

How does enterprise assistance support Māori entrepreneurs? An identity approach

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Abstract

Indigenous entrepreneurs represent a growing segment of the business community in many countries, but face sometimes stark challenges in starting and running enterprises. The success of indigenous entrepreneurs matters because they draw upon their indigeneity as sources of inspiration and innovation, contribute to the collective wellbeing of indigenous peoples, and some represent world class exemplars of sustainable ways of doing business. While enterprise assistance for entrepreneurs is widely accepted as a worthwhile use of public funds few guidelines exist to help policy makers and providers understand the needs of indigenous entrepreneurs and how best to respond. In this paper, we use the theoretical lens of entrepreneurial identity to provide insight into this challenging context. Taking an identity perspective may enable us to tease out how identifying as a Māori entrepreneur can enable and also hinder change in this community context. In doing so we lay foundations for future empirical work.

Keywords: Māori, indigenous, enterprise assistance, entrepreneurial identity

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INTRODUCTION

This paper reports the development of an identity approach to support research and thus provide insight into how Māori entrepreneurs might best be served by enterprise assistance in Aotearoa New Zealand. Indigenous entrepreneurs represent a growing segment of the business community in many countries but face sometimes stark challenges in starting and running enterprises. The success of indigenous entrepreneurs matters because they draw upon their indigeneity as sources of inspiration and innovation, contribute to the collective wellbeing of indigenous peoples, and some represent world class exemplars of sustainable ways of doing business (see e.g., Mika, 2016). While enterprise assistance for entrepreneurs is widely accepted as a worthwhile use of public funds (Reihana, Sisley, & Modlik, 2007) few guidelines exist to help policy makers and providers understand the needs of indigenous entrepreneurs and how best to respond. In this paper, we use the theoretical lens of identity to provide insight into this challenging context.

We argue for identity as a potentially useful explanatory concept for our study because it provides a lens into how context shapes entrepreneurship, an important focus for entrepreneurship scholars in recent years (Welter, 2011). The Aotearoa New Zealand context is different, culturally, socially and economically, through its bicultural population (indigenous Māori and European settlers) and its geographical isolation. As well as the distinctive nature of Māori culture in regard to entrepreneurship, several studies have pointed to the existence of the ‘Tall Poppy’ syndrome (TPS) in Aotearoa

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New Zealand, a phenomenon of Australian origin referring to conspicuously successful people being subject to the enactment of envy, jealousy and hostility (Mouly & Sankaran, 2002). Kirkwood (2007) examines this phenomenon in relation to entrepreneurs in Aotearoa, New Zealand, concluding that the notion is pervasive and can damage entrepreneurs who seek a high profile in getting off the ground. Research in this area is still sparse, for both New Zealand and entrepreneurship, particularly Māori entrepreneurship. The notion that identity for Māori entrepreneurs is important is not new; the contribution of this paper is in unpacking the concept more fully than has previously been reported in the literature. Developing a deeper insight into an identity perspective may enable us to tease out how being identified as a Māori entrepreneur can enable and also hinder change in this context, through the interplay of entrepreneurial identity with the evolving community dynamic. In this paper we bring together the literature on entrepreneurial identity in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and indigenous entrepreneurship to better understand how Māori entrepreneurs might best be targeted by assistance programmes, given that present uptake is low (Mika, 2015). In doing so, we extend the use of the identity concept to the contextual aspects surrounding enterprise assistance to Māori entrepreneurs.

MĀORI ENTREPRENEURS: MULTIPLE DISCOURSES

In this section, we consider the phenomena at the heart of this paper: entrepreneurial identity, Māori entrepreneurship and TPS.

Entrepreneurial identity

There is increasing recognition of entrepreneurship as a process within a social and cultural context in the entrepreneurship literature (Welter, 2011). Entrepreneurs must engage in a set of interactions concerning what they do and how they present their activity as part of the social context which they may actually be trying to change. Behaviours are enacted and of course perceived by individuals, in accordance with the wider cultural context. To be well received and therefore successful, they must carry out what it means 'to be an entrepreneur' in the eyes of society. They need to go beyond realising opportunity and creating economic and social value; they must build legitimacy for themselves and their emerging venture in the eyes of the public (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Identity offers a useful theoretical lens for this study, as it captures both perceptions and practices; what entrepreneurs do and how they are seen in society (Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Lewis, 2015). Identity offers a means of understanding the roles that people present and how those roles are received (Nicolson & Anderson 2005) and further, how they rationalise the need to be different (by creating novel value) with a sense of belonging (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). An entrepreneurial identity can be an asset for challenging the rules and the status quo when creating something new (Brenkert, 2009; Anderson & Warren, 2011; Bureau & Zander, 2014), but this is not universal (Hytti, 2005; Warren & Smith, 2015).

