



Decolonizing Methodologies

RESEARCH
AND
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES

SECOND EDITION

Linda
Tuhiwai
Smith

About the Author

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou) is a Professor of Education and Maori Development and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Maori at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand.

Praise for the first edition

'This book is a counter-story to Western ideas about the benefits of the pursuit of knowledge. Looking through the eyes of the colonized, cautionary tales are told from an indigenous perspective, tales designed not just to voice the voiceless but to prevent the dying – of people, of culture, of ecosystems. The book is particularly strong in situating the development of counter-practices of research within both Western critiques of Western knowledge and global indigenous movements. Informed by critical and feminist evaluations of positivism, Tuhiwai Smith urges researching back and disrupting the rules of the research game toward practices that are more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful vs racist practices and attitudes, ethnocentric assumptions and exploitative research. Using Kaupapa Maori, a fledgling approach toward culturally appropriate research protocols and methodologies, the book is designed primarily to develop indigenous peoples as researchers. In short, Tuhiwai Smith begins to articulate research practices that arise out of the specificities of epistemology and methodology rooted in survival struggles, a kind of research that is something other than a dirty word to those on the suffering side of history.'

Patti Lather, Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership, Ohio State University, and author of *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern* and *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*

'Finally, a book for researchers working in indigenous contexts. Finally, a book especially for indigenous researchers. Linda Smith goes far beyond decolonizing research methodology. Our contextual histories, politics, and cultural considerations are respectfully interwoven together. Our distinctiveness remains distinct, but there are important places where our issues and methodologies intersect. Stories of research experiences, examples of projects, critical examination, and mindful reflection are woven together to make meaningful and practical designs related to indigenous issues and research.'

Jo-Ann Archibald, Sto:lo Nation and Director of the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia

A book like this is long overdue. It will be most useful for both indigenous and non-indigenous researchers in educational and non-educational institutions. It will empower indigenous students to undertake research which uses methods that are culturally sensitive and appropriate instead of those which they have learned about in Research Methods courses in universities which assume that research and research methods are culture-free and that researchers occupy some kind of moral high ground from which they can observe their subjects and make judgements about them.'

Konai Thaman, Professor of Pacific Education and Culture, and UNESCO Chair of Education, University of the South Pacific

'Linda Tuhiwai Smith is the leading theorist on decolonization of Maori in New Zealand. This book opts for a dynamic interpretation of power relations of domination, struggle and emancipation. She uses a dual framework – the *whakapapa* of Maori knowledge and European epistemology – to interpret and capture the world of reality for a moment in time. Thus the search for truth in complex human relations is a never-ending quest.'

Ranginui Walker, formerly Professor of Maori Studies Department and Pro-vice Chancellor, University of Auckland

'We have needed this book. Academic research facilitates diverse forms of economic and cultural imperialism by shaping and legitimating policies which entrench existing unjust power relations. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's powerful critique of dominant research methodologies is eloquent, informed and timely. Her distinctive proposals for an indigenous research agenda are especially valuable. Decolonization, she reminds us, cannot be limited to deconstructing the dominant story and revealing underlying texts, for none of that helps people improve their current conditions or prevents them from dying. This careful articulation of a range of research methodologies is vital, welcome and full of promise.'

Laurie Anne Whitt, Professor of Philosophy, Michigan Technological University

'A brilliant, evocative and timely book about an issue that serves to both define and create indigenous realities. In recent years, indigenous people, often led by the emerging culturally affirmed and positioned indigenous scholars, have intensified the struggle to break free from the chains of colonialism and its oppressive legacy. In writing this book, Linda Tuhiwai Smith makes a powerful and impassioned contribution to this struggle. No budding researcher should be allowed to leave the academy without reading this book and no teacher should teach without it at their side.'

Bob Morgan, Director, Jumbunna Caiser, Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, University of Technology, Sydney

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Linda Tuhiwai Smith



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Foreword

This book explores the intersection of two powerful worlds, the world of indigenous peoples and the world of research. They are two important worlds for me: I move within them; in one sense I was born into one and educated into the other. I negotiate the intersection of these worlds every day. It can be a complicated, challenging and interesting space. When *Decolonizing Methodologies* was first published in 1999, indigenous activists were engaged with states and governments in the drafting of a proposed United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, commonly known as 'The Draft Declaration'. At the same time the world of research – through its institutions, disciplines and communities – was concerned about educational and economic reforms and grappling with the advent of the Internet and other technologies. Today, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is official, albeit signed belatedly by my own country of New Zealand, and research institutions have been so transformed by technology that it is hard to imagine carrying out teaching or research without access to the Internet and digital technologies.

Methodology in its simplest definition generally refers to the theory of method, or the approach or technique being taken, or the reasoning for selecting a set of methods. This is a very broad definition as there are discipline-specific ideas about theory, methodology and method. *Decolonizing Methodologies* is concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities. It is also concerned with the institution of research, its claims, its values and practices, and its relationships to power. It has 'talked back to' and 'talked up to' research as an institution of knowledge that is embedded in a global system of imperialism and power. The book has been used to stimulate far-reaching discussions within indigenous contexts, academic institutions, non-government organizations and other community-based