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RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY AS SELF-REFLEXIVITY IN INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH

From Zimbabwe to Aotearoa

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Abstract

This article is intended as a provocation for Indigenous researchers to reflect on their cultures and life stories, and consider how sharing their intergenerational experiences can engender cultural empathy with Indigenous peoples that originate from a different community and are at the heart of their study. I explore how an Indigenous researcher's life story, from a childhood in the African continent to adulthood and parenthood in Aotearoa, influenced his research direction and design toward Indigenous entrepreneurship as an emancipatory and empowering endeavour. The article challenges the dominance of objectivity, balancing it with the subjectivity of researcher positionality in Indigenous entrepreneurship research. First, I narrate my life story to demonstrate how my experiences shape my research philosophy. Second, I discuss the research that I am involved in, exploring issues of my reflexive process and positionality as it relates to the research. I invite other Indigenous researchers to reflect on how their life stories influence their research.

Keywords

Indigenous entrepreneurship, positionality, Māori, Aboriginal, Aotearoa

Introduction

Positionality in Indigenous research has been explored by scholars who examined the complexity of Indigenous contexts as they relate to researcher positioning (Blix, 2015; Brayboy et al., 2012; Kwame, 2017; Moffat, 2016; Zilber et al., 2008). Moffat (2016) emphasised opening up to the researched community in the spirit of finding commonalities and understanding to foster trust, proposing a relational approach to research. Brayboy et al. (2012) emphasised the importance of incorporating reflexive exercises concerning positioning and its effect on research decisions and processes. Zilber et al. (2008) argued that life stories, social fields influencing lived experiences and meta-narratives give contextual meaning, which can aid in articulating participant narratives devoid of researcher influences.

This article is an exercise in self-reflexivity to illustrate its relevance for research efficacy in Indigenous contexts. Reflexivity includes a self-appraisal process in which the gaze is turned onto

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the researcher to assess situatedness within the research and their effect on the research process (Berger, 2015). Self-reflexivity, then, is an intentional introspection of the self to better understand how one connects with others who have different cultural origins and life stories. Self-reflexivity in this case contemplates the interconnections between my world view, lived experience and interactions with Indigenous entrepreneurs who belong to cultures other than my own. This article shows the importance of articulating researcher positionality and its antecedents in relation to theoretical and methodological choices in Indigenous research. I consider how my childhood experiences in Zimbabwe and teenage experiences in Aotearoa shaped my world view and research intentions, priorities and processes. This involves a self-reflective examination of my lived experience and an evaluation of my positionality as it relates to research. Including this step in Indigenous entrepreneurship research leads to being adequately prepared in the mind, heart and hand to conduct research in ways consistent with the values, ethics and expectations of Indigenous peoples with whom and for whom one is researching. Rather than taking a "you have to be of the same Indigenous community to do research with them" approach, I present my case by highlighting that it is possible to do research with empathy and understanding of another culture without being part of that culture through whakapapa. I will now refer to my whakapapa and the moments that relate to my research journey.

Growing up a Karanga child in independent Zimbabwe

I am of the Karanga tribe, which is a Shona subtribe, and my tribe makes up approximately 37.5% of the 12 million Shona people of Zimbabwe. I hail from Chief Nemauzhe's tribal land, and my totem is Moyo VaRozvi. I was born in Seke, Zimbabwe, in 1985 just after the independence of my people and was able to experience a starkly easier life than what my parents and grandparents had experienced during the time of British colonisation and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

Zimbabwe was colonised by the British Crown in the 1880s under the sponsorship of Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes (1877) had the following to say about his mission to colonise lands on behalf of the Crown:

> I contend that we [the English] are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence, look again at the extra employment a new country added to our dominions gives. (p. 248)

It is with the views of European superiority such as those exhibited by Rhodes that parts of the African continent were colonised. The white minority held executive, judicial, legislative and social power over the black majority and enacted racist policies such as the 1923 Constitution of Rhodesia (Barber, 1966), which technically gave all citizens the right to vote, but excluded the Indigenous population by stipulating requirements for an income of £100 per annum, occupation of a dwelling worth at least £150 pounds or owning a mining claim. These requirements could not be met by the Indigenous population, who averaged a salary of £3 a month (Mutiti, 1974).

