Social movement ethics vs academic conventions

More stringent, richer outcomes?

Ingrid Huygens

- Adopted ethics of Treaty movement
- Revised qualitative & feminist research practices
- Sought new consents (twice!)
National campaign from 1986 by Treaty activist groups:

• developed from church, liberation, adult education & anti-racism traditions

• followed feminist organising & praxis

• educated ourselves & other Pakeha about the Treaty with indigenous people
Key ethics & traditions in Treaty movement

- Responsive & accountable to Maori collectives
- Analysis & action by consensus @ local groups & national gatherings
- Group brainstorms recorded & circulated as collective records
- Transparent & accountable to each other in our activist/educational work
Qualitative (& feminist) research practice

- Attention to researcher position & ‘interest’
- Personal critical reflection & academic accountability

BUT

- Participant ‘interest’?
- Accountability to participant group transparent?
- Processes for collective reflection?
The earnest, benign, self-reflexive researcher...

“Let’s have focus groups! I will tape-record & analyse (reflectively)”
“My colleagues passionately want to hear about each other’s work.....

UH OH, my method & consents aren’t appropriate.....”
Letter to pilot groups

Dear [individual names]

Re: Permission to revise research process

I’m writing to pick up where we left off in the research process. Thank you for approving the record I made of our meeting earlier this year. I have also visited the Whangarei group, and found much to reflect on about the best processes to use for this research. .....
Cumulative co–theorising begins in earnest!
“My colleagues should have direct access & dialogue with each other....”

UH OH, revise the method & consents again....”
National meeting

- Presented work to each other
- Dialogue to evaluate & extend my preliminary themes
Beyond self & academy – accountability to collective ethics led to:

- Innovative method – ‘cumulative co-theorising’
- New theory – how Pakeha change
- Useful resources - for Treaty education
And best of all, rigorous ethics led to revitalised activists!