

RESEARCHING THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION FROM A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE: DILEMMAS FOR RESEARCHERS

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Researching the social and political in mathematics education from a critical perspective raises a particular set of dilemmas for researchers. These may include the choice of what to research and who decides; the purpose of the research and the purposes to which it might be put; the methodology of research, traditional or alternative; the practice of the research, particularly as it relates to the people involved; and the reporting of the research, the format, the language, the authorship.

It is the intention to continue the work that was undertaken on this subject last year at PME 25. A number of individuals offered the whole group a response to the invitation to reflect on their own research into political and social issues in mathematics education and to highlight some feature of the research which had been problematic for them. Issues considered included

- researching sites which promote values opposed to those of the researcher;
- reporting in the language of the participants? the language of the researcher? the most powerful language in mathematics education?
- resisting the attribution of the 'label' expert northerner researching the south;
- the centrality or otherwise of a narrowly defined focus on mathematics education in the research;
- reporting to and with the participating community;
- the importance of seeking strategies that impact on policy;
- contributing to a shift within the dominant discourse of the mathematics education research community itself.

The co-ordinators will bring to the first session some specific and focused, possibly fictitious, dilemmas on which small sub-groups will work. Depending on their complexity, these may be circulated electronically before the conference. The second session will be adapted to meet the outcomes of the first session. It may include sharing reflections on the first session; writing reports of dilemma resolutions; considering dilemmas which are actual for the group members; or planning continuing work for the group.