RESEARCH IS RELATIONAL: EXPLORING RESEARCHER IDENTITIES AND COLONIAL ECHOES IN PACIFIC AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES

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RESEARCHERS IN PACIFIC AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES SEEK TO RECLAIM, celebrate, and remember Indigenous epistemologies that have been systematically marginalized by histories of colonialism. This colonial lineage, emphasizing simplistic categorizations of peoples often based primarily on race, also contributes to ideas about which researchers can and should be "in" and "out" within contemporary Pacific and Indigenous research. These constructions affect the ability of Indigenous scholarship to impact other disciplines. Polarizing binary definitions and ideas about race and place being synonymous with a researchers' "authenticity" are enduring colonial echoes, limiting possibilities for participation and dialog. Researchers are never simply "insiders" or "outsiders"; instead they work within complex and fluid relational continuums. We offer the broad category of the *Multi Perspective Culturally Responsive* (MPCR) researcher to better acknowledge complex, multifaceted, and intersectional researcher identities. Through naming an

inclusive identity pathway, we hope to support collaborations between academics and researchers in Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

The intellectual project of decolonizing has to set out ways to proceed through a colonizing world. It needs a radical compassion that reaches out, that seeks collaboration, and that can only be imagined as other possibilities fall into place (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, xii)

Classifications of researchers as insiders or outsiders oversimplify the relational and ethical complexities of research processes. These categorizations reinforce racist historical divisions, with significant consequences for participation, voice, and collaboration in the present. Indigenous researchers are increasingly writing that, even when we construct ourselves as insiders in relationship to a community, we are never simply either/or but always both inside and out. Without seeking to reify the binary discourses that exist, but to acknowledge their wide-reaching implications, this paper addresses the possibilities and limitations inherent in understanding the value of research as linked to the researchers' insider or outsider status.¹

Categories are always reductive; consequentially, there is a need to acknowledge multiplicity and diversity within broad social categories. This paper considers possibilities for relationships between people who might be located, or locate themselves, within a variety of social categories (for example, categories based on nationality, class, gender, race, religion, ability, or sexual orientation). Rather than emphasizing differences and divisions, our intersectional approach looks for commonalities and possible relationships between and across categorical divides. Relationships and allegiances can be built through acknowledging that people across different social categories may, in fact, experience many commonalities in terms of experiences of marginalization in relationship to prevailing power structures (Cole 2008). Through supporting understandings across difference, a relational and intersectional approach opens possibilities for new perspectives, relationships, and coalitions (Cole 2008).

This paper contributes to conceptualizing Pacific and Indigenous Studies in a world still grappling with colonial legacies. The authors are "outside-in" (Minh-ha 1995, 217) researchers, all born in nations outside of the Pacific region, with postgraduate research experience in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Fiji, and Samoa. We have been powerfully informed by discourses in Pacific and Indigenous Studies. We grapple with insider/outsider definitions, both as scholars engaging in relational research with Indigenous communities and in the process of seeking to be part of academic communities in Pacific/Indigenous Studies.

We understand insider/outsider identities as complex performative and relational social constructions. Identities are "continuously negotiated, unfinalized and open-ended" (Blix 2015, 179). They are created and performed by people in specific social situations, through relationships, conversations, and interactions that are "framed and shaped, facilitated and inhibited by broader stories and discourses that are available in particular socio-historical context" (Blix 2015, 177). The process of constructing identities is also influenced by "cultural metanarratives" within particular social and historical contexts. These are referenced and made relevant through ongoing dialogs between people involved in research processes (Blix 2015, 175). Research is relational.

In Indigenous epistemology, place is vitally important. "[T]he location from which the voice of the researcher emanates" establishes relationships between people (Aveling 2012, 204) and reveals the power structures surrounding complex, intersectional identities. To name your location(s) is to begin to acknowledge the places and perspectives from which you speak. As Hall (1991, 18) argues, "You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all." To acknowledge all our identities, through which we intend to challenge whiteness as an assumed, hegemonic, normative, and anonymous category (Graveline 2010, 367), we have chosen to locate ourselves, to name some of the places from which we speak. Our introductions are rooted in place, mirroring traditions of oralcy and performances of landbased authenticity in the Pacific. Our intention is not to authenticate or to challenge place-based notions of belonging. We hope to introduce ourselves in a way that is culturally situated and respectful and to point toward some of our intersectional identities, both through genealogy and relationality.

Tui Clery has English, German, Irish, and Belgian heritage. She was born in London, England, and has lived, studied, and worked in the United Kingdom, Fiji, and Aotearoa. Her son also has Fijian heritage; his village is Logani, Tailevu. Acacia Cochise has Native American, African American, English, and Lebanese heritage. She has developed deep relational connections to people and places in Samoa and Aotearoa; these links are demonstrated through her choice to scatter her father's ashes in culturally significant places in both countries. Robin Metcalfe was born in Edmonton, Canada. She has Ukrainian, Polish, Scottish, and English ancestry. She has lived and studied in Canada, Fiji, and Australia.