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the British monarch started the process of "decolonising" its colonies with a democratic policy of handing over power to the Indigenous populations (Pearce, 1984; Tamarkin, 2012). The white minority in Rhodesia campaigned against this process and through political measures crafted a proclamation document known as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), to officially declare independence from Britain. This completed secession from the British monarchy and further deprived the black majority of having the same rights as the white citizens (Coggins, 2006).

The UDI created the rebel state of Rhodesia, which was in power from 1965 to 1979. Rhodesia did not receive official recognition internationally and did not have any diplomatic relationships with any country other than the apartheid state of South Africa (Stephenson, 1975). To fight against the repressive and racist policies of the Rhodesian government, the Indigenous population waged a protracted guerrilla war from 1969 to 1979 known as the Rhodesian Bush War (Hove, 2011). A ceasefire was reached in late 1979 to allow a process of negotiation at Lancaster House in London with representatives of all sides of the conflict (Soames, 1980). The Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) was signed by representatives of the British government, the Patriotic Front and the Rhodesian government, and it stipulated how a democratic election was to be held, the issue of land redistribution was to be reconciled, and many other issues of disagreement were to be handled.

> "Zimbabwe shall never be a colony again"—Robert Mugabe [Former President of Zimbabwe] (Willems, 2013, p. 27)

At the onset of independence, in April 1980, the new black-led government of Zimbabwe embarked on an indigenisation drive of industry to empower the Indigenous population through land redistribution and social reform. Based on the principles of the LHA, land redistribution was intended to be a logical and ordered process; in practice, however, it turned out to be a chaotic, corrupt and violent process with mixed results (Nyawo, 2014). The new people in power practised elitism, disproportionately benefiting from the post-independence distribution of land and other economic resources. Productive farms were given to the upper echelons of the ruling political party and the masses saw no material benefit apart from basic rights that should be a given (Palmer, 1990). Disgruntled war veterans embarked on a deadly rampage seizing white-owned commercial farms for the resettlement of subsistence farmers. With government endorsement, this process preceded economic devastation and instability in Zimbabwe (Mutanda, 2013).

During the early post-independence period, there were opportunities for more Indigenous people to enter entrepreneurship and be in control of their own destiny. My grandfather, for instance, was able to open and operate a convenience store, which would have been an unimaginable achievement for him pre-independence. Later in the post-independence period, Zimbabwe was teetering on economic collapse, and entrepreneurship became symbolic of the struggle to survive. With high unemployment and record inflation, everyone became entrepreneurs. People began an informal market for currency exchange and traded in basic commodities and services to feed their families. I can recall my grandfather having to use stock from his shop to feed his family, which is one of the reasons why the business eventually failed. My early ideation of entrepreneurship was a romanticised exercise of opportunity to move up the socioeconomic ladder; however, with the proliferation of gritty necessity entrepreneurship, I began to see how entrepreneurship can also become a vehicle for survival.

Self-limiting beliefs and entrepreneurship

> "This kind of stuff is for the white people. Why don't you just get an education and find yourself a good job?"—My father

An incident that has been ingrained in my psyche occurred when at around age 13 I excitedly uttered my desire to be an entrepreneur. I remember yearning for the feeling of building something that I could be proud of—something that would satisfy the question of my purpose in life. My father responded by saying that these kinds of pursuits were not for the black man; our role was to get an education, secure a job and leave this business stuff to the white man. In his experience, education was a proven path to better living conditions, and at that time, entrepreneurial pursuits were an exercise in futility.

Like many other Indigenous Shona people of Zimbabwe, my father grew up in the native trust lands, which were in typically dry and arid regions. He would tell us stories of when he was a young man and his family would retreat to the mountains for days in fear of harassment by the Rhodesian army patrols. My grandfather ensured that he would be educated at Christian mission schools. At that time, a black person was limited in terms of career aspirations. My father had a hard upbringing, but strove to get an education, ultimately becoming an engineer in post-independent Zimbabwe. Albert Memmi's theory of colonisation as explained by Mungazi (1986) states that colonisation initially assimilates the colonised to an education system that legitimises it. The system produces a more productive and compliant servant and preserves the privileged position of the coloniser. However, education eventually leads to an awareness of inequality and injustices in the colonised, and results in a nationalistic conscience on the path to self-liberation. My father had limited access to education growing up under oppression, and in a black majority rule Zimbabwe, it made sense for his children to exploit the educational resource that he did not have growing up. Sports and other pursuits such as entrepreneurship were secondary to our education.

