

## IJIDI: Book Review

McGregor, D., Restoule, J-P., & Johnston, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships*. Canadian Scholars. ISBN 9781773380858. 345 pp. \$59.95 CND.

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Indigenous research is growing in post-secondary institutions and across numerous other sectors throughout Canada. Many institutions and organizations are making significant strategic commitments to increase and support Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers. However, as Indigenous research grows, so does the need for those concerned with supporting the research enterprise—especially in post-secondary institutions—to understand the practice of Indigenous research. Indigenous research, theories, practices, and relationships help to fill this need and is a much needed and vital guide to the varied practices of Indigenous research in Canada. With a particular focus on First Nations researchers and research, it helps to answer such questions as: What is Indigenous research? How is Indigenous research conducted? And what considerations must be considered when conducting Indigenous research?

The entire volume is comprised of five parts focused on specific issues in Indigenous research practice with research stories or reflections grouped in each section, namely “The Research is the Process: Research Journey Inside and Out,” “Making Space For Indigenous Research,” “Communities We Research With,” “Our Tools For Research,” and “Destinations: Where Research Can Take Us.” Each section begins with a short introduction by the editors outlining key broad topic areas and includes “Learning and Reflection Questions” which help guide readers through each section. Contributions from three or four Indigenous and non-Indigenous research collaborators are included in each section across a total of seventeen chapters. Each chapter focuses on the practice of research, not the results of research, or even what we might typically expect to understand as the findings of the research.

The researchers are primarily centered at universities in the Great Lakes region and primarily represent First Nations research, and research from across the country known as Canada, with a heavier concentration in Anishinaabe research. Representative research methodologies represent both urban Indigenous research, such as Angela Mashford-Pringle’s work with the City of Toronto’s Aboriginal Advisory Planning Table and programs for Aboriginal Children in Toronto, as well as numerous pieces on research with First Nations communities, such as Lorrilee McGregor’s chapter on community-based research with Anishinaabe First Nations.

There is representation from several different First Nations and each chapter clearly delineates the ways the researcher’s identity is deeply connected to the practice of their research and the methodologies they use. For example, Georgina Martin, who identifies as a Secwepemc woman from Williams Lake, British Columbia on the west coast of Canada, delves into research

methodologies of storytelling and narrative inquiry which are specifically drawn from Secwepemc identities. While Paige Restoule, Carly Dokis, and Benjamin Kelly use water as a mechanism for connecting stories and research on water quality. Other chapters demonstrate collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, such as the piece by Karen Hall and Erin Cusack on “Healing and Transformative Learning through Indigenous Methodologies.” Each chapter is a personal research story, explaining the author’s personal experience and practice of the research which the editors have chosen as a device to structure this volume as a teaching tool. Furthermore, through this structure the editors demonstrate an awareness that readers may be coming to this volume with little experience with the practice of Indigenous research and offer these stories as a way to experience the varied practice of Indigenous research.

This collection of research reflections is primarily aimed at those in post-secondary institutions, but it is equally useful for those in organizations or sectors engaged in or interested in any form of Indigenous research, such as readers working in government or in the not-for-profit sector. As stated in the introduction, “Despite the interest in Indigenous research within the academy, many misperceptions remain, and epistemic violence and dominance continue. This volume lends further support to scholars seeking to justify their use of Indigenous research approaches as the academy continues to resist genuine Indigenous scholarship” (p. xi). Thus, *Indigenous Research* is an intervention into a system of research dominated by colonial systems which continuously fail to appropriately recognize Indigenous research methodologies.

Conceptualizing this volume as a teaching tool is essential to understanding the work it does in the context of the Indigenous research space. However, it is equally important to understand that despite this, *Indigenous Research* is not a “how-to” in the way of a disciplinary or methodological handbook. Instead, the focus of this work is on creating an understanding of the varied practices of Indigenous research, the explicit need to tie Indigenous research to one’s own identity and experience, and to lend validity to the use of Indigenous methodologies in academic research. For example, Hall and Cusack describe their chapter as an “academic journey” and Cormier and Ray begin with an “origin story about the drum” and continue through their chapter as a narrative. Throughout the volume, the stories of Indigenous research are clearly organized to interweave the discussion of research journeys with sections detailing choice of methodology for frameworks. For example, Cormier and Ray use ceremony, and specifically fasting, as a research framework. This work will help readers further reflect on their own learning and understanding of research practices. Reading through this book is rather like being able to listen to a talk on the research process with the editors acting in the roles of teacher or guide. *Indigenous Research* is thus helpful in the “unlearning” process required to shift mindsets away from the dominant forms of the practice of research in Canada by those following colonial methodologies to alternate forms of research.