None of the authors is connected genealogically to the Pacific from birth. We have all chosen to develop intimate and complex relationships with people, places, and communities in the Pacific region. We share an interest in Pacific studies and in using Pacific, narrative, and arts-based research methods to engage in community-centered, participatory research. We have research experience working together with Pacific communities in Fiji,

Samoa, and Aotearoa, and we seek to be reflexive⁵ and open to having our own epistemologies challenged and transformed by these cultural encounters. We are interested in research as a form of activism, which is useful, useable, and of benefit to Pacific people.⁶

As scholars we strive to continually reflect on our intersectional identities and to recognize the layers of power and privilege involved in these various spaces and identities. We write this article to acknowledge the importance of relationality in research processes involving Indigenous communities. Through building relationships and engaging in participatory, collaborative research that acknowledges and seeks to build upon intersectional identities, we can achieve greater empathy, understanding, and solidarity.

We draw upon an intersectional genealogy of ideas that includes a wide variety of voices, cultures, and methods. This includes not only academic genres but also literature, story, performance, poetry, and song. Embodied knowledge and learning through doing, learning from silences, and listening are also important parts of how we have learned and continue to learn about relational approaches to research.

Our ideas of the importance of relationality in research are inspired by the Samoan concept of $teu\ le\ va$ (Anae 2007, 2010a, 2010b). To teu le va is to attend to, care for, and nurture the relationships and relational spaces among and between people to ensure that the quality of relationships and the process of research are recognized and respected. Working within the va involves working critically and thoughtfully in the "inter" in the spaces between people, cultures, and disciplines (Whimp 2009).

Teu le va as a relational methodology rooted in Indigenous Pacific epistemology has been generative for us in the process of conceptualizing MPCR. Advocates of teu le va as a methodology argue that the concept of the va represents "pan-Pacific" relational values (Airini, Anae, and Mila-Schaaf 2010, 2) of "linking, interdepending and building our diverse relationships" (Nabobo-Baba 2004, 18). We argue that "relational accountability" (Ray 2012, 91) is a core Indigenous principal. It can be used to guide the ethics and values of research in ways that prioritize relational arrangements as a central concern in culturally respectful and reflective research processes.

This article begins by exploring 1) insider research in the context of how insider/outsider debates have been used by and are useful to Indigenous peoples, recognizing that research that is by and for Indigenous people has helped to reclaim space for Indigenous voices and Pacific epistemologies in the wake of colonialism. 2) We then critique the insider/outsider binary, illustrating through a review of existing research, the necessity of moving away from identity politics that define people on socially constructed scales of inside or out as though these categories were whole and tangible. 3) We offer

the idea of the *Multi Perspective Culturally Responsive* (MPCR) researcher as one response to the complexity of navigating hybrid and multiple intersectional researcher identities. An identity pathway that is committed to reflexivity in research relationships can enlarge dialog, enabling us to explore and access a broader spectrum of possibilities and outcomes for the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

Exploring commonalities between the practice of MPCR researchers and Indigenous approaches to research helps to move past static notions of inside and out. We seek to "acknowledge and negotiate not only difference but also affinity" (Meredith 1998, 1), aiming for a critical consideration of the positionality of researchers and the multiple, intersectional identities that they navigate (Cole 2008). We conclude that a range of diverse perspectives, epistemologies, methods, and methodologies in the academy contributes to creating a "new nonhomogenous academic landscape" (Kovach 2009, 157), which better reflects the complex realities of an increasingly globalized and transnational world.

Insider Research: Processes of Indigenous Resistance, Reclaiming, and Cultural Revitalization in Pacific and Indigenous Studies

Academic knowledge has often been constructed in terms of conceptions of inside and out and by ideas of who has the right and ability to speak.⁷ Colonialism involved processes of categorization and stereotyping that powerfully excluded Indigenous peoples,⁸ who were often constructed as less than human (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 27). Indigenous knowledge systems were marginalized, belittled, and often systematically destroyed (Dei 2010, 126; Donald 2009: 1–24; Kovach 2009: 77–78; Wilson 2008).

The structural power of colonialism extends through systems of policy and governance, which often endure even after colonial leadership has formally ended. Colonial ideologies also extend into the minds of colonized peoples, who internalize and recreate the vision that colonizing powers have created of them (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 24; Gegeo 2001, 492). Therefore, Indigenous scholars have argued that Indigenous peoples need to "decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 24).

