



Fracturing the Colonial Paradigm: Indigenous Epistemologies and Methodologies

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the epistemological and methodological challenges posed by Indigenous peoples to the sociology of deviance, and in particular the field of criminology. The article argues that there has emerged a comprehensive challenge by Indigenous intellectuals and activists to Western social science paradigms. We set out the major concerns of Indigenous scholars, including the fundamental importance of colonialism, the role of Indigenous human rights in research and the significance of Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and research ethics.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine les défis épistémologiques et méthodologiques que posent les peuples autochtones à la sociologie de la déviance et notamment dans le domaine de la criminologie. L'article soutient que les intellectuels et militants autochtones ont lancé un défi complet vis-à-vis des paradigmes occidentaux des sciences sociales. Nous exposons les principales préoccupations des savants indigènes, y compris l'importance fondamentale du colonialisme, le rôle des droits de l'homme indigènes dans la recherche, et la signification des ontologies, des épistémologies et de l'éthique de la recherche indigènes.

KEYWORDS

Indigenous peoples;
Indigenous research;
colonialism; epistemology;
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MOTS-CLÉS

Peuples indigènes;
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Introduction

This article explores the epistemological and methodological challenges posed by Indigenous peoples to the sociology of deviance. At the outset, we acknowledge that we have no intention of essentialising the experiences of Indigenous peoples who, globally, are a heterogeneous group. The United Nations estimates there are 370 million Indigenous peoples living in 90 nations spread over all continents (United Nations 2009, 1). Our focus is on Indigenous peoples in the settler colonial states of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA, and we recognize that within and between these settler colonial states, there are substantial differences between Indigenous peoples.

We argue that there has emerged over the last two decades a consistent and comprehensive challenge by Indigenous intellectuals and activists to Western social science paradigms. We set out to take seriously this wide-ranging body of intellectual endeavour, and

distil from it what we see as the core arguments. The Indigenous challenge has destabilized the taken-for-granted validity and truth claims of Western social science research. We are especially interested in the sociology of deviance (and particularly the field of criminology) because of their discursive power to pathologize Indigenous peoples. These discourses of deviance continue to legitimize social and legal practices that result in extraordinary levels of criminalization and incarceration of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states, and constitute an ongoing modality of colonial rule (Cunneen and Tauri 2016).

More than 70 years ago, C. Wright Mills (1943) criticised sociologists for being 'social pathologists' who were a conservative, homogenous group with an uncritical acceptance of existing social structures, lacking historical awareness and raking over social problems constructed within narrowly defined frameworks. We argue that the contemporary sociology of deviance is equally constrained in its consideration of Indigenous peoples. Our focus then in this article is the production of knowledge and its dissemination. On the one hand, the experts on deviancy (particularly criminologists) produce knowledge that is the basis for the subjugation of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial contexts. While on the other hand, Indigenous intellectuals have increasingly fractured the hegemony of Western discourses, supporting contemporary modes of Indigenous resistance and empowerment. These are fundamental struggles not only over truth claims, but over the reality and meaning of the lifeworlds of oppressed peoples. It is a deeply political contestation.

Before turning more directly to an investigation of Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges, we first consider the historical roots of the sociology of deviance, particularly as it manifested itself in the development of criminology. Alongside these developments was the subjugation of Indigenous understandings of the world as part of the colonial process. The dominant intellectual frameworks of sociology were established in the West with a view to understanding and explaining the social problems of industrialized urban communities. Such narratives were 'fashioned in relation to the experience of the [European] Diaspora and in the construction of complexly stratified societies within and around the urban conurbations of Western cities' (Blagg 2008, 202). Others have recently drawn attention to the historical connections between the development of criminology in the nineteenth century and the projects of colonialism and imperialism (Agozino 2003; Kitossa 2012; Morrison 2006). For criminology, part of the problem is that by 'taking the American and European criminological traditions as the point of departure, whether right or left realism, critical theory or administrative criminology – is that they all tend to operate without a theory of colonialism and its effects' (Blagg 2008, 11; see also Cohen 1988). The powerful traditions of empiricism and positivism were a primary means by which the profession sought respectability and status. Such professionalizing trends have constructed enduring boundaries that render inferior ways of knowing (such as Indigenous knowledges) that do not conform to the dominant model of scientific reasoning. The contemporary dominance of 'evidence-based practice' and 'what works' approaches continue to marginalize and delegitimize Indigenous knowledges in the design and conduct of research and the development of public policy (Cunneen 2014; Tauri and Webb 2012, 9).

