UCLA
American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title
Producing Sovereignty: The Rise of Indigenous Media in Canada

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2fc8x75h

Journal
American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 49(1)

ISSN
0161-6463

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Publication Date
2026-04-02

DOI
10.17953/A3.61963

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10.17953/A3.61963

Producing Sovereignty: The Rise of Indigenous Media in Canada. By Karrmen Crey. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2024. 224 pages. $108.00 cloth; $27.00 paper; $27.00 e-book.

Producing Sovereignty presents a sustained analysis of Indigenous media production in Canada as a political and institutional practice shaped by governance, cultural policy, and collective labor. The book contributes to Indigenous media scholarship by directing analytical attention toward the infrastructures that organize how Indigenous media is produced, circulated, and sustained. Media emerges as a site where sovereignty takes form through funding mechanisms, regulatory frameworks, institutional partnerships, and long-term commitments to community accountability. Sovereignty appears here as a relational practice grounded in Indigenous worldviews that emphasize responsibility, continuity, and collective presence across generations.

The study is situated within the political transformations that followed the 1982 patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the recognition of Aboriginal rights. These developments reorganized the conditions under which Indigenous political claims entered public life and cultural production. Media institutions occupy a central role within this landscape. Broadcasters, funding agencies, and educational programs function as sites where social change is interpreted and operationalized through administrative mandates, programming decisions, and production cultures. Indigenous media history is traced through these institutional formations, highlighting how Indigenous producers have shaped, redirected, and inhabited them over time through sustained engagement and political pressure.

A key contribution of the book lies in its treatment of institutions as historically specific and internally differentiated. Provincial broadcasters, independent production companies, national television networks, and postsecondary programs function in the book as analytically distinct institutional sites through which Indigenous media production is examined. Indigenous media practice unfolds across these sites through strategic engagement, collective organizing, and ongoing negotiation. The analysis foregrounds relationality as a structuring principle, emphasizing how Indigenous producers navigate institutional life in ways that remain accountable to community, kinship, and land-based responsibilities. Institutional participation is shown to be neither incidental nor purely instrumental, but embedded in Indigenous modes of governance and responsibility.

Within Indigenous media studies, scholarship has frequently focused on questions of representation, authorship, visual sovereignty, and the politics of self-representation. These interventions have been crucial in challenging colonial regimes of seeing and narrating Indigenous lives. *Producing Sovereignty* builds on this foundation while extending the field's analytical scope. Its focus on policy frameworks, funding

infrastructures, and systems of production introduces dimensions that remain comparatively underexamined. By attending to how media circulates, how access is regulated, and how institutional legitimacy is conferred, the book reframes Indigenous media as a field shaped by political economy as much as by aesthetics or narrative form. This contribution clarifies how sovereignty operates not only through images and stories but also through the governance of cultural labor itself.

The chapters on Indigenous broadcasting and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (ATPN) offer a detailed account of how institutional identity shapes programming strategies and the ways Indigenous media is positioned for different audiences. APTN's positioning within national broadcasting frameworks shapes expectations around mediation, translation, and public visibility. These expectations influence genre selection, funding priorities, and representational forms. Reality-oriented programming such as *Indians + Aliens* become legible as a site where Indigenous knowledge systems encounter dominant epistemologies through the conventions of popular media. Genre operates here as an institutional mechanism that structures how Indigenous worldviews circulate within national media spaces and how audiences are positioned in relation to Indigenous cosmologies.

The analysis of broadcasting moves beyond content to consider how scheduling practices, audience metrics, and funding requirements shape contemporary Indigenous media. National circulation introduces pressures related to legibility, accessibility, and scale, all of which carry implications for how Indigenous stories are framed. The book demonstrates how Indigenous producers work within these conditions while maintaining commitments to specificity, community-grounded knowledge, and epistemological difference. Broadcasting thus appears as a field of negotiation in which sovereignty is articulated through practical decisions about form, distribution, and institutional alignment.

One of the book's most distinctive interventions lies in its analysis of how production extends into distribution and circulation, treating these processes as constitutive dimensions of Indigenous media-making rather than as secondary stages that follow creative work. Indigenous media scholarship has often concentrated on production and representation, while the governance of access, movement, and visibility has received less sustained analysis. By tracing funding pathways, broadcast regulations, and policy frameworks, the book demonstrates how sovereignty is produced through the conditions that authorize circulation, determine reach, and shape public presence.

The chapter on Indigenous documentaries produced within academic research institutions offers a careful examination of how institutional training frameworks shape ethical and representational practices. The pairing of *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock* illuminates how institutional pedagogies, research cultures, and disciplinary expectations inform filmmaking methods. Documentary conventions associated with revelation, crisis, and resolution appear as historically positioned practices that carry epistemological assumptions. These assumptions become particularly visible in Indigenous contexts shaped by kinship obligations, language loss, and histories of dispossession. The analysis reframes debates about ethics in Indigenous documentary by situating them within institutional training and genre formation.

The final chapter extends this institutional analysis into digital media through an examination of virtual reality production. *Highway of Tears* is situated within longer histories of Indigenous representation and ethnographic viewing practices. Immersive technology operates as a site of ethical encounter shaped by proximity, discomfort, and responsibility. The viewer's position aligns with Indigenous storytelling traditions that foreground accountability and resist extractive modes of witnessing. Digital media thus enters the book's broader argument as another institutional terrain through which sovereignty is practiced and contested.

Across its chapters, *Producing Sovereignty* advances a methodological framework that spotlights institutions, policy, and circulation as central to Indigenous media studies. This framework complements existing scholarship on visual sovereignty by attending to the material conditions that structure cultural production. The book articulates sovereignty as an ongoing practice embedded in relationships among people, institutions, technologies, and Indigenous worldviews.

Within its clearly defined scope, the study offers a model for future research attentive to Indigenous media as governance, labor, and intellectual work. It will be of particular value to scholars and students interested in Indigenous media, cultural policy, and the political economies of storytelling. More broadly, it invites sustained reflection on sovereignty as something enacted through everyday institutional relations and maintained through collective practice.

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