It is appropriate to draw on the literature that views identity as a fluid, social construct, rather than an unproblematic given. Leitch and Harrison (2016) highlight a European tradition of interpretivist studies of entrepreneurial identity taking a social constructivist perspective (Cohen & Musson, 2000; Down & Reveley, 2004; Berglund, 2006; Down, 2006; Mills & Pawson, 2006; Jones, Latham, & Betta, 2008; Reveley & Down, 2009; Watson, 2009; Boje & Smith, 2010; Kjellander, Nordqvist, & Welter, 2012; Williams Middleton, 2013; Lewis, 2015). In this tradition, Down (2006) proposes identity is a mutable achievement in time and space, built through relationships with others, and also in relation to the surrounding social context (Leitch & Harrison, 2016). Identities can serve as powerful drivers for entrepreneurial behaviours around legitimacy, reputation and ethical conduct. Correspondingly,

Watson (2009) talks about the need for entrepreneurs to carry out 'identity work' to legitimise what they do. Williams Middleton (2013) notes that studies explain how entrepreneurs narratively construct and negotiate their identities (e.g., Warren, 2004; Mills & Pawson, 2006; Down & Warren, 2008; Jones, Latham, & Betta, 2008). Here entrepreneurs try to present their story as legitimate to local stakeholders to justify access to resources and opportunities (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Navis & Glynn, 2011). How they do this may require the careful negotiation of conflicting discourses: the need for the entrepreneur to be different and stand out from the crowd in the creation of novelty, and perhaps becoming wealthy as a result, which may be received differently in different cultures.

There is an established sociological tradition (Goffman, 1978) of treating identity as a practice – the presentation of self – in symbolic interactionism (Anderson, 2005). In entrepreneurship the interactive view has surfaced as identity work which is shaped by the social environment (Watson, 2009; Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis, & Sabelis, 2009; Brown, 2015). In doing identity work, individuals draw on available socially constructed discursive resources and then weave these discourses into their narrative of identity (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Hamilton, 2014) in line with social attractiveness and dominant interests (Wieland, 2010). Warren and Smith (2015) note how public perceptions of entrepreneurs vary over time, highlighting problems for those who fail to navigate socially contextualised rules. Thus, there is tension between being different, but not too different.

In Westernized economies (including Aotearoa New Zealand), the 'enterprise discourse' has become powerful in the media and through government policy, encouraging people to become entrepreneurs. De Clercq and Voronov (2009: 399) explain, 'discourses of entrepreneurship and enterprise may have taken a special position in capitalist societies by providing a normative prescription of the roles people are to play and how they should interrelate with important institutions in society and one another'. The enterprise discourse promoted by government policy makers identifies entrepreneurs as drivers of economic growth, even aligned to restructuring public services (Du Gay, 2004), or regional development (McKeever, Anderson, & Jack, 2014). The enterprise discourse thus offers stereotypical scripts of 'the entrepreneur' (Down & Warren, 2008; Perren & Dannreuther, 2013), aligned to a plethora of initiatives and schemes that promote competition and high profile achievement.

As Gill and Larson (2014) show, the enterprise discourse is not monolithic, it is shaped by local discourses of home, self and place. Local networks have been shown to legitimise entrepreneurial activity, and the local environment can dramatically impact the ability of entrepreneurs to thrive in that locality, as well as the wider national context (Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989; Hustedde, 2007; Fortunato, 2014; Gill & Larson, 2014). If there is a 'moral space' (Anderson & Smith, 2007) created for entrepreneurship in such discourses, entrepreneurs must understand that as they strive for a legitimate entrepreneurial identity. Warren (2004) showed that an entrepreneurial identity can be negative when constructions of entrepreneurship carry connotations of greed or selfishness – 'the unfriendly face of capitalism'. Otherwise, negative responses may occur, provoking resistance to entrepreneurial action (Doern & Goss, 2012). An identity lens enables us to focus on the subtleties of such interactions. We strive to be able to account for how acceptance of Māori entrepreneurship is granted or withheld and how identity work from Māori entrepreneurs influences that approval during the quest for legitimacy.