A core problem within criminology is that it constructs the 'deviant' as Other. This is particularly evident with the way Indigenous people have been and are seen as dysfunctional threats to the 'good order' of colonial society. As Fanon has written:

As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values, but also the negation of values ... the enemy of values ... the absolute evil ... corrosive ... destroying ... disfiguring. (1963: 31–32)

The process of 'othering' takes place on a range of levels: From symbolic exclusion to ontologically 'real' exclusion, or perhaps more accurately, social and geographical sequestration of peoples in spaces designed to 'discipline the native', including for Indigenous peoples the use of reservations, residential schools and prisons (Churchill 1997; Cunneen 2001). Referring to the intellectual and moral foundations of traditional criminology, the Italian theorist Ruggiero (2000, 1) writes that:

[t]here are imaginary geographies which place imperfect minorities in marginalised locations: in a social elsewhere. These locations consist of protected zones which ensure the reproduction of those who inhabit them, who are separated from the majorities living outside. These geographies of exclusion associate *elsewhere* with that which is contaminated, filthy, offensive to morality and olfaction.

Ruggiero challenges contemporary criminology's obsession with purity/impurity; the latter symbolically (and, for Indigenous peoples and other 'outsiders', often physically) positioned in a space he calls the *inferno of the social elsewhere*, the inhabitants of which are 'immediately recognisable for the halo of sludge surrounding them and for the subhuman features which they had slowly acquired during a long residence in hell' (Ruggiero 2000, 1). Crucial to classifying and measuring this 'hell', and constructing knowledge of its inhabitants, was the development of the human sciences, including criminology (Foucault 1977). Lynch (2000, 146–147) argues that 'the history of criminology has been the story of humanly created methods of oppression told from the oppressor perspective'.

In Lynch's view, criminology developed as one of the sciences of oppression whose central focus was controlling the supposedly free and unfettered creativity of the criminal classes. The criminal classes are those groups and communities – the *folk devils* – that are periodically depicted by political, academic and media commentators as *problem populations* deserving of the violent attentions of the institutions of social control. We are talking of course of the unemployed, the indigent, travellers, women of 'low moral character', working class youth (particularly males), and ethnic, racial and religious minorities (Cohen 1973; Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994; Hier 2011; Shain 2011). Criminology played a significant role as a vanguard discipline for supporting the suppression of groups considered an impediment to the establishment of a capitalist economy (Agozino 2003; Kitossa 2012). In the settler colonial context, Indigenous peoples have long been seen as the problem population *par excellence* threatening as they do the very claims of state sovereign power (Cunneen 2008; Palys 1993; Tauri 2009).

The role of social science in the 'othering' of Indigenous peoples, especially in the context of epistemological and methodological frameworks, has only recently received critical attention (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith 2008). In the realm of criminology, critical commentators have primarily been Indigenous or drawn from a small group of non-Indigenous collaborators (for example, Agozino 2003, 2004; Blagg 2008; Cunneen 2014; Cunneen and Rowe 2014, 2015; Deckert 2014; Kitossa 2012; Tauri 2012a, 2014; Tauri and Webb 2012), and most recently by those working to develop a critical criminology

informed by the precepts and conceptual paradigm of Critical Race Theory (see Coyle 2010; Glover 2009; Schneider 2003). An Indigenous approach holds similar ontological and practice-based principles to other emancipatory approaches that developed within criminology and the wider social sciences in the 1970s, including Marxist criminology and standpoint and radical feminist approaches, as well as more recent iterations such as peacemaking and critical race theories. However, there are key characteristics and objectives that are specific to a critical Indigenous approach. We turn to these characteristics and objectives below.

The critical analysis indicated above reveals two overwhelming, and related issues; first, that academic criminology is complicit in the silencing of Indigenous experiences and perspectives in the construction and pursuit of knowledge of deviancy; and second, that many Indigenous peoples experience criminology as a component of the *epistemic violence* of settler colonial crime control. According to Bhargava (2013, 413), ‘epistemic injustice [is] a form of cultural injustice that occurs when the concepts and categories by which a people understand themselves and their world is replaced or adversely affected by the concepts and categories of the colonisers’.

