

A review of Ranjan F cwcøi' *Gf 0: 'Decolonization in practice: Reflective learning from cross-cultural perspectives

Donna H. Swapp, *University of Regina*

Adeola S. Amos, *University of Regina*

Tcplcp" F cwcøi (2023) *Decolonization in practice: Reflective learning from cross-cultural perspectives* explores its titular theme across 15 chapters of this new edited book. The dqqnøu appeal is in bringing together perspectives from Indigenous and non-Indigenous settler Canadians from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds regarding how to move decolonization from discourse to practice. As two racialized colour settlers to Canada ourselves (one of us is from Africa and the other from the Caribbean), we were particularly drawn to the book. The book is divided into five parts, with a short introduction to each of the parts. Author biographies are placed at the front, and a half-page section titled *What is Next (Moving Forward)* is at the end of the book. The book aims to move decolonization from discourse and theoretical inquiry to the realm of everyday practice. A supporting premise is set early kō"j g"dqqnø introduction, stating, ø]o _cp{ " academic researchers introduced decolonization in their work; however, they have not explained what it means to think of decolonization as a source of reflective learning from and within our gxgt { f c { 'r tcevegö"r 03-0 The editor positions the book to address this gap.

The first part of the book directly unpacks the overarching theme of decolonization in practice, exploring Indigenous community reflections from Anishanaabe, Cree, Métis, and Mohawk scholars. Herein, the authors gzi qwpf "qp"gr kngo qm { "kō"cuugukpi "øj qy 'y g"hpqy 'y j cv" we know and why and how to learn to do things differently in out 'gxgt { f c { 'r tcevegö"r 0; + Across the six chapters, authors explore this focus through a number of pedagogical framings, such as Indigenous dance as transformative decolonial pedagogy, Indigenous storytelling to transform university pedagogy, land-based education as transformative pedagogy, anti-racist community building as critical pedagogy, and transforming colonized mindsets to decolonized dreams. The main insight from this part of the book is how decolonization could occur from a pedagogical perspective, in the sense that when learners have encounters with teachers, knowledge keepers, and Indigenous elders, they have the opportunity to learn, unlearn, and relearn the history of Canada and understand a way forward. This section of the book advances the argument that we, as settlers, have a responsibility to the Indigenous peoples and the Indigenous land on which we all live.

In the second part of the book, racialized immigrant women and children share community reflections on decolonization in practice. In the four chapters, these settler authors of colour contribute their voices to the theme qh" fgeqmpk cvkq" kō" r tceveg. " go r j cuk kpi " kpf kxf wcnø responsibility to seek knowledge about the places and spaces they occupy, and describing this responsibility as sign of respect to both the lands and the peoples who have inhabited these lands from time immemorial. Each contributing awj qtøu't ghge vkpu'eqpxg{ "f ggr "t gur ge'vcpf "tgxgt gpeg" for Indigenous lands and customs. Particularly for us. "Lgdwppguuc" Ej cr qrcøu" eqpt kdwkq" ucpf u" out. This author shares her practices as a newcomer, racialized, settler woman from a privileged mainstream Muslim background in Bangladesh, learning the Indigenous significances of land acknowledgements, proposing how this learning has helped her create a strong sense of belonging and community with Indigenous peoples and the land. Vj ku'cwj qtøu work in a community garden, in bringing gardeners and community guests together, and participating in activities including ej kftgpøu anti-racist art workshops, talks on the environment, talks by Indigenous Elders,

education movie nights, and presentations on the benefit of gardening are inspiring examples of committed intent and follow-through by a racialized Canadian settler towards decolonization and reconciliation. This section of the book situates these actions by colour settlers as a sign of respect to the land and of embracing and showing reverence for cultures and traditions of Indigenous peoples. The authors demonstrate their understanding of what it means to live together with Indigenous communities in a relationship borne out of and executed in mutual respect and understanding.

