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community-engaged research, teaching, and learning

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**ENGAGING WITH
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

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From the Editor

From Bi-culturalism, Multiculturalism, to a Treaty Nation: Re-Writing a Story of Indigenous Community Engagement in Canada

Natalia Khanenko-Friesen

Our Journal is pleased to present its long-anticipated special issue on the scholarship of community engagement with Indigenous communities. The Journal's Advisory Board has identified Indigenous engagement as a priority focus for our Journal and its special issues. Perhaps this emphasis is not surprising for those based in Canada, as Canadians have been witnessing and living through significant societal transformations that have recently gained momentum in Canada. Let me first share a story.

From 2012 to 2015, together with my students, I ran an oral history project called *Oral History of 20th Street: Many Faces of a City Core Neighbourhood*. Our project grew out of a realization that given ongoing urban development and the rapid gentrification of the neighbourhood, the current makeup of 20th Street could soon disappear. One of the oldest in Saskatoon, 20th Street has a rich and culturally-layered history; many different people and communities called it home. Throughout its history, 20th Street was known in the city for its unique 'cultural' or 'ethnic' flair, be it Indigenous, East Asian or Eastern European. From the early- to mid-20th century, the street was a bustling commercial area but, by the end of the same century, it was associated with poverty, gang wars, and general economic decline. More recently, the neighbourhood attracted developers and new businesses, betting on the commercial potential of the area.

Following students' own interests in various aspects of the 20th Street history, we recorded diverse stories from the neighbourhood, shared by the residents and those who worked in the neighbourhood. Some stories were related to us by former homeless individuals, economically deprived mothers whose children were taken away into foster care, former gang members, and the patrons of local charity organizations. Other stories were shared by social workers, church officials, politicians, local businessmen, and even university professors involved in various social justice projects in the neighbourhood.

At the start of our project, 20th Street was perceived by some in the city as an uncertain place to visit, and some of the white middle-class student researchers were initially quite apprehensive when it came to collaborating with individuals from a milieu other than their



Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Editor
(Photo: Erin J. Weiss)

own. In the end, these individuals' stories had the most impact on the students as attested by their field assignments and group discussions. I worked on this project over three years, with three different groups of students. At the end of each course, students shared their research findings in a presentation panel held in the community. These public presentations allowed student participants and community members to appreciate the scope and impact of each story recorded.

In 2012, one story stood out. It was told by a then 50-year-old Cree gentleman who worked at a local charity organization and was well-known in Saskatoon as an advocate for homeless youth. Albert (name changed) shared with a student researcher the story of his entire life and not only the story of his involvement with the neighbourhood. Born on the reserve in the north, he was forcefully removed from his family at the age of 5 and sent to a residential school for the Indigenous children, far from his own community. In the residential school everybody spoke English but he spoke Cree, so it was hard for him as a small boy to adapt to the unfamiliar and non-familial institutional environment. He was separated from his siblings. Parental visits were discouraged. Food was different and not good. From that school he tried to escape several times. He successfully ran away when he was 8, but soon after was brought back to the school by the authorities. He survived typhoid, from which he suffered lifelong weaknesses. Having been forced to spend his entire youth in the residential school, he grew quite detached from his family, community, language and culture. Later on in life, having been brought up outside of his family and community, he had difficulty settling down. His relationships did not last, but he continued to be a committed father to his children. He told a story of how he found an abandoned baby in the woods and brought that baby into his own home. While he was struggling to make ends meet, he eventually raised the girl as his own daughter, along with his other children. For some time, he lived as a homeless person. A wanderer without a steady job or steady income, he knew alcohol abuse too well.

Albert's account is one of many other stories of continued marginalization and discrimination to which Canada's many Indigenous people have been subjected throughout their participation in the Canadian national project. The story affected my non-Indigenous students profoundly, as they were not familiar with such life experiences. It seemed to them like a scene from another world, a 'faraway' country. Yet, this was a story of someone living right in their own city. One of the reasons some students felt emotionally displaced when encountering Albert's story is that, until recently, similar stories of Indigenous peoples' experiences of systemic discrimination and resistance were not circulating in mainstream (predominantly white, middle-class) Canadian society. Stories like Albert's were neither welcome for such circulation nor included in the Canadian meta-narrative of nation-building. They were too inconvenient to account for within the framework of an accepted national story of Canada's beginnings.