Silencing Indigenous knowledges

The colonization of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states was directly connected to the subjugation of Indigenous law, knowledge and cultures. Western knowledge, an integral part of the colonial project, has been used to construct a particular view of the racialized inferiority of Indigenous peoples. A common argument found among Indigenous writers in this field is that the developing hegemony of Western science was built on and informed colonial societies’ views of ‘race’ and racial inferiority (Rigney 2001: 4; see also Battiste 1998, 2000, 2005; Kincheloe and Steinberg 2008; Moreton-Robinson 2000). Knowledge was neither innocent nor neutral: Rather, knowledge was a key to power and meaning that has been and continues to be used to dominate and control (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015). As Battiste (2000, 195) succinctly states: ‘modern knowledge has been the ideology of oppression. This ideology seeks to change the consciousness of the oppressed, not change the situation that oppressed them’. Indeed Indigenous systems of knowledge, economy, law and governance were attacked and devalued by colonial institutions on the basis that those social systems and their institutions were inferior. Rigney (2001, 4) elaborates:

If one’s racial superiority could be scientifically legitimated then the logical conclusion could be drawn that the scientific methods used in ‘other’ cultures to investigate or transmit knowledges were inferior and irrational. Indigenous intellectual traditions and knowledge transmission, which sustained Indigenous cultures and humanity for thousands of years, were not considered worthy science or even science at all. ‘Race’ theories laid the firm foundation for determining whose knowledge was valid and whose science was legitimate.

Indigenous scholars have argued that the assumed universality and globalization of Western knowledge and culture has ‘manufactured the physical and cultural inferiority of Indigenous peoples’ (Battiste 1998, 21) and ‘constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge [and] the arbiter of what counts as knowledge’ (Smith 1999, 63). We explore below the way in which universalism in social science research impacts on Indigenous people.

According to Hawaiian scholar Renee Pualani Louis, Indigenous ways of sharing knowledge, mostly through oral or performative communication modes, were seen as hearsay and inferior to the written texts 'that recorded a superior intelligence' of the colonizers (2007, 131). The legacy of invalidating Indigenous knowledge disconnected Indigenous people from 'their traditional teachings, spirituality, land, family, community, spiritual leaders, [and] medicine people' (Louis 2007, 130). Yet despite colonial hegemony and close interaction with the dominant culture, traditional views in Indigenous communities remain important (Hand, Hanks, and House 2012, 450). Furthermore, Indigenous knowledge systems remain intact and continue to develop as living, relational schemas (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009, 97).

Authoritarian social science in the age of neo-liberalism

Perhaps the most damaging claim made by Indigenous scholars is the inherent belief of many social scientists (including criminologists) in their right to dominate the construction and dissemination of knowledge, primarily because of their adherence to the illusion of an epistemology that enables 'dispassionate' reason and the rule of objectivity. For Indigenous scholars, and Indigenous communities, the specific danger of criminology's drive for policy relevance in the contemporary moment is its denial of Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges (Tauri 2012a). Furthermore, understanding criminology as a 'science of oppression' enables us to uncover the connections between the *practice* of social sciences, the *construction* of social control policies and interventions, and the *criminalization* of Indigenous peoples in contemporary settler colonial contexts.

As individuals and as an academic collective, criminologists often contribute to the political enterprise of inclusion/exclusion through the very act of *doing* criminology. An example of this problem is the conduct of contractual research for government which limits or denies Indigenous peoples input into the design and administration of research *on them* (Deckert 2016; Tauri 2015). In the Indigenous context, all too often criminologists conduct research on Indigenous issues while proselytizing from afar utilizing, for example, highly structured surveys, statistical modelling and such like, while rarely (sometimes never) descending into the spaces described by Ruggiero (2000), in order to experience directly, the life-worlds they present themselves as experts on (Deckert 2016; Tauri 2013).

The re-emergence of a more conservative authoritarian criminology further isolates Indigenous concerns. The ascendancy of authoritarian criminology is well documented through: The increasing influence of the neo-liberalism in the development of social, economic and crime control policy in Western jurisdictions over the last two decades (Ruggiero 2000; Wacquant 2009a, 2009b); the influence of the post 9/11 war on terror on criminal justice (Chunn and Menzies 2006); and the steady growth in globalized markets for crime control products (Jones and Newburn 2002, 2007). These developments have combined to empower the neo-liberal state. During this period we have seen significant growth in the use of imprisonment as a key justice strategy, and this has had particularly negative effects on Indigenous peoples (Cunneen and Tauri 2006).

