

HOUSING POLICY FOR RANGATAHI MĀORI: A DISCUSSION PAPER ON SHARED EQUITY HOMEOWNERSHIP

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Front page image: Homes in Puhinui Park. Photo taken by Hanna-Marie Monga (2023).



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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of a housing policy option for rangatahi Māori (Māori youth), specifically focusing on shared equity home ownership (SEH). This overview provides a background context derived from domestic and international literature for the policy and outlines the features, benefits and challenges of SEH. Implementation considerations and potential impacts are also discussed. This paper seeks to advise and inform decision makers, policy makers and relevant stakeholders on SEH as a response to improving home ownership for rangatahi Māori, and to encourage further discussion and collaboration in developing practical and responsive housing policies.

This work represents an extension of prior research efforts, drawing on the insights articulated within the working paper titled, *A Critical Review of Rangatahi Māori and Housing Policy: Working Paper* (Paul, 2022). Within the working paper, two key recommendations were posited: firstly, to invest in rangatahi Māori housing research and data, and secondly, to improve housing policy for rangatahi Māori. The present paper serves to build on these recommendations, with a particular focus on the second recommendation. Paul's (2022) working paper analysis points to a lack of housing policies explicitly tailored to rangatahi Māori in the Tāmaki Makaurau area.

Rangatahi Māori remain overlooked and unrecognised in relation to both local and national plans, policies and strategies. With this in mind, the SEH policy is proposed as a potential pathway for improving home ownership rates and enhancing the accessibility of affordable housing outcomes for whānau Māori, explicitly emphasising the needs of rangatahi Māori.

As a dedicated team of emerging rangatahi Māori researchers, our intentional and purposeful focus is centred on improving housing policies for rangatahi Māori in Aotearoa. Our collective research efforts are directed towards making meaningful contributions to the research and policy landscape, and advocating for the interests of rangatahi Māori, specifically within the housing space.

This discussion paper has been organised into seven main sections, which are as follows: 1) introduction, providing background context; 2) SEH; 3) a brief overview of the current home ownership situation for Māori; 4) policy context; 5) pathways to home ownership; 6) a discussion on what SEH could offer rangatahi Māori; and 7) concluding remarks.

1.1 Background Context

This discussion paper is part of the larger RKTk research project. This project is also a part of the UIKI research programme, which focuses on Māori housing in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The RKTk project is a 4-year (2020–2024) initiative funded by the National Science Challenges' BBTHC. The overarching research question for the RKTk project is: "What are the realities and aspirations of rangatahi Māori for kāinga (housing), and how can rangatahi Māori be best supported to navigate pathways towards an affordable, safe and secure home in Tāmaki Makaurau?"

In Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the dream of becoming a home owner can feel unattainable because of various challenges and barriers. These challenges include high property prices, high interest rates, limited housing supply (both rentals and affordable housing), relatively low incomes, limited access to financial support and a high cost of living, to name a few. According to Auckland Council (n.d.), in 2018, the median income per annum for Māori (NZ\$27,500) was lower than the median income for all Aucklanders (NZ\$34,400), and it was NZ\$14,400 less than the median income for people of European descent. This difference is even larger when wealth is taken into consideration, with the individual median net worth of Māori in 2021 being only 27% of those of European descent — NZ\$42,000 for Māori in comparison to NZ\$151,000 for those of European descent (Statistics New Zealand, 2022). Both income level and net wealth need to be considered when determining optimal home ownership models (e.g., shared ownership). Both income and wealth are critical factors in rangatahi achieving home ownership. Additionally, the wealth statistics demonstrate that wider whānau networks lack the financial resilience and capability to overcome this challenge.

For many whānau Māori, high house prices outstrip their earning capacity and can discourage them from pursuing home ownership. According to the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ, 2022) data from 2022, the median house price in Tāmaki Makaurau was NZ\$1,065,000 in December 2022. This price is significantly higher than the national median house price of NZ\$810,000, as reported by REINZ (2022). The deposit and the high income needed to secure and service a mortgage are significant challenges for whānau and rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

1.2 Scope of the Paper

The SEH programme was identified as a potential affordable housing tool through our engagement with rangatahi Māori participating in the RKTk research project. The findings from this research have informed the current paper.

There are various providers of shared home ownership in Aotearoa. For example, the New Zealand Housing Foundation (NZHF), YouOwn, Kāinga Ora (a First Home partner), Tāmaki Regeneration and Dwell Housing Trust, to name a few, are operating in the market.

However, for this paper, we specifically focus on the NZHF as they were identified as a good example that rangatahi shared from their own experiences. For this reason, we wanted to explore the programme further.

For the scope of this paper, we use a case study example from the NZHF SEH programme, focusing primarily on the Puhinui Park Development in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa. The NZHF SEH programme has provided a pathway for whānau Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland to achieve their home ownership aspirations. Shared ownership programmes allow participants to purchase a portion of a property and gradually increase their ownership over time, making home ownership more accessible and affordable.

In this paper, we encourage investment in SEH programmes as a potential response to support rangatahi Māori in achieving affordable home ownership in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Our initial research indicates that no housing provisions are designed specifically for rangatahi in Tāmaki Makaurau (Paul, 2022), but SEH through the NZHF's programme may be a viable alternative.

