Cross-Cultural Research and Qualitative Inquiry

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Abstract

Cross-cultural research has become important in this postmodern world where many people have been made, and are still, marginalised and vulnerable by others in more powerful positions like colonial researchers. In this paper, I contend that qualitative research is particularly appropriate for cross-cultural research because it allows us to find answers which are more relevant to the research participants. Cross-cultural qualitative research must be situated within some theoretical frameworks. In this paper, I also provide different theoretical frameworks that cross-cultural researchers may adopt in their research.

Performing qualitative cross-cultural research is exciting, but it is also full of ethical and methodological challenges. This paper will encourage readers to start thinking about methodological issues in performing cross-cultural research.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural research; qualitative Inquiry; healing methodology; decolonizing methodology.*

Introduction

The presence of indigenous populations in countries such as Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia has a great ramification for social science researchers. These indigenous people have been colonised and have become marginalised in their own native lands. More disturbingly, their traditional knowledge and ways of living have been robbed, damaged and destroyed by the colonising process (Aspin and Hutchings 2007; Bartlett et al., 2007; Bishop, 2008; Cram, 2009; Denzin et al., 2008a, b; Iwasaki et al., 2005; Salmon, 2007; Smith, 1999, 2006, 2008; Walker et al., 2006)**.** Inequalities in education, employment, health, living conditions and opportunities among indigenous people (in comparison to white, dominant groups) continue to exist and even the "mainstream" societies have become wealthier. In nations like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America indigenous people continue to disproportionately represent those who are poor, sick, and disadvantaged in health, welfare and opportunity (see Bartlett et al., 2007; Bishop, 2008; Smith, 2008; Iwasaki et al., 2005; Rock, 2003; Walker et al., 2006;). The rates of imprisonment, suicide and alcoholism are unequally high among indigenous populations around the globe (Smith, 1999). Black deaths in custody among Australian indigenous men are well-known and continue to the present time. This has led some social science researchers to suggest that indigenous groups live in the *fourth world* (Bartlett et al., 2007; O'Neil, 1986). It has been suggested that dealing with these problems among indigenous people should be seen as "a top priority" not only in policy-making and service provision, but also in research (Bartlett et al., 2007: 2372).

Due to a concern about reducing inequalities between the indigenous peoples and the "white" populations, there have been attempts to include these vulnerable people in the research arenas. But as we have witnessed, research concerning indigenous people has been intensely biased by Eurocentric philosophies and paradigms (Bartlett et al., 2007; Bishop, 2008; Denzin et al., 2008a; Edwards et al., 2005; Robinson and Trochim 2007; Smith, 1999, 2008; Walker et al., 2006). Smith (2008: 116) points out that indigenous people around the world become people who are "the 'most researched' people in the world" but the research has not improved their lives and well-being. Indigenous peoples have often voiced their concerns about the "problem of research". In Aotearoa New Zealand for example, Mãoris have been heavily researched by Pakeha (non-Mãori) researchers who have not only neglected to involve Mãoris in the development of their research (Walsh-Tapiata, 2003: 55), but also marginalised them as people who have problems and who cannot cope or deal with their problems (Bishop, 2008; Smith, 2008). Pakeha researchers gain great benefit from their research, but not for Mãoris. This has similarly happened to indigenous people in other parts of the world. From the indigenous perspectives, Smith (2008: 116) contends, research is "so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development". It has now been realised that research in a number of areas including social welfare and health needs is crucial (Bishop, 2008; Smith, 2008; Walsh-Tapiata, 2003). But this research must employ culturally sensitive and empathetic approaches which take into consideration the issues and problems which are important for the people who participate in the research (Smith, 1999).

There are also those ethno-specific groups who have lived for long periods in some Western societies, such as African Americans in the United States and Caribbean-born people in the United Kingdom. These people have also been made marginalised by social, cultural and political factors. Many of them have been caught in research endeavours carried out by researchers who exploited and abused them or had little or no regard for their cultural integrity. This has tremendous implications for cross-cultural research at present time.

In multicultural societies like the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, there has been an increasing number of people from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. These people may arrive as immigrants (legal and illegal) or as refugees who have fled war-torn countries. Many of them have health problems and no access to social benefits. Their health and well-being have implications for the provision of culturally sensitive health and social care in the host societies. Hence, the provision of culturally sensitive care has become "a necessity" (Tsai et al., 2004: 3; see also Barata et al.; 2006; Dunckley et al., 2003).