We argue that the ascendancy of neo-liberalism has not only created a more punitive turn in penalty (Wacquant 2009a, 2009b), but also valorized a particular set of values that find expression in social science research and policy development. These values emphasize deterrence and retribution, the individualization of rights and responsibilities; the

merit of individual autonomy; and the denial of cultural values that stand outside of, or in opposition to, a market model of social relations (Findlay 2008, 15). The ascendancy of these values has reinforced a particularly negative view of cultural difference and runs counter to Indigenous claims to cultural autonomy. The ascendancy of managerialism and risk-thinking that have increasingly permeated social sciences devalue Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies. In the discipline of criminology, classification systems, programme interventions, state supervision and indeed incarceration itself is increasingly defined through the management of risk. The assessment of risk involves the identification of statistically generated characteristics drawn from aggregate populations of offenders (such as drug and alcohol problems, rates of offending and reoffending, spousal violence, child abuse and neglect). These characteristics are treated as discrete 'facts' devoid of historical, political and social context – the very contexts which for Indigenous peoples have been forged through the processes of colonialism (Cunneen 2014). So-called evidence-based policy and practice and the 'what works' literature reinforces a constricted understanding of epistemology and methodology which diminishes the possibilities of Indigenous approaches. Similarly, the growing use of meta-analysis privileges those research outcomes that have been designed within narrow methodological frameworks. The value placed on evidence-based policy and practice disadvantages a range of groups including Indigenous people, women and minorities (Brown et al. 2016, 168–171).

Characteristics of Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies

The remaining sections of this article consider the key features or characteristics of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies. We have attempted to distil from a range of Indigenous social sciences literature what we see as the distinctive qualities of Indigenous research. We have no desire to be prescriptive, or to create an essentialised set of principles that must be adhered to. Different Indigenous scholars emphasize various features or tenets of Indigenous research. However, it is possible to discern a range of commonalities across this literature. While our focus is on the sociology of deviance, and criminology in particular, we draw on and acknowledge that a great deal of Indigenous social sciences literature has emerged across a broad spectrum including education (Kovach 2009; Rigney 1999; Smith 1999), geography (Louis 2007), statistics (Walter and Andersen 2013) and Indigenous studies (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015).

The colonial paradigm

Indigenous approaches to social science analysis are firmly based in the investigation of *colonialism*. This investigation takes various forms. We have already noted that a core component of the colonial project was the devaluation and attempted eradication of Indigenous cultures, including Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous people were also the objects of Western research. As Moreton-Robinson and Walter (2011, 6) note Indigenous peoples were 'interpreted and analysed utilising Western perspectives, methodologies and agendas' (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2011, 6). Given Indigenous people have been constantly seen as 'research curiosities' and/or a problem population to be controlled, it is not surprising that the term 'research' is often linked with colonialism. 'The way in which scientific research has been implicated in the excesses of imperialism remains a

powerful remembered history for many of the world's indigenous peoples' (Porsanger 2004, 107; see also Rigney 1999; Smith 1999). In relation to the colonial project these techniques of enquiry were (and arguably still are) aimed at the control of colonized peoples. For example, one might point to the 'science' of eugenics in legitimizing the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families during the first half of the twentieth century where the aim was to breed out the racial characteristics of Indigenous people through their biological absorption into the dominant [European] race (NISATSIC 1997).

It appears to us that there are two further areas where the investigations of colonialism have been key to the development of Indigenous research paradigms. The first has been in relation to the ongoing political struggle for reparations and compensation for historical wrongs; and the second is in relation to understanding the manifold impacts of colonialism on the contemporary position of Indigenous people. The claims concerning historical injustices and human rights abuses arising from colonialism and perpetrated against Indigenous peoples are multi-layered. They include genocide, mass murder, racism, ethnocide (or cultural genocide), slavery, forced labour, forced removals and relocations, the denial of property rights, and the denial of civil and political rights (Cunneen 2008). Two specific historical injustices have been particularly important in the context of reparations and compensation: Firstly, the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities, and their placement in institutions and residential schools (NISATSIC 1997; Smith 2004; TRCC 2012) and, second, government fraud and corruption in relation to the management of Indigenous peoples' finances and property (Kidd 2006). Both have been the subject of sustained demands by Indigenous people for apologies, compensation and reparations. Both arose directly from government *policies* aimed at the regulation and assimilation of Indigenous peoples.

The second major priority for the study of colonialism has been in understanding the contemporary impact of colonialism in creating the current conditions under which Indigenous people live. In other words, this is the insight that colonial policies and practices played a fundamental role in creating the current socio-economic marginalisation of Indigenous people. Contemporary Indigenous poverty, criminalization and incarceration, ill-health, over-crowded housing and poor educational outcomes did not simply 'fall from the sky' – they were created historically through policies such as forced relocations of Indigenous nations, removal of children, control of wages and denial of social security (Cunneen and Tauri 2016).

