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Foreword
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Published in:
Reciprocity and Its Practice in Social Research

DOI:
10.4018/978-1-7998-9602-9

Published: 01.01.2022

Document Version
Publisher’s PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Foreword

The following book – *Reciprocity and Its Practice in Social Research* – by Jahid Siraz Chowdhury, Professor Haris Abd Wahab, Dr. Mohd Rashid Bin Mohd Saad, Dr Hasan Reza and Professor Mokbul Ahmad, is an ambitious endeavor that offers an in-depth analysis of reciprocity as a research methodology to employ in social science research. I admire the effort of the authors wholeheartedly for this excellent contribution. It is, therefore, an honor for me to write the Book’s Foreword.

In recent years, reciprocity has become a norm in social science research to help clarify the need to integrate participants of the study in the actual production of research-based knowledge. It is an ethically driven norm. Reciprocity refers to a process by which research participants are an active part of research and from which not just researchers, but they benefit, too. In ordinary meaning, it reflects: “if someone does something for you, you then feel obligated to return the favor”. Studying a community without involving them as the co-creator of knowledge does not offer equal term and due respect, if only researchers objectify participants without bringing any real promise suggesting the benefit they deserve. A community as a research participant being merely an object and not a research subject seriously questions any study’s ethical validity. Hence, the researcher-participant relationship has to be reciprocal in which the former’s contribution reinforces the latter’s needs and desires. The study is supported by participants’ involvement with time and effort, sharing of experiences and wisdom, etc. Hence, reciprocity seeks for a methodical recovery process from the prevailing imbalances between researchers and participants in producing research-based knowledge. Reciprocity is, therefore, a fundamental value in research ethics, which deserves a systematic approach to developing research methodology, replacing or complementing the existing ones for a research product to be more legitimate and ethically acceptable.

The Book’s theme touched upon the above to rationalize research methodology in social science research. It is not only ambitious; rather, it is a timely effort to bring reciprocity as an indispensable methodological concept into academic practices. I salute Jahid Siraz – a colleague and research collaborator – for adding such an interesting feature to this book that explicitly contributes to solidifying academic research, particularly the discipline of theoretical anthropology. But the influence of the contribution goes beyond the anthropological knowledge pool. The tone of the Book is authoritative, though; it is, however, an authority that comes from the community, suffering inequality due to lack of reciprocity employed in research. The Book tackles myths and misconceptions regarding ethnographic research and defends the scientific validity of ethnography even in the context of digital connection.

The authors of the Book are from different parts of the world. Notwithstanding the limitations and difficulties resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors demonstrated a strong commitment to bring this Book into light, which one could not but admire. It is also noteworthy that a prolific judgment in sorting chapters with a precise aim has been attributed to the Book. While the Book is devoted
Foreword

to one concept – reciprocity as a method in social science research – the Book successfully resourced the world readership from various social science disciplines. The Book, therefore, informs theoretical and practical value in it and can be used as a guide for pictorial researchers. The Book’s content offers the theoretical foundation to comprehend everyday praxis and communication that researchers, practitioners, and participants perform in their daily business. The Book’s concluding chapter proffers some exciting insights on the way forward with observations from various chapters, suggesting the prospect of Being Reciprocal.

The knowledge reflected in the Book will benefit the following disciplines: Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Social Work, Development studies, etc. In addition, the Book will facilitate the development curriculum for academics, researchers, and advanced-level students. Finally, the Book is a detailed and comprehensive contribution to be used as a practical guide for students, teachers, designers, and scholars interested in employing practical methods to study, including the Global South, North, and beyond. Focusing on the key method and written in a professional genre, accompanied by text-box, chapter task, and essential videos at the end of each section, this Book informs invaluable advice, tips, guidelines, and principles to assist young researchers, regardless of whatever their topics are, whomever the researchers are, and wherever they work.

The work reminisces a high degree of commitment to the cause of Indigenous communities, which may call for a new horizon. In this exercise, the authors have received unconditional support from IGI Global as a funder to address the needs of the study participants, including those from disadvantaged populations. I genuinely appreciate the role of Professors Dr. Haris Wahab and Mokbul, Dr. Rashid and Dr Reza, and their sober and successful guidance to Jahid Siraz. The effort looks like amazing teamwork that made this idea materialize. I have been informed that IGI has maintained a facilitative and corroborative attitude through the production process, especially in handling the global distributions. I believe the Book is an up-to-date contribution and valuable addition to the social sciences literature and a resource for relevant libraries.

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