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## **Māori internationalisation and trade policy: The role of business ethics**

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Our study seeks to shed light on how Māori who engage with New Zealand's trade agenda view trade, in particular as it relates to Māori business ethics and indigenous values. The New Zealand export sector sustains more than half a million New Zealand jobs and trade is an important driver of productivity, employment and incomes (Statistics NZ, 2018). Productivity per New Zealand worker is 36% greater if they are in a firm that is exporting, compared to one that isn't. It has also been established that employment grows 7% to 12% faster when New Zealand firms start exporting. Similarly, the Māori economy, estimated at nearly \$50 billion (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018), has been growing substantially, and 20% of Māori small and medium enterprises and 44% of Māori authorities (Statistics New Zealand, 2016) engage with world. Although it is expected that these figures will continue to grow, until recently, with few exceptions (for instance, Kawharu, 2016) there has been only a limited focus on how Māori exporters engage with, and may benefit from, New Zealand's trade policy agenda. Moreover, along with the rest of the world, New Zealand's approach to trade policy is evolving rapidly and this has important consequences for how Māori can participate and grow their enterprises for the benefit of iwi and beyond.

Given the growing significance of the Māori economy, and the fact that the prevailing international trade landscape is currently being questioned globally through developments such as Brexit and recent trade barriers introduced by the USA, our research will contribute to the body of knowledge on engaging indigenous enterprises with exporting. In particular, given the

particularities of indigenous entrepreneurship (Spiller et al., 2017), there is little understanding on the ethics of trade from an indigenous perspective, as noted by Kawharu (2016).

The study draws on the experiences and perceptions that Māori entrepreneurs and exporters have about New Zealand trade policy within their value framework. Data will be drawn from ten in-depth interviews with Māori exporters in the fishing, tourism and honey-making industries, who will be accessed through business associations and regional economic development agencies. The interviews will be thematically analysed and compared to findings on indigenous exporters elsewhere.

The study is framed within the context of Māori business practices, which are particular to an indigenous population, with specific indigenous values and business ethics. By taking a business ethics perspective on how Māori SME exporters perceive trade policy, and how it is developed, we contribute to the debate about diversity in the development of trade and international economic policy, as well as provide insights to the understanding of Māori internationalisation in the context of intrinsic Māori values. This will allow us to grasp how Māori businesses, including SMEs, engage with, and experience trade policy. These insights can help inform future trade policy development, and engage more Māori enterprises in exporting, resulting in economic growth in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## References

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