Globally too, we have witnessed many poor people become vulnerable with health and social issues. These people have also been subject to abuse and exploitation in intervention and experimental research (see Macklin, 2004). Because of their poverty and powerlessness, many have been coerced into research endeavours which further render them more vulnerable. At present time, we are still witnessing this. Do we, as social science researchers, have the moral obligation to provide culturally competent care to these marginalised people?

The need for culturally competent social and health care requires knowledge of the social and cultural contexts of the people and this can be obtained by research, particularly qualitative approach (Esposito, 2001; Hall and Kulig, 2004; Liamputtong, 2008, 2009, 2010a; Papadopoulos and Lees, 2002; Smith, 2008; Tillman, 2006). Many researchers have started projects with vulnerable and marginalised people in a cross-cultural context. But it is crucial that the researchers ensure that their research is conducted ethically and that they take into account cultural integrity of the participants so

that their research will not harm but benefit local people who take part in their research (Borkan et al., 2000; Liamputtong, 2008, 2010a).

Despite the increased demands on cross-cultural research, as Madriz (1998: 7) contends, discussions on "culturally sensitive methodologies" are still largely neglected in the literature on research methods including qualitative methods. As a result, researchers who are working within socially responsible research in cross-cultural settings often confront many challenges with very little information on how to deal with these difficulties. Conducting cross-cultural research is rife with ethical and methodological challenges (Best, 2001; Bishop, 2008; Hall and Kulig, 2004; Hennink, 2008; McDonald, 2000; Mkabela, 2005; Liamputtong, 2008, 2010a; Small et al., 1999a, b). Discussions on undertaking qualitative research in cross-cultural settings are then essential. This paper fills this gap in literature.

In this paper, I shall discuss the essence of qualitative research in cross-cultural research. I shall then provide some theoretical standpoints that I believe sit neatly within the framework of cross-cultural research.

Qualitative Methodology and Cross-Cultural Research

Qualitative research is essential when there is little knowledge of a research area which deals with "the questions of subjective experience and situational meaning" (Davies et al., 2009: 6). Qualitative approach provides "a better opportunity for conveying sensitivity" (Davies et al., 2009: 6). As such, it helps to eliminate or reduce the distrust that individuals from ethnically diverse communities may have toward research and the researchers (Davies et al., 2009; Levkoff and Sanchez, 2003; Liamputtong, 2007; 2009, 2010a; Skaff et al., 2002).

I contend that cross-cultural research cannot be too rigid and too "objective" as in positivist (quantitative) science. As Bishop (2008: 171) suggests, much positivist research has insisted on using "researcher-determined positivist and neopositivist evaluative criteria, internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" and this has "dismissed, marginalized, or maintained control over the voice of others". It is impossible to "measure" people or to "generalise" about people if the researchers wish to understand people within the context of their society and culture. We are at the juncture of social turmoil in the 21th century, when too many people struggle with health and social difficulties and inequalities in their lives. Social scientists have the moral obligation to do something to improve the lives of many marginalised people in different cultures, and it is only through using a qualitative approach that we can accomplish this task.

Qualitative research relies heavily on "words" or stories that people tell researchers (Liamputtong, 2010b). The focus of this approach is on the social world instead of the world of nature. Fundamentally, researching social life differs from researching natural phenomena. In the social world, we deal with the subjective experiences of human beings, and our "understanding of reality can change over time and in different social contexts" (Dew, 2007: 434). Essentially, qualitative research aims to "capture lived experiences of the social world and the meanings people give these experiences from their own perspective" (Corti and Thompson, 2004: 326; Liamputtong, 2009).

Qualitative research emphasises interpretation and flexibility. The interpretive and flexible approach is necessary for cross-cultural research because the focus of qualitative research is on meaning and interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Liamputtong, 2007, 2009, 2010a). As Hammersley (1992: 45) suggests, qualitative data are reliable because they "document the world from the point of view of the people…rather than presenting it from the perspective of the researcher". For most qualitative

researchers, it is accepted that in order to understand people's behaviour, we must attempt to understand the meanings and interpretations that people give to their behaviour.