We were a blue-collar middle-class family living comfortably, but I had always felt that there was more to life. As children we had expectations placed on us by our parents to excel at school. The pursuit of excellence was evident in my parents' lives, with my father, as an engineer, and my mother, a receptionist at that time (now a nurse), setting the example. I wanted to excel beyond being an employee and be the employer. Consequently, having limits imposed on me negatively affected my self-confidence, and often crippling doubts and fears would arise at the thought of going beyond my comfort zones. A self-limiting belief was instilled in me with a strong narrative that as

a black man, business was not for me. I thought maybe my father was right because I had my grandfathers' entrepreneurial failures to refer to.

The desire to follow the entrepreneur path never left me, but over time the self-regulating narrative reminded me that I was black and, consequently, should not bother with business. It was through deep reflection catalysed by becoming a father, that I learned to acknowledge the past, begin to reinvent myself and focus on pursuing my dreams. I thought a lot about why I was the way I was and how I could change the narrative for my children. There had always been a discomfort with how my entrepreneurship desires contradicted my behaviour and thought processes. Festinger (1962) described this misalignment of beliefs and behaviours as cognitive dissonance, and now being a father, it further increased the discomfort. This discomfort was due to the realisation that holding on to these emotions would be a liability to success and prove to be a tragedy if I were to project the same injunctions onto my children. It was important that I defy these boundaries, not only for my sake, but for my children and father as well. So in studying entrepreneurship I have two goals. The first is to satisfy my passion for entrepreneurship research, and the second is to study at the pinnacle of education as an ode to my father. My experiences are apparent in the research that I am engaged in. I have moments of doubt in my capability to carry the weight of responsibility of telling the participants' stories. They have opened up and entrusted me with them.

Becoming a father helped me empathise with my own father's desires for his children. He was a product of his upbringing, which was punctuated by state-sanctioned racism that succeeded in physically and mentally repressing his generation and those before and after him. Ultimately, I had to assume control of my life's course. His experience was that although his father—my grandfather—operated a convenience store, it brought no significant increase in his standard of living, and success seemed to be reserved for the whites. Writing this, I reflect on how colonisation can manifest complicated and perplexing intergenerational effects in varying degrees.

Aotearoa: The big move

> "Here in New Zealand, there are people called the Māori. They are just like us except for the fairer skin."—My father

The search for better standards of living led my family to immigrate to Aotearoa in the early 2000s. The simplicity of the visa process at the time and Aotearoa's reputation as multicultural made it an obvious choice. The move made it possible for me to have quality education and health care and the freedom to pursue my ambitions. My first exposure to the Māori culture was in Gisborne, the first Aotearoa town in which we settled. My father described Māori people as "just like us". I could immediately identify some similarities in their views on hospitality and the importance of family, as shown in such practices as inviting people for dinner after just meeting them and the concept of whāngai, which is common in our culture.

It was a challenging time being new to the country, adjusting to my surroundings and realising my brother and I were the only two black people in the school we attended. People were curious about us, and we were asked all sorts of questions, some bordering on the ridiculous and racist. While I put it down to curiosity, these instances sometimes made me feel like a spectacle and an outsider. On the other hand, I was fascinated by the haka and some of the waiata on display during assembly, and asked questions about their significance. It was this exposure to the Māori culture that opened my being to the realisation that the Indigenous experience has some universal similarities in cultural practices: reverence of sacred sites, respect for elders, funeral rites and importance of familial relationships irrespective of context, among other things. I also found similarities, in the desire for self-determination and advancement. I empathised with the socio-economic and political arguments Māori made for redress, such as through the Waitangi Tribunal, which sought to investigate and make recommendations for Māori claims against breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi to the Crown (Stokes, 1992). Having come from and witnessed violent forms of redress for historical wrongs, I was impressed with the orderly judicial process in Aotearoa.