As mentioned, this discussion paper draws on insights and stories from the RKTk project. The project involved a series of podcast interviews (n=10), individual interviews (n=12) and four wānanga sessions (n=23) conducted by our research team. Additionally, the NZHF provided supplementary research upon request (R. Ness, personal communication, November 2022).

It is important for the reader to understand that the current study is situated at the local level in the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland region, but housing policy is examined and investigated at the national level. Note that we do not intend to provide any economic or market analysis in this study as this is beyond the scope and outside our teams' expertise, but we draw on insights from *Shared Housing Ownership for Moderate-income Households in Auckland: A Path to Affordability*, a study undertaken by Fernandez et al. (2020). We intend to undertake further research into rangatahi Māori economic well-being for the Generation Kāinga research programme, which investigates rangatahi Māori and kāinga in Aotearoa.

1.3 Rangatahi Māori

Rangatahi Māori is the term we use to refer to youth who whakapapa Māori (Māori ancestry). As we have mentioned in the working paper, *A Critical Review of Rangatahi Māori and Housing Policy: Working Paper for Urban Intergenerational Kāinga Innovations*

(*UIKI Research Programme* (Paul, 2022), we define the rangatahi Māori cohort as aged between 15 and 25 years old. It is worth noting that understanding the concept of rangatahi Māori from an Ao Māori (Māori worldview) lens is beyond the scope of this paper, but the concept is discussed in detail in additional bodies of work that are forthcoming from our research team.

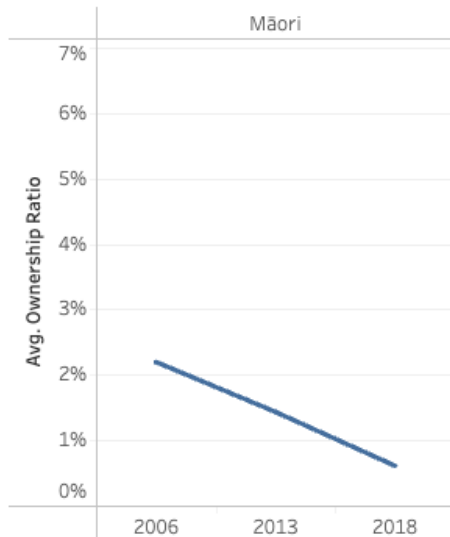
Rangatahi Māori comprise a substantial portion of the Māori community in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. For context, nearly a quarter (23.4%) of the total Māori population in Aotearoa New Zealand reside in Tāmaki Makaurau, representing the largest concentration across all regions, with the median age of Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau being 24.9 years old (Auckland Council, 2020). According to 2018 Census data, around 181,194 Tāmaki Makaurau residents, representing over 11% of the total populace, identified as Māori. Moreover, over half of the Māori population is under the age of 25. Thus, transforming social and economic outcomes for this significant population necessitates prioritising policies and investments targeted at supporting rangatahi Māori in the region (Independent Māori Statutory Board, 2019).

It has been demonstrated that home ownership is an important factor in securing and building intergenerational wealth and achieving quality of life within Aotearoa (Rout, 2022). The rapidly falling home ownership rates amongst Māori over recent decades (Rout et al., 2019) and the declining percentage of rangatahi Māori ownership (Figure 1) have serious implications for economic and social security within Tāmaki Makaurau and Aotearoa. When intersected with the significant and growing proportion of rangatahi Māori, it is clear that solutions to the housing crisis are both crucial and urgent for securing the overall well-being and success of communities in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Figure 1 shows the trend in home ownership rates for rangatahi Māori (Māori aged 15–24 years) in Tāmaki Makaurau from 2006–2018. The home ownership rate for rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau decreased slightly from 2% in 2006 to 1% in 2018. This represents a 1% decline over the 12-year period. While already extremely low in 2006, the downward trend indicates a worsening of home ownership access for rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. In 2018, just 1% of Māori aged 15–24 years owned their own home in Tāmaki Makaurau, down from 2% in 2006. This compares to an overall home ownership rate of around 45% for all residents in Tāmaki Makaurau during this period (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). The declining and strikingly low home ownership rate for rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau highlights an ongoing, systemic lack of access to affordable housing and home financing for this demographic. Urgent policy changes and targeted programmes

to improve home ownership attainability for rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau are needed to reverse this inequitable trend.

Figure 1. Trend in rangatahi Māori (aged 15–24 years) home ownership in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland).



Source: Whitehead, J. (2022). *Rangatahi dashboard*.

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/jay.whitehead/viz/RangatahiDashboard/Dashboard1>

2. SEH

SEH is an affordable housing tool that enables individuals and whānau with limited financial resources to become home owners by offering shared ownership of the property via reducing upfront costs and making home ownership more affordable. It is important for context that readers understand that housing policy in Aotearoa is highly centralised at the national level; therefore, shared equity in home ownership is considered within the national housing policy context. SEH generally involves a buyer owning a portion of a property, while another entity, such as a government agency, community housing provider, non-profit organisation or consortium of entities, owns the remaining portion. This approach is an affordable and resale-restricted home ownership option for lower-income families, which allows buyers who may not be able to afford a home at market value to purchase a portion of a property and gradually gain equity over time.