Māori entrepreneurship

Studies of Māori entrepreneurship are informed by studies of indigenous entrepreneurship. Indigeneity refers to the quality of being indigenous; with the New Zealand variant of indigeneity being 'Māoriness' or Māoritanga, that is, Māori cultural identity (Rangihau, 1992; NZIER, 2003). Peredo et al. (2004) and Hindle and Moroz (2010) argue for the notion of indigenous entrepreneurship as a separate field, where there is a need to reconcile history and understand indigenous values. In this

perspective, entrepreneurship has often been aligned with the history of an indigenous people which has then been disrupted through colonisation, often by Europeans (Ivory, 2002). As a result, indigenous peoples are typically cast within Western analysis as marginalised subcultures, underdeveloped, impoverished, vanquished, but who may have legitimate emancipatory claims hinged to treaty rights, hard-won court-rulings, legislation and policy provisions, antiestablishmentarianism and outright human suffering (Havemann, 1999; Mikaere, 2000; Howard, 2003; Chakrabarti, 2006; Smith, 1999). Yet, burgeoning indigenous economies suggest indigenous entrepreneurs have much to offer as they seek to create value not just in 'traditional' sectors such as crafts and food, but also in, for example, emerging digital spaces (Walker, Mika, & Palmer, 2017). Mika (2015) summarises three broad views of indigenous entrepreneurship: as poverty alleviation; as fulfilling aspirations for economic independence on indigenous terms; and finally, as an emancipatory endeavour for populations disenfranchised from the states within which they live.

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, while estimated to be worth around US\$42 billion in 2013 (Nana, Khan, & Schulze, 2015), the scale of the Māori economy is insufficient on its own to support a Māori population of around 712,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Instead, Māori aspirations for economic self-sufficiency are to be met by Māori participation in the Māori, national and global economies (Parker, 2000; Allen, 2011; Durie, 2011; Nana, 2013). There is an economic imperative then to support successful Māori entrepreneurship, yet this must be achieved via policies that recognise past disenfranchisement, inequities, disagreements and false starts. Overall, there is some consensus in the literature that entrepreneurship has always been part of Māori society (Pihama & Penehira, 2005), but how this should be expressed, supported and developed post disruption and in an increasingly urbanised population is subject to debate. Anderson and Giberson (2003) point out the strong tie between process and place for indigenous entrepreneurship. Yet, Mason and Brown (2014) caution policy makers against replicating ecosystems from elsewhere without sufficient local adaptation to the local context.

Who is a Māori entrepreneur and what is Māori entrepreneurship are premised upon a Māori world view. A Māori world view draws upon Māori knowledge, language, culture, methods and self-identification and socialisation as Māori within *te ao Māori* (Māori society). A Māori entrepreneur is thus a person who identifies as Māori and engages in entrepreneurial activity according to a Māori world view, but integrates within this, elements of a Western world view. Māori entrepreneurship is not contingent upon a Western world view, but the prevailing institutions of democracy and capitalism which derive from Western heritage condition Māori entrepreneurship (Mika, 2015). Within this context, the central concern of Māori entrepreneurship is not merely creating economic value through new combinations of products, processes, and markets, but doing so in a way that accords with Māori cultural imperatives. While the degree to which Māori knowledge, values, language and customs are applied may vary, these elements of Māoriness (values, language and customs), which are acquired by socialisation within *whānau* (family), *hapū* (sub-tribe), *iwi* (tribe) and Māori communities, are associated with Māori entrepreneurship. (King, 1975; Black, Bean, Collings, & Nuku, 1992, 2012; Ministry of Justice, 2001; Mead, 2003; Royal, 2005; Gillies, Tinirau, & Mako, 2007). Thus, there is a clash of paradigms between the preoccupation with value creation in Western entrepreneurship and an emphasis on holism, relational well-being, and interconnectedness by Māori seeking to create social, spiritual and cultural value (Pio, Tipuna, Rasheed, & Parker, 2013).

