

innovative methodology
and researching
disadvantaged, excluded,
vulnerable and/or
disenfranchised people or
groups: Aboriginal
Australia

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Some common theoretical approaches

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theories through methodical gathering and analysis of data. This methodology uses inductive reasoning, in contrast to the hypothetico-deductive model of the scientific method.

A study using grounded theory is likely to begin with a question, or even just with the collection of qualitative data. As researchers review the data collected, repeated ideas, concepts or elements become apparent, and are tagged with codes, which have been extracted from the data. As more data is collected, and re-reviewed, codes can be grouped into concepts, and then into categories. These categories may become the basis for new theory. Thus, grounded theory is quite different from the traditional model of research, where the researcher chooses an existing theoretical framework, and only then collects data to show how the theory does or does not apply to the phenomenon under study.

Serendipity - sociological method (Robert Merton 1949)

Conceptual elements standing by themselves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

Constant comparative (Glaser 1965)

Axial coding (Strauss & Corbin 1990 & 98)



Critical Theory

In sociology and political philosophy "Critical Theory" describes the Western Marxist philosophy of the Frankfurt School, developed in Germany in the 1930s. Frankfurt School critical theorists drew on the critical methods of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.

It maintains that ideology is the principal obstacle to human liberation, Critical theory established as a school of thought primarily by Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, and Erich Fromm.

Modern critical theory has additionally been influenced by György Lukács and Antonio Gramsci, as well as 2nd generation Frankfurt School scholars, notably Jürgen Habermas. In Habermas's work, critical theory transcended its theoretical roots in German idealism and progressed closer to American pragmatism. Concern for social "base and superstructure" is one of the remaining Marxist philosophical concepts in much of contemporary critical theory.

Postmodern critical theory politicizes social problems "by situating them in historical and cultural contexts, to implicate themselves in the process of collecting and analyzing data, and to relativize their findings.



Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory is a multidisciplinary knowledge base with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. It approaches this goal by promoting the role of criticism in the search for quality education. Through critical social theory in education, quality is proportional to the depth of analysis that students have at their disposal. As a critical form of classroom discourse, critical social theory cultivates students' ability to critique institutional as well as conceptual dilemmas, particularly those that lead to domination or oppression. It also promotes a language of transcendence that complements a language of critique in order to forge alternative and less oppressive social arrangements. A critical social theory-based movement in education highlights the **relationship between social systems and people**, how **they produce each other**, and ultimately how critical social theory can contribute to the **emancipation of both**.

Brian Fay



Critical Race Theory

Is a theoretical framework in the social sciences that uses critical theory to examine society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race, law, and power.

Began in the mid- to late 1980s as a reworking of critical legal studies on race issues - proposes that white supremacy and racial power are maintained over time, - investigates the possibility of transforming the relationship between law and racial power, and more broadly, pursues a project of achieving racial emancipation and anti-subordination.

Took off in USA in 2002 now taught and innovated in the fields of education, law, political science, women's studies, ethnic studies, communication, American and Aboriginal studies.



Insider Outsider Theory

The status of the insider and outsider is an important concept for cross-cultural research. Being a cultural insider is recognized as a strength that allows the researcher to take part in the everyday lives of local people and to get closer to the participants. Insider status has an impact on whether the researchers can conduct successful fieldwork and obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Being an insider enables a researcher to conduct research more sensitively.

It helps in gaining a deeper understanding of the sociocultural contexts of the research setting. However, there are also challenges associated with insider status. These include the need to reestablish ones position in a community,

Beware cognitive bias.



The position of cultural insider/outsider is a key component when doing cross-cultural research. This status can be the key to success in fieldwork particularly in traditional communities

Being an insider means being recognized as part of their community by local people and this can help to gain the trust of local people more easily. Insider researchers and participants have common backgrounds that tie in with local social and cultural practices. This allows insiders to form a relationship with local people, to learn things, to behave like local people, and to understand new sociocultural contexts.

Outsiders might have to take more time to gain trust from the local people as they are viewed as strangers to the community. However, this position could be advantageous as they might be able to see different perspectives, ones that insiders might fail to see.

Conducting research in the real world can be a daunting endeavor. However, having a certain status, such as being an insider and sharing gender and ethnic identities, can make the fieldwork more effective and productive.



Lets go back to 1999

- **Lester-Irabinna Rigney's (1999) views on Indigenist Research** follow three fundamental and interrelated principles a strategy to research rather than a research process. They are:
 - **resistance as the emancipatory imperative in Indigenist research**
 - **political integrity in Indigenist research, and**
 - **privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research**



•Rigney, Lester-Irabinna. (1999) 'The First Perspective: Culturally Safe Research Practices On or With Indigenous Peoples'. In 1999 Chacmool Conference Proceedings. University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 'Internationalisation of an Indigenous Anti-colonial Cultural Critique of Research Methodologies: A Guide to Indigenist Research Methodology and its Principles' Higher Education Research and Development in Higher Education.20: 629-636.