In their document, *Progressive Home Ownership Modelling Guidelines: Shared Equity*, the New Zealand Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2022b) described shared equity as:

The eligible household/whānau becomes a part owner of a home with the approved PHO [progressive home ownership] provider, the household/whānau then purchases the provider share within a 15-year period to reach independent ownership. The PHO loan funds the provider's share in the property until it is bought by the household/whānau. This releases monies for the provider and can be used to repay the PHO loan. (p. 4)

This guidance document is one of the most comprehensive outlines of shared equity that I have found presented by the New Zealand Government. It is also worth noting that shared equity is under the umbrella of PHO, situated alongside the rent-to-buy scheme and leasehold. Note that this paper does not cover the latter two schemes in detail.

SEH was also explained by Lubell (2013) as:

A tenure choice that provides most of the benefits of home ownership at a lower price point, facilitating access to home ownership by low- and moderate-income households. Under SEH, home price appreciation is shared between the homebuyer and the program[me] sponsor to achieve a balance between the individual's interest in building wealth and the community's interest in ensuring long-term affordability. (p. 2)

The investigation into SEH in Aotearoa remains relatively limited, and the implementation of such programmes is still considered new. Although literature remains scarce, a few studies point to alternative approaches that could support Māori. For instance, Rout et al. (2019) have discussed alternative finance options for Māori, both on Māori land and general land, and the authors have recommended shared equity schemes to enable Māori to enter home ownership by reducing owners' deposits and weekly mortgages.

What I find important in this case is that the authors pointed to the role of cultural institutions of rūnanga (iwi [tribal] authorities). Although this is beyond the scope of the study, there is an opportunity to understand further the capacity and capability of Māori entities to deliver SEH at scale, notwithstanding that several Māori entities already operate in this market. Furthermore, Menzies et al. (2019) described shared equity models as a financial tool for affordable home ownership alongside rent-to-buy, sweat equity, impact investment, rates rebates, stamp duty rebates, social lending, financial literacy support and social/cultural procurement grants. Similarly, these tools are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important for us to understand the broader context and other schemes in which SEH is situated.

There are, however, various international studies that I examine to draw key insights on the impact of SEH (Acolin et al., 2021; Cheung & Wong, 2020; Ramiller et al., 2022; Thaden et

al., 2013). While these programmes have a long-established presence internationally and have been extensively documented, there is a scarcity of peer-reviewed studies specifically demonstrating their policy benefits in the Aotearoa context.

In addition to SEH, it is worth noting that housing programmes cannot succeed independently. The need for assistance in enhancing financial literacy has also been recognised, particularly in the context of investigating various housing approaches like co-housing, kitset homes, leasehold, rent-to-buy and shared equity models (Menzies et al., 2021). Complementary programmes like Sorted Kāinga Ora can assist in facilitating such support. For context, Sorted Kāinga Ora is a programme (developed by Te Puni Kōkiri and the Commission for Financial Capability) aimed at enhancing the financial skills and capacities of whānau to empower them in making informed decisions regarding their housing goals (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2022). The initiative comprises a series of eight workshops succeeded by a guidance phase, which assists whānau in devising and executing their housing plans (Te Puni Kōkiri [Ministry of Māori Development], 2022). It is also interesting to note that 10 iwi nationally are operating their own financial literacy schemes to support home ownership amongst their whānui (extended family network) (Reid & Rout, 2022), further emphasising the need for such services. As mentioned, SEH is a potential affordable housing policy tool enabling rangatahi Māori to access affordable housing. Hence, I explore this approach within this paper to contribute to ongoing discussions on housing policy for Māori in Aotearoa.

2.1 Domestic Literature

Domestic literature covering shared equity schemes in the Aotearoa context is sparse. In their paper, *From Housing to Homes: Strategies to Assist Low- and Modest-income New Zealand Households into Homeownership*, Smith and Robinson (2005) have argued that shared equity offers several key benefits, including providing households with immediate equity in the property, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to both the property and the community. SEH effectively bridges the deposit gap, making home ownership more affordable. Additionally, it offers security of tenure to households and serves as an incentive and pathway for individuals who previously believed home ownership was beyond their reach. Furthermore, SEH contributes to increasing the asset base of low- and modest-income households, thereby enhancing their financial stability and prospects.

The authors note that SEH programmes come with inherent risks, including the requirement for substantial initial expenditure to establish and maintain such schemes.

Sustainability concerns may arise, as these programmes need ongoing support and funding to remain effective. Equity issues may also emerge, as risks associated with schemes are carried by governments or other public entities, while the primary benefits may accrue to private participating households. Additionally, the administrative bureaucracy and compliance costs imposed by governments can potentially hinder the efficiency and viability of SEH initiatives for non-government organisations or private providers, thereby limiting their ability to participate effectively in these programmes (Smith & Robinson, 2005). There are various key points raised here that Aotearoa's Ministry of Housing and Urban Development needs to consider in the administration, assessment, delivery and evaluation of SEH programmes.

