An introductory bibliographic guide

Strategies for Change: Indigenous Women in the New Millennium

This resource is intended to supplement a course on Indigenous women that offers the student a unique opportunity to engage with a diverse body of scholarship and writing, largely produced by Southern women themselves, that is women located in the geographic South as well in the “South” within the global North. The texts presented here challenge the student to re-think commonly held assumptions regarding the needs, struggles, and challenges women face, thereby allowing the student to theorize how inclusive and appropriate policies and practice might be achieved in a world of immense diversity. An important theme is how Indigenous Women in the New Millennium conceptualize themselves, their struggles, strategies and alliances in order to effect change. This part of the document will address their epistemological standpoints in relation to Western feminist gender constructions, issues of democracy, rights and citizenship; and the politics of knowledge production from a decolonized perspective.

We begin this exercise by looking at how some of our perceptions of indigenous women and their struggles are permeated by certain stereotypes. The aim is to overcome the simplification of the concepts of “gender” and “women” through culturally-specific gender analyses that do not necessarily fit within mainstream Eurocentric feminisms (Hernandez-Castillo, 2002, 2005; Dary, 2005; Dary et al, 2004). An obvious starting point is colonization and the processes of knowledge production associated with it. It is thus necessary to analyze these constructions through diverse conceptualizations of gender, some of which are informed by knowledges that existed prior to colonization. Cultural assumptions which relegate women into certain roles depending on their race and class are juxtaposed with notions of citizenship, rights and democracy in an effort to illustrate how differently indigenous and non-indigenous groups are treated under these systems that do not correspond to indigenous forms of government and decision-making. As stated in our gender project statement, “these ‘normative systems’ often impede the implementation of reform measures aimed at ensuring greater access to justice for indigenous women” (ISHD, 2004: 3).

Next, students will be exposed to conceptualizations of gender developed by indigenous women based on their own understandings of territory, community, and relationship to the land where they have been the original peoples. They will learn about indigenous women’s positioning as indigenous feminists (Cunningham, 2006; Trask, 2005; Hernández, 2002, 2005; Grande, 2004); tribal feminists (Deerchild, 2005; Gunn-Allen, 1992); or as indigenous women. This exercise will help students juxtapose theorizations “from the outside” with those “from within” allowing them to develop a greater understanding of the realities of indigenous women.

Finally, the course intends to expose students to indigenous scholars who are theorizing about these experiences from indigenous standpoints in an effort to legitimize and value indigenous scholarship, epistemologies and voices.
The second half of the document presents abstracts of the articles and chapters referenced in this document.

References

Do l o r e s F i g u e r o a Rome r o, (2006) “Interview with Mirna Cunningham Kain” International Feminist Journal of Politics, 8:4, 618–626 (translated by Vivian Jimenez).


The document will cover the following themes:

- Politics of Knowledge Production and Imperialism
- Epistemological and conceptual critiques of Western feminism
- Territory and Nation-State
- Democracy, Rights and Citizenship
1. Politics of Knowledge Production and Imperialism

Although we question why some ideas are valued more than others and the power/knowledge nexus which might incite comparisons with postmodernists (Foucault) – we take anticolonial and decolonizing approaches to knowledge production (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Bishop, 1998; Rigney, 1999). Such positions aim to name discursive sites where epistemological racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997) and cognitive imperialism occur (Battiste, 1996) in order to devalue non-Western systems of thought. We follow Tuhiwai-Smith’s argument (1999) that the major agent of imposing positional superiority over Indigenous knowledge was through colonial education and later through the new classes of educated elite who aligned themselves with the culture, values and worldview of the colonizer. She also contends that gender relations brought from Europe differed from indigenous conceptualizations in the way women were valued, respected and integrated into society. Through colonization, these epistemological differences became key in the construction of “the Other” as savage and backward, which included the way women participated in community affairs. In this course we will see how representation is power, and thus the feminist critique of Western epistemology and sexism also applied to Western feminists for conforming to some very fundamental Western European world views, values systems and attitudes towards “the Other”.