Processes of decolonizing the mind have included creating spaces in the academy in which to resist colonial legacies and cultural hegemony. Through disciplines including Indigenous Studies, Pacific Studies, Critical Race Theory, Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies, Indigenous scholars are challenging the dominance of Western philosophies and research methods. Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 4) argues that processes of Indigenous resistance and cultural revitalization are closely linked:

The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope.

Pacific Studies originated as a form of area studies¹¹ and it has undoubtedly white male, patriarchal, and colonial origins (Teaiwa 2014, 50). As a discipline, Pacific studies assisted colonial powers in knowing and controlling the "other." This need was particularly acute during and after World War II, because Western powers expanded into unknown territories (Wesley-Smith 1995, 117). Despite these militarized origins, and the fact that much research in the Pacific continues to be funded by "metropolitan states with national interests at stake in the Pacific Islands" (Firth 2003, 144), Indigenous researchers in the contemporary Pacific have also used the discipline to reclaim Pacific ways of knowing and being. ¹²

As early as 1976, Wendt called on Indigenous Pacific peoples to "take the places of the outsiders who act as experts in and on the region" (cited in Wood 2003, 352) and to tell the stories of Pacific peoples and communities from the inside, rewriting history to include Indigenous voices, perspectives, and worldviews.¹³ Decolonizing Pacific Studies involves "reclaiming Indigenous Oceanic perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed because they were not considered worthwhile" (Thaman 2003, 2). Contemporary Pacific Studies has involved scholars privileging "a cultural group's ways of thinking and of creating and reformulating knowledge, using traditional discourses and media of communication, and anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture" (Gegeo 2001, 493).

Part of this movement toward reclaiming Pacific ways of knowing and being has involved insider researchers consciously engaging in research within their own communities (White and Tengan 2001), seeking highly contextualized, place-based, linguistically, and genealogically embedded knowledge, which would not be easily accessible to outsiders. Indigenous researchers acknowledge the complexities of insider research, the community roles that need to be fulfilled and cared for, and the skill needed to navigate different social positions, relationships, and responsibilities in communities (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 14; Uperesa 2010, 291). The forms of knowledge that insiders might access are significantly impacted by factors including status, seniority, religious affiliation, gender, sexuality, and community expectations.

Brayboy and Deyhle (2000, 164) describe the challenge of moving from the position of family member or friend, to the role of a researcher. "Traditional" qualitative methodologies often involve Indigenous researchers transgressing cultural protocols by, for example, inviting themselves into social situations where they would not usually be present, or asking direct questions that may feel intrusive or have a distancing effect on relationships.

Insider researchers may also be faced with difficult decisions in terms of balancing university research ethics and community expectations to protect certain forms of "closed" knowledge (Nabobo-Baba 2006). Community elders reminded Nabobo-Baba (2006) to care for relationships surrounding her research with great sensitivity, and this included deciding which stories to tell and to hold back (Nabobo-Baba, 2006, 1).

Insider research also responds to a history of relationally disconnected research in the Pacific. Outsider researchers often conceptualized research as a detached "practice of studying others" (White and Tengan 2001, 388). Thaman (2003, 5) argues that outsider researchers have been so fundamental to representations of the Pacific that the region as it is currently understood has been "produced politically, socially, ideologically, and militarily by westerners."

Without the inherent accountability found within lived relationships, outsider researchers in the Pacific have often misrepresented and interpreted others from an anonymous distance and for their own benefit. In contrast, insider researchers face the consequences of the representations, promises, and products of research every day. Intimately accountable for the representations they create, insider researchers embody the long-term consequences of their research journey because they are the subject of the research.

Western research methods, rooted in empiricism and scientific paradigms, assumed that maintaining critical and objective distance from communities was a necessary part of good research. Within Indigenous methodologies, safeguarding relationships always takes precedence over claims to objectivity (Brayboy and Deyhle 2000, 165; Wood 2003: 351–353; Nabobo-Baba 2006). Research is inherently subjective. Researchers are conceptualized as culturally, socially, and historically situated and gendered. Indigenous methodologies emphasize the importance of researchers openly acknowledging how they are related to their research, describing the relationships surrounding it, and reflecting upon the possible consequences of their positionality. Through openly mapping relationships within and surrounding the research, readers can access the web of ideas places, people, discourses, and organizations to which the research is connected.

Insider discourses have been used as spaces of reclamation, renaissance, and celebration, encouraging and supporting Indigenous Pacific researchers to explore their cultures, languages, and communities. Colonial legacies are challenged through recognizing cultural knowledge and understandings as valid and valuable research topics.

