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Chapter 8

Choosing the Margins

The Role of Research in Indigenous Struggles for Social Justice

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Introduction

*Ka whawhai tonu matou, ake, ake, ake—
We will fight on for ever and ever.*

—Rewi Maniapoto, 1864

A nineteenth-century prophecy by a Maori leader predicted that the struggle of Maori people against colonialism would go on forever and therefore the need to resist will be without end. This may appear to be a message without hope, but it has become an exhortation to Maori people that our survival, our humanity, our world-view and language, our imagination and spirit, our very place in the world depends on our capacity to act for ourselves, to speak for ourselves, to engage in the world and the actions of our colonizers, to face them head on. Maori struggles for social justice in New Zealand are messy, noisy, simultaneously celebratory and demoralizing, hopeful and desperate. Although there have been incremental gains, they have often been made from the depths of despair, accepted reluctantly as the crumbs of compromise.

The demands on scholars and intellectuals in similar contexts have been discussed in the revolutionary texts by writers such as Gramsci and Fanon, in feminist and indigenist literature, and in research texts. In the research literature, the issues are often discussed in terms of the methodologies, ethics, theoretical and discursive representations, emancipatory possibilities, and power relations associated with studying marginalized and vulnerable

communities, the outsider Other, or within specific populations and communities such as urban youth.

Qualitative researchers are trained to “see things.” Researchers working in the field of social injustice witness or see things that may impact directly on their own relationships, identities, safety, and freedom. Speaking for, and speaking out, can land a researcher in considerable trouble; being “named” as a leftist researcher or native sympathizer is likewise a risk that is carried even in societies that value freedom of speech and of academic discovery. In these conservative times, the role of an indigenous researcher and of other researchers committed to producing research knowledge that documents social injustice, recovers subjugated knowledges, helps create spaces for the voices of the silenced to be expressed and “listened to,” and challenges racism, colonialism, and oppression is a risky business.

This chapter is written from that messy intersection, from the borders of the vast and expanding territory that is the margin, that exists “outside” the security zone, outside the gated and fortified community. The first part of the chapter revisits Chandra Mohanty’s (1991) cartography of struggles, as faced by indigenous and marginalized communities. The purpose is to provide a sense of the landscape that researchers negotiate and seek to understand. In this first part, the chapter emphasizes the notion of struggle and what it means to live a life in struggle. The second part examines some of the implications for indigenous researchers who choose to work in indigenous and marginalized communities, communities that are in engaged struggle. These researchers work the borders, betwixt and between institutions and communities, systems of power and systemic injustice, cultures of dominance and cultures in survival mode, politics and theory, theory and practice.

Revisiting the Concept of Struggle

Struggle, as many social activists have identified, is an important tool in the overthrow of oppression and colonialism. Struggle is a dynamic, powerful, and important tool that is embedded in what at first glance often seems to be just part of the apparatus of Marxist rhetoric and radical discourse. In its Marxist revolutionary sense, the concept of struggle can also be associated with

forms of psychological torture and political haranguing, as individuals are coerced into losing their memories of a past regime or into informing on their family and friends.

In its broader sense, struggle is simply what life feels like when people are trying to survive in the margins, to seek freedom and better conditions, to seek social justice. Struggle is a tool of both social activism and theory. It has the potential to enable oppressed groups to embrace and mobilize agency and to turn the consciousness of injustice into strategies for change. Struggle can be mobilized as resistance and as transformation. It can provide the means for working things out “on the ground,” for identifying and solving problems of practice, for identifying strengths and weaknesses, for refining tactics and uncovering deeper challenges.

But struggle can also be a blunt tool. As a blunt tool, it has often privileged patriarchy and sexism in indigenous activist groups or been used to commit groups to modes of operation that undermine the very values they espouse and expect of others. As a blunt instrument, struggle can also promote actions that simply reinforce hegemony and that have no chance of delivering significant social change.

Paolo Freire’s model of change argues that conscientization leads to action or struggle; when people learn to read the word (of injustice) and read the world (of injustice) they will act against injustice. However, Graham Smith (2004) has argued that in the Maori context, participation in struggle can, and often does, come before a raised consciousness. Smith’s research has shown that people often participated in struggles more to show solidarity with friends and family, or some other pragmatic motivation, than as a personal commitment to or knowledge about historical oppression, colonialism, and the survival of Maori people. Along the way, many of those people become more conscious of the politics of struggle in which they are engaged. As Smith points out, “Maori experience tends to suggest that these elements, [conscientisation, resistance, transformative action], may occur in any order and indeed may occur simultaneously” (p. 51).