Indigenous women continue to challenge these practices by theorizing from their lived colonial experiences and struggles. One of the central elements in the struggles that indigenous people engage in is a struggle over epistemology and representation of both, histories and imaginaries. As colonialism has constituted the primary context in which knowledge about indigenous people has been produced, many indigenous scholars take this constitution of knowledge as their first terrain of struggle. What perspectives and approaches are used by scholars who write about indigenous people? What are the differences between the approaches used by scholars/writers/activists that are from indigenous communities and those who are not? Where are the main issues of contestation between ‘modernist/Western’ and indigenous approaches? What ‘methods’ are used to ‘do research’ about and/or with indigenous peoples? How does one assess the validity of these methods? What kind of power relations defines their validity?

In this context, we will explore in some detail the decolonizing approach to scholarship that has come to be widely endorsed by many scholars – indigenous and non-indigenous – in this field. A decolonizing approach to research entails “writing back” to the academy and “righting history” by telling other sides of the colonial histories told (Smith, 1999). Research has been the most damaging enterprise and indigenous peoples the most researched and least benefited, thus, this methodology also ascribes centrality to Indigenous knowledge systems (ibid.). In this sense, scholars have called for an indigenous approach to research, which involves transcending the sense of conducting research for “research’s sake” and instead engaging in research that actually can further indigenous people’s political struggles (Hermes, 1998). In this context, how are indigenous women resisting colonial misrepresentations, stereotypes, deauthorization, paternalism and racism in their daily experiences?
Readings


Herrera, Gioconda; Rodríguez, Lily. (2001) “Gender studies in Ecuador: between knowledge and recognition” Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, (FLACSO), Quito, Ecuador. [link]


Additional Readings:


2. **Epistemological and conceptual critiques of Western feminism**

In the global North, indigenous struggles to recognize and respect this relationship are often referred to as the realm of the Fourth World (Ouellette, 2004), a distinct worldview that is specific to the teachings of Aboriginal peoples, and that also hold many parallels to those teachings in other global contexts. In an effort to situate indigenous women’s experiences of oppression within their own framework and interpretive lens (Mihesuah, 2000; Denetdale, 2006), we will see how indigenous views on feminism make reference to issues such as the different ways in which postcolonial discourse do not speak to the indigenous experiences. How some indigenous women wonder if some “traditions” are colonial reflections of sexism and learned patriarchy rather than tradition (100, 102; see also Maracle)? Further, we will question the assumption that peoples residing in “nations” of former colonies are all “equal” citizens within “sovereign nation states” (Bonita Lawrence in Thorpe, 2005, Grande, 2004). How does the understanding of the discourse that views men and women as complementary to each other (CEIMM, 2003) as an ideal to strive for, rather than a reality they have experienced (Hernandez, 2005), of
indigenous women affect their politics? And finally, why is it important to introduce the gender analysis in the debate about forms of Indigenous governance such as Autonomy? All these assumptions and questions complicate indigenous peoples’ distinct identities, conceptualizations of “nationhood” and rights and will create debate regarding the struggles between individual and collective rights, identity, and citizenship within nationalist and homogenizing discourse.

These complex realities also speak to the inadequacy of neatly fitting the experiences of indigenous women into one category of gender. This approach to gender studies offers the opportunity to grapple with the use of the term “feminism” in relation to Indigenous women (Mihesuah, 2000) through an examination of the lived experiences of women from the Global South, we can investigate the demands that indigenous women are putting on debate regarding their rights as part of social group that suffer specific oppression conditions (Sierra, 2004; Bonfil, 2005; Oliveira, 2005). These experiences are a form of theorizing where narratives speak to the individual and collective experiences that point to diverse cultural and social locations that demonstrate parallel yet diverse epistemological standpoints. The issue of balancing individual with collective experiences is twofold: on the one hand, it prevents the essentialization of one general and homogeneous experience and on the other; it draws on parallels that connect the experiences of indigenous peoples across the globe (Guthrie Valaskis, 2005: 6).

**Readings:**


Bertomeu Martínez et al. (2004). Reclaiming gender as a concept.