The Insider/Outsider Binary: Possibilities, Limitations, and Moving beyond Dichotomies

Indigenous researchers in the contemporary Pacific argue for the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous research ethics in the academy. ¹⁵ They have been leaders and innovators in conceptualizing culturally appropriate research methods and methodologies for use with Indigenous peoples. The methodologies that are emerging are grounded in Pacific epistemologies as a way of decolonizing research. They celebrate Pacific cultures, diverse Indigenous knowledge systems, and identities.

Insider research locates and develops work about the Pacific in Oceania, claiming central space for Indigenous epistemologies and recognizing the forms of knowledge that researchers from the inside access, experience, and articulate. Jones (2012, 100), commenting on relationships between Pākehā and Māori researchers in Aotearoa/New Zealand, argues that calls for research that is by and for Indigenous peoples should be seen as emphasizing the inclusion of Indigenous researchers, rather than the exclusion of researchers from mixed or non-Indigenous backgrounds.

However, racialized and place-based notions of authenticity can and do function to exclude communities of difference. Research that involves Indigenous epistemologies, methods, and methodologies is often seen as possible only for insiders. This has significant impacts for developing research practice and critical reflection upon that practice, often determining who is able to learn from and engage in critical dialog about Indigenous epistemologies. Although dialogs privileging insiders can claim important space for denigrated and marginalized ideas, this exclusivity can also limit possibilities for wider interdisciplinary interaction and dialog outside of the disciplines of Pacific and Indigenous Studies. Denzin (2001, 35), citing Smith (1993, xxix), argues, "If only a man can speak for a man, a woman for a woman, a Black person for all Black people. If this is so, then a bridge connecting diverse racial and gendered identities to discourse in the public arena cannot be constructed."

Defining people on a binary scale of either inside or out perpetuates historic and colonially inscribed divisions between people and re-inscribes these powerfully into the present. Rigid notions of identity, authenticity, belonging, and indigeneity can discount people who would seem to belong in relatively conventional ways, people who can trace genealogical or intergenerational connections to the Pacific, Pacific people who live or work away from home, people who have children with Pacific heritage, or who have lived in Pacific Islands for all or most of their lives. Such discourses also construct certain people living within Pacific communities as outsiders.

This includes migrants, settlers, city dwellers, and people of mixed Pacific ethnicity and cultural heritage. ¹⁶

The persistence of the insider/outsider binary in Pacific and Indigenous Studies puts issues of identity at the heart of Pacific Studies scholarship. Sanga (2004, 49) reflects that historically, Indigenous Pacific research has tended to make arguments along "political and cultural lines" for the exclusion of outsiders and their "imperialist research practices." The assumption underlying much of the discourse around insider research is that if you are of Indigenous Pacific heritage you will necessarily be more committed to Pacific people than would someone who is not. It is assumed that Indigenous researchers will engage in the process of research with greater care for issues of relational accountability and that consequentially research products with greater levels of authenticity and value will emerge.

The binary is too simple; there are always complex "spaces between" inside and out (Kerstetter 2012, 101). Research identities, positionality, and belonging to communities are fundamentally relational, coconstructed, flexible, and subject to change (Clery 2013; Kerstetter 2012; Nabobo-Baba 2006, 29). All communities are subject to complex, intersectional power relationships.

Racially rooted assumptions about belonging, authenticity, and voice have a variety of consequences for Pacific peoples and consequences for the participation and collaboration of outside-in researchers who are committed to research that is grounded in Pacific methodologies and epistemologies. Mila-Schaaf (2009, 2) eloquently cautions against a rigid imagery of belonging in the Pacific:

How we are imagined, inevitably can become the cage in which we become captured. How we are imagined, as well as *how we imagine* counts. The way that we imagine ourselves, as Pacific peoples, and *who is in* and *who is out*, and whose behaviour exceeds the limits of our comfortable criteria and ideas about "who" and "what we are." This is contested and political. Do you happen to be too white, too feminist or too liberal, too gay, too self-mutilating, too outrageous, too much of a stickler for time or too upwardly mobile to comfortably fit within the boundaries of the Pacific social imaginary?

Although Indigenous methodologies invoke notions of authentic or traditional knowledge, they never work exclusively within these paradigms (Ray 2012, 86). Indigenous methodologies involve complex blends of Western and traditional knowledge. Rigid notions of tradition can confine Indigenous research within ideational frameworks, which are legacies of colonialism (Ray 2012, 88). Teaiwa and Henderson (2009, 430) also argue that Western

and traditional knowledge systems are not binary constructs. Instead these multifaceted ways of knowing continually inform and influence one another.

In the Pacific, authenticity is not only defined in terms of blood and place of birth but also by an embodied and ongoing connection to land, language, and culture (Anae 2010a, 223; Gegeo 2001, 496). Indigenous people who are born or who live out of place are often accused of being less authentic. Their insider status becomes increasingly vulnerable and open to challenge. Exposure to multiple cultures and urban centers is thought to leave Pacific Islanders culturally contaminated (Gegeo 2001, 495), with less right to speak about indigeneity and native peoples than if they had remained in place.