2.2 International Literature

There is extensive international literature surrounding SEH. For instance, Temkin et al. (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of seven SEH home ownership programmes and found that they provide long-term affordable home ownership opportunities for low-income families to build equity and sustainable tenure. The evaluation of the seven SEH programmes indicated that these programmes offer a viable path towards home ownership for low-income families, ensuring both affordability and the ability to build equity over time.

Similar findings were found in another study by Molle (2018), who analysed nine SEH programmes within the US, including Boston's Dudley Neighbourhood Initiative programme. However, the author concluded that while SEH effectively expands home ownership for lower- and moderate-income households, its effectiveness for working-class income earners is inconclusive (Molle, 2018). It is important to note that "low income" here is referring to those who are dependent upon the US Low Income Housing Tax Credit programme. The implications for this distinction are important as SEH targets low-income home buyers, yet that makes the programmes unattractive to middle-income home owners. Molle (2018) suggested that middle-income home buyers may not be willing to sacrifice personal gain for the benefits of SEH, even though it is available at a lower price than market-rate housing. While entering the housing market through SEH programmes may entail lower upfront costs, it is important to note that capital gains are distributed amongst buyers based on their ownership shares.

Michael Diamond's (2010) paper, *Shared Equity Housing: Cultural Understanding and the Meaning of Ownership*, examined whether SEH limitations on subsidised affordable housing create a second-class ownership status for the owners of such housing. However, the author concluded that such limitations do not (Diamond, 2010). A study by Thaden et

al. (2013) explored the evaluations and reception of SEH as a tenure alternative amongst lower-income households in Nashville, TN, US. The majority (73%) of participants expressed interest in SEH, perceiving it to deliver individual, community and economic benefits compared to rental or alternative home ownership options in the market. However, concerns were raised about programme design, development and location of SEH homes (Thaden et al., 2013). These findings suggest that SEH development may be viable in localities with relatively affordable housing markets. A large proportion of targeted beneficiaries comprehend and perceive a need for this tenure alternative.

According to Temkin et al. (2013), policy makers they studies tended to endorse home ownership programmes for four primary reasons. Firstly, they believed that home ownership enhances family stability. Secondly, it was associated with improved health and educational outcomes for children. Thirdly, home ownership was perceived to foster increased social and civic engagement, leading to enhanced neighbourhood quality. Lastly, policy makers viewed home ownership as a means for families to accumulate wealth (Temkin et al., 2013). The study provided important insights as it showed that policy makers believe home ownership generates a variety of social benefits; the research also aligns with existing research (Roskrugue et al., 2011; Yun & Evangelou, 2016; Prakash, 2023), which indicates that home ownership generates positive outcomes. These perceptions are validated by research in Aotearoa that indicated strong associations between home ownership and increases in social capital (Roskrugue et al., 2011).

A study by Ehlenz and Taylor (2019) reviewed the concept of SEH in the US, examining its origins, historical precedents and contemporary arguments for the model. The review provided conflicting conclusions on low-income home ownership, with some suggestion that encouraging it may increase wealth disparities, while other conclusions argued that home ownership remains the most consistent means for asset building in low-income households. I can draw some key learnings from this study, e.g., Ehlenz and Taylor (2019) suggested the need to contextualise SEH within the broader discourse of housing policy and home ownership in the US. Further investigation into SEH research also needs to consider the context and conditions of housing policy and home ownership in Aotearoa.

Considering the under-exploration of SEH in Aotearoa, there are several valuable lessons that I can draw upon. As this housing model gains traction and attention, evaluating its potential impact on the local housing market and the experiences of those participating in SEH programmes becomes increasingly important. By examining the successes and challenges faced by SEH initiatives in other countries and adapting them to the unique Aotearoa context, we can address the current housing crisis and improve the housing

landscape for rangatahi Māori. In this context, the international experiences with SEH programmes can provide insights and best practices for policy makers, stakeholders and housing advocates in Aotearoa. Yet, further research in Aotearoa is needed to evaluate and assess SEH programmes broadly across the country. It would also be helpful to conduct interviews with buyers to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences related to SEH when entering the housing market and completing the full purchase.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Declining Home Ownership Rates for Māori

There are numerous studies that have shown the declining rates in Māori home ownership (Flynn et al., 2010; Goodyear, 2017; Reid & Rout, 2019). Rout et al. (2019) provided an insight into the changing landscape of home ownership amongst Māori. Their research highlighted a significant decline in home ownership rates over the years. In 1936, 71% of Māori lived in dwellings owned by their whānau. However, this figure dropped to 56% by 1991, further declining to 43% by 2013. Today, the home ownership rate has likely dipped below 40%, notably contrasting with the national average of 70% for Pākēha (Rout et al., 2019). Similar trends were revealed in an issues paper by the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2022a), which highlighted the 31% Māori home ownership rate in 2018 vs. 52% for non-Māori. Rout et al. (2019) underscored the alarming trend by suggesting that if this decline continues at the same pace as observed since 1991, Māori could be entirely reliant on rental housing by the year 2061. Rout (2022) highlighted the cascading negative social and economic impacts on Māori of declining home ownership. These data reinforce the pressing need for actions to address the disparities in home ownership amongst communities, particularly Māori, and the data highlight the importance of housing policies and programmes to reverse this trend.