Yet, a common response of social scientists to Indigenous arguments for the inclusion of colonialism or coloniality in analysis of the contemporary situation is to ask a series of delimiting questions, including how to measure the impact of policies over time and historical epochs, and how to isolate the impact of specific policies or interventions to ascertain their impact on social conditions (Tauri 2012b). More broadly, this reflects a point noted by postcolonial theorists that sociology has been slow to respond to the insights of postcolonial theory and the search for 'ways of representing the world and histories that critique rather than authorize or sustain imperialistic ways of knowing' (Go 2013, 6).

Indigenous rights and the struggle for decolonization

Indigenous approaches to social sciences research are also firmly based in an understanding and commitment to Indigenous human rights principles. The framework for

understanding, developing and promoting these rights has advanced significantly since the adoption of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by the UN General Assembly in 2007. The *Declaration* is a normative document that establishes the 'minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world' (Article 43). There are four key principles that underpin the *Declaration*. These are self-determination; participation in decision-making and free, prior and informed consent; non-discrimination and equality; and respect for and protection of culture (ATSISJC 2011, 18). Each of these principles provides a basis for understanding and valuing Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies in social sciences research.

Every issue concerning Indigenous peoples is implicated in the collective right of self-determination. 'Self-determination is a process. The right to self-determination is the right to make decisions' (ATSISJC 1993, 41). At a community or tribal level, it includes the right to exercise control over decision-making, community priorities, how communities operate and processes for resolving disputes (ATSISJC 2011, 109–110). Self-determination is closely linked to the second principle of participation. Participation in decision-making requires participation in both internal Indigenous community decision-making, as well as external decision-making processes with government, industry and non-government organisations. Decision-making must be free, prior to any activity occurring, informed of all the options and consequences, and based on Indigenous consent. The requirements underpinning decision-making are particularly apt when assessing how researchers (both academic and government) 'consult' (rather than negotiate) with Indigenous peoples, and further the process through which various policy initiatives are introduced in Indigenous communities. The principle of non-discrimination and equality is particularly important given the history of entrenched racial discrimination against Indigenous people. Furthermore, the principle of equality requires the recognition of cultural difference. The *Declaration* affirms that 'Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.' Respect for and protection of culture is essential for the survival of Indigenous peoples. For a decolonial sociology of deviance, a fundamental understanding is that Indigenous culture is a source of strength and resilience, and cultural safety and cultural security are foundational to restoring and maintaining social order in Indigenous communities (ATSISJC 2011, 123–134). Furthermore, respect for and protection of Indigenous culture and the right to self-determination by definition must include respect for the formulation and practice of Indigenous knowledge (Cunneen and Tauri 2016).

The lack of respect for Indigenous cultures, knowledges and epistemologies is one of the hallmarks of contemporary social sciences, particularly in the discipline of criminology. There is a significant political disjuncture between the rights embedded in the *Declaration* and the way most research is conducted in Indigenous communities and the policy prescriptions that derive from research. Indigenous people still struggle with the damaging effects of one of the leading institutions of colonial control – the justice system – and struggle to change the ongoing cycles of marginalization brought about as an outcome of criminalization. Yet with few exceptions (Blagg 2008; Cunneen 2008; Cunneen and Rowe 2014; Deckert 2014; Tauri 2014), most criminologists proceed with their analysis and prescriptions with little attention paid to the importance of the right of Indigenous people to self-determination, or indeed to any of the other core principles found in the *Declaration*.

Universalism and epistemological racism

The assumed universality of Western concepts and research paradigms creates ‘a strategy of difference that leads to racism’ (Battiste 1998, 21). An important question raised by the connection between Western research structures, philosophies and methods and the colonial process is whether these approaches are fundamentally racialized in their investigation of issues related to colonized peoples. Some have considered these approaches ‘racist epistemologies’ (Scheurich and Young 1997; Tauri 2012b). More specifically in the research context, universalism refers to the view that social scientific/Eurocentric methodologies and ethics of research *are applicable to any and all social and cultural contexts*. According to Battiste and Henderson (2000, 134):

Eurocentric thought would like to categorise Indigenous knowledge and heritage as being peculiarly local, merely a subset of Eurocentric universal categories ... It suggests one main stream and diversity as a mere tributary ... [t]ogether mainstreaming and universality create cognitive imperialism, which establishes a dominant group’s knowledge, experience, culture, and language as the universal norm.

Minnich (1990, 53) brings Battiste and Henderson’s evocation of the culture-destroying potentiality of universalism into stark relief when he contends that ‘one category/kind comes to function almost as if it were the only kind, because it occupies the defining centre of power ... casting all others outside the circle of the “real”’. In other words, Eurocentric notions of what constitutes proper research, appropriate methods and ethical conduct, form the centre of what are considered to be acceptable approaches to knowledge construction.