Fathering Afro-Māori children

> "Is Africa dry like they show on the Red Cross adverts?"—My wife

I met my wife at church in Hamilton, and despite her lack of knowledge about Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, we instantly developed an affinity because we had Gisborne in common. She is of Te Arawa and Ngāti Porou descent and was born in Ruatoria, East Coast. I consider Gisborne my home because of the love I have for the region. It was the first place in which I settled and planted my roots in Aotearoa. The climate is reminiscent of

a Zimbabwean summer and the friendliness of the people was welcoming. She had questions regarding my culture and I had some regarding Māori culture. Several years later, we married and had our first child. We made sure to gift our daughter both Māori and Shona names. We made a decision to expose her to both her cultures from an early age so that she would find pride in her blended identity. Fathering an Afro-Māori child places me in a unique position. There is a need to be conscious of the mana of my tamāhine and to take a participatory role in shaping her understanding of the world. I observe her light up and become transfixed by television coverage of Te Matatini and try to dance and emulate Shona nziyo on YouTube. There is an immediate connection to what she is seeing and hearing, as if her wairua/hunhu is conscious of who she is. As a father, it is my duty to nurture those interests in her.

I believe the onus is on mātua/vabereki to mould a child into a well-adjusted individual with strong cultural roots. Researching Māori entrepreneurship allows this father to pave a way for his daughter and others to have the option of pursuing entrepreneurship and, by doing so, forge an evolving living application of entrepreneurship to their Indigenous contexts. E iti noa ana nā te aroha: though small in the scheme of things, love motivates the contribution that I make to the kete of Indigenous entrepreneurship knowledge. In the next section, I explain why the research included Aboriginal people.

Australian connections

> "Why are you researching Māori and Aboriginal people?"—Almost everyone asks this when I tell them about my research topic.

My father relocated to Perth, Australia, in 2011 because he had secured a job in the mining industry. I had the opportunity to visit him and was able to meet some of his Aboriginal acquaintances. It was interesting to finally meet and have conversations with Indigenous Australians about their views on Australian society. It was sobering to hear about their history and struggles, which they still deal with today—that is, the stigma and discrimination that is perpetuated towards Indigenous people in some sectors of Australian society.

I could identify with some of the issues we discussed. We looked similar and I felt a deep connection with the struggle for self-determination for a people who were so rich in history. It was also interesting to find similarity in our framing of belonging to our respective lands, as Shona, Māori and Aboriginal. Māori refer to themselves as tangata whenua, which is similar to the Shona term vana vevhu, and according to Aboriginal researcher Foley, as cited in Duff et al. (2020), "land is the mother and we are of the land" (p. 45). These parallels of a deep connection to land, experience of colonisation, racism and discrimination at both the state and the personal level, and desire for self-determination through various means, including entrepreneurial endeavours, are why I chose to include both Māori and Aboriginal people in my research journey. I felt a connection to their respective struggles and aspirations.

It was also interesting to hear from Indigenous people about the steps the governments of Aotearoa and Australia have taken to assist Indigenous people into business, such as the establishment of Te Puni Kōkiri and Supply Nation, an Australian agency for procurement of goods and services from Indigenous enterprises, respectively. I saw an opportunity to pose questions on the impact of such initiatives in practice for Indigenous people as part of my research. Having my own account of how Indigenous entrepreneurship was influenced by government policies and initiatives in Zimbabwe such as the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy of 2008 (Gochero & Kadira, 2015), I was intrigued as to how Māori and Aboriginal entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship given their history as Indigenous people who have experienced colonisation. How could I engage in research that was respectful of Indigenous people from Aotearoa and Australia and acknowledged our commonalities and differences in a way that identified how commercial and cultural imperatives were considered, as well as how the state (government) influenced Indigenous entrepreneurial endeavours?

The research

Māori and Aboriginal ethnic groups have historically been misrepresented, exposed to the hubris of Western science and the legacy of cultural arrogance, as well as being subjected to unequal power relations (Crothers, 2015; Groenfeldt, 2003; United Nations, 2009; Smith, 1999). Thus, this research must be culturally sensitive, benefit both the researcher and the researched, and acknowledge the legitimacy of the participants' Indigenous beliefs and practices (Baba et al., 2004; Bishop, 1999; Spiller et al., 2011). Since the research involves participants from Indigenous communities, it requires an approach that best represents their world views while being aware of the world view of the researcher. My intention

is to affirm similarities and differences across our cultures, draw lessons from contextual differences and avoid the traps of insinuating power of one over the other, or of the researcher over the researched. There are universal and parallel struggles across all Indigenous groups (Smith, 1999); however, my experiences are not theirs and theirs are not mine. Zimbabwean, Māori and Aboriginal entrepreneurship are dissimilar and set against different political, economic and societal realities. For example, Māori and Aborigine are still in the struggle for self-determination, whereas I have come from a black majority ruled country. Self-reflection is a key part of the entire research process and starts with understanding my motives and implicit assumptions for pursuing this research path. All efforts will be made to ensure my research decisions and processes are not based solely on my world view and experiences, and are continually reflected on and assessed, to allow Māori and Aboriginal voices in the research to be heard.