3.2 Barriers to Home Ownership for Māori

Māori face several barriers to achieving home ownership, including a lack of financial capability and capacity (Menzies, 2023), limited access to finance, housing market dynamics, cultural barriers, racism and discrimination (Houkamau & Sibley, 2015), and a limited supply of suitable housing (Rout et al., 2019). Historical injustices have contributed to intergenerational poverty and limited access to assets, including property (Rout et al., 2019). These factors have made it difficult for Māori to afford the costs associated with home ownership. One of the key questions in our interviews and focus groups with rangatahi Māori was: “What challenges and barriers do rangatahi Māori face in securing housing in Tāmaki Makaurau?” Asking this question has helped us consider the direct

barriers they encounter to accessing information, services and support across the housing system.

Lack of financial capability and capacity is a barrier for Māori. In the Māori housing sphere, this is a widely recognised issue. Diane Menzies (2023) found that the lack of financial capability and capacity is a barrier to funding support for Māori housing development projects. The lack of financial support for Māori landowners to build homes is a well-recognised issue and has been acknowledged in various studies (Hitchcock, 2008; Office of the Auditor-General, 2011b; Menzies, 2023). Similarly, the *Māori Housing Investment Strategy* — which focuses on key areas such as whānau financial capability through workshops to help whānau understand housing issues, building their housing capability and realising their housing aspirations — identified the need for maximising the impact of investment in Māori housing (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019). However, while this strategy is helpful to Māori who own or live adjacent to whenua Māori (Māori land), most rangatahi Māori are either alienated from this land or live in urban areas that are distant from where this land is located. This consideration needs to be factored into Māori housing policies that use papakāinga (housing on ancestral Māori land) as a priority Māori housing approach.

More broadly, the *New Zealand Financial Capability Survey 2021*, a report by Galicki (2021) found that Māori tend to have lower financial well-being outcomes than the average population and score lower across a number of financial capabilities. This finding will not surprise many policy makers and Māori scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand. Nonetheless, the report (Galicki, 2021) recommended that for Māori,

support is needed especially for not using credit for consumption and improving knowledge of money management and active saving. Data also suggests that Māori convert the same level of knowledge and resources into greater financial wellbeing compared to Pākehā, which means that investment in Māori financial capability can bring disproportionate payoffs in terms of improved financial wellbeing. (p. 4)

Housing policy design should incorporate measures to address and mitigate the financial capability and capacity barriers faced by Māori individuals and communities.

Limited access to finance is a significant obstacle, with lower incomes and reduced access to banking services making it challenging for Māori to save for a deposit and secure a mortgage with favourable terms. In the current economic environment (September 2023 at the time of writing), with high inflation and rising interest rates, these conditions further hinder whānau Māori and individuals' access to home ownership. Similarly, access to capital is difficult for those who are trying to raise finance for Māori land (Office of the

Auditor-General, 2011a). The challenges raised here are also acknowledged in public feedback to the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2022b) on identifying ways to improve Māori access to capital. There are some helpful suggestions noted in improving Māori home ownership rates that rangatahi would benefit from, for instance, “lower repayments over longer periods of time could make lending more affordable for whānau, specifically within the context of long-term/intergenerational lending” (Reserve Bank of New Zealand, 2022b, p. 9).

Housing market dynamics in Aotearoa New Zealand have also presented challenges for Māori who want to own a home. Rising house prices and rents have made it difficult for many people to enter the housing market, particularly in high-demand areas like urban centres such as Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, which has long-term impacts on whānau. Māori underrepresented in home ownership tend to have worse access to housing asset wealth to support their tamariki (children) into home ownership (Joynt & Hoffmann, 2021).

Cultural factors, such as a preference for living intergenerationally and in extended family arrangements, or a lack of familiarity with the home-buying process, may also influence Māori decisions in pursuing home ownership (Paul et al., 2022). From our study, several rangatahi indicated that they did not know where to start and did not know about the deposit and buying processes. These narratives are not unfamiliar, but enable us to think specifically about how we communicate the home-buying process to rangatahi Māori.

Additionally, discrimination in the housing market, including discriminatory lending practices or discriminatory treatment from landlords or real estate agents, can further limit Māori access to home ownership opportunities. Research conducted by Houkamau and Sibley (2015) has indicated that the home lending industry in Aotearoa New Zealand exhibits institutional racism against Māori based on their appearance as being “more Māori”. In addition, during our interviews with rangatahi, we identified aspects of discrimination in the challenges rangatahi encountered while renting, particularly the use of Māori names. For example, several rangatahi shared that they had Māori names and found it challenging to get a rental property and apply for a mortgage. This issue is not well documented but needs investigation in further research.

Finally, the limited supply of suitable housing options is a significant barrier for Māori. There may be a shortage of affordable, culturally adequate and appropriate housing that meets their needs, particularly in areas with high demand, like Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Addressing these complex and interconnected barriers is crucial for improving Māori access to home ownership opportunities.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

In the following section, we aim to provide a brief overview of the key policy conditions that holds particular significance for rangatahi Māori and SEH. These policy conditions play a crucial role in shaping the housing landscape and in addressing the needs of rangatahi Māori. Extensive analysis of conditions is not provided; rather, references in policy about SEH are noted and highlighted.

