013). Given that social entrepreneurship is presumed as a force for changing society for the better, the literature is lacking in reflecting ethical measures for evaluating whether there has been genuine change for the better and what ‘better’ actually means (p. 187). In a study based on six heterogeneous social enterprises, Kassim and Habib (2020) proposed a social value chain model as a result of exploring social values created by social enterprise and how these further create social impact. The study adopted case study as a methodology and interviews as the primary data collection tool. Kassim and Habib’s (2020) social value chain model is illustrated below:

Table 11. Social Value Chain Model (Kassim & Habib, 2020, p. 209)

Social enterprise value	Description	Value Chain Enabler	
Inter-social innovations	The ability to come out with solutions, which do not focus on the end products only, but it also highlights on the process and operations across groups and stakeholders.		Shared ownership, financial independence, self-sustainable and strategic alliance.
Sharing economy	The state in which the economic benefits are shared across the entire chain of the stakeholder.		
Social inclusion	The state in which the less fortunate community has greater access		
Social empowerment	The state in which the community feels a greater autonomy and confidence, and act collectively to change social relationships and improve the social hierarchy.		

The intersection between health, well-being, and social enterprise aligns strongly with the concept of social value creation (SVC), emphasising the transformative potential of social enterprises to address societal needs in innovative ways. Social enterprises as ‘well-being-enabling’ landscapes (Munoz et al., 2015), provide non-clinical spaces that foster healthier interactions and environments, making them unique platforms for public health interventions (Roy et al., 2014).

The SVC perspective positions social enterprises as vehicles for creating meaningful social change by prioritising the needs and care of beneficiaries (Andre & Pache, 2016). Kassim and Habib's (2020) social value chain model emphasises the dynamic process through which social enterprises translate their activities into tangible social impacts, highlighting the importance of thoughtful methodology and frameworks in capturing the breadth of their contributions. Social enterprise, in this sense, can be viewed as agents of systemic change, particularly in advancing holistic well-being within communities.

4.8 Social Enterprise

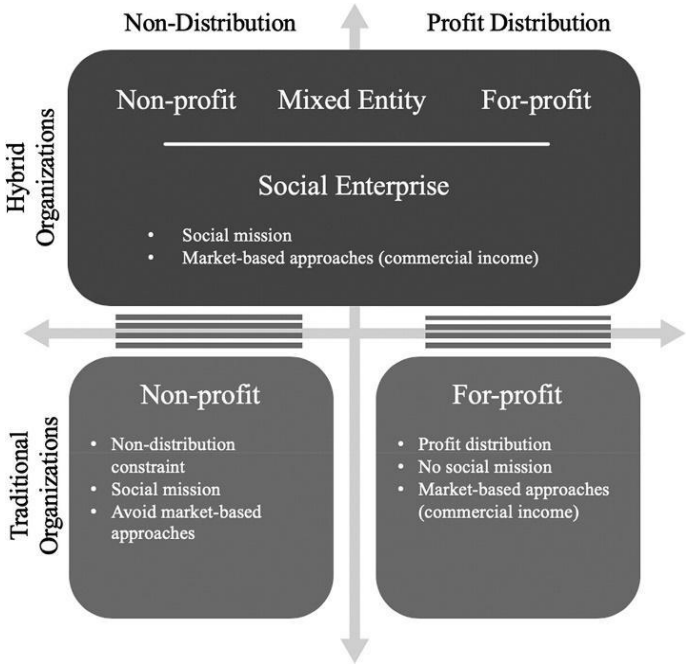
Social enterprise has been defined by the OECD as "any private activity conducted in the public interest, organised with an entrepreneurial strategy, whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment" (OECD, 2022). This definition encapsulates the dual focus of social enterprises on achieving social impact and operating with entrepreneurial strategies. Several works expand on this OECD (2022) definition of social enterprise by emphasising the contextual adaptability and the for-profit-not-for-profit spectrum (Kerlin, 2010; Beaton & Kennedy, 2021; Zhao & Mao, 2021; Henry, 2007).

Building on this, Kerlin (2010) emphasises the flexibility of social enterprises, which often adopt nongovernmental, market-based approaches to address social issues. Kerlin (2010) highlights the social enterprises may generate revenue through for-profit activities, while remaining committed to their social missions. However, not all social enterprises operate as for-profit entities and may adopt non-profit or hybrid models, emphasising social and community impact over financial returns (Beaton & Kennedy, 2021).

There is a myriad of challenges and academic debate around defining social enterprise particularly from a dichotomic view. That is, that social enterprise is characterised by the interrelationship between social and commercial elements (Zhao & Mao, 2021, p. 1). For example, the criterion that a social enterprise is defined by its ability to "solve social problems through business solutions", does not help in distinguishing 'real' social enterprises from other enterprise (Zhao & Mao. p. 4). The tendency to focus on the relationship between social and commercial elements hinders the interpretation of other elements (e.g., environmental, cultural, spiritual, political, technological, and human) that are equally important (Bhatkal et al., 2024). There are many different forms of social enterprise, which beckons the need for a framework that can define social enterprise in multiple dimensions (Zhao & Mao, p. 4).

Kerlin (2010) argues the characteristics of social enterprise will depend on the region and the context from which it is based. Social enterprise has been described as having blurred sector boundaries that can obscure the role of social enterprise and non-profit sectors (Dees & Anderson, 2003). Social enterprise may take the form of for-profit, non-profit, or a partnership between both that make up organisations focused on the triple bottom line; that is, maximising financial, social, and environmental well-being. Beaton and Kennedy (2021) illustrate these 'blurred boundaries' that move between non-profit and for-profit categories.

Figure 4. Blurred Boundaries of Social Entrepreneurship (Beaton & Kennedy, 2021, p. 643)



Contrary to the dichotomic view of social enterprise that seeks to understand the relationship between social and commercial elements, Indigenous peoples and their enterprises have long focused on many elements that are equally important. For Māori enterprise, principles and cultural values innately work toward a triple bottom line (focused on people, land, and profit) in building business "underpinned by a sense of commitment to Māori community, whether it be whānau, hapū, or iwi…entrepreneurship and innovation for, with and by Māori (Henry, 2007, p. 547).

More recently, there has been a growing focus on a quadruple bottom line to focus on social, cultural, environmental, and business goals (TPK, 2022). Similar convictions have been argued within the Pacific Islands context (Conn et al., 2021) where social enterprise works to benefit Pacific communities in which they operate in. This research, while not exclusively focusing on Māori and Pacific social enterprises, is focused on social

enterprises in Auckland that are committed to enhancing the well-being of Māori and Pacific Peoples. Further, the study seeks to understand the social change elements or in the context of this study, health equity advancements, found in social enterprise and how these might work to create healthy food environments for whānau. In its widespread typology, social enterprise is the organisation, social entrepreneur is the individual, and social entrepreneurship are the actions and processes that work to enhance social wealth through entrepreneurial and innovative means (Alter, 2006).

According to Zhao and Mao (2021) a shift from solving social problems through business solutions toward solving social problems by entrepreneurial means can take us to the core of social enterprise – social entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship perspective can aid in understanding the complexities of social enterprise, and explore different types of social enterprises with the ability to distinguish organisational differences. Thus, the entrepreneurship perspective allows various forms of the social enterprise, including private enterprise, government-owned enterprise, institutions, etc. A theoretical framework definition of social enterprise is offered by Zhao and Mao (2021): “Social enterprise is an organisation that has a primary organisational objective of solving a specific social problem; identifies an opportunity of making social change rooted in the government and market failures; delivers innovative problem-solving solutions; and has practices and/or systems that protect the social goal from being jeopardized by the pursuit of the business goal” (p. 8). Theoretical underpinnings found in social and Indigenous entrepreneurship can be explored to find the mediating role of businesses for social change within the food environment that works to improve individual diets, and sustainable food systems.

In transforming a food industry, Logue et al. (2018) explore the role of social value in social enterprise. Social enterprise extends to other key areas such as social value chains (Logue et al., 2018); social entrepreneurship (Zahra et al., 2009); and Indigenous entrepreneurship (Henry, 2007; Foley, 2005; Kawharu et al., 2017). Social enterprise is closely connected to the entrepreneurs who run these organisations. Thus, the role of Indigenous entrepreneurship will be explored in the creation of social enterprise. The findings of this study may also identify and define social enterprise as told by participants from Indigenous communities (from Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa).

Overall, Tapsell and Woods (2010) argue that “context counts”. Theoretical discussions on social entrepreneurship are that the context in which entrepreneurial activity takes place is often marginalized or ignored. There is lack of, or inadequate consideration for the historical and cultural context in which it occurs (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). Tapsell and Woods (2010) describe entrepreneurship as a vehicle for social change through

innovative activities occurring within or across economic and social communities in a historical and cultural context. Given social enterprises can be conceptualised as hybrid organisations (i.e. being simultaneously for economic and non-economic gain), they often hold together by paradox (e.g., social value vs. financial viability) (Cornforth, 2004). Consequently, governance frameworks for cooperation, mutual and social enterprise is underdeveloped and lacking in contextual reference. For this purpose, research on social enterprise should account for contextual factors. Adequate focus on context may bring to light definitions and understandings of social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship as understood by the Māori and Pacific community in this study.

4.9 Chapter Summary

Social enterprises are not one-size-fits-all entities, they vary in form and function depending on regional, cultural, and contextual factors. This chapter explored the complexity of defining social enterprise, considering both its commercial and social dimensions, as well as its relevance to Māori and Pacific communities. This chapter advances our understanding of context-specific applications of social enterprises, that is, their role in Māori and Pacific communities.

By adopting the triple or quadruple bottom line approach, social enterprises in Aotearoa New Zealand can address economic, social, cultural, and environmental goals in a way that aligns with the values and aspirations of Māori and Pacific Peoples. This chapter introduced the concept of Indigenous entrepreneurship, which highlights the importance of community-centred business models that focus on the collective well-being of whanau, hapū, iwi, and community. Social and emancipatory entrepreneurship offers a lens through which the potential of social enterprises to create meaningful change can be understood, particularly in the context of fostering health food environments.

This literature review lays the foundation for the following chapters, which will further investigate ways in which social enterprises can influence and improve food systems and dietary behaviours, ultimately contributing to the health and well-being of Māori and Pacific communities. By emphasising the importance of contextual factors, such as cultural values and historic inequities and injustices, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the role those social enterprises can play in driving social change.

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Introduction

In academic literature, research paradigms are commonly categorised into three broad types: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, each reflecting distinct approaches to understanding and generating knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2018). Māori and Pacific research, while often situated within the qualitative paradigm, embody distinct ontological and epistemological foundations rooted in Indigenous worldviews. These worldviews go beyond methodological considerations, forming comprehensive systems of beliefs, values, and approaches to knowledge that challenge dominant paradigms. As such, this study frames Māori and Pacific research as paradigms in their own right, reflecting the cultural, social, and spiritual values of these communities (Hart, 2010; Smith, 1999; Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019; Henry & Pene, 2001).

Hart's (2010) work has been instrumental in advancing the recognition of Indigenous methodologies as decolonised research frameworks that respect and validate Indigenous sovereignty in knowledge creation. Similarly, Smith (1999) highlights the role of Kaupapa Māori as a framework that centres Māori worldviews and disrupts Eurocentric approaches to research. Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) extend these discussions to Pacific research, arguing that Pacific methodologies reflect unique cultural and epistemological foundations. Together, these works support the framing of Māori and Pacific research as paradigms that honour Indigenous ways of knowing and provide a culturally responsive framework for this study. This study follows the stance that Māori and Pacific understandings of reality, knowledge generation, and values, stand on their own as the basis of a research paradigm to serve the interests of Māori and Pacific Peoples (Smith, 2012; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017).

The combination of Kaupapa Māori and Pacific paradigms may appear complex, given their distinct cultural contexts. However, this research argues that shared values such as collectivism, interconnectedness, and spirituality make them complementary. These paradigms provide a holistic lens through which to examine the lived realities of Māori and Pacific communities, particularly in addressing contemporary challenges such as health inequities and the impacts of unhealthy food environments. The choice of paradigms is further reinforced by the primary researcher's dual heritage as Māori and Pacific, which positions them as a cultural insider with a unique ability to engage with the values and perspectives of both communities.

This study's focus on health, food environments, and social change necessitates a framework that is not only culturally grounded but also capable of addressing complex socio-cultural determinants. By grounding the research in these paradigms, the study acknowledges the significance of Indigenous knowledge systems in shaping holistic, community-driven approaches to inquiry. While Kaupapa Māori and Pacific paradigms are distinct, their shared emphasis on relationality, cultural continuity, and collective well-being makes them particularly well-suited to this research context.

In addition to presenting the overall paradigm, this chapter will also explore the ontology (nature of reality) and epistemology (nature of knowledge) that underpin the study. These paradigms provide the foundation for the methodologies and methods employed, ensuring that the research remains culturally relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the communities it seeks to serve. In this study, the paradigm is underpinned by the shared ways of viewing and thinking about the world that is reflective of Kaupapa Māori, and Pacific, worldviews, beliefs, values, and ways of living.

It should be noted from the outset, that the combination of both Māori and Pacific paradigms may seem complex, even problematic for a research project. However, there are several reasons why these paradigms are necessary for navigating this research project, the context, and the researcher's part in relating to the participant community. By bringing together both paradigms, the researcher gains a better understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the participant community. A researcher must have a deep connection to both paradigms in order to bring each together for the contexts and betterment of the communities involved in the research.

Firstly, the primary researcher in this study is of both Māori and Pacific descent, which may serve as a reflection of the multicultural world in which we live, particularly in New Zealand, a nation active within the advancements and developments that have resulted from globalisation, technological evolution, and an increase in social connectedness. Secondly, the communities in which this research aims to serve are significantly and disproportionately represented among population groups in New Zealand that are most affected by unhealthy food environments and diet-related non-communicable diseases. In this sense, this research works within a space that is novel and contemporary, and in need of multiple perspectives of knowledge, while also acknowledging that no one approach has the monopoly on truth and knowledge (Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019).

Kaupapa Māori

For Henry & Foley (2018, p. 218), Kaupapa Māori is a research paradigm incorporating ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, about which they state, “methodology in this context is not so much a matter of distinguishing ‘quantitative’ from ‘qualitative’, or ‘deductive’ from ‘inductive’ methods, but of recognising that Kaupapa Māori is a framework for understanding how Māori live according to *tikanga* (principles), and how new knowledge can be created out of those principles”. The epistemological and ontological considerations of Kaupapa Māori stem from the cultural values that inform the research design. Kaupapa Māori research is defined as being culturally safe; involving the mentorship of kaumatua, in conjunction with ensuring rigour of research; embedded in mātauranga Māori or knowledge originating from our tīpuna/ancestors; and being by, for, and with Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Pacific Research Paradigm

Pacific researchers have also developed and are continuing to develop equally distinctive ontological and epistemological frameworks (see for example, Vaioleti, 2006; Sauni, 2011; Anae, 2019; Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). This study shares the same sentiments as Sanga and Reynolds (2017), “rather than being named in the shadows of other traditions, a Pacific research paradigm is equal to others or nothing at all” (p. 202). An array of Pacific research approaches is presented by Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) comprising of key themes including inclusiveness, respect, reciprocity, family, genealogy, and cultural customs. These research approaches have stemmed from a Pacific paradigm that is holistic in nature (knowledge traditions encompassing of the connection between spiritual, physical, mental, and environmental factors). You could also argue that Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) reflect on the use of metaphors and symbolism reflected in Pacific traditions and practices to illustrate epistemology and ontological considerations in research and research processes.

This work, similar to Sanga and Reynolds' (2017) description of the Pacific paradigm across the region, acknowledges the dynamic interplay between unity and diversity among the Pacific Island groups that constitute Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also highlights the bringing together of Māori and Pacific approaches to research, recognising shared values, distinct cultural contexts, and the inherent tensions that exist within.

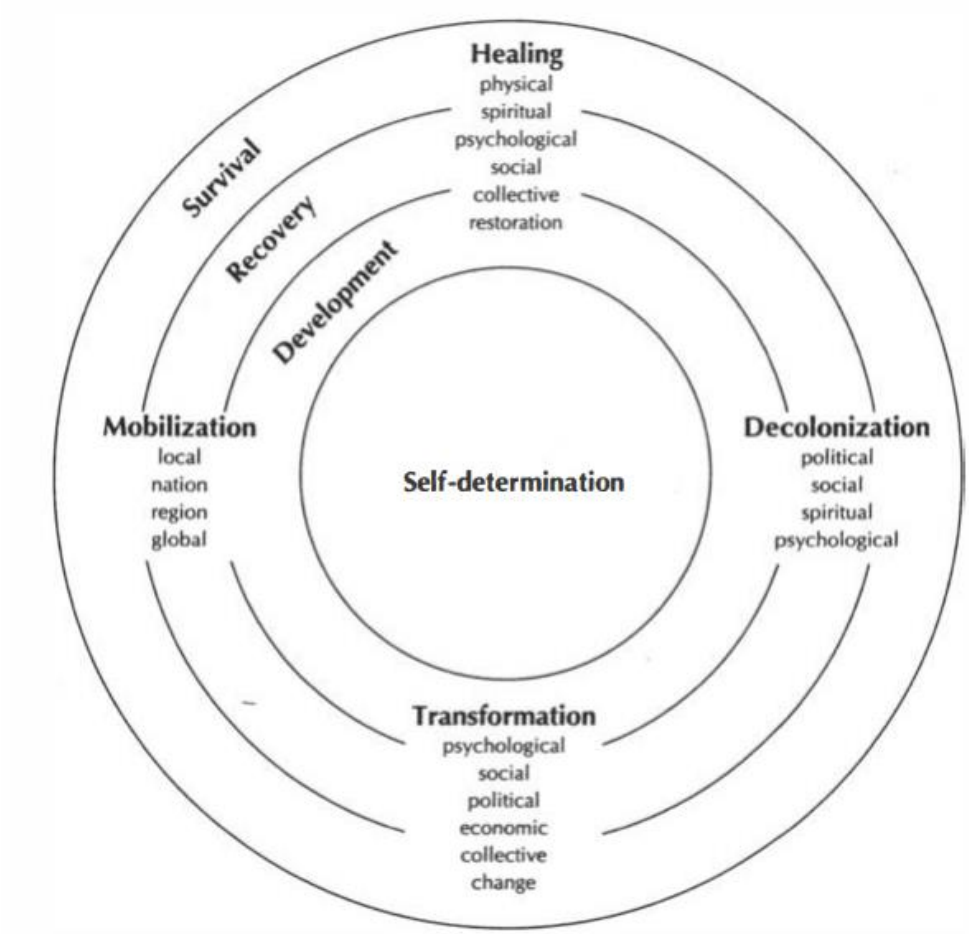
Bringing Together of Māori and Pacific Paradigms

Although cultural traditions may differ between Māori and Pacific Peoples, and even among Pacific Island countries, as well as the different tribes and villages within these Pacific Island settings, there are shared values that shape Pacific identity and society (Cammock et al., 2021b) that align with Māori worldview. The ontological and epistemological juncture of Māori and Pacific worldviews is centred on a deep understanding that all things spiritual, human, and environmental are all intrinsically interconnected (Pulotu-Endemann et al., 2007, p. 50). Additionally, this connection comes from an innate understanding of genealogical roots that link humans to sacred mountains, oceans, rivers, ancestral homelands, waka (or va'a), family (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 73), and God as the origin (Tamasese et al., 2005).

This research project is based on paradigms that share beliefs and worldviews that are based on collectiveness, connectedness, relationships, and are spiritual in nature. Further, the indigeneity of both groups being from Aotearoa and the Pacific also brings together a drive for self-determination as peoples who have been negatively impacted by colonisation, discrimination, racism, and poverty which has led to the very intergenerational inequities and disadvantages being investigated in this study. Within the New Zealand context, Māori are the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, and Pacific Peoples represent the diasporic Indigenous communities of the Pacific region who share a Pacific ancestry (Enari & Haua, 2021).

Bringing together heterogenous peoples can be a complex task in ensuring both groups are honoured and equally privileged during the research process while honouring the important point that this study takes place on Māori whenua (land) here in Aotearoa. Smith (2012) provides adept commentary which can be applied to the challenging task at hand: "Indigenous research is not quite as simple as it looks, nor quite as complex as it feels" (p. 5). Smith (2012) goes on to explain that research of this nature is a humble and humbling activity. One model that can assist in applying an 'Indigenous research agenda' can be adopted from Smith (2012). The Indigenous Research Agenda is multidimensional and proposes self-determination as an ongoing cycle comprising healing, decolonisation, transformation, and mobilisation. Indigenous works have adopted, adapted, redefined, and built on the Indigenous Research Agenda as proposed by Smith (see for example Worby & Rigney, 2002). Smith's (1999) Indigenous Research Agenda is centred on notions of self-determination with the focus on key areas such as healing, decolonization, transformation, and mobilization, through processes that involve development, recovery, and survival (p. 117).

Figure 5. The Indigenous Research Agenda (Smith, 1999, p. 117)



5.2 Critical & Native Theory

The research design for this thesis is theoretically underpinned by Critical Theory and Native Theory. Critical Theory is founded on the viewpoint that the social world is characterised by the conflict that has resulted between the powerful and powerless (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001). Critical theory assumes a process that critiques and deconstructs the hegemonic powers that marginalise knowledge constructs of Indigenous Peoples (Eketone, 2008; Smith, 1997). Key components of Critical Theory include analysis of power, empowerment, resistance, and emancipation (Eketone, 2008).

Although their stories differ between Māori and Pacific experiences, generally, Māori and Pacific whānau in Aotearoa have been negatively impacted by contextual factors such as colonisation, discrimination and racism, and poverty which have led to intergenerational inequities and disadvantage. For this purpose, critical theory is a key theoretical underpinning for which Māori and Pacific research can take place in order to challenge and resist, but also to develop and advance the Māori and Pacific community. Embedded in this research, is the notion of acting strategically and proceeding

purposively, that is, there is more to the kaupapa than our history under colonialism and our desires to restore rangatiratanga. Indigenous Peoples possess an epistemological tradition, that frames the way that we see the world, the way that we organise ourselves in it, the questions we ask and the solutions we seek (Smith, 2012, p. 10).

Native Theory is defined as “the right of Indigenous people to make sense of their time and place of this world” (Russell, 2000, p. 10). Although the intention of Native Theory is obvious, it also suggests that Indigenous knowledge stands on its own without justificatory reference to the West (Eketone, 2008; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017). In this sense, Native Theory is about Indigenous Peoples making sense of their time and place in this world, with the ability to define themselves using their own reference points as to what is of value, and the processes that are important (Eketone, 2008, p. 10). The key components of Native Theory in this study, underpinned by constructivism, is the Māori and Pacific constructs of knowledge, values, process, and self-determination. In this sense, the Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research practices adopted in this research are a form of grounded theory which sets out to discover or construct theory from the data, and analyse that data through the research process for the purpose of knowledge generation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Together, Native theory and Critical Theory can inform the Kaupapa Māori and Pacific Research methodologies, protocols, and practices adopted in this study.

5.3 Kaupapa Māori Practices & Pacific Research Protocols

Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research is both the reinstatement of traditional knowledge as well as reinforcement of the contemporary beliefs and ethics. Taken together, these embody the contemporary drive for self-determination and empowerment for and by Māori, and Pacific Peoples (Henry & Pene, 2001; Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019; Pulotu-Endemann, 2001). The centrality of genealogy, connection to all things spiritual, human, and environmental illustrates how Kaupapa Māori and Pacific Research informs ontology, or assumptions of ‘what is real’; and epistemology, around what constitutes knowledge.

Whakapapa underpins the entire social system in Māori society. It articulates the connections between the animate (humans) and inanimate (the physical environment), and from the atua (guardian spirits) to the present time (Barlow, 1991, p. 173). Whanaungatanga is the expression of those relationships, the kinship and sense of belonging that connects members of the group, thereby enshrining mutual rights and reciprocity (Moorefield, 2011). Through both our whakapapa and whanaungatanga there is a collective interdependence between humans, the environment, and the god’s, which encapsulates mind, body, and spirit (Henry & Pene, 2001). The interconnectedness

between humanity and all things earthly and spiritual is centred on a reciprocal relationship with creation and comes from a Pacific ancestry (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 74). Research and researchers are obliged to enhance these qualities of connection, spiritual and physical, for the communities in which they serve. These are the very markers of trustworthiness in research for Indigenous Peoples, ensuring respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

The social impact of research on Māori and Pacific Peoples lies in its potential to strengthen the connections between people, their environments, and their cultural and spiritual identities. By grounding the research within the frameworks of whakapapa and whanaungatanga (Barlow, 1991; Moorefield, 2011); Pacific values of relationality, service, and reciprocity (Anae, 2010; Vaioleti, 2006; Spiller et al., 2015), studies can actively contribute to the well-being of these communities. When research honours these principles, it fosters trust and empowers communities by addressing inequities, validating Indigenous knowledge systems (Smith, 2012), and providing culturally relevant solutions to pressing socio-economic health challenges (Henry & Pene, 2001; Conn et al., 2021).

