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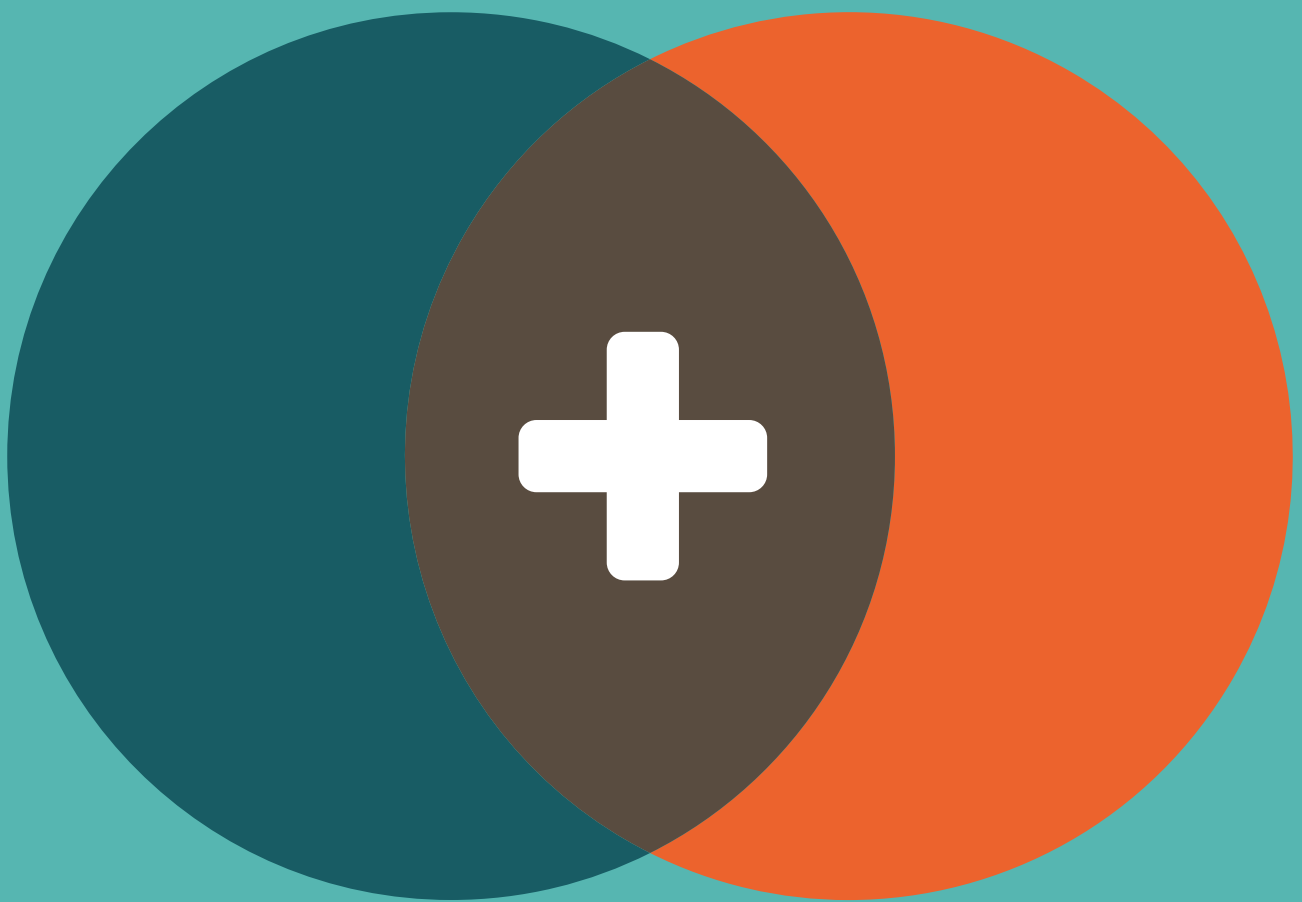
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CO-CONSTRUCTING RESEARCH

A critical literature review

Lindsey K. Horner



March 2016

Written as part of the AHRC funded Connected Communities project:

Co-Design: Leaning Reflections

Lindsey K. Horner

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Background and acknowledgments

This literature review was written as part of the project Co-Design: Learning Reflections, part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Connected Communities programme. At the beginning of 2013 the Connected Communities program awarded 10 projects under a funding call designed to encourage "creative, innovate and ethical" ways of conducting research with communities, rather than on communities. This involved a novel two-phase funding model which provided for an initial phase to support the processes for "upstream community engagement" through which "research foci, questions and methods can be identified, selected and developed with communities", and a second phase to implement that co-constructed research. The Co-Design: Learning Reflections research project set out to explore how different theoretical perspectives might resource co-produced research and knowledge and to enhance our understanding of how universities and civil society can work together. This review was written to act as a conversation starter in order to develop a common baseline for shared learning and cross-project discussion.

From the outset then I would like to thank the AHRC Connected Communities programme which funded the project this emerged from, Co-Design: Learning Reflections. Related to this I would also like to thank Professor Keri Facer (University of Bristol) and Dr Robin Durie (University of Exeter) who as the principle and co investigators on this project offered me the opportunity to work on it and write this review. In this process their input and guidance was invaluable. Furthermore I would like to acknowledge the participating individuals from the separate two-phase projects who took part in Co-Design: Learning Reflections and evoked many of the questions that motivated this review.

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Introduction

This literature review was written as part of the AHRC funded Connected Communities project: Co-Design: Learning Reflections. As such it aims to provide a broad overview of different approaches to theorising and doing 'co-constructed' research in order to help create a common baseline for shared learning and cross-project discussion within the co-design projects from the two-phase funding stream as part of the AHRC Connected Communities programme. It is, therefore, written from a specific objective and in this sense does not aim to define the discourse on co-construction or its boundaries.

Through an overview of emerging discourses, research communities and networks which forefront a participatory and collaborative research ethic it sets out to sketch the landscape of current co-constructed research, including the new communities of practice that are emerging and the different 'communities' or stakeholders who are involved. The review asks: What are the underpinning theoretical models employed by co-constructing research? How is knowledge conceptualised? And what types of validity are being invoked?

Literature was identified using the BIDs database, Google Scholar, browsing procedures for on-line journals and through searching under names which were prominent in the literature and references. A variety of search terms were used through a combination of key words such as 'participatory', 'action' 'partnership', 'engaged' and 'activist' research. Several combinations were used to reflect the diversity and breadth of the topic. In this literature review co-construction will be defined as research that focuses on the co-construction of the research process and not simply the involvement or consultation of users/publics. I am using 'co-construction' as a synonym for research involving co-creation, co-production and co-design.

The review includes the following themes:

1. A short definition of the field is followed by describing current examples of practice and networks.
2. The review then turns to characteristics of co-constructed research identified as participation, transformation and praxis, which are explored in more depth drawing on prominent theorists in the field.
3. From this the review goes on to identify three broad theoretical frameworks which have been used by other practitioners in co-constructed research: Pragmatism, critical theory, and poststructural theory.
4. The review then turns to the methodologies involved in co-constructed research, and the rationale behind the use of 'beyond text' methods.
5. Through a discussion of each frame the review offers some insight into how knowledge is being conceptualised and the validity frameworks that are used.

6. The review continues with a reflection on contemporary practices of co-constructed research discussing some of the challenges facing the field, such as internal conflicts between theory and method and the need to develop new criteria to judge 'quality' research.

The broad range of co-constructed research, and the different traditions, disciplines and contexts which inform it, make a comprehensive overview of co-constructed research impossible. This sets obvious limitations to this review, and it should be viewed as a starter for ten, to be expanded on and developed in different directions according to the different contexts in which it is being read and used. Different projects, for example, will find different areas with which they chime and to which they wish to add to.

2. Co-construction – a working definition

As a basic definition: co-constructed research is research that facilitates equal partnership in research between at least one academic party and one non-academic party (for example a community organisation, charity, museum, or public sector organisation) over all phases and aspects of the research from research design, analysis and output. To this brief definition, for the purposes of this literature review, co-construction will also put an emphasis on: **(i)** participation, **(ii)** transformation and **(iii)** theory and practice/praxis.

The short working definition provided here works both as a summary and as the working definition that guided the review. In this sense, this definition acts not only as a description, but also frames and informs what is and is not covered in the literature review, thus providing the boundaries of the review. This review can therefore be considered a review of a particular ‘branch’, or type, of co-constructed knowledge. Furthermore, as I have been conducting this literature review I have increasingly started to view co-construction as an ethic, approach and aspiration rather than (or more than) a field or methodology, and this has influenced the review. This approach is captured in Brydon-Miller’s case for an alternative strategy for ethical review of action research arguing that “If rather than relying in the existing system of imposed contractual ethics as the primary mechanism for assessing research ethics, all scholars began with a grounding in covenantal ethics, we might find our combined efforts to bring about positive social change are more effective” (Brydon-Miller 2009: 253). This short working definition was developed both through my initial engagement with the literature and consideration of the nature and purpose of the co-constructed research projects in the project Co-design: Learning reflections. The framing of the definition and therefore the review has focused on co-construction in research with academic and community partners and research which has more or less explicit theoretical groundings. This definition is both ‘working’ in that it is fluid and to be built upon/unravelling and bounded in that it is not comprehensive. It is not the intention to create a discourse to define or create the reality of co-construction.

2.1. Expanded definition: Partnership, Transformation and Praxis

Co-constructed research is research that facilitates the co-construction of knowledge at its core. Here the organising ethic is the equal partnership between academics and partners (specifically in the Connected Community programme these partners have been community partners) over the research design, analysis and outputs, which permeates all phases and aspects of the research. While this ethic may be problematic and will be translated in different ways within different contexts, a focus on a deep and authentic collaboration that goes beyond ‘traditional’ academic collaboration orientates the research. Such research draws from and is present in different contexts, histories, disciplines and cultures, and consequently succinct definitions can unintentionally diminish its meaning. As a starting point, to be broadened, explored and problematised in what follows, co-constructed research is research in which community organisations, groups and individuals are involved not only in gathering data or acting as informants but in developing alongside researchers the aims and designs of research activities.

The emphasis on equal partnership and participation in the production of knowledge is also indicative of an underpinning democratic value found in co-constructed research, which seeks the pursuit of human progress through participation. Here, in addition to participation, co-constructed research is also characterised by its transformative potential; themes that this literature review will explore further in the forthcoming sections.