The prioritisation of cultural, social and spiritual values by Māori enterprises is evident in Māori management theory and practice (Warriner, 1999; Puketapu, 2000; Harmsworth & Tahi, 2008; Harmsworth, 2009; Yates, 2009; Spiller, 2010; Knox, Agnew, & McCarthy, 2014; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014). For instance, Morgan and Mulligan (2006), in examining the characteristics of 30 Māori enterprises, find a common desire to be both culturally and commercially successful, with cultural values the higher priority. Harmsworth (2005) shows that Māori values are instrumental in defining what is a Māori organisation, setting cultural and ethical standards, enterprise direction, and market differentiation.

TPS

Kirkwood (2007) argues that TPS is presumed to have emerged from New Zealand's geographic isolation (Packer, 2014) and has been argued as a mix of the social characteristics of its indigenous Māori population (Haar & Delaney, 2009) and early British immigrants (Packer, 2014), resulting in a discourse pertaining to an egalitarian culture being desirable (Trevor-Roberts, Ashkanasy, & Kennedy, 2003; Peeters, 2004; Hugo, 2006). TPS is often considered to be culturally specific to Australasia, but it is also noted elsewhere, such as the Nordic countries where the 'Law of Jante' (janteloven) discourages people from promoting their achievements (Scott, 2016), or showing pride (Bromgard, Trafimow, & Linn, 2014).

In business, perceptions of success are related to a number of factors such as venture creation, business growth and job creation, and also the accumulation of personal wealth and social stature for business leaders. The likelihood of TPS is linked to wider societal perceptions of what it means to act legitimately in business. There is evidence that managers behave differently in accordance with societal expectations, which differ in societies that aspire to an egalitarian culture, such as Aotearoa New Zealand and the United States, for example, where Americans generally perceive the upward and downward mobility of individuals with respect to wealth to be more legitimate than Australians (Mandisodza, Jost, & Unzueta, 2006).

Within the business context, entrepreneurs are expected to take a high profile role in leading the development of new products, new services, new ventures, new markets, as well as instigating new behaviours, around new technologies for example. In Aotearoa, New Zealand, if TPS is a cultural norm, then this might well impact perceptions of entrepreneurial legitimacy, and perhaps even the notion of being an entrepreneur at all. Kirkwood's exploratory qualitative study (2007) found that over half of the 40 participating entrepreneurs in New Zealand had experienced TPS in their role as business owners; recognising this, they had employed strategies for managing its impact. These strategies included 'staying under the radar', not telling people they owned a business and not 'flaunting' their wealth. In particular, the key way that these business owners managed the effects of TPS was in relation to their assets – not buying expensive vehicles, houses or taking expensive holidays. These results parallel Maritz and Beaver (2011), who found that New Zealand entrepreneurs chose 'lifestyle' pathways that enabled the cloaking of wealth and thus 'hiding' from potential TPS conflict.

Kirkwood (2007) suggests that the effects of TPS may have three significant implications for entrepreneurship in Aotearoa, New Zealand. First, TPS may discourage entrepreneurs from starting a business; second, it may inhibit 'failed' entrepreneurs to establish another business because of the public reaction to their 'fall'. Finally, entrepreneurs may deliberately limit business growth because they do not want to attract additional attention (Kirkwood, 2007). This is worrying for Aotearoa New Zealand, as not only does it need entrepreneurs to grow the economy, it is also allocating resources to support entrepreneurship: this is a tension of legitimisation that needs to be addressed.

ENTERPRISE ASSISTANCE AND MĀORI ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

Aotearoa New Zealand is eminently concerned with business growth, and sees entrepreneurship, innovation, science, education and infrastructure all having a role in bringing this about (Joyce & Parata, 2014; Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014; New Zealand Government, 2015). Mika (2015) notes that traditional enterprise assistance policies favour direct intervention addressing specific needs (e.g., advice, markets, finance, technology) within given industries and firms, provided there is evidence of market failure and the benefits of acting outweigh the costs of not doing so; though the results of direct intervention have been mixed (Greene & Storey, 2010; Mason & Brown, 2014). More recently, policy makers have been drawn to more holistic forms of enterprise

assistance, recognising that the complex and dynamic nature of firms and the social and economic environments in which they operate, require more subtle, systemic and contingent policy interventions (Acs & Szerb, 2006; Audretsch, Grilo, & Thurik, 2007; OECD, 2010; Smallbone, 2010; Mason & Brown, 2014).

