Research without Boarders
A Chinese Migrant Researcher Working with Indigenous Communities in Tropical Australia and New Zealand

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The Inaugural Conference on "Sustainable International Leadership in Indigenous Research: Pathways, Potential and Practice" 9-10 July 2013, Cairns, Australia

Introduction

Place identity

Places can be understood as locations, concentrations of personal experiences, social relations and practices, and zones of experience and meaning (Lengen and Kistemann, 2012).

Places influence people's way of thinking, life course, social position, health, and as a result their identity.

The concept of place identity was developed as a way to discuss the significance of physical settings and their properties in terms of self-identity.

Introduction

Place identity

Proshansky and colleagues (1983) defined place identity as a substructure of the self that consists of cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives, such as memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, and meanings attributed to behaviour and experience.

According to this definition, place identity is a personal construct and a static psychologically healthy state of a person's sense of self, which grows out of direct experience with the physical environment (Lewicka, 2008).

Introduction

Critical social and health psychologists have challenged the notion that place identity is a personal construct and a static psychological state (Li, Hodgetts & Ho, 2010).

The concept of place identity is compatible with the proposition that human selves are much more than fixed personality-based entities residing within individuals (Li et al., 2010).

Place identity an open-to-change construct located in the world physically, psychologically, and socially (Li, 2013).

Introduction

The concept of transnationalism describe migrants who build, maintain and reinforce multiple and constant economic, social and emotional interconnections with more than one country (Green, Power, & Jang, 2008).

It brings the traditional assumptions associated with place-specific immigration into question (Ho, 2002).

Transnationalism refashions migrants as transmigrants who often move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two or more countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in the countries on a sustained basis (Portes, 1997).

Introduction
Transnationalism and Inbetweenness

Living between the home and host countries, between homes and between languages, migrants do not merely insert or incorporate themselves into existing spaces in the countries; they create inbetweenness where they experience hybridisation.

The concept of inbetweenness opens up the question about the complexity of hybridised place identities that intersect with the cultural, social and political processes of the host and home countries (Li, 2013).

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I identify myself as an Australian-New Zealand-Chinese (ANZC), comfortably living inbetween three cultures.

I brought this inbetweenness into my research with indigenous communities in New Zealand and Australia.

The model I employed to work with the indigenous communities is the Tiaki model.

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Four models for a non-indigenous researcher working with indigenous peoples (Smith, 2003):

- Tiaki/mentoring model: Authoritative Maori people guide and sponsor the research.
- Whangai/adoption model: Non-indigenous researchers are incorporated into the daily life of Maori people and sustain a life-long relationship which extends far beyond the realms of research.
- Power-sharing model: Non-indigenous researchers seek the assistance of the community to meaningfully support the development of a research enterprise.
- Empowering outcomes model: The research addresses the questions that Maori people want to know and provides beneficial outcomes.

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Tiaki (*Te Ara – The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*)

* The word tiaki is the basis of the longer word kaitiakitanga. Tiaki means to guard. It also means to preserve, foster, protect and shelter.

* Notions of care and protection are at the heart of kaitiakitanga, and give it its conservation ethic.

* The prefix kai means someone who carries out an action. A kaitiaki is a person, group or being that acts as a carer, guardian, protector and conserver.

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Tiaki/mentoring model

- Moves outside the western paradigm, to investigate new ways of constructing and engaging in research with indigenous communities that recognises different, crosscultural
- communication structures (Sanderson & Allard, 2003).

- Provides a culturally safe and appropriate research environment

- Helps me develop greater self-awareness within a supportive environment

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Indigenous research projects I have been involved:

- Exploring the Nature of Intimate Relationships: A Maori perspective (Mentored by A/Prof Linda Nikora, the Director of the Maori Psychology Research Unit, University of Waikato, New Zealand)
- A Demographic Analysis of Voter Participation in the 2010 Election of the Trustees of the Tuhoe Fisheries Charity Trust (Mentored by A/Prof Linda Nikora)
- Positive Ageing in Place: Older Māori in Traditional and Non-traditional Place (Mentored by A/Prof Linda Nikora)
- Realising Māori Potential within the Youth Guarantee— An Evaluation of the Youth Guarantee Programme with a Focus on Māori Learners (Mentored by Hera White, the Director of Māori , Waikato Institute of Technology, New Zealand)
- Climate Change and Ageing in Place in the Tropics (Mentored by Prof Yvonne Cadet-James, Chair of Indigenous Australian Studies)

Exploring the nature of intimate relationships: A Maori perspective

- The overall aim of this research was to obtain better understandings of the nature of intimate relationships from a Maori perspective.

- The project investigated the societal messages about intimate relationships to better understand how Maori people perceive relationships, how they remain in positive relationships or alternatively how they exit relationships.

A Demographic Analysis of Voter Participation in the 2010 Election of the Trustees of the Tuhoe Fisheries Charity Trust

- The Tuhoe Fisheries Charity Trust (TFCT) was established in 2006 as the Mandated Iwi Organisation for Tuhoe under the Maori Fisheries Act 2004.

- The 2010 TFCT election attracted 1,566 votes, which resulted in a voting rate of 21% among registered members of the TFCT.

- This research project provided key findings of the demographic analysis of the voters, focusing on voters' geographical distribution, and age and gender structures.

Positive Ageing in Place: Older Māori in Traditional and Non-traditional Place

- The project examined the role of place in experiences of ageing for older Māori, and the extent to which places of choice facilitated a sense of positive ageing.
- Participants were older whānau members over the age of 55 who whakapapa to, and have lived, or currently live in Manaia in the Coromandel.
- Findings:
  - Māori relationships with places of ancestral connection are complex and do not exclude other places.
  - Experiences of home for participants were multiple and extended to places with which they had forged memories, relationships and positive attachments.
  - Findings indicate that the ability to age positively within particular places is largely reliant on the supports available for older Māori.

Realising Māori Potential within the Youth Guarantee: An Evaluation of the Youth Guarantee Programme with a Focus on Māori Learners

- The Youth Guarantee (YG) programme is one of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's initiatives which aim to increase the educational achievement of 16 and 17 year old Maori learners by making the education system more responsive to their needs.

- This project investigated the achievements of the YG Maori learners at Waikato Institute of Technology and the challenges the Maori learners faced. The specific goals of this evaluation research were to:
    - Assess the effectiveness of the YG programme at Wintec in relation to improving education outcomes for and with Māori learners using the Measurable Gains Framework and associated rubrics.
    - Identify opportunities to strengthen and improve the YG programme delivery and responsiveness to Māori learners and their parents, families and whānau.

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Climate Change and Ageing in Place in the Tropics

- This research aims to explore the impact of climate change on ageing in place (AiP) in northern Queensland.

- The four primary objectives are to:
  - explore subjective AiP experiences among three different cultural groups: Anglo Australians, **Indigenous Australians** and migrant Australians;
  - investigate the impact of perceived thermal/temperature comfort and tropical cyclones on the wellbeing of older northern Queenslanders;
  - investigate the social, economic and health impacts of climate change on AiP in the tropics; and
  - explore tropical AiP futures.

Final remarks

Inbetweenness is a process of identity transformation and negotiation, which provides me with a cultural comfort-zone to work with indigenous peoples.

The Tiaki model is a culturally sensitive and empathetic model by which culturally appropriate research can be undertaken by a non-indigenous researcher.

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Questions?

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