For a long time, mainstream Canada and the Canadians have known their history of nation building as a history of Anglo-Saxon and French 'successful' expansions into what was referred to as a 'new world', of conquering and settling its lands. These 'successes' eventually led to the establishment of a nation that understood itself as comprised by two dominant

‘founding’ cultures, two national languages, and the federation as the principle of their political union. This bi-culturalism was for some time seen as the only explanation for how Canada as a modern nation came to be, as two competing colonial forces came to terms with respect to their own, now shared, dominion and dominance over Canadian lands.

Then in the 1970s, bi-culturalism gave way to another vision of Canada, inspired to a great degree by the policy of multiculturalism. This new state policy became the next lenses through which many started reassessing the Canadian story of origin. Such reassessment was especially of interest to long-established ethnic minorities the Canadian government had once recruited to settle its Western frontier and build the railroads. First as a national policy and then as a lived set of practices, multiculturalism produced many versions of how Canada was built and what Canada was as a nation. Room was made for ‘other’ stories of nation-building.

At the same time, the colonial foundations upon which bicultural Canada was conceived remained unchallenged. Canadian ethnic minorities eagerly contributed to the national meta-narrative of origin of a strong and undivided Canada, reassuring the others that they, as ethnic minorities, were the nation builders as well. Every year in Saskatchewan, the provincial branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress awards those most deserving with a medal that states exactly this – the “Nation Builder Award”. Similar acknowledgements to celebrate ethnic ‘nation builders’ have been produced by other ethnic groups who have some voice in the multicultural Canadian establishment. Grievances were certainly brought forward as well, as Ukrainian, Chinese, and Japanese Canadians pursued the Canadian government for redress with respect to previous injustice and discrimination these groups had been subject to in one historical period or another. To convey a message to the political establishment, these ethnic minorities began forging their own narratives of participation in the Canadian nation, focusing predominantly on how they were in fact contributing to one, now multicultural Canada.

Yet, their contribution to the story of Canada’s origins, even if at times focused on the wrongdoings of previous governments, still effectively echoed the early Anglo-Saxon and French Canadian meta-narrative of nation-building, with the notion of ‘success’ as the core message. Despite its oftentimes celebratory rethorics, multiculturalism, as the government’s policy *and* the lived practice of many Canadian ethnic communities with roots in the Canadian frontier, continued contributing to and reproducing the same colonial dichotomy and power imbalance as the previous bicultural model of Canada. The multicultural vision of Canada also effectively excluded Albert’s experiences, as his story was certainly not fitting the mainstream understandings of success and nation building.

It has taken a few more decades for Canada to embark again on a transformative path towards reevaluation of its own narrative of origin. This time around, Albert’s life story of systemic marginalization and discrimination as an Indigenous person mattered. In historical terms, this journey is just beginning, first informed by land disputes pursued by various Indigenous nations across Canada, and then by a growing resistance movement for Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and respect for treaties. Escalated land disputes, such as for example the Oka Resistance in 1990, led to the 1992 establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The goal of this commission was to address the deep political and cultural polarization

that characterized the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples of Canada. Various grassroots Indigenous networks of resistance arose since the 1990s, focusing on environment protection and economic and social inequality. This has culminated in 2012 with the powerful Idle No More movement, recognized as one of the largest and most impactful Indigenous movements in Canadian history.

Sustained Indigenous political activism launched a new dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, leading to renewed negotiations in Canada on the meaning of the Canadian nation. This time, Alber's story comes to the foreground of the negotiations. Though there are many other Indigenous stories that do not resemble Albert's, his life does mirror the experiences of many who had been forcefully enrolled in Canada's residential school system. Set up in the 1870s by both Christian churches and the Canadian government, the 'Indian Residential School' system was ultimately created in an effort to assimilate Indigenous youth into mainstream Canadian society. In the operation for more than one hundred years, this system disrupted individual lives, families, and entire communities, and brought about many long-term complications and heartache for Indigenous peoples across Canada.

Though the last such school was closed in 1996, the reassessment of residential schools and their harmful impact began in the 1980s. First it was individuals who sought justice, often through legal action. They were followed by churches—those who once operated the schools—who began offering official apologies to former students. This long cultural, legal, and political journey towards truth and truthful representation of what happened to students in residential schools culminated in 2005, when the federal government offered a comprehensive compensation package to survivors of abuse at residential schools.