Because of its flexibility and fluidity, qualitative research is suited to understanding the meanings, interpretations, and subjective experiences of individuals (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Dickson-Swift et al., 2008; Liamputtong, 2007, 2009). Qualitative inquiry allows the researchers to be able to hear the voices of those who are "silenced, othered, and marginalized by the dominant social order", as qualitative methods "ask not only 'what is it? but, more importantly, 'explain it to me—how, why, what's the process, what's the significance?' " (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008a; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2005: 28; Liamputtong 2009). The in-depth nature of qualitative methods allows the researcher to express their feelings and experiences in their own words (Bryman, 2008; Liamputtong, 2007, 2009; Padgett, 2008). This approach is particularly appropriate and essential for researching those communities "who have historically been described as oppressed but who are wanting to take control of their situation and move towards social change" (Walsh-Tapiata, 2003: 60). Here, I refer to many indigenous communities in the world.

In their research regarding drug use and risky sexual behaviour with young, low-income Latina women, Lindenberg and colleagues (2001) used a qualitative approach. Lindenberg and colleagues (2001: 134) tell us that "through the use of qualitative research methods and talking directly with clients and providers, we gained understanding of the beliefs, knowledge, practices, and social context in which young, Latina, low-income, immigrant women make their drug use and sexual behavioural choices". In this study, they adopted focus groups methodology and individual ethnographic life stories. They say that these methods were "indispensable to understanding the contextual and cultural realities in which Latinas make their alcohol, drug use, and sexual decisions".

Jackson (2000: 347) tells us about a research project in which he had been involved in Zimbabwe in 1998. The project adopted a methodology referred to as an "enabling state assessment methodology" (ESAM). It was developed because of a general dissatisfaction with conventional (positivist) methodologies in the African context. Often, surveys were used to obtain information from local people. Jackson (2000: 348) contends that positivist methodologies do not fully capture the views or agendas of local people. On the contrary, participative research methodology "relies upon local people to formulate ideas and then to test them against their own experience".

The opinions of Zimbabwean entrepreneurs about the traditional methodologies of questionnaires and the more participatory-based approach were markedly different. The participatory approach allowed many participants to express and explore their ideas, which they felt it would have been missed by positivist methodologies. One participant who has been subjected to numerous research projects said that none of the projects in which he had been asked to participate "had allowed him to actually get his views across. He had filled in numerous questionnaires, but had received very little feedback or interaction with the research team". On the contrary, the "hands on" approach of the participative research "had allowed him not only to express and develop his opinions, but also to meet and discuss these issues with other stakeholders" (Jackson, 2000: 356).

Qualitative research, Morris (2007: 410) contends, has functioned as "the sociological vanguard" for exploring cross-cultural issues. Because of an ability of qualitative approaches to closely follow social processes as they emerge and change, the inquiry is particularly useful for examining race, culture and ethnicity as "the product of social interaction". In her research regarding women's experiences of education with South Asian girls and women, Mirza (1998: 82) adopted a qualitative approach. She articulates on her choice of methodology:

> "I chose to pursue a qualitative research methodology in order to explore the girls' and women's lives from their own perspectives. I felt that the interview technique would best allow social process to be examined and questions of 'how' and 'why' to be answered. Thus the methodology would provide an informal environment which would encourage the women to discuss 'their experiences, beliefs and values, and the social meaning they attach to a given phenomenon' (Brah and Shaw 1992: 53). This was especially important as I sought to explore sensitive issues such as sexism, racism and culture, as well as the area of 'non-traditional subjects', which can be difficult. Interviewing enables respondents to move beyond answering the questions asked, to raising other issues and concerns which the researcher may not have considered or seen as relevant, thus providing 'considerable opportunity for respondents to control the interview and hence to dictate the content and form of the data."

Madriz (2003), in her work with Latina and African American women of lower socioeconomic background, makes use of the focus group method in powerful ways. This is clearly seen in her book *Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls* (1997). In this book, Madriz writes about how the fear of crime creates a latent form of social control on the lives of women. Fear of crime dictates certain rules about what women "should" and "should not" do in public so that they themselves can be protected. These ideas inevitably lead to debilitating perceptions about "good girls" and "bad girls". Not only that, they severely constrain what will be available to lower socioeconomic Latina and African American women in their everyday practices.