Resistance as the emancipatory imperative in Indigenist Research

- This is research undertaken as part of Indigenous Australia's struggle for recognition and self-determination. This is justified in the statement: 'whilst the primary goal of Indigenist research is self-determination and the resistance of radicalization, it can also be used for quantitative or qualitative research for self-benefit' (Rigney 1999: 13).
- This approach rejects the dehumanizing characterization of Indigenous peoples as the oppressed victims in need of charity by challenging the power and control that traditional research has had on knowledge over the 'other' (Rigney 1997).



Political Integrity in Indigenist Research

- **research that is undertaken to assist the Indigenous struggle; it must be by the Indigenous researcher. For far too long the Indigenous struggle for self-determination has been indebted to research undertaken by the non-indigenous researcher (Rigney 1997). This function must entail a social link between ‘research’ and the political struggle of Indigenous Australia. Then the research serves and informs the political struggle making the researcher responsible to the Indigenous community (Rigney 1997).**



Privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist Research

The privileging of the Indigenist voice is shown in the following:

- ... Indigenist research is research which focuses on the lived, historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles of Indigenous Australians. It is Indigenous Australians who are the primary subjects of Indigenist research. Indigenist research is research which gives voice to Indigenous people (Rigney 1997: 118).



- Rigney (1997) qualifies this by acknowledging that there is not cultural homogeneity among Indigenous Australians and the minds of Indigenous researchers are not free of colonial hegemony (colonial internalization), or that being Indigenous will make the researcher a better representative of Indigenous Australia (Rigney 1997).
- Indigenous researchers have the potential to be (and are in many instances) more aware and respectful of each other's cultural traditions. Above all, they are accountable not only to their academic institutions but also their Indigenous communities. **From an Indigenous epistemological standpoint it is culturally appropriate that Indigenous Australians speak through Indigenous researchers** (Rigney 1997).



In other words

It is research undertaken by Indigenous people,

For the better good of Indigenous people,

Following Indigenous protocols,

With positive outcomes!

It is not research for research sake!



Indigenous Standpoint Theory

is an intricate theoretical approach to how the Indigenous navigate the difficulties of their experiences within spaces which contest their epistemology.

More precisely, its utilisation stems from a diverse background of marginalised groups whose experiences were rejected and suppressed by the colonist within an intellectual knowledge production.

The analysis of these experiences involves the cycle of accumulation of stories, of lived experiences, and in turn, doesn't produce limitless subjective narratives to **obstruct objective knowledge.**

Nakata, Martin (2007). *Disciplining the Savages: Savaging the Disciplines*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 213–216.



- **Indigenous standpoint, like feminist theory, expect the “knower” to address their social status of privilege to those they are researching.**
- **When addressing ourselves as ‘knowers’ into the setting, the intention isn’t to realign the focus, rather to include the social relations within what we as “knowers” know.**
- **This is a matter of respect as the researcher is expected to declare who they are and on what basis they write on. This “self-awareness is fundamental to the research process because it should result in a researcher role that is respectful and not disruptive, aggressive or controlling”.**

Ardill, Allan (2013). "Australian Sovereignty, Indigenous Standpoint Theory and Feminist Standpoint Theory". Griffith Law Review. 22 (2): 323.



- **Nakata states “It would, therefore, begin from the premise that my social position is discursively constituted within and constitutive of complex set of social relations as expressed through social organisation of my every day”**. Nakata, Martin (2007). *Disciplining the Savages: Savaging the Disciplines*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 213–216.
- **1st The Indigenous social position is established and acknowledges factors such as social, political, economic and cultural, impacts and influence who you are and structure your everyday life.**
- **The second principle Nakata states “This experience as a push-pull between Indigenous and non-Indigenous positions; that is, the familiar confusion with constantly being asked at any one moment to both agree and disagree with any proposition on the basis of a constrained choice between a whitefella or blackfella perspective**



- Nakata signifies that the position of which Indigenous people hold at the cultural interface to decide a continuous stance is recognised.
- Indigenous agency should be constituted on what they know from this position.
- Simplistically, it is why should Indigenous people have to choose positions instead of share what they know from both?
- The **third** and last principle Nakata states “the idea that the constant ‘tensions’ that this tug-of-war creates are physically experienced, and both inform as well as limit what can be said and what is to be **left unsaid in every day.**”

Disciplines. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 213–216.

