

Editorial: Special Issue

Ignored no longer: Emerging Indigenous researchers on Indigenous psychologies

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Indigenous peoples have been primarily constructed as exotic subjects of research. We have often been denied the status of informed research instigators and producers of valid knowledge. In many respects Indigenous psychologies remain marginalised in the broader discipline of psychology. Research in the global discipline has failed to recognise or embrace our own psychological systems, histories, socio-economic and political conditions and worldviews. Further, psychological research rarely employs cultural concepts germane to our distinct groups when interpreting our thoughts and behaviours. These omissions reflect missed opportunities and the continued dominance of Anglo-American worldviews in the global discipline of psychology.

Indigenous psychologies recognise that people have complex and highly developed understandings of themselves and there is more than one legitimate psychological approach to understanding the social world, the place of different people within it. The development of many Indigenous psychologies has been closely associated with processes of decolonisation and with assisting Indigenous and minority groups to find a voice and gain access to resources for self-determination. Dissatisfaction with the unquestioned, derivative, and explicative nature of psychological research that is deeply rooted in individualistic strands of North American focused psychology has led Indigenous researchers to look outside the

discipline in order to begin solving the devastating problems within our own communities.

The discipline of psychology is expanding world-wide and requires the establishment of psychologies relevant to each culture around the world. These various traditions can be constructively connected to an evolving global discipline that embraces diversity and difference (Lawson, Graham, & Baker, 2007). Globalisation offers an invaluable opportunity for psychology to enhance its content, methods and scope. This must be nurtured and it should be addressed by an open and inclusive discussion on how we may implement it. What is required is a strategic collaborative interaction that seeks a responsive global psychology (Lawson et al., 2007).

Many decisions shaping the circumstances of Indigenous peoples are made beyond their life worlds, and it is up to us, as critical Indigenous scholars working with community groups, to help bridge this divide through advocacy and joint action. As current and future psychologists, we need to situate our work within local socio-political contexts. This special issue highlights analytic approaches informed by Indigenous world views which are crucial for extending our psychological engagements with human diversity in more complex and relevant ways. Here we explore the breadth of Indigenous psychologies through the current work of emerging Indigenous researchers on issues of relevance to our communities.

In this special issue, edited by Mohi, Bridgette, Shiloh, Pat and Darren, we showcase work conducted within several such Indigenous psychologies. This collection of papers from emerging Indigenous scholars reflect a vibrant, healthy and supportive research environment in which conversations relevant to Indigenous peoples are taking place, and where culturally diverse perspectives and methods are valued and accepted. Here, culture is not simply seen as an abstract set of concepts. Culture constitutes a field of human action, meaning making, and self-production. It is through culture that all people construct themselves and make sense of the world (Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora, & Leggat-Cook, 2011; Nikora, Rua, & Te Awekōtuku, 2007).

In doing so, we consider the position of emerging Indigenous psychologies within Australia, Aotearoa and the broader Pacific region. This leads us into the first theme for this special issue of *people*, their cosmologies and orientations, where they come from and how they understand the world and their place in it. From there we move into how indigenous people's understandings of themselves and the world inform *theorising* within Indigenous communities by Indigenous scholars. This in turn informs the *methods* we use to work with our people rather than on our communities. Indigenous theoretical frameworks and research methods allow us to develop the ways in which community issues are understood and addressed in dialogue with those communities. Theories are often developed from within our communities inform the use of research methods to obtain insights that can be *applied* to addressing a range of social and economic issues.

It is important to start with a paper from Country where this journal is located. Anna Dwyer's contribution lays the foundations for this special issue. Anna talks of the enduring resilience, creativity and deep understanding of the relationships between human beings

and their environment that Indigenous peoples share across oceans. The title of this article 'Pukarrikarta-jangka muwarr – Stories about caring for Karajarri Country' recognises the centrality of Country to social relationships and the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities (Kelly, Dudgeon, Gee & Glaskin, 2010). The importance of fostering Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing through an understanding of the connection to land, language, culture, spirituality, ancestry and family and community is explored. These factors are inextricably intertwined and afford a bastion for Indigenous peoples to draw from in the face of adversity, buffering communities from the impact of stressful circumstances on their social and emotional wellbeing (Kelly et al., 2010). Anna leads readers through the supportive consultation process between Indigenous and academic institutions resulting in the Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Country Plan. This contribution challenges a dominant colonial framework in Australia that continues to undermine the legitimate use of Indigenous people's extensive and comprehensive knowledge to manage homelands.

