



Smith argues that from the vantage point of the colonized, the term *research* is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. She points to the system and framework of how European research was carried out, classified, and presented back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to the colonized, a process that Edward Said has called "Orientalism." The alternative is to address social issues of indigenous peoples within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization, and social justice in order to create "indigenous research, indigenous research protocols and indigenous methodologies" that relate to indigenous priorities and problems. This new framework and approach requires a historical and critical analysis of the role of research in the indigenous world so that it can provide alternatives as to how we see knowledge and its social construction, as well as methodologies and the politics of research.

In the first chapter, "Imperialism, History, Writing, and Theory," Smith contextualizes four concepts that are present in how indigenous peoples' ideas are articulated: imperialism, history, writing, and theory. These four concepts, according to the author, will enable scholars to have a better understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations, and values informing research practices. Smith writes that reclaiming indigenous history is a critical and essential part of decolonization, and not a total rejection of all theory, research, or western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering indigenous concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from indigenous perspectives and for indigenous purposes.

In chapter 2, the author argues that western imperial research of indigenous peoples has had at its foundations the "theory of knowledge known as empiricism and the scientific paradigm of positivism" derived from it. Western research, founded upon western philosophy and the use of western epistemology, comes with a cultural orientation, a set of values, different conceptualizations of such things as space and time, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power that represent the western worldview. Reductionist methods are employed, models are developed, and evaluations are made according to the criteria determined by the researcher. Hence the urgent need to rectify this form of colonization. The next chapter elaborates upon this idea by looking at how the western production of knowledge was a commodity to be exploited, just like other natural resources.

Chapter 4, “Research Adventures on Indigenous Lands,” revisits the author’s earlier discussion about early adventurers being the forerunners of subsequent colonization. Using the examples of Abel Tasman and James Cook, she argues how the colonialists “came, saw, named, and claimed” as part of the western empire. By looking at the case of the Maori and their contact with the British, she forcefully argues that all accounts of events are seen through imperial eyes and that the “master narrative” is therefore established from their perspective. In chapter 5, “Notes from Down Under,” Smith replies to the question of “Is there imperialism today?” by saying that the colonizers have not really left. She claims that a new generation of indigenous elites is to be found, many of whom still have colonized minds.

Smith develops her alternative research agenda in chapter 6 by focusing on movements among the Maori and the Australian Aborigines. Although they are largely political, she sees them as part of “grassroots” movements all over the world. From the “decolonization politics” of these movements, the author presents her agenda for indigenous research.

The goal of this research agenda moves beyond survival to recovery, development, and, ultimately, to self-determination. It goes beyond politics into the realm of social justice and involves a wide range of terrains, including the psychological, social, cultural, and economic. The agenda put forward involves the processes of transformation, decolonization, healing, and mobilization of peoples. However, in order for all of these aspects of the indigenous research agenda to be “credible,” they must be based on indigenous frameworks and worldviews.

Chapter 7, “Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda,” furthers her earlier points. Two types of pathways to indigenous research may be identified: community/tribal research and indigenous research within the academy. Whichever way is adopted, researchers must be trained. In chapter 8, the author identifies 25 types of research activities or projects within the ambit of the goal of self-determination. In each area, the framework adopted would be a “mix” between modern methodologies and indigenous practices. Among the projects identified are claiming, remembering, indigenizing, intervening, revitalizing, reframing, discovering, creating, and sharing.

Chapters 9 and 10 discuss her own experience of conducting research named Kaupapa Maori Research (research done by “Maori about and involving Maori”), which begins by structuring assumptions, values, concepts, orientations, and priorities. The author sees Maori indigenous research as imbued with a strong anti-positivistic stance, but does see the

possibility of an “interface” between this approach and such social science approaches as sociology and policy analysis.

This book is very relevant as far as the Islamic and Muslim responses to contemporary knowledge are concerned. The whole “Islamization of knowledge” (IOK) idea, propounded by scholars since the 1970s, is focused on the process of developing alternatives to western knowledge by using both our heritage and modern science – but from our own perspectives – and utilizing methodologies that are consistent with our epistemological foundations centering on revelation. The issues brought up by Smith for indigenous peoples are generally issues of concern to Muslim scholars as well.

The progress and shortcomings of the IOK agenda manifest the difficulties involved in creating and developing indigenous Islamic alternatives. Islamic alternatives are necessarily transethnic, transnational, transtribal, and transcultural, having at their core an essential worldview. However, this worldview is able to include the Muslim world’s pluralist nature and deal with non-Muslim research and researchers. In this, we have to admit that the journey has only begun.

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