Struggle, then, can be viewed as group or collective agency rather than as individual consciousness. The political leaders of struggle need some form of collective consent or mandate to act and to sustain action over time. The story of struggle is also a

story about activist leadership and collective consent and the tension between these two processes (leading and consenting). It is in this area that much revolutionary literature tends to focus on the hegemonic role of intellectuals who occupy the establishment and their power to influence others and command over what counts as legitimate knowledge.

Struggle is also a theoretical tool for understanding agency and social change, for making sense of power relations, and for interpreting the tension between academic views of political actions and activist views of the academy. Theorizing the politics, psychology, and pedagogy of struggle is the role of activist scholars and the organic intellectuals who work in that intersection between the community and the academy. It often presents itself as a phenomenon that researchers “see” when they see communities living on the edge and in crisis; when they attempt to interpret or make ethnographic sense of life in the margin; when they attempt to account for behaviors, attitudes, value systems; and when they attempt comparisons with their own communities and social class. People, families, and organizations in marginalized communities struggle every day; it is a way of life that is necessary for survival and, when theorized and mobilized, can become a powerful strategy for transformation.

Multiple Layers of Struggle

The Maori struggle for decolonization is multilayered and multidimensional and has occurred across multiple sites simultaneously. Graham Smith (2004) has argued that theorizing this struggle from a Maori framework of *Kaupapa Maori* has provided important insights about transformation, about how transformation works and can be made to work for indigenous communities. Similarly, Leonie Pihama (2005) writes that, “*Kaupapa Maori* is a transformative power. To think and act in terms of *Kaupapa Maori* while experiencing colonisation is to resist dominance.” In this section, I focus more on the conditions that intersect or are external to this transformative process and that, at times, can work for or against change, can destabilize the struggle or can present opportunities to be exploited, can provide creative resources, or

can unleash a counterhegemonic and narrow agenda of change.

I conceptualize five conditions or dimensions that have framed the struggle for decolonization. I define the first as a critical consciousness, an awakening from the slumber of hegemony and the realization that action has to occur. I define the second condition as a way of reimagining the world and our position as Maori within the world, drawing on a different epistemology and unleashing the creative spirit. This condition is what enables an alternative vision, it fuels the dreams of alternative possibilities. The third is concerned with ways in which different ideas, social categories, and tendencies intersect, the coming together of disparate ideas, the events, the historical moment. This condition creates opportunities, it provides the moments where tactics can be deployed. The fourth I have defined simply as movement or disturbance, the distracting counterhegemonic movements or tendencies, the competing movements that transverse sites of struggle, the unstable movements that occur when the status quo is disturbed. The fifth is the concept of structure, the underlying code of imperialism, of power relations. This condition is grounded in reproducing material realities and legitimating inequalities and marginality.

What I am suggesting by privileging these layers over others is that separately, together, and in combination with other ideas, these five dimensions help map the conceptual terrain of struggle. The categorical terms being used are not of the same type and have not been motivated by a particular “model.” Rather, they reflect the multiple positions, spaces, discourses, languages, histories, textures, and world-views that are being contested, struggled over, resisted, and reformulated by Maori.

In writing a “cartography” of the struggles facing Third World women, Chandra Mohanty (1991) has said that “the world (is) transversed with intersecting lines.” Along such intersecting lines are ideas, categories, or tensions that often connect with each other in different ways. They are not necessarily oppositions or dualisms. They create and are created by conditions that are inherently unstable, arbitrary and uncontrollable. She also argued that one of the key features of struggle is the “simultaneity” of oppressions that are fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality. Intersections can be conceptualized as lines

that intersect or meet other lines and also as spaces that are created at the points where intersecting lines meet. Spaces created by intersecting ideas, tendencies, or issues are sites of struggle that offer possibilities for people to resist.