Research involves relations of power at multiple levels between the researcher and the research participant; in determining the priorities of research agendas; in the broader assumptions that give ‘truth’ value to certain types of research; and in the social, political and cultural values that underpin our processes of reasoning and understanding of the world. Research operates within communicentric frames of reference that enable and legitimize it (Scheurich and Young 1997). As Hart (2010, 4) notes: ‘Eurocentric thought has come to mediate the entire world to the point where worldviews that differ from Eurocentric thought are relegated to the periphery, if they are acknowledged at all.’

Conversely, Indigenous research is part of the decolonization process (Porsanger 2004). Battiste (2005, 6) explains that:

Recognition of the monopoly that Eurocentric thought reserves for itself is the key to understanding the new transdisciplinary quest to balance European and Indigenous ways of knowing. The contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies between the two knowledge systems suggest that the next step needed in the quest is a deeper understanding of Indigenous knowledge.

As Smith (1999, 193) writes: ‘When Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms.’

Alternative ways of thinking about the research process: Indigenous knowledges and experiences

It is not surprising that Indigenous perspectives on research represent alternative ways of thinking about the research process, and require a decolonization of research methods as a first step to recognizing Indigenous knowledges (Kovach 2009; Smith 1999). These alternative approaches are not necessarily meant to replace a Western research paradigm (Porsanger 2004) but rather to challenge it and to reconfigure Indigenous research as one that is increasingly defined by and responsive to Indigenous needs (Louis 2007; Smith 1999). An important response to this issue has been the development of Indigenous standpoint theory (Nakata 1998; Walter and Andersen 2013) and Indigenous women's standpoint theory (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009). We take Walter and Andersen's (2013) work on Indigenous standpoint theory as an example. They argue that an Indigenous standpoint incorporates the social position of Indigenous researchers, and specifically Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies (see also Denzin and Lincoln 2008). They note that the 'social position of Indigenous researchers differs politically, culturally, racially and often economically from those of researchers from settler [colonial] backgrounds' (Walter and Andersen 2013, 83). They argue that 'the filters and frames' through which Indigenous researchers approach research 'are molded by our social position' (Walter and Andersen 2013, 83–84).

Indigenous ontology

Notions of what constitutes reality (or a researcher's ontological base) directly influences both doing research and the interpretations of research findings. One of the fundamental ontological differences between Western and Indigenous ontologies pertinent to the sociology of deviance and criminology is the nature of the self as a rational individual exercising free will, compared to a view that sees the individual as defined by, and with obligations and relationships to, kinship groups and the natural environment. We see this as a basic distinction between the ideas of individual autonomy and individual relationality. As McCaslin and Breton (2008, 523) clarify, 'The most fundamental reality factor that Indigenous law acknowledges (and Eurocentric law does not) is the reality that we are all related.' Further, according to Hart:

One dominant aspect that has been noted amongst some, if not many, Indigenous people is the recognition of a spiritual realm and that this realm is understood as being interconnected with the physical realm ... Another dominant aspect is reciprocity, or the belief that as we receive from others, we must also offer to others ... Reciprocity reflects the relational worldview and the understanding that we must honour our relationships. (2010, 7)

In contradistinction, Western ontology is predicated on an individualized, hierarchical, gendered and racial dichotomy (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009, 99), a way of being dominated by Cartesian ideas separating mind and matter, self and world (Kincheloe 2006).

Indigenous epistemology

We noted above that Scheurich and Young (1997) raise the issue of epistemological racism. These authors argue that epistemologies arise out of the social history of a

particular group. European colonial expansion occurred under the rationale of the supremacy of European civilization within the broader developments around 'modernism'. For these authors, 'modernism is an epistemological, ontological and axiological network that "makes" the world as the dominant Western culture knows and sees it' (Scheurich and Young 1997, 7). The history of research on Indigenous peoples has imposed a dominant epistemology that has facilitated definitions of the racialized Other as defective, dysfunctional, disturbed and culturally deprived. Indigenous epistemology stresses a focus on Indigenous experience and the concomitant methodologies that can facilitate this. Others have noted that Indigenous knowledge is local, holistic and oral (Hart 2010, 3). Indigenous ways of knowing are transmitted through storytelling, rituals and ceremonies. It is fluid, intuitive and introspective. It arises from interconnections between the human world, and the spiritual and physical world (Hart 2010, 8). Many Indigenous scholars emphasize the importance of relationships, not only human relationships, but Indigenous peoples' connection to their ancestors, nature and the land. For Carjuzaa and Fenimore-Smith (2011, 12), 'it is relationality that is the key to understanding and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing'.

