

## Book Review

Lambert, L. (2014). *Research for indigenous survival: Indigenous research methodologies in the behavioral sciences*. Lincoln, NE: Pablo Montana, Salish Kootenai College Press, distributed by Nebraska Press.

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In *Research for Indigenous Survival* (2014), Dr. Lambert presents a compelling argument for rethinking methodologies used to study Indigenous populations, "...the tribal people in independent countries whose distinctive identity, values, and history distinguishes them from other sections of the community" (p. 1). She emphasizes that to study an Indigenous population, that population must be an active partner in the research process. The community should be involved in creating and posing the research question, should be shared the results, and perhaps even share ownership of the data itself.

Historically, Western approaches to the study of Indigenous populations are perceived by those populations as stemming from a cold, pessimistic academic mindset, and has been "research on Aboriginal people, rather than with" (p. 14). The problem with this approach is that Western academic methodologies make the researcher an authority over "objects," the people under study, ignoring the history and knowledge of the people, and even the people themselves. Researchers view one finite aspect of Indigenous people from the outside, without a nuanced understanding of the language, symbols, beliefs, and group psychology. This tradition of Western methodologies is seen to be a continuance of colonization, and the central thesis of this book argues for the decolonization of research.

The call for centering tribal culture in the research is the primary method for the decolonization of research on Indigenous populations. Ethnographic

research, which emphasizes talking and sharing between the researcher and members of the tribe, are paramount to decolonization. Decolonized research should "[d]o no harm to culture, language, or individuals. Do not exploit the research data. The research must move the community forward by asking a positive and strengthening research question" (p. 67). It is OK to ask the hard questions, but there are many ways to phrase them, optimistically with hope, or pessimistically with foregone conclusions.

Psychology and mental illness are also major themes in this book. "Soul wounds," and depression and addictions to fight those injuries are of great concern for Dr. Lambert. The author is "... motivated to understand mental health issues in Indigenous communities through the eyes and cultural paradigm of the people themselves. The method to do this is Indigenous psychology, also termed ethno-psychology, ...the scientific study of human behavior (or the mind) that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its people" (Kim & Berry, as cited in Lambert 2014, p. 42).

Attachment to and importance of places and stories and sharing both common and sacred knowledge are very important to understand Indigenous populations. The author reminds the reader (and researchers) that without giving these elements the consideration they deserve, researchers are not seeing the whole of Native reality. Western methodologies ignore or forget that the Indigenous

peoples they are studying have their own ways of learning and transmitting knowledge and have been studying the world around them and “re-searching” it themselves for generations. Ignoring the relationship between the land, animals, and the people does not allow for the researchers to “see” the whole experience. Folk wisdom and pathways of knowledge such as storytelling are much more important than Western researchers have ever given them credit for, and not all of the stories have been shared.

Dr. Lambert interviews 25 Indigenous persons who share their Native stories, thoughts, and feelings on research and researchers. These personal, firsthand narratives constitute a significant portion of the book and reflect the voices and concerns of Australian Aborigines, and Natives from Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana, and Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. They also share many of their own personal stories and worldviews from their unique historical and colonial perspectives.

The book ends with a conceptual framework that would frame research methods around tribal specific realities. For each new Indigenous group, a new framework is necessary to fully understand that “...Native/Indigenous knowledge or epistemology is tribal and place specific...” (p. 202).

The author makes an argument that seems almost inimical against traditional Western methodologies and investigation by outsiders who use these techniques. The arguments and framing of the rationale are well made and very persuasive. Indeed, the author makes a great case that outside researchers will never see the whole picture (or even have the picture shared with them) if they do not work with and share with the Indigenous population under study. That means taking place and inherent teaching and learning systems, such as nature and the animals (this includes the coyote and platypus), as real and of scientific importance. This book would be well used in any research methods class to provide a great example of ethnomethodology and the importance of culturally sensitive research. The text would fit perfectly in any course on Indigenous or Native studies to illustrate the importance of community involvement and the ethics of research questions and research outcomes.

“Responsible research means staying for tea” (p. 13. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Center for Alaska Native Health Research, n.d.).