In addition to collaboration and transformation co-constructed research shares a commitment to unite theory and practice (e.g. Eikeland 2012; Gustaven 2001; Levin and Greenwood 2001; McNiff and Whitehead 2001; Cook 2009; Hale 2008.), viewing sites of political struggle or collaboration as generative sources for the production of knowledge. In this sense co-constructed research is a scholarly engagement that employs theoretical and philosophical reflection in its meaning making, and should not be confused with narrowly focused, atheoretical 'problem-solving' tasks.

Such a broad definition as that sketched out above is alluded to in a collection of terminology including such expressions as 'Participatory Action Research' (PAR), University-community research partnership, co-operative research, co-design, engaged research, activist research, community university engagement, etc. Likewise co-constructed research spans a variety of disciplines, including Education, Sociology, Design, Performance/theatre studies, Social Policy, Geography, Heritage Studies, Development, Management, Health etc.

3. Overview of national/international co-constructed research

In this section I offer a brief map of the field, describing current examples of practice and networks in order to situate our projects in their wider field. This will help us to identify continuities and practices which may be helpful resources as well as potential areas where we feel we could contribute something unique to the conversation.

The themes apparent in co-constructed research have a long history, with the uniting of theory and practice to initiate change (praxis) found in researchers such as Mead, Parsons, Hurston and Tax in anthropology, Ely and Veblin in economics or Gramsci, Weber or Addams in Sociology (cited in Greenwood 2008: 312). Many universities in both the UK and US were built on a commitment to improve the social situations of the communities around them, for example in the US the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the University of Chicago had the service of the larger community written into their foundations (Boyer 1990), the land grant universities have a statutory requirement to public service (Greenwood 2008), and in the UK the LSE was founded with an intention to use scholarship in order to combat urban poverty through the development of knowledge (Gaventa and Bivens 2011).

Arguably from their conception universities have been engaged in supporting social change (Gaventa and Bivens 2011, Greenwood 2008, Boyer 1990), with 'scholarship' alluding to creative work around thinking, communicating and learning. However, as Gaventa and Bivens argue, there is a case to be made that the tradition of the public university has come under threat with a changing political economy that promotes a more market-orientated university and arguably undermines its autonomy and role as social critics (Altbach 2008) while privileging income earning disciplines, contributing to a deteriorating relationship with its publics (Olsen 2000, cited in Gaventa and Bivens 2011).

However, while we can trace a heritage of some of the ideas contained in co-constructed research, such as activism and transformation, co-constructed research is also something new and different from these themes. Co-construction takes these themes and builds on them, so that the public intellectual who uses their knowledge as 'expert' to improve the situation of the marginalised, gives way to the aspiration of democratising knowledge production itself which recognises expertise in everyone.

The contested role of the contemporary university and the increased marketisation of higher education, have reignited the debate about the role and purpose of universities. Co-constructed research has an important voice in the debate of how scholarship can contribute to social change and the challenges of increasingly complex global problems where solutions rely on the bringing together of multi-sited and diverse knowledge. Even within the picture of a challenging academic environment painted by Gaventa and Bivens, Hall and Dragne argue that "Universities remain the single largest underutilized source for community development and social change available" (Hall and Dragne 2008: 271, cited in Gaventa and Bivens), while Ordírika (2008) argues the university can still play a role beyond the market, and Santos maintains the "counter-hegemonic force" of the University (2008). While it seems to be the case that much of the innovative work around participation and co-

construction is coming out of the universities of the Global South, it is not exclusively limited to the south, with universities in the UK and US pushing definitions of 'third stream' collaboration beyond businesses to include the third sector and civil society organisations (Laing and Maddison 2007 cited in Gaventa and Bivens 2011, Watson 2007, Kagan 1995).

Budd Hall (2011) recognises a swell in research networks with a collaborative or participatory characteristic and asks if this could be a knowledge movement. Hall builds on Gaventa's 'knowledge strategy' (Gaventa and Cornwall 2008) for linking people's movements and community organising to knowledge, defining a global knowledge movement as "an action-orientated formation that recognises, gives visibility to and strengthens the knowledge that is created in the context of, as Marx said, people trying to change the world" (Hall 2011: 4). He identifies a number of discourses and trends to support his argument, including the re-emergence of community-university engagement, a number of community-based research networks and the Canadian Knowledge Commons initiative. While many of the activities contained in these networks and trends will not be considered as co-constructed research according to the bounded definition in this review, they will contain within them, to varying degrees, numbers of co-constructed research projects and address themes pertinent to co-construction. For example community-university engagement can range from students and staff volunteering and working in the local community at one end of the spectrum to carrying out research *with* communities at the other. Recently, in the US the Carnegie Foundation has created a Community Engagement Classification which recognises universities that collaborate "for the mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity". While this classification is not exclusively organised around co-constructed research, it does however address some of the institutional structures that it perceives as barriers to community engagement and seeks to promote a type of academic scholarship that recognises the values of engagement. These are issues pertinent to co-constructed research and co-constructed research is included as part of this broader category.

The increased recognition of the role of community engaged research is seeing an emergence of an increasing field with its own conferences and journals, for example *The Australian journal of university community engagement*; *Living knowledge: International journal of community based research*; and *Action Research*. These journals are amongst a number which support and disseminate increasingly wide networks, institutions and initiatives for participatory and collaborative research across the globe. These networks and initiatives include:

- **Community-Based Research Canada (CBRC)**, a 25 year old pan-Canadian coalition on community research. The network aims to "build an inclusive and open network, engaging already existing networks, to build support for community-university partnerships in community-based research and community engagement". The wide variety of practices included in this network include "joint university and community partnerships that identify research problems, develop methods and, in some cases, implement action-based solutions" (Community-Based Research Canada 2011: 2). The network finds objectives in research, policy, advocacy and capacity building, seeking to understand research impacts and build capacity and reflection on theoretical and methodological underpinnings. The network website hosts member publications, resources for Community Based Research including tools and methods, and links to other useful networks. The network is also involved in the Community University Exposition, and hosted the fourth CuExpo in May 2011.

- **The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)** was established in 1982 in India, and carries out research with marginalised communities, with a focus on participation and citizenship. The focus on participation is much wider than participatory research, with “key initiatives focusing on capacity building, knowledge building, participatory research, citizen-centric development, and policy advocacy” (PRIA website). PRIA’s established reputation in the field for democratic and ethical research approaches has opened doors to universities in India where it provides training for community-based research and field placements to students.
- The **UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education** has been recently created and “grows out of and supports the UNESCO global lead to play “a key role in assisting countries to build knowledge societies”” (UNESCO chair-cbrsr website). The chair is co-located in the Community Development Programme in the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, Canada and at the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) located in New Delhi, India. The co-chairs are Dr Budd L Hall and Dr Rajesh Tandon respectively. The chair’s co-location in Canada and India reflects its support of North-South-South and South-South partnerships, with the aim to “enhance the emerging consensus in knowledge democracy”. Both Tandon and Hall facilitate GACER, and will also be active in this role in supporting and sharing the co-creation of new knowledge through university, community and government partnerships. “The UNESCO Chair...strengthens recent collaboration between the Higher Education section in UNESCO, the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) and the Global Alliance on Community University Engagement (GACER). It co-creates new knowledge through partnerships among universities (academics), communities (civil society) and government (policy-makers) leading to new capacities; new solutions to pressing problems related to sustainability, social and economic disparities, cultural exclusion, mistrust and conflict; awareness among policy makers; enhanced scholarship of engagement; and modified pedagogy of community based research” (ibid).
- The **Institute for Studies & Innovation in Community-University Engagement**, at the University of Victoria, is a new initiative that draws on a heritage of existing records of community-engagement practice and the Office of Community Based Research created in 2007.
- The **Instituto Paulo Freire** is a Spanish nation-wide university-community research network, based across several Spanish Universities.
- The **Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability network (Citizenship DRC)** was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID) to conduct a decade of research projects in partnership with universities, organisations and institutes across the globe in order to explore how citizens can and are shaping both government and civil society. Partnering with over 60 collaborators (academics, activists and policy makers) in over 25 countries their research sought to integrate its focus in citizenship, democracy and participation into its own research practice. While this project concluded in 2010 it continues to publish from this research and its website hosts publications and resources useful to collaborative researchers, especially those interested in cognitive justice and the democratisation of knowledge.

- The **Highlander Research centre** has a long history of collaborative and participatory grassroots organising and movement building in Appalachia, US. From its beginnings in 1932 it has played a role in labour movements, the American civil rights movement, and environmental justice. Today its mission includes working “with people fighting for justice, equality and sustainability,.. Through popular education, participatory research, and cultural work, we help create spaces — at Highlander and in local communities — where people gain knowledge, hope and courage, expanding their ideas of what is possible” (Highlander Research centre webpage).
- **Community-campus partnerships for Health** (CCPH) was established in 1997 with the objective of developing community partnership to promote health and social justice. CCPH runs a range of programmes including a consultancy network in response to training needs and technical assistance on participatory research and community engaged scholarship from universities, government agencies, and community organisations. Other programmes include conferences, networks and scholarships. CCPH claim that “By mobilizing knowledge, providing training and technical assistance, conducting research, building coalitions and advocating for supportive policies, we help to ensure that the reality of community engagement and partnership matches the rhetoric” (Campus and Community Partnerships for Health website).

This is not intended as a comprehensive list, and we would invite contributions of networks and organisations that are drawn on from different projects to extend the examples given here.

4. Background

This section attempts to expand the themes identified in the working definition (Participation, Transformation and Theory and Practice/praxis), exploring their heritage and how they are being used within co-constructed research.

4.1. Participation

The participation of community groups in identifying and acting on a specific issue is at the centre of co-constructed research. Much of the thinking on participation draws from literature from Participatory Action Research (PAR), most notably the work of Freire and Fals-Borda. In addition the concept of democracy and addressing the 'democracy deficit' have been important for understanding participation. Here participation can be seen as linked to democracy, where a weak participation results in a weak democracy and vice versa, strong participation can result in a strong democracy.

It is important to note here that PAR is not inherently collaborative across two parties, and can be conducted by one party actively participating in the investigation of their own situation. Therefore, not all PAR is necessarily co-constructed between communities and academics and therefore relevant to this review. However, much PAR is co-constructed and co-constructed research is participatory, making discussion of PAR very relevant for this review.

4.1.1. Freire and PAR

Freire was the pioneer of an emancipatory pedagogy which aimed to improve the conditions of the oppressed through praxis. Freire rejected the 'banking model' of education, which viewed learners as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge from their teachers, which he argued "transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power" (Freire, 1970, p. 77).