Guided by these research paradigms, the outcomes of this study are meant to primarily be of benefit to Māori and Pacific Peoples, in Aotearoa New Zealand in general, and Tāmaki Makaurau in particular. The research may be of value by creating models that address socio-economic and health issues concerning inequalities shared by these Māori and Pacific communities. The research contributes to the burgeoning literature on Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research ethics, practice, and protocols, as previously developed by Smith (2012) and Vaioleti (2006) in the table below (as cited in Tonumaipe'a et al., 2022). These research practices and protocols will guide the methodology, methods, and analysis of this study.

Table 12. Kaupapa Māori Practices and Pacific Research Protocols (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2022)

Kaupapa Māori Practices (Smith, 2012, p. 124)	**Pacific Research Protocols (in the Tongan language) (Vaioleti 2006, p. 29-31)**
Aroha ki te tangata (show respect for participants)	Faka'apa'apa (respectful, humble, considerate)
Kanohi kitea (be the seen face, present yourself to participants, face-to-face)	Anga Lelei (tolerant, generous, kind, helpful, calm, dignified)
Titiro, whakarongo…korero (look, listen…speak with care)	Mateuteu (well prepared, hardworking, culturally versed, professional, responsive)
Manāki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)	Poto He Anga (knowing what to do and doing it well, cultured)

Kia tupato (be cautious)	‘Ofa Fe’unga (showing appropriate compassion empathy, aroha, love for the context)
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)	
Kia mahaki (do not flaunt your knowledge)	

5.4 Methodological Framework – Likeness to Grounded Theory and Tivaevae Methodology

Manuscript two proposed the Moana Māori research methodology and is encompassing of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa as a methodological framework. This research was underpinned by Critical and Native Theory that encapsulates the essence of both Kaupapa Māori Practices and Pacific Research Protocols (see Table 11). A focus of this study was to decolonise and indigenise the research area under investigation (Chilisa, 2012). In doing so, the methodological framework, is cognisant of a Straussian Grounded Theory approach (see Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and the Tivaevae methodology (MaUa-Hodges, 2018).

While the study does not explicitly adopt Grounded Theory or the Tivaevae methodology, their likeness to the selected methodological approach highlights its alignment with well established and culturally resonant practices. Both methodologies share core principles such as iterative processes, collaborative knowledge creation, and cultural responsiveness, which are central tenet of this research. The comparison strengthens the theoretical foundation by situating the approach within recognised methodological traditions, while also demonstrating a commitment to relationality and Indigenous frameworks such as Tivaevae.

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is traditionally known to produce theory that is grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory methodology is both a tool that frames methods for inquiry and a resultant product of that inquiry (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2005). Since its inception by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Grounded Theory has evolved into several methodological versions. It is the choice of philosophy (in this case, Critical and Native Theory underpinned by Kaupapa Māori Practices and Pacific Research Protocols) that help determine the Grounded Theory approach congruent to this research design. Grounded Theory methodology involves processes that are nonlinear, iterative, and comparative in nature (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019).

Grounded Theory has been adopted as a useful methodology among Māori and Pacific researchers (see for example, Enari, 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). The Grounded Theory approach adopted in this study aligns with Constructivist Grounded Theory. Constructivist Grounded Theory relies on the position of the researcher in relation to the participants and the data (Charmaz, 2008). Contrary to previous versions of Grounded Theory, Constructivist Grounded Theory accepts the notion of multiple realities, emphasises reflexivity, and rejects the assumption that researchers should and could set aside prior knowledge to develop new theories (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p. 293). In this sense, Grounded Theory acknowledges the researcher as implicit in the research process and co-constructs experiences and meaning with the research participants (Charmaz, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Although the original tenets of Grounded Theory assumes that theory emerges from the data, Constructivist Grounded Theory assumes the researcher constructs the analysis of the data which become categories that eventually make up the theory grounded in the reality of the researchers and the researched (Mills, Birks, & Hoare, 2014).

Tivaevae/Tivaivai[3]

The methodological framework of this study shares significant similarities with the Tivaevae research methodology, a cultural and metaphorical approach rooted in Cook Islands traditions, and introduced by Mama Teremoana MaUa-Hodges (Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019). Tivaevae, representing the collective process of creating intricate quilts, embodies values such as connection, reciprocity, and shared purpose (Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019). In the same vein, this study brings together Kaupapa Māori practices and Pacific research protocols, which emphasise relationality and co-creation of knowledge with and for Māori and Pacific communities (Smith, 2012; Vaioleti, 2006). Both approaches recognise the importance of relationships and mutual respect in ensuring culturally grounded and meaningful research outcomes.

The Tivaevae methodology mirrors this study's emphasis on collaborative and iterative processes. Just as tivaevae quilts are crafted through collective effort, with each participant contributing unique pieces that come together to form a cohesive whole, this research is cognisant of a constructivist grounded theory approach. This approach values co-construction of meaning between the researcher and participants, reflecting the collective ethos of Pacific methodologies (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). The nonlinear, iterative nature of grounded theory and

[3] Tivaivai is the term used in Pa Enua or outer islands, *"like my Island, Atiu"* – Mama Teremoana MaUa-Hodges.

Tivaevae processes, where creation is adaptive and reflective, allows for the emergence of culturally resonant insights.

Furthermore, Tivaevae methodology emphasises the importance of cultural specificity, recognising that the research process must reflect the lived realities and values of the communities it serves (Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019). Similarly, this study acknowledges that Indigenous research methodologies, including Kaupapa Māori and Pacific paradigms, are deeply rooted in relationality, spirituality, and collective well-being (Smith, 2012; Spiller et al., 2015). By integrating these principles, the research framework fosters empowerment and addresses social inequities while remaining culturally responsive and relevant.

This alignment with the Tivaevae methodology reflects the broader commitment of this study to honour Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Both methodologies prioritise inclusivity, reciprocity, and community-driven outcomes, ensuring that the research not only generates knowledge but also contributes positively to the communities involved. Through this shared commitment to relationality and cultural grounding, the methodological framework reinforces the significance of Indigenous approaches in advancing social equity and collective empowerment (MaUa-Hodges, 2018; Vaioleti, 2006; Smith, 2012).

Manuscript two provides deeper explanations of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa as the methodological framework adopted in the current research. Table 11 provides key features of Kaupapa Māori, Talanoa, Constructivist Grounded Theory, and Tivaevae and situates these methodologies within broader academic and methodological contexts. The Tivaevae symbolises collaborative, layered, and interconnectedness processes, aligning with the values of relationality and co-construction centre to Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa. Constructivist Grounded Theory on the other hand, shares the emphasis on generating knowledge inductively through close engagement with participants' lived realities. Both approaches resonate with the core principles of this research, illustrating how Indigenous and constructivist methodologies share a foundation of respect for participant agency, relationality, and context-specific insights. By exploring these methodological parallels, this research demonstrates its grounding in culturally resonant frameworks while highlighting the broader relevance of its approach within the academic landscape. This reflective alignment strengthens the validity of the methodology and enriches the understanding of how diverse research paradigms can inform and support each other.

Table 13. Key Features of Kaupapa Māori, Talanoa, Tivaevae, and Constructivist Grounded Theory

Feature	Kaupapa Māori	Talanoa	Tivaevae	Constructivist Grounded Theory
Ontology	Whakapapa (genealogy), interconnection of people, land, and atua	Holistic and relational understanding of reality	Collaboration through individual contributions (quilting metaphor)	Multiple realities; knowledge co-constructed by researcher and participants
Epistemology	Mātauranga Māori (ancestral knowledge), embedded in tikanga (protocols)	Relational knowledge creation through open dialogue	Knowledge created through storytelling, shared values, and collective understanding	Knowledge emerges through co-construction and reflexivity
Values	Manaakitanga (hospitality), Whanaungatanga (relationships), Aroha (love)	Respect, Reciprocity, Empathy	Respect, Collaboration, Shared Purpose	Reflexivity, Collaboration, Flexibility
Process/Practices	Aroha ki te tangata (respect), Kanohi kitea (face-to-face engagement), Kia mahaki (humility)	Open-ended dialogue, flexible conversation pathways	Collective effort, Iterative creation, Adaptive design	Iterative, Comparative analysis, Reflexive coding
Metaphor	N/A	Weaving connections and meaning through dialogue	Cook Islands Māori quilt making (*Tivaevae*) as a metaphor for research	Grounding theory in the data through layers of meaning
Research Focus	Empowering Māori voices, Decolonising research	Gaining deep insights through trust-based relational dialogue	Co-creation of culturally relevant knowledge with community involvement	Theory emerges from participant narratives and researcher co-analysis
Application	By, with, and for Māori (Smith, 1999); culturally safe research.	Used in Pacific research to build relationships and co-create meaning (Vaioleti, 2006)	Reflecting Cook Islands traditions (Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019), but can be used across the Pacific	Applied in dynamic and relational research contexts, including Indigenous methodologies

5.5 The Sample

The sample for this study comprised participants from Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), specifically those connected to social enterprises focused on fostering healthy food environments. Through purposive and snowball sampling, the sample included 47 participants from Māori and Pacific communities involved in or having been influenced by social enterprises that promote health food environments. The sample comprises two primary groups: leaders and entrepreneurs who operate within social enterprises, and end-users – primarily Māori and Pacific whānau who have experienced these initiatives. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to identify social enterprises actively fostering healthy food environments, with an emphasis on those committed to community well-being, food sovereignty, and cultural relevance.

The selection criteria for participants in this study focused on social enterprises and their stakeholders in Tāmaki Makaurau that were dedicated to creating healthy food environments for local communities. Participants were selected from social enterprises including employees, volunteers, trustees, managers leading out the social enterprise initiatives, and clients over the age of 18. Participants ranged in age from 18 and 82, providing valuable insights into their perspectives on food, health, and cultural values related to food systems. Participants included those who were end-users of social enterprise products or services.

5.6 Data Collection Methods

The methods and tools for data collection involved in-depth interviews, and wānanga/talanoa (a forum for open discussion). The wānanga/Talanoa discussions took place with end users of these social impact initiatives and involved the voluntary participation of Māori and Pacific end-users of these services, and initiatives as well as individuals driving the social enterprise. Overall, through purposive and snowball sampling, the sample size consisted of 47 participants (11 leaders, 36 end-users who were of Māori and/or Pacific descent). Wānanga or Talanoa sessions were conducted either individually or in groups, based on participants' preferences. Social enterprise leaders or owners typically favoured individual Talanoa, while end-users preferred group discussions. A summary of the research methods and questions are presented below:

Conducting Talanoa and Wānanga

The talanoa and wānanga sessions were carried out in culturally appropriate and inclusive settings to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for participants. These sessions were held in venues familiar to the participants, including community spaces such as Marae, churches, community gardens, and social enterprise hubs. The

settings were chosen to reflect the communal and relational nature of talanoa and wānanga, ensuring that participants felt a sense of belonging and trust.

The sessions were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent to ensure the accurate capture of discussions. Recordings allowed for detailed analysis while maintaining the integrity of participants' narratives. Each talanoa or wānanga session ranged from one to two hours, depending on the group dynamics and the depth of discussion.

Group configurations varied based on the context and preferences of participants. Some sessions involved small groups of 4-6 participants to facilitate intimate and focused dialogue, while others included larger groups, one of which had in attendance 20 participants for broader community discussions. In cases where individuals preferred one-on-one engagement, smaller talanoa sessions were conducted to accommodate their comfort levels.

Facilitation followed culturally grounded practices, including opening and closing with karakia (prayer or incantation) to acknowledge the significance of the gathering and ensure spiritual and emotional safety. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and perspectives openly, with the researcher guiding the conversations while respecting the natural flow of dialogue. This approach ensured that talanoa and wānanga sessions remained participatory, respectful, and culturally attuned, fostering rich and meaningful discussions that informed the research findings.

5.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was rooted in culturally responsive and collaborative framework, utilising thematic and systematic approaches to synthesise insights from talanoa, wānanga, and interviews. Inspired by Charmaz's grounded theory techniques and Eaves (2001) synthesis technique for grounded theory data analysis, the research developed Māori-Pacific synthesis technique. This approach aligns with Indigenous values of relationality, collaboration, and collective meaning-making, ensuring the analysis process reflects both Māori and Pacific worldviews.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns within the data, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Initial coding was conducted systematically with the use of NVivo, with transcripts and audio recordings reviewed multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data. Codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected the research objectives and participants' shared experiences.

The data analysis process was collaborative in nature. Rather than conducting the analysis in isolation, key themes were co-constructed with input from community members, research participants, and colleagues. This collaborative approach aligns with the concept of whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships) and the relational ethos of talanoa and wānanga. Steps in the analysis process adopted in this research are as follows (see Appendix for examples of its application):

Table 14. Steps in the Data Analysis Process

Step	Process	Detail
1	**Data familiarisation**	All audio-recorded sessions were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were reviewed alongside the recordings to capture nuances in tone, expression, and context.
2	**Initial coding**	A combination of inductive and deductive coding was used to identify meaningful data segments. Codes were rooted in participants' narratives while also guided by the research framework.
3	**Themes development**	Codes were grouped into themes through collaborative discussions with participants, research colleagues, and advisors. This iterative process ensured that the themes reflected both collective insights and individual experiences.
4	**Synthesis**	Drawing on Eaves' (2001) synthesis techniques, themes were refined through collaborative dialogue, weaving Māori and Pacific perspectives to create a unified analytical framework. This step involved synthesising diverse viewpoints while respecting cultural and contextual nuances.
5	**Validation**	Preliminary findings were presented back to a sub-set of participants to validate interpretations and refine the themes further.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical principles of respect, partnership, and protection, ensuring that the research process was culturally responsive and respectful of participants' rights and well-being. Ethics approval was obtained from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), reference number 22/291.

Participants were fully informed about the study through detailed information sheets, verbal briefings, emphasising their right to decline or withdraw at any stage. Written consent was obtained before participation, and pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality when discussing their stories, except where participants explicitly consented to the attribution of their responses.

Cultural safety was central to the research, guided by Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies. These approaches emphasises relational practices, reciprocity, and

respect for cultural values, ensuring the research upheld the mana and wairuatanga (spirituality) of Māori and Pacific participants. Consultation with the community leaders and relevant stakeholders informed the research design to ensure alignment with cultural protocols and community aspirations.

Data security protocols were strictly followed, with electronic data stored on secure AUT systems and hard copies in locked storage. Data will be retained for six years, after which it will be securely destroyed.

Fostering a safe and supportive environment for wānanga and Talanoa aided in minimising risks to participants. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences freely. Any discomfort or concerns raised during the study were promptly addressed, and support options were made available. This ethical framework ensured that the research met institutional standards and reflected the values and priorities of the Māori and Pacific communities it aimed to serve.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the foundational research paradigms and methodological frameworks guiding this study, with a focus on Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research protocols. These paradigms are deeply rooted in Indigenous worldviews, emphasising the importance of cultural values, spirituality, connectedness, and collectiveness in both the research process and outcomes. The research design draws on Critical Theory and Native Theory, both of which are essential for challenging colonial structures and advancing self-determination for Māori and Pacific Peoples. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to disrupt dominant power dynamics while fostering empowerment and transformation within the communities involved.

The methodological approach taken in this study reflects a commitment to Indigenous knowledge systems and recognises the complex interplay between food environments, social enterprises, and health outcomes. As the research progressed, its aims generated new insights in how social enterprises can foster healthy food environments and improve the well-being of Māori and Pacific communities. As a result of this process, a model was developed, hereinafter referred to as the Te Moana Māori Methodology, which is presented as Manuscript Two, to provide further understanding of the foundations of the research design and paradigms which were developed for and evolved out of this study.

CHAPTER 6 MOANA MĀORI METHODOLOGY

6.1 Manuscript Two [Submitted to Health Promotion International, March, 2025]

Weaving Indigenous Research: Māori and Pacific paradigms for the Moana Māori Methodology

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ABSTRACT

While Māori have the Indigenous status in Aotearoa/New Zealand as first peoples, we cannot ignore the history of their seafaring journey through the previously uninhabited Pacific Islands over many hundreds of years prior to their discovery of these lands sometime in the last 1,000 years~~,~~ and therefore their strong genealogical connections to the Pacific – in terms of culture, geography and history. This paper expands on – and presents novel ways of combining - two methodologies that have been developed over the last thirty years by tangata whenua (Māori) and tangata Moana (other Indigenous peoples of the Pacific), which have significant applicability in Aotearoa, that is, Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa research paradigms.

We propose a research paradigm that we have named Moana Māori methodological research paradigm. This paradigm is founded on an ontology derived from Māori and Pacific culture and traditions; that is an expression of an Indigenous epistemology, which recognises Māori and Pacific knowledge as paramount; a methodology that is rigorous and relevant for Māori Pacific Peoples; and an axiological stance that is founded on Māori and Pacific values of respect connection, reciprocity, and aspirations for self-determination, wairuatanga or spirituality, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and tino rangatiratanga.

This model could provide more empowering research, contributing to further decolonisation of the public health research agenda and empowerment of Māori and Pacific Peoples. This paper proposes a way forward while still honouring the valuable contributions that have been made before, and will continue to be made by, for, and with, Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa.

Keywords (4-5): Māori and Pacific health, public health research, food havens, social enterprise

CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH PROMOTION

- **Development of Moana Māori Methodology:** This article introduces a new research paradigm combining Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, emphasising an Indigenous epistemology and valuing Māori and Pacific traditions and knowledge systems.
- **Emphasis on Respect and Reciprocity:** The methodology highlights the importance of mutual respect, relationship-building, and cultural sensitivity in research practices, ensuring that research benefits honours the participant community.
- **Community-Engaged Research:** This article showcases the effectiveness of community-led public health approaches and participatory actions research, as demonstrated through projects like the Food Havens Project, which prioritise engaging and empowering Māori and Pacific communities in health promotion efforts.

GLOSSARY

This glossary includes selected terms that are relevant to the context of this article. Other terms and concepts may be described within the text itself. The inclusion of these terms are not exhaustive, and readers are encouraged to explore further for a more comprehensive understanding of Indigenous language and cultural practices discussed.

KUPU MĀORI

Term	Definition
Aotearoa	The Māori name for New Zealand, often translated as "Land of the Long White Cloud."
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face-to-face interaction; is a principle emphasising direct personal engagement.
Kaumātua	Elder, elderly man, elderly woman – a person of status.
Kaupapa Māori	A research paradigm grounded in Māori ontology, epistemology, and axiology, emphasising research by, for, and with Māori.
Koha	Gift, offering, contribution.
Manaakitanga	The practice of hospitality, kindness, and care for others, ensuring the dignity and mana of others are upheld.
Tapu	Sacred, holy.

Term	Definition
Taonga	Treasure.
Tino Rangatiratanga	Self-determination and autonomy; the ability to make decisions and exercise authority over one's own life and resources.
Tuakana-teina	Older sibling-younger sibling like relationship.
Utu	Reciprocity and balance, ensuring harmony and equilibrium in relationships and interactions.
Wairuatanga	Spirituality; is a core value emphasising the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds.
Wānanga	A forum or discussion group for sharing knowledge and exploring ideas, is often used in education and research contexts.
Whakapapa	Genealogy or lineage; is a fundamental concept connecting individuals to their ancestors, land, and environment.
Whanaungatanga	Relationships and a sense of belonging, emphasizing kinship and collective well-being.

PACIFIC TERMS

Term	Definition	Source
Fa’afaletui (Samoan)	A research framework involving collective dialogue and consensus-building within a Samoan cultural context.	Tamasese et al. (2005)
Fonofale (Samoan)	A holistic model of health with a fale (house) metaphor, emphasising cultural and spiritual dimensions.	Pulotu-Endemann (1995)
Kakala (Tongan)	A research framework based on the process of making garlands, emphasizing preparation, weaving, and presentation.	Thaman (2003)
Kanne Lobal (Marshallese)	Culturally rooted approach to education and leadership based on values like kindness, love, respect, reciprocity.	Jim et al. (2021)
Talanoa (Tongan)	An open, inclusive dialogue that emphasizes relational storytelling, sharing, and collective understanding.	Vaioleti (2006); Halapua (2000)

Term	Definition	Source
Tivaevae or Tivaivai (Cook Islands Māori)	A metaphorical and methodological framework representing collaborative quilt-making, emphasising collective effort and creativity.	Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges (2019)
Vā (Tongan & Samoan)	The relational space between people, emphasizing balance, harmony, and interconnectedness.	Kalavite (2019); Anae (2010)
Va Tapuia (Samoan)	Sacred relational space; emphasises respect and care in maintaining interpersonal relationships.	Anae (2010)
Vakarokoroko (Fijian)	Respect	Cammock et al. (2021a)
Vanua (Fiji)	Fijian interconnectedness inclusive of culture, chiefs, knowledge systems, relationships, values, land, and spiritualities.	Nabobo-Baba, 2008
Veitokoni (Fijian)	Reciprocity	Cammock et al. (2021a)
Viewekani (Fijian)	Relationship building	Cammock et al. (2021a)

INTRODUCTION

Since Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) writings on Kaupapa Māori research and developing Indigenous research methodologies there has been an increase in researchers both in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter referred to as Aotearoa) and internationally choosing to use Indigenous methodologies in their studies (Braun et al., 2014; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). As with the diversity in Western qualitative methodologies (e.g., phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography etc.), we are also seeing a range of Indigenous methodologies being written about and developed (Vaioleti, 2006; Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019). Research efforts from Māori (Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa) have also echoed and perhaps provided breadcrumbs for future Kaupapa Māori approaches that have seen a groundswell of research carried out for, by, and with Māori (Bishop, 1994; Smith, 1997; Henry & Pene, 2001).

Notably, Vaioleti (2006) has significantly contributed to the development of Pacific research protocols and practices that have led to further debate as well as the evolution and creation of Pacific methodologies. We have seen the development of research methods and methodologies within the Pacific community including the following: Talanoa which is presented as a Tongan approach but applicable and adopted by researchers descending from other Pacific Islands (Halapua, 2000; Vaioleti, 2006); the Cook Islands Māori Tivaevae model by Teremoana MaUa-Hodges (Futter-Puati & MaUa-Hodges, 2019); the Fijian Vanua research framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2008); the Tongan Kakala framework (Thaman, 2003), the Samoan Fa'afaletui (Tamasese et al., 2005), Ula (Sauni, 2011), and Fonofale (Pulotu-Endemann, 1995); and the Marshall Islands Kanne Lobal (Jim et al., 2021).

An extended stocktake and discussion of Pacific research efforts can be found in Sanga and Reynolds (2017) and Naepi (2015). More recently, we have seen the development of other Pacific methodologies such as the Soalaupulega Samoa framework (Taleni, 2023); Vukumuni vuku ni vanua of Fiji (Ramala & Ruwhiu, 2024); and Talanoa Participatory Action Research (Cammock et al., 2021a). This paper build upon the works and the accumulated knowledge of Indigenous scholars who have come before us by focusing on two methodologies with significant applicability in Aotearoa – Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa approaches to research.

Rather than treating Pacific research methodologies as a singular or monolithic construct this paper explores a paradigm that values both diversity and connection. Grounded in whanaungatanga (relationality), vā (relational space), and lotu (spiritual ethics), this paper seeks to present a methodological approach that honours both the specificity of each tradition while advancing a collective aspiration for Indigenous sovereignty in research.

While there is a growing body of literature on each of these methodologies separately, there remains a paucity of scholarship on how Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa might be woven together. Exploring this intersection has the potential to create an expansive Indigenous methodological paradigm that is uniquely suited to the Aotearoa context and responsive to the growing call within public health to decolonise and democratise approaches to research and community practices (Branelly & Boulton, 2017). Vaioleti's (2006) writings borrow from the Māori proverb that aptly reflects the Māori and Pacific experience of knowledge generation: *Na tō rourou, na taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi (with your food basket and my food basket, we will feed the people well).* In this way, the

integration of these methodologies can enrich the ‘mosaic’ of Indigenous information-sharing, preservation, and knowledge creation.

This paper posits that shared principles of holism, relationality, and guardianship as practices and informed by Māori and Pacific worldviews is needed, and provides a robust foundation for a combined research paradigm, creating a framework that centres Indigenous worldviews while responding to the unique challenges and aspirations of Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. These principles are embodied in practices that shape how we interact with one another, our communities, and the natural world. Relationality emphasises the interconnectedness of all things, reflecting the Māori concept of whakapapa and the Pacific concept of vā, which honour the relationships between people, land, and spirit (Spiller et al., 2015; Allen et al., 2022). These shared values situate this work within a genealogy of Indigenous knowledge systems that honour both diversity, and unity. This alignment not only strengthens our methodological approach, but also reaffirms the importance of collective well-being and self-determination in the pursuit of decolonised research practices.