Byron Malaela Sotiata Seiuli's paper titled 'Uputaua: A therapeutic approach to researching Samoan communities' calls attention to the significant gap witnessed between an inclusive understanding of health and the realities of Samoan and other Pacific communities. The Uputaua Approach outlined in this paper provides a supportive guide for clinicians, health professionals and researchers alike to be reflective of their role throughout the engagement processes. Byron draws upon his own personal, cultural and professional experiences to unpack the conceptual framework encompassed by the Uputaua Approach. Where psychology has historically neglected the spiritual dimension of human existence the Uputaua Approach addresses this oversight. In his paper, Byron contends that the specific beliefs of Indigenous people must be

considered in order to bridge gaps between psychological concepts developed in one cultural context and the application of these ideas to addressing the needs of Indigenous people in other contexts (Sue & Sue, 2008). Beyond addressing the body, mind and social dimensions is the need to locate these within their familial, ancestral, environmental and divine connections.

Ingrid Waldron makes an invaluable contribution to the comprehensive yet historically muted body of research on African-centered psychology. This paper titled 'Out from the margins: Centring African-centred knowledge in psychological discourse' assertively critiques the applicability of Anglo-American psychology to the African peoples of the diaspora experience with its assumptions of inferiority. Ingrid contends that marginality can be more than a place of exclusion. It can also constitute a space for resistance. Her paper provides an overview of the vast healing approaches utilised by African peoples of the Diaspora that are informed by Indigenous and various Euro-Western approaches. Within an African conceptual framework it is recognised that spirituality is an intimate aspect of the human condition and a legitimate aspect of mental health work (Sue & Sue, 2008). Such recognition is extended through Ingrid's discussion of the limitations of Cartesian-orientated Anglo-American psychology which is challenged by Indigenous people's conceptualisation of the interconnected self.

Andre McLachlan, Ruth Hungerford, Ria Schroder and Simon Adamson's contribution titled 'Practitioners experiences of collaboration, working with and for rural Māori' showcases how qualitative research strategies can be indigenised and adapted to better reflect Māori cultural concepts and values. Andre and colleagues challenge assumptions that prescribe Kaupapa Māori Research (KMR) as a descriptor for research with Māori communities. They present KMR

as comprising the development of a rich philosophical framework and theory that outlines a set of methodological principles, processes and intervention strategies. From this perspective, KMR does not preclude the use of quantitative methodologies. KMR can be used to shape and inform different research methods with emancipator relevance for Indigenous peoples. Through an example showcasing the use of KMR across health and social services in a rural setting to address the needs of Māori with substance use issues, Andre and colleagues highlight the need to recognise the diverse lived realities of Māori today. These authors argue that it is crucial to understand that Māori practitioners and those Māori accessing services may have different understandings and experience of the use of tikanga (practice informed by Māori values).

Our fifth paper, by Arama Rata, Jessica Hutchings and James Liu titled 'The Waka Hourua Research Framework: A dynamic approach to research with urban Māori communities', employs a methodological framework at the interface between Indigenous knowledge and Western science. Utilising such a research approach allows for the generation of new and distinct insights that enriches both knowledge bases. Ancient Māori values utilised in the framework provide the bases and processes of scientific inquiry. The Waka Hourua (double-hulled sailing vessel) research framework was developed as part of a community-driven intervention at a low-decile State secondary school to reflect the diverse realities of Māori community members. Arama and colleagues draw comparisons across indigenous communities encompassed by a holistic approach to research where analyses comprise social relationships and connections between people, the physical environment and historical events. While it is difficult to turn research into action within the limits of a PhD, Arama successfully contributes to broader agendas of change. This is evidenced by key stakeholders expressing satisfaction with the outcomes of intervention activities central to

this project.

Arlene Laliberté's paper titled 'Participatory action research in Aboriginal contexts: 'Doing with' to promote mental health' details her experiences and reflections as a Canadian First Nation community psychology researcher working alongside Aboriginal Australian peoples. This paper highlights the positive contributions the Collaborative Research on Empowerment and Wellbeing team that Arlene has been involved with in supporting positive mental health outcomes within Indigenous communities. Employing a participatory action research approach, Arlene demonstrates the strength of supportive relationship building when working with Indigenous communities. Participating communities included two remote communities, a rural community easily accessed and close to a large town and a mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community close to a large urban centre. Arlene reflects on the tensions and strengths of integrating "insiders," "outsiders" and multiple perspectives to obtain a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the issues that face Indigenous communities and how we might respond in constructive ways.