Regarding the research methods, in this book Madriz argues that most research relating to fear of crime among women has used a quantitative approach. They tended to be large survey studies and conducted with both men and women. This approach, Madriz argues, vigorously restricts the points of view and experiences that the participants are prepared to share. As such, research data only reveals partial and inaccurate accounts of the issue. She suggests that it is difficult to get women, particularly women of non-Western groups, to speak about sensitive issues like their fears of sexual assault or rape, in the context of oral or written questionnaires, either when they had to do it alone or with a single researcher.

Madriz argues that quantitative methods such as survey tend to alienate the research participants. Individual interviews can also make the participants feel fear, suspicion and intimidation. Hence, she employed the focus group method in her research as she attempted to obtain richer information with greater accuracy from the women. She also notes that focus groups offered a safe environment for the women to support each other when speaking about their experiences of crime and their discomforts and fears about crime. One of Madriz's participants, Carmen, remarked that: "When I am alone with an interviewer, I feel intimidated, scared. And if they call me over the telephone, I never answer their questions. How do I know what they really want or who they are?" (Madriz, 1998: 6-7). The following excerpt is what Madriz (1998: 3) tells us about her choice of method in this research. Madriz (1998) believes that it was essential for her to "listen to women's stories to understand the limitations that fear of crime imposes on their everyday lives". She writes: "Rather than addressing how many of these women are afraid because of crime or how much fear they feel, my particular study was aimed at exploring the images and representations that shape women's anxieties and fears at understanding the way in which their lives are limited by these fears. I simply asked them about their worries, anxieties, and concerns related to crime and about the strategies they use to feel safe".

In summary, qualitative research is an essential approach for performing cross-cultural research (Liamputtong, 2010a). We, as cross-cultural researchers, need to cast the net of approach wider

because we are now living in "an era when the diversity of human experience in social groups and communities, with languages and epistemologies, is undergoing profound cultural and political shifts" (Smith, 2008: 137). In the following sections, I propose several methodological standpoints on which cross-cultural qualitative research can be based.

Embracing Healing Methodology

In the time of global uncertainty and crisis that we are now facing, "a methodology of the heart, a prophetic, feminist postpragmatism that embraces an ethics of truth grounded in love, care, hope and forgiveness, is needed" (Denzin et al., 2008a: 3). Hence, I am introducing the "healing methodology" in this section.

Healing methodology is theorised by Cynthia Dillard (2008: 286) who argues that the approach is an essential ethics and methodology for working with indigenous and African women. Healing methodology, accordingly, is "a form of struggle against domination". The methodology is "consistent with the profound indigenous pedagogical tradition of excellence in the history of African people" (see also King, 2005: 15). Healing methodology involves action; the researchers must "engage and change" situations with which they encounter in their research endeavours. Dillard (2008: 286) asserts:

> "We must fundamentally transform what research is and whose knowledge and methodologies we privilege and engage… In this spirit, there must be a 'letting go' of knowledge, beliefs, and practices that dishonour the indigenous spiritual understandings that are present in African ascendant scholars, given our preparation and training in predominately Western, male, patriarchal, capitalist knowledge spaces and the manner in which our spiritual understandings are negated, marginalized, and degraded."

The essence of healing methodology is "spirituality and transformation" (Dillard, 2008: 287). This methodology can work to counteract the negative attitudes of many African American toward research which was due to "abusive hegemonic structures that have characterized the methodologies and practice of research in the Western academy".

Healing methodology encompasses the principles of: "unconditional love, compassion, reciprocity, ritual and gratitude". Dillard (2008: 287) also refers to these principles as "methodologies of the spirit". These components are proposed as "a way to honour indigenous African cultural and knowledge production and as activist practice designed to acknowledge and embrace spirituality in the process of all of us becoming more fully human in and through the process of research". The first three principles are essentially relevant to performing cross-cultural research involving indigenous and marginalised ethnic communities. Hence, I shall focus my discussion on these three issues in the following paragraphs.

Love is the first principle of healing methodology. Too often, as Hooks (2000: 287) says, researchers do not consider love as the wisdom which can produce "reciprocal (and thus more just) sites of inquiry". Love as a knowledge will allow the practice "of looking and listening deeply". Thus, the researchers will "know what to do and what not to do in order to serve others in the process of research". Love also includes carefully seeking understanding of "the needs, aspiration, and suffering of the ones you love" (Hanh, 1998: 4). Deeply understanding the humanity of individuals with whom we engage in the research process is "a necessary prerequisite for qualitative work in the spirit" (Dillard, 2008: 287).