Making space within such sites has become a characteristic of many Maori struggles in education, health, research, and social justice. What is slightly different between this notion and the idea of struggles in the margins is that, when attached to a political idea such as *rangatiratanga*, often translated as sovereignty or self-determination, then all space in New Zealand can be regarded as Maori space. This takes the struggle out of specifically "Maori contexts" and into the spaces once regarded as the domain of the "settler" or Pakeha community, such as large institutions like universities, where Maori really are a small minority. Rather than see ourselves as existing in the margins as minorities, resistance initiatives have assumed that Aotearoa New Zealand is "our place," all of it, and that there is little difference, except in the mind, between, for example, a Te Kohanga Reo, where Maori are the majority but the state is there, and a university, where there are Maori are the minority and the state is there.

Whereas we can conceive of space geographically and politically, it is important to claim those spaces that are still taken for granted as being possessed by the West. Such spaces are concerned with intellectual, theoretical, and imaginative spaces. One of these is a space called Kaupapa Maori. This concept has emerged from lessons learned through Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Maori and has been developed as a theory in action by Maori people. Graham Smith (1995) has argued for Kaupapa Maori as an intervention into theoretical spaces, particularly within the sphere of education. Kaupapa Maori research refers to Maori struggles to claim research as a space within which Maori can also operate. Given the history of the Western research gaze of indigenous peoples, it may seem unusual that Maori should take hold of the idea of research and attempt to apply it to our own questions. There are imperatives that have forced that on us, such as the constant need to prove our own history and to prove the worth of our language and values.

Maori and other indigenous peoples, however, also have their own questions and curiosities; they have imaginations and ways of

knowing that they seek to expand and apply. Searching for solutions is very much part of a struggle to survive, it is represented within our own traditions, for example, through creation stories, values, and practices. The concept of "searching" is embedded in our world-views. Researching in this sense, then, is not something owned by the West, or by an institution or discipline. Research begins as a social, intellectual, and imaginative activity. It has become disciplined and institutionalized with certain approaches empowered over others and accorded a legitimacy but it begins with human curiosity and a desire to solve problems. It is, at its core, an activity of hope.

One of the criticisms made of educators who have been concerned about the emancipatory potential of schooling is that they have often ignored or diminished the role in social agency of such qualities as hope, optimism, and the need to strive for utopian goals. As summarized by McLaren (1995):

Some radical educators have, in fact, argued that the notion of hope as the basis of a language of possibility is really nothing more than a "trick of counter hegemony," and that hope is employed for ideological effect rather than for sound theoretical reasons. In other words hope as a vision of possibility contains no immanent political project and as such has to be sacrificed on the altar of empirical reality. [p. 121]

I have stated previously the sense of noisy optimism that has been a characteristic of Maori politics. Here, I argue for the importance in Maori struggles of the imagination and of the capacity shown by Maori to constantly imagine and reimagine, to create and recreate our world. The capacity of colonized peoples to continue to imagine and to create our own worlds was the focus of quite systematic imperial and colonial practices that are encapsulated in the concept of dehumanization. The dehumanizing tendencies within imperial and colonial practices are deeply encoded. They constantly deny that colonized people actually have ideas of our own, can create new ideas, and have a rich knowledge base from which to draw.

I would not claim that, on its own, imagination is a critical tool or contains within it a political project that is connected inherently to emancipation. What I would argue is that if they are to work, to be effective, political projects must also touch on, appeal

to, make space for, and release forces that are creative and imaginative. This point is made in Smith's (1995) identification of the significant elements within Kaupapa Maori. He argues that the *kaupapa* has to "grab people" emotionally; it has to excite them and "turn them on" to new possibilities.

The danger in such forces is that they do not necessarily lead to emancipatory outcomes. They are inherently uncontrollable, which is possibly why this aspect is excluded from decolonization type programs and other attempts at planned resistance. However, there is a point in the politics of decolonization where leaps of imagination can connect the disparate, fragmented pieces of a puzzle, ones that have different shadings, different shapes, and different images within them, and say that "these pieces belong together." The imagination allows us to strive for goals that transcend material, empirical realities. For colonized peoples, this is important because the cycle of colonialism is just that: a cycle with no end point, no emancipation. The material locates us within a world of dehumanizing tendencies, one that is constantly reflected back on us. To imagine a different world is to imagine us as different people in the world. To imagine is to believe in different possibilities, ones that we can create.