Instead Freire advocated a participatory education which raised the critical consciousness of learners as active in their own learning about their own conditions, which he coined conscientization. PAR builds on the pedagogical practices of Freire through a primary emphasis on participation and process sharing "a commitment to a methodology that involved active participation of community members in the investigation of their own social reality" (Lykes 1997: 729).

While PAR encompasses a wide range of practices, the diverse disciplines and projects are connected through a commitment to action by participants within a specific context. An action component may address a particular situation with the objective of achieving positive change for the participants, while reflection on the action provides critical learning which can generate an action-reflection cycle. The emergent learning from the action-reflection cycle becomes the foundation of a local theory for the participants involved in the project (e.g. Fals Borda 2001, Genat 2009). Because PAR emphasises the construction of localised knowledge it is interested in how stakeholders attribute meaning in their own situation. Here participants "function as an incubator of new meanings, representation and language and thus the locus of the production of a particular local theory or 'situated knowledge'" (Genat 2009:102).

While Freire can be credited with consolidating the participatory paradigm, a focus on indigenous knowledges should not lead to a conclusion that PAR is exclusively something for the Global South. While universities and researchers in the South have arguably pioneered some of the most innovative work in PAR, Freire's attention to subjugated knowledges can be equally applied to marginalised groups globally. For example PAR has been used with coal workers in Appalachia, USA (Lewis 2001); Mothers and midwives in Sydney, Australia (Barret 2001); Learners excluded from school in Mid-Atlantic America (Brown 2010), Gypsy and traveller communities in England (Beebejuan 2013) and disabled people in Southern Ontario, Canada (Buettgen *et al.* 2012).

4.1.2. Democracy

An emphasis on participation in many research projects in the literature review reveals a democratic ethic underpinning much co-constructed research. The participatory paradigm has at its core the objective of the transformation of cultural, political and economic conditions in order to facilitate human progress. While democracy does not have a monopoly on human progress (and can be problematised) an emphasis on participation naturally aligns itself with democracy. The emphasis on participants bringing local knowledge "becomes a way in which research concepts and theories could both arise from local contexts and in turn be grounded and deepened within them" (Gaventa and Bivens 2011: 15).

The idea that co-construction is a process of democratising knowledge production is prevalent in the literature. Co-constructed research therefore speaks to the 'democracy deficit', which describes how democratic cultures are declining as citizens perceive decreasing influence and ways of holding governments accountable, and the increase of powerful international organisations such as the World Bank, that are not elected or democratically accountable. The democracy deficit equally applies to publicly funded universities, and co-constructed research relocates both its production and accountability to the communities it serves.

However, democracy itself is not a simple or uncontested concept, with multiple variations, values and practices (see Brigstoke and Noorani (un-dated) for an overview of democratic theory in relation to participation). Under theorising concepts of democracy can diminish the claims made about participatory research, with "many theorists of participatory practice critical of the shallow degree of participation involved" (Brigstoke and Noorani: 20). A number of typologies of participation have been developed (e.g. Arnstein 1969, Pretty 1995 and Wilcox 1994) which seek to position participation on a spectrum spanning: degrees of citizen control (Arnstein 1969); degrees of activity and passivity (Pretty 1995); and degrees of collaboration (Wilcox 1994). While these typologies can be critiqued for their dichotomising and normative positions, they do point towards the variety of ways of conceptualising participation (see Brigstoke and Noorani).

"Democratic piety" (Little 2008) has also been critiqued from poststructuralist perspectives. Uncritical and under-theorised appeals to democracy to legitimise participatory and co-constructed research can neglect problems such as majoritarianism. Where powerful local individuals assume to talk for a community local power differentials may actually be maintained through practices of democracy, if perceived as majority rule. Instead, a 'radical democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) offers "

an alternative to ‘representation’ in ‘articulation’, interpreted as a practice that can build political alignments between diverse interests and identities, but only ever according to a contingent set of identifications that remain open to contestation” (cited in Brigstoke and Noorani: 11).

4.2. Transformation

PAR has a radical political heritage. Freire advocated PAR and popular education as a means of addressing inequality and marginalisation through deep social transformation. In 1971 he worked with the socialist government of Tanzania to assist in the development of its education programme, in the mid 1970s he advised the revolutionary government of Guinea Bissau, and later the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The struggle against fascist dictatorships in South America, that continued into the 1980s, was bolstered through popular education, which also played a significant part in the grassroots guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala (Leal 2007).

Similarly, co-constructed research from a pragmatist perspective seeks to bring about change through democratic participation. Dewey, like Freire, was critical of an education which merely transmitted knowledge, and saw the potential in education as an instrument for change “education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction” (Dewey 1897: article 5, para 3).

While transformation is an important characteristic of co-constructed research, the different disciplines, histories and theoretical frameworks that shape a project will result in differing understandings of what transformation means. For example from a pragmatic perspective transformation may mean changes in the real lived conditions for a specific and local group, while from a critical theory perspective transformation would mean an impact on larger scale structures which disturb existing power relations. This is explored further under the section on theoretical frames.

However, some have questioned the ambitious claims made by co-constructed research regarding transformation. There are questions over the ability to back up claims of transformation, as simply “intending to create social change is no assurance of actually doing so” (Riger 1992, cited in Durose *et al*). This critique is captured in a review of 37 unduplicated peer-reviewed papers on photovoice by Catalani and Minkler (2010). Catalani and Minkler find that it is “often assumed that intention to act, increasing the understanding of community concerns, and individual empowerment would have important long-term impacts” (Catalani and Minkler 2010: 447), however these assumptions were rarely described in depth or assessed, with little evidence in the literature of any attempt to evaluate their long-term impact.

In addition to a question mark over the ambitious claims of transformation, a further and more political critique has emerged that posits that innocent and unexamined claims to the transformative character of participation can actually hide and obscure power inequalities, and work as a barrier to transformation. Cooke and Kothari’s (2001) now well known edited book *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, identifies three ways that participation can work to maintain existing power inequalities through:

- The continuing dominance of multinational agencies and funders under the discourse of participation;
- Ways in which practices of participation can maintain local power differentials, and even allow powerful local actors to use those very practices of participation to further their own influences;
- Ways in which the dominance of the language of participation crowds out alternatives, such as the strengths of expertise or leadership models, and entrenches a notion of empowerment that is both depoliticised and individualised.

(bullet points cited from Brigstoke and Noorani: 31)

Leal (2007) argues that participation has now become a buzzword for neo-liberalism. Identifying a move to co-opt Freire's radical method of transformation through participation he argues that the World Bank has successfully employed 'participation' not as "advocating a popular government, but rather creating a populist justification for the removal of the state from the economy and its substitution by the market" (Leal 2007: 542). Similar arguments could be made regarding the promotion of social capital and the use of civil society to drive efficiency and reduce the role of the state under the guises of the ideologically driven Big Society in the UK.

Whereas participatory research was once the preserve of a minority of activist researchers and marginalised communities, as explored in the opening paragraphs of this sub-section, its successful struggle to gain recognition has seen it adopted by governments, international and transnational development organisations and universities. The appropriation of 'participatory' research by these large and powerful institutions produces new challenges, in particular when one considers the traditional role of participation in questioning power. As Gaventa and Cornwall ask "How do we understand the dynamics of power when participatory methods are employed by the powerful" (2001: 77)?

In an attempt to counter this some researchers have preferred to speak from the periphery, and for some good reasons. However Hickey and Mohan (2006, referenced in Brigstoke and Noorani: 32) have tried to meet this challenge by advocating participatory research which addresses political processes of social change, while avoiding technocratic issues, while also tempering ambitious claims about transformation and empowerment.

4.3. Theory and Practice/Praxis

An important element of co-constructed research for the basis of this review and process of reflection is the alliance of both theory and practice. Proponents of co-constructed research argue, as Greenwood does using the writings of thinkers such as Dewey (1990), Rorty (1981), Gadamer (1993) and Habermas (1992), that research which relies solely on building theory as a type of 'pure' social science is arguably speculation, and any scientific legitimacy "must cycle constantly between theorisation and application as a way of developing and understanding, regardless of its intention of

social change” (Greenwood 2008: 328). On the other hand, however, purely problem-solving exercises can arguably diminish into partisan ‘research’ which restricts the production of knowledge into quick fixes for the improvement of practice for a narrowly defined cause. Instead research is involved with generating new knowledge, and produces outcomes which can come to constitute theory. It should be noted however that theory need not be understood as anything daunting according to these authors. As McNiff and Whitehead point out theory is just the production of new knowledge, and grand theory is now complemented with local and situated theories where participants can “show how they have contributed to new practices, and how these new practices can transform into new theory... Perhaps pieces of knowledge existed, but what practitioners do with that knowledge and how they reconfigure it in relation to their own contexts can be seen as their original theorizing” (McNiff and Whitehead 2006: 19)

Praxis, therefore becomes an important idea – that of theoretically engaged action. The cycles of action and reflection explored above reveal the way co-constructed research unites both theory and action. Ways of understanding the alliance between theory and practice draw upon a number of traditions, including a Marxist sense of praxis, pragmatism (Levin and Greenwood 2001), Aristotle’s ideas of *Phrônêsis* (Eikeland 2012, Greenwood 2008), and the studium and punctum (Barthes, in Cook 2009). While here these are considered as separate entities, within co-constructed research there is cross-over between them and research may draw on them to varying degrees. For example Fals-Borda employs a Marxist concept of praxis, but also cites Aristotle’s *phrônêsis*:

“Thus to the Marxist-Hegelian concept of praxis Aristotle’s ‘*phrônêsis*’ is to be added, that is, wise judgment and prudence for the achievement of the good life. *Phrônêsis* should furnish serenity in participatory political processes; it should help to find the middle measure and the proper proportion for our aspirations; and to weight the hermeneutic relations between ‘core’ and ‘cortex’ data provided by the logos-Mythos technique” (Fals-Borda 2001: 32).

As I discuss ideas related to Marx’s notion of praxis, such as a critical conscious raising to facilitate human progress, and the merging of theory and action in pragmatism elsewhere, I will only discuss *phrônêsis* and the studium and punctum in this section.