This paper begins by exploring the theoretical underpinnings of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, situating them within shared Māori and Pacific principles. Two case studies are then presented to illustrate the practical application of these methodologies, highlighting their relevance for community-led health initiatives. We then propose Moana Māori methodological framework, drawing on these synergies to address contemporary challenges in public health research.

Aotearoa Context

Aotearoa’s bicultural foundations were established through Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed between Māori and the British Crown in 1840, marking the beginning of formal colonization (Anderson et al., 2015). Māori, recognized by the United Nations as the Indigenous people of Aotearoa, hold deep genealogical connections to the Pacific through their seafaring ancestry across Te Moananui a Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean), prior to their arrival in Aotearoa approximately 1000 years ago (Banbury et al., 2022; Te Ara, 2020). These shared cultural and historical ties highlight the interconnected histories of Māori and Pacific Peoples, which continue to shape Aotearoa’s evolving diverse landscape.

That is to say, Māori first arrived here as Tangata Moana (people of the sea), named Polynesians by the colonisers (Anderson, Binney, & Harris, 2015). Prior to this arrival, the first millennium AD saw the ‘becoming’ rather than a ‘coming’ of Polynesians (p. 19).

Anderson et al. (2015) argue that those who first arrived in Aotearoa would have largely descended from East Polynesia, having formerly been settled by peoples from West Polynesia (p. 20). Māori and Pacific whakapapa (genealogical links) are deeply connected. There is DNA evidence to suggest a deep connection between peoples of Austronesia diaspora from which all Pacific Peoples come (Chambers & Edinur, 2015). This relationship between Māori and Pacific Peoples is further affirmed and signalled by the Health Research Council New Zealand as an 'ancient whanaungatanga relationship of tuākana (older relation) and tēina (younger relation) within Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the Pacific region' (as cited in Naepi, 2015). It has been said by prominent Pacific academics Albert Wendt and Epeli Hau'Ofa that Māori are people of the Pacific, and that Pacific is a connected sea of islands as opposed to islands in the Far Sea (as cited in Sommerville, 2012). Sommerville (2012) as well as Anderson et al. (2015) offer literature that highlights the interconnections between Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Next to Māori and the Asian population, Pacific Peoples make up the second largest non-European population in Aotearoa and their figures continue to grow (see Table 1). We make a cautionary note that Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa is in no way a single ethnicity, but comprises of many Pacific nations. The New Zealand government defines Pacific populations as encompassing of over 18 diverse ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand (MPP, 2020). These include, in order of population size: Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan, i-Kiribati, Tahitian, Papua New Guinean, Ni Vanuatu, Rotuman, Indigenous Australian, Soloman Islander, Hawaiian, Pitcairn Islander, Nauruan and 'other' (MPP, 2020).

The Pacific region encompasses vast cultural diversity, with communities often grouped under the Western-imposed categories of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. However, these labels do not fully capture the depth of Indigenous knowledge systems and research methodologies within each group. In Aotearoa, research has historically focused on Polynesian populations, but the increasing visibility of Melanesian and Micronesian communities emphasise the need for research approaches that better reflect the full spectrum of Pacific identities and experiences.

Due to factors such as historical migration trends, domestic government and policy focus, research developments and gaps, future research is needed to address the broader Pacific context that seeks to understand the unique needs and experiences of Micronesian and Melanesian populations. This paper serves as a provocation to critically address these gaps, focusing primarily on Polynesian populations due to their historical prominence in New Zealand's Pacific communities. However, it also calls for further exploration into the experiences of Melanesian and Micronesian populations, with the

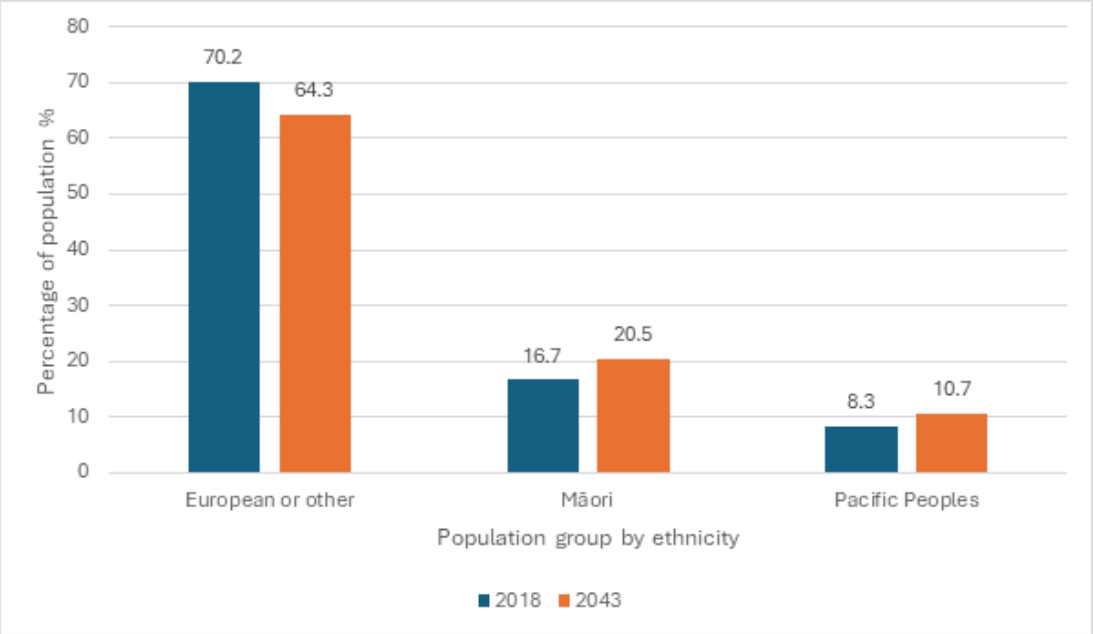
understanding that a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to Pacific research is essential for accurately representing and supporting all Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa. By highlighting these areas for future inquiry, the paper aims to contribute to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of Pacific health, well-being, and cultural practices.

Table 1. *Growing Numbers of Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa*

	2006 (count)	**2013 (count)**	**2018 (count)**
Māori	565,329	598,602	775,836
Pacific Peoples	265,974	295,941	381,642

According to Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ 2021b), these figures are projected to increase by 2043, when Aotearoa's ethnic landscape will have changed with a declining European population and increasing Māori and Pacific Peoples population (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Aotearoa population projections of European, Māori, and Pacific Peoples 2018-2043*



Aotearoa also has a youthful population. Latest figures recorded in 2021 (StatsNZ, 2021a) reveal estimates of 2.7 million people aged 0-39 years which is over half the total population (n=5.1 million). For Māori 64.5% of males and 61.7% of females made up the population aged 0-34 years; and for Pacific Peoples it was 68% males and 66.4% females (StatsNZ, 2022a; StatsNZ, 2022b). It is increasingly recognized that many young

people in Aotearoa identify as having mixed heritage or multiple ethnic identities. Research shows that over a quarter of young New Zealanders identify with more than one ethnic group, often a blend of Pākehā, Māori, and Pacific Island backgrounds, shaped by factors such as parental marriage, migration, ancestry, and cultural affiliations (Butler, 2018). In a Contemporary Pacific Status Report in 2016, nearly 60% of individuals identifying as Māori, also reported as belonging to a Pacific ethnicity, with 43.7% of this group being children aged 0-14 years (MPP, 2016).

In Aotearoa, there have been long standing, prevalent inequalities in health between ethnic groups and social classes, with Māori and Pacific Island peoples disproportionally affected. This has limited the effectiveness of public health measures, which have historically been shaped by Eurocentric and professionally driven frameworks (Affun-Adegbulu & Adegbulu, 2020). The impact of this can be seen in the health research, which shows the high prevalence rates for obesity among Māori and Pacific Peoples at 50.8% and 71.3% respectively (Ministry of Health, 2021) which has been linked to individuals living in areas of high deprivation (Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit 2015). Among other works, Jefferies et al. (2020) have shown that Māori and Pacific Peoples experience inequity in morbidity and mortality in the face of influenza pandemics and other communicable disease. This finding is reinforced by Steyn et al. (2021) who noted that when it came to hospitalisation from COVID-19, “Māori have 2.50 times greater odds of hospitalisation than non-Māori non-Pacific Peoples. Pacific Peoples have three times greater odds” (p. 28).

While research has been traditionally positioned in a homogenous ‘medical model’ of public health, researchers and practitioners are now faced with the realisation that for effective change in health systems to occur, public health approaches need to be decolonised and democratised. This involves changes at both epistemic and ontological levels, as well as the methodological level that place importance on local-contextualised, community-based health, empowerment and codesign of health research and actions, drawing on Indigenous wisdom and diverse health concepts. While Māori and Pacific research aims to generate outcomes that serve their respective communities, Smith (1999) and Southwick and Solomona (2007) argue that Pacific research must actively contribute to decolonisation. Building on their work, we contend that a combined approach would enhance decolonisation efforts in Aotearoa and serve as a step toward more equitable outcomes.

UNDERSTANDING KAUPAPA MĀORI AND TALANOA RESEARCH

A Māori and Pacific Paradigm

In this paper we raise the questions: ‘What would it look like to have a methodology led by a combined Kaupapa Māori/Pacific worldview?’ and ‘How would public health research in Aotearoa benefit from such a methodological approach?’ To this, we also echo Smith’s (2012) writings:

‘What happens to research when the researched become the researchers?’ (p. 185)

We also add, that in our efforts to seek out a Kaupapa Māori/Talanoa methodological framework, the meanings of ontology, epistemology, and axiology are worth noting (see Table 2). These components of sense-making guide the methodological framework that is the set of methods and procedures adopted in Māori and Pacific research.

Table 2. *Components of sense-making in research that guide the methodology (Adapted from Henry & Pene, 2001).*

Components of sense-making in research	**Questions posed to the researcher**
Ontology	What is ‘real’?
Epistemology	What is ‘true’?
Axiology	What is of ‘value’?

There is a danger in assuming that the origins of sense-making concerning ontology, epistemology, and axiology all come from the same place, be it Western, Māori, Pacific, Eastern or other knowledge constructs. The danger comes by implication, that standardised instruments may be used to collect and analyse data and generate knowledge within Kaupapa Māori and Pacific contexts but do not adequately capture the Māori and Pacific experience, values, lived reality, and ways of being (Smith, 2012, p. 1; Vaioleti, 2006).

There is a demographic shift in our Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa. This will mean the current and impending emergence of mixed-ethnic communities that are of both Māori and Pacific heritage. Further, in many contexts within Aotearoa, our research spaces are shared between Māori and Pacific Peoples. In order to consider the possibilities and benefits of weaving Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, it is important to recognise the history of each. In the next section, we offer an overview of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa separately. We then shift the discussion to what a combined approach may look like—for researchers, participants, and a public health research agenda.

The negotiation of space for Indigenous theorising is essential for creating culturally responsive research paradigms (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009). While distinct, Māori and Pacific worldviews converge around shared principles of holism, relationality, guardianship of natural systems, and spirituality. These interlinkages, alongside our shared history, rather than demographic inter-mixing, provide a compelling foundation for a shared research paradigm.

Overview of Kaupapa Māori

For Henry & Foley (2018, p. 218), Kaupapa Māori is a research paradigm incorporating ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, about which they state, "methodology in this context is not so much a matter of distinguishing 'quantitative' from 'qualitative', or 'deductive' from 'inductive' methods, but of recognizing that Kaupapa Māori is a framework for understanding how Māori live according to *tikanga* (principles), and how new knowledge can be created out of those principles". The epistemological and ontological considerations of Kaupapa Māori stems from the cultural values that inform the research design. Kaupapa Māori research is defined as being culturally safe; involving the mentorship of kaumatua, in conjunction with ensuring the rigour of research; embedded in mātauranga Māori or knowledge originating from our tīpuna/ancestors; and being by, for, and with Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001). Drawing on and expanding mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) requires adherence to tikanga (social practices), which must be embedded into the research design. Notions of tikanga (or what is considered to be 'right' and 'just' according to Te Ao Māori) should be embedded in the research. Even Māori researchers may need training because they often carry the 'kanohi ki te kanohi' or face to face aspects of the research (Smith, 2012). Tikanga itself cannot be regarded as a recipe or formula that can be learnt at a single professional development course (Smith, 2017) but is a lifelong journey of learning. Even kaumātua (respected elders) still discuss and disagree on matter of tikanga (p. 49).

Some Māori researchers face the challenges of becoming the silent research partner, having research knowledge but lacking in actual research skills (Smith, 2015). Graham Smith (1990) offers three models that include the tiaki model or mentor model where an authoritative Māori mentors a researcher; a whāngai model where a researcher is adopted into a research whānau or community; and a power-sharing model where the community have ownership and decision-making capabilities from the inception of the research. In essence, these models ensure that a researcher is respected and upholds notions of collectivism in a way that is mana-enhancing, and reciprocal in nature. These relationships ensure a Māori researcher is both guided, supported, and given the

opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to a 'rising tide.' That is, to navigate the research path while carrying the duty, obligation, and responsibilities to the community while increasing in overall mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori.

Overview of Talanoa

Talanoa was first used in formal conflict-resolution settings by Halapua as a method for open-hearted dialogue, and 'unconcealed storytelling' to address the ensuing conflict within Fiji (Halapua, 2000). It was later developed as the Talanoa Research Methodology by Vaioleti (2006) and continues to be developed by Pacific scholars. Within the Pacific Islands, countries and communities in the education and social sciences sectors have embraced Talanoa as a research methodology (Enari & Matapo, 2021; Halapua, 2000; Otsuka, 2006; Prescott, 2008). Indeed, Halapua (2008) has argued that throughout the histories of Pacific Island societies, Talanoa has been the foundation for "better understanding and cooperation within and across our human relationships. It advances knowledge about our social identities, extended families, our villages, our ethnic and tribal communities, our religious beliefs, and our moral, economic, and political interests" (p. 1). Drawing on Pacific worldviews, the epistemological basis of Talanoa is based on the knowledge construction processes of Pacific Peoples (Vaka et al., 2016; Cammock et al., 2021a). That is, "Talanoa's philosophical base is collective, oriented towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences in research" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 25). Vaka et al. (2016) described Talanoa as involving stories about subject matter. Vaka et al. (2016) use the 'coconut' as an example of subject matter to illustrate; that is, the talanoa will be built around how everyone knows and describes the coconut, its history, uses, parts, trunk, leaves, and fruits (p. 538). In defining Talanoa, Tongan academic, Vaioleti (2006), broke the word down into two parts. The first, '*Tala*', refers to telling, informing, or commanding; while the second part '*noa*' calls to attention the ordinary, nothing in particular, imaginary or no value. Thus, according to Vaioleti, Talanoa literally means, talking about nothing in particular and without boundaries. Further, Halapua (2008) discussed Talanoa as a tool whereby communication is open and without concealment; while Nabobo-Baba (2008) described it as a process whereby participants can 'offload'.

Within Pacific, and indeed Māori, cultures, knowledge construction relies on communicating, connecting and learning about people and their realities; and Talanoa offers a way in which to capture that process (Halapua, 2008; Smith, 2012). However, just as knowledge construction is not a linear process, neither are Talanoa discussions which forefront inclusivity and fluidity, encompassing holistic approaches to perceiving

phenomena. Although sharing a common emphasis on open dialogue across Pacific ethnicities, Talanoa is inclusive of different interpretations as it is highly dependent on the norms, systems, and traditions of the particular Pacific ethnic group. Learnings from Hindley et al. (2020) suggest that a researcher engaged in Talanoa should: 1) allow the talanoa to take its natural course without overburdening the participants; 2) prioritise the relationships (the vā) over the location of the talanoa; and 3) foster intercultural research conversations that honour Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (p. 99).

We have seen the Talanoa used in several ethnic-specific studies relating to Pacific Islands nations and Pacific Peoples here in Aotearoa. For instance, for Cammock et al. (2021a), the Talanoa approach was informed by the Fijian cultural concepts of vakarokoroko (respect), veiwekani (relationship building), and veitokoni (reciprocity) which provided the study with a contextual lens within which the methods and processes were based. Examples of how Talanoa has been used across Pacific communities includes Prescott's (2008) exploration into the experiences of Tongan entrepreneurs in Pacific businesses in Aotearoa; Matapo and Enari's (2021) and the use of a Samoan lens to re-imagine the relational space that is embedded in Talanoa; Conn et al., (2021) exploration of food systems and entrepreneurship in Fiji through Talanoa; Vaka et al. (2016) who used the Talanoa to explore mental health in Tongan communities; and the use of Talanoa to explore sexual health and family planning for iTaukei Fijian (Indigenous Fijian) communities (Cammock et al., 2023). Talanoa provides an avenue whereby researchers and participants are able to establish rapport with each other; gain an understanding of the environment each exists in and allow for a discussion that is authentic.

It is important to clarify the distinction between 'methodology' and 'method,' as this has been widely debated (Tunufa'i, 2016; Kovach, 2010). In this paper, *methodology* refers to the overarching framework informed by ontological and epistemological foundations, while *methods* are the specific tools or processes employed within these frameworks. Among Pacific academics, there is disagreement as to whether Talanoa is a method, a methodology, or both (Tunufa'i, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006; McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Fa'avae, Jones, & Manu'atu, 2016). Initially proposed as a Tongan methodology, Talanoa is now widely claimed as a Pacific methodology, though some argue that this Pan-Pacific approach risks being colonising in itself (Tunufa'i, 2016).

The concept of Talanoa is rooted primarily in Tongan, Fijian, Tokelauan, and Samoan traditions, which may make its generic application across all Pacific contexts problematic (Tunufa'i, 2016). Despite this, Talanoa has been utilized across other Pacific contexts—

particularly as a method under the Tivaevae methodology (Te Ava & Page, 2020) and as a complementary methodology to the Tivaevae methodology (Houghton, 2023). While recognising the diversity within Pacific communities, it is important to emphasise that Pacific nations do not constitute a homogenous group (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001); their ways of knowing and being are grounded in unique epistemologies (Vaioleti, 2006). Though, the concept of a shared Pacific identity, referred to as 'Nesian', does highlight the cultural genealogical, and relational ties between Pacific communities, even in diaspora settings (McGavin, 2014).

Nonetheless, the Talanoa Research Methodology (TRM) remains one of the pioneering frameworks from which other Pacific methodologies have drawn inspiration (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017). The TRM offers theoretical structures that seek to harness the values, behaviours, and understandings intrinsic to the Pacific region (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017). For example, Talanoa's emphasis on relational dialogue parallels the Kaupapa Māori principle of kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face interaction), illustrating the shared commitment to reciprocity and respect in community engagement. Both approaches prioritise building trust and fostering relationships that honour the mana (dignity and authority) of participants, ensuring that research processes are both culturally safe and empowering. This alignment highlights how these methodologies can be woven together to create a comprehensive and inclusive research framework.

Synergies and Expansion

Pacific research methodologies reflect the diversity of the region, with approaches rooted in Polynesian, Melanesian, and Micronesian traditions. While this paper centres on Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa, it also draws inspiration from frameworks like the *Vanua* in Melanesia, which emphasises interconnectedness between people, land, and spirituality (Nabobo-Baba, 2008), and *Kanne Lobal* in Micronesia, which utilises oral traditions to foster communal knowledge (Jim et al., 2021). These approaches highlight the shared principles of relationality and holistic well-being across the Pacific, reinforcing the potential for combining Indigenous methodologies into a cohesive paradigm.

Although the previous sections have presented the two methodologies — Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa —separately, it is evident that there are parallels between the two. In this section we highlight the use of critical theory, Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research practices, and draw on four key values that we see as the starting point for weaving these approaches: reciprocity, holism, collectivism, and respect.

Critical theory

It has been argued that the persistence of inequities within the sciences is partially due to Eurocentric ontological and epistemological perspectives (Kayumova & Storm, 2023). Critical theory is the viewpoint that the social world is characterised by the conflict that has resulted between the powerful and powerless (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001). Critical theory assumes a process that critiques and deconstructs the hegemonic powers that marginalise the knowledge constructs of Indigenous peoples (Eketone, 2008; Smith, 1999). Key components of Critical Theory include power analysis, empowerment, resistance, and emancipation (Eketone, 2008). In Smith's (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies* opening words, 'research' is described as one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary (p. 1). Vaioleti (2006) further highlights the dynamics of research as being historically driven by hypotheses and often by an institution's approved questionnaires that do not require a personal relationship between researcher and participant (p. 22). Indigenous peoples have been historically studied objectively, like specimens or 'things' giving little context that is appropriate from an Indigenous worldview (Smith, 2012, p. 59). Consequently, research is described by Indigenous scholars as historically being stolen from Indigenous peoples, only to benefit those who have stolen the knowledge (Smith, 2012 p. 58). Unfortunately, the argument between objectivity and subjectivity is blurred given the injustices, dehumanising, and devastating impacts on Indigenous peoples in the name of research. Based on the experiences of Indigenous peoples, we argue that truly apolitical and objective research may be unattainable. Research that claims neutrality can often carry the legacy of imperialism, thus, reinforcing the research motivations of Māori, Pacific Peoples, and their allies in Aotearoa today.

Many Māori and Pacific whānau in Aotearoa have been negatively impacted by contextual factors such as colonisation, discrimination, racism, and poverty which have led to intergenerational inequities and disadvantage that is evident in public health statistics. Historically, Indigenous peoples have been assumed by settler governments to take on the skilled and unskilled labour for the benefit of the settler economy (Henare, 1995). In Aotearoa, this was the case not only for its Indigenous peoples (Māori), but also for Pacific Peoples who were originally enticed to migrate to New Zealand by the New Zealand government to drive the required labour for the country's rapid industrial growth following World War II (Wright & Hornblow, 2008). Later, a stagnant New Zealand economy meant significant job losses and state-supported policies put in place that saw the unjust removal of Pacific Peoples from their homes, families, and communities in Aotearoa. State-supported racism towards Pacific Peoples saw Pacific communities falsely perceived as overstayers who took jobs away from 'New Zealanders' (Krishnan et al., 1994), despite the majority of overstayers being from Europe and North America

(New Zealand History, n.d.). This resulted in the Dawn Raids of the 1970s, where immigration officials and police targeted Pacific families, conducting aggressive early-morning raids on their homes, workplaces, social meeting places, often using intimidation and racial profiling for deportation. The devastating consequences of the dawn raids for Pacific Peoples has only recently received an apology from the Crown in 2021.

Critical theory provides a framework through which Māori and Pacific research can assert resistance, challenge dominant narratives, and strengthen the development and advancement of Māori and Pacific communities on their own terms. The intention is to move forward strategically and proceed purposively – not merely to survive colonial legacies, but to thrive and shape futures defined by prosperity, self-determination, and Indigenous excellence. There is more to the agenda than our history under colonialism and our desires to restore self-determination. Indigenous peoples possess an epistemological tradition, that frames the way that we see the world, the way that we organise ourselves in it, the questions we ask and the solutions we seek (Smith, 2012, p. 10). To this, one may also lean into native theory, defined as “the right of Indigenous people to make sense of their time and place of this world” (Russell, 2000, p. 10). Native Theory refers to theoretical frameworks developed from Indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems, and lived experience. Although the intention of Native theory is apparent, it also suggests that Indigenous knowledge stands on its own without justificatory reference to the West (Eketone, 2008; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017). The underpinnings of critical theory and native theory are present in both Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa research paradigms. Further, these approaches echo broader transitions that call for the decolonisation of Eurocentrism research methodologies and bringing Indigenous knowledge systems to the fore (Enari & Matapo, 2021; Cammock et al., 2021a; Henry & Pene, 2001; Smith, 2012). We argue that further synergies and expansion of such a methodological framework (encompassing both Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa) provide culturally appropriate research practices and protocols that give voice to the very communities we hope to serve within the public health landscape of Aotearoa.

While critical theory provides valuable tools for analysing power and resistance, it is one of many approaches that can complement Indigenous epistemologies. Māori and Pacific philosophies offer their own frameworks for understanding and addressing systemic inequities.

CASE STUDY: FOOD HAVENS RESEARCH PROJECT

To illustrate the practical application of the Moana Māori methodological framework, we present two case studies. These highlight the value of combining Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa in fostering community-driven research and addressing health inequities.