Gegeo (2001, 495) uses Kwara'ae epistemology to argue that identity and place are portable. The strength with which traditions and cultural practices from home are upheld by diasporic people living in new places suggests that assumptions that detachment from place leads to a loss of cultural identity are unfounded (Diaz and Kauanui 2001, 324). Remittances from Pacific and diasporic peoples are another way in which connections and identities are powerfully and continually demonstrated. However, the widespread impacts of defining who is in has impacts for issues of power, voice, authenticity, collaboration, and participation in Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

Recognizing and Including Multi Perspective Culturally Responsive (MPCR) Researchers

Research as "An Activity of Hope" 17

Researchers using Indigenous research methods and methodologies often seek to better understand their cultures and communities and to be useful through proposing practical solutions to real life issues (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 152; Kovach 2005, 31; Nabobo-Baba 2006; Anae 2007; Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001; Gegeo 2001). In this spirit of conceptualizing research as a pragmatic activity of hope (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 203), we close by arguing for the recognition and inclusion of the presence of MPCR researchers in Pacific and Indigenous Studies, and in the wider academy.

We offer MPCR to interrupt certainties that are rooted in Western universalism (Bell 2009, 188). It contributes to processes of change through which the often unconsciously assumed dominance of colonial/white/settler cultures is revealed and challenged. Inspired by the work of hooks (2003), we argue that idealism and hopefulness are pragmatic and necessary strategies that can reinforce resilience, helping us to withstand the significant divisiveness that arises from histories of colonialism, globalization, and neoliberalism. Exploring the possibilities inherent within MPCR research contributes to processes

of reimagining possibilities for supporting connected and "meaningful community" (hooks 2003, 197). It is an approach that questions and challenges dominant, hegemonic approaches to research:

When we only name the problem, when we state complaint without a constructive focus or resolution, we take hope away. In this way critique can become merely an expression of profound cynicism, which then works to sustain dominator culture (hooks 2003, xiv).

Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences, this is the process that brings us closer that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community (hooks 2003, 197).

The need to name and acknowledge MPCR researchers was initially conceptualized in the doctoral thesis of Acacia Cochise (2013). Cochise recognizes the need to legitimatize the perspectives of researchers who have lived in multiple places, cultures, and communities. She was inspired by the work of Gay (2010), which considers culturally responsive theory, research, and practice. Her embodied experiences as an inside-out' researcher in the Pacific, and as an Indigenous person of mixed ethnicities and cultural heritage, were also significant inspirations for articulating the importance of including MPCR research approaches and researchers in the academy.

We have developed MPCR as a way of helping to create conceptual space, which better reflects multiple and hybrid cultural positionings. In the process of writing about our research experiences and commitment to relational methodology, we have extended these initial ideas as the basis for encouraging wider praxis and dialog. We argue that place and belongingness are not just located genealogically through blood ties, but they are also located relationally—created through continuous cycles of reflexivity, effort and engagement with people. The importance of place within Indigenous epistemologies is valued within MPCR; also, it acknowledges and seeks to include people who transcend overly simplified racial or national affiliations and who have many places and relational understandings from which to contribute.

Through a relational approach to research, we can gain multifaceted and complex understandings of location and of how identities and cultures change and evolve through relationships with others. If we accept that "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (Bhabha 1990, 211), then the academy needs to work toward a greater recognition of "multiple, collective and collaborative dimensions of knowledge" (Dei 2010,

119). MPCR is part of creating and claiming spaces through which people can holistically acknowledge all of the cultural, ethnic, experiential, and lived identities that they embody.¹⁹

The inclusive category of the MPCR researcher is an identity pathway that acknowledges the power of language. Words to describe researchers with multiple ethnicities and identities are not always easy to find. The language that exists influences the ways in which we are able to theorize our own experiences of others and of otherness. Names are powerful. They can lead to recognized identities and approaches, to processes of negotiation, reclaiming, and renaming.

Naming can function to limit and fix identities, but it is also true that we need words that strive to reflect the realities we experience. Friere (1970, 69) argues that "to exist, humanely, is to *name* the world, to change it." The process of naming the world is not mere semantics but is a significant act of praxis (Friere 1970, 68). Naming involves a necessary dimension of action that provides possibilities for transforming the world through dialog.

The intended audience for this paper is the academic community; however, we recognize the limitations inherent in this focus. Not only is the academy an artifact of colonial priorities and discourses, but the academic community is also often maintained and sustained by such discourses. Academic writing about decolonization, which takes place among academic elites and in the English language, will necessarily tread into this kind of tension. Because the academy is founded on and shaped by deeply rooted colonial legacies, these power dynamics shape and constrain the possibilities for dialog. There is a need to engage in ongoing dialogs about the sociocultural norms, values, and possibilities that language communicates more broadly, across cultural contexts, languages, and communities.