Decolonization must offer a language of possibility, a way out of colonialism. The writing of Maori, of other indigenous peoples and of anti/postcolonial writers would suggest, quite clearly, that that language of possibility exists within our own alternative, oppositional ways of knowing. Even though these may not be seen to connect with current socioeconomic realities, the fact that we adhere to, that we can imagine a connection suggests a resistance to being classified according to the definitions of a dominant group. Furthermore, the language of possibility, a language that can be controlled by those who have possession of it, allows us to make plans, to make strategic choices, to theorize solutions. Imagining a different world, or reimagining the world, is a way into theorizing why the world as it currently is is unjust and posing alternatives to such a world from within our own world-views.

Implications for Researchers: Choosing the Margins

The metaphor of the margin has been a very powerful metaphor in the social sciences and humanities for understanding social inequality, oppression, disadvantage, and power. It is used alongside other similar concepts such as borders, boundaries, bridges, center-periphery, and insider/outsider to demarcate people in spatial terms as well as in socioeconomic, political, and cultural ones. Anthropology uses the term "liminal" to capture some of the elements that are lived by people in the margins. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2000) uses the term in this way, "Thus the work of the liminal perspective is to reveal the ways that dominant perspectives distort the realities of the other in an effort to maintain power relations that continue to disadvantage those who are locked out of the mainstream" (p. 259).

Feminists and minority scholars (such as African American writers) have worked the metaphor of the margin, the hyphen, or the border into social theories of oppression and marginalization and of resistance and possibility (Fine, 1992; hooks, 1984). Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), for example, writes of the border where she grew up literally at the border between the United States and Mexico and figuratively at the border and intersection between languages, between home and school, between having and not having, and as a site for positive identity formation. African American writer bell hooks (1984) wrote of the radical possibility of "choosing the margins" as a site of belonging as much as a site of struggle and resistance.

The critical issue hooks and other writers such as Stuart Hall have identified is that meaningful, rich, diverse, interesting lives are lived in the margins; these are not empty spaces occupied by people whose lives don't matter or people who spend their lives on the margins trying to escape. Many groups who end up there choose the margins, in the sense of creating cultures and identities out of the margins (for example, the deaf community, gay and lesbian communities, minority ethnic groups, and indigenous groups).

There are also researchers, scholars, and academics who actively choose the margins, who choose to study people marginalized

by society, who themselves have come from the margins, or who see their intellectual purpose as being scholars who will work for, with, and alongside communities who occupy the margins of society. If one is interested in society, then it is often in the margins that aspects of a society are revealed as microcosms of the larger picture or as examples of a society's underbelly. In a research sense, having a commitment to social justice, to changing the conditions and relations that exists in the margins is understood as being "socially interested" or as having a "standpoint."

For researchers who come from the communities concerned, it may also be understood as "insider" research. Kaupapa Maori research can be understood in this way as an approach to research that is socially interested, that takes a position, for example, that Maori language, knowledge, and culture are valid and legitimate, and has a standpoint from which research is developed, conducted, analyzed, interpreted, and assessed. Some of these approaches are also referred to as critical research, as social justice research and as community action research. There are also specific methodologies that have been developed out of the work these approaches have initiated. Participatory action research, Kaupapa Maori research, oral histories, critical race theory, and *testimonio* are just some examples of methodologies that have been created as research tools that work with marginalized communities, that facilitate the expression of marginalized voices, and that attempt to represent the experience of marginalization in genuine and authentic ways.

Focusing on researching with marginalized groups foregrounds many of the issues that are faced by researchers working in the face of inequality and social injustice. As leading researchers in the social justice area have already established, it is crucial that researchers working in this critical research tradition pay particular attention to matters that impact on the integrity of research and the researcher, are continuously developing their understandings of ethics and community sensibilities, and are critically examining their research practices (Cram, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fine, 1992; Rigney, 1999).

A third dimension to doing research in the margins is that the researchers who choose to study with and for marginalized communities are often in the margins themselves in their own institutions, disciplines, and research communities. It may be that the

researchers come from a minority social group or perhaps their interest in and perceived support for marginalized communities unsettles the status quo or questions both implicitly and explicitly dominant approaches to research. Regardless, there is ample literature from feminist and minority group scholars that shows that doing work with marginalized groups or about their concerns can have a significant negative impact on careers and therefore on the perceived expertise and intellectual authority of the researchers concerned.