This paper has emerged from two research projects within the public health domain that have been centred on Māori and Pacific Peoples' perspectives of the food environment, food system, and the influence on whānau kai (food) intake in an effort to combat the non-communicable diseases that plague our communities in Aotearoa. A synopsis of these projects is presented below:

Table 3. Case Studies of Food Havens Research

Case 1: Food Havens, a PhD study (data collection 2019-2023)	
Aim	Explore the role of social enterprise and the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau
Research Question	What is the role of social enterprise and the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau?
Research Design	Kaupapa Māori & Talanoa Methodological Framework Talanoa/Wānanga, In-depth interviews, Visual methods
Analysis	Thematic Analysis
Sample	47 Participants of Māori and/or Pacific descent 36 End-users of social enterprises that seek to improve the food environment 11 Entrepreneurs and leaders of social enterprises relating to improving eating behaviours and options for Māori and Pacific whānau

Case 2: The Food Havens Project (Data adapted from unpublished research by Tonumaipe'a, Cammock, & Conn, 2024)	
Aim	Creating space for community led food havens development
Research Question	What are the community aspirations for creating healthy food environments and how have or can these be realised?
Research Design	Participatory Action Research underpinned by Kaupapa Māori principles and Pacific practices (as set out under the Talanoa methodology) Talanoa/Wānanga, In-depth interviews, Visual methods

Analysis	Collaborative Thematic Analysis
Sample	37 Māori and/or Pacific Peoples, 3 iterative talanoa/wānanga with each Family members (including children aged above 5 years of age) End-users of social enterprises that seek to improve diet.

The findings of these works are beyond the scope of this paper, however, both cases provide valuable insight in terms of methodological contribution to research by, for, and with Māori and Pacific Peoples. Key features of the research processes include dialogue with participants in the research that were not confined to the beginning and end of the commissioned research and have evolved into a reciprocal relationship between the researchers and the participant community. For example, as a result of the Food Haven's project, a Facebook page named 'Whānau Food Havens' was created by participants, and researchers stay connected to a growing community. This work was also centred on a strengths-based approach. The goal is to effectively engage with the community through positive engagement rather than imposing solutions defined by others (Marsters-Awatere & Nikora, 2017). This echoes previous Indigenous works that argue that processes in the research journey should be of upmost importance as opposed to being driven solely by outcomes (Marsters-Awatere & Nikora, 2017). Doing so would ensure that the voices of participants are not excluded based on parameters that tend to be set from outcomes focused research.

An important learning that came from these projects, was that wānanga/talanoa does not always take place the way it is originally planned, and that researchers should be able to adapt, and accommodate for participants. Often the complexity of life is reduced or overlooked (Marsters-Awatere & Nikora, 2017). This was the case for a wānanga that was to be carried out at a local marae for the PhD study. Originally, a planned in-depth interview was to be carried out with the hēmana (chairperson) of the marae to discuss the food sovereignty programmes that were carried out for the local community. This one-to-one in-depth interview quickly turned into a wānanga with 20 individuals, and an impromptu gathering of kai to manaaki the researcher. A planned 1-hour interview turned into a 4-hour wānanga, and time for whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships). Having been accustomed to these practices within whānau, church and marae settings, the researcher was prepared with extra koha on-hand, enough for over 20 individuals including those who took part in the wānanga, and those who were in the kitchen serving kai (food) and cleaning.

Indigenous knowledge transfer and sharing occurs through various forms, many of which extend ensure knowledge is passed down through generations, communities, and across different spaces. Some forms of knowledge transfer and sharing include: karakia, prayer, and incantation (Mead, 2003); oral traditions including genealogy, storytelling, and waiata or song (Marsden, 2003; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014); traditional healing practices (Wendt, 1999); games and activities (Smith, 2012); visual arts including carving and weaving (Mead, 2003). The researcher adopted visual methods that helped to engage a larger group in discussion, particularly aligning with multi-dimensional ways of sharing knowledge within Indigenous settings. The researcher also joined those in the kitchen to help with clean up at the close of the wānanga. While seemingly a small gesture, these practices are crucial in respecting the mana of the participants and honouring the manaakitanga that was so generously afforded by the participant community. Similar experiences occurred within the Food Havens Project, where a talanoa was to take place with a set number of participants, and often would equate to more, or less participants. Rather than keeping the community to a confined timeframe, space must be given so that mana can stay intact and be enhanced by shared learning between participants and researchers.

The inclusion of Tamariki (children/youth – translate for international journal audience) in the Food Havens Project (case 2), was also key in cultivating critical discussions that allowed for deeper insights for whānau. For example, through visual methods, it was found that a child and teenager favoured the home cooked meal that was occurring once a week compared to several nights of takeaway. This discussion came as a surprise to adult whānau members in the room, and plans were made collectively to improve the number of home cooked meals as driven by the younger voices in the whānau grouping. Family dynamics within Māori and Pacific spaces come in different variations, however, the research methods adopted which included visual methods helped navigate some of these dynamics.

The concept of vā, as explored by Suaalii (2017), highlights the importance of a relational spaces in Pacific research. In a talanoa with a Pacific family, we noticed that children and young people (up to the age of 21) were less engaged in discussion. Visual methods helped to amplify their voices, and in one talanoa, the researcher decided to split the parents and grandparents from the young people. When these groups were divided, the young people spoke freely, and the room was filled with laughter. They then presented key discussion points to their older family members. This dynamic reflects the importance of vā in creating safe spaces that honour relationality and intergenerational knowledge exchange. It also highlights that vā is not static but alive, requiring researchers to be

agile and discerning in maintaining and nurturing these relational spaces. Both Talanoa and Kaupapa Māori approaches emphasise such relational spaces, where participants feel valued and respected, fostering authentic dialogue across generations. Successfully navigating the flow of a talanoa or wānanga requires researchers to understand cultural practices and family dynamics while ensuring that all members are respected.

MOANA MĀORI METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi
With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive – Whakataukī (Māori Proverb)

The aforementioned whakataukī embodies the notion that while working in isolation might result in survival, working together can allow our peoples to move beyond survival and into prosperity. Rather than a seamless amalgamation, this framework acknowledges the productive tensions and similarities between Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa. These approaches, while distinct, are united by shared principles such as reciprocity, respect, and collectivism, offering complementary pathways to decolonise and democratise research. This paper proposes a Moana Māori Methodological framework that allows the combining of Māori and Pacific research practices to encapsulate a research approach that is for, by, and with, tangata whenua (Indigenous peoples) of Aotearoa, and tangata Moana (the people of our seas). If we take a glance at the seminal works of both Smith (2012) on Kaupapa Māori, and Vaioleti (2006) on Talanoa, we can draw direct comparisons and similarities in research practices and approaches that guide each methodological approach respectively (see Table 4).

Table 4. Kaupapa Māori Practices and Pacific Research Protocols (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2022)

Kaupapa Māori Practices (Smith, 2012, p. 124)	**Pacific Research Protocols (in the Tongan language) (Vaioleti 2006, p. 29-31)**
Aroha ki te tangata (show respect for participants)	Faka'apa'apa (respectful, humble, considerate)

Kanohi kitea (be the seen face, present yourself to participants, face-to-face)	Anga Lelei (tolerant, generous, kind, helpful, calm, dignified)
Titiro, whakarongo…korero (look, listen…speak with care)	Mateuteu (well prepared, hardworking, culturally versed, professional, responsive)
Manāki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)	Poto He Anga (knowing what to do and doing it well, cultured)
Kia tupato (be cautious)	‘Ofa Fe’unga (showing appropriate compassion empathy, aroha, love for the context)
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)	
Kia mahaki (do not flaunt your knowledge)	

**In the Māori and Tongan language respectively*

Further, both Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa research invoke voice-based methods and forefront collaboration and the sharing of power between all who are involved in the research, no matter their role.

The idea of combining Indigenous research paradigms is not without precedent. For instance, Mila-Schaaf (2006) and Mila-Schaaf & Hudson (2009) explore *Va-centred approaches*, emphasising relational spaces that bridge Māori and Pacific epistemologies. Similarly, Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014) discuss how Pacific research tools like *Fa’afaletui* foster collective dialogue while respecting cultural distinctiveness. These works provide valuable precedents for understanding how methodologies like Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa can intersect through shared principles, such as relationality, reciprocity, and respect. As Sanga (2004) highlights, making philosophical sense of Pacific research involves grounding methodologies in Indigenous values such as community, spirituality, and interconnectedness. These principles are integral to Moana Māori framework, which seeks to bring together Māori and Pacific research paradigms.

While Indigenous methodologies can integrate Western research approaches (Smith, 2012; Kaomea, 2016; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014), we argue that for Māori and Pacific research conducted by, for, and with Māori and Pacific Peoples, the combination of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa research paradigms offers an inherently robust ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological foundation within Aotearoa's public health agenda. Pacific PeoplesWe also caution that in no way is this convergence an avenue to generalise the Māori and Pacific community as one ethnic group as has been done in Australia (see Abkar et al., 2022), nor should findings and results be reported this way. We acknowledge that there has been some level of generalisation and grouping in reporting health statistics on our Māori population which consists of a diverse range of iwi, hapu, and whānau groups as well as Pacific Peoples that are made up of different Pacific Islands nations and villages within these nations. Rather, at the ontological, epistemological, and methodological level, a coming together of two decolonising methodologies both fit for their respective ethnic groups should respond to the changing demographic environment and increasing number of Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa.

Reciprocity

When carrying out research with Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa, there is a duty of care between the researcher and advisory groups, participants, partners, and stakeholders of the research. Too often have Māori and Pacific Peoples contributed to research only for knowledge and outcomes to benefit the researcher disproportionately to the participant community (Smith, 2012). Utu is an important value for Māori, and although it can be associated with revenge or retaliation, in essence, it is concerned with the maintenance of balance and harmony in relationships (Moorfield, 2011, p. 233). Firth described utu as 'equivalence' (Firth, 1959, p. 262). For Māori, utu, when practiced correctly, can balance, and bring harmony that strengthens and cultivates relationships based on honour and reciprocity. Similar principles and values can be found across the Pacific, particularly from our Indigenous peoples of Moana-nui-a-kiwa whose lands and genealogies have been grouped under the colonial term 'Polynesia', though we recognise the distinct identities, languages, and histories beyond imposed categorisations. Namely, the Pacific concept of Vā (also known as va, va'a, and vaha), the relational space between people, land, and environment (Ioane, 2017); and can either be harmonious or disharmonious (Kalavite, 2019). The core values of keeping good vā or maintaining vā as described by Kalavite (2019) must be centred on cooperation, consensus, maintenance, mutual respect, mutual trust, responsibility, commitment, and mutual care.

In practice, reciprocity might be the consideration of appropriate koha to ensure participants leave a project feeling valued, and with their mana upheld. Reciprocity may also be extended to participants through ongoing relationships beyond the research project, or a data collection approach that is responsive and flexible to accommodate the needs of participants. For example, this may be done by ensuring participants can opt for one-on-one discussion if they feel uncomfortable or unable to attend a group wānanga or talanoa. Instead of 'fitting participants in' to the schedule of researchers and their projects, the participant needs should be thoughtfully considered. To this, we add, that participants and their contribution to a study should be treated as taonga (treasure) and should be treated throughout the research processes as tapu (sacred).

Holism & Collectivism

While Western notions of holism trace back to the philosophical teachings of ancient Greece, the concept has long been embedded in Māori and Pacific ontologies. For instance, whakapapa (genealogy) and vā (relational space) reflect deeply holistic philosophies that emphasise interconnectedness across spiritual, social, and ecological domains (Spiller et al., 2015; Wendt, 1999; Ioane, 2017). These Indigenous perspectives highlight the relational nature of existence, where well-being is seen as inseparable from community, environment, and spirituality. The concept of holism is also evident in philosophical teachings from 380 BC, when Plato, a Greek philosopher, wrote, 'the part can never be well unless the whole is well' (as cited in Michaelson et al., 2018). The pioneering anthropologist Professor Hūfanga Māhina described tā (time) and vā (space) as culturally ordered, historically altered in plural, cultural, collectivist, holistic, and circular modes, in stark contrast to the West which tend to associate time and space with singular, individualistic, atomistic, and linear ways (Māhina, 2010, p. 170). This contrast emphasises the differences between Indigenous and Western worldviews, with the former viewing time and space as interconnected, fluid, and cyclical, while the latter tends to frame them as separate and linear. In this sense, tangata Moana are thought to move forward into the past, and backward into the future, both taking place in the present, where the past and future are constantly mediated in the evolving and transforming present (Māhina, 2010).

Adjacent to holism, is the systems thinking approach, defined as "an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organised in a way that achieves something" (p. 11). Indigenous knowledge is often referred to as holistic in nature (Cammock & Andrews, 2023; Smith, 2012). That is, for Indigenous peoples, holism would entail a cumulative body of knowledge, practices, and beliefs, that have evolved via adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission (Berkes & Berkes, 2009).

Systems thinking of Indigenous peoples has been described as a complementary knowledge bases within public health research in Aotearoa (McKelvie-Sebileau et al., 2022). Instead of viewing problems and solutions in isolation, systems thinking considers the entire system to understand complex relationships and dynamics.

A look at the 'centrality of whakapapa and whanaungatanga' might aid in describing the Māori experience of holism (Tonumaipe'a, 2018). The notion that whakapapa (kinship ties) underpins the whole social system for Māori, and that whanaungatanga is the belonging element to these connections, brings together the ecological nature of the Māori world. Through whakapapa and whanaungatanga, one can make deep connections based on their relation to sacred mountains, oceans, rivers, ancestral homes, waka and family (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 73). Similar beliefs are held across the Pacific Islands, that connect humans to land or environment, and spirit with the origin of these genealogical links being to God (Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldergrave, 1997; Pulotu-Endemann et al., 2007, p. 50). The interconnectedness between man and all things earthly and spiritual is centred on a reciprocal relationship with creation (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 74). Thus, humans are part of the natural world and become guardians and protectors of the environment. Spirituality is a natural part of Māori and Pacific ontology and epistemology. Although the environment has been eroded due to globalisation, Indigenous principles of custodianship are now being reclaimed, revalued, and revived in efforts to attain sustainability and self-determination. Systems and holistic approaches to research in public health are said to be consistent with both Kaupapa Māori and Pacific philosophies (McKelvie-Sebileau et al., 2022; Kokaua et al., 2020). With this, outcomes of health can be realised at multiple levels according to Māori and Pacific measures of wellness (Kokaua et al., 2020).

The theoretical underpinnings of holism from Māori and Pacific perspectives are also closely connected to notions of collectivism in health. That is, public health is the responsibility of all involved and should consider both communal relationships and individual relationships and rights (Kokaua et al., 2020). Māori and Pacific researchers have a duty and obligation to their communities, and the sacredness of that relationship must be protected, and fostered even beyond the parameters of a research project. In practice, this means wānanga/talanoa or discussions can take place informally or formally prior to and after the commencement and completion of a research project. Violating the sacredness of this duty and obligation to community, can have harmful implications for the participant community. Further, working in isolation can have limited gain, thus, efforts should be made particularly concerning Māori and Pacific health to build a stronger collective whole (Tiatia-Seath et al., 2021).

Respect

While respect is a seemingly baseline value for many, Indigenous experiences of research would suggest that respect has been missing in research practice when it comes to the concerns of Māori and Pacific Peoples. Take the controversial work of Mead titled 'Coming of Age in Samoa' (Mead, 1971). Although as a result of the book, Mead became known as a worldclass pioneering researcher and anthropologist, there remains a grievous disconnect in praise from the Samoan community who have been critical of the lack of cultural responsiveness, reliability, and validity (Taleni, 2017; Naepi, 2015). Repercussions of Mead's work can be seen in the misrepresentation of the lived experience of Samoan women, and resultant stereotyping of gender roles in the community (Naepi, 2015). This illustrates research that has a disconnect between those who own the resultant knowledge and those who live within the participant communities. Further, if research is carried out in ways that are culturally irresponsive, the results can be deemed culturally inferior, particularly by the participant community. Ways in which respect of our Māori and Pacific communities have been violated are evident when research fails to capture the context of local communities, benefit only an agenda that is external to the participant community, and failing to meet obligations made to the participant community (Naepi, 2015). Respect in this case, underscores the significance of relationships and humanity for Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012). This relationality can only ensure balance and harmony if respect is upheld (p. 125). Respect can present itself in several ways including: understanding the 'right' way to do things given the cultural context; allowing for appropriate time commitment in relationship building; having formal and informal meetings over food; or participation in cultural activities unrelated to the research agenda. Non-Indigenous researchers must recognise that Indigenous knowledge does not always mesh with Western concepts of reality as something observable and measurable (Kennedy et al., 2015).

The true value of research for Māori and Pacific Peoples will include some contemplation of spirituality that may stem from traditional knowledge, and ultimately holds the level of respect practiced by researchers to account (p. 153). In this sense, the code of conduct for ensuring respect among Māori and Pacific communities will depend on one's spirituality and what is deemed 'correct' or 'right'. For Māori and Pacific Peoples, that also means that our work includes our knowing that many generations have come before us and guide us, ensuring that this journey we take should never be alone (p. 158). The principle of respect should be the basis of all encounters in research endeavours, even those encounters that occur prior to or post project. Thus, all stakeholders in the research journey whether it be the participant community, Indigenous led advisory groups, or

partners, should move forward in a safe space enabling people to speak freely, with their contributions valued and acknowledged. One key feature of respect in Māori and Pacific research is that the retelling of stories from various participant groupings should move with integrity or truth and should be protected and upheld through different stages of the research whether it be through relationship building, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination (Kennedy et al., 2015, p. 158).

CONCLUSION

The complex and inter-ethnic nature and culture of Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa reflect the way that Indigenous communities are increasingly mobilised, urbanised, and calls for an Indigenous research approach that reflect these contemporary changes. Rather than battling Western research paradigms and agendas through small scale studies with separate populations/community groups, a combined Moana Māori methodological paradigm would enable researchers to work alongside multiple communities therefore giving room for more voices to effect change. As a result, this could provide potentially more effective decolonising of the public health research agenda. This paper illustrates the parallel journey Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa have taken to realise Indigenous aspirations in knowledge creation, preservation, and evolution. This process of sense-making and resultant methodologies within Indigenous spaces does not come without its challenges and tensions. However, this paper proposes a way forward while still honouring the valuable contributions that have been made before, and will continue to be made by, for, and with Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualisation of the study: D.T., R.C., C.C., E.H. Methodology: D.T., C.C., R.C. Formal analysis D.T., C.C., R.C., E.H. Supervision: C.C., R.C., G.J., T.M-H., E.H. Writing, review, and editing: all authors.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical approval of the case studies presented was obtained from the Auckland University of Ethics Committee (AUTEC) reference numbers 22/291 and 22/95.

CHAPTER 7 FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

The increasing prevalence of diet-related health issues among Indigenous communities emphasises the need for culturally resonant, community-driven solutions. This study explores critical issues within the health disparities experience by Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), particularly concerning diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and obesity. Recognising the conventional public health approaches, this research investigates the potential of social enterprises as catalysts for creating healthy food environments that align with Indigenous values and community-driven goals. Despite the efforts of various health initiatives, significant gaps remain in understanding how social enterprise can effectively promote, create, support, and sustain healthy food environments within our Māori and Pacific communities. This chapter addresses the role of social enterprise and the social impact of the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whanau in Tāmaki Makaurau.

In response to the study's research questions, this section serves to:

1. Provide an analysis of how social enterprises define and implement initiatives that create healthy food environments to reflect Māori and Pacific cultural values as they relate to healthy food environments.
2. Explore the perceived social impact of these initiatives on food sovereignty and health outcomes among Māori and Pacific communities.
3. Identify the challenges and facilitators that social enterprises encounter in promoting and sustaining culturally appropriate food systems.

By focusing on these objectives, the study expanded our understanding of how social enterprises can contribute to improved health outcomes and sustainable food practices that support Māori and Pacific community well-being. The findings offer practical insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to develop, support, and sustain culturally grounded, community-driven approaches to public health in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter presents an in-depth exploration of the social and environmental influences of food accessibility, dietary practices, and the broader food systems influencing Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). It captures the lived experiences and perceptions of participants, highlighting the intersection between cultural, social, and economic factors that shape food choices. Through thematic analysis, this study reveals how community members navigate complex food environments often dominated and outnumbered by fast food outlets, limited access to affordable health options, and economic constraints.

Each theme in this chapter reflects a distinct but interconnected aspect of the food environments, illustrating both challenges and adaptive responses within these communities. Participants' reflections on fast food prevalence, family dynamics, economic hardships, and emotional connections to food emphasise the multi-layered nature of food-related decisions. At the same time, the chapter unravels a resilience rooted in culturally significant practices, including urban home gardening, community engagement, and the innovative use of digital resources to promote healthy eating. Importantly, participants highlight the role of social enterprises, marae, churches, and schools as influential spaces for fostering healthier dietary choices, cultural identity, and community support, positioning these institutions as integral to achieving food sovereignty and well-being.

This chapter contextualises these findings within the broader social and structural realities faced by Māori and Pacific communities, offering insights into the ways food environments can be reshaped to support the long-term health equity and sustainable practices. They illustrate the pivotal role of this sample of social enterprises. This role is examined in-depth in the attached manuscript, *Upstream healthcare through social enterprise: fostering healthy food environments by, for, and with Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand.* The findings clearly articulate the role that social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship can play in mitigating food insecurity and promoting health equity. By aligning their missions with cultural and economic realities of our Māori and Pacific communities, social enterprises create a pathway toward achieving food sovereignty, community empowerment, and healthy dietary practices.

Each theme in this chapter reveals an aspect of the food environment that impacts Māori and Pacific whānau, their health and well-being, emphasising the role of local institutions like marae, churches, and schools. Together, these findings provide a foundation for understanding how Indigenous-led social enterprises, entrepreneurship, and community organisations can drive upstream healthcare by addressing the structural barriers to nutritious, culturally relevant food access.

7.2 Prelude to Manuscript Three

The intersection of social enterprise and public health has emerged as a promising avenue for addressing complex food-related challenges within Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. This chapter is structured into two parts: the first presents the findings from a manuscript that explores the systemic role of social enterprises in fostering healthier food environments, promoting cultural integrity, and addressing health inequities. The second part delves into the perspectives and experiences of end users, highlighting how these enterprises influence daily lives, dietary practices, and community well-being. Together, these sections provide a comprehensive view of how social enterprises operate at both systemic and individual levels, addressing the root causes of food insecurity and health disparities while honouring Indigenous values and aspirations.

Drawing from in-depth interviews, wānanga, and talanoa discussions with social entrepreneurs and community members, this study provides unique, culturally grounded perspectives on how Indigenous entrepreneurship can address systemic health inequities. Social enterprises in Māori and Pacific communities do more than provide access to nutritious food – they are spaces of empowerment, cultural preservation, and community resilience. Through promoting place-based food systems, embedding Indigenous knowledge into food production, and fostering community engagement, social enterprises offer a pathway to addressing food insecurity and promoting healthier dietary behaviours.

The following manuscript presents the findings of wānanga and Talanoa discussion with participants, exploring the perceived impact of social enterprises on food environments, with an emphasis on cultural practices, food sovereignty, and health equity. By adopting Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, the study ensures that Māori and Pacific voices are at the fore, providing insights into the ways in which social enterprises have contributed to health outcomes. This paper contributes to broader discussions on the role of social enterprises in promoting upstream healthcare, addressing the root causes of health disparities, and creating sustainable, healthy food environments that align with Indigenous values and aspirations.

7.3 Manuscript Three [Submitted to Social Enterprise journal, October 2024]

Upstream healthcare through social enterprise: fostering healthy food environments for, by, and with Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand

Daysha Tonumaipe'a

Abstract

Purpose—This study explores how social enterprises create healthy food environments and address food-related challenges in Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. It seeks to understand the role of social enterprises in promoting food sovereignty and healthy dietary behaviours within these communities.

Design/methodology/approach - The research is qualitative and was deeply rooted in Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, wānanga, and talanoa discussions (likened to focus groups), with 47 participants, including social entrepreneurs and community members. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes related to the perceived impact of social enterprise on food environments.

Findings – Findings highlight the importance of place-based food systems, the role of cultural practices in food decision-making, and the potential of social enterprises to foster community engagement within underserved populations. By promoting Indigenous knowledge and food sovereignty, social enterprises play a pivotal role in addressing health inequities.

Originality/value - This research is original in its use of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies to explore the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments for, by, and with Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides valuable insights into how Indigenous entrepreneurship and culturally grounded approaches can address food insecurity and promote food sovereignty. The study offers a strengths-based perspective on food systems, emphasising community empowerment, cultural relevance, and long-term sustainability. This work contributes to broader discussions on health equity and the potential of social enterprises to drive social change.

Paper type Research Article

Introduction

Social enterprises address complex societal challenges, particularly in creating sustainable and healthy food environments. These organisations use business models

that balance social change and economic gain, making them effective at tackling issues like food insecurity and health inequities. By aligning their objectives with the needs of vulnerable communities, social enterprises improve access to nutritious, sustainable food options (Bublitz *et al*., 2019).

As food systems face environmental degradation and inequitable access, social enterprises offer solutions balancing economic and sustainability with social responsibility (Johnston *et al.,* 2014). In the food sector, social enterprises innovate by improving access to healthy food for underserved communities, offering solutions that balance economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Johnston *et al.*, 2014). This intersectional approach positions them as critical actors in transforming local food systems.