The main research objective is to explore the experiences of Indigenous entrepreneurs in determining the balance of Indigenous business imperatives and non-Indigenous business imperatives. The idea is not to contrast the two but to investigate the resolution process Indigenous entrepreneurs share. It is hoped this will identify barriers and enablers Indigenous entrepreneurs face in integrating their culture into business and vice versa, as well as offer insights into how non-Indigenous persons or entities such as government agencies can offer appropriate assistance, and that the knowledge gained from this research process may serve to provide information to policymakers and Indigenous entrepreneurs.

How my positionality influenced the research process

Positioning myself in the research process

Even though I had decided to research Māori and Aboriginal entrepreneurs, I was not sure where I fit in the research process. My research naivety initially led me to believe the process was going to be free from ambiguity and subjectivity; however, a reflexive process was triggered when I realised I had interpreted my interactions with people from these Indigenous cultures through my own frame of reference. As an ally of the Māori and Aboriginal participants, I had to continually learn and develop skills in listening deeply to a different world view and report Indigenous voices accurately (Brophey & Raptis, 2016), as well as revisit my research decisions. Thinking about how we think helps to understand the self and our motivations (Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Weick, 1999). It was easy enough to define what I wanted to do; however, articulating where I fit in took continued effort to clarify. I feared that the analogous experiences of my people and the research participants as the formerly colonised would stir up empathetic responses in me that threatened to personalise their experiences as mine. Emotional reflexivity is critical to interpreting interactions (Shesterinina, 2019) and helps to self-locate by offering opportunities to review relational placing with participants as well as understand how we affect and are affected by the research process (Kwame, 2017). As an Indigenous person, I felt that I was part of the research inseparable from the participants, and as Kovach (2009) suggested Indigenous researchers should do, was committed to relational accountability to the participants. However, it was later apparent during the interviews that my positioning was not static but fluid.

Smith (1999) suggested that positioning is determined by participants and it is often difficult to assume a single position. In my conversations with participants during the interview process, I noticed a continual repositioning of my status as an outsider and an insider. For example, a Māori participant would reference a tribal-related issue, which would place me as an outsider, and then immediately bring me to the insider position by discussing the issue as an Indigenous issue that we all face. In a conversation with an Aboriginal participant, social stigma towards the Aboriginal community was discussed, placing me in the outsider position, but then the issue of skin colour was brought up by the participant, gesturing to point to us together as blackfellas. Positioning is negotiable depending on context (Kwame, 2017; Smith, 1999), and the researcher is more of a co-participant (Kelly, 2014). The shifts in positioning would affect my emotional state in a way that seemed irrational. As an outsider, I remember having empathy for the struggles being conveyed by participants and being able to digest the information as their experiences. However, in the insider position, I had an emotional response, often with waves of anger at the injustices narrated by the participants. Yes, it was their story but drawing from my experiences and the experiences of my people, I felt a part of that story.

Acts of reciprocal exchange

During the data collection phase, I engaged in what Mataira (2019) referred to as talk story, which enables the researcher and participants to engage

on equal terms. This engagement humanises the interview process through the sharing of stories of ancestry, cultural background, life experiences and interests. It is facilitated by showings of gratefulness, such as bringing gifts or food to share. Gifting is not to incentivise participation, but rather acts as a medium of appreciation, of a reciprocal exchange between two people(s). It places power in the recipient to accept or decline the gift, thereby acknowledging the value of their mana (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The concept of gifting, however, may differ according to cultural contexts. It was my understanding that as the researcher, I would initiate the gift-giving process and lead the conversations. However, I remember being befuddled when some of the interview participants would present food on the table and initiate conversation. In my head, I was thinking this was the wrong order of proceedings. I was supposed to organise the food and lead the conversation, but here I was being hosted as a guest and made to feel comfortable. I resolved to leave the koha presentation until after the interview had finished because I feared I would frame their hospitality as a transaction if I did so earlier in the proceedings. With regard to my positionality, in Zimbabwe, it is common for hosts to ask if you have brought a gift for them and that has familiarised me with passing on a gift earlier in the process. This was a cultural shift on my part, with the aim of avoiding offending my hosts.