Maori researchers and academics have also written of the impact of community needs and institutional demands on their work lives and approaches to work and life as a Maori person (A. Durie, 1995; Irwin, 1988). Although communities may want to work with a Maori researcher, they may be quite unaware of the risks that many academic researchers face when researching in the margins. Thus, communities have expectations that researchers should not be building their careers by studying "them," but researchers feel pressure from the academy to turn research into peer-reviewed publications. Increasingly, research is viewed as an activity that must be measured and assessed for quality as part of a researcher's performance, and an individual's performance is linked directly to a department's and institution's ranking. A researcher working for social justice is likely to be involved in hours of work that does not lead to a "quality" academic publication—they may contribute to major social change but their research ranking will not reflect their contribution to society.

There are also implications and risks for researchers who work within the insider frame. From one perspective, the known methodological risks are about the potential for bias, lack of distance, and lack of objectivity. From another research perspective, they are about the potential to see the trees but not the forest, to underplay the need for rigor and integrity as a researcher, and to mistake the research role with an advocacy role. There are other risks, however, in terms of the relationships and accountabilities to be carried by an insider researcher.

Unlike their colleagues, these extra responsibilities can be heavy, not just because of what people might say directly but because of what researchers imagine the community might be saying. It can be difficult, because of the magnitude and amount of

urgent tasks that seem to require action and support. Researchers make strategic decisions to deal with the urgent, while sacrificing the research and ultimately their careers. Mentoring by other indigenous scholars who have made their way through the system can provide some support, although these senior scholars are few and far between and are not always the best exemplars themselves of how to balance a life and maintain research while working with communities to make a positive difference.

Many of the social issues and challenges that confront marginalized communities will also be part of the biography and social network of an insider indigenous researcher. Visiting relatives who are sick, looking after grandchildren or someone's teenage child, writing submissions, being the breadwinner for more than one household, being in constant mourning, having to rush home to deal with emergencies, and being at the constant call of a community are often very normal parts of life for an indigenous researcher who is also trying to make his or her way into a career. Although every researcher may claim to have similar responsibilities and at some point to have taken on similar burdens, there is a qualitative difference between the conditions of people living in marginalized communities and those in middle-class suburbia.

Marginalized Populations, Research, and Ethics

For researchers working with "human subjects or participants," the terms "marginalized and vulnerable peoples" appear in the literature in relation to research ethics. Marginalized populations are often described as groups who have little access to power (for example, women, ethnic minority groups, gay and lesbian communities, children and youth). Vulnerable populations are also marginalized from power but are considered particularly vulnerable because they have even less individual agency to provide informed consent. Vulnerable groups include prisoners, armed forces personnel, people who are mentally ill, children, some groups with disabilities, and groups who can be and are more likely to be vulnerable to coercion. The significant event from which Western sensibilities about research abuses with marginalized and vul-

nerable populations was heightened was the Holocaust and the research undertaken by Nazi doctors on Jewish, Roma (Gypsies), and other groups imprisoned in the death camps. The Nuremberg Code of Ethics emerged from this momentous legacy. According to David Weisstub (1998):

The Nuremberg Legacy represents almost a mythic chapter in the history of understanding of research ethics... . Nuremberg is a distant collective memory. For most of us Nuremberg emerged as a code and a symbol both in its principles representing the foundations of civilized medical practice and research and in its symbolization of the triumph of the democratic ideal over fascism. [p. 217]

Code was formed from the ashes of the Holocaust through the Nuremberg Tribunal and was an attempt to ensure that the types of research carried out by Nazi scientists would never happen again. The code recognizes that there are likely to be groups of people who are especially vulnerable when it comes to research and that these groups would also most likely exist in the margins of society. It is also the first acknowledgment that there are some basic moral principles by which researchers must abide.

From an indigenous perspective, the Nuremberg Code came too late, as the history of research as exploitation was already embedded in European imperialism leading into the twentieth century. And for other groups of people such as women, African American males, and many indigenous communities, the existence of the Nuremberg Code has not prevented research abuses from occurring. A series of scandals have highlighted the ways in which marginalized and vulnerable groups continue to be exposed to unethical research. According to Tolich (2001), the Cervical Cancer Inquiry, which looked into New Zealand's "darkest hour" in research, came about primarily because of the efforts of two feminist investigators who persisted in their inquiries despite the blocks and barriers put before them by institutional and professional systems. It was only after the Cervical Cancer Inquiry that academic institutions in New Zealand were required by legislation (Statute 161 of the Education Act 1989) to institute policies and practices for conducting ethical research with human subjects.

