

# THE ETHICS OF CARE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL RESEARCH PRACTICES IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Māori – indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand  
Pākehā – non Māori

## Impacts of colonisation

The United Nations (2009 p67) report states

Many illnesses that have a disproportionate impact on indigenous peoples, especially problems of mental health, are related to the colonialist and racist structures that cause indigenous communities to be some of the poorest and most marginalized in the world. Not only have indigenous peoples experienced a collective history of genocide, dispossession and dislocation, manifestations of these violent forces persist today...

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005)

“...the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism and is one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous dictionary ... as knowledge is collected, classified and then represented back to the West. The word research stirs up anger, silence and distrust.

# Limited guidance

## Reflections by researchers

- de Ishtar – 2005
- Hart, Straka and Rowe 2016
- Fredericks 2010 'pretty business'
- Torrie et al 2015 – cultural competence

## Institutional guidance

- Tiriti (Treaty) of Waitangi – Protection partnership, participation
- OPAC Canada – ownership, control, access and possession
- New Zealand Health Research Council (2010)

# Implications

- Pākehā paralysis
- Tolich 2002
- Settler researchers avoided working with Māori in research studies in order to sidestep the difficulties of negotiating inclusion, an approach that was problematically sustained through a lack of challenge by Aotearoa institutions such as ethics committees.

# Ethics of care

- Interrelations between humans is enjoyed best in a co-propelling relation (Hage 2009)
- Tronto (2013 p127) states: The problem also is that those who have benefitted from past injustice have a great incentive to forget that fact, whether they perpetrated injustice or were simply bystanders who benefitted from the unjust acts of others, and those who have been so harmed cannot grasp how the world can go forward simply by ignoring or burying the past.
- Barnes' (2012 p147) discussion of deliberation with care
- Sevenhuijsen (1998) the moral agent

## In conclusion – Integrity of care

- Attention is required to the role of privilege – to offset privilege, responsibility remains with researchers to take action that repays the community.
- Researchers must take responsibility for the protection of indigenous intellectual property with direction required from the community about what can be shared and how to appropriately acknowledge the Indigenous IP that is shared.
- Sevenhijzen alerts us to the competent moral actor, who is open and available to learn and challenge themselves.
- The responsiveness of the community is required at every level of the research process, as is common in other participatory practices.
- Solidarity is required to ensure that the research attends to the project of decolonisation as defined and actioned by indigenous communities.