

¹Since 2010, participants at [Matike Mai o Aotearoa](#) hui have consistently advocated for a [Tiriti o Waitangi](#) based constitution that protects and upholds the right of all peoples to fully participate in the political affairs of this country.

Because Te Tiriti was between the [rangatiratanga](#) in behalf of [Tangata Whenua](#), and the [kawanatanga](#) in behalf of [Tangata Tiriti](#), there is value in constitutionally enshrining these two different spheres of influence as well as a relational sphere between them. Such an arrangement would protect the right of everyone to have an effective voice in governing this country.

So who would qualify to participate or be represented in each sphere of influence? And how might the often vexed question of identity be reconciled with any general statement about participation? Who decides who belongs in which sphere?

There is truth in the old adage that “the namer of names is the father of all things” and redefining who [Māori](#) are has been a constant form of colonising control. Indeed since 1840 there have been numerous different legislative definitions of Māori, many of them in statutes about land and the taking of land.

However the right to define oneself is an essential part of [self-determination](#), so it is logical and right that each party to Te Tiriti will decide its own grounds for participation and representation in its own sphere. They would naturally then also choose their own representation in any relational sphere.

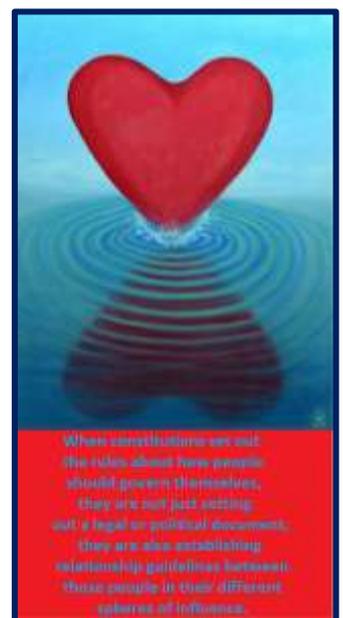
“Our [whakapapa](#) tells us who we are...what matters is how we live our whakapapa and where we put our effort...we then make a choice in this process where we want to stand”.

“It’s not a complicated issue...it was colonisers that started saying there were only half Māori or quarter Māori and that was just to control us...a constitution would have to get rid of all that...it doesn’t mean giving up what else is in our whakapapa...my Nan’s from Australia...but I’m not a half anything”.

“However we define who we are...the main thing is that we find a robust way of making sure everyone has a say...to make sure we would always have our say through our own [tikanga](#)”.

“The change we are talking about is the next step past merely biculturalising the Crown to finding something that’s not assimilative or integrationist or a British clone transplanted here...something unique where we make political decisions here in a way that represents or conveys what being here means”.

This emphasis on the value of good social relations in both treaty and constitutional terms indicates a genuine generosity of spirit. It is also a reminder that when constitutions set out the rules about how people should govern themselves, they are not just setting out a legal or political document, they are also establishing relationship guidelines between those people in their different spheres of influence.



¹ Thirty-third edited extract from pp. 78 – 79 of [He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu Mō Aotearoa – The Report of Matike Mai o Aotearoa](#)