4.3.1. *Phrônêsis*

Aristotle’s three part scheme of knowledge distinguishes between *epistêmê*, *têkhnê*, and *phrônêsis*, which are different forms of knowledge. While we can find some similarities between *epistêmê* and *têkhnê* in contemporary conventional social science, with *episteme* related roughly to theoretical work and *têkhnê* related roughly to the technical or applied knowledge in improving living conditions, *phrônêsis* does not find a rough translation in the contemporary social sciences. Within Aristotle’s knowledge forms *phrônêsis* is close to situated knowledge because it is always linked to the specificities of (local) context. Furthermore *phrônêsis* cannot be formalised as it is not about rule following like *têkhnê*, while still being geared towards action, contrary to *epistêmê*. *Phrônêsis* is a way of knowing that emerges from collaborative reflection, and simultaneously differs and builds on both *episteme* and *têkhnê*. *Phrônêsis* differs from *episteme* in that it is not concerned with general truths, however it simultaneously draws on the generalised knowledge of *episteme* to apply to change projects. *Phrônêsis* differs from *têkhnê* in that it is not concerned with the application of general

‘expertise’ knowledge, however simultaneously draws on the themes of *têkhnê* in collaboration between ‘experts’ and stakeholders. In *phrônêsis*, rather than being anti *epistêmê*, or anti *têkhnê*, instead we find a union of the two.

The collaborative and transformative nature of *phrônêsis*, which unites theory and practice located particularly in the here and now, lends itself to an intellectual argument for co-constructed research. Such characteristics of *phrônêsis* has led Greenwood to claim that “*Phrônêsis*, the intellectual basis of action research, is not the mere application of theory either. Rather it is a democratizing form of context-specific knowledge creation, theorization, analysis, and action design in which the goals are democratically set, learning capacity is shared and success is collaboratively evaluated. As such it is radically different from applied science” (Greenwood 2008: 329). For a more nuanced take on *phrônêsis* see Eikeland 2012 and Eikeland 2008.

4.3.2. Studium and Punctum

Cook (2009) employs Barthes notion of studium and punctum (1982) as a way of conceptualising theoretical or academic knowing and tacit or experiential knowing.

The studium, which Barthes uses to discuss the part of a photograph which shows the intention of the photographer, is governed by rules which frame our seeing. The studium can help to conceptualise a type of knowledge that can be aligned with our affiliations, codes and traditional ways of knowing. In contrast to this the punctum is that part of the photograph that we are aware of but cannot code; it is usually that unknown ‘something’ that we cannot articulate that none-the-less makes its presence known through disturbing and unsettling the studium. It is the punctum that brings a rare quality to an image which is felt but not explicit.

Cook uses the studium and punctum to explore the ‘messy turn’, where “new understandings are revealed, developed and articulated” (282). Through locating participatory research in the punctum, synonymous with Schön’s ‘swampy lowlands’ (1983), Cook contrasts it to the rule-governed events which we can code, recognise and affiliate with found in the studium. As researchers engaging in the tacit and experiential knowledge of the punctum, collaborative research attempts to clarify and unfold both explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge in order to create new, transformational knowledge. The creation of new knowledge and theory is born out of an engagement with the punctum, which is a messy area which is “a forum for the exchange of perceptions and beliefs, a place of co-construction where strands of knowledge and learning are unearthed and critiqued. These strands ultimately act as catalysts for new knowing leading to development and change” (281).

5. Theoretical framings

The theoretical underpinnings apparent in co-constructed research are as equally varied as the histories and disciplines where they can be located. In this section it is not the intention to provide an impossible comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinnings of co-produced research, but to offer a thumbnail sketch of three prominent frameworks: Pragmatism, critical theory, and poststructural theory, along with a brief description of each framework's approach to validity. These three frameworks were the most prominent in the literature review, which may have been affected by the working definition chosen. While I have written about each framework separately, the reality is that they overlap, and while a research project may primarily use one frame, it may borrow from another. Similarly, while there is a great variation in the choice and application of theoretical frameworks across co-constructed research, there is also a great variation in how much the theoretical frameworks are developed and carried through the projects, for example in influencing methodologies, leading to critiques of an under theorization of research.

5.1. Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that orientates meaning, truth and value around the essential criteria of an idea's practical consequence. From this perspective inquiry is a tool for problem-solving and knowledge is concerned with its practical use. It is concerned, on the one hand, with the notion of change, and, on the other, the consequences of different stances (Perry 2001, cited in Lind *et al* 2008).

Advocates of pragmatism start with a critique of the separation of thought and actions through Cartesian logic. They argue that when universities separate theory and practice, thought and actions, through a Cartesian model of scholarship, "the institutions that claim the position of the premier and most advanced knowledge producers in society frustrate learning and social change in most of their internal processes and in their articulation with the surrounding society" (Levin and Greenwood 2001: 103). Here, a division of theoretic and 'lower' activities contribute to a 'democratic deficit', which renders university scholarship as irrelevant, and seeks a more socially engaged alternative.

Dewey, instead, rejected the dichotomy between theory and practice. Concerned with practicalities instead of the 'correctness' of Descartes, Dewey developed the idea of inquiry as a communicative process which sought to transform problematic situations in order to contribute to fallible progress (Dewey 1938). Epistemologically pragmatism upholds that all held beliefs and methods are subject to flaws, and instead of a search for absolute certainty enquiry is a method employed to facilitate fallible progress.

In a pragmatist tradition inquiry is orientated around problem-solving and evaluated according to its success in addressing the research problem. Pragmatism sees knowledge production as utilising both theory and praxis in an integrated way through employing a method of cycles of reflection and action which are concerned with material and social transformation in a given context. The pragmatic approach uses a scientific method, as a knower uses experimental methods in their given context to

empirically support their conclusions and inform change. Here inquiry is approached from a scientific perspective where an agent's understanding of their situation and their ability to transform it lies in their own experience.

Underpinning pragmatist philosophy is a pluralist idea of knowledge which posits that there are several ways of conceptualising a situation. Different ways to conceptualise problems, and consequently their solutions, stem from the intersubjective perceptions of various social actors. For example, in the case study *Approaching soil protection from another angle in Switzerland* (Fry, 2001, cited in Pohl *et al* 2010) the use of 'thought styles' (Stark 2007, cited in Pohl *et al* 2010) illuminated three very different ways of conceptualising a problem, where "farmers are primarily interested in producing foodstuff and government agencies in protecting soils, soil scientists focus on producing theories about soil functions and processes" (Pohl *et al* 2010: 273). In this example various actors perceived and therefore answered the problem in different ways. Here is an example of a realist understanding which is also not objectivist, as according to a pragmatic perspective. The idea of 'mode 2' knowledge (Gibbons 1994), which is "produced in the context of application" (ibid: 3) also shows an affinity to a pragmatist conceptualisation of knowledge.

The emphasis on action found in pragmatism assists in the step towards the participatory element of pragmatic inquiry. Inquiry is a community activity, and participative democracy and an ethics of participation were developed in Dewey's understanding of the knowledge process (1991[1927]).

The contribution of a pragmatist approach to co-constructed research can be found in its conception of knowledge which integrates both theory and action, and is therefore produced through action/experimentation, and in its emphasis on participation and contribution to participative democracy.

5.1.1. Validity

From a pragmatist perspective validity is measured by how the research outcomes contribute to the "direct transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole" (Dewey *et al* 1998: 171). Or, put another way outcomes contribute to the progressive transformation of a contextualised situation through concrete action.

Validity is tied up in the idea of 'warranted assertions' (Dewey), which pragmatists argue support a strong validity claim because it is the very people who are impacted by the knowledge and who have collaborated in its production that judge its claims. In this sense research outcomes are subject to a more demanding test of validity than conventional research, and is more accountable.

5.2. Critical Theory

While pragmatism centres around finding 'solutions' to problems, the proliferation of research agendas geared towards generalisations that 'deliver' interested answers to support policymaking and practice, or community engagement used to bolster political drives around public sector efficiency and a reduction in the role of the State (Big Society), can subvert the democratic ethic at the centre of

co-constructed research. Here research can fall into Cox's 'problem-solving theory' category (Cox 1996). Problem-solving involves attempts to generate solutions to make a given system work more efficiently without challenging its underlying frameworks and interests.

Cox contrasts 'critical theory' with 'problem-solving theory', and unlike problem-solving, critical theory locates its research within a far broader context, challenging underlying frameworks and their interests, and imagining alternatives. In this sense critical theory is politically edgy and concerned with institutional and conceptual transformations, traditionally linked to issues of emancipation.

An emphasis on critical thinking in co-constructed research "aims towards helping practitioners to develop a critical and self-critical understanding of their situation – which is to say, an understanding of the way both particular people and particular settings are shaped and re-shaped discursively, culturally, socially and historically" (Kemmis 2001: 92). Through connecting local situations and people with their broader political contexts co-constructed research from a critical perspective aims at addressing and transforming situations of injustice, oppression and alienation.

Kemmis (2001) develops this further using Habermas' theory of communicative action which is a critical discussion which interrupts a situation or action to reflect on its dynamics and nature in order to progress towards shared understandings and consensus. The contribution of a critical approach to co-constructed research can be found in the commitment to enable communicative action among participants in a given context to instigate sustained and transformative personal, social and cultural development. Here praxis is emphasised: "in the process of enlightenment there can only be participants" (Habermas 1974: 40, cited in Kemmis)

Underpinning critical theory is an understanding of knowledge as partial and shaped by human interests. However, while it maintains criticisms of a positivist's exclusive claim to knowledge through unsettling ideas of objectivity as masking the interests of power, it does not fully embrace a poststructural reading either. While embracing the deconstructive move, critical theory considers knowledge as vital to social action and emancipation. "If scholarly knowledge has no authority, if it doesn't provide good reasons to believe that some courses of action are better than others, or riskier, or less reliable, then it doesn't have a distinctive value" (Calhoun 2008: xviii). Rather than an unconditional endorsement of the deconstructive critique of objectivity and positive forms of knowledge, critical theorists occupy a more nuanced position, maintaining the critique while employing positive evidence in their own research and argument and defending and advancing their cause. Here we can see an affinity with the philosophy of critical realism.

The understanding of knowledge as partial and interested contributes to an understanding of social justice as linked with ideas of cognitive justice, which is concerned with who creates knowledge, for whom, and whose knowledge counts (Sousa Santos 2005, Visvanathan). This is related to notions of giving 'voice' and upholding counter hegemonic knowledge.