One of the primary contributions of social enterprises in this domain is their ability to address the structural barriers to accessing healthy food. By aligning their business models with the needs of vulnerable populations, these organisations work to create food environments that support healthy dietary behaviours. They often engage in initiatives to improve food security, promote sustainable agriculture, and foster community engagement in food production and distribution. The focus on empowering communities through food-related initiatives also highlights the potential of social enterprises to drive behavioural change, encouraging individuals to make more informed, sustainable food choices (Bublitz *et al*., 2019).

Collaboration has been identified as a key mechanism through which social enterprises amplify their impact. By forming partnerships with government, civil society, and the private sector, social enterprises can leverage additional resources and expertise, expanding their capacity to influence food systems at a broader scale (Seelos and Mair, 2005). These collaborations not only enhance the reach of social enterprises but also contribute to a more integrated and holistic approach to addressing food-related challenges.

Despite the growing recognition of their potential, defining what constitutes a social enterprise remains a complex task. Social enterprises span a broad spectrum of organisational models, ranging from for-profit entities with a strong social mission to not-for-profit organisations that engage in commercial activities to sustain their operations. The absence of a universally accepted definition complicates the measurement and evaluation of their impact and the development of legal and regulatory frameworks that support their growth (Lambooy *et al*., 2013). However, certain core characteristics—such as a clear social mission, an entrepreneurial approach, and a commitment to financial

sustainability—are commonly associated with social enterprises (Young, 2006; Mulyaningsih, 2021).

In food systems, the concept of “healthy food environments” has gained prominence as policymakers and researchers strive to address the growing disparities in food access and dietary health. A healthy food environment is defined by the availability, affordability, and cultural relevance of nutritious food options, which empower individuals to make healthier choices (Story *et al*., 2008). Social enterprises contribute to these environments by creating "food havens" that provide consistent access to affordable, high-quality, and culturally appropriate food. These havens are especially critical in low-income or underserved communities where food insecurity and unhealthy dietary behaviours are more prevalent (Tonumaipe’a *et al*., 2021).

The concept of food havens broadens the traditional understanding of healthy food environments by emphasising community-driven initiatives and creating spaces that not only improve access to healthy food but also foster social cohesion and empowerment. By actively engaging communities in developing sustainable food systems, social enterprises help create environments that support long-term health and well-being, while also addressing structural inequities in food distribution (Tonumaipe’a *et al*., 2021; Cammock *et al.*, 2021b).

This research, which employs Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies, aimed to explore how social enterprises contribute to creating healthy food environments in Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The focus is on understanding the role of social enterprises in addressing food insecurity, improving dietary behaviours, and promoting food sovereignty within these communities. By situating this research within Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies, the study aimed to provide culturally relevant and community-centred analysis of how social enterprises can foster sustainable and equitable food systems and how their end-users have experienced the perceived impact.

To explore these dynamics, this study aimed to answer the following research question:

What is the role of social enterprise and the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific families in New Zealand?

In addressing the overarching research question, the study explored social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship; service providers and clients’ perceptions of impact, and perceived impact by Māori and Pacific families.

Literature Review

Social enterprises can address challenges in healthy food environments by improving access to nutritious, sustainable food options (Bublitz et al., 2019; Merritt et al., 2024). Their role in promoting sustainable development through a balance of social and economic objectives is well documented (see Merritt et al., 2024).

By aligning their business models with social and environmental objectives, these organisations can create positive change in local food systems, enabling communities to access affordable, high-quality food. Social enterprises have been recognised for their ability to drive behavioural change and encourage more sustainable food choices. Through innovative approaches, such as educational campaigns and community engagement, social enterprises can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their food consumption and contribute to their communities' overall health and well-being.

Healthy Food Environments

The topic of healthy food environments and food havens has garnered significant attention in recent years as researchers and policymakers seek to address the growing challenges posed by unhealthy eating habits and the uneven distribution of food resources within communities (Story *et al*., 2008). This study aimed to explore current understandings of the concept of food havens and its relationship with the broader landscape of healthy food environments.

One important consideration in the discussion of healthy food environments is sustainability. Sustainable food systems are characterised by production, processing, and consumption practices that protect biodiversity, promote diverse and traditional food consumption, and ensure accessibility and availability for all (Johnston *et al*., 2014). This holistic approach to food systems is crucial for ensuring the long-term viability of healthy food environments.

A healthy food environment is characterised by the availability, accessibility, affordability, and desirability of nutritious food options that support individuals in making healthier dietary choices. These environments offer a variety of fresh, minimally processed foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, while limiting the availability of unhealthy, energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods. The structure of a food environment influences the dietary behaviours of a population, especially in low socioeconomic areas where access to nutritious food is often limited.

The concept of "food havens" expands on traditional notions of healthy food environments by emphasising the creation of spaces where individuals have consistent access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food options. The concept of

"food havens" is closely related to healthy food environments but with a specific emphasis on creating environments that serve as refuges or sanctuaries for vulnerable populations (Tonumaipe'a *et al*., 2021). Food havens are characterised by the presence of a diverse array of nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food options, often supported by community-based initiatives and partnerships. These environments not only provide access to healthy foods but also foster a sense of community, empowerment, and well-being. This redefined concept encourages a shift from merely addressing harmful food environments (such as food deserts, swamps, and mirages) to actively developing and promoting spaces that support healthy dietary choices, irrespective of socioeconomic status.

Food Systems, Food Environments, Individual Diets

There is a plethora of literature on unhealthy food environments and their metaphoric variances, such as food swamps (Rose *et al*., 2009), food deserts (Cummins and Macintyre, 2002), and food mirages (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013). A food desert refers to areas, often in low-income neighbourhoods, where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly fresh produce. Food swamps, on the other hand, describe food environments with an overabundance of unhealthy food options, like fast food and convenience stores, making it difficult for residents to make healthier choices despite food availability. Food mirages refer to areas where healthy food options exist. However, they are financially inaccessible to the local population, leading to a situation where food is technically available but out of reach due to cost.

Dominant literature on food environments continues to be tied to ideas of unhealthy food environments and understanding these for the purpose of healthy protection measures. Although the policy agenda of understanding unhealthy food environments is ongoing and necessary, the food haven was offered as a strengths-based approach to understanding healthy food environments to address inequities among low-socioeconomic and ethnic groups in Aotearoa (Tonumaipe'a *et al*., 2021). The concept of food havens as a strengths-based approach is rooted in its focus on leveraging existing community resources and empowering local populations to address food-related challenges. The food haven as a concept, was designed to build on community strengths, such as cultural knowledge, social networks, and local capacities, to create healthier and more equitable food systems.

The EAT-Lancet Commission report provides a useful reference for sustainable food systems, which encapsulates two endpoints of the food system; that is, the final consumption of food or diets and sustainable food production (Willet *et al*., 2019). The food system is encompassing of a web of systems including production, aggregation,

processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food (FOA 2018). The food environment has been identified as the interface between people's individual food acquisition and consumption and the wider food system (Turner *et al*., 2018). This means that individual diets are influenced by food environments, and food environments are influenced by the wider food system.

Short, Guthman, and Raskin (2007) argue that many initiatives seem to assume that 'if you build it, they will come', with the underlying assumption that once healthy food is available, the food problems among low-socioeconomic groups will cease to exist (p. 365). However, one of the key issues within these environments, and in health, is that engagement is especially important to effective implementation of healthy spaces (Kingi *et al*., 2017). Effective outcomes may be compromised if trust, common understandings, and agreed parameters of an initiative can be established (p. 69). Take the community garden, for example. Community gardens have been identified as a healthy eating strategy for low socio-economic populations (Gillies *et al*., 2021); however, studies have suggested that without community engagement, gardens become unsustainable despite well intentions of these initiatives (Ohmer *et al*., 2009). Jackson and Ronzi (2021) argue that interventions of this nature should be community-led and emphasise the importance of the sharing of power and decision-making of running the project with the community as key determinants of success and engagement. These healthy eating strategies and initiatives challenge bridging the gap between structural characteristics (the food environment and attaining affordability and access to healthy foods) and social characteristics (engagement within the community). Studies suggest that social enterprises and the initiatives they implement may have the ability to bridge this gap in achieving enhanced connectedness, well-being, and self-confidence (Calò *et al*., 2018).

THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Social Enterprise

Defining 'social enterprise' is complex due to the diverse models that combine social missions with economic activities. Despite the varying plethora of definitions of social enterprise, several core characteristics are commonly featured, including the social mission, entrepreneurial approach, and financial stability. At its core, social enterprises are driven by a clear social mission. This mission is central to their operations and guides decision-making, even when it may not align with maximising profits (Young, 2006). Social enterprises employ innovative, market-based solutions to address social problems. They often operate with an entrepreneurial spirit, seeking sustainable revenue streams to support their social impact goals (Mulyaningsih, 2021). While prioritising social impact, social enterprises strive for financial sustainability. This can involve

generating revenue through trading activities or securing diverse funding sources to support their operations (Bhati and Manimala, 2011).

The legal structure of a social enterprise does not necessarily dictate its social impact. Both for-profit and not-for-profit models can effectively address social issues. For-profit social enterprises operate as traditional businesses, aiming to generate profits. However, they prioritise their social mission alongside financial goals, often reinvesting profits into business or community initiatives (Young, 2006). Not-for-profit social enterprises priorities their social mission above profit generation. They may engage in income-gathering activities to support their operations, but any profits are reinvested into the organisation to further its social mission (Lambooy *et al*., 2013).

The lack of clear, universally accepted definitions of social enterprise presents challenges relating to measurement and evaluation and legal and regulatory frameworks. That is, the diversity of models makes it difficult to measure and compare the social impact of different social enterprises, and existing legal frameworks may not adequately accommodate the unique characteristics of social enterprises, ultimately hindering growth and development (Lambooy *et al*., 2013). Despite the challenges in defining social enterprise, the concept represents a growing movement of organisations seeking to create positive social change through entrepreneurial approaches. Understanding social enterprises' diverse definitions and models is crucial for fostering their growth and maximising their potential to address pressing social issues.

Kerlin (2010) argues the characteristics of social enterprise will depend on the region and the context from which it is based. Social enterprise has been described as having blurred sector boundaries that can obscure the role of social enterprise and non-profit sectors (Dees and Anderson, 2003). Social enterprise may take the form of for-profit, non-profit, or a partnership between both that make up organisations focused on the triple bottom line; that is, maximising financial, social, and environmental well-being.

Contrary to the dichotomic view of social enterprise that seeks to understand the relationship between social and commercial elements, Indigenous peoples and enterprises have long focused on many equally important elements. For Māori enterprise, principles, and cultural values innately work toward a triple bottom line (focused on people, land, and profit) in building business “underpinned by a sense of commitment to Māori community, whether it be whānau, hapū, or iwi…entrepreneurship and innovation for, with and by Māori (Henry 2007, p. 547). More recently, there has been a growing focus on quadruple bottom line to focus on social, cultural, environmental, and business goals (TPK 2022). Similar convictions have been argued

for in the Pacific Islands (Conn *et al*., 2021) in that social enterprise works to benefit the Pacific communities in which they operate in. While not exclusively focusing on Māori and Pacific social enterprises, this research focuses on social enterprises in Auckland that are committed to enhancing the well-being of Māori and Pacific Peoples. The study sought to understand the social change elements found in social enterprise and how these might work to create healthy food environments for whānau. In its widespread typology, social enterprise is the organisation, social entrepreneur is the individual, and social entrepreneurship are the actions and processes that work to enhance social wealth through entrepreneurial and innovative means.

As cited by the OECD, The European Commission has more recently defined social enterprise as being "an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit..." (OECD, 2022). According to Zhao and Mao (2021), a shift from "solving social problems through business solutions" to "solving social problems by entrepreneurial means" can take us to the core of social enterprise – social entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship perspective can aid in understanding the complexities of social enterprise and explore different types of social enterprises with the ability to distinguish organisational differences. Thus, the entrepreneurship perspective allows various forms of the social enterprise, including private enterprise, government-owned enterprise, institutions, etc. A theoretical framework definition of social enterprise is offered by Zhao and Mao (2021): "Social enterprise is an organisation that has a primary organisational objective of solving a specific social problem; identifies an opportunity of making social change rooted in the government and market failures; delivers innovative problem-solving solutions; and has practices and/or systems that protect the social goal from being jeopardized by the pursuit of the business goal" (p. 8). Theoretical underpinnings found in social and Indigenous entrepreneurship can be explored to find the mediating role of businesses for social change within the food environment that works to improve individual diets and sustainable food systems.

In transforming a native food industry, Logue *et al*. (2018) explore the role of social value in social enterprise. Social enterprise extends to other key areas such as social value chains (Logue *et al*., 2018); social entrepreneurship (Zahra et al., 2009); and Indigenous entrepreneurship (Henry, 2007; Foley, 2017; Kawharu *et al*., 2017). Social enterprise is closely connected to the entrepreneurs who run these organisations. Thus, the role of Indigenous entrepreneurship will be explored in the creation of social enterprise. Overall, Tapsell and Woods (2010) argue that "context counts". Theoretical discussions on social entrepreneurship is that the context in which entrepreneurial activity occurs is often marginalised or ignored. There is a lack of or inadequate consideration for the historical and cultural context in which it occurs (Tapsell and Woods, 2010). Tapsell and Woods

(2010) describe entrepreneurship as a vehicle for social change through innovative activities occurring within or across economic and social communities in a historical and cultural context. Given social enterprises can be conceptualised as hybrid organisations (being simultaneously for economic and non-economic gain), they often hold together by paradox (Cornforth, 2004). Consequently, governance frameworks for cooperation, mutual, and social enterprises are underdeveloped and lacking in contextual reference. For this purpose, research on social enterprise should account for contextual factors. Adequate focus on context may bring to light definitions and understandings of social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship as understood by the Māori and Pacific community in this study.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is widely recognised as the process of identifying and exploiting opportunities, yet it lacks a universally accepted definition. Entrepreneurship involves innovation, risk-taking, and the ability to organise ventures for economic gain. The term "entrepreneur" originates from the French word *entreprendre*, meaning "to undertake," and has evolved to encompass value creation through the identification of commercial opportunities (Martin and Osberg, 2007). Key characteristics identified by scholars include innovation (Schumpeter, 1983), risk-taking (McClelland, 1967), and strategic thinking (Carland *et al*., 1984).

Social entrepreneurship expands on the traditional definition by adding a social mission to the entrepreneurial process. It focuses on addressing societal needs through innovative, market-based solutions. While the concept has grown across the private, public, and non-profit sectors, no single definition captures its diverse forms. Martin and Osberg (2007) define social entrepreneurship as the process of identifying and addressing unjust societal conditions, developing solutions that benefit marginalised communities, and creating stable ecosystems for positive social change. Social entrepreneurs prioritise social goals, often innovating in ways that align with societal improvement rather than profit maximisation (Zhao and Mao, 2021).

Indigenous entrepreneurship, an emerging field, draws on traditional knowledge, community values, and a focus on collective well-being. For Māori and other Indigenous peoples, entrepreneurship is deeply connected to self-determination and community upliftment (Henry 2007). Indigenous entrepreneurial activities have long been intertwined with trade and community engagement, predating European colonisation. These

ventures emphasise cultural sustainability, kinship ties, and the revitalisation of Indigenous traditions (Peredo *et al*., 2019).

Emancipatory entrepreneurship goes beyond traditional wealth creation, focusing on social change and human emancipation. It aims to transform marginalised communities by breaking free from societal constraints and seeking autonomy (Rindova *et al*., 2009). This concept emphasises the power of declarations and strategic arrangements to drive social change. Māori entrepreneurship shares similar values, often focused on the revitalisation of Māori culture and language as part of this broader emancipatory process (Henry, 2017).

Social Value

There have been calls to consider the health and well-being outcomes of social enterprise (Roy *et al*., 2014). The link between non-clinical spaces and the fostering of health and well-being has been explored by health geographers (Munoz *et al*., 2015). Munoz *et al*., (2015) found that social enterprise can provide 'well-being-enabling' landscapes that provide opportunities for end-users to experience spaces and places in 'healthier ways.' Social enterprise may be conceptualised as a potential public health intervention (Roy *et al*., 2014). Roy *et al*. (2014) suggest that there is a chain of causality from trading activities through to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. One perspective that may align with this Kaupapa within the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship literature can be found in social value creation (SVC). The SVC perspective focuses on the beneficiaries of social enterprises and is based on the premise that social enterprise is created to provide care to its beneficiaries (André and Pache, 2016; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2019). "Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by: adopting a mission to create and sustain social value…" (Dees 2001, p. 4). However, this becomes problematic when exploring what is meant by social value instead of market value as the underlying philosophical foundations are not often disclosed (Lautermann, 2013). Given that social entrepreneurship is presumed as a force for changing society for the better, the literature is lacking in reflecting ethical measures for evaluating whether there has been genuine change for the better and what 'better' actually means (p. 187).

Research Design

What happens when the researched become the researchers?

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012)

The research employed a community-centred approach, utilising Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies to engage with Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), New Zealand. These Indigenous research paradigms were chosen to ensure that the research was culturally safe and relevant, aligning with the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of both Māori and Pacific knowledge systems (Smith, 2012; Vaioleti, 2006; Henry and Pene, 2001). The approach fostered relationships built on mutual respect, reciprocity, and trust, emphasising wairuatanga (spirituality), whanaungatanga (kinship), and manākitanga (care and hospitality) throughout the research process (Vaioleti, 2006; Smith, 2012).

The research followed a qualitative design, combining both individual in-depth interviews and group talanoa or wānanga discussion sessions. Talanoa is a Pacific research method that emphasises open, informal or formal (depending on the setting) where participants share stories, ideas, and experiences in a relational, respectful manner. It creates a space for meaningful exchange, promoting inclusivity, trust, and cultural respect. It allows for deeper insights through personal and communal narratives (Vaioleti, 2006). Wānanga is a Māori knowledge-sharing process involving collaborative discussions to explore ideas, teaching, and learning. Rooted in traditional Māori practices, wānanga encourages sharing of collective wisdom, facilitating community-driven dialogue and decision-making. It is a holistic approach to education, integrating spiritual, cultural, and intellectual elements (Henry and Pene, 2001). This multi-method approach allowed for the collection of rich, contextual data from diverse perspectives within the communities involved. The study aimed to explore how social enterprises fostered healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau, with a focus on understanding the role of these enterprises in addressing food insecurity, improving dietary behaviours, and promoting food sovereignty (Tonumaipe'a *et al*., 2022).

The study engaged with two primary groups of participants: leaders and entrepreneurs involved in social enterprises that work to improve food environments and end-users of these enterprises who were predominantly Māori and Pacific whānau. Purposive and snowball sampling was employed to identify social enterprises actively working on creating healthy food environments. These enterprises were selected based on their focus on social impact, their commitment to improving food systems, and their engagement with Māori and Pacific communities. For the wānanga and talanoa discussion sessions, participants were recruited from the communities these social enterprises served, ensuring that a wide range of perspectives were represented. A total of 47 participants took part in this study, including 11 interviews with social entrepreneurs or leaders within food-related social enterprises, who identified as being of Māori and

Pacific descent, and 36 family members that attended wānanga and talanoa discussions. Family members were over the age of 18 years, with the oldest family members being 82 years of age. Overall, four wānanga or talanoa discussions took place.

Data collection took place over several phases, beginning with in-depth interviews with leaders and entrepreneurs from social enterprises. These semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their experiences and insights into the challenges and successes of creating healthy food environments. Open-ended questions facilitated a deep exploration of the social, cultural, and economic factors that shaped the work of these enterprises (Cammock, Conn, and Nayar, 2021a). In addition to interviews, group wānanga and talanoa sessions were held with community members who were the end-users of these food initiatives. These sessions were designed to foster open, collaborative dialogue, providing a space for participants to share their thoughts and experiences regarding food, health, and well-being (Vaioleti, 2006). Visual methods, including community mapping and photo-elicitation, were used to support discussions, particularly with younger participants and families. This approach helped to engage participants in a culturally meaningful way and allowed for the exploration of collective and intergenerational perspectives on food environments.

Using thematic analysis ensured that the voices of Māori and Pacific participants were centred in the research process (Smith, 2012). Regular discussions with participants and community advisors helped to refine the themes and validate the findings (Tonumaipe'a *et al*., 2022). The key themes that emerged from the analysis included the importance of place-based food systems, the role of whānau in food decision-making, and the challenges of sustaining social enterprises in a resource-constrained environment.

The research encountered some challenges, particularly in relation to scheduling and participant availability. Some wānanga and talanoa discussion sessions did not proceed as planned, with unexpected participant numbers and timing changes. This work adopted a flexible approach to address these challenges, adjusting session formats and timelines to accommodate participants' needs. In one instance, a planned one-on-one interview with a marae leader evolved into a larger group wānanga, which required adapting the interview approach to ensure meaningful engagement with a larger group. These adaptations were critical in maintaining the participants' mana (respect and dignity) and ensuring that the research remained responsive to the community context (Smith, 2012).

The methods employed in this research were designed to uphold the cultural values and practices of the Māori and Pacific communities involved. The combination of Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa methodologies provided a robust framework for engaging with

participants in a way that was respectful, reciprocal, and culturally appropriate (Smith, 2012; Vaioleti, 2006). The constructivist grounded theory approach allowed for a deep exploration of the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments. At the same time, the use of visual methods and group discussions ensured that all voices, including those of tamariki (children), were heard. The methods employed in this research contributed to a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of food environments in Tāmaki Makaurau. They highlighted the potential for community-led social enterprises to address food inequities for Māori and Pacific whānau.

Findings

Key themes from the experiences and perceptions shared by Māori and Pacific families related to the role of social enterprise in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau revolve around several important areas such as social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship; social impact; the role of food environments; the role of service providers; and the perceived impact on Māori and Pacific whānau.

Social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship

There are several examples of community focused entrepreneurship, where Indigenous values are at the heart of the social enterprises. This includes initiatives like food pantries, local food markets, gardening projects, and the use of Indigenous knowledge to create sustainable food sources, and the role of church in providing education on self-reliance in relation to food storage. The programs identified in this study by participants promote the idea of self-reliance, with initiatives supporting tamariki (children) and whānau (family) to be involved in entrepreneurial activities, often related to food production and sustainability. Food sovereignty in this sense is further supported by social enterprise to create healthy food spaces.

> *"When there's a kaupapa on, they're always doing the 'Mara to table'. You get to experience everything from when it's nothing to when it's on the table." – Social entrepreneur, wāhine Māori (Māori woman).*

> *It's noticed that here in south Auckland, all the very bad foods are excessive...whereas good food is high in price, so it's a lot easier for whānau to go out and buy fish and chips than something healthy. – Māmā Māori (Māori mother).*

Participants also highlighted the role of places and spaces of significant importance to families, including churches, marae, social media community groups that fostered healthy food environments. Participants highlighted how churches often act as pivotal

community hubs where congregates come together not just for worship, but for communal activities, including food sharing and education programs about healthy eating. The marae was also identified as a central meeting place for Māori communities, where traditional values and practices, including those related to food, play a crucial role in fostering community well-being and health. The more in this sense, is more than just a physical space, it is a cultural epicentre where food practices are intertwined with social and spiritual life, contributing significantly to the health and cohesion of the community. This was exemplified by the diverse range of individuals who had attended the wānanga within the marae setting, having in attendance leaders of food sovereignty initiatives, women from a refuge program, and students of a Māra kai course. These marae and faith-based settings, care crucial junctures where diverse groups within our communities come together to discuss matters of importance for the well-being of the collective.

Role of healthy food environments

When speaking on social enterprise initiatives that encouraged or provided opportunities to grow good at home, families emphasised that growing food at home was central to their approach, viewing gardening as a means to secure access to fresh, healthy foods. This perspective aligns with Māori and Pacific concepts of a deep connection between people, place, and environment, and highlights the importance in promoting well-being.

> *"Having a home garden influence or encourages you to eat health and be self-reliant." – Father, Samoan.*
>
> *"Our family has become more aware and conscious of what we eat since putting in our garden." – Mother, Māori and Cook Islands Māori.*

Older participants shared how the food environments that surrounded them during their upbringing in the Pacific Islands, had an influence on their decision to grow food here in New Zealand. Older participants also highlighted the shift in lifestyle, since moving to New Zealand from the Pacific Islands.

> *"When we were growing food in Samoa, me and my brothers had a patch of land each...we would grow our food as children. We would compete, and trade, and you could only eat from your patch of land... From a young age we were taught this..." - Grandfather, Samoan.*
>
> *"We were not big people back in the islands. We were skinny, living an active life. Working all day and working for our food in the plantation." - Grandmother, Cook Islands Māori.*

Despite the value placed on home gardening and community-based food sources, challenges such as time constraints, lack of resources, and community engagement were highlighted. This includes difficulties in maintaining gardens and the pressures of modern, fast-paced lifestyles that lead people to rely on fast food options. For

participants who were not engaged in home gardens, there were several insights on the food environments within their local urban environments.