Another act of reciprocal exchange is the dissemination of results back to the participants. This is especially important because Indigenous people have historically had researchers come into their communities, collect data and disappear (Cochran et al., 2008; Guillemin et al., 2016; Peltier, 2018). It is imperative, then, to report back to the participants to show respect and maintain good relationships that may endure beyond the research (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Reporting back goes beyond showing a copy of the thesis. For example, I have been asked to archive some audio files of the interviews for future generations, share preliminary findings on an iwi radio station and meet with aspiring local entrepreneurs in a small community, and I am poised to write a report separate to my thesis for the communities involved in the research. Including participants in this way allows Māori and Aboriginal people to have legitimacy as research partners, to share their truths and see the results of their contribution to the research process and outcomes on their own terms (Borell et al., 2019).

Toward a culturally appropriate methodology

Researchers have presented kaupapa Māori research as for Māori by Māori (Eketone, 2008; Irwin, 1994; Smith, 1999; Walker et al., 2006), and in this type of research, Māori have control of the research process, from designing, gathering and analysis to dissemination. Because I am a non-Māori researcher, this notion places me in a precarious position. How do I approach this research without invalidating the process and outcome in the eyes of Māori? I am aware that I am tauiwi, and thus have reservations about applying kaupapa Māori precepts in their entirety. Additionally, a kaupapa Māori perspective may not be appropriate when conducting research with other Indigenous people and communities, such as Aboriginal people of Australia.

On the surface, I may indulge in kaupapa Māori literature, but my world view is a social construct of the African savanna with surface exposure to the Māori way through my spouse and her whānau. I cannot see the world the same way my Māori and Aboriginal peers do. I can empathise, relate and parallel our lived experiences, but the essence of our paradigms is not the same. To deal with this constraint, I mulled over the option of actively collaborating with my Māori supervisors, wife and whānau to navigate issues of protocol and sensitivities, but upon further reflection, this proposition posed some challenges. The main issue was that this approach may not be enough to satisfy the rigour of exemplary kaupapa Māori research. I had issues reconciling the control aspect of tino rangatiratanga with how I am placed in the research process in relation to the participants. Another issue was that, while it may work to explain the Māori experience, I was not sure I would be able to (or should) analyse, interpret and present the Aboriginal experience through a kaupapa Māori lens. Upon discussion with my supervisors, a decision was made to have both Māori and Aboriginal research collaborators to consult throughout the research process.

Indigenous Dreaming in the Aboriginal world view informs the logic and rationale for their knowledge systems (Rigney, 2001). It would be a disservice to the Aboriginal world views for me to try to explain Dreamtime precepts and meaning from within a kaupapa Māori framework. According to Dean (1996), scholars have fallen into the misconception of trying to interpret Dreamtime by referencing, imposing order and logical cohesion or using Western concepts as a reference. He goes on to postulate that world

views are full of ambiguity, obscurities and contradictions, and those who seek to bring order to them, in fact mythicise and misrepresent ideational reality. Reality is subjective, and in the context of academic inquiry, Indigenous intellectual tradition needs to break out of the restrictions of Westernised discourse (Warrior, 1999), and set fertile grounds for rich Indigenous narratives. How can I tell both Māori and Aboriginal stories of Indigenous entrepreneurship in a way that acknowledges the ambiguities, obscurities and contradictions?

As outlined in my origin story, my people pursued self-determination through armed conflict, and Māori and Aboriginal people did it through various types of activism. We all had different historical interactions with our former colonisers. Although all former colonies of the British Empire, we approached decolonisation in vastly different ways. These differences contextualised the lived experiences of the research participants markedly and added a level of complexity to how I would approach the data collection phase. I believe that narratives are what ties us together, despite our distinctiveness in world views. Culturally, the stories of old transmitted through oral traditions serve to guide, and perpetuate knowledge and wisdom (Henry et al., 2018). Instead of using methods such as surveys, case studies and the like, I chose semi-structured interviews as my research practice because it allowed for discussions that brought an understanding of contextual phenomena. For example, in my culture people identify with their lineage, tribal chiefdom and totem, so when connection to country was mentioned by Aboriginal participants and the pepeha was recited by Māori participants, I quickly grasped the significances of these concepts of belongingness because they had similarities to how I communicate my identity. There is a synergistic relationship of people, spirits and nature in our paradigms (Keelan & Woods, 2006), which brings a level of understanding to our differing lived experiences.