Lamas, Martha (2004) Gender: simplicity and complexity. (link)

Las Dignas. (2002). Learning About Feminism through Debates. (link)


3. **Territory and Nation-State**

The concept of territory is another area of contestation for indigenous peoples. Territory here is not viewed as mere expansion, accumulation of resources or economic gain. Rather, Valaskis asserts (2005) that the link of indigenous communities to their land is materialized through a relationship which emphasizes Native peoples relationships to one another, other communities and to all that is alive. Thus, “the relationship between the ‘empty land’ metaphor and the colonization of ‘primitive’ Indians [sic] is well-worked theoretical territory in cultural studies; but this relationship is important to recall because it frames the discourse of Native experience and structures the critique of colonial culture.” (95). How does this position legitimate discourses on colonization, sexism, modernization and production? The discourses that feminized women and land for the purpose of devaluing their worth lie at the core of this barren land discourse. Gender constructions here parallel that of indigenous peoples in general and women specifically, deeming invisible the spiritual, social and cultural conceptualization of the land. How do colonizing discourses about indigenous peoples parallel that of the land and territory?

Oral stories, ceremonial objects and dances, continue to illustrate that women played an important role in their communities. How have these relationships changed through time and with the influence of Western ways of thinking, governance and policy? Denetdale, (2006) illustrates how women were consulted about important decisions that affected all of their people on matters that extended to the economic and the political. She posits that foreign ideas about proper gender roles have affected Native women's roles and Western perceptions of them have been just as detrimental. She examines how Navajo leaders, who are primarily men, reproduce Navajo nationalist ideology to re-inscribe gender roles based on Western concepts even as they claim that they operate under traditional Navajo philosophy.

Moreover, Umaña (2000) argues that understanding the relationship between gender, the environment and development is important because women, along with men, are carriers of knowledge and practices in respect to the management of natural resources. This knowledge is key and has to be taken into account for viable and sustainable development initiatives, however could be contrasted with notions of territory that devalue women and the land in exchange for Western perspectives of modernization based on domination of nature.

On the other hand, authors like Pratt (2004), argue that non-Indigenous constructions of nation and identity fundamentally limit the State’s approach to its relationship with indigenous peoples. His work allows to ask important questions such as how do indigenous definitions of nation, state and rights conceptually different from Western standpoints? How do they affect indigenous gender conceptualizations and relations?
Readings


Additional Readings:


4. **Democracy, Rights and Citizenship**

For indigenous peoples, the notions of democracy, rights and citizenship have different meanings, applications and implications than those used by Western nations and states. These factors therefore affect the theories produced by indigenous women. Smith (2005) argues that for Native women activists, women’s struggles are further extended to address indigenous sovereignty, land claims and nationhood. Trask (2004) also contends that Hawaiian women’s struggles are based on Hawaiian culture and sovereignty and are predicated on inter-relatedness and responsibility. Likewise, indigenous women’s struggles complicate the generally simplistic manner in which indigenous women's positioning is often reduced to the dichotomy of feminist and non-feminist, Western and Indigenous. For the Latin American context, the issue is further complicated by the fact that democracy and rights are discourses that do not often apply equally to indigenous peoples (Yashar, 2005). How do forms of indigenous governments and autonomy
facilitate and strengthen mechanisms to recognize the multiple-dimension of indigenous women’s rights and identities: as members of their communities and peoples, as important actors of their community economy, as representatives in local powers and forums, as women, as wives, as traditional healers, as midwives, leaders, etc.?

The Latin American state has since colonization provided a disadvantageous nation and citizenship framework for indigenous peoples. What are the multiple complexities entailed in the debate about the collective, human and women’s rights? How is it possible to resolve this controversy? Understanding indigenous conceptualizations of the nation, citizenship and sovereignty will help students further identify the different struggles.

Readings:


Additional Readings:


ABSTRACTS


ABSTRACT: This article explores the nature of Aboriginal demands for a citizenship regime grounded in a substantive recognition of cultural difference and inherent rights in Mexico and Canada. It provides an overview of the different evolution of Aboriginal citizenship in each country but focuses on two recent development projects, the Puebla Panama Plan in Mexico and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline in Canada. These cases
demonstrate the ways in which neo-liberal globalization is reshaping the substantive recognition of Aboriginal cultural difference and inherent rights. While contemporary neo-liberal rhetoric recognizes cultural difference, the models of development employed effectively separate territory from the ideas of self-government, culture and identity. The article concludes that the neo-liberal turn in the construction of Aboriginal citizenship undercuts potentially much richer conceptions of Indigenous citizenship offered by the First Peoples of North America.