4.1 Government Policy Statement: Housing and Urban Development

The *Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development* (GPS-HUD) (released in September 2021) outlined a vision for Aotearoa New Zealand in which everyone has a home and lives within communities that fulfil their needs and aspirations (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021a). Thriving and resilient communities is a focus, as are emphasising accessibility, connectivity to opportunities, environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and resilience to natural hazards. Housing was cited as a source of well-being, with stable and affordable homes supporting healthy lives. The statement highlighted a partnership between Māori and the New Zealand Government to ensure safe and affordable homes for whānau Māori, led by Māori and utilising their assets and whenua (land). The policy also sought an adaptable and responsive system that adjusts to challenges and opportunities, with well-planned and regulated land-use change, infrastructure and housing supply in response to demand.

Māori play a significant role in achieving and improving housing and urban outcomes in Aotearoa. Their involvement is crucial in delivering effective housing solutions, especially for Māori communities. Iwi and Māori entities, including marae and ahu whenua trusts, are well-positioned to contribute to the housing and urban development system. They assist the New Zealand Government in addressing homelessness through affordable housing options, including public housing, and they offer innovative housing solutions like PHO initiatives. For example, the Ngā Pōtiki Trust has partnered with Westpac Bank to deliver their SEH programme. Providing high-quality, affordable housing for all members of Ngā Pōtiki is a primary strategy for Ngā Pōtiki ā Tamapahore Trust and its housing delivery entity, Manawa Community Housing Trust, which is a registered community housing provider tasked with offering housing solutions to our Ngā Pōtiki whānau (Ngā Pōtiki, 2019; see <https://ngapotiki.org.nz/housing/>).

Community housing providers deliver long-term affordable housing through rental, mixed-tenure or PHO solutions. Understanding the key actors and roles in the housing system is critical to delivering SEH. Nevertheless, within the GPS-HUD, PHO is recognised, including

SEH (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021a). This recognition emphasises the importance of housing programmes amongst various solutions needed to address declining home ownership rates and make affordable housing options more available. Thus, the GPS-HUD is vital to the policy landscape for housing as it facilitates the New Zealand Government's key priorities. Clearly, recognition of SEH will continue to play a role in the wider housing system and enable opportunities and specific actions, as articulated in the GPS-HUD implementation plan.

Yet, while the GPS-HUD encourages affordable housing options and alternative tenures like SEH, it lacks specific details, or discussion about the extent to which SEH is promoted. The GPS-HUD implementation plan indicates that the Government is focused on supporting first-home buyers by increasing PHO opportunities and updating First Home loan products. According to the plan, the PHO Fund is a NZ\$400 million initiative that will assist 1,500 to 4,000 households and families in purchasing their own homes by collaborating with a provider to address the deposit barrier and share the cost of home ownership (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2022a).

4.2 MAIHI Ka Ora National Māori Housing Strategy

The MAIHI Ka Ora, a New Zealand Government strategy led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, focuses on six key priorities for Māori housing (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b). These priorities include Māori–Crown partnerships, Māori-led local solutions, Māori housing supply, Māori housing support, Māori housing systems and Māori housing sustainability. Under “Priority 4: Māori Housing Support”, the strategy highlights the key action of the PHO Fund (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b, pg. 27). The PHO Fund is an initiative aimed at increasing opportunities for people to access home ownership. It leverages the expertise of the existing PHO sector and supports iwi and Māori aspirations for home ownership through iwi and Māori organisations. The PHO Fund also offers products directly to households, where appropriate. PHO Fund enables families to partner with providers to help them become home owners through SEH, rent-to-own and leasehold products, which are already available in Aotearoa and can be accessed through the PHO Fund.

4.3 PHO Fund

The PHO Fund is a NZ\$400 million fund launched in 2020 aimed at helping individuals and whānau who would not otherwise be able to buy their own homes. The PHO Fund aims to support 1,500–4,000 households in home ownership (Office of the Minister of Housing Chair, Cabinet Economic Development Committee, n.d.). Approved PHO providers can

access a 15-year loan from the New Zealand Government to partner with eligible households and whānau to help them achieve home ownership. The fund has a specific aim that seeks to address housing affordability for Māori, Pacific whānau and whānau with tamariki. Te Matapihi (Te Matapihi operates as an independent voice for the Māori housing sector) recently produced “Te Aho Tāhuhu”, an informative series of webinars for whānau and housing providers who wish to engage with the PHO Fund (Te Matapihi, n.d.; <https://www.tematapihi.org.nz/pho-webinars>).

There are three pathways under the PHO Fund: the Provider pathway, the First Home Partner scheme and Te Au Taketake. The Provider pathway allows organisations to secure funding for their PHO programmes to assist individuals, families and whānau within their communities to achieve independent home ownership. The First Home Partner scheme enables first-time home buyers to acquire a home in collaboration with Kāinga Ora. This is a potential pathway for rangatahi Māori and whānau who may wish to pursue home ownership, subject to eligibility requirements. Through the PHO and MAIHI Ka Ora, Te Au Taketake funds iwi and Māori organisations to enhance or establish their PHO programmes. This assistance contributes to improving housing outcomes for whānau Māori. The ring-fencing of dedicated funding for Māori organisations increases “by Māori for Māori” approaches and improves access to home ownership pathways and options for rangatahi Māori and whānau.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2022b) has stated that providers may use three main methods to deliver PHO schemes as follows.