5.2.1. Decolonising theory

While critical theory is associated with the Frankfurt school, decolonizing theory (Mignolo 2009, Tuhiwai Smith 2012, Freire) has emerged as an important contribution of critical theory to co-

constructed research, in particular around indigenous knowledge. Decolonizing theories stress that while working to deconstruct Western Scholarship, they work not only discursively, but in order to change the material political and social conditions of indigenous peoples. Many indigenous researchers resist affiliations with the 'posts', considering poststructural and postcolonial theory as a "convenient invention of Western intellectuals which reinscribes their power to define the world" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 14).

Decolonising theory takes the critical position that the assumption that knowledge is detached or neutral, what Castro-Gómez describes as "the hubris of the zero point" (2007), is no longer tenable. However, it expands critique of hidden social, class and economic interests, to include cultural power and interests, arguing that the success of a Eurocentric epistemology (enlightenment and a scientific technocratic framing of the world) to conceal its geo-historical and bio-geographical history still perseveres in the idea of a universal knowledge which conceals its own situatedness while simultaneously undermining alternative situated knowledges (Mignolo 2009). Related to this is the geo-politics of knowledge (Mignolo 2003; Walsh 2012).

The final objective of indigenous knowledge movements is "to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Audre Lorde 1984 cited in Cann and DeMeulenaere 2010:41). From this perspective engagement in theories of collaboration lead to the conclusion that "Collaborative research is oxymoronic to the extent that, if successful it undermines its own *raison d'être* by disestablishing any need for outsiders" (Coombes 2012: 290).

While many academic researchers engaged in co-construction cite Freire's work, and engage with Tuhiwai Smith's decolonising theory, an under engagement with their radical theory of knowledge and decolonial ethics diminishes their claims and over-states progress (ibid). The co-constructed research literature itself focuses on Western theories such as pragmatism and poststructuralism and overlooks important origins found in other cultures, where life-supporting activities and problem-solving have fostered participatory forms of inquiry have existed from time immemorial across cultures. Where indigenous researchers are finding a voice in growing numbers "their training has been primarily within the Western academy and specific disciplinary methodologies" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 5).

5.2.2. Validity

Critical activist research outcomes work for a specific group of people, and consequently the research has an inherent test of validity: Does it work for the research participants; Has it been transformative from their perspective? Gideon Sjoberg (1976, cited in Hale 2008) argues that the deep awareness of their ethical-political context makes validity judgements from research participants even more insightful and accountable, thus in fact raising the bar for validity. The ethical-political nature Sjoberg evokes here as part of the validity judgment is crucial as critical research focuses on broader frameworks and structures and goes beyond problem-solving, so transformation of a situation is

measured in terms of how it unsettles powerful structures and accounts. Here an important test of validity is how critical research informs and reframes ethical and political debates.

According to Kemis (2001) Habermas further contributes to the validity debate in his theory of communication in works including *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979, cited *ibid*) by offering four validity claims which provide the basis for on-going critical reflections: Is this utterance comprehensible?; Is it true (accurate)?; Is it right and morally appropriate?; Is it sincerely stated?.

5.3. Poststructural Theory

In poststructuralism the role of language has an important role in our construction of our world and worldview. Through continually shifting and uncertain language we come to know and to express knowledge, and the uncertainty inherent in the flux of language pervades all scholarly work and all knowledges. In this account there are multiple knowledges, and each one is incomplete. As all knowledge is incomplete it is prone to movement, and can be deconstructed and reconstructed.

In this understanding of knowledge as discourse, discourses work as a symbolic framework that both enables and constrains the production of knowledge. Therefore discourses can be seen to permit certain ways of thinking, while excluding others. Foucault claims that each society has “types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (Foucault 1980:131), a regime of truth. In this sense discourse is constitutive of truth. The implication is that knowledge is not universal and neutral, but instead it is determined by values and mechanisms in society, and “those who are in charge with saying what counts as true” (*ibid*). When an understanding of discourse is grounded in this perspective it is seen to determine who can speak, when they can speak, and with what authority (Ball 1990). Poststructural approaches seek to deconstruct regimes of truth, making room for ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Foucault).

Questioning the idea of who has the authority to speak, the Authority Research Network theorises an authority which is bottom-up, a “productive, creative social relationship that can enable minoritarian claims to be made with more force” (Brigstocke and Noorani 13). Through concepts of authority that rely on experience (e.g. Dawney 2013 and Noorani 2013, cited *ibid*), disruption (e.g. Kirwan 2013 and Millner 2013), experiment (e.g. Millner 2013 and Noorani 2013) and aesthetics (Brigstocke 2013, cited *ibid*), participation becomes a means not only of empowerment, but also of authority. This work also moves participation beyond a dichotomy “of active/passive. Active participation is not a virtue in itself, and sometimes a refusal to participate can be a powerful form of participation” (Brigstocke and Noorani: 15).

Within the category of poststructuralism we find some overlap with critical theory perspectives, which have recently expanded with the advent of poststructuralism and postmodernism. The influence of poststructuralism has helped to develop critical theory beyond totalizing regulatory and emancipation scripts towards understanding of alternative and multiple forms of oppression and emancipation. The term ‘critical social theory’ is sometimes used to differentiate between traditional forms of critical theory and critical theory which incorporates a poststructural perspective to varying degrees, such as feminist standpoint theory, postcolonial theory and critical race theory.

However, within the broad set of approaches I have identified as critical social theory, there is a differing understanding and commitment to poststructuralist ideas. For example Sousa Santos rejects a common critique of poststructuralist theory: that the recognition of multiple and incomplete knowledges leads to cultural relativism or an 'all narratives are equally valid' position. Instead a type of critical analysis shapes his idea of a diatopical hermeneutics which is an approach where interpretation converges from multiple sites through critical dialogue (Sousa Santos 2005). There is also some cross over between decolonizing theories and postcolonial theory, as while some indigenous scholars reject postcolonialism in its entirety, others point to the European orientation of Foucault's thinking while not necessarily discounting it.

Considering the wide range of perspectives that converge in this category it is impossible to discuss every variation, and consequently I will cover the most prominent in the literature: postcolonial theory and poststructural/standpoint feminisms.

5.3.1. Postcolonial theory

Starting from a premise that there are multiple knowledges, and they are all incomplete, Sousa Santos (2005) argues that, using enlightenment reasoning, the West actively produces the non-existence of alternative thinking. Through a 'sociology of absences' scientific knowledge produces an exclusive standard of truth which promotes the interests of the West through the criteria of objective truth and efficiency. However, Sousa Santos argues that instead of a destructive relationship where hegemonic monoculture actively produces inferior knowledges, an 'ecology of knowledges' must be recognized, where non-destructive relationships between knowledges is possible.

"The ecology of knowledge aims to create a new sort of relationship between scientific knowledge and other kinds of knowledge. It consists of granting 'equality of opportunities' to the different kinds of knowledge... maximizing their respective contributions to building 'another possible world,' that is to say a more democratic and just society" (2006: 19).

Here we find a strong emphasis on the idea of cognitive justice, which recognizes the equality of co-existing types of knowledge in an attempt to address the domination of certain types of knowledges. This is of importance because 'power gives knowledge', as Fals Borda argues "there is now ample recognition that material production may not be so far ranging as knowledge production" (1996: 177). An understanding of knowledge as instrumental in influence and power, and consequently exploitation, concludes that "social justice is based on cognitive justice" (Sousa Santos 2006:19). From this framework the uncertainties pervading all scholarly work serve to undermine the monopoly of scientific inquiry, and open up the space for alternative types of inquiry. Through the works of Husserl, Gadamer, Benjamin and most notably Foucault, "space has been gained for qualitative approaches and for the analysis of the fractal and everyday-life events... a new epistemology has risen to open the gate to fair emancipator longing... to give play to "subjugated knowledges" " (Fals Borda 1996: 178).

Through these qualitative spaces iterative ways of knowing emerge which link different types of knowledge in order to create new knowledges and narrow definitions of what counts as legitimate knowledge are a barrier to the creation of new knowledges. From within this perspective we find a

radical approach to knowledge production, which sees co-production as a stage in the broader aim of the democratization of knowledge itself (Heyman 2007, cited in Coombes 2012).

5.3.2. poststructural/standpoint feminisms

Like postcolonialism feminist perspectives from a poststructural perspective critique the hegemonic status of scientific methods, which subjugate women's knowledge and voice. Instead feminists have worked to challenge privileging certain types of knowledge over the marginalization of others through the development of new epistemologies (Harding 1991, cited in Lunn and Munford 2007: 67). From this foundation feminist research has developed participatory research strategies which seek to address issues of power between researcher and participant.

Feminisms not only challenge the hegemonic status of masculine discourses in the academy, however they uphold that there is no single universal feminist perspective either, preferring to talk about feminisms, underscoring the diversity of feminist perspectives. Because there is no single method or theoretical base feminisms provide a range of understandings of oppression and action for change. This recognition of multiplicities critiques the positivist search for universal knowledges and abstract theories which cannot contain the diverse lived realities of research participants or the demographics they try to understand. Instead the idea of situated knowledge becomes important.

Situated knowledge (Haraway 1998) is related to how and what we know in a particular situation. In acknowledging the co-existence of multiple knowledges what becomes important is research to facilitate the non-destructive concurrence of different knowledges and the greater understanding of knowledges to transform particular situations. It "offers a more adequate, richer, better account of a world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that makes up all positions."(ibid).

The contribution of a feminisms approach to co-constructed research can be found in its consideration of identity, the relationship between different types of knowledge, the experiential and questions over the ownership and purpose of knowledge. Maguire's book *Doing Participatory Research: a Feminist Approach* (1987) explores the important relationship between feminisms and participatory research, positing an explicit feminist participatory research framework.

5.3.3. Validity

From a poststructuralist perspective validity works to police research and limit its possibilities, as "an incitement to discourse" (Lather 1993: 674). Scheurich argues that validity is a positivist concern, not a poststructural concern, and that it is curious to "retain validity... [when] willing to dump conventional science, the nomological net from which validity derived its meaning" (Scheurich 1997: 81). Wary of inscribing new hegemonic discourses that police research and the legitimacy of knowledge, instead poststructuralist researchers advocate a horizontal fluid network of reflexive scholars.