A few years later, in 2008, the federal government followed with its official apology to former students of residential schools. In the same year, as a part of the compensation package, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established, to "guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect" (as stated on the Commission's website). During the years of its operation the Commission collected numerous testimonies from the survivors of the residential schools to document, reveal, preserve and share their experiences with all Canadians. The work of the Commission was officially completed in 2015.

Some scholars and political analysts acknowledge that the very spirit of this Commission, with its emphasis on *re*-conciliation, was tinted and in many ways informed by the values and expectations of the dominant, settler culture. Thus, the word 'reconciliation', used in the title of the Commission, presupposes the existence of trust and a harmonious relationship prior to the period of injustice. Yet, many claim that the relationship between settlers and the Indigenous peoples was never truly harmonious or balanced, and had always been constructed in colonial terms. Despite these conceptual shortcomings, the work of the Commission, coupled with the will of the Canadian government to finally redress former injustice, has triggered and continues to inform what appears to be a large-scale renegotiation of the very meaning of what Canada is, and who the Canadians are as a people.

By 2012, when I launched the oral history project, stories like Albert's began to be

actively sought out and publicised, within the framework of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission's mandate was, after all, to inform Canadians of what the 'Indian Residential School' system was like in reality. These and other stories of long-term systemic marginalization of Indigenous people, whether or not related to residential school experiences, are nowadays gaining much currency and are publicly shared across the country, at the same time empowering those who share them.

With these stories in the public domain, the time has come to properly acknowledge their right to be firmly woven into Canada's narrative of nation-building. And a cardinal new version of this narrative is needed, where tropes like 'success' and 'nation-building' are not used as the only vectors and markers of nation formation. This narrative will need to move beyond a multicultural model to account for the unique role Indigenous people have played in the Canadian national project. Thus, the initial use of 'First Nation' in Canada's public discourse signalled a change toward this new model, with its emphasis on Indigenous communities' statuses as the first peoples of Canada. In efforts to lead, or to simply fit into this sweeping societal change, many public organizations, schools, campuses, city councils, and governments in Canada are realigning their priorities, mandates, and agendas. They now choose to incorporate Indigenous voices and Indigenous perspectives on the meanings of the Canadian nation and Canadian citizenship. We are indeed witnessing a turn in history, though it is yet to be seen how truly transformational it will be.

These ongoing efforts at realigning the relationships between Indigenous people and various other segments of Canadian society are something Canadian scholars of community engagement have been involved with for a while. Even before the increased public support towards 'reconciliation,' many Indigenous communities were at the vanguard of both the above discussed societal transformations, and the evolution of Indigenous community-engaged scholarship as it may be understood today. For quite some time, numerous Indigenous communities have been actively using academic expertise, collaborating with historians, anthropologists, and legal scholars to accomplish various goals (especially in the area of land titles reclamation), notably in British Columbia, Quebec, the Atlantic Provinces, and the North. Large areas of Canada are still subject to land claims by Indigenous peoples, where land-surrender treaties were not signed in the past. Present-day collaborations are often accompanied by other kinds of engagement between the Indigenous communities and academics.

Canadian contributions to our special Issue illustrate this new development quite well. Many academia-based CES scholars are also members of Indigenous nations or of Indigenous ancestry. These scholars therefore are intimately aware of the bridges that have to be built between different epistemologies, traditions, and research practices when it comes to collaborative work between Indigenous communities and mainstream academic institutions. Whether or not researchers engaged with Indigenous communities directly acknowledge the link between their work and the ongoing matrix-reloading of the Canadian nation, there is an indisputable correlation between their scholarship and broader sociocultural changes now taking place in Canada.

Though our special issue includes many examples of CES work specific to Canadian Indigenous peoples, we are pleased to share essays focusing on Indigenous communities from other parts of the world as well. Nearly half of all contributions featured in this issue come from outside of Canada, mainly from the United States, but also from Europe and Asia. We are thrilled to bring this vibrant international scholarship to our readership, and we encourage readers to think of the articles not only as an assembly of independent texts, but rather as a polylogue. This extended exchange between many stories, voices, and viewpoints effectively conveys the meta-story of Indigenous community engagement, in partnership with academics—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—in various international contexts. This multi-voiced story is complex, enlightening, and telling, highlighting different cultural and political contexts where Indigenous community engagement takes place.