Māori enterprise development relates to the growth of Māori enterprises within the Māori economy, how that growth is classified and activated, and the business needs, which give rise to help-seeking by Māori entrepreneurs (Mika, 2015). Māori business needs are generally inferred from theory, industry and policy and can be identified as macro and micro (Zapalska, Perry, & Dabb, 2003; Reihana, Sisley, & Modlik, 2007; Battisti & Gillies, 2009). At the macro-level (i.e., business environment), Māori business needs include market access, economic policy, taxation, research and development, property rights, and compliance costs. At the firm-level, Māori business needs include finance, management, marketing, networking, training, technology, and advice.

Mika (2015) finds that publicly funded enterprise assistance performs three roles in respect of Māori entrepreneurship. The first role of enterprise assistance is to satisfy the firm-level business needs of Māori entrepreneurs as clients. These needs are not dissimilar to the business needs of non-indigenous enterprises, with Māori entrepreneurs making use of typical forms of enterprise assistance (i.e., information, advice, facilitation, training, grants and finance) (Storey, 1994). The second role of enterprise assistance is to build the entrepreneurial capabilities of Māori entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial capabilities are determinants of entrepreneurship that manifest within five forms of capital: social capital, human capital, cultural capital, financial capital, and spiritual capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Firkin, 2001; Light & Gold, 2000; Verter, 2003; Ahmad & Hoffman, 2007; Chu, 2007). Mika (2015) finds, however, that these capabilities are modified by Māori indigeneity, redefining entrepreneurial capabilities, legitimising Māori spirituality, knowledge, institutions, language, values and methods in entrepreneurship. If, as Mika (2015) suggests, cultural authenticity is a key component of the success of such initiatives, then how Māori create an authentic entrepreneurial identity must be part of the picture. This must recognise the imperatives of Māori cultural identity, the enterprise discourse, and further TPS, which seems to be a factor for both Māori and settler cultures in Aotearoa, New Zealand (albeit that TPS might be perceived and expressed differently in the two communities).

While the identity of Māori as *iwi* and *hapū* is well established, there is less recognition of the subtle nuances around the construction of a legitimate entrepreneurial identity. The notion of the 'maui entrepreneur' (Tapsell & Woods, 2008; Keelan, 2010) has found some purchase in attempting to reconcile Māori history and values for entrepreneurs (Dell & Houkamau, 2016). Within Māori mythology, Māui is a charismatic, mischievous mythical figure, who appears in oral traditions throughout the Pacific (O'Sullivan & Dana, 2008; Keelan, 2009). It has been suggested that Māori entrepreneurs have embraced Māui as an inspirational metaphor for innovative pursuits (Keelan, 2009; Hanita, Te Kanawa, & Rihia, 2016; Mika, 2016). Māui achieved many feats, one of which was an adventure to seek the source of fire. Thus, the concept of *ahi kimi* or fire-seeking takes its meaning from a traditional understanding of the importance of interacting with the external world to innovate, through environmental scanning and the recognition and development of opportunities in the wider world (Dell & Houkamau, 2016), thus affording direct connection with the mainstream entrepreneurship literature, while embracing and advocating Māori entrepreneurial freedom and empowerment.

Thus, Dell and Houkamau (2016) contrast fire-seeking with the metaphor of *ahi kā* or fire keeping, an inward focused function, describing the actions and people who keep the home fires burning (Mead, 2003). Dell and Houkamau (2016: 9) state that fire keeping, recognises the importance of maintaining 'cultural diversity, knowledge systems, customs, and identities that belong to the Māori people'. Fire keeping enhances what it means to be a Māori entrepreneur and do business in a Māori way, creating value directly benefitting indigenous communities. In contrast, the metaphoric notion of keeping the fire alight refers to the nurturing, preservation, and protection of the cultural and spiritual aspects that constitute the heart and soul of indigenous communities.

