

Title: Politics of Worldview: A Meta-analysis of Collaborative Research

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Abstract:

Scholars who engage in co-creative, collaborative research set out to challenge normative outcomes and nudge transformative change. This paper is a meta-analysis of a 10-year research programme which excavates the politics of worldview in knowledge creation within several cross-cultural research partnerships for tourism development. The research asks: what are the roles and actions, tensions, dynamics within research relationships and the effects of embedded power?

Contextually, four studies examined enterprise aspirations from societal margins and address issues of hybridity, otherness and ‘being alongside’. Epistemologically, the research locates ‘between world-views’ in a ‘third space’ ontology. All were hybrid research collectives, and used a process constructed to resonate with cultural norms yet interact with normative research. *Foucauldian* narrative analysis, *deep thinking* techniques of critical collaborative research were triangulated with Pacific community peer review and critique. A common methodological framework was used across the four studies—the Mutuality Approach—which integrated Pacific indigeneity with academic practice to form a hermeneutic circle of critique, reinterpretation and common meaning, underpinned by indigenous voices. Following Johnson’s advisory for collaborative research, the analysis demonstrated political dimensions of problem definition, ideological affinity, role clarity, and worthy outcomes. Yet, researcher worldview (migrant, indigenous, insider/outsider other) varies even if ideological affinity is the same. Further, that role clarity needs constant reiteration throughout the research process. In addition, a picture emerges of tension and (mis)communication, offset by long-term relationships and trust. In terms of impact, findings were integrated in local government policy and targeted enterprise funding, as well as into regional development planning and governmental policy, and an NGO’s enterprise advisory programme. Further, several emerging Pacific (New Zealand-based) and Tongan scholars now carry forward the experience, skills and research outcomes in their own work lives in academic, policy and community action. The collaborative methodologies were integrated into best practice Pacific research. Whilst only one of the research projects achieved transformative social change, each study had a degree of impact on the research participants and the descent-diaspora communities which supported them.

The contribution of this paper is that it builds a framework for reflection on the ephemerality of impact and the tensions and dynamics of research teams. The paper discusses sympoetic hybridity, the effects of embedded power and employment of a hybrid approach to knowledge co-creation within a series of research collectives. These generate impacts within and beyond the worldviews of the research team to the descent diaspora networks, with an enhanced

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potential to generate social change through activism. This contribution is timely given the current push towards impact agendas in universities and the ethics of engagement. Research is not a neutral act.