For poststructuralist researchers looking for a validity framework Lather offers a guide for possible ways to judge poststructural research, collectively referred to as *transgressive validity*. Lather provides four frames of *transgressive validity*:

1. Validity as simulacra/ironic validity (which “take the crisis of representation into account” through transparency and reflexivity to resist “the hold of the real” Lather 1993: 685-686). For example rather than seeing a project’s inability to represent its subject/s objectively and faithfully as undermining its validity, the foregrounding of the insufficiencies of representation instead testify to its authenticity and validity. This might include research that uses fiction, poetic discourse or third voice.
2. Lyotardian paralogy/neo-pragmatic validity (which “fosters differences and heterogeneity” *ibid*). For example paradox and dissensus is not considered to invalidate research, but the inability to reduce something to a simple description reveals instead an alternative to single thinking and defies attempts to reduce it to something simple. Here contradictions and juxtaposition are expected within research with communities and therefore point to its validity, where conversely the construction of a homogeneous community would undermine it.
3. Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity (which “unsettles from within” in order to generate “new locally determined norms of understanding”, while exceeding the stable and permanent (Lather 1993: 685-686). For example research which decentres the expert and refuses to pin down ‘truth’ as the inscription of a new regime can be said to have Derridean rigour, where a certain type of uncertainty is considered to be a sign of validity.
4. Voluptuous validity/situated validity (which seeks validity through “disruptive excess, leaky, runaway, risky practice” and “practices of engagement and self-reflexivity” *ibid*).

6. Methodology

In this section I attempt to review some of the methodologies involved in co-constructed research, and the rationale behind their use. This includes how the research is designed, particularly in the initial phase, and the rationale behind the use of 'beyond text' tools. The section finishes with a brief sketch of some of the different media of engagement.

Co-constructed research is not a single coherent framework or research method, but instead describes a research approach which seeks to redress the power imbalances between researchers and communities, knowledge and power. In other words there is more to co-construction than methods. One of the challenges in writing this review has been that co-construction is not a field, theory, discipline or methodology. The characteristics discussed above are therefore operationalised, like the disciplines and theoretical underpinnings, in a variety of ways. What unites co-constructed research is the aspiration to foreground the values and autonomy of community participants at all stages of the research (Boser 2007). This includes a commitment to involve community participants in identifying areas of research and shaping research questions, to research design, to data collection, to data analysis and writing up, dissemination and beyond.

It is worth noting at this point that the successful implementation of the tenets of co-constructed research are achieved to varying extents in different projects, and the challenges of mobilising co-constructed research is reflected in a divergence between rhetoric and reality. This is reflected in a study by Castleden *et al* (2012), which looked at 15 examples of community-based participatory research projects from Canadian universities working with indigenous communities, conducted from final year PhD students to fully tenured social science faculty members. The study found a divergence within the sample between ideal and real practice, for example in relation to research design two respondents reported having "pitched" their study to the community, only integrating the community partners' vision into the proposal afterwards. Regarding data analysis, only one included a community-based researcher in data analysis and writing up, with the other 14 ranging from involving community members in only preliminary data analysis to community members reviewing findings.

6.1. Research Design

Co-constructed research brings together academics and community members from the outset, with community participants working together with academics in identifying the research questions and research design. There are differing approaches to how to initiate this first stage of the research process, with some researchers advocating that ideally the research is initiated by the community, while others consider the origin of a research idea as of lesser importance, considering the design, conduct and benefit of the research to involve both parties as paramount. Koster *et al* (2012) differentiate between research 'with' and research 'for' indigenous communities to differentiate between the two types of community based participatory research.

Much of the literature talks about the importance of trust for mutual and reciprocal relations between academics and communities (e.g. Castleden *et al* 2012; Koster *et al* 2012; Brown and Gaventa 2008;

and Duggan and Kagan 2007) and the time needed to build meaningful relationships. The time intensive nature of building relationships is captured nicely in Castleden *et al's* journal article title *I spent the first year drinking tea*. Patrizio (2010), similarly reflects on the time invested in building partnerships, as she shares in a published diary extract her concerns that a university colleague would raise research at a community board meeting, "that research should be put on the table so blithely, as a foregone conclusion, in the context of a partnership that required two years of relational work and negotiations to establish" (2010: 76). The investment in community relationships suggests a pre-established relationship between academics and communities, such as through activism, previous work as consultants, or affiliation to someone with a pre-existing relationship (Castleden *et al*). In the four examples of co-constructed sustainable development research projects explored by Pohl *et al* (2010) in Kenya, Switzerland, Bolivia and Nepal, all of the researchers had previously worked as practitioners.

While time is often cited as an important requirement of co-constructed research, it is also a challenge. University research projects and funding cycles do not accommodate for relationship building or the long-term nature of community-university partnerships. An exception to this was an 11 year funded project from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, which allocated 3 years just to identify and negotiate the research priorities, 5 years to design and conduct the research, and 3 years for dissemination. However, the time-scales involved in co-constructed research not only provide challenges for universities and academics, community activists may also be frustrated by such a long process when they are 'itching for change' of very real lived conditions. Therefore, while research initiated by communities is sometimes held up as the ideal, in reality the lengthy processes involved in genuine project 'seeding' may turn out to be less than ideal for both parties.

However, while the co-identification of a research problem and consequent research design may suggest the requirement of a pre-existing relationship, this appears to be more of an aspiration. In Castleden *et al's* review of community based participatory research in Canada "Less than half the respondents reported that their most recent research project stemmed from their own pre-existing relationships with indigenous communities and organisations" (168). Respondent three confesses "In an ideal world, community-based research is initiated by the community", but it is recognised that much is still researcher-initiated, with researchers approaching partners with funding already in-hand, research questions pre-determined. Only after the communities have agreed to participate are their visions retrospectively incorporated into the existing structure.

While it was not always considered ideal the researchers on the study found that researcher-initiated projects were often the only practical and ethical ways to conduct co-constructed research, and once community partners joined the project at the very early stages they were involved with the development of the research design from this early point onwards. Respondent four recounts "I didn't bully my way in, but I certainly wasn't invited" (169).

However, Koster *et al* (2012) are not as concerned over who initiates research, as long as both parties are involved in designing and conducting the research, with reciprocal benefits. In Canada the issue of academic initiating research with indigenous communities has been partly addressed through the Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR) centres which connect researchers and their interests to community needs and provide seed funding (Castleden *et al* 2012). In India PRIA

perform a similar service, brokering community–university research partnerships (Hall 2011), and in Brazil the research centre *Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento* (CEBRAP) links up academics from a number of universities (Gaventa and Bivens 2011).

Durie *et al*'s (un-dated) research into “the initial conditions that facilitate the creation of enabling environments for successful community engagement with research” (3), comes to similar conclusions. Through qualitative research in collaboration with Beacon Teams (U.K. university-based collaborative centres set up in 2008) on seven different projects their research finds that projects which succeed in engagement invest substantial time developing relationships between academics and collaborators. These ‘lead in’ stages are considered very important, as are the ‘follow on’ periods. The relationship building which occurs in the first stages of collaboration is important for building trust and designing research which is mutually beneficial.

In their research Durie *et al* use Complexity theory to frame their understanding of what they refer to as the ‘engagement cycle’. The initial stages of the engagement cycle, or ‘lead-in’ phase, “tend to manifest the typical qualities of complex systems – they are open, fluid, dynamic, and lead to emergent outcomes” (7). This is followed by an engaged phase which may take on the form of more linear systems. Here the emergent outcomes of the non-linear, chaotic stage of initial collaboration determine the form and structure of the proceeding research projects. The research found that successful projects tended to fulfil outcomes determined in the initial phase through clear structures and goals where participants had fixed roles and responsibilities. In these conditions it was felt that all collaborators felt liberated “to experiment with their actions, which in turn can lead to emergent outcomes” (7).

From my review of examples of research design it appears that the AHRC phased funding model is quite distinctive from other examples. There are some opportunities for seed funding, however they are not ‘phased’ as follow-on grants are not provided with projects relying on additional funders to see potential in their preliminary research. While other phased models do exist, for example the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities and Harvard Catalyst scheme, there is an emphasis on traditional and recognised research methods and the capacity building in these skills amongst community-based researchers. The primacy of traditional academic methods and skills suggests that academic knowledge and ways of knowing are still dominant. Much of the phased funding in co-constructed research is also based in health and therefore has a more interventionist character to it. The AHRC phased funding model is unique in that it funds a wider range of research areas and topics and supports a variety of models and methodologies including creative and novel methods.

6.2. Methods

While co-constructed research is far more than participatory methods, as already explored above, research methods are an important key to co-producing knowledge, and as such literature around collaborative, co-constructed and participatory research has contributed to the development of alternative methods. Such methods include utilising different media in engagement from storytelling (e.g. Beebeejaun *et al* 2013, Lykes 1997), to video (e.g. Frey and Cross 2011) and photography (Lykes

2001; Purcell 2009), to stakeholder created art (e.g. Glass 2008), to theatre (e.g. Burden 2000, Vasudevan *et al* 2010), to poetry (eg. Adame *et al* 2011, Clark *et al* 2005; Glesne 1997). For a more extensive list of relevant methods and methodologies Coghlan and Brydon-Miller's recently published SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research (2014) provides a useful resource.

The use of what sometimes is described as 'beyond text' research tools, resonates with the characteristic of co-constructed research along two main themes: **1.** it deprivileges the sometimes exclusionary influence of text in preference for accessibility, and **2.** in research approached from a poststructural theoretical perspective, it troubles representation.

6.3.1. Accessibility/empowering

Where the conventions of academic text may seem impermeable to those members outside of the particular disciplines they order and legitimise, beyond text tools search for a more equal method of engagement between communities and academics. Where "language is a matter of power and control, or colonisation and submission" (Williamson and de Souza 2010: 5, cited in Beebejuan *et al* 2013), beyond text tools work as an inclusionary intervention that recognise the equality of multiple methods and data.

Through the use of the arts, beyond text tools can help to engage participants, provide a sense of autonomy and 'voice', aid transformation, and increase access:

Engaging

Art can engage us in new ways, for example Andy Warhol's famous picture of the red and white Campbell soup can engages us in the everyday from a different perspective, asking us to take another look. "Giving a new symbolic visual twist to plain old things works well because we do not have our guard up against the mundane, allowing it to break through our everyday perceptions and get us to think outside the theoretic box" (Weber 2008: 4).

Autonomy

Asking stakeholders to create art as data privileges the emic point of view. The control over the creation of art, and consequently data, by participants relinquishes the power and control of the academic, as interpretation and production of meaning is surrendered. Furthermore, that art-forms open up multiple meanings, enables meaning making from their own perspective.

Transformative

Rather than merely collecting already existing data, art is created, and the process of creation requires the imagining of new possibilities and new meanings. Springgay, *et al* referencing Greene (1995) posits that the arts "have the distinct power to open out imagination toward the unimagined and the uncertain" (Springgay 2005: 897).