ABSTRACT: This paper examines, an indigenous initiative in research within Aotearoa, New Zealand, called Kaupapa (agenda/philosophy) Maori research. This agenda for research is concerned with how research practice might realize Maori desires for self-determination, while addressing contemporary research issues of authority and legitimacy. This paper suggests that it is the cultural aspirations, understandings, and practices of Maori people who implement and organize the research process and that position researchers in such a way as to operationalize self-determination for research participants. The cultural context positions the participants by constructing the story lines and with them the cultural metaphors and images, as well as the “thinking as usual,” the talk and language through which research participants are constituted and researcher and researched relationships are organized. Kaupapa Maori research, thus, rejects outside control over what constitutes the text’s call for authority and truth. A Kaupapa Maori position promotes, then, an epistemological version of validity. Such an approach to validity locates the power within Maori cultural practices where what is acceptable and what is not acceptable research, text, and/or processes are determined and defined by the research community itself.


ABSTRACT: In this article, Myrna Cunningham reflects on two experiences that motivated her to seek out Indigenous women. These women identify as feminists, they understand both the importance of feminism and the transformations that are needed within the international women's movement in order for feminism to live up to its potential as a political practice.


ABSTRACT: This book addresses the complexities surrounding the factors that facilitate or obstruct Maya women’s “professionalization” and access to work. It goes beyond a gender and class analysis by illustrating specific examples of the racialized and racist
policies that leave indigenous women outside of social processes and rewards that would improve their social and economic status.


ABSTRACT: In this brief article, Dary discusses the barriers and possibilities of Maya indigenous women in Guatemala by discussing the work and roles of professional Maya women. She discusses the social and political processes and collaborations that have enabled this small group to break free from dim statistics that relegates them to the poorest and worst socio-economic conditions in the country.


ABSTRACT: In this Chapter, Deerchild discusses “tribal feminism”, a term that refers to the frustration the author and other Native women have felt towards their exclusions from drumming circles due to the influence of colonialism in Native societies.


ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the recent Mexican controversy about the legal status of the indigenous population and the nature of nationalism, which is linked to recent constitutional amendments and new policy strategies. Changes in legislation and policy are examined in the context of a widespread economic and political crisis of the populist regime after 1982. These changes radically affected the previous indigenist discourse but they are also seen as having been motivated by Indian demands and mobilizations against the official vision of citizenship as a function of cultural homogeneity and mestizaje. The article analyses the implications of the new constitutional amendments and the heated debates that they have provoked among different political actors, including indigenous organizations. In particular, it examines two areas of disagreement. The first concerns the multiple meanings of multiculturalism, as a threat of fragmentation and fundamentalism, a new form of state control or a strategy for indigenous national participation and empowerment. The second concerns the definition and levels of implementation of indigenous political autonomy. Negotiation over such disagreements, leading to inclusive citizenship, constituted a great challenge for ethnic intellectuals and theoreticians of Mexican nationalism.


ABSTRACT: Central to the understanding of gender is the notion of a collective identity. Not only does such a collective identity directly affect its members, it also impacts and transcends other social entities with which it interacts. This paper uses such
an understanding of gender to explore the tensions between the notions of equality and difference and how they present challenges for the construction of a feminine identity - and its transcendence from the abstract to the lived reality of gender relations in everyday life.


ABSTRACT: The first section of the work deals with how the knowledge of grandmothers and mothers are still alive today, and illustrates what it means to have a “woman-centered culture”, as it is the case with the Keres Pueblo. It also chronicles some of the history of American Indian women since contact in 1492 and provides another view of history that facilitates an understanding of both, American Indian life and also American patriarchy in the past few hundred years. Finally it also provides a glimpse into the author’s life in order to attest to the continuance of Indian women through changing contemporary times. The Chapter titled “Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian Tale” (p. 222-244) is an example of how the author approaches both feminism and indigenous standpoints. She illustrates her strategy as feminist when dealing with indigenous peoples and as indigenous when dealing with feminists.