The Nuremberg Code was later followed by the World Medical

Association Declaration of Helsinki in 1964 and, in the United States, by the Belmont Report in 1979. These three documents are referred to as landmarks in establishing a history of ethical research conduct (Sugarman, Mastrioni, Kahn, & Jeffrey, 1998). There is a difference, however, between professional ethics codes of practice that are essentially self-monitoring and voluntary, legislated, or officially regulated codes of practice. The Nuremberg Code has rarely been used in legal cases (Weisstub, 1998). The Helsinki Declaration is a professional voluntary code for medical practitioners who belong to the World Medical Association. The Belmont Report was an official report of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. What is known in the United States as The Common Rule is a set of federal policies adopted by the major U.S. agencies that conduct or fund research with human subjects.

In New Zealand, there are several legal instruments that cover aspects of ethical research with human subjects, including the Education Act 1989, the Human Rights Act 1999, the Health and Disability Services Human Rights Code, and the Health Information Privacy Code. The Treaty of Waitangi is also incorporated into research and ethics policies, and consultation with Maori communities is part of some institutions requirements when the research involves Maori participants. New Zealand also has a National Ethics Advisory Committee, a National Bioethics Committee, and other specialized committees that deal with single issues such as reproductive birth technologies.

Why is this background important when discussing issues that relate to indigenous peoples? There is one significant reason and three other contextual purposes. The significant reason is to establish the case history, in a sense, for why Maori as peoples need to be recognized as a marginalized group. The literature uses the word "populations" rather than "peoples," and there is a distinction in international law between these two terms. As a marginalized population, Maori are basically just another group or set of individuals and communities. As peoples, Maori have claims to self-determination. There is a risk that in fragmenting small groups of Maori into categories of marginalization and vulnerability we lose sight of the overall picture of Maori as an indige-

nous and marginalized people in New Zealand. The risk becomes especially important in discussions about the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in protecting Maori rights to develop as Maori and to be treated as equal citizens.

The contextual issues and history are important because research is an international activity conducted across the globe by researchers from different nations, institutions, disciplines, and approaches. The norms of research conduct are developed in this environment. Furthermore, legal precedents established in other Western jurisdictions such as the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia have weight in the New Zealand context, especially if the issue is related to indigenous communities. Finally, science and technology are making rapid advances into areas that challenge existing notions of ethics on a broad scale, and Maori attempts to articulate and have recognized a different knowledge and ethical system are in a race against time. In this context, being better informed is an important protection.

On-Going Marginalization of Maori

Recent public discourses on the place of Maori and the Treaty of Waitangi position non-Maori as victims of discrimination because of the perceived extra special rights that Maori have to be consulted, to have our language and culture recognized, and to have Treaty of Waitangi protections built into legislation and policy frameworks. It would be quite fair to say that Maori have struggled a long time to make such inroads as part of making the Treaty of Waitangi "real" as the foundational instrument of the nation. Maori have also seen this process as being necessary to fulfill their visions of self-determination and to fulfill and benefit from the rights of citizenship.

It is this last point about citizenship that brings us back to the question of marginalization. In almost every social index, Maori are disproportionately represented as disadvantaged, even when statistical analyses control for class factors such as income levels. Furthermore, the long-term systemic nature of disadvantage has constituted patterns of participation by Maori people in society that are different from mainstream Pakeha norms and consequently

tend to challenge taken-for-granted policies and practices of institutions. One obvious example is the impact of underachievement at secondary school, on adult second-chance learning, and on the average age of Maori in postgraduate education.

Maori participation rates in tertiary education is one of the highest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, but the level at which Maori are participating is at a low second-chance level and is a direct consequence of the failure of schooling to deliver achievement to Maori. Many Maori students enter tertiary education through bridging programs, they tend to be older, they are more likely to be women, they tend to be part-time students in comparison to non-Maori, and it takes them much longer to complete a degree qualification. Furthermore, they have a disproportionately higher take-up rate for loans and because they are less likely on completion to move into higher-paying positions, they take longer to repay their loans. In sum, the pattern of participation in society reinforces disadvantage.

Whether one drives through New Zealand literally or as a figurative journey to understand social in/equality, Maori communities are on the margins of the economy and society. In the late 1980s, New Zealand began a significant neoliberal program of structural adjustment, of deregulation and reregulation of the economy and major reforms of education, health, and the welfare system (Kearns & Joseph, 1997; Kelsey, 1997; Moran, 1999).