These authors connect the concept to a range of initiatives in Aotearoa, New Zealand, including for example, Hinepreneur, a collaboration by Māori Woman's Development Incorporated (MWDI), the Global Indigenous Woman's Leadership and Development programme, and RP Enterprises, that builds, through a cultural lens, the capacity of Māori woman to create personal and whānau wealth (MWDI, 2015). In addition, Māori specific entrepreneurial programmes and competitions such as Dig My Idea (ATEED, 2015), Māori hi-tech awards (New Zealand Hi-Tech Trust, 2015), and Whiua ki te Ao (Velocity & Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2017), focus on encouraging Māori to develop ideas with global potential. Moreover, Māori-specific innovation and entrepreneurship roles within public and private institutions are emancipating and empowering Māori entrepreneurs to participate in their external environments (Mika, 2015). Some of these include, the Māori economy team within Callaghan Innovation ('Callaghan looks to boost Māori economy', 2013), the Māori business team within New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE, 2015), and the Māori economic unit within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE, 2017), among others. While good progress is being made, overall the uptake of such programmes remains low (Mika, 2015).

We find entrepreneurial identity has fundamental implications for Māori entrepreneurship as well as policies intended to assist Māori entrepreneurs. Identifying as Māori and as a Māori entrepreneur are choices Māori are entitled to make as tangata whenua, the indigenous people of Aotearoa. In identifying as a Māori entrepreneur, one is opting into the Māori economy wherein their commercial activity is counted as contributing to this economy. The act of self-identifying as a Māori entrepreneur also implies an affinity with a Māori world view, which shapes entrepreneurial identity and practice. Some in this category will identify instead as Māori in business, which separates ethnic affiliation as Māori from the nature of the entrepreneurial activity they undertake (Mika, Bensemann, & Fahey, 2016). Not all Māori who are 'entrepreneurial', however, will identify as a Māori entrepreneur, exercising as is their right to self-select their identity. They are in effect opting out of the Māori economy. This group may be sizeable, but few studies have examined this segment, that is, those who opt out of identifying as Māori entrepreneurs, and indeed, as Māori enterprises.

Māori entrepreneurial identity gives policy makers some sense of the scope, scale, and modes of enterprise assistance that are likely to work for Māori entrepreneurs and the basis for doing so. When asked what works, Māori entrepreneurs consistently identify three expectations of providers: cultural competency (knowledge of the Māori language, culture and history and the ability to use it); relational competency (relationships with Māori entrepreneurs that are *mana*-enhancing for both provider and entrepreneur); and technical competency (the capacity to deliver promised technical assistance) (Mika, 2015). Three steps providers can take to satisfy these expectations are: first, identify who among their clients are Māori entrepreneurs by asking clients to self-identify as Māori; second, ask the client (i.e., the Māori entrepreneur) what their business needs are and their preferred way of working with the provider; and third, develop the cultural capacity to interact with Māori entrepreneurs in ways that are authentic, appropriate and effective.

CONCLUSION

Māori entrepreneurship will be key in future to supporting the needs of the Māori community and realising the full, unique, potential of the Māori community in an increasingly global and digital world. Māori entrepreneurs must behave in ways that are perceived as legitimate to the Māori community and also to Aotearoa, New Zealand, society overall. For an entrepreneur to practice in a legitimate manner in Aotearoa, New Zealand, they must take account of both Māori cultural values and wider societal values in the construction of their entrepreneurial identity. In taking a fluid perspective on identity, we take account of Bargh's (2012) caution against oversimplification of complex economic and social

contexts through legitimising any one identity construct. Foley (2006), for example in Australia, suggests that the focus on community-based enterprise can render invisible urban entrepreneurs.

Thus, in this paper we have demonstrated the different discourses that shape the construction of a Māori entrepreneurial identity: the challenges of indigeneity; Māori cultural values and aspirations; the wider enterprise discourse of 'Western' economies; and the subtle and pervasive notion of TPS. In taking a social constructionist approach to Māori entrepreneurial identity, we recognise the fluidity of the construct (Leitch & Harrison, 2016) in a country context that is shaped by intertwined discourses around what it means to be an entrepreneur, as Māori and as a New Zealander, of a particular context and place (Gill & Larson, 2014). Our contribution is in showing how better understanding of entrepreneurial identity can enable provision of focussed aid for Māori entrepreneurs.

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