ABSTRACT: In this chapter, the author deconstructs the historicized images of First Nations women as either “princesses” or “squaws” and the related narratives deeply entrenched in North American popular culture. These appropriated, commodified representations circulate in the politics of difference and influence the identities of Native women, which make an interesting connection with the perceptions non-Native women have of Native women. These representations in fact reiterate the need to contest Western feminism as a universal theory to liberate all women based solely on gender. She argues that their mothers' and grandmothers' narratives of Aboriginal experience help Native women to situate and re-appropriate the past and empower their own futures.


ABSTRACT: The author presents an analysis of indigenous women’s demands and illustrates the points where they coincide with the demands of urban feminists (and non-indigenous). She argues that the economic and cultural context in which indigenous women have constructed their gender identities marks the specific forms that their struggles take, as well as their conceptions of "women's dignity" and their ways of building political alliances. While she illustrates that ethnic, class and gender identities have determined their struggle and have managed to also participate in their own
communities, they have at the same time created specific spaces to reflect on their experiences of exclusion as women and as indigenous people.


ABSTRACT: The author analyzes a new “indigenous feminism” whereby indigenous women are subjects of change in the national struggle to recognize indigenous sovereignty. She also looks at how, as a means of empowerment, organized indigenous women have integrated elements of their cosmovision with their political struggles, embracing a discourse that views men and women as complementary to each other as an ideal to strive for, thereby following the Women’s Law promoted by Zapatista women since 1994. She concludes with the imperative that urban feminisms must engage and listen to the cultural perspectives of indigenous women, which include indigenous spirituality to resist the homogenizing drive of globalization and the acculturating policies of the nation states. She also addresses the need to challenge the ethnocentricity of some feminisms that build emancipatory projects based on a concept of the individual and a rhetoric of equality that come from the liberal tradition.


ABSTRACT: In this paper the author writes in retrospect about her experience of researching the creation of a culture-based curriculum in a tribal community. She is situated in the community as both an insider and an outsider, represented in this article through the use of an academic voice spliced with a narrative voice. Both her research problem and methodology emerged as a response to the community. A wide range of cultural and academic traditions inspired the methodology she used. Finally, rather than prescribing a particular formula for research in Native communities, she is suggesting that the model of a “situated response,” particular and dependent on context, would ground research in community, as well as academic, concerns.

**Lamas, M. (2004).** “Género: Claridad y Complejidad”. (link)

ABSTRACT: This article outlines the complexities embedded in gender and its implications for making national and international policies. It discusses the different interpretations of gender as used in the social sciences to argue for the need to clarify its conceptual basis when developing policies that will positively impact society. The author argues that implementing gender mainstreaming depends on its treatment as a cultural policy. Finally, she posits that gender will gain results if there is participation from the cultural matrix of society, starting from a theoretical training that allows for an analysis of local factors, and thus develops options for both men and women.

ABSTRACT: Lavrin takes a look at the different feminisms in the Latin American region as a case study to argue the possibility of maintaining the international character of feminisms with the specificities found in its diversity.


ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the historical context and the systematic obstacles that hinder indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women, to participate at the different levels of the society, especially the political processes. The author argues that indigenous women have always been present in decision-making processes and that the terms have been negotiated when they have not been optimal.


ABSTRACT: The author describes the obstacles indigenous women face in attaining political participation in different spheres and denounces the racist tendencies of non-indigenous women’s spaces while simultaneously denouncing Maya men’s compliance to sexism and gender discrimination. She calls for the reclamation of indigenous women’s teachings such as the double gaze and concepts of complementarity and balance in an effort to take their own decisions and decide their own futures.


ABSTRACT: Mihesuah argues that while the integration of American Indian women's studies and feminist studies would seem a logical project for the next millennium, the progress on such initiative should be both cautious and deliberate. Only if feminist scholars can engage in reciprocal, practical dialogue with Native American scholars can Natives become a part of feminist discourse.


Chapter 1 “A Few Cautions on the Merging of Feminist Studies with Indigenous Women’s Studies”.