> *"When you get that choice taken away from you because you don't have the time or the money, or it's not convenient, then you fall back into old habits. We're talking about food sovereignty, but we actually don't have that right now. – Wāhine Māori (Māori woman).*
>
> *"It's easier for families to buy fish and chips than to buy something healthy. We don't have access to the assets to provide healthy options." – Social entrepreneur, wāhine Māori (Māori woman).*

Despite the known challenges surrounding family members with limited time to prepare meals, a critical discussion did follow, when children were asked what their favourite foods were on their maps. It was discussed, that when families worked on their personal family food environments following programs delivered by social enterprise initiatives, home cooking increased, and home food growing was introduced, which was recognised as the healthier option to takeaway meals.

Service providers and clients' perceptions of impact

While free lunches were provided in primary schools, there is significant food waste due to children's preferences and lack of involvement in meal preparation. There was suggestion that children and whānau might be encouraged to get involved in food preparation that might lead to greater appreciation and engagement. Others spoke of social initiatives such as the food pantry, and highlighted some of the challenges in these initiatives, particularly in relation to engagement from the community.

> *"The pātaka kai (food pantry) is only as good as the community that contributes to it….people started putting in leftovers and BBQ plates [in the pantry], which is not helpful." – Father, Samoan.*

There is a cultural dimension to food provision, particularly in schools and churches, where large gatherings often involve unhealth foods as part of traditional feasting. Service providers and communities recognise the need for education and awareness of healthier options, but also the challenge of balancing this with cultural practices.

Participants described how social enterprises fostered social value by improving access to nutritious food, particularly for low-income Māori and Pacific communities. Initiatives such as community gardens, local food hubs, free food in schools, church funded food storage initiatives, not only provide affordable, culturally relevant food options but also empowered families to take ownership of their food choices. This sense of empowerment was seen as a critical aspect of social value creation, as it enabled whanau to make healthier decisions and fostered a sense of self-reliance. Participants also noted that

these enterprises promoted community cohesion, as they engaged with local resident to co-create solutions to food insecurity.

Social entrepreneurs spoke of the importance of building capability within our communities and walking alongside community informed solutions that worked for their needs. One participant referred to the proverb: '*teach a man how to fish'* while speaking on the role of food banks.

> *"Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a short time...teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. Food banks are unsustainable. They are necessary for immediate need, yes. But we need to provide our people with ways that keep their mana intact, and their whānau fed" – Social Entrepreneur, Māori/Cook Islands Māori, Male.*

Food banks were also described by participants, both entrepreneurs, and families, as a shameful experience, although from some participants, recognised as a necessary part of keeping the family fed. Even with that necessity, participants still described the receiving food from food banks as an experience *'we do not want...' - Woman, Māori and Cook Islands Māori.*

Perceived impact on Māori and Pacific whānau

The stories and experiences shared emphasised the health challenges faced by Māori, and Pacific communities like diabetes and heart disease. These are seen as being exacerbated by environments people live in and their limited access to healthy food options. Following the talanoa and wānanga discussion involving mapping of food environments, and a discussion of current rates of obesity and non-communicable disease among Māori and Pacific Peoples, participants shared insights on how these made them feel.

> *"It feels like they are trying to kill us…it feels like we don't have the choice to eat healthy…" - Māmā Māori (Māori mother).*

Likewise, within the talanoa discussion, participants reflected on what food meant to them, and how this has changed over the years.

> *"I wish we knew back then that food is like medicine. If you don't treat it like medicine, then you will need to take medicine, like me...and pop pop do today." – Grandmother, Samoan.*

Based on the discussions with families, healthy food seen as expensive and less accessible than fast food, which exacerbates health issues. Māori and Pacific families are aware of the importance of healthy eating, but economic constraints often push them

toward cheaper, less nutritious options. Many of the initiatives discussed aim to create long-term change by teaching younger generations about food sovereignty, entrepreneurship, and sustainable food production. However, economic pressures and lack of resources are seen as barriers to making these changes widespread.

Discussion

This study highlights the pivotal role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), New Zealand. Social enterprises in food systems not only provide access to nutritious, culturally relevant food, but also address the broader social determinants of health by embedding Indigenous values and practices into their operations. These findings underscore the transformative potential of social enterprises as critical agents of upstream healthcare.

Social Enterprises as Catalysts for Change

The findings indicate that social enterprises are instrumental in addressing food insecurity and health inequities. By aligning their business models with both social and economic objectives, these enterprises play a dual role: creating sustainable food environments while driving social change. Through innovative, community-led initiatives, social enterprises demonstrate their capacity to bridge the gap between economic sustainability and social responsibility, positioning them as essential actors in the transformation of local food systems.

The Importance of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices

Central to the success of social enterprises in this context is their alignment to Māori and Pacific values and traditional knowledge. Food-related activities, such as marae-based food initiatives and home gardening, serve as both a practical means of providing healthy food and a way to reconnect whānau with their cultural heritage. Participants emphasised the deep connection between food practices, culture, and well-being, with initiatives promoting food sovereignty fostering not just physical nourishment but also spiritual and cultural revitalisation. This emphasises and supports the importance of culturally grounded approaches in addressing food insecurity and promoting community resilience.

Food Sovereignty and Community Empowerment

A significant theme that emerged from the findings is the role of food sovereignty in empowering Māori and Pacific whānau. Social enterprises, by promoting local food production and self-reliance, enable communities to take ownership of their food systems. This empowerment is vital for long-term health outcomes, as it allows

individuals and families to reclaim control over their food environments, making healthier choices that align with their cultural values. Initiatives such as home gardening and community food programs are particularly powerful, as they foster intergenerational knowledge sharing and reinforce traditional practices that strengthen community bonds.

Challenges to Sustainability

Despite their successes, social enterprises face several challenges in maintaining long-term sustainability. Economic pressures, resource limitations, and inconsistent community engagement often hinder the ability of these enterprises to scale up their operations and maximise their impact. For many Māori and Pacific whānau, the high cost of healthy food remains a barrier, exacerbating health disparities. The reliance on social enterprises to address these structural issues highlights the need for broader systemic support. Policy and funding mechanisms must be put in place to ensure these initiatives can thrive and continue providing valuable services to underserved communities.

Collaborative Community-Led Solutions

The success of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments is closely linked to their collaboration with community institutions such as marae and churches. These spaces serve as cultural epicentres where traditional and contemporary food practices intersect. The findings suggest that these collaborations, rooted in trust and mutual respect, are critical for the sustainability of healthy food initiatives. By leveraging the strengths of these cultural hubs, social enterprises are able to extend their reach and engage communities in a meaningful way, ensuring that food-related programs resonate with the values and needs of Māori and Pacific whānau.

Upstream Healthcare Model

Social enterprises in this context can be viewed as upstream healthcare models that address the root causes of poor health outcomes in Māori and Pacific communities. By intervening at the level of food production and distribution, social enterprises create environments that support healthier dietary behaviours, which in turn reduces the prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases. This preventive approach moves beyond traditional healthcare models that focus on treating illness and instead emphasises the creation of food environments that promote long-term well-being.

Food Havens: A Strengths-Based Approach

The concept of food havens, as explored in this study, represents a shift from deficit-based models of addressing food insecurity to a strengths-based approach. By focusing on resilience, cultural knowledge, and local innovation, food havens empower

communities to take control of their food environments. Social enterprises, through their community-driven initiatives, play a critical role in the creation of these havens, providing safe, accessible spaces where whānau can access affordable, nutritious, and engage in culturally appropriate food practices. This approach fosters not only improved physical health but also strengthens social cohesion and cultural identity.

Conclusion

This research shed light on the transformative role that social enterprise plays in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific communities. By promoting culturally relevant foods and embedding Indigenous knowledge into their operations, social enterprises not only improve access to nutritious food but also empower communities to reclaim control over their food systems. Through initiatives like community gardens, marae-based and faith-based food programs, local food hubs, these enterprises support the principles of food sovereignty, encouraging Māori and Pacific whānau to take an active role in shaping their food environments.

Unlike traditional deficit-based approaches that focus solely on addressing immediate problems, the concept of food havens offers a strengths-based approach that emphasises resilience, local innovation, and long-term sustainability. Food havens provide more than just access to food – they serve as spaces where communities can connect, share knowledge, and cultivate a deeper understanding of the relationship between food, culture, and well-being. By focusing on empowering communities, these initiatives help to bridge the gap between food access and cultural identity, ensuring that food solutions are both sustainable and meaningful to those they serve.

Though, sustainability of these social enterprise-driven solutions is contingent on boarder support systems. For these initiatives to thrive and scale across Māori and Pacific communities, long-term investment in policy, funding, and community engagement is essential. Structural support will enable social enterprises to expand their reach and continue addressing the root causes of food insecurity and poor health outcomes. Social enterprises, through their alignment with Indigenous values and their focus on community empowerment, represent a critical intervention point in the battle against health inequities. Their ability to foster culturally aligned, sustainable food environments position them as vital contributor to upstream healthcare solutions. The ongoing success of these efforts will depend on the commitment of stakeholders to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to support the scaling of these community-led initiatives, ensuring that they remain resilient and impactful for future generations.

7.4 Themes

The exploration of food environments and accessibility within Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau reveals a multifaceted landscape influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors. This section outlines five core themes derived from participant talanoa/wānanga discussions, shedding light on the complex interplay of fast-food accessibility, economic constraints, cultural traditions, and institutional influences. Key challenges include the prevalence of obesogenic environments, the cost of healthier alternatives, and the emotional and psychological dimensions of food choices. However, resilience emerges through practices such as home gardening, communal support, and the leveraging of social and digital platforms for promoting healthier eating. Together, these themes highlight both the systemic barriers and the community-driven initiatives shaping food environments in these communities.

Table 15. Summary of Key Themes

Themes	Key insights
Food Environments and Accessibility	Fast-food outlets are more accessible than supermarkets. Home gardening provides a counterbalance by promoting self-sufficiency and healthier diets. Social media and food delivery apps influences both unhealthy and healthy food choices, offering potential for positive interventions.
Influence of Social and Familial Structures	Family dynamics influence dietary choices; traditional meals strengthen bonds but modern pressures lead to reliance on fast food.
Cultural significance of food	Emotional attachment to food creates barriers to healthier eating. Cultural pride in traditional foods necessitates culturally sensitive health interventions.
Economic Constraints and Time Poverty	High costs of fresh produce and limited time for meal preparation drive reliance on fast food. Strategies like food sharing and community gardens provide relief.
Institutional Influence	Schools, churches, marae, and workplaces shape food environments. Engagement with communities is essential to ensure the success of health-promoting initiatives in these spaces.

This structure provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of the findings for this section, supporting the narrative with clear categorisation of themes.

Theme 1: Food Environments and Accessibility in Māori and Pacific Communities

The findings reveal that the ease of access to fast food outlets and the cost of healthier alternatives largely shapes food environments in Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau. Participants noted the prevalence of fast-food chains like McDonalds, KFC, and food delivery services such as Uber Eats, especially in lower socio-economic areas. One participant reflected, “it’s just easier to get McDonalds on the way home after work, especially when I’m tired and don’t have time to cook.” - Māori/Cook Islands Māori Male. Another participant added, “when I’m stressed or tired, it’s just easier to grab something quick and unhealthy” (Māori/Cook Islands Māori woman). The convenience of fast food, in particular, posed barriers to adopting healthier dietary practices.

While supermarkets such as Pak n’ Save and Countdown provide access to healthier options, participants found these stores either too expensive or too far from home, making it harder to maintain a healthy diet. As one participant mentioned, “Sometimes, by the time you get to the supermarket, you’ve already spent money on petrol, and then the fruit and veg are too expensive to stock up on.” – Māori woman.

The influence of digital platforms, particularly delivery apps and social media, on food choices was also evident in the responses from participants. Participants discussed services such as food delivery apps provided easier access to fast food at the “touch of a button.”

“Sometimes, I’m too tired to even think about cooking, and it’s easy to just order Uber Eats” (Māori/Cook Islands Māori woman). The constant promotions and discounts offered by food apps further encouraged their use, making fast food more appealing than preparing home-cooked meals.

On the other hand, social media was also mentioned as a tool for promoting healthier eating. Some participants followed influencers who shared healthy recipes or tips for growing food at home. One whānau discussed creating their own social media group as a result of participating in a social enterprise initiative and continued to share tips and tricks on growing food at home for whānau. “I’ve been learning a lot from Instagram about cooking healthy on a budget. It’s been really inspiring” (Māori woman). This dual influence – both positive and negative – of digital platforms suggests that interventions could leverage these technologies to promote healthier habits, and improve access to healthy foods. Equally, this also calls for ethical considerations of social media and digital platforms that may encourage uptake of unhealthy foods and providing a healthier ‘online food environment’.

An important counterbalance to the obesogenic environments was the growing trend of home gardening. Several participants discussed how growing their own vegetables allowed them to reduce their reliance on fast food and increased their intake of fresh, healthy foods. Some participants had been growing food at home since migrating from the Pacific Islands to New Zealand. Others were introduced to food growing through their local marae, or charities (notably naming and identifying Whenua Warrior, and Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae as Food Haven's).

"We've started growing our own silver beet and kale in the backyard," shared one participant. "It's been a game-changer for our family." – Samoan Male.

These insights emphasise the dual challenges and opportunities within Māori and Pacific food environments, highlighting the need for systemic changes that address accessibility and affordability while supporting community-led initiatives.

Theme 2: Influence of Social and Familial Structures on Dietary Practices

Family dynamics and social settings played a significant role in shaping dietary choices. Many participants acknowledged that food is central to family life and celebrations. However, busy schedules and the pressures of work often led to the adoption of less healthy, convenient options. "We used to cook as a family, but now everyone is so busy, we just get takeaways. It's quicker and no one complains," one participant explained (Māori/Cook Islands Māori woman).

In contrast, others found that traditional family meals, especially those that involved home-grown produce, not only encouraged healthier eating but also strengthened family bonds. "We've started cooking more together since we began growing our own vegetables. My kids are involved, and they're learning about where food comes from. It's become a family activity," (Māori/Cook Islands woman, Talanoa/Wānanga), a participant shared following their involvement with a social enterprise that supported learning and growth of home food gardens.

For many, family structures promoted the cultural significance of food. Some expressed concern that shifting to healthier meals could impact traditional food practices, particularly at family or community gatherings. "I don't want to give up the food I grew up with. Our Pacific food is part of our identity" (Samoan male, Talanoa). This illustrates the challenge of balancing the desire for healthier diets with the need to preserve cultural heritage.

Theme 3: Cultural Significance of Food

An underexplored yet significant theme was the cultural significance of food, which frequently influenced participants' choices. Food was often described as a source of comfort during periods of stress or financial hardship. One participant reflected, “When I’m stressed or tired, it’s just easier to grab something quick and unhealthy” (Māori/Cook Islands Māori woman). This emotional attachment to fast food, in particular, posed barriers to adopting healthier dietary practices.

Simultaneously, participants expressed deep pride in their cultural food practices and traditions, which were deeply intertwined with concepts of communal exchange and reciprocity. In Māori and Pacific cultures, food is more than sustenance—it is a medium for fostering relationships, demonstrating care, service, and expressing manaakitanga (hospitality and generosity). Shared meals, food gifting, and communal feasting (e.g., hāngī or umu) are integral practices that reinforce whanaungatanga (relationships and connectedness) and cultural identity. As one participant noted, “Our food is who we are. I want to eat healthy, but I don’t want to lose that connection to my culture” (Samoan woman). These cultural dimensions of food highlight the challenges of promoting healthier eating habits without disrupting deeply rooted traditions and values.

The duality between health and tradition was also evident in institutional settings. A participant (Samoan woman), who was a primary school principal, described this tension in the context of free school lunches. She noted significant food waste due to tamariki (children) being unfamiliar with or unwilling to eat the provided healthier options. She emphasised the need to tailor these programs to align with tamariki tastes and preferences in south Auckland, while also incorporating cultural elements to foster greater acceptance.

These findings point to a critical need for culturally sensitive health interventions that acknowledge the profound cultural significance of food. Initiatives must balance promoting healthier eating habits with preserving cultural practices that strengthen social bonds and reinforce identity. Addressing this balance may require engaging community leaders, integrating traditional foods into health programs, and fostering environments where both cultural and health priorities can coexist.

Theme 4: Economic Constraints and Time Poverty

“We try to eat healthier, but sometimes it’s just not practical, especially when money is tight.” – Wāhine Māori (Māori woman).

Economic constraints emerged as one of the most significant barriers to accessing healthy foods. The cost of fresh produce was a recurring theme, with many participants expressing frustration at how much cheaper it was to buy fast food rather than to stock up on vegetables and fruits. “You can feed a family with fish and chips for way less than a week’s worth of fresh veg” (Māori woman), reflecting the economic reality many whānau face. Additionally, limited availability of time compounded the issue, as busy schedules often left participants with little time to prepare healthy meals. Several participants discussed how long working hours, combined with the demands of raising children, led them to prioritise convenience over nutrition. One participant shared, “By the time I get home from work, it’s too late to cook a proper meal. Uber Eats just feels like the only option.” – Māori woman.

The systemic undervaluing of fresh produce in food markets and the proliferation of fast-food outlets in low-income areas further perpetuate these disparities, creating an environment where unhealthy options are the easiest and most affordable choice.

Some participants found innovative ways to navigate these constraints. A few had suggested the use of meal-prep services which provided pre-portioned ingredients and recipes, making it easier to cook at home. Others turned to community gardens or collective food-sharing networks to supplement their diets. “We’ve started a little garden, and trade vegetables with my neighbours. It’s been helpful, especially when money is tight.” – Samoan male.

A particularly salient theme was the experience of food insecurity among participants. Several described having to make difficult decisions between paying bills and buying food, leading to the adoption of strategies such as skipping meals or relying heavily on food banks. “Some weeks, we just don’t have enough for groceries, and we have to make do with what we’ve got” (Māori woman). Though the experience of receiving food from food banks was gratefully received, some participants spoke of the shame they felt getting food for their whānau given from food banks.

In response to those challenges, many turned to adaptation strategies that involved communal support. Informal networks, such as bartering with neighbours for produce or participating in food-sharing groups, were critical in helping families access fresh food. “I trade my tomatoes for my neighbours eggs, and it helps us both out” (Māori woman). These strategies reflect the resilience of these communities in the face of economic hardship, but they also point to the structural issues driving food insecurity.

Theme 5: Institutional Influence: Schools, Churches, Marae, and Workplaces

Schools, churches, and workplaces play an important role in shaping food environments for Māori and Pacific families. In schools, participants had mixed feelings about the free lunch programs. While some appreciated the initiative, others noted that much of the food went to waste as a result of tamariki (children) being unfamiliar with or unwilling to eat the options provided. “My kids won’t eat lunches at that school. They end up bringing them home or just throwing them away” (Māori woman). This suggests a greater need for engagement with children in the selection and preparation of school meals to increase their acceptance. Additionally, participants noted the absence of culturally appropriate options, which further diminished the appeal of these programs and emphasised the importance of embedding cultural practices into institutional food offerings.

Churches, as central institutions in Pacific communities, were also mentioned frequently in relation to food. Traditional church gatherings often featured large, communal meals. Some participants noted efforts by their churches to encourage healthier practices, such as incorporating more fruits and vegetables into communal meals or starting gardens. “Our church has started giving out fresh vegetables after service, and it makes a big difference” (Samoan male). However, these initiatives often rely on volunteer efforts and limited funding, which restricts their scalability and sustainability. Churches were also identified as key connectors between businesses and whānau, redistributing surplus goods like bread to families in need.

Marae, as significant locations for those who attended initiatives such as Maara Kai (Food gardening) courses and women’s refuge initiatives, were central places for health, well-being, and social services. Marae also encouraged entrepreneurship by hosting market days for social enterprises that supported health and well-being. These spaces offered opportunities for whānau to access fresh produce, learn new skills, and connect with local health and social service providers. However, participants noted that the reach of these programs was sometimes limited by logistical challenges such as transportation, awareness, or eligibility requirements, which prevented broader community participation.

Workplaces too, were highlighted as influential settings. Participants working in environments that provided healthy meal options reported improved dietary habits, whereas those in specific roles, such as healthcare and labour, found it difficult to take lunch breaks, often resorting to fast food. “At work, I don’t even have time to sit down and eat properly. It’s grab-and-go all day” (Samoan woman). This suggests that workplace policies can significantly shape food choices. Employers who fail to prioritise breaks or provide access to affordable, healthy meals perpetuate a structural barrier to improving dietary health among workers.

These findings suggest that while individual and community-driven initiatives make a positive influence on food environments, structural barriers remain that must be addressed to ensure sustained improvements in food environments and health outcomes. Greater integration of culturally responsive practices, enhanced funding for community-based initiatives, and policy reforms that prioritise equitable access to nutritious food in schools, workplaces, and community settings are essential for meaningful change.

7.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter identifies five key themes related to food environments and access in Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). The first theme explores the influence of food environments on dietary practices, where fast food options are readily available and affordable compared to healthy alternatives. In the first theme, the chapter examines the dual influence of digital technologies and social media, both as enablers of fast-food consumption and as tools of promoting healthy eating and community engagement. The second theme reveals how family and social settings shape dietary habits, showing the pressures that time poverty and economic constraints place on whānau. The third theme delves into the cultural significance of food, where food serves as a symbol of reciprocity, hospitality, and service.

The fourth theme highlights economic constraints and time poverty as significant barriers, where the high cost of fresh produce and time limitations challenge participants' intentions to eat healthier. The final theme identifies institutional influences, such as schools, churches, marae, and workplaces, as critical spaces for supporting health eating and cultural preservation.

These findings emphasise the integral role that community-driven initiatives and social enterprises play in reshaping food environments for Māori and Pacific communities. As highlighted in manuscript three, social enterprises serve not only as providers of nutritious food but also as agents of cultural preservation and community resilience. By promoting Indigenous values, food sovereignty, and place-based food systems, these enterprises help address systemic inequalities while supporting long-term health and well-being.

The experience shared in this chapter point to a vital need for structural support to sustain and expand these community-led initiatives. Although individual and community efforts are resilient, broader systemic interventions, including funding and policies, are essential to foster sustainable food environments and improve health outcomes for Māori and Pacific whānau. The manuscript builds upon these findings, arguing that culturally aligned, community-centred social enterprises offer a strengths-based, upstream healthcare approach, moving beyond treating illness to creating sustainable health-supportive food environments that honour Indigenous values and aspirations. Through continued support, these initiatives hold the potential to transform food systems and contribute meaningfully to health equity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the theoretical and practical core of this thesis, synthesizing findings and situating them within the broader discourse on food environments, social enterprise, and public health in Aotearoa New Zealand. It explores how social enterprises are uniquely positioned to address the intertwined challenges of food sovereignty and food insecurity for Māori and Pacific communities. As the heart of this research, the chapter outlines the pivotal role these enterprises play in fostering culturally resonant, community-driven food systems that prioritise well-being and health equity.

The first section discusses the role of social enterprises in enabling food sovereignty, emphasising their capacity to promote traditional food practices, support community-led initiatives, and advocate for policy change. The second section focuses on addressing food insecurity, exploring how social enterprises facilitate access to nutritious and affordable food, create economic opportunities, and educate communities about healthy eating. Lastly, the chapter introduces the concept of social and cultural food environments, a critical but underexplored dimension that integrates social, cultural, and spiritual capitals into food systems. Together, these sections position social enterprises as transformative agents of change, bridging structural gaps and reshaping food systems to align with Indigenous values and aspirations.

8.2 The Importance of Food Sovereignty for Māori and Pacific Peoples

This research highlights the importance of food sovereignty for Māori and Pacific communities. This concept, which emphasises the right of peoples to define their own food systems and to have access to healthy and culturally appropriate food, has been increasingly recognised as a key determinant of health and well-being (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). This study found that social enterprises play a critical role in promoting food sovereignty by supporting community-led initiatives, promoting traditional food practices, and advocating for policy change.

Defining Food Sovereignty in Indigenous Contexts

Food sovereignty is a fundamental concept for Māori and Pacific Peoples, encompassing the right to define and control their own food systems. This includes access to culturally appropriate and healthy food, the ability to grow and harvest food in alignment with traditional practices, and the political agency to influence food policy. The findings of this study, support international definitions and principles of food sovereignty as presented by Patel (2009), that is:

- Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agricultural systems, ensuring that decisions are made democratically at the local and national levels.
- It advocates for sustainable development objectives, prioritising ecological, social, and economic sustainability.
- Trade is not negated, but trade policies should promote the rights of people to safe, healthy, and sustainable production.
- There is an emphasis on local control and empowerment.
- Framed as a rights-based concept, it demands that the ability to shape food policy is a universal right, not reserved for a privileged few.