Nakata, Martin (2007). *Disciplining the Savages: Savaging the*



- **Nakata is describing the physical worlds of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous differ in everyday context.**
- **These three principles allow Nakata to forge a critical standpoint from the cultural interface and enable to create better arguments in relation to his position within epistemologies and with other groups of ‘knowers’.**
- **However critical evaluation from the dominant society can overturn his dominant position because of his background due to the arguments being simplistic or misrepresented with no evidence to support itself?**



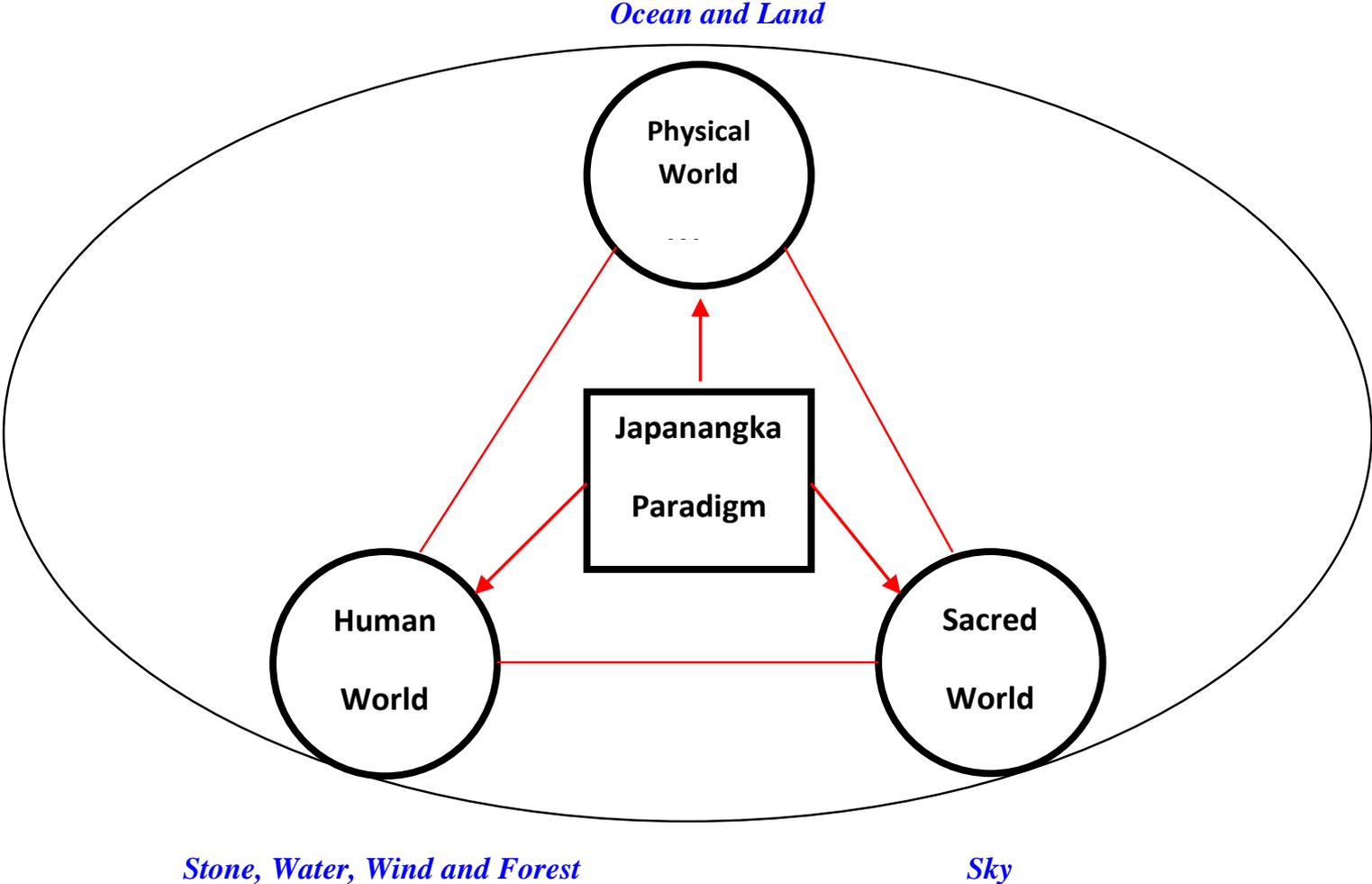
- **Indigenous standpoint theory can be defined as a “method of inquiry, a process for making more intelligible ‘the corpus of objectified knowledge**
- **An Indigenous ‘knower’ does not possess a predisposed ‘readymade critical stance’ on the world, rather it presents questions required to answer before able to produce objective knowledge. Thus, this engagement enables us to create a critical Indigenous standpoint. This in itself doesn’t determine truth, however, produces a range potential argument with further possible answers.**
- **Foley’s 2004 definition is superior as a process!**



- **The arguments established still require a basis to be rational and reasonable and answer the logic assumptions on which they were established. Thus, arguments cannot assert a claim of truth on an idea because they, the Indigenous individual, are a part of the Indigenous community as the theory wouldn't allow to authorise themselves solely truthful on the basis of their experience.**
- **Indigenous standpoint theory is facilitated by three principles, defined by Martin Nakata.**
- **Foleys definition provides a substantiation and cultural process**



INDIGENOUS STANDPOINT MODEL



Questions