Just as Indigenous peoples themselves are not homogenous people, and there is no pan-Indigenous worldview or knowledge, a crucial aspect of Indigenous research demonstrated through this title is the fact that Indigenous research does not follow one path and is not monolithic. Moreover, Indigenous research should not be viewed as akin to a discipline, such as humanities research, and there isn’t one overarching approach or methodology. Indigenous research practices and research are varied and diverse in its aims, scope, and methodologies. The editors have chosen articles which bear the diversity of research practice out and demonstrate the ways worldviews, knowledges, and community context profoundly impact research practice. Furthermore, the form of research method and the shape of each research

project is interconnected to the contextual situation of individual nations. Unlike colonial research practice which typically promulgates and enshrines the idea of the objectivity and separation of the researcher from the topic under research, one cannot separate Indigenous research from the individual. Each essay in this volume makes clear the importance of a researcher's personal responsibility and connection to the research itself.

As the subtitle of this volume, "Theories, Practices, and Relationships," suggests, relationships are an essential component of the practice of Indigenous research. Kirkness and Barnhardt's "The Four Rs – Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility" (1991) have become guiding principles for Indigenous research and the pieces in this volume bear this out. For example, contributors Fellner ("miyo pimatisiwin: (Re)claiming Voice with Our Original Instructions") and Parent ("Research Tales with Txeemsim (Raven, the Trickster)") both discuss the relationship between research and personal stories, while Johnson and Musayett ("Wise Indigenous Woman Approaches to Research: Navigating and Naming Jagged Ethical Tensions and Micro-Aggressions in the Academy") focus on the tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships in the context of academic research. Lorrilee McGregor ("Conducting Community-Based Research in First Nation Communities") focuses on the importance of community relationships and the need to respect community decisions when conducting research with Indigenous communities. Indigenous research cannot be undertaken without careful consideration and respect for the myriad of interconnected relationships.

The focus on relationships and responsibilities is tightly connected to the need to be continually mindful of ethical considerations in the practice of Indigenous research. For those coming from higher education looking to guide researchers, including student researchers, these considerations are paramount. However, it is essential to move beyond this volume to ensure researchers are encouraged to seek out the necessary pathways to appropriately engage in Indigenous research. The volume concludes with an extensive list of Indigenous Research Resources, categorized around topic areas such as "Urban Populations" or "Women and Gender" as well as to resources related to the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) principles. The volume also includes resources for Turtle Island: United States and Aotearoa: New Zealand, such as research offices or community contact points. The editors conclude with an Epilogue advocating for Indigenous research as a means to support the obligations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as well as the Calls to Action for the Truth and Reconciliation Committee report and for the need to create a more ethical space for research. Thus, this volume is only one contribution to a much larger body of resources needed for a strong understanding of the ethical and responsible practice, not only for Indigenous research, but research as a whole. This volume would be an excellent resource for those looking to create better understandings of a more holistic approach to research.

For readers wishing to gain a greater understanding of Indigenous research methods as practised by Indigenous peoples in Canada, this volume is highly recommended, especially for its clear layout and thoughtful questions and summaries. One criticism of this title is the lack of representation by Inuit and Métis researchers; however, this one weakness is outweighed by its strengths as a model of Indigenous writing and research practice. Thus, for those working in academic libraries, it is recommended this title be complimented with other reading in the area of Indigenous research to more fully understand the needs of researchers and students. Full recognition of the needs and values of Indigenous research is essential as institutions and organizations build capacity for Indigenous research.

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## References

Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The four R's — respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), 1-15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24397980>

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