MPCR seeks to name, and therefore to better see, the commitment and engagement of researchers and students who are often caught between or excluded from conventional notions of belonging-ness, because of their nonconforming or multiple racial/ethnic identities or because of the multiple places/cultures in which they have lived, studied, and worked. We offer the encompassing category of the MPCR researcher as one way of resisting reductive notions of identity and ethnicity, of acknowledging intersectional researcher identities, and of creating safe space. MPCR is an invitation to other researchers to self-describe and become part of the reflective process.

Through naming the MPCR researcher, we intend to support processes of dialog about the complexity of researcher identities, and about the impacts of identities on belonging, authenticity, participation, and collaboration in Pacific and Indigenous Studies. Although our paper is a small contribution to what must be a wider process of dialog about what might constitute MPCR researcher identities and what they might contribute, following the work of Dei (2010, 127) we argue that "small acts" are "cumulative and significant for social change."

Towards an Understanding of Multi Perspective Culturally Responsive Researcher Identities

This section explores ideas, ethics, and approaches that might be associated with MPCR researchers. These are not intended to be prescriptive. They are offered as a way of considering both differences and areas of common practice between MPCR researchers and Indigenous scholars.

MPCR researchers often have lived experience in a variety of different spaces, places, cultures, religions, and languages. Their commitment to exploring cultures and to community-based research often grows from these embodied, affective experiences. Some MPCR researchers are "third culture kids" (TCK's) (Pollock and Van Reken 2009, 19). Raised with multiple cultures, in or across a variety of locations, their identity is rooted in many places.

Through their lived experiences and the relationships that they establish, MPCR researchers can gain an intimate and nuanced awareness of cultural experiences supported by the use of reflective, appropriate, and culturally situated research methods. Enabling outside-in researchers to use Indigenous methods and methodologies²⁰ supports the creation of research that grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being, thus deepening the MPCR researcher's knowledge of culturally situated understandings through and across the process of research.

MPCR researchers gain a level of community acceptance observable through their inclusion, access, and ability to collaborate. They are listeners, active participants, and coconstructers of knowledge, who recognize the necessity of reflecting on the impacts of their positionality and research relationships. MPCR researchers recognize that their identities always operate within wider structures of power:

The relationship begins with decolonizing the mind and heart. Non-Indigenous academics who have successful relationships with Indigenous communities understand this. This means exploring one's own beliefs and values about knowledge and how it shapes practices. It is about examining whiteness. It is about examining power. It is ongoing (Kovach 2009, 169).

MPCR researchers work toward achieving mutually empathetic relationships with Indigenous communities (Cochise 2013). Mutual empathy begins when research communities feel researchers have a good understanding of local cultures and that they have demonstrated their commitment to the well-being of Indigenous peoples. It emerges from continuing processes of engagement, and it occurs when relationships are strong.

Some success in research is experienced by both researchers and communities when there is a sense of mutual empathy between them. Through their willingness to enter into research and all of the complex relationships that surround it, researchers and participants consciously enter into an engaged, relational process. Mutual empathy involves finding ways to relate across differences and to understand one another's perspectives through dialog. It involves a genuine openness to reciprocal processes of learning, change, and discovery.

Mutually empathetic relationships help to embody research ethics and principles advocated by many contemporary Indigenous/Pacific Studies scholars, who argue that good research is fundamentally relational. MPCR researchers recognize and value the process of research over and above any standardized research products (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 130).

Collaboration and dialog are central concerns for MPCR researchers, who seek to involve communities and Indigenous peoples at all stages of the research process. This approach involves moving away from conventional and essentially linear sequences of data extraction, interpretation, and return and extending a relational commitment across the entire research endeavor (Benmayor 1991, 165).

MPCR offers ways for researchers to check their academic and institutional privilege, not only through analyzing a researcher's racial heritage and positioning in relationship to colonial narratives and histories, but through acknowledging relationality and intersectionality as key analytic frameworks that represent and reflect the complexity involved in research relationships.

MPCR is based on relational praxis and communal ways of being alongside and in solidarity with people involved in and surrounding research. It intends to be reflexive and critical without being divisive or excluding researchers or participants on the basis of their race, ethnicity, or location. MPCR focuses attention on how we engage in research and relate to others, rather than on essentialized ideas of what we are.