Pita King, Amanda Young-Hauser, Wendy Li, Mohi Rua and Linda Waimarie Nikora's contribution titled 'Exploring the nature of intimate relationships: A Māori perspective' looks at the imperfect beauty of intimate relationships from a Māori perspective. The complex interplay between identity change, violence perpetuated by men and women, communication and culture is explored. The processes of colonisation have undermined the role of women in Māori society and are seen to be a major contributing factor to the high rates of intimate partner violence within the Māori population. The sadness and loneliness played out in relationships as they sometimes dissipate, as well as the cultural values

enacted in each relationship, providing a framework to connect, negotiate and relate to one another is considered. Pita and colleagues seek to enhance current understandings of the nature of intimate relationships as a preventative approach to promote more loving, compassionate and violence free intimate relationships.

Our eighth paper by Glenis Mark and Kerry Chamberlain, titled 'Māori healers' perspectives on cooperation with biomedicine', outlines some of the tensions occurring between Māori health practitioners and General Practitioners, whilst providing practical solutions to emerging tensions. Glenis explores the contemporary role of Rongoā Māori as part of a traditional system of healing that has developed out of the cultural traditions of Māori. Where *tohunga* (traditional Māori priest) once held a prestigious position in Māori society, colonial policies aimed at suppressing the practices of such *tohunga* have seen the role of *rongoā* relegated to a secondary and alternative form of health treatment in Māori society today. The authors contend that Indigenous healing practices and belief systems entail experiential and lived realities. The paper demonstrates the importance of holistic care involving spirituality for Māori healers during *rongoā* healing could be shared with doctors. Conversely, healers may benefit from becoming informed of basic biomedical practices such as recognising the need for patients to be referred for biomedical treatment.

Stanley Kamutingondo, Darrin Hodgetts, Shiloh Groot and Linda Waimarie Nikora's paper, titled 'Zimbabwean medication use in New Zealand: The role of indigenous and allopathic substances', considers what becomes of indigenous forms of knowledge regarding medications and health care when groups move from their homelands to another country; in this case from Zimbabwe to New Zealand. With the colonisation of Zimbabwe and the creation of a Westernised professional class in urban centres, there has been a shift away from *vanaChiremba* (traditional healers) towards Western

medications and associated practices. Zimbabweans come from a background of interdependence where sharing, unity, respect and love are important components to their everyday lives. The authors explore how these families respond to illnesses within domestic spaces in a new country in the context of both their traditional and Western medical approaches to support each other and ensure the appropriate sourcing and use of medicinal substances. These authors reflect on how striking divisions between Indigenous and Western traditions is problematic in that, once taken into the home, allopathic substances are transformed socially into cultural objects through their use in household healthcare practices.

In our final paper titled 'Māori children and death: Views from parents', Juanita Jacob, Linda Nikora and Jane Ritchie consider (through the eyes of their parents) children's participation in tangi (Māori death rituals) as an important forum for the expression of grief and providing continuity and support with familial networks. While death may come to us all, how children understand and respond to death varies across cultures. Tangi as an institution has largely withstood the devastations of colonisation and remains deeply rooted within Māori communities. The process of conveying knowledge of death, dying, mourning and culturally defined responses from parent to child occurs within the whanau (family) rather than through media or counselling. The increasing challenges of urbanisation and associated kinship fragmentation threaten the continuation of this practice and the authors emphasise the need to ensure these practices continue to persist between parents and their children.

Each paper located within the pages of this special issue shares multiple commonalities and echoes Martín-Baró's definition of liberation psychology as "a paradigm in which theories don't define the problems of the situation; rather, the

problems demand or select their own theorization" (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 314). Combined, these papers demonstrate that while structural intrusions have clearly posed challenges to Indigenous wellness, we are not passive in the face of socio-political upheavals. We are resilient and we are adaptive. This special issue problematises racist discourses regarding Indigenous peoples that associate dark skin with a lack of motivation, low achievement, poor self-discipline and violence (Gowan, 2002; Groot et al., 2011; Kingfisher, 2007). The analyses offered by the 10 papers comprising this collection, rupture negative stereotypes that focus on deficits, and demands that the broader discipline shifts over to incorporate Indigenous strengths, capacities and knowledges into our responses. If articulation is the catalyst for change, then to be heard, to be read, connects us. After all, "without language, there are no true meanings" (Dwyer, this issue).

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