The final three sections of the book are short, containing two chapters each in the third and fourth parts and one in the final part of the book. The third and fourth parts continue to carry the theme from the second part of the book, that of community reflections on decolonization in practice, with the author centering *colour settler perspectives* in the third part and *Black and Asian* perspectives in the fourth. A key takeaway from the third part of the book is a demonstration of how decolonization is meant to occur not only in schools but in every aspect of life, including our daily activities. In this sense, the authors show, through their own lived examples, how decolonization is a collective responsibility and what it means to act on this responsibility. Decolonial stories of learning, unlearning, and relearning are shared. In honest and vulnerable detail, the authors share their actions in acknowledging and honouring Indigenous ceremonies, traditions or protocols and implementing them in everyday practices. In part four, the first of two chapters attempts to connect decolonization through climate research from the perspectives of Sub-Saharan African immigrant communities in Western Canada, and the second chapter discusses anti-racism activism in building a decolonial community in a Vancouver Asian district. We found this second chapter particularly effective and noteworthy. The author begins by acknowledging her *White* people and sets this prejudice against the backdrop of xenophobia being experienced by Asian residents in Chinatown. The author is part of a community resistance effort towards gentrification and racism in this district and relates how Asian residents came to confront their own ignorance and prejudice and reorient their claims of *ownership* to the lands on which their community resides. Through community collaboration, the Asian residents were able to build relationships of solidarity, respect, and reverence with Indigenous residents. The last part of the book is comprised of only one chapter, and here, the author discusses the responsibility of building decolonial communities through anti-racism education and action.

While we found the book informative and insightful, we think that a reorganization of the five sections would help these sections be more evenly weighted. For example, we propose that the organization of the text might be simplified by dedicating the first part of the book to Indigenous community reflections on decolonization. By recategorizing the second part of the book to be focused on racialized immigrant community reflections on decolonization in practice and research. This would leave a last and third section to involve work of Black, Asian, and European contributors exploring research and action-based decolonization.

Another critique of this book regards the lack of robust discussion and follow-through in two of the chapters. For instance, while Chapter 10 is particularly appealing to us as two teenaged children of colour settler Canadians and are actively involved in community practices of cross-cultural decolonization, a few missed opportunities to more fully flesh out key terms and positions put forward weakened the chapter. For example, the term *land-based storytelling* is particularly noteworthy, but the authors do not define or explain the term

to readers. In other instances, they fail to always flesh out Indigenous teachings around the cyclical and interconnected relationships between humans and our ecosystems. One such example occurs when, in advocating for more physical connections with the land and with plants and animals, they state *we are not just a part of the land, we are the land* (p. 183) without explaining how this is so and/or making an explicit connection to the cyclical and interconnected nature of human relationship or responsibilities with and to Mother Earth.

Lastly, the authors' own co-authored chapter on the sub-Saharan African immigrant experience around climate risks missed important opportunities to connect more fully to decolonial thought. In this chapter, the authors use the term *decolonial* often, referencing *Decolonizing the Mind* (p. 456) but the chapter does not reflect the complexity of decolonial thought relative to this research is decolonial. In fact, though the authors purport to use decolonizing phenomenology to explain how sub-Saharan African immigrants in western Canada cope with climate risks, they neither explain what this term means nor demonstrate how their results are unique to the sub-Saharan perspective as opposed to other people in western Canada experiencing the same climate disaster risks. For us, the lack of a final concluding chapter summarizing each chapter's key contributions, anchoring key learnings, and/or emphasizing important takeaways made these missed opportunities more apparent.

Overall, however, this book stands out and makes a strong contribution to the field. There are few books dedicated to unpacking what decolonization looks like in everyday practice, and in this context. As two Black immigrant women settlers to Canada, we find the examples and lessons in this book relatable and practical. The emphasis on learning, unlearning, and relearning was an underpinning premise artfully and consistently woven throughout the chapters. The book did an excellent job of illuminating how people from different backgrounds relate to the challenges of colonization and how these experiences foster a sense of solidarity and respect for Indigenous peoples, customs, and traditions and a strong commitment to reconciliation and decolonization. I believe this book provides a deeper understanding of what it means to live on Indigenous lands. This book centres racialized perspectives, effectively situating reconciliation and decolonization as a collective responsibility and demonstrating the practical contributions settler immigrants of colour are making, and could make, in achieving these aims. We therefore recommend this book to readers of *in education*.