Although categories such as White and Settler have relevance in terms of analyzing historically embedded and current power relationships, these terms were born out of violent opposition and othering, and they can function to create and reinforce simplistic binary divisions (Nichols 2010, 4). They can also significantly mask sociocultural diversity, inhibiting dialog between Indigenous and White peoples and epistemologies. We offer MPCR as a tool

that cuts across such categorizations. MPCR does not only concern itself with racial identities concordant with White or settler, but involves reflection and checking privilege at all levels, including Whiteness.

MPCR researchers conceptualize research projects and questions with communities engaging in the analysis of data together and inviting participants to become involved in processes of editing representations created about them. The process of coconstructing representations with Indigenous communities reflects the need to care for relationships and relational spaces between people (Anae 2007).

MPCR research is not about learning about culture to tick cultural boxes to help ensure that data is efficiently gathered.²¹ MPCR researchers avoid using culture to gain access to communities and knowledges solely for their own purposes and benefit. Instead MPCR researchers seek to establish ongoing trusting and reciprocal relationships with people and communities as a necessary foundation for research. They take time to build relationships and actively look for ways in which they can be useful to communities, thus embodying a relational methodology throughout the research process and generating deeper researcher reflexivity.

MPCR researchers at best become accepted as allies who are willing and able to listen deeply and who value the stories and testimonies shared as ways of telling not only the diverse stories of individuals but also of contributing to telling a collective story (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 145). Ideas about detachment and objectivity are replaced with a commitment to be open and accountable to communities and participants, and to be reflective about the impacts of relationships throughout the process of research.

Processes of engagement in which people can find and claim space to act on their empathic response are important. MPCR researchers are expected to be of use, to return the products of research in ways that are relevant and accessible, and to act in solidarity with people in research communities throughout and beyond the formal research process. MPCR researchers should be able to engage emotionally and with humility demonstrate culturally respectful and engaged behaviors, increasing cultural fluency, continuous reflexivity, and an ongoing willingness to learn.

Conclusion

Constructions of researchers as either insiders or outsiders essentialize and fix identities, oversimplifying the lived complexities of researchers who often bring multiple ethnicities and cultural identities to their research endeavors. Binary definitions contain racially biased and divisive judgments about whose voices or perspectives are more valuable or authentic, with various conse-

quences for dialog, collaboration, and participation and for the possibility of ideas found within Indigenous scholarship being able to reach out to and influence other disciplines.

We have argued that perceptual shifts that allow us to recognize intersectional identities as a part of life, and to see possibilities for collaborations across categorical divides, require a vision of relationship. This paper attempts to think creatively about possibilities for allegiances in Pacific and Indigenous scholarship. We argue that people are social beings who exist in and navigate a variety of intersectional and relational identities and that recognizing this diversity as a source of strength and opportunity is a necessary part of building relationships across broad categorical divides that might otherwise be divisive or isolating.

This paper has suggested that the broad identity pathway articulated through the idea of the MPCR researcher is one way of recognizing and legit-imatizing diverse researcher experiences and identities and of acknowledging identity as coconstructed, multiple, and fluid. Through offering the inclusive category of the MPCR researcher, we aim to provide language that enables dialog and acknowledges the complexities surrounding ideas of identity and belonging in an increasingly globalized and transnational world. Recognizing hybrid and multiple researcher identities and the different ways that these are performed in relationship with others is an important step toward more collaborative and inclusive research practices, challenging inside/out dichotomies, and helping us to move toward more innovative and engaged communities of inquiry and practice. By naming the MPCR researcher, we hope that this idea can tangibly exist and be accessible to others as one way of reflecting on inside-out/outside-in research ethics and intersectional research identities in Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

MPCR offers a relational approach to acknowledging privilege and power relationships by suggesting a research identity and methodology that hopes to articulate and acknowledge sociocultural complexity. It problematizes colonial/white/settler privilege and Western epistemological dominance in the academy. The MPCR researcher identity is reflexive and fluid; it is intentionally open to redefinition and continually in process.

MPCR challenges us as researchers to reflect upon what we could have done better, to think deeply about how we could have acted or positioned ourselves from a more relational space. It pushes us to question the well-being of people involved in and surrounding research, and to use a relational lens to assess and acknowledge our inevitable mistakes and shortcomings. Rather than seeing challenges in relational processes as indications that collaboration is not possible, MPCR challenges us to be open to mishaps as an integral part of the research process and to humbly work from and with

these experiences, incorporating them in our growing understandings and empathy.