Access

Where technical academic language may be inaccessible the arts can enable participants to express their feelings in symbols and images that do not rely on a formal level of language. In arts such as storytelling and poetry, where language is used, individual preferences over style and degree of

formality provide a familiar form. Furthermore the multilayered nature of the arts provides a medium to communicate what is complex, contradictory and hard-to-put-into words.

However beyond text tools are simply tools, and some have critiqued the unreflexive promotion of them as a proxy for 'voice' or 'democracy' or 'empowerment'. Buckingham (2009) argues that much of the claims and aspirations for creative visual methods are not inherent to them, but how they are used, warning that simplistic claims to, and uses of, creative methods can result in a naive empiricism. While influential visual researchers such as Pink (2006), Rose (2006) and Banks (2001), fore-front the constructed nature of visual representations, exploring the social context of production, distribution and interpretation of images, this can be under-considered in some research. To illustrate this Piper and Frankham's (2007) critique of Mizens' (2005, cited Piper and Frankham's 2007) photovoice project, which is claimed to be empowering, argues that instead it actually 'ventriloquizes' the young participants involved through adding the researchers' own layers of interpretation.

In my own experience the argument that beyond text methods are accessible, engaging and empowering gives little recognition to the visual and artistic literacy required both to produce and interpret art. If anything "such apparently open approaches could be seen to require a greater degree of reflexivity about the relationship of power that are necessarily and unavoidably inscribed in any act of research, however 'creative' it might outwardly appear to be" (Buckingham 2009: 649). Visual and artistic literacy are as nuanced and complex as linguistic literacy, and arguably utilising the arts as a method of data collection does not broaden inclusivity, it merely targets a different set of participants.

Furthermore, the recognition that beyond text methods do not broaden inclusivity, can lead to the argument that they therefore create different types of exclusivity. For example the use of text, Twitter, etc. can rely on in-group abbreviations, making it hard to penetrate from outside. For example, it may exclude people from different generations or cultures. While this is not necessarily an issue for data collection if the research is concerned with the situated knowledge of a particular text and tech savvy group, it does undermine claims made for the potential of beyond text tools for wider dissemination.

Also, while the arts can have a transformative impact, they can equally be off putting to a different audience. Considering the use of experimental aesthetic writing forms, Kirsich observes that some "may find such texts confusing, annoying and incoherent – rather than playful, open, and fascinating, as writers of experimental prose like to imagine" (Kirsich 1999: 73, cited in Adame *et al*). It may be that rather than the arts enabling voice, empowering and disseminating participants' stories, they work to confuse and obscure them. If the rationale for using beyond text tools lies in empowering participants' voices, it may actually work to undermine this objective. However, sometimes the rationale for using the arts is precisely because it troubles representation.

None of these critiques of visual, creative, or beyond text methods are of them per se, and it is acknowledged that many researchers are using creative methods in effective and potentially progressive ways. However, the critique is of the simplistic promotion of creative methods and media as inherently empowering and reflexive. Instead they caution against under-theorising methodology,

and instead advocate that the “political and ethical dimensions of that process do not derive simply from the methods that are employed, but are a function of the wider social contexts in which research is conducted, disturbed and used”(Buckingham 2009: 648). It is with this in mind that the rest of this section should be read.

6.3.2. Troubling representations

The notion of transparent representation is questioned from a poststructural approach, resisting the myth of “the correctness of representation [and] its fidelity to some great original” (Said 1987:21). This is particularly well developed in poststructural approaches to ethnography (e.g. Bitzman 2000, Tyler 1987; Clifford 1986), which explore how it is quite possible for ethnography “to construct the very materiality it attempts to represent” (Bitzman 2000: 28). Here we find a critique of the idea of giving ‘voice’ found in much co-constructed research from a critical theoretical perspective, because to assume that one can give voice, or that participant’s stories are not mediated, commits a violence of clarity. It is inevitable that as researchers we “both get out of the way and in the way” (Lather and Smithies 1997: xiv) of the communities’ offerings. No matter how transparent or accessible texts are written, no matter how ‘innocent’ they appear, they are just as much part of a discursive system implicated with issues of power. To write poststructurally “is to write paradoxically aware of one’s complicity in that which one critiques” (Lather 1991:10).

In order to shift research away from inscribing participants and homogenising communities, poststructural co-constructed research can use the arts to disturb the idea of a fixed representation or meanings. As the arts are subject to constant multiple readings, it is impossible to say that there is only one correct reading, with each viewer constructing their own meaning. From a poststructural perspective this is true of all texts, however art is more transparent about this relationship as it foregrounds the reconstructions of each viewer, so that “the meanings of each image are multiple, created each time it is viewed” (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 25). Not only are the arts subject to multiple readings, they are also multi-layered, able to communicate multiple meanings and answer and ask questions simultaneously. This space for contradiction and paradox deliberately seeks out instabilities as the site for understanding, “allowing knowledge to be split open, revealed, and ruptured... a process of opening texts, of seeking understanding by continuing to un/ravel and to stitch back in response” (Springgay et al 2008: 905). Here arts based forms crystallize how “the nature of all knowledge is considered to be transient, partial, provisional, situated, and constructed, new understandings are reported in open-ended instructive accounts that contain no ‘story of stories’ and no ‘synthesizing allegory’” (Norris 197: 89, cited in Adame *et al*).

6.3. Media of engagement

6.3.1. Community theatre

An approach to participation through the use of theatre is a common method in co-constructed research. Forum theatre is probably the best known and frequently utilised, usually informed by the work of Boal and his influential book *Theatre of the oppressed* (1979). According to Boal (1995, 1979) the public performance of co-created work which offers alternative visions can transform political and social situations. Community theatre uses non-hierarchical collaborative techniques which bring

together participants' own experiences in a performative piece of drama, consequently instigating change at the personal level of the participants who explore and produce meaning through the collaborative process of creating a theatre piece and through public performances which advocate change.

Alternatively Verbatim theatre acts as a kind of documentary, where actors use the exact words from participant interviews.

6.3.2. Poetry

Poetry, and fictionalised narrative, is often used as an approach in order to represent what Glesne describes as the 'third voice' (1997). The third voice is the voice that is neither the academic's or the participant's, but represents the creative exploration of the story created between them through the research process, a process which creates data as opposed to merely uncovering data. Poetry is employed as an alternative to academic styles of representation that privilege propositional representation, instead "meaning traffics in patterns, images, qualities, feelings, and eventually concepts and propositions" (Johnson 2007: 9). Here, co-constructed meaning is fore-fronted through a co-creative process where the academic and participant create meaning together in a third voice.

6.3.3. Video

The use of video shares many of the characteristics of theatre, with dramatization used both as a collaborative process to create, explore and analyse data and as a means of advocacy. Video embellishes this approach in two new ways, it utilises an "audio-visual language... closer to their [young people's] interests and modes of apprehending the world" (Frey and Cross 2011: 70), and is easier to access widely in workshops and meeting with authorities.

6.3.4. Photography and art

One of the most common uses of photography in co-constructed research is the use of Photovoice (e.g. Wang and Burris 1997, Lykes 2001). Here community partners take photographs which represent topics around the theme they are exploring and use the photographs as the basis of discussion/interview. Narratives can also be developed from and through the images to bring a collective perspective. This perspective is usually from marginalised communities and photovoice outputs are framed as a means of advocating their perspective.

However, from a poststructural perspective, art and the creation of stakeholder-created-art can also be used to disturb representation, unsettle fixed ideas and inspire transformation (e.g. Springgay *et al* 2008, Sturken and Cartwright 2001). In this sense the use of images and art is tied up with an ethic about representation, authorship and complicates the relationship between the researcher and researched. This ethic and characteristic of the use of art in poststructural research can be explored further in the literature on a/r/tography (artist/researcher/teacher-ography) (see Springgay *et al* 2008).

7. Locations of collaboration

In this section I attempt to identify the different ways that the variety of co-constructed research manages the collaboration between academics and partner researchers, including some of the conceptual thinking behind it. There seem to be three main approaches to co-creating/collecting and co-analysing data: **(1)** The incorporation of community participants as part of the academic research team; **(2)** creating a permeable space with overlapping realms or agora (Pohl *et al* 2010) and **(3)** fostering 'edges' where frontiers between different realms meet (Kagan 1995).

7.1. Incorporation of community researchers

This practice appears to be popular among geographers and academics working with indigenous peoples and in health studies. In Casleden *et al's* review of community-based participatory research with indigenous peoples 13 of the 15 research projects employed local community members as research assistants. The employment of community members as research assistants helps to develop methods of data collection that are appropriate to the community participants and data analysis benefits from insider perspectives. The bridging relationship of the research assistant between academic and community can also facilitate open and honest dialogue between the two. As academic researchers community assistants also receive training in university based research ethics and research methods, and in Castledon *et al's* research "over one-third of the respondents noted that community members who had worked on research projects had gone on to pursue undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate training" (170). This capacity building element resonates with some approaches to co-constructed research which emphasise an ethical commitment to "empowerment".

However, while the employment of community participants can work well, when it doesn't it can have a range of negative impacts, including personal issues between community members clouding the research findings. Ansell *et al* (2012) explore several problems encountered when they used insider research assistants in their participatory research to research the impact of AIDS in southern Africa, including their role in censoring participants' contributions and inadvertently intimidating participants.

Furthermore, from a decolonising perspective, employing community participants as research assistants contradicts the radical potential of co-constructed research. Many of the research projects which claim a participatory or collaborative character cite Freire's work as an underpinning theory, however fail to explore his radical pedagogy to its full extent. Freire advocates a new epistemology that gives space to subjugated knowledges; however the practice of training community participants in academic research methodologies serves to promote hegemonic research methods and knowledges, with the imposition of western, male and privileged research approaches and paradigms onto communities. In this sense co-construction can be considered as a new form of colonialism, when practiced in this form. However, there is no reason why this has to be the case if careful reflexivity and awareness are practiced alongside the acknowledgement and value of a mixed ecology of knowledges.