Patel (2009) described food sovereignty as a “big tent” concept, accommodating diverse perspectives, from sustainable development to the specific needs of communities. For the participant community of this study, food sovereignty is not just about nutrition – it is deeply intertwined within cultural identity, well-being, and social justice.

This research highlights that social enterprises are well-positioned to support food sovereignty by fostering community-led initiatives that prioritise Indigenous food practices. Unlike traditional business models, which often prioritise profit, social enterprises balance financial sustainability with social and environmental outcomes, making them ideal vehicles for promoting food sovereignty (Roseland, 2000). The findings indicate that through their activities, social enterprises contribute to restoring control over food systems, empowering Māori and Pacific communities to address their own food needs in culturally meaningful ways.

Community-led Initiatives

The findings of this study emphasise social enterprises as having been particularly effective in facilitating community-led initiatives that are responsive to the unique needs of Māori and Pacific Peoples. These initiatives often include community gardens, food co-operatives, and food distribution networks designed and operated by local communities. By ensuring community voices are at the forefront of this work, and leadership, social enterprises enable the development of food systems that reflect local values, priorities, and resources. Based on the findings of this study, community-led approaches are instrumental in fostering food sovereignty, as they promote local ownership and decision-making, thus enhancing the capacity of communities to sustain themselves.

Promoting Traditional Food Practices

Another significant contribution of social enterprises is their role in promoting traditional food practices. Māori and Pacific cultures possess rich culinary traditions and sustainable agricultural practices that have been eroded by colonialism and globalisation. Social enterprises that incorporate traditional knowledge and practices are helping to revitalise Indigenous food systems (Conn et al., 2021). These enterprises engage in activities such as promoting the cultivation and consumption of native foods, restoring traditional food harvesting techniques, and raising awareness about the cultural significance of Indigenous diets. By weaving these practices into their operations, social enterprises not only contribute to healthier food environments but also play a role in the preservation of cultural heritage (Conn et al., 2021).

Advocacy for Policy Change

Beyond the direct operations, social enterprises actively advocate for policy change that supports food sovereignty. This includes working with policymakers to raise awareness about the importance of Indigenous food systems and influencing the development of supportive food and agricultural policies (Hutchings, 2020). The research highlights the potential for social enterprises to act as intermediaries between communities and government, using their influences to advocate for policies that enable Indigenous control over food production, distribution, and consumption (Nicholls, 2010). By doing so, social enterprises contribute to the creation of a more equitable food systems in Aotearoa New Zealand.

8.3 Addressing Food Insecurity in Māori and Pacific Contexts

This research also highlights the challenges of food insecurity faced by many Māori and Pacific families in New Zealand, bringing to light the implications of food insecurity relating to access to affordable food, creating opportunities for employment, and educating communities about healthy eating and living.

The Challenges of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity remains a pervasive issue for many Māori and Pacific families, characterised by inconsistent access to adequate nutritious food (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021; Cammock et al., 2021b). The findings of this research suggest that food insecurity is a major driver of health disparities, contributing to higher rates of diet-related illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in these communities. Participants in this study resorted to takeaways and energy-dense foods in the absence of accessibility and affordability of healthy food. Even participants who grew up in low-socioeconomic environments and later achieved financial affluence faced challenges in maintaining healthy diets. Addressing food insecurity requires not only making food more accessible

but also ensuring that it is affordable, culturally appropriate, and nutritious (Cammock et al., 2021b). This would also suggest that the harm to human health experienced from unhealthy food environments can have long-lasting effects.

Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food

Social enterprises are playing a key role in addressing food insecurity by providing affordable, nutritious food options to Māori and Pacific communities. Initiatives such as community gardens, food co-operatives, food banks run by social enterprises make healthy food more accessible to families facing economic hardship. These initiatives often operate on a non-profit or low-margin basis, ensuring that food is affordable while maintaining a focus on quality and cultural relevance. By prioritising the needs of the community over profit, social enterprises are able to address the immediate food needs of Māori and Pacific Peoples while contributing to long-term food security. A cautionary note should be given regarding initiatives such as food banks, in that they are not viable long-term fixes to food insecurity or diet-related illnesses, as suggested by the social entrepreneurs in this study. They are essential for the acute needs of Māori and Pacific communities who struggle with food insecurity, however, do not provide a sustainable solution to food insecurity (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2015; Bazerghi et al., 2016).

Creating Employment and Economic Opportunities

In addition to providing access to food, social enterprises contribute to food security by creating employment and economic opportunities within the food sector (Conn et al., 2021). The research highlights how job creation, particularly in food production, processing, and distribution, can help alleviate food insecurity by providing families with the economic means to secure adequate food. Many social enterprises also offer training and capacity-building programs, equipping Māori and Pacific individuals with skills in agriculture, food preparation, and business management. This dual focus on food provision and economic empowerment is critical to building the long-term resilience of these communities. By creating job opportunities in the food sector, social enterprises are helping to build economic resilience in Māori and Pacific communities (McKerchar et al., 2015). This, in turn, can contribute to improved food security.

Educational Initiatives for Healthy Eating

Social enterprises also address food insecurity by educating communities about healthy eating (Nicholls, 2010). Through workshops, cooking classes, and other community-based educational initiatives, social enterprises empower families to make healthier food choices. These initiatives are often culturally tailored, weaving traditional knowledge and

practices into modern nutrition education. By promoting a holistic understanding of food that encompasses cultural, nutritional, and economic dimensions, social enterprises help to combat food insecurity in a way that is both sustainable and culturally resonant (Haldeman, 2024).

8.4 The Social and Cultural Food Environment – A Missing Piece in Theoretical Understandings of Food Environments

The findings of this thesis align with the existing body of literature of food environments, particularly the role of social enterprises in fostering healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau (Nicholls, 2010; Conn et al., 2021). However, this research also identifies a critical gap in current theoretical frameworks, which have predominantly focused on physical, economic, and policy-driven dimensions of food systems (Cammock et al., 2021b; Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). While these are vital, they overlook the equally significant social and cultural food environments, which includes the cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions that are central to food practices in Māori and Pacific communities. The following discusses the social and cultural food environments as a vital, yet underexplored, dimension within the broader food environments discourse. It argues that understanding and improving food environments, particularly in Māori and Pacific contexts, requires an acknowledgement of how food practices are embedded in social relationships, cultural traditions, and spiritual values. Drawing on the concept of social imaginary theorising (Laine & Kibler, 2022), this section discusses how intangible capitals such as social, cultural, and spiritual, inform and shape food environments, thereby offering a more holistic approach to addressing food inequities.

As told by participants in this study, food is not only a source of nutrition and sustenance but also a medium for expressing social connections, cultural identity, and spiritual values. The social and cultural food environments encompass the ways in which food practices are informed by communal relationships, cultural traditions, and collective well-being. It highlights the role of food in fostering kinship ties, hospitality, values that are central to Māori and Pacific worldviews. The findings of this thesis illustrate that food environments in these communities cannot be fully understood without considering the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions that shape food behaviours and practices.

Social Imaginary Theory and The Intangible Capitals

Embedding social imaginary theory in this work also deepens our understanding of the social and cultural food environment. Social imaginaries refer to the collective visions, values, and assumptions that communities hold about how the world works, including how food systems should operate (Taylor, 2004). The research reveals that Māori and

Pacific communities have distinct social imaginaries related to food sovereignty, cultural sustainability, and spiritual well-being. These imaginaries envision food systems that are not only equitable and sustainable but also rooted in cultural traditions and values that affirm communal and spiritual identities. Central to this discussion is the recognition of intangible capitals, including social, cultural, and spiritual aspects, that inform and sustain the social and cultural food environment. The recognition of intangible capitals echoes the seminal work of Indigenous academics within Indigenous entrepreneurship that holds the values of cultural, spiritual, and relational knowledge systems central to shaping sustainable and sovereign entrepreneurial futures for Indigenous peoples (Foley, 2017; Henry & Dana, 2016).

The social imaginary around food is deeply informed by the concept of whakapapa (genealogical links) and the vā (relational space) where the food system is understood as interconnected and sacred. To illustrate, the marae was described as being a haven for many socio-economic needs, whereby the learning of nutrition and healthy food environments could be received in a way that was meaningful and mana-enhancing given to the spiritual and social connection participants had to that marae. Participants also shared how their church was a place where similar activities were taking place and long-standing food practices were encouraged among its patrons, like food storage to help in times of need.

Cultural capital in this context, refers to the knowledge traditions, and practices passed down through generations that guide food-related behaviours. In Māori and Pacific communities, cultural capital is expressed through traditional food practices, sustainable agricultural practices, and rituals that honour the land and sea as sources of life (Spiller et al., 2015). These cultural practices are vital for maintaining a connection to ancestral knowledge and ensuring the continuation of cultural identity (Māhina-Tuai, 2020). Participants shared their desire to hold on to food sharing, growing, and eating practices as from their Pacific Island home within the Aotearoa context

Spiritual capital plays an equally important role in shaping the social and cultural food environment. Spiritual capital, described as a form of ‘profit’, and the economy out of which it flourished, was irrevocably dismantled as a consequence of colonization (Henry & Poyser, 2022). Spiritual capital can be thought of as a sub-species of social capital (Berger & Hefner, 2003, p. 3), and can be considered as distinct from human and social capital, as it specifically encompasses the connections between spirit, traditional practices, and traditional knowledge (as cited in Henry et al., 2020). According to Mika (2015), spiritual capital enhances Indigenous aspirations for self-determination, human potentiality, and freedom. For several participants of this study, food is seen as a gift

from a higher power, and its consumption, preparation, preservation, and sharing, are intertwined with spiritual beliefs and practices. The act of growing, harvesting, and sharing food is often accompanied by prayer, blessings, and ceremonies that acknowledge the spiritual significance of food, environment, and the people it serves. This spiritual dimension provides a sense of connection to the land and sea, reinforcing the belief in the sacredness of nature and the responsibility to care for it (Henry et al., 2020; Spiller & Wolfgramm, 2015).

Revisiting the work of Ohri-Vachaspati & Leviton (2010, p. 411) we offer the social and cultural food environment as a type of food environment that can shed light on the intrinsic links between peoples within Māori and Pacific communities. This food environment is less physical in nature, however, should still be recognised as a type of food environment if researchers, policy makers, and healthcare professionals are to fully understand the role of food environments in shaping peoples' individual diets, and as agents within a wider food system.

Table 16. Types of Food Environments (extended from Ohri-Vachaspati & Leviton, 2010, p. 411)

Food Environment	Description
Community Food Environment	The geographical distribution of food outlets, including the number, type, access, and hours of operation.
Organisation Food Environment	Generally, affects groups such as families or students, occurring in settings such as homes, schools, worksites, churches, and health care facilities.
Consumer Food Environment	Refers to what consumers encounter within and around retail food outlets: nutrition quality, price and affordability, promotion, placement, variety, freshness, nutritional information, and nutritional labelling.
Informational Food Environment	Media and advertising operating at national, regional, neighbourhood or food outlet levels.
Social and Cultural Food Environment	Involves cultural practices, community relationships, and social norms that influence food access, consumption, and identity.

The concept of 'social and cultural food environments' offers a framework for understanding the factors that shape food choices, particularly in the context of Indigenous communities. While the social and cultural food environment encompasses the social networks, access to food, and community norms that influence eating habits (Tarasuk et al., 2019). This inclusion of culture acknowledges the profound role that cultural values, traditions, and historical practices play in shaping food systems (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). This dual perspective recognises that culture is dynamic, and food environments are not static; they evolve over time in response to both internal community factors and external societal pressures. For Indigenous communities, this framework is particularly relevant, as it allows for the recognition of both traditional food

practices and the contemporary adaptations that occur as communities navigate the complexities of modernization, colonization, and globalization (Cammock et al., 2021b). By framing food environments as both social and cultural, we ensure that the broader spectrum of factors influencing food choices, spanning from historical traditions and contemporary realities, are addressed in the development of sustainable, equitable, and culturally relevant food systems.

Interweaving Māori and Pacific values into social enterprise frameworks enriches the conceptualisation of social entrepreneurship by embedding culturally grounded principles that emphasise the collective well-being, relational ethics, and sustainability. While existing models such as Kassim and Habib's (2020) social value chain, provide valuable insights into how social enterprise create value, they often lack the cultural specificity required to address the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities. By interweaving Māori and Pacific values, the framework can be adapted to reflect the relational and holistic approaches inherent in these worldviews. The contributions of Māori and Pacific perspectives to social enterprise offers a culturally relevant model that fosters both social and economic empowerment.

Table 17. Embedding Māori and Pacific Values into Social Enterprise Frameworks for Collective Well-being

Social Enterprise Value	Description	Māori Values[4]	Pacific Values
Inter-social innovations	The ability to generate solutions that focus on not just end products but also the processes and operations across groups and stakeholders.	**Whakawhanaungatanga** (relationships building based on reciprocity), fostering strong, enduring connections among stakeholders.	**Teu le vā**[5] (nurturing the relational space between), ensuring harm interactions and processes. **Akapapa'anga**[6] (relationship building through reciprocity), fosterin maintaining connections through meaningful relationships a stakeholders.
Sharing economy	The state in which economic benefits are shared across the entire chain of stakeholders.	**Manaakitanga** (care and hospitality), extends sharing to all stakeholders with mutual respect and well-being.	**Fa'aaloalo**[1] (respect, humility, reciprocity), extends sharing stakeholders with mutual respect, hospitality and care. **Tautua**[1] (to serve), the state in which there is service and care stakeholders. **Ōranga tangata**[2] (the collective well-being of the people), the st which interconnected aspects such as physical, mental, spiritua social well-being are enhanced collectively across all stakeholder gr
Social inclusion	The state in which less fortunate communities have greater access.	**Whanaungatanga** (kindship and belonging), promotes belonging and access for all, particularly for Māori.	**Faka'apa'apa**[7] (respect), the state in which others are honoure relationships maintained in the community. **Kātoatoa**[2] (inclusion and connection), the state in which incl connection, and belonging can be accessed by all, particularly F peoples.
Social empowerment	The state in which the community feels greater autonomy, confidence, and acts collectively to change social relationships and improve social hierarchy.	**Tino rangatiratanga** (self-determination), empowers communities to make their own decisions. **Kaitiakitanga** (guardianship), encourages responsibility for collective resources and well-being.	**Mana Tūrangatira**[2] (self-determination), empower communities to their own decisions. **Vā tapuia**[1] (sacred relationships with respect for the environ encourages responsibility for sacred relationships between indivi families, and the environment for collective resources and well-being

[4] Terms used below are in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language)
[5] In the Samoan language
[6] In the Cook Islands Māori language
[7] In the Tongan language

8.5 The Role of Social Enterprises in Shaping the Social and Cultural Food Environment

As presented in Manuscript three, social enterprises operating in Māori and Pacific communities have demonstrated an ability to transform food environments by centring social, cultural, and spiritual values in their initiatives. This research highlights how social enterprises create spaces, referred to in this study as food havens, where food is not only accessible and healthy but also culturally resonant and spiritually meaningful. These enterprises play a crucial role in fostering food sovereignty by empowering communities to take control of their food systems, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and reinforcing cultural and spiritual traditions.

The success of these social enterprises lies in their ability to integrate social imaginary theory into their operations. By aligning their initiatives with the shared visions and values of Māori and Pacific communities, these enterprises contribute to the creation of food environments that are mana-enhancing or strengths-based and culturally grounded. They bridge the gap between the structural challenges of food access and the community's social, cultural, and spiritual needs, offering a holistic approach to food system transformation.

8.6 Developing a Food Havens Framework (FHF) – A Holistic Approach to Food Environments

Based on the findings of this research, a comprehensive framework can be proposed to develop the Food Havens model further. This framework acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of food environments, particularly within Māori and Pacific communities, and introduces social, cultural, and spiritual capitals as central elements that shape and sustain these environments. This framework aims to enhance the Food Havens model by integrating these intangible capitals into a holistic approach that addresses food sovereignty, community well-being, and health equity.

The Food Havens Framework (FHF)

The Food Havens Framework is the distillation of my theory and thesis, which emphasises five core dimensions including physical, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual. These dimensions are interconnected, and each play a critical role in shaping the food environments that support healthier, more equitable and culturally aligned food systems. The FHF builds on the strengths-based approach of Food Havens while providing a nuanced understanding of how intangible capitals contribute to the creation of resilient and sustainable food environments.

Figure 6. The Food Havens Framework

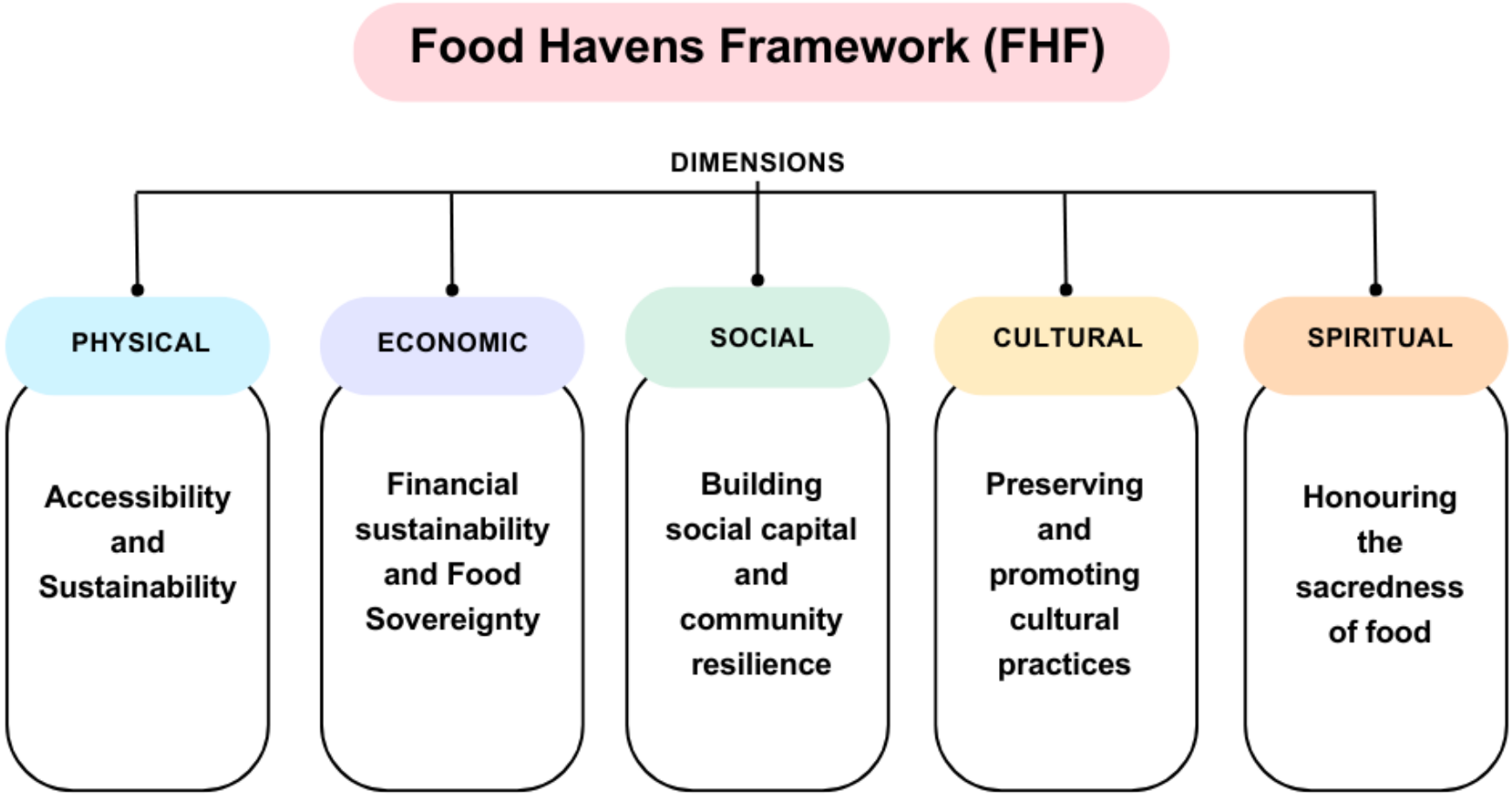

Table 18. Core dimensions of the Food Havens Framework

Core Dimensions	Function	Key characteristics	Examples
Physical	Availability Accessibility	Access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods. Promotion of sustainable food production practices.	Sustainable and regenerative food processes (e.g. urban fo gardens). Source locally grown organic produce and culturally significant foo to ensure affordability and cultural relevance.
Economic	Food sovereignty Financial sustainability	Local ownership and control of food resources. Economic sustainability of food-related social enterprises. Creation of employment opportunities and pathways within the food systems.	Social enterprise provides employment opportunities (payi employees at the minimum, a living wage). Local food hubs ensure that local stakeholders (including t community) are involved in decision-making, reinvest profits into loc initiatives, and create a model where the community owns and contro the food production and distribution systems.
Social	Building social capital Community resilience	Strengthening social networks through communal food practices. Building trust and participation in food-related initiatives. Encouraging collective responsibility and shared ownership of food systems.	Passing of knowledge through generations or community garde where community members share knowledge. Strengthening social networks through communal food practic encourages collective responsibility and shared ownership of fo systems.
Cultural	Preserving and fostering cultural practices	Integration of traditional food knowledge and practices. Celebration of cultural food rituals and communal feasting. Support for cultural identity through food sovereignty initiatives.	Integrating traditional food practices in social enterprise products a services. Supporting cultural identity through food sovereignty initiatives. Celebration of cultural food rituals and communal feasting tied important cultural or seasonal celebrations.
Spiritual	Honouring the sacredness of food	Spiritual acknowledgment of the land and food sources (prayer). Acknowledging the altruistic nature of food-sharing practices. Fostering deep respect for the natural world as providers of food and sustenance.	Developing and supporting food practices in churches and prayi over food with blessings of sustenance and gratitude. Foster deep respect for the natural world as providers of food a sustenance through, for example, education programs.

At its core, the physical dimension of food environments relates to the availability and accessibility of healthy, nutritious, and affordable food. The original Food Havens model emphasised creating spaces where healthy food is readily accessible and affordable for Māori and Pacific communities (Tonumaipe'a et al., 2021). The FHF retains this focus on physical access but extends it to incorporate sustainability principles. This includes promoting sustainable farming and gardening practices that align with Māori and Pacific cultural values of custodianship of the land.

Food sovereignty is central to the economic dimension of the FHF, which emphasises the importance of communities having control over their food systems. The FHF suggests that social enterprises should be designed to generate not only social impact but also economic sustainability for the communities they serve. Social enterprises operating in Māori and Pacific communities can empower these communities by providing employment opportunities, building local economies, and reducing dependence on external food sources.

The social dimension emphasises the role of social relationships and networks in shaping food environments. In the FHF, social capital is a key resource for creating food havens, as it strengthens community cohesion and fosters collective action. Social enterprises can tap into existing community networks to build trust and encourage participation in food-related initiatives. This dimension also highlights the importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer and collaboration among whānau.

Embedding the cultural dimension into the FHF recognises that food environments must be reflective of the cultural values, traditions, and knowledge systems of Māori and Pacific Peoples. The framework emphasises the importance of preserving traditional food practices, such as Indigenous food preparation techniques and sustainable agricultural methods. By grounding food initiatives in cultural practices, the EFHF supports the ongoing revitalisation of Māori and Pacific food sovereignty.

The spiritual dimension of the FHF highlights the sacred relationship between people, food, and the natural environment. For Māori and Pacific communities, food is not just a resource but a gift from nature that is intertwined with spiritual beliefs and values. This dimension emphasizes the role of spiritual practices—such as blessings and prayers—related to food production, preparation, and consumption. Social enterprises and food initiatives should incorporate spiritual practices that honor the land and sea, fostering a sense of stewardship and respect for natural resources.

Applying the Food Havens Framework

This framework provides a holistic approach to food environments, and social enterprise that integrates the intangible capitals of social, cultural, and spiritual values. It highlights the interdependence of these dimensions in creating sustainable, healthy, and culturally aligned food systems. Social enterprises and community initiatives operating within the FHF would be guided by the following principles:

Table 19. Key principles of the Food Havens Framework

	Principles (Māori/English)	**Principles (Cook Islands Māori)**	**Description**
Hospitality and respect	Manaakitanga	Akaakaanga	Ensuring the food systems enhance the dignity and respect of all involved, reflecting the values of hospitality and generosity.
Relationships and reciprocity	Whanaungatanga	Kātoatoa'anga	Building strong relationships within the community by promoting collective food practices and intergenerational knowledge sharing.
Guardianship and sustainability	Kaitiakitanga	Tiaki	Practicing guardianship of the land, water, and resources through sustainable food production methods that respect the environment.
Self-determination and sovereignty	Tinorangatiratanga	Tū rangatira	Empowering communities to exercise self-determination in their food systems and food environments, ensuring that they have control over the productions, distribution, and consumption of food.