NOTES

- 1. Following the work of Teaiwa (2001, 353) we hope that Pacific Studies can be "available to challenge, criticism, connection to all."
- 2. "Many Indigenous communities continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 4). Indigenous peoples are also grappling with the emotional and psychological consequences of historical and ongoing deficit messaging about their supposed inabilities, inferiorities, laziness, and dependence.
- 3. In Indigenous epistemology "the location from which the voice of the researcher emanates" is important because it establishes relationships (Aveling 2012, 204). To name your location(s) is to begin to acknowledge the places and perspectives from which you speak. As Hall (1991, 18) argues "you have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all." To challenge whiteness as an assumed, hegemonic, normative, and anonymous category (Graveline 2010, 367), we specifically name where we are from.
- 4. Evans et al. (2009, 1) suggest that Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches have a conceptual base in common with many Indigenous Methodologies (IM). They suggest that a fusion of these approaches, together with the critical angle offered by White Studies, can be useful in terms of collaborative work with Indigenous communities. Both PAR and IM challenge the dominance of positivism in the academy and seek to accept diverse ways of knowing, highlighting the processes of power that play a significant part in the social construction of knowledge. Other commonalities include a commitment to social transformation and to honoring the lives and experiences of participants and a broad commitment to sharing power and ensuring collaboration (Evans et al. 2009, 4).
- 5. Margaret Kovach (2009, 33) describes reflexivity as "the researcher's own self-reflection in the meaning-making process."
- 6. We have been involved in research processes working with marginalized communities including women and girls (Clery and Nabulivou 2011; Clery 2013), people with disabilities (Clery 2008), Fiji's LGBT community (Clery 2014), people living in informal settlement communities (Clery 2006; Metcalfe 2009), and young people of mixed ethnicity (Cochise 2013).
- 7. By excluding Indigenous knowledge(s), universities claim "a monopoly on what does and does not count as knowledge" (Kovach 2009, 79).
- 8. The term Indigenous Peoples recognizes the shared experiences of "peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures and the denial of their sovereignty by a colonizing society" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 7).
- 9. Indigenous elites, as well as others who benefit from existing power structures and divisions, have been involved in maintaining and re-inscribing colonial realities, inequalities, and power structures.

- 10. Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001, 492) argue that the political independence of nations formally under colonial rule has not necessarily meant the decolonization of minds or processes.
- 11. Area studies is "based on the assumption that it is possible to understand other societies and even whole regions in their totality, that there are certain essential characteristics that, once grasped, will lead to adequate understanding of the whole" (Wesley-Smith 1995: 118–19).
- 12. Firth (2003) notes that ideas about cultural reclamation and renaissance are particularly strong parts of Pacific Studies scholarship in Hawai'i and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Scholarship in the wider Pacific region has focused on issues of development rather than cultural revitalization.
- 13. This movement has helped to write Indigenous Pacific women back into the history books, because colonial accounts had systematically misrepresented and excluded women (Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 29–30). Creative approaches to understanding Pacific ways of knowing and being are a strong feature of contemporary Pacific Studies. Creative approaches seek to better reflect oral cultures in the Pacific, conveying metaphoric and emotional understandings alongside more conventional forms of academic writing, and providing important epistemological challenges to dominant "rational" Western modes of thinking.
- 14. Smith (cited in Kovach 2009:92) cautions against bringing "sacred" or "restricted" knowledge forms into the academy because adequate care, respect, and preservation cannot be guaranteed.
- 15. Many Indigenous scholars who have contributed to rethinking methodologies and methods for research with Indigenous peoples are mentioned in this paper. Other important researchers include; Hau'ofa 1993, 2000, 2008; Meyer 2001; Nabobo-Baba 2008; Subramani 1993; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 2012; Tuwere 2002; Vaioleti 2006.
- 16. Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 28) points to the colonial origins of processes of categorization by race and notions of racial purity. Children who were born out of relationships between colonizers and colonized were labeled half-castes or half-breeds, stigmatized and excluded from both White Settler and Indigenous communities. Kovach (2009, 10) tells the story of an Indigenous student in Canada who wanted to use Indigenous research methods but was concerned she did not have the "necessary cultural connections" because she had been brought up in the city.
 - 17. Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 203).
- 18. Bhabha (1990, 211) describes hybridity as a "third space" that emerges: When "a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principals, rethink them, extend them" (1990, 216)
- 19. Because MPCR researchers are often highly mobile and have been exposed to multiple sociocultural realities, they are clearly linked to processes of globalization, but MPCR researchers are not purveyors of globalization. They do not seek to homogenize or disregard culturally situated forms of knowing and being.

- 20. Support is needed on a variety of levels. University systems need to acknowledge the value and validity of Indigenous approaches to research; supervisors should support rather than gate-keep Indigenous methodologies as only being usable by/accessible to Indigenous researchers; non-Indigenous researchers should be supported to explore, critique, and adapt Indigenous methods and methodologies.
- 21. For example, researchers using local/traditional protocols as tools for negotiating access need to approach this interaction relationally rather than functionally (now I have made this presentation to this community or eaten this meal with this person I can ask this sensitive question). Respecting cultural protocols is one aspect of nurturing relationships in the process of research.

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