The second principle of healing methodology is to embrace compassion. According to Dillard (2008: 288), compassion is about "the intention and capacity to relieve and transform suffering through our research work". It is "a form of struggle against dehumanizing contexts and conditions". Compassion as a methodology requires the researchers to "relieve communities of their suffering through the process of activist research". It means that the researchers must have serious and ongoing concerns for the research participants and want to bring benefits to them through their research. As researchers, Dillard (2008: 288) contends, "we must be culturally and historically knowledgeable about and aware of suffering, but retain our clarity, calmness, our voices and our strength so that we can, through our practice, help to transform the situation and ourselves".

Seeking reciprocity is the third principle of healing methodology. Within this principle, the researchers must have their "intention and capacity to see human beings as equal, shedding all discrimination and prejudice and removing the boundaries between ourselves and others" (Dillard, 2008: 288). If the researchers continue to perceive themselves as "researchers" and the others as the "others" (the "researched"), or if they continue to see their own research agenda as more crucial than the needs and concerns of the research participants, they "cannot be in loving, compassionate, or reciprocal relationships with others" (Dillard, 2008: 288).

Healing methodology (love, compassion, and reciprocity) allows us to see those with whom we do our research as human beings, and this will have a profound impact on our ways of performing cross-cultural research.

Decolonizing Methodology

Research has been referred to as "a colonizing construct" (Mutua and Swadener, 2004: 1), with a legacy that Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 80) writes: "They came, they saw, they named, they claimed". Colonising refers to the process where a foreign settler creates a new colony in a new land, and over time, takes away the livelihood and suppresses the identities of many native peoples. And he has resulted in significant loss of culture and ways of life impacting on the health and well-being of local people (Bartlett et al., 2007). Smith (2008: 126) says that in of the process of colonization, "something gets lost". The "something lost" for indigenous peoples include "indigenous knowledge and culture". Chow (1993) terms this "something lost" as "endangered authenticities". Smith (2008: 126) puts it:

> "In biological terms, the 'something lost' is our diversity; in sociolinguistics, it is the diversity of minority languages; culturally, it is our uniqueness of stories and experiences and how they are expressed".

Smith (1999, 2008) and Swadener and Mutua (2008) argue that through the refusal to recognize non-Western perspectives as "legitimate knowledge", the colonial research traditions have made cultural knowledge silent. This is referred to as the "methodology of imperialism" by Said (1995: 21). To counteract this hegemony, the perspectives of indigenous people must be "adopted and valorized in the research process" (Bartlett et al., 2007: 2372). Indigenous researchers such as Smith (1999, 2008) and Duran and Duran (2000) call for decolonizing methodology to recognize and undo the damage caused by the colonial authority. Decolonizing methodology, Smith (2008: 117) suggests, requires "the unmasking and deconstruction of imperialism, and its aspect of colonialism, in its old and new formation alongside a search for sovereignty; for reclamation of knowledge, language, and culture; and for the social transformation of the colonial relations between the native and the settler".

Decolonizing methodology questions colonial models of understanding the indigenous reality and "challenges dominant modern methods of knowing and reinforces Indigenous identity and discourse"

(Habashi, 2005: 771). This methodology accepts indigenous standpoints, processes, and ways of learning and knowing (Bartlett et al., 2007; Brooks et al., 2008; Smith, 1999; Vannini and Gladue, 2008). It aims to create research which allows for indigenous self determination. As Kaomea (2004: 43) says: "Indigenous research should be about healing and empowerment. It should involve the return of dignity and the restoration of sovereignty, and it should ultimately bring formerly colonized communities one step further along the path to self-determination".

Decolonizing methodology is guided by the values, knowledge, and research of indigenous people (Bartlett et al. 2007; Smith, 1999; Prior, 2007). Therefore, the methodology can begin to address the suspicion and harm that previous research has created in indigenous communities. Decolonizing discourse assists in developing trust in the researcher and researched relationship through respect, reciprocation, collaboration and cooperation throughout the research (Brooks et al., 2008; Prior, 2007; Vannini and Gladue 2008).

