

Book Review

McGuire-Adams, Tricia. (2020). *Indigenous Feminist Gikendassowin (Knowledge) Decolonization through Physical Activity*. Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan.
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Tricia McGuire-Adams shows us why stories matter by exploring how they are central to our understandings of ourselves and how we think and feel about each other. Through exploring the way settler colonialism causes ill health she advances how Indigenous Peoples can resist existing narratives and regenerate their health through processes of decolonisation.

Decolonisation is meaningful and transformative resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation of minds, bodies and lands. She argues, that rebuilding and restoring health is achieved through Indigenous People reconnecting with ancestral knowledge and current stories of physical activity. She critiques settler-colonial stories that negatively portray Indigenous Peoples' physical health and demonstrates how such narratives perpetuate inequality. By highlighting the way health disparity research documents the differences in health between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples, she shows how this pathologizes Indigenous Peoples as ill. Moreover, by contrasting this with the way settler colonial notions of health are reified she exposes how Indigenous Peoples' ancestral notions of health are subjugated. This has marginalising effects that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women by suppressing Indigenous Peoples' cultural solutions to ill health.

Through critical engagement with *dibaajimowinan* (stories founded in ancestral knowledge), McGuire-Adams theorises how narratives of the great physical strength and skill Indigenous People possessed through land-based activities such as fishing, trapping and hunting can have a decolonizing effect. Focusing specifically on Indigenous women, she asks "Can physical activity that encompasses a decolonization approach be a catalyst for regenerative well-being for Anishinaabeg Women?" (chapter 1).

McGuire-Adams highlights that before colonization, Indigenous women had to be physically strong to survive, possessing significant strength and resilience as leaders, hunters and runners. She identifies that Indigenous women's connection to the land is foundational to their cultural identity. McGuire-Adams shows how colonialism, genocide and forced removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands continues to impact Indigenous Peoples health identities. By exploring how settler-colonial violence endures in social, political and economic structures, she exposes the devastating impact of enforced settler-colonial laws, and policies; that perpetuate a disconnect between Indigenous Peoples land-based *dibaajimowinan* and physical health. She demonstrates how this disconnect negatively impacts health through reduced participation and access to land-based physical activity, which continues to erase Indigenous Peoples from the land. She argues, that settler-colonial violence against Indigenous women is rooted in their inherent connection to the land and continued erasure. For example, Indigenous women continue to be systematically erased through gender-based violence where Indigenous women and girls are eight times more likely to die of homicide in Canada compared to non-indigenous women. As such, the impact of settler-colonial violence is embodied in intergenerational histories, past, present and future, where the erasure of Indigenous women's bodies is internalized through trauma, grief, substance abuse and thus, ill-health.

McGuire Adams advances Indigenous feminist theory through creating space where Indigenous women can engage with their dibaajimowinan to explore how settler colonialism is embodied. She shows how through dibaajimowinan Indigenous women's bodies can have dual representations of strength and resilience and settler-colonial erasure. As an Indigenous Anishinaabeg woman from Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada and an Indigenous feminist scholar, McGuire-Adams aimed to understand how Indigenous women resisted and actively decolonised Western perceptions of health through participation in physical activity. To achieve this, she makes a key contribution to Indigenous feminist research through the innovative design of an Anishinaabeg research paradigm that centres on Anishinaabeg knowledge or gikendaasowin. Central to the Anishinaabeg research paradigm is the 'Anishinaabeg way of being' that 'signal the use of culture, teachings and ceremony in research' and involves story collection rather than data collection to address the central problems of research (Chapter, 2, P.21). Three different methods of story collection were developed to capture key insights from Elders through a sharing circle, guided storytelling with Anishinabekweg Indigenous running groups and physical engagement in exercise followed by storytelling (Wiisokotaatiwin) with urban-based Indigenous women.

Major findings centred on how Indigenous women use physical activity as a form of regeneration and personal decolonization. McGuire-Adams identifies how the connection between culture and physical activity is profoundly influenced by ancestral physicality and how this is regenerative of spiritual connections to the land. She explains that 'mindfully engaging in revitalizing the physical strength of our ancestors in our own bodies and connecting with memories of the physicality of our Anishinabekwe ancestors, Anishinaabeg are inspired to seek physical strength via physical activity and to re-engage in Anishinaabeg ethic of self-discipline' (Chapter 3, p.58). The research showed the importance of connecting to ancestral physicality through the Mitchitweg who, historically were highly respected Anishinaabeg messengers that ran between communities. She identified that a contemporary group of Mitchitweg female runners, called Kwe Pack, chose to run on ancestral trails enabling them to connect to the vitality, histories, language, and cultural landscapes of their ancestors. For the Kwe Pack running is a form of ceremony, healing and a way of inspiring others to achieve personal well-being. Importantly running created the opportunity to provide good role models for their children, family and community. McGuire-Adams theorises that this acts as a decolonising force that actively resists notions of victimage and re-presences the Anishinaabeg on the land. Moreover, the Kwe Pack demonstrate a counter-narrative to the deficit-based literature by showing the regenerative impact of physical activity guided by ancestral physicality.

McGuire-Adams calls for Indigenous health research that has traditionally used a deficit-based approach when analysing the ill health of Indigenous Peoples to shift to a strength-based perspective that focuses on what is working well for Indigenous People (Chapter. 5, p.91 – 92). She demonstrates the regenerative power of engaging in physical activity and how it acts as a bridge between the past and present to decolonize narratives of health. In sum, this book will appeal to scholars, postgraduate students and public authorities. It provides new theoretical and methodological approaches to decolonize physical activity and present unique opportunities to leverage social change for Indigenous Peoples and particularly Indigenous women.

