Guest editorial

Editors' note on special issue on indigenous knowledges, priorities and processes in qualitative research

Though scholarship on Indigenous organizations, practices and methodologies is rapidly growing alongside the burgeoning sub-discipline of Indigenous business and management, such research is not often reported in "mainstream journals." Rather, the research is commonly concentrated in Indigenous- or ethnic-focused journals. Recognizing the importance of these topics for all scholars, the editors of the journal of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* invited us (the guest editors) to conceive of a special issue that would enable qualitative researchers and organizational management scholars to engage with the richness of Indigenous ways of knowing and the innovations resulting from methodologies that honour centuries-old knowledge and wisdom. As researchers of Indigenous organizations, management and policy, we called for a special issue that would bring Indigenous knowledges and methodologies to the broader discussion of qualitative methods in organizations and management.

During the past decades, there have been important contributions to qualitative research methodologies for research in Indigenous contexts. Alongside the emergence of Indigenous ethics review boards in institutions, scholars have suggested ethical frameworks for research with Indigenous peoples (e.g. Ellis and Earley, 2006 on issues of consent and reciprocity). Increasingly, researchers are engaging in applied research that is useful to the communities involved, employing action research methods to solve problems (see Carpenter and McMurchy-Pilkington, 2008). Relationships between researchers and research participants are being challenged and redefined, empowering Indigenous peoples to collect, analyze, interpret and control research data instead of participating in projects as "subjects" (see Tomlins Jahnke and Gillies, 2012). Indigenous ways of knowing, embedded in oral traditions, are informing research design and implementation, as well as the communication of research results, for example, through digital storytelling (Cunsolo-Willox *et al.*, 2012; Wachowich and Scobie, 2010; Marsh, 2009). These shifting orientations and approaches respond to calls by Indigenous advocates and communities for the decolonization of institutions of higher education and research methodologies employed by academics in their work with Indigenous peoples (Mihesuah, 1998; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Brown and Strega, 2005; Wilson, 2009; Chilisa, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Strega and Brown, 2015).

Business scholars Weir and Wuttunee (2004), alongside their peers in the humanities and social sciences, have observed that the data collection undertaken in Indigenous communities and organizations rarely benefitted Indigenous peoples. Consequently, Hindle and Moroz (2010) asserted (based on Schnarch, 2004) that Indigenous research requires "methodologies […] built upon frameworks grounded within long standing Indigenous knowledge management techniques, ensuring ownership, control, access and possession" (p. 376). Indigenous researchers will make an important contribution to the expanding discipline of Indigenous business through expert knowledge in research design and implementation, as well as advocacy (Hindle and Moroz, 2010, pp. 376-377). While culturally responsive and sensitive research protocols are needed to advance the study of business, entrepreneurship and management in Indigenous contexts (Kayseas *et al.*, 2008), the value of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in diverse business contexts is increasingly being recognized (Love and Tilley, 2014, pp. 35-36) and may inform new theoretical perspectives and practical approaches.

Directly linked to research and practice, international policy bodies have affirmed Indigenous rights to protect and control their own knowledges. The United Nations

Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal
Vol. 15 No. 1, 2020
pp. 1-5

1746-5648
DOI 10.1108/QROM-03-2020-858

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination, self-governance and organizational structures in support of these rights. Importantly, article 31 states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (2008, p. 11).

Within this context, we conceived of a special issue that would focus on Indigenous knowledge and research methodologies, and encourage authors to critically reflect on the processes and activities of qualitative research in Indigenous contexts, Indigenous approaches to research design and implementation, and/or the challenges and opportunities resulting from Indigenous research strategies, with the objective of reconceptualizing current approaches to qualitative research through an Indigenous lens. The articles selected for inclusion would join the growing body of literature focused on Indigenous knowledges, priorities and processes in qualitative research in organizations and management. Though the articles in this special issue are topically and geographically diverse, they share common themes of the decolonization of research methodologies, the ethical engagement with and representation of Indigenous research, and the rights of Indigenous peoples around research governance.

Opening this special issue is Love's "State of the Field" overview, which highlights the contributions of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to the study of Indigenous organizations and management. Love begins by describing the texts and practices shaping the field of Indigenous organization and management, before addressing its de-colonizing agendas and the methodological approaches that support its study. He concludes by advocating for the transformation of academic institutions by embracing Indigenous approaches to the study of organizations and management and the decolonization of research ethics by implementing Indigenous research methodologies.

The integrity of research methods and processes is then addressed by Bull *et al.*, who describe the shifting landscape and practice of research ethics in Canada. Their report from a gathering focused on understanding how Indigenous and non-Indigenous research collaborators can better support each other and work together emphasizes the position of Indigenous peoples as rights holders with sovereignty over Indigenous research. Their focus on governance and collective responsibility highlights the need for decolonized ethics review processes to ensure ethical research relationships at all stages.

Furthering this discussion of ethics is the contribution by Alderson, who emphasizes the importance of researchers' preparing to enter into research relationships by first becoming familiar with the historical and geographic contexts within which their inquiry is situated. The onus is on researchers to self-educate prior to engagement with Indigenous knowledge keepers, to ensure that they are aware of and respect nation or country-specific protocols and capacities, while acknowledging the inherent value of their knowledges that are often erased through a colonization-laden worldview.

Coombes and Ryder apply a decolonized methodology – the use of yarning and Dadirri as a means of deep listening and learning – in the study of potential barriers to aftercare treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia. They also illustrate a common approach in Indigenous research, where the author(s) recognize the interconnected reality of human systems and position themselves in relations to their study and research collaborators, demonstrating how Indigenous methodologies affirm cultural identity and enable cultural integrity.

Finally, Colbourne *et al.* present a case study that suggests how the strengths of western and Indigenous knowledge systems might be combined to advance research goals and facilitate reconciliation in Canada. Combining Indigenous interpretive lenses of two-row wampum and two-eyed seeing with the principles of community-based participatory action research, the authors advance a critical Indigenous research paradigm that enables inclusive, respectful and reciprocal relations.

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