Social enterprise operating under the FHF would adopt strategies that align with each of these dimensions. The FHF advances the original Food Havens model by emphasising the role of intangible capitals – social, cultural, and spiritual – in shaping resilient and sustainable food environments. This framework provides a comprehensive approach for social enterprises and community-led initiatives to create spaces that not only address

physical and economic barriers to healthy food but also align with the values and aspirations of Māori and Pacific Peoples, as told by participants in this study. Through the integration of these dimensions, the FHF offers a pathway toward truly transformative food systems that promote health equity, cultural sustainability, spiritual well-being, and social justice for future generations.

The findings of this research highlight that the inclusion of social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions in food environment models is critical for addressing the unique needs of Māori and Pacific communities. If a holistic understanding of food environments guides social enterprises and food system initiatives – one that centres on building cultural, social, and spiritual capital – then they are likely to align more closely with the values and aspirations of these communities. A failure to embed these dimensions risks perpetuating inequities by overlooking the broader factors influencing food access and the cultural significance of food practices.

Conversely, if the Food Havens Framework, as proposed in this study, is adopted, then food initiatives will not only address the physical and economic barriers to food access but will also enhance community resilience, cultural identity, and spiritual well-being. Several studies have looked at the effectiveness and sustainability of food banks (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013; Tarasuk et al., 2019), One example found in this study is the use of food banks as a social enterprise initiative for supporting healthy food environments by addressing acute needs within the community. Although the food bank addresses the economic and physical dimensions of the food environment, the experience of picking up a food parcel, while associated with strong feelings of gratitude, also bring feelings of shame and discomfort for those receiving this type of support.

That is not to say that food banks should be done away with, but it does emphasise the need to enhance food environments in ways that are mana-enhancing, and considers the sanctity of a person by recognising their cultural, social, and spiritual world. This research emphasises the need for policymakers and practitioners to acknowledge the influence of social imaginaries and intangible capitals if they are to create food systems that are equitable, culturally resonant, and capable of promoting long-term health outcomes for Indigenous communities.

The findings of this research lead to several important implications regarding the development of food environments that cater specifically to Māori and Pacific communities, as presented in this study. These implications can be articulated through a series of hypothetical scenarios that demonstrate the potential outcomes of implementing the FHF. The following ‘if’ statements reflect the conditions and subsequent impacts that emerge from this study.

If social enterprises focus on building cultural, social, and spiritual capital, t**hen** they will better align food environments with the needs and values of Māori and Pacific communities.

If food initiatives embed community-led approaches that recognise social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions, **then** food environments will be more effective in promoting health equity and well-being;

If the intangible capitals of social and cultural food environments are acknowledged, such as kindship, rituals and practices, and spiritual beliefs, **then** the food sovereignty of Māori and Pacific communities can be strengthened.

If current food environment models do not integrate the social dimension, **then** they risk failure to address the holistic needs of Indigenous communities, resulting in persistent food inequities;

If policymakers adopt a framework that includes the social imaginaries (aspirations and vision of the community), **then** interventions aimed at improving food environments will likely be more culturally resonant and impactful;

If social relationships and cultural practices are at the centre of the food environment initiatives, **then** community resilience and collective health outcomes will be significantly improved;

If the Food Havens Framework is implemented, **then** it will create food environments that not only address physical and economic barriers but also enhance cultural and spiritual well-being.

8.7 Future research and directions

Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal studies are essential to evaluate social enterprises' impact on food sovereignty and food security. These studies can track the outcomes of social enterprise initiatives over extended periods, providing critical insights into their sustainability and long-term effectiveness (Huybrechts & Nicholls, 2013; Tregear, 2011). Longitudinal data can reveal patterns and identify the key factors contributing to the success or failure of social enterprises in addressing food-related challenges. For example, the capacity to adapt to changing local and global food systems may emerge as a critical determinant of success.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Conducting cost-benefit analyses of social enterprise models offers valuable insights into their economic viability. Such analyses could explore how social enterprises balance financial sustainability with social impact, shedding light on their dual mandate (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). Understanding the economic contributions of social enterprises not only highlights their potential for scalability but also demonstrates their ability to serve as sustainable solutions in food systems. This approach is particularly relevant for informing funding priorities and attracting investments.

Evaluating Policy Interventions

Policy interventions play a pivotal role in the growth and effectiveness of social enterprises. Evaluating how governmental support influences social enterprise development can provide actionable insights. Research that examines intersections between policies related to food sovereignty, public health, and social enterprise development is crucial for designing supportive environments (Smith et al., 2020). Evidence from evaluations can inform policymakers on strategies to enhance the capacity of social enterprises to meet food system goals while addressing broader social and environmental outcomes.

Continued Investment in the Social Enterprise Sector

Beyond research, sustained investment in the social enterprise sector is vital. Such investment should focus on financial support to scale operations, capacity-building initiatives to strengthen skills and resources among social entrepreneurs and fostering partnerships with government agencies and community stakeholders (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017). Collaboration among diverse stakeholders can help create a food system that prioritises equity, justice, and sustainability. As noted by Battilana and Lee (2014), the integration of diverse resources and expertise amplifies the transformative potential of social enterprises within local and global food systems.

8.8 Limitations

A key limitation of this study is the absence of comprehensive demographic data, particularly regarding participants' Māori and Pacific descent. This gap restricts the ability to report on the cultural composition of the sample, which is significant given the study's focus on Indigenous and Pacific perspectives. The decision to withhold demographic data was made consciously and ethically, especially in the context of one large wānanga group that included participants from a women's refuge. In this setting, prioritising safety, anonymity, and emotional wellbeing was paramount, and collecting detailed personal information was deemed inappropriate. While this approach aligns with relational and trauma-informed research principles, it also limits the granularity of cultural analysis.

Future research could mitigate this constraint by incorporating an optional demographic form and presenting aggregated data in a way that maintains participant safety while enhancing contextual understanding.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of detailed information about the social enterprises involved. This research was not designed as a case study and therefore did not include in-depth organisational profiles or operational analyses. As the inquiry progressed, it became increasingly clear that the voices of end-users, those directly impacted by food systems and social enterprise initiatives, were central to understanding the lived realities and relational dimensions of wellbeing. This shift in focus reflects an intentional move away from institutional narratives toward community-based perspectives, but it also means that the structural and strategic aspects of the enterprises remain underexplored. Future research could address this gap by weaving case study methods or organisational ethnographies alongside participant narratives, allowing for a more holistic understanding of both enterprise models and their social impact.

8.9 Chapter summary

The role of social enterprise in creating healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific communities is critical to addressing food sovereignty and food insecurity. These enterprises provide culturally relevant, community-led solutions that empower Indigenous peoples to take control of their food systems. The findings of this research suggest that social enterprises offer a promising approach to addressing the complex health challenges faced by Māori and Pacific Peoples. For social enterprises to thrive, however, they need ongoing support from government policies, financial investments, and collaborative partnerships. With this support, social enterprises have the potential to create lasting change, contributing to healthier, more equitable food environments for Māori and Pacific Peoples, and for all.

This research identifies the social and cultural food environment as a missing piece in current theoretical understandings of food environments. By incorporating social imaginary theorising and recognising the importance of intangible capitals such as social, cultural, and spiritual capital, this thesis offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding and improving food environments in Māori and Pacific communities. Social enterprises, as demonstrated in this research, are key actors in shaping these environments, creating spaces that not only address food insecurity but also nurture cultural identity, social cohesion, and spiritual well-being.

As this thesis has shown, food environments are not merely physical spaces where food is consumed; they are dynamic social systems that reflect and reinforce the values,

relationships, and beliefs of a community. Addressing food inequities in Māori and Pacific communities requires an approach that goes beyond physical access to food and embraces the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of food environments. This more holistic perspective can lead to more sustainable, equitable, and culturally relevant solutions that truly support the health and well-being of Māori and Pacific whānau.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

This thesis has provided a qualitative exploration of the role that social enterprises play in fostering healthier food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Drawing on and further developing Indigenous methodologies like Kaupapa Māori and Talanoa has allowed this research not only to illuminate the critical role of food environments in shaping health outcomes but also highlighted the potential of social enterprises as a transformative vehicle for addressing long-standing health inequities.

By ensuring the perspectives of Māori and Pacific communities are at the forefront, this study has revealed how social enterprises, deeply rooted in cultural values, can create meaningful and sustainable change. The concept of 'food havens', introduced by Tonumaipe'a et al. (2021), and further developed here, offers a strengths-based approach to addressing the health challenges faced by these communities. The food haven, defined by the availability, affordability, and cultural resonance of healthy foods, provide a powerful counter-narrative to obesogenic environments, which have historically marginalised Māori and Pacific populations.

At a theoretical level, this research contributes significantly to the discourse on social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship. It situates these enterprises within the broader context of food sovereignty, demonstrating how Māori and Pacific frameworks of well-being and community empowerment can inform more culturally responsive and effective approaches to health intervention. The study not only expands the understanding of social enterprise in and Indigenous context but also bridges gaps in the literature on food environments and health disparities, offering insights that are applicable both locally and globally.

The findings from this study have important practice implications. They provide valuable guidance to policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and community leaders seeking to co-create solutions to the pressing health issues faced by Māori and Pacific whānau. By advocating for initiatives that are driven by Indigenous knowledge and values, this thesis emphasises the importance of partnership, co-design, and community leadership in addressing the systemic issues that contribute to health inequities. The concept of social enterprise as a tool for both social and economic resilience is shown to be particularly effective when aligned with the aspirations of the communities it serves.

In conclusion, the research presents a strong case for the role of culturally grounded social enterprises in improving health outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples. It

demonstrates the potential of food havens to create equitable, culturally responsive food environments that not only address the immediate issues of food access but also contribute to broader goals of food sovereignty, community empowerment, and long-term resilience. The implications of these findings are far-reaching, offering a framework for future research, policy development, and community-led initiatives that prioritise the well-being of Māori and Pacific whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand, and for the international Indigenous community.

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APPENDICES

A. COAUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

From the AUT Co-Authorship Protocol:

An author is an individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output, and agrees to be listed as an author. A significant intellectual or scholarly contribution must include one, and should include a combination of two or more, of the following:

- Conception and design of the project or output;
- Acquisition of research data where the acquisition has required significant intellectual judgement, planning, design, or input;
- Contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Indigenous knowledge;
- Analysis or interpretation of research data;
- Drafting significant parts of the research output or critically revising it so as to contribute to its quality and interpretation.

For further details on the co-authorship guidelines and requirements, please refer to the AUT Co-Authorship Protocol.
For the definition of a 'manuscript' within a thesis please refer to the Postgraduate Handbook.

Co-authorship Contributions within this Thesis

Please copy the box below into your thesis, repeated for each manuscript included in the thesis.

STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR APPROVALS

By signing you are confirming that the co-author contributions stated in the table(s) below are accurate.

Student Name	Daysha Tonumaipe'a	**Signature**		**Date**	1/12/2024
Supervisor Name	Prof. Ella Henry	**Signature**		**Date**	2/12/2024
Co-author	Dr. Radilaite Cammock	**Signature**		**Date**	2/12/2024
Co-author	Dr. Cath Conn	**Signature**		**Date**	2/12/2024
Co-author	Gareth Jones	**Signature**		**Date**	2/12/2024
Co-author	Dr. Shoba Nayar	**Signature**		**Date**	2/12/2024
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Chapter Number:	**2**
Manuscript Title:	**Food Havens not swamps: a strengths-based approach to sustainable food environments.**
Publication Status:	**Accepted for Publication**
Reference if published:	**Tonumaipe'a, D., Cammock, R., & Conn, C. (2021). Food Havens not swamps: a strengths-based approach to sustainable food environments. *Health Promotion International, 36*(6), 1795-1805.**

AUTHOR SURNAME: (order as per manuscript)	**CONTRIBUTION** (May copy from the guidelines above)
Daysha Tonumaipe'a	**Design, write, review, edit**
Dr. Radilaite Cammock	**Supervise, review, edit**
Dr. Cath Conn	**Supervise, review, edit**

Chapter Number:	**5**
Manuscript Title:	**Weaving Indigenous Research: Māori and Pacific paradigms for Te Moana Māori Methodology**
Publication Status:	**Submitted for Publication**
Reference if published:	**N/A**

AUTHOR SURNAME: (order as per manuscript)	**CONTRIBUTION** (May copy from the guidelines above)
Daysha Tonumaipe'a	**Conception, design, write, review, edit**
Dr. Radilaite Cammock	**Supervise, review, edit**
Dr. Cath Conn	**Supervise, review, edit**
Dr. Shoba Nayar	**Contribution of knowledge as it relates to public health and introductory sections**
Gareth Jones	**Supervise, review, oral feedback**
Teremoana Maua-Hodges	**Supervise, review, oral feedback**
Professor Ella Henry	**Supervise, review, edit**

B. ETHICS APPROVAL

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

4 November 2022
Ella Henry
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Ella

Re Ethics Application: **22/291 Food Havens: the role of social enterprise, and the social impact of the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).
Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 3 November 2025.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.
For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)
The AUTEC Secretariat

C. EXCERPT OF DATA ANALYSIS APPLICATION

Step	Process	Examples of application
1. Data Familiarisation	Audio-recorded sessions were transcribed and reviewed alongside recordings.	Nuances such as tone, expression, and cultural context were captured. For example, participants emphasised the importance of *marae* and churches as spaces for fostering health-enhancing food practices.
2. Initial Coding	Inductive and deductive coding identified meaningful segments of data.	Codes such as *food sovereignty*, *community connection*, *economic resilience*, and *cultural identity* were drawn from participant narratives. Participants described how traditional food practices, such as *mara kai* (gardening), strengthened their connection to cultural identity while addressing food insecurity.
3. Theme Development	Codes were grouped into themes through collaborative discussions with participants and advisors.	Themes such as *place-based food systems*, *cultural sustainability*, and *collective empowerment* emerged. For instance, participants noted the role of social enterprises in supporting food sovereignty through culturally grounded initiatives like community gardening and education. Example: *"Growing our food feels like connecting back to the land and to our ancestors"*.
4. Synthesis	Themes refined using Eaves' (2001) techniques, integrating Māori and Pacific perspectives.	The refined framework emphasised *social food environments*, incorporating cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions of food practices. For example, *marae* and churches were identified as central hubs for food sharing and education, fostering both community well-being and cultural pride. Themes like *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) and *manaakitanga* (hospitality) were woven into the analysis to reflect Indigenous values.
5. Validation	Findings were presented back to a sub-set of participants for feedback and refinement.	Participant feedback led to the interweaving of additional themes such as *economic resilience* and *intergenerational knowledge transfer*. One participant highlighted the need to integrate entrepreneurial strategies that balance financial sustainability with cultural practices, stating, *"We have to make it work financially while staying true to our values."* This feedback was critical in refining the themes.

D. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWS

Date Information Sheet Produced: 19/09/2022

Project Title: Food Havens: the role of social enterprise, and the social impact of the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau

An Invitation

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Kia orana, Bula Vinaka, Fakaalofa lahi atu and warm Pacific greetings. This is an invitation to from myself, Daysha Tonumaipe'a *(Taranaki, Tainui, Te Arawa)*. I would like to discuss healthy food environments and the social impact initiatives your enterprise offers with you through an interview at a place that is convenient to you. Participation is voluntary and you will in no way be disadvantaged if you choose not to take part. If you do take part in the research, you may withdraw at any time before we complete the analysis of the research findings. This study is part of my PhD and has been funded by Health Research Council NZ (HRC).

What is the purpose of this research?

We are asking you to consent to being a part of an interview about food spaces and healthy eating initiatives in the community. We will discuss your understandings, aspirations, your background, and life histories in connection to creating healthy food environments through social impact initiatives within Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau. We would like your consent to record the discussion on audio device. The findings of this research may be used for academic publications, presentations and guidelines for organisations and community groups within this space.

You have been identified as a potential participant because of the following criteria:

You are of Māori and/or Pasifika descent and over 18 years of age.

You are involved in social impact initiatives that work to create healthy food spaces in Tāmaki Makaurau.

You have experience in creating healthy food environments through social impact initiatives within Māori and Pasifika communities.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to take part in this research, we would like for you to complete a consent form which will be given to you in person or sent via email. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

We would like the opportunity to discuss your experiences, stories, aspirations, and understandings of healthy food environments and how you came to be involved in social impact initiatives within this space. We are happy to visit you at a site you prefer, or we could arrange for the discussion to take place at AUT University, South Campus. Your participation in this study will be through in-depth interview and will be recorded on an audio device and notes will be taken. You will be given a transcript of the discussion and may add, amend, or delete any comments.

What are the discomforts and risks?

We do not believe there will be any discomforts or risks associated with taking part in the interview. However, if you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you do not need to answer them. You can choose to end your participation in this research at any time that you wish. Whilst the interview may cover information about your personal history and background, you only need to share what you are comfortable with in doing so. It is not our wish to cause you any embarrassment, inconvenience, or distress. Participation is voluntary and you will in no way be disadvantaged if you choose to withdraw at any time.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If at any time during the discussion you are uncomfortable, or wish to retract or revise any statements, you may do so. We are committed to protecting you matauranga/knowledge and ensuring that you feel safe and comfortable with our discussions and your contributions to this research. You may withdraw from the interview at any time.

If you are feeling uncomfortable or concerned by your participation in this study AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.

Pleaselet the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health

What are the benefits?

We believe that the results of this interview will provide us with insights that will inform future research that will help to build a better picture of food environments, and social impact initiatives for whānau in Māori and Pasifika communities. Your involvement may shape ways in which educators, policy developers, and those engaged in the food environment and wider food system can best provide support and infrastructure to build healthy food environments that are led by the communities in which they hope to serve. Your views will provide important insight to help guide policy and practice to improve food environments for Māori and Pasifika whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your confidentiality is assured. Your privacy will be maintained, and any information shared through the discussion will be woven into a narrative of Māori and Pasifika experiences that ensure the confidentiality of individuals, while painting a picture of your thoughts and aspirations. Although it is possible that the organisation of your workplace may identify you, no statements that you make will be attributed to you, and no statements that can be traced to you personally will be used in the final write-up, report, or publications. Further, the interview can take place away from your workplace (e.g. online or AUT South Campus) to further ensure confidentiality.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs associated with the interview beyond the time it will take to conduct the interview, which we envisage will be approximately 1 hour. We are happy to travel to a site of your choosing for the interview. However, if you prefer to come to AUT South Campus, we will ensure that you receive reimbursement for any costs associated to travel to the campus.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have 2 weeks to consider this invitation. Please note it is envisaged that interviews will commence in approximately October 2022.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you wish, you may receive a summary of the findings. Please tick the appropriate box in the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Daysha Tonumaipe'a: Daysha.tonumaipea@aut.ac.nz

0272435419

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Primary Supervisor Contact Details: Ella Henry: ella.henry@aut.ac.nz

AUT City Campus, 55 Wellesley Street East, Auckland CBD

09-921-9999 ext. ext. 6097

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *4/11/2022*, AUTEC Reference number *22/291*.

E. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR WĀNANGA OR TALANOA

Date Information Sheet Produced: 27/09/2022

Project Title: Food Havens: the role of social enterprise, and the social impact of the initiatives they create to foster healthy food environments for Māori and Pacific whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau

An Invitation

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Kia orana, Bula Vinaka, Fakaalofa lahi atu and warm Pacific greetings. This is an invitation to from myself, Daysha Tonumaipe'a *(Taranaki, Tainui, Te Arawa)*. I would like to discuss your experiences of healthy food spaces and the social impact initiatives through wānanga/talanoa/group discussion at AUT South Campus [date to be confirmed]. Participation is voluntary and you will in no way be disadvantaged if you choose not to take part. If you do take part in the research, you may withdraw at any time before we complete the analysis of the research findings. This study is part of my PhD and has been funded by Health Research Council NZ (HRC).

What is the purpose of this research?

We are asking you to consent to being a part of a discussion about food spaces and healthy eating initiatives in the community. We will discuss your understandings, aspirations, your background, and life histories in connection to creating healthy food environments through social impact initiatives within Māori and Pacific communities in Tāmaki Makaurau. We would like your consent to record the discussion on audio device. The findings of this research may be used for academic publications, presentations and guidelines for organisations and community groups within this space.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been sent this information sheet and identified as a potential participant because of the following criteria:

You are of Māori and/or Pasifika descent

You are an end-user of social impact initiatives that work to create healthy food spaces in Tāmaki Makaurau.

You have important experience participating in the healthy food environments initiatives in Māori and Pasifika communities.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to take part in this research, we would like for you to complete a consent form which will be given to you in person or sent via email. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

We would like the opportunity to discuss your experiences, stories, aspirations, and understandings of healthy food environments and how you came to be involved in social impact initiatives within this space. We are happy to visit you at a site you prefer, or we could arrange for the discussion to take place at AUT University, South Campus. Your participation in this study will be through talanoa/wānanga and will be recorded on an audio device and notes will be taken. You will be given a transcript of the discussion and may add, amend, or delete any comments.

What are the discomforts and risks?

We do not believe there will be any discomforts or risks associated with taking part in the interview. However, if you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you do not need to answer them. You can choose to end your participation in this research at any time that you wish. Whilst the interview may cover information about your personal history and background, you only need to share what you are comfortable with in doing so. It is not our wish to cause you any embarrassment, inconvenience, or distress. Participation is voluntary and you will in no way be disadvantaged if you choose to withdraw at any time.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If at any time during the discussion you are uncomfortable, or wish to retract or revise any statements, you may do so. We are committed to protecting you matauranga/knowledge and ensuring that you feel safe and comfortable with our discussions and your contributions to this research. You may withdraw from the wānanga/talanoa or at any time.

If you are feeling distressed by your participation in this study AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.

let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health

What are the benefits?

We believe that the results of this talanoa/wānanga will provide us with insights that will inform future research that will help to build a better picture of food environments, and social impact intiatives for whānau in Māori and Pasifika communities. Your involvement may shape ways in which educators, policy developers, and those engaged in the food environment and wider food system can best provide support and infrastructure to build healthy food environments that are led by the communities in which they hope to serve. Your views will provide important insight to help guide policy and practice to improve food environments for Māori and Pasifika whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau.

How will my privacy be protected?

Please note that your identity will be disclosed to the other participants involved in the wānanga or talanoa due to the nature of being part of a discussion with others. However, all information shared during the session should be kept private and note shared with anyone outside the sessions, and we ask that you keep the identity of your fellow participants confidential. Your valuable contribution will be confidential as personally identifiable information will be removed from transcripts and final write up.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs associated with the Wānanga/Talanoa beyond the time it will take to conduct the Talanoa, which we envisage will be approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. We are happy to travel to a site of your choosing for the Talanoa. However, if you prefer to come to AUT South Campus, we will ensure that you receive reimbursement for any costs associated to travel to the campus.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please take time to consider this information. I would like to begin conducting Talanoa/Wānanga between November and December 2022 so you can consent to participate at any time over the coming month, up until 30th October 2022.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will have 2 weeks to consider this invitation. Please note it is envisaged that interviews will commence in approximately October 2022.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Daysha Tonumaipe'a: Daysha.tonumaipea@aut.ac.nz; 0272435419

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Primary Supervisor Contact Details: Ella Henry: ella.henry@aut.ac.nz

AUT City Campus, 55 Wellesley Street East, Auckland CBD

09-921-9999 ext. ext. 6097

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *4/11/2022*, AUTEC Reference number *22/291*.

F. INDICATIVE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW, WĀNANGA, TALANOA

In-depth Interview	Wānanga/Talanoa Discussion
With owner or manager: • Tell me about how you came to be involved in this business? Why did you start this enterprise? • What is the problem you are trying to solve? • How have you contributed to creating social good? • What challenges have you had while trying to make impact? • Who are the beneficiaries/users of your service/initiative? • How have you sustained your enterprise? • How do you measure success for your enterprise/initiative? • What could government and society do to encourage more initiatives that improve food spaces for Māori and Pasifika? *With employee or volunteer:* • Tell me about how you came to be working/volunteering at [enterprise] • What motivates you? • How does culture or upbringing play a part in your involvement in this enterprise? • Tell me about the end-users of the service/enterprise?	*Introductory visual methods:* Materials: Pens, Sheet of paper per participants Ask participants to draw a map of where they get their food from. Invite whānau to share their map with the group. *Discussion on the participants personal experiences:* • Tell me about the food sources you most frequently use in your neighbourhood/community? • What would a healthy food space look like to you? • How has your culture or upbringing played a part in your eating habits and food choices? • What are your priorities when purchasing food? *Discussion on the enterprise/initiative:* • How would you describe this initiative? • What is your favourite aspect about this organisation? • What feedback would you have for this enterprise? • What changes can be made to create or encourage healthy eating spaces in our communities? • Has your experience with this enterprise influenced your eating habits? If so, how?

These questions should only serve as a discussion guide and are meant to encourage