ABSTRACT: This chapter discusses topics that must be addressed when writing about Native women, including the need to recognize the heterogeneity among Native women through sensitive research methodologies.

Chapter 6 “Colonialism and Disempowerment”

ABSTRACT: This chapter attempts to bring home the point that Native women did have various degrees of power, equality and prestige within their traditional tribal structures.
The philosophies and policies of colonialism changed that status for many women; and Indigenous women still feel the effects of colonialism.

Chapter 12 “Feminists, Tribalists, Activists”

ABSTRACT: This chapter discusses the terms Feminists, Tribalists and Activists and why many Native women call themselves one thing or the other. The author illustrates why many Native women vehemently shun feminism and will not associate with people who claim it. Other Native women, however, proudly call themselves feminists. Other women are concerned about tribal and cultural survival and advancement rather than male oppression or individual success in economic status, social circles, and academia, and they avoid feminists and their ideologies. Many of these indigenous women argue that white women have enjoyed the power privileges that come with being white at the expense of women of color.


ABSTRACT: Mohanty revisits the themes and arguments of an essay she wrote 16 years ago, "Under Western Eyes," focusing specifically on how the Third World inside and outside the West would be explored and analyzed decades later. She identifies what she considers to be the urgent theoretical and methodological questions facing a comparative feminist politics at this moment in history.


ABSTRACT: This book draws on the postcolonial critique of epistemological foundationalism to argue that all knowledge is situated and therefore partial. Spivak identifies two dimensions to the act of representation (Spivak 1988a, 1988b). One dimension is to perceive representation as "speaking for"; the other is to comprehend representation as involving interpretation. The latter Spivak identifies as re-presentation; thus all representations are based on interpretation.


ABSTRACT: The book examines the recent emergence of the Canadian Aboriginal women’s movement, its relationship to the broader feminist movement, and the applicability and appropriateness of contemporary feminist theories as frameworks for the analysis of Aboriginal women’s legal, political and socio-economic status. The author argues that feminism often assumes that all women, cross-culturally, share the same oppression. This book explores how the status of Aboriginal women varies due to several factors under colonialism from the perspectives of Aboriginal women based on their experiences and social realities as colonized peoples.

Chapter 1 “Contemporary Feminist Theory”

ABSTRACT: This chapter contextualizes Aboriginal women’s struggles within a critique of the four schools of feminist political thought: liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist. The critique of feminist theory and methodology illustrates the exclusion of race analyses
within feminist positions arguing colonialism and racism actually advanced white women’s status. The author narrates the struggles of black women and immigrant women, pointing to the dearth of analyses or critique by Aboriginal women and thus justifying the creation of distinct women’s groups based on their particular race and culture. An idea that defied the previously accepted notion that biology united all women equally. Further the author guides the position that if the concept “woman” is socially constructed, then it is a contradiction to have a movement where that concept is the unifying force. For Aboriginal women, gender roles and responsibilities are numerous and they are constructed not only for women, but also for men, children and elders. The understanding that each person plays a certain role that is not valued more than another is at the very root of indigenous cultures and thus, denying roles such as motherhood represent an affront to Aboriginal women, whose cultural values, beliefs and worldviews are different than that of white women.

Chapter 4 “Fourth World of Aboriginal Women”

ABSTRACT: This chapter sums the book and provides an overview of Aboriginal women’s concerns that go beyond sexism and male dominance. It also provides an overview of how colonial policies like the Indian Act have transformed Aboriginal gender relations, constructions and roles. Finally, it discusses the path Aboriginal women have carved and laid out to attain balance, or liberation as feminists have described it.


ABSTRACT: This paper compares Australian and Canadian approaches to their relationships with Indigenous peoples in terms of how each state handles demands for the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood. This analysis shows that there are as many similarities as there are differences between Indigenous-state relations in both states and that there is a need for a more genuinely inclusive approach to negotiations and debates over Indigenous people’s rights.


ABSTRACT: This article examines the complex life story of a Native American/Chicana woman whose identity revolves around her experience as a person of mixed heritage. She argues that transnational, as well as gendered perspectives must be considered within notions of cultural citizenship in order to create a world where women like Sanchez, who live between nations, can one day belong to. It presents us with still another kind of box, looking at the border as another kind of confinement, as she extends Renato Rosaldo’s notion of cultural citizenship to include Julia Sanchez.

