

Designing Disaster Resilience Research in Partnership with an Indigenous Community

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Abstract : The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction called for the inclusion of indigenous people in the design and implementation of all hazard policies, plans, and standards. Ensuring that indigenous knowledge practices were included alongside scientific knowledge about disaster risk was also a key priority. Indigenous communities have specific knowledge about climate and natural hazard risk that has been developed over an extended period of time. However, research within indigenous communities can be fraught with issues such as power imbalances between the researcher and researched, the privileging of researcher agendas over community aspirations, as well as appropriation and/or inappropriate use of indigenous knowledge. This paper documents the process of working alongside a Māori community to develop a successful community-led research project. Research Design: This case study documents the development of a qualitative community-led participatory project. The community research project utilizes a kaupapa Māori research methodology which draws upon Māori research principles and concepts in order to generate knowledge about Māori resilience. The research addresses a significant gap in the disaster research literature relating to indigenous knowledge about collective hazard mitigation practices as well as resilience in rurally isolated indigenous communities. The research was designed in partnership with the Ngāti Raukawa Northern Marae Collective as well as Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa (a group of Māori sub-tribes who are located in the same region) and will be conducted by Māori researchers utilizing Māori values and cultural practices. The research project aims and objectives, for example, are based on themes that were identified as important to the Māori community research partners. The research methodology and methods were also negotiated with and approved by the community. Kaumātua (Māori elders) provided cultural and ethical guidance over the proposed research process and will continue to provide oversight over the conduct of the research. Purposive participant recruitment will be facilitated with support from local Māori community research partners, utilizing collective marae networks and snowballing methods. It is envisaged that Māori participants' knowledge, experiences and views will be explored using face-to-face communication research methods such as workshops, focus groups and/or semi-structured interviews. Interviews or focus groups may be held in English and/or Te Reo (Māori language) to enhance knowledge capture. Analysis, knowledge dissemination, and co-authorship of publications will be negotiated with the Māori community research partners. Māori knowledge shared during the research will constitute participants' intellectual property. New knowledge, theory, frameworks, and practices developed by the research will be co-owned by Māori, the researchers, and the host academic institution. Conclusion: An emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction risks the appropriation and misuse of indigenous experiences of disaster risk identification, mitigation, and response. The research protocol underpinning this project provides an exemplar of collaborative partnership in the development and implementation of an indigenous project that has relevance to policymakers, academic researchers, other regions with indigenous communities and/or local disaster risk reduction knowledge practices.

Keywords : community resilience, indigenous disaster risk reduction, Maori, research methods

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