Western theories of knowledge are premised upon notions of objectivity, whereby 'reason is the apex of the hierarchy of knowledge production' and 'knowledge status is limited to the educated and social elite' (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009, 98). Further, Western epistemologies tend to compartmentalize knowledge into different social and physical sciences or disciplines. This compartmentalization contrasts strongly with the holistic framework of Indigenous knowledge whereby legitimacy is based upon connectivity (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009, 98). It is worth emphasizing here that knowledge is not acultural: Rather, approaches to research and consequently knowledge production are embedded in institutional structures that can be seen to promote and maintain the status quo (Carjuzaa and Fenimore-Smith 2011, 3). This discussion also has important ramifications for the ethics of research – a point we return to below.

Indigenous feminist approaches

Indigenous researchers have also developed feminist understandings of gender and power, and some like Mohawk scholar Patricia Monture (1992, 2006) have been critical of aspects of Indigenous approaches for failing to consider gendered relations. Monture (1992, 250) argued: 'The goal we set for ourselves should be to eliminate the disadvantage that Aboriginal women face because it is more startling than the experience of either race or gender alone.' In particular, feminist analysis of contemporary Indigenous justice has highlighted the need for a gendered analysis. For example, Coker's (2000) research on Navajo peacemaking in cases of domestic and family violence exemplifies some of the problems of coercion through forcing Indigenous women's participation in the process. Others, such as Moreton-Robinson and Walter (2009, 99–105), have developed a specific Indigenous women's standpoint centred upon Indigenous knowledges, and informed by a feminist methodological paradigm. Cognizant of the diversity of Indigenous women's individual experiences and perceptions of themselves, Indigenous women's standpoints are built on shared positioning between Indigenous women. In this way, Indigenous women's standpoints help explicate 'the intersecting oppressions of race and

gender, and the subsequent power relations that flow from these into the social, political, historical and material conditions' which frame the lives of Indigenous women (Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009, 99). More recently, the growing importance of decolonized feminist research has helped position feminist researchers to address enduring and emergent questions of gendered social justice, concomitantly demanding the decolonization of 'self and other' (Olesen 2011, 129–130).

Further, the gendered nature of colonial power has been examined by various Indigenous writers. For example, Monture (2006, 26) argues that the processes of contemporary criminalization of Indigenous women has clear linkages to the policies of the so-called 'initial phases of colonization'. Australian Indigenous lawyer Irene Watson analyses the gendered nature of coloniality within contemporary legal systems. She argues that:

In the process of translating Aboriginal law the Australian courts have contributed to the harm that is done to Aboriginal women while at the same time constructing Aboriginal men as inherently violent and inferior to white men. The courts' reading of Aboriginal law and culture is that it is permissive of violence, a reading which is translated by a non-Aboriginal process, and one that excludes in its consideration the impact of more than 200 years of colonial violence ... the courts have mostly failed to understand the effect of colonialism on Aboriginal relationships to kin and country, as though those relationships have remained intact and unaffected by modernity. (2009, 5)

Speaking truth to power: the axiology of Indigenous research ethics

Axiology refers to the set of values, ethics and morality which underpin our research, including our ethical standpoint on the relationship of research to broader social or political goals. Moreton-Robinson and Walter (2009, 99) argue that what is valued in Indigenous approaches is 'observation based on being in the world'. Valued knowledge comes from many sources including 'dreams, the ancestors, stories, and experience' which is embedded in relationships to the social and physical environment. In contradistinction, what is valued in Western knowledge is scientific 'rigour, established via measurement, explanation, causality, classification and differentiation'.

Indigenous ethics call for a collaborative social science research model (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, 15). A critical element here is that research be for the benefit of Indigenous communities. As Louis (2007, 131) bluntly states: 'If research does not benefit the community by extending the quality of life for those in the community, it should not be done.' Indigenous knowledge needs to be protected (for example, through the recognition of Indigenous intellectual property rights), and research outcomes shared. Some of the core values include Indigenous control over research, respect for individuals and communities, reciprocity and responsibility. The values of respect and reciprocity are perhaps the most frequently cited (Hart 2010, 11; Porsanger 2004, 113). A further value has been referred to as rights and regulation, which 'refers to research that is driven by Indigenous protocols, contains explicitly outlined goals, and considers the impacts of the proposed research' (Louis 2007, 133; Smith 1999).