7.2. Overlapping realms/ the agora

Pohl *et al* (2010) explore an approach to co-construction where “knowledge production takes place at the intersection of the realms of science and non-science - the agora” (269). The agora is a public space where “science meets the public” and “the public speaks back to science” (Nowonty *et al.*, 2001: 247, cited in *ibid*). Pohl *et al* contrast this to boundary organisations, which arguably merely mediate between two communities:

Boundary organisations (B.O)

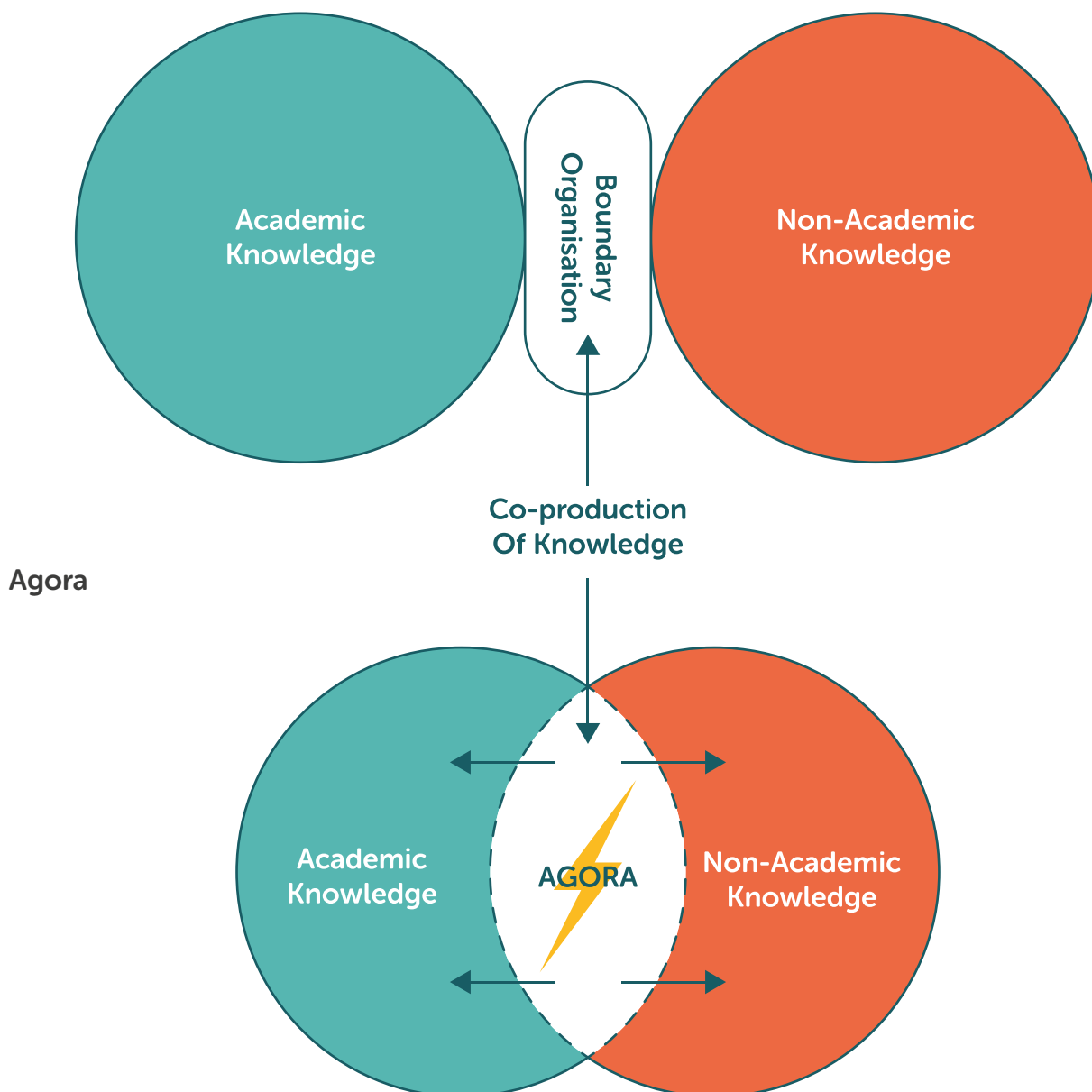


Figure from Pohl *et al* 2010.

The Agora is a permeable space where academic and non-academic knowledge overlap, and is concerned with the production of 'Mode 2' knowledge (Gibbons *et al* 1994). Mode 2 knowledge is produced in the context of application, "always produced under an aspect of continuous negotiation, and it will not be produced unless and until the interests of the various actors are included" (4).

This approach brings together stakeholders and academics in order to produce knowledge as a solution to a particular issue in a particular context. It aims to provide a space where participants can interact in a process of continuous negotiation in order to produce knowledge that speaks to the context of its application in a socially robust way.

Pohl *et al* provide four examples of this approach in Kenya, Switzerland, Bolivia and Nepal. In each case-study the porous boundaries that make up the agora blurred the roles of the different actors involved, where "the researchers gave up the authority associated with their role as Mode 1 academics, in order to be able to ensure successful transition to Mode 2 knowledge coproduction. They assumed roles as reflective scientist, intermediary and facilitator" (276). It is worth noting that in all of the case-studies the researchers also identified as practitioners.

The problem-solving emphasis of this approach to co-construction can expose it to criticisms that it is atheoretical. As previously discussed problem-solving research does not have to be atheoretical and has a strong heritage in pragmatism, and this critique may be unfounded. However, sometimes the roles the researchers play as intermediary between the different voices in the agora sometimes positions them more as mediator or consultant than researcher. Furthermore, this approach raises questions about the 'outsider' perspective. If researchers occupy multiple roles in the blurred and messy space of the agora, such as practitioner, advocate, activist, then they become quasi insiders to some extent. While they will always be outsiders at a particular level, the level of acquaintance with communities to varying degrees seems a pre-requisite to this work, as much of the mediation is considered intuitive.

7.3. Fostering edges

Kagan (1995) draws on an ecology metaphor to promote co-constructed research as inquiry located at the edges. Imagining communities as eco-systems, co-constructed research takes place at the interface of two different eco-systems, known as the ecotone (Odum 1991, cited in Kagan). The ecotone provides rich conditions for the yielding of new knowledges because "at such junctions, the variety and diversity of species and thus the productivity of the ecotone is usually greater than the sum of each of the adjoining communities" (Kagan 1995: 7). Using the metaphor of the academy as an oceanic ecology, and communities as continental ecologies, each with its own organisms, systems and habitats, the edge in between them would be an estuary. Here, in this tidal zone, where ocean and land, salt and fresh water meet, species from each ecology thrive as well as species specific to the estuary ecology, which are unique to it. The increased diversity and potential productivity of the ecotone provides an 'edge' effect. Kagan uses the approach of 'maximising the edge' as an example of the work of the North Western Training and Development Team, a small interdisciplinary team working to change the lives of people with learning disabilities. The team works with statutory agencies,

voluntary organisations, families and individual, as well as at the edges of existing and better practices, health and social services, welfare organisations and local communities etc. Kagan claims that by fostering edges the team works between organisations, linking experiences and expertise, in order to “maximise developmental possibilities” (1995: 5), however she does warn that edge effects, as well as enriching communities, “with bad stewardship it can become barren and impoverished, supporting little of environmental benefit. Working at the ‘edge’ therefore has responsibilities to preserve the very best of all adjoining communities” (ibid: 10). The edges advocated here have synergy with Durie *et al’s* work on complexity, which similarly seeks to compare “such phenomena as networks, sustainability and resilience in biological systems with similar phenomena in social systems, and thereby opens the possibility of transferable co-learning about the causes of such phenomena” (3).

This approach resonates with the similar but distinct practices of diatopical hermeneutics (Sousa Santos) and third voice (Glesene 1997), which seek out new knowledges and experiences which are born out of but preserve an ecology of mutual knowledges. Diatopical Hermeneutics is where multiple perspectives converge in cross-over to create new translations without one consuming or colonising the other. The third voice refers to a narrative that emerges through the research process that is neither the academics’ nor the participants’, but has been created through the act of the research itself.

The generation of new knowledge that is located where two knowledges interact provides a practice which preserves and nourishes both ecologies, while simultaneously creating new ecologies. This approach addresses some of the issues around colonisation that surface in the recruitment of community participants as researchers, as each ecology maintains the value of its own distinct knowledge. The production of new knowledge from the interface also moves this approach beyond mere mediation.

8. Next Steps

This review has sought to address how co-constructed research conceptualises knowledge, some of the theoretical frames invoked to do this, methods utilised and the processes involved. In doing so it has raised some potentially interesting questions. Pertinent themes emerging seem to be:

8.1. Theoretical framings

- What theoretical frameworks resource the projects in our programme? Do they fit neatly into the three broad frameworks offered here or do we need to expand this?
- A critique of an under-theorization of research emerged in some of the literature, how are we addressing this critique in our own work – how do the theoretical frames inform our methods and how do they relate to our thinking around quality and legacy?
- There are murky areas between the theoretical frames. Sometimes they overlap, e.g. both pragmatist and poststructuralist approaches would advocate situated and localised knowledges. Sometimes they are in tension, e.g. the poststructuralists problematise the notion of ‘voice’ and representation in tension with the other approaches, while both poststructural and pragmatic approaches question the very existence of the underlying framework critical theorists seek to challenge. As a group do we want to either **i)** highlight the differences and explore the tensions between these/our theoretical perspectives, or **ii)** locate our work in the continuities and overlap between the approaches?

8.2. Research Design/outputs

- While some literature explored the processes of co-constructed research, the research into the mechanisms, benefits and verifiable outcomes of co-constructed research was limited. Can we offer insights into the processes? How are projects negotiated and relationships maintained? What processes help with that and hinder it? Did the phased funding model bring anything new?
- Transformation seemed an important impact/character of co-constructed research. However transformation has different meanings from different theoretical perspectives. How do we understand transformation? Are there differences/similarities between the projects?
- How do the research outputs impact transformation? A critique of the claims for co-constructed research emerged in some of the literature: How can we address this critique in our own work? What are our claims? How do we evidence them? How does this relate to our thinking around legacy?

8.3. Methods/medias of engagement

- Why do we choose the innovative methodologies represented in the different projects? Is it to produce new types of knowledge? If so how is it new? Why is this new type of knowledge important? Is it to increase accessibility? Is it to contribute and disseminate? How does it do this? Who does it exclude? Is it to trouble representation? How does our methodology link to our understanding of knowledge/theoretical frames? How does this relate to our thinking around novelty?

These are just some of the questions that the process of writing the review raised for me. More questions will have been raised as each reader brings their own experiences and perspectives to the review. As mentioned in the introduction this review is intended to be built upon, un-ravelled and stitched back together.

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