The neoliberal agenda and the continuous process of reform has had a profound effect on New Zealand society; after two decades, it has produced a generation of young people for whom the neoliberal ideologies are normal and taken for granted. In education, neoliberalism is marked by a discourse of education as a marketplace with parents and students as consumers and clients, teachers and schools as self-managing providers of services, and curriculum knowledge as a commodity that can be traded in or traded up for social goodies such as well-being and social status.

The reform process redesigned the way schools were administered, redesigned the role of the principal government agency that was responsible for education, created a new agency to review and assess school performance, created a new curriculum framework, created a new qualifications framework and a new agency

to accredit qualifications and institutions, created a user pays system for postsecondary education, and created a competitive environment through its funding arrangements. Private providers of postsecondary education and training were, until recently, able to compete with public institutions for public funding and aspire to attain degree-granting status.

In the neoliberal concept of the individual, Maori people in the 1980s presented a potential risk to the legitimacy of the new vision because Maori aspirations were deeply located in history, in cultural differences, and in the values of collectivity; even the Maori concept of family or whanau seemed threatening. When the neoliberal agenda was implemented, however, Maori communities were already embarked on their own educational revolution. The forward momentum of Maori development at that time has played a significant role in challenging the reform agenda to accommodate or at least attempt to make space for Maori aspirations. Jane Kelsey has argued that at times Maori were the only group in New Zealand society actually contesting the reforms in any serious way.

The development of Te Kohanga Reo sparked and continues to inspire the development of a range of Maori initiatives in education that have developed as alternative models within and outside the current system from early childhood to postsecondary tertiary education. The alternative models include Kura Kaupapa Maori, Maori language immersion schools that developed outside the state and were included as a separate category of education in the Education Amendment Act 1989 and Wananga or tribal degree-granting institutions that were also included as a category of the Education Amendment Act of 1989.

These alternatives were Maori-initiated institutions based on different conceptions of what education was about. They were community efforts that challenged the taken-for-granted hegemony of schooling and, as argued by Graham Smith (2000), revolutionized Maori thinking by demonstrating that Maori people could free their minds from the colonizer, and exercise agency in a purposeful, tactical, and constructive way. These educational alternatives did not begin with active state support, and even after they were included in legislation there was no supportive

infrastructure to assist them. In the case of the Wananga, the three institutions took a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal related to capital expenditure. The tribunal ruled in their favor, and two of the Wananga have now settled their claim with the crown and have resources to develop their capital infrastructure.

I want to emphasize that the Maori development momentum was already in progress when the neoliberal reform process began. This meant that Maori had a platform for challenging those aspects of the reform process that seemed to threaten Maori development and a platform for engaging with the process in order to influence change.

This is not to say that the reform process welcomed Maori participation. On the contrary, Maori had to make serious demands to be included or to be heard. At times, overseas experts were brought in to dismiss Maori concerns or show how those concerns would be addressed by the new structures.

Nor can we say that Maori were particularly well organized or mobilized. In fact, the early reforms that privatized the state industries, such as forestry, created massive Maori unemployment and a high degree of community stress. The significance of the revolutionized thinking created by the development of Te Kohanga Reo was that in the absence of organized resistance, there was enough criticism to provide a counterhegemonic possibility and to have it voiced at every opportunity available. The point is that if Maori had been in disarray without any alternative models, the reform process would have run a different and likely a more devastating course. As it was, the reform process has had a disproportionately negative impact on Maori communities, widening disparities between Maori and non-Maori in educational achievement, health, and economic status.

What has become even clearer in the twenty-first century is the way in which policies aimed at Maori continue to resonate and recycle colonizing narratives. The discourse might change subtly, with terms shifting from Maori to *whanau*, *hapu*, *iwi*, to urban Maori and *iwi* Maori, and the unit of problem definition might change from tribes to *whanau*, from Maori women to Maori parents, from Maori providers to Maori consultants, but the underlying racialized tensions remain constant. The subtext is that Maori

are responsible for their own predicament as a colonized people and that citizenship for Maori is a "privilege" for which we must be eternally grateful. Marginalization is a consequence of colonization, and the price for social inclusion is still expected to be the abandonment of being "Maori."