ABSTRACT: In this article, the author discusses his own journey in finding a liberatory epistemology and designing indigenous research methodologies. The author does this to further discussion regarding appropriate research in order to protect indigenous communities and promote their understandings of the purpose of research.


ABSTRACT: In this article, the two researchers, who are White, offer a substantive response to the argument of scholars of color who have contended that their research epistemologies are racially biased. They claim that the lack of response to date to the racial bias argument is not primarily a function of overt or covert racism, as some might argue, or of institutional or societal racism, as others might suggest. They discuss how their research is biased in the way data is analyzed, discussed. They discuss five categories of research and their linkages to research and conclude with some suggestions about what initially needs to be done to address epistemological racism.


ABSTRACT: This book illustrates the many ways in which native women influenced and were influenced by the changing world around them. These women had many roles and relationships within their communities and were crucial participants in the ongoing struggle for the survival of Indian cultures and communities.

Chapter 1 “The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier”

ABSTRACT: In this chapter, the author explores in two ways the gender frontier that evolved between English settlers and the indigenous peoples of Virginia’s tidewater. First, she assesses how differences in gender roles shaped the perceptions and interactions of both groups. Second, she analyzes the “gendering” of the emerging Anglo-Indian struggle, or how the English depicted themselves as warrior dominating a feminized native population and the native resistance and treatment of the intruders as less deserving people.

Chapter 4 “Women, Men and American Indian Policy Cherokee response to civilization”

ABSTRACT: The author looks at how Cherokee women and men accepted U.S. policies at assimilating Indians but in ways that complemented their traditional roles, thus shedding light into how women continually work to enhance their position within native societies.


ABSTRACT: This article focuses on theories produced by Native women activists which intervene both in sovereignty and feminist struggles to complicate the generally simplistic manner in which Native women's activism is often articulated within scholarly and
activist circles. She argues that, Native women’s articulation of feminism and struggles against sexism differ and cannot be reduced to the dichotomy of feminist and non-feminist. These articulations are also based on indigenous sovereignty, land claims and nationhood, all predicated on inter-relatedness and responsibility. This position varies greatly from reductionist notions of “Nation”, based on domination and coercion and limited to the human world.


ABSTRACT: The author gives a critical, self-reflexive analysis of the African women's movement, with her proposals for the changes she would like to see. She asks that African feminists transform themselves and societies into a more equitable, democratic and tolerant one.


ABSTRACT: The author interviews Bonita Lawrence, author of "Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood (2004), regarding the themes of diaspora and hybridity appearing in her book. Among other things, Lawrence talks about the weaknesses of transnational feminism and hybridity – both rooted in post-colonial discourse as a way to discursively erase Native identity.


ABSTRACT: Trask argues that White feminists and feminism in the First World, and specifically the United States, are different from Hawaiian women’s fight for justice because their loyalties differ: the first is to the United States and the latter to Hawaii and its sovereignty. She traces the implicit difference as rooted in the individual versus collective rights dichotomy, stating that imperialism and colonialism have benefited all white people – including white feminists. She posits that Hawaiian women’s feminism also include racism, territorial claims and sovereignty and white feminists’ role is to support these claims, not transform indigenous women’s perspectives into their own narrow definitions of feminism.


ABSTRACT (Chapters 3 and 4): These chapters articulate the protocols, relationships and cultural processes that researchers must follow when working with indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples have not benefited from research and so these processes will advocate for research that will be applied to indigenous realities and needs based on the particular communities goals and political projects.

ABSTRACT: The author looks at Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico to analyze the marked, but uneven, politicization of ethnic cleavages. She sets to explain why indigenous organizing has emerged in the contemporary periods and why significant indigenous organizations have emerged in these five countries and their emergence proves a way to contest the Latin American state and its disadvantageous terms of citizenship for indigenous peoples. The article does not, however, give a thorough understanding or explanation of indigenous perspectives on nation, citizenship and sovereignty.