A common requirement for Indigenous-inspired ethics is the need to give back to the communities from which knowledge is taken (Smith 1999; Tauri 2014). Some of the ways in which Indigenous researchers give back that have been identified in the literature include: (i) taking on the political role as agents of change and (ii) as organic intellectuals involved

in unmasking dominant ideologies and colonizing practices of the state and other institutions, including the Academy (see Bogues 2005; Tauri 2009). Edward Said (1996, 11) perhaps best sums up the important role of the (Indigenous) intellectual in this regard when he describes the role of the politically motivated researcher as one focused on 'confront[ing] orthodoxy and dogma ... whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug', while challenging the foundations of the dominant systems of thought and hegemony that confront, in this case, Indigenous peoples.

Agozino (2003) urges a researcher/participant relationship that rejects the false dichotomy between objectivity and commitment. Instead, Agozino endorses *committed objectivity* as a position that 'capture[s] the inextricability of the articulation of the processes of commitment and objectivity' that is the key to carrying out meaningful social inquiry (2003, 157). Rather than seeking to detach from the context of social inquiry, a critical Indigenous approach advocates for researchers who can speak with empirical authority about the life-world of Indigenous people: Speaking with authority is predicated on purposely standing in the social context from which their experience derives, because, as Deutscher (1983, 2) explains, '[e]very detachment is another kind of involvement – the idea of complete objectivity as complete detachment is a complete fraud'.

Such an approach to measuring the ethicality of research has especial concern for Indigenous scholars and research participants. The universalism that appears inherent in institutionalized ethics processes is based in part on a foundational myth of contemporary Western scholarship: That 'White knowledge' is the only knowledge worthy of consideration, and only 'white' approaches to gathering knowledge can be ethical and, therefore, appropriate. It is, as Best (cited in Ermine 2000, 62) describes it, '... a dictatorship of the fragment', the privileging of Eurocentric-derived protocols leading to the purposeful marginalization of the 'Other' (see Tauri 2012a). Furthermore, it is based on an assumption that the institutionally derived, formalized processes of the Academy are the only appropriate way for measuring the ethicality of social research, and not the communities where research activity occurs.

A key characteristic of Indigenous social science ethics is that research with Indigenous peoples should be 'real'. Arguably, some members of the Western academy have become adept at 'faking' the appearance of respectful consultation/research. Canadian anthropologist and member of the *Gitxaata* Nation, Charles Menzies (2001, 21) reveals the strategy of 'faking it', when he writes that:

It is unfortunate that there are still many researchers who continue to conduct research on Aboriginal people as opposed to with us. Some of these researchers have even mastered the technical form of respectful consultation, but without the necessary depth and the real respect that is required.

Elsewhere, we have exposed the nature and extent of this problem as it recurs across much of the criminological research on the 'Indigenous problem' (Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Tauri 2012a, 2014). More importantly, the negative impact of deceptive or dishonest consultation and engagement, in terms of meaningless Indigenous strategies, biculturalized interventions and such like, is *very real* and often damaging for the Indigenous communities upon whom they are forced. Therefore, it is essential that we ensure the knowledge about Indigenous peoples that we assemble and disseminate, reflects their experiences

and has a positive impact on their lives. For this to happen we need to ensure that our work is 'real', meaning it must come *from within* Indigenous peoples and their communities.

Conclusion: the political nature of Indigenous research

We argue that Indigenous research is *political* in the sense that we (1) privilege the perspectives, experiences and issues of Indigenous peoples, (2) critically analyse the activities of the powerful, such as policy-makers, criminologists and criminal justice institutions; and (3) offer solutions to criminological and policy praxis that empowers Indigenous peoples in their struggle for self-determination and to gain a measure of jurisdictional autonomy so they might practice Indigenous law.

The encouragement for Indigenous criminologists, and our critical non-Indigenous colleagues to undertake 'political' research, to take a position, mirrors what has been occurring across other academic disciplines since the early 1990s, including education (Rigney 2001; Rudolph 2011), psychology (Powis 2007) and sociology (Howard-Wagner, Habibis, and Petray 2012), wherein the call for Indigenous researchers to be 'public intellectuals' and advocates for the Indigenous experience and perspective, is now firmly entrenched. In summary, we see the hallmarks of the Indigenous challenge to the domination of Western research paradigms as including at their core a commitment to the process of intellectual decolonization. This decolonial process requires a thorough critique of the long-term consequences of colonization and a corresponding commitment to Indigenous human rights. It involves privileging Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies in the research process. And it involves challenging the assumed universalism and epistemological racism that lies at the foundation of much contemporary sociology of deviance and criminology.

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