The idea of having to account for personal biases (Morse et al., 2002), which may be present because of my positioning and the aim to be polypolitical and non-ideological (Roulston & Shelton, 2015), was considered because the dominant idea of research was to use objectivity as a measure of legitimacy. I thought about how as an Indigenous person, I intuitively gravitate towards empathising with participants. I am aware of the injustices of colonisation, the intergenerational disadvantaging of Indigenous people through systemic racism and my own experiences of covertly racist experiences. Thus, is neutrality something to aspire to as a researcher? In the positivist paradigm, neutrality might ring true. However, feedback from other scholars and my own reflections indicate that for Indigenous research to have accuracy and legitimacy as representations of Indigenous truth, empathy and sincerity are essential (Gair, 2012; Singh & Major, 2017; Smith, 1999).

This sincerity is neither insider research nor kaupapa Māori research, but centres on giving voice to Indigenous entrepreneurs' narratives in a respectful and genuine manner. According to Heshusius (1994), to be free from objectivity people need to change their understanding of the relation between self and others as well as reality and turn toward a participatory mode of consciousness. Henry (2017) stressed the need to understand the cultural context of the Indigenous people who are part of the study. I concur with a participatory mode of consciousness that minimises power distances between the parties involved, especially given the difficulty I have disassociating with Indigenous peoples' struggles whose experiences parallel my own. It is fair, then, to acknowledge my biases not as a limitation but as an advantage in presenting phenomena from a participatory and conscious lens.

My position is that Indigenous research needs to have the active participation of all parties involved, benefit both the researcher and the researched, represent without caricaturising, acknowledge as well as define Indigenous aspirations for research, and accept Māori and Aboriginal culture, knowledge, values, beliefs and language as legitimate (Bishop, 1999; Smith, 1999). It is also important to acknowledge that there is no universal Indigenous world view, but rather a diverse range of experiences, meanings and ambiguities needing representation to avoid a caricature of Indigenous approaches to entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

In this article, I set out to discuss the positionality of Indigenous researchers who research Indigenous entrepreneurs from cultures other than their own. This composition explores how an Indigenous researcher's life experience spanning childhood to adulthood and intergenerational narratives ultimately play a role in research. Positionality has been a central consideration in the philosophy for the present research on Indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia and Aotearoa. Indigenous entrepreneurship research is evolving to integrate and legitimise Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and narratives as

a standalone discipline. This is important because research on Indigenous populations has historically been subject to the hubris of Western epistemologies, Indigenous populations were researched as objects rather than participants, and positivist approaches were used with no specific benefit to the researched. This created Indigenous distrust of researchers and produced paternalistic and negative interpretations of Indigenous ways of being and knowing. Not only were Indigenous people classified as primitive and to be "civilised" through colonisation, but Indigenous knowledge, practices and wisdom were dismissed.

My research contributes to the field of Indigenous entrepreneurship research by bringing my personal experience as an Indigenous Shona of Zimbabwe with Māori whānau researching two distinct Indigenous peoples (Māori and Aboriginal) for the purpose of understanding the interaction of business and cultural imperatives for Indigenous people from two lands. I note the importance of trust, respect, empathy and acknowledgement of Indigenous methodologies without appropriating them or impinging on the rights and aspirations of Indigenous people. Through narrating my "origin story", I demonstrate how my experience has shaped my philosophy on research. By doing so, I challenge other Indigenous researchers to acknowledge their positionality, and include self-reflexive moments in the research process.

Glossary

Aotearoa	New Zealand
E iti noa ana nā te aroha	A small thing given with love
haka	Māori posture dance
iwi	tribe
kaupapa Māori	Māori based topic/event/enterprise run by Māori for Māori
kete	basket
koha	gifting
mana	cultural power, authority, respect
mātua	parents
pepeha	a form of self-introduction incorporating one's ancestry and history
tamāhine	daughter
tangata whenua	people of the land
tauiwi	non-Māori
Te Matatini	national Māori performing arts festival
Te Puni Kōkiri	the Ministry of Māori Development
tino rangatiratanga	self-determination
waiata	songs
wairua	spirit
whakapapa	genealogy, ancestry, familial relationships
whānau	family
whāngai	customary practice of adoption
Shona	
hunhu	spirit, humanness
nziyo	songs
vabereki	parents
vana vevhu	children of the land

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