Thus, decolonizing methodology attempts to change research practices which have damaged indigenous communities in the past. Rather than accepting the research application of traditional scientific methodology, from design to dissemination, decolonizing methodology deconstructs research to reveal hidden biases (Brooks et al., 2008). This methodology strives to empower indigenous communities and respect their culture and traditions (Brooks et al., 2008). To adopt a decolonizing methodology to the research, the voices of indigenous researchers, those who live and work in indigenous communities, are privileged (Bartlett et al., 2007).

Methodologically speaking, traditional positivist research has often denied the agency of indigenous (the colonized) populations. This has led to methodological resistance among decolonizing researchers. Denzin and colleagues (2008a: 11) say this clearly: "Indigenists resist the positivist and postpositivist methodologies of Western science because these formations are too frequently used to validate colonizing knowledge about indigenous peoples". Instead, decolonizing researches advocate "interpretive strategies and skills fitted to the needs, languages, and traditions of their respective indigenous community. These strategies emphasize personal performance narratives and testimonies". Thus, the use of qualitative research inquiry and more innovative methods are promoted in decolonizing methodology (see Bartlett et al., 2007; Bishop, 2008; Brooks et al., 2008; Smith, 2008; Vannini and Gladue, 2008).

More importantly, Bartlett and colleagues (2007: 2376) contend a community-based participatory action research (PAR) is an important method within the framework of the decolonizing methodology. The principle of PAR increases the likelihood that the research process and its outcomes will be more related to and beneficial for indigenous individuals and communities. The research process and sequences also provide empowerment among those individuals involved (Park, 2006; Reason and Bradbury, 2006a; Brooks et al., 2008; Conrad and Campbell, 2008; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2008; Pyet et al., 2010).

Decolonizing methodology also allows collaboration among the native researchers themselves and with outsider researchers. Within decolonizing research, Swadener and Mutua (2008: 31) contend, "the possibilities of forging cross-cultural partnerships with, between, and among indigenous researchers and 'allied others' and working collaboratively on common goals that reflect anticolonial sensibilities in action are important facets of decolonization". Collaboration with others requires that decolonizing researchers "acknowledge and interrogate theories that inform our research agendas and the ethical and moral issues embedded in them as part of making this a reality" (Jankie, 2004: 101-102). More importantly, it requires that research to be carried out in ways which are sensitive and culturally appropriate for both the research participants and the decolonising researcher.

Indigenous and postcolonial (decolonising) researchers are part of a "cacophony of subaltern voices" (Gandhi, 1998). Such subaltern voices, Swadener and Mutua (2008: 39) remind us, speak many languages and communicate through oral storytelling, song, poetry, dance and rituals. These voices make use of "performative styles" which reflect a wide range of "indigenous epistemologies that go far beyond prevailing Western academic styles and venues for dissemination". Such subaltern voices reject "external definitions of what is of worth", and often mirror "relational versus individualistic constructions of human beings and other creatures". As such, decolonizing methodology supports the use of alternative and performative styles such as storytelling, narratives, music, drama, and arts "as vehicles of growing resistance to Western, neoconservative, and positivist paradigms" (Swadener and Mutua, 2008: 41).

Decolonising methodology, according to Swadener and Mutua (2008: 35), does not only apply to researching "exclusively in contexts where the geopolitical experience of colonization happened, but indeed among groups where colonizing research approaches are deployed". To them, decolonising methodology applies to non-Western, marginalized people such as those living in poverty and ethnic minority groups. Decolonising methodology offers indigenous cultural ways of undertaking research for other researchers (Bartlett et al., 2007). For Kaomea (2004: 43): "We should think on these factors as they apply to our own research, and if and when we decide to proceed, we should do so humbly, in an effort to serve". This is the stance that I also advocate.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural research has become hugely important in this postmodern world where many people have been made, and are still, marginalized and vulnerable by others in more powerful positions like colonial researchers. In this paper, I have suggested that qualitative research is particularly appropriate for cross-cultural projects because it allows us to find answers which are more relevant to the research participants. I have also provided a different theoretical framework that cross-cultural researchers may adopt in their research. They are methodologies that will allow us to see the world through the eyes of the research participants. They are methodologies that will ensure that our research products provide benefit to the participants instead of harming them. Performing qualitative cross-cultural research is exciting, but it is also full of ethical and methodological challenges. This paper will encourage readers to start thinking about methodological issues in performing cross-cultural research. I hope that it will be useful for many of you in the field.

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