The impact of this sustained narrative on Maori is both a growing fragmentation within communities alongside a parallel urgency to redevelop and recenter ourselves around common baseline symbols and aspirations, for example, as in Mason Durie's three conceptualizations of "living as Maori, being a citizen of the world and Maori well-being and good health" (Durie, 2004, p. 66). The tension between fragmentation and coming together is an almost impossible situation and, in many cases, at our most vulnerable points, fractures occur, families fragment, core relationships between parents and children break down, and Maori people become alienated from themselves and from their extended families and communities.

It is neither accidental nor genetic that Maori mental health issues have risen dramatically in the last two decades so that they rank as one of the most important health issues for Maori. Marginalization as a process, as well as a state of affairs, impacts at multiple levels and sites.

Maori people are marginalized from mainstream New Zealand society. Some are able to choose the margins by embracing their Maori identities and participating in Maori society and culture. Some are alienated from Maori society. This occurs through a range of mechanisms or social, economic, and political processes. It may simply be that geographic distance from their home is a barrier to participation or that the loss of Maori language and culture is seen as a barrier. Some, by virtue of being institutionalized or enveloped into a system of care and protection, are removed from their social and cultural supports. Other groups (for example, those who have come together around a special interest) may find themselves excluded or alienated from existing Maori power structures but still function as Maori. Then there are probably those who are alienated from Maori and mainstream society (for example, people who have committed crimes against their own communities may never be welcomed back home; they have, in effect, been excluded from their own society).

Researchers in the Margins

As stated earlier, researchers who choose to do research in the margins are at risk of becoming marginalized themselves in their careers and workplaces. One strategy for overcoming this predicament is to embrace the work and commit to building a career from that place. As writers such as bell hooks and Gloria Anzaldúa have argued, the margins are also sites of possibilities that are exciting and “on the edge.” Cultures are created and reshaped, people who are often seen by the mainstream as dangerous, unruly, disrespectful of the status quo, and distrustful of established institutions are also innovative; they are able to design their own solutions, they challenge research and society to find the right solutions.

Those who work in the margins need research strategies that enable them to survive, to do good research, to be active in building community capacities, to maintain their integrity, manage community expectations of them, and mediate their different relationships. Kaupapa Maori research developed out of this challenge. As Graham Smith, Leonie Pihama, and others who write in this tradition have emphasized, Kaupapa Maori research encourages Maori researchers to take being Maori as a given, to think critically and address structural relations of power, to build on cultural values and systems, and to contribute research back to communities that are transformative.

There are strategies that researchers can use that will enable them to build strong research relationships with different communities. There are also skills and principles that Maori researchers have learned through experience work well with Maori if practiced in sensitive and nuanced ways. These might be as simple as focusing on building good relationships and “showing one’s face” as the first step in a relationship. But they are also about building networks of people who have stronger links into communities and building community capacities so that people can do the research themselves.

One of the anxieties that researchers may have is that when communities have the power to determine their own research they might not choose a Maori researcher even if they have all the right skills. That is a risk and a challenge. Many communities would want to choose the best researcher available or the researcher from

their own community or area. Often their choice is brokered by a funding agency, more precisely a government-funding agency that may not know of Maori researchers or may not prefer a Maori researcher.

Experienced community organizations are also learning what they need from researchers, both Maori and non-Maori. In other indigenous contexts, some tribal nations in North America have protocols for researchers and their tribal structures have specialist research directors who manage all research on their nation. What is possibly very different in Aotearoa New Zealand is the growing capacity of Maori researchers across many different fields and disciplines. In the New Zealand context, Maori scholars can assemble quite large and multidisciplinary research collaborations, there are a growing number of independent Maori researchers working with communities, and there are funding agencies eager to support Maori research capacity development.

In what he calls a “sociology of absences,” legal sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2004) calls for an ecology of knowledge/s that enables alternative ways of knowing and scientific knowledge to coexist and argues that there can be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. At the heart of this engagement in social justice and indigenous research are questions about knowledge, education, participation, and development. There are enduring questions about power relations, agency and structure, ethics and methodologies. Research is simply one site at which these issues intersect. Research is important because it is the process for knowledge production; it is the way we constantly expand knowledge. Research for social justice expands and improves the conditions for justice; it is an intellectual, cognitive, and moral project, often fraught, never complete but worthwhile.

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