Shared equity: The eligible household/whānau becomes a part owner of a home with the approved PHO provider, and the household/whānau then purchases the provider share within a 15-year period to reach independent ownership. The PHO loan funds the provider's share in the property until it is bought by the household/whānau. This releases monies for the provider that can be used to repay the PHO loan.

Rent to buy: The eligible household/whānau initially rents a home from an approved PHO provider. Savings are put aside while the household/whānau is renting until they can purchase the home from the PHO provider within the 15-year period.

Leasehold: The eligible household/whānau purchases a registered leasehold interest in a home from the PHO provider with the right to occupy the property for a long term, such as 100 years. The freehold interest in the property is retained by the provider, and the leaseholder pays a modest ground rent as well as servicing any mortgage commitment. Freehold home ownership is not achieved using a leasehold model, but the leaseholder

has secure tenure in their own home and the opportunity to build savings over the term of the lease. The PHO loan supports the balance sheet of the provider, who must maintain financial capacity to repay the PHO loan within the 15-year period.

It is worth noting that the PHO programme requires close monitoring and assessment regarding delivery challenges. Recent Cabinet papers signal that the “Progressive Home Ownership is off track and will not meet its targets under current settings, but its contribution to overall housing supply is small” (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022, pg. 03). Further independent research is required to understand the full impacts of the fund and programme.

5. PATHWAYS TO HOME OWNERSHIP

5.1 NZHF Shared Ownership Programme

The NZHF is a non-profit organisation that offers affordable housing solutions to low- and moderate-income families through its shared ownership programme. This initiative involves purchasing a significant portion of a property, typically at least 60%, while the NZHF retains ownership of the remaining share (e.g., 40%). The buyer and the NZHF are both listed on the property title until the buyer can fully purchase the property, which usually takes 7 to 10 years. Mortgage payments are capped at 30% of the buyer's income to ensure affordability.

The success of this programme has been demonstrated in developments such as Waimahia Inlet and Puhinui Park in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Waimahia Inlet is an affordable housing project with a 295-dwelling greenfield development over 16 ha in Weymouth, situated in the Manurewa local board area south of Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa (Kake & Paul, 2018). Waimahia is managed and governed by the Tāmaki Makaurau Community Housing Limited (TMCHL), an incorporated organisation made up of the Tāmaki Collective, Te Tumu Kāinga (2022), Community of Refuge Trust (CORT) and the NZHF (Fergusson et al., 2016; Witten et al., 2019). A total of 295 homes were constructed in the Waimahia Inlet development, with 85 of those homes participating in shared ownership programme (New Zealand Housing Foundation, n.d.) . Notably, 47% of the households participating in the shared ownership program were Māori. In a study by Fergusson et al. (2016), the authors found that it will be challenging for the consortium, aka community housing providers (CHPs), to achieve additional large-scale investments in affordable housing, which is essentially a social service, without significant financial support from the Government (Witten et al., 2019). We discuss the Puhinui Park example in the next sub-section.

The NZHF provides wrap-around support services to help families navigate the home-buying process, including financial counselling and education, home maintenance and repair assistance, and support with navigating New Zealand Government programmes and services. The organisation partners with various stakeholders, including Government agencies, community housing providers, non-profit organisations and private sector companies, to develop and deliver sustainable housing solutions.

In a study by Diane Menzies (2023, pg. 17), the author noted that the NZHF gathers ethnicity data from their programmes; she found that between March 2018 and December 2022, 55% were whānau Māori (35% of participants gave no ethnicity). Furthermore, Menzies (2023) also emphasised that there is support amongst financiers and bankers for the NZHF scheme.

The success of the shared ownership model relies on an effective partnership between the household, the NZHF and the banking partners. It is essential to reinforce the importance of the relationships and agreements between these parties for the model to succeed. Overall, the shared ownership programme offered by the NZHF is a key policy approach that can assist low- and modest-income households in home ownership (New Zealand Housing Foundation, 2017).

5.2 Puhinui Park, Manukau, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

Puhinui Park is an affordable housing development located in Manukau, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, designed to provide affordable and secure housing options within proximity to amenities, to low- to moderate-income households. Affordable housing is crucial for improving well-being, and Puhinui Park helps address this need. According to the *Puhinui Park Household Well-Being Survey (2021)*, 34% of new residents self-identify as Māori, underlining the positive impact in addressing housing needs within the Māori community (Ness, NZHF, personal communication re Puhinui Park household well-being survey topline findings, November 2022).

The NZHF outlines qualifying requirements (New Zealand Housing Foundation, n.d.). Applicants must be New Zealand citizens or permanent residents, which is a prerequisite for mortgage lending. At least one household member should be employed full-time (35+ hours per week) to demonstrate financial stability. As first-home buyers, applicants should have manageable personal debt that can be paid off within 5 years, excluding student loans. Preference is given to those who live/work in Manukau or have community/family ties to the area. Applicants must be committed to home ownership and willing to abide by limitations on parking and pets due to the nature of the development. Total household

income should fall between NZ\$85,000 and NZ\$110,000 gross per year. Meeting these requirements indicates applicants are in a financial position to become successful home owners in this affordable housing development.

5.3 Insights from Rangatahi Māori Living at Puhinui Park

The interviews conducted are part of a larger *He Tātai Whetu ki te Rangi, he Rangatahi ki te Kāinga: Rangatahi Pathways to Safe, Secure and Affordable Homes* study, but we would like to highlight some of the stories that were shared during these interviews.

Generally, rangatahi Māori we interviewed herein indicated how stressful the cost of living is and the impacts on them and their whānau, which potentially make it harder to save and get into home ownership because many are focussed on the basics of living. For example, Grayson (age 30) discussed innovative rent-to-own schemes as a potential solution:

“I think if there were schemes where you felt comfortable renting from iwi housing, but actually like that rent to own, given the high market prices in say something like Taamaki, if there were maataawaka schemes where you could all live in like for example rent to own but some of the portion of that puutea goes into purchasing land where you are from, and so that you are balancing this idea of connection and it's sustained in your identity, and your home.”

In our rangatahi interviews, SEH led by the NZHF emerged as one pathway for home ownership. For example, Mereana (age 32) discussed her positive experience with an SEH scheme and how it enabled her to achieve home ownership:

“I was fortunate enough to get the help of the Housing Foundation and a Māori trustee to support my application to own a home or to purchase a home. The biggest reason or the biggest driving force to me applying for this house is because we'd just had a daughter. Without the support of the Housing Foundation, or the Māori Trustee, we would never ever be able to, like, I would never be able to purchase a house and have a mortgage, especially for the price that we pay for our mortgage currently. I spoke about the struggles of trying to rent, especially because when I did live in Grey Lynn, it was really hard for us to find houses because everyone that I lived with, we all had Māori first and last names, so often no one wanted to rent to us.”

Similarly, Raniera (age 33) shared his story and the positive impact it had on his whānau:

“What I actually saw was that my success was also their success. Then I actually saw my cousins having conversations like, man, if that fella can do it, then we can. So, I didn't realise going into this that my journey was also going to be a journey for the rest of my family and that my success actually opened up their vision to see

that they can have this also. I think that, yeah, the house is one thing, but the even bigger thing was that I was able to inspire my whānau to get on the huarahi and to really believe that they can achieve that.”

Through shared pūrākau (stories) like Mereana's and Raniera's, we see how SEH programmes led by organisations like the NZHF provide not just housing stability and support, but also inspiration and hope for rangatahi Māori and their whānau to achieve home ownership.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 What SEH Offers Rangatahi Māori

The SEH programme offers a pathway towards home ownership for rangatahi Māori. Facilitating access to home ownership opportunities for rangatahi Māori early in their lives and careers will provide social benefits and positive outcomes. Given the wealth disparities between Māori and Pākehā households, rangatahi Māori generally lack the wealth and financial resources to secure home ownership independently, in comparison to Pākehā. Designing pathways to assist rangatahi Māori to enter the housing market would offer them a support network; generate tangible asset accumulation and the ability to build equity over time; and provide stability during this growth period of their life. Enabling rangatahi Māori to access home ownership by providing well-designed SEH programmes that are targeted and tailored could also propagate positive externalities for whānau and Māori communities. Such an approach provides security of tenure and incentivises rangatahi to participate and invest in their local community long-term. Nonetheless, further research is encouraged, particularly to demonstrate that SEH programmes will enable rangatahi Māori access to owner-occupied housing that will not exceed their financial capabilities, as described by Molle (2018).

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided an overview of SEH as a potential housing policy option for rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa. Our research, based on international and domestic literature, shows that SEH, depending on context and mode of delivery, can be an effective and affordable housing model that offers shared ownership of a property, making home ownership more accessible and sustainable for those with limited financial resources. However, while we believe that SEH programmes have the potential to support rangatahi Māori in achieving affordable home ownership in Tāmaki Makaurau, further evaluation of existing programmes across Aotearoa is necessary.

The NZHF's shared ownership programme has successfully enabled whānau Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau to achieve their home ownership goals. However, more evidence is needed to fully understand the programme's effectiveness for Māori and to assess its long-term impacts on the broader community. We encourage continued investment in shared equity initiatives alongside rigorous evaluation to ensure they effectively meet the needs of whānau Māori. Evaluation of kaupapa Māori (approaches by Māori, with Māori and for Māori) models of SEH could provide helpful insights, and if proved effective over the long term, SEH may serve as an alternative model for increasing indigenous home ownership in other geographies and regions.

This study contributes to the limited literature on shared equity in the Aotearoa context. Our research highlights the potential for tailored SEH policies to help address systemic disparities facing Māori communities in home ownership and wealth-building. Providing affordable housing solutions for rangatahi Māori in early adulthood could have lifelong benefits for their financial security and well-being. In conclusion, this paper reinforces the critical need to address inequities in home ownership, particularly for Māori. Continued investment and research are essential to developing housing policies and programmes that ensure affordable home ownership is accessible for more whānau Māori and rangatahi.

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