We thank our guest editors, Drs. Winona Wheeler and Robert Innes, both at the Department of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, for taking ownership of this project and steering the entire editorial process in the right direction while attending to so many other duties and obligations in their professional and community lives. Winona's and Robert's knowledge, expertise, and consideration were indispensable. The Journal, along with its Advisory Board, would like to thank the University of Saskatchewan and the office of VP Research for their continued support. This support enables us to continue to serve Canada as the leading national venue on community-engaged scholarship.

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to our Peer Reviewers

Working on the production of this issue has been a great journey for all involved. We thank all contributors for sharing their expertise, knowledge, and ideas with others through our Journal. At the *Engaged Scholar Journal*, we have been privileged to work with every author's work quite closely, given the editorial process and the protocols of peer-reviewing. We are grateful to all our peer-reviewers for diligently assessing submissions, ensuring a high quality of scholarship in the texts published. It has been a pleasure to work with scholars from around the world who volunteered their time to make our Journal and the current issue stronger.

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Robert Henr	Sylvia Moore	Shawn Wilson
Heather Howar	Brenda Parlee	

Issue Statistics

A. Authors and Submissions

Authors and Co-Authors	
University-based	56
Community partners	14
Including First Nations as co-authors	4
Total	70

Article Submissions	
Articles submitted for peer review	38
Articles submitted for editor review	7
Peer-reviewed articles accepted for publication	16
Editor-reviewed articles accepted for publication	2
Book reviews submitted for editor review	2
Book reviews accepted for publication	1
Total number of submissions	45

Geographic Distribution (Corresponding Authors Only)	
Atlantic Canada	
Memorial University	1
Eastern Canada	
McGill University	1
McMaster University	1
University of Ottawa	1
University of Sudbury	1
Wilfrid Laurier University	1
Western Canada	
North Island College	1
Simon Fraser University	1
University of Alberta	2
University of British Columbia - Okanagan	1
University of Calgary	1

University of Fraser Valley	2
University of Regina	2
University of Saskatchewan	7
University of Victoria	1
International	
Allauddin State Islamic University of Makassar, Indonesia	1
Fort Peck Community College, US	1
Lesley University, US	1
Miami University, US	1
Michigan State University	1
Montana State University, US	2
Non-University Based	2
Northern University of Arizona, US	1
St. Thomas University, US	3
The New School, US	1
University of Alaska Fairbanks, US	2
University of Arizona	1
University of Hawai'i-Manoa, US	1
University of Hawaii, US	1
Uppsala University, Sweden	1
Washington State University, US	1
Total	45

B. Peer-Reviewers and Peer-Reviewing

Peer Reviewers	
Total invitations to peer review	87
Number of peer reviewers who accepted invitations	44

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Atlantic Canada	
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Queen's University	1
University of Toronto	1
York University	1
Western Canada	
First Nations University of Canada	2
University of Alberta	3
University of British Columbia	1
University of Calgary	1
University of Manitoba	3
University of Regina	2
University of Saskatchewan	11
University of Winnipeg	2
The King's University	1
Northwest Territories	
Independent	1
International	
Bowling Green State University, US	1
Kamehameha Schools-Bishop Estate, US	1
Michigan State University, US	2
Northern Arizona University, US	1
University of California - Davis, US	1
University of Maryland, US	1
University of Montana, US	1
University of Sydney, Australia	1
University of Tennessee, US	1
Xavier University, Philippines	1
Total	44

Essays

Indigenous Communities and Community-Engaged Research: Opportunities and Challenges

Catherine McGregor, Onowa McIvor, Patricia Rosborough

ABSTRACT As the inaugural issue of *The Engaged Scholar Journal* made apparent, while there is significant evidence that community-engaged scholarship has reached a critical mass in Canadian institutions, many important junctures still need to be explored. One such issue is the recognition of Indigenous community-engaged scholarship. Working from an appreciative stance, the three authors of this article explore how existing community-engaged scholarship theory intersects with their own experiences as academics—teasing out some of the potentialities and tensions that exist in the lived spaces where community-engagement thrives, amidst the boundaries of institutional tenure and promotion policies. The article also explores what kinds of practices or policies might be usefully considered by institutions, particularly around how to engage in more inclusive processes of scholarly recognition. We argue it is possible to embrace tools that create reciprocal, respectful and meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who share deeply held beliefs in the power of research to alter lives and communities in powerful ways.

KEYWORDS Decolonization; Indigenous scholarship; tenure and promotion; community-engaged scholarship; scholarly reconciliation

“We want to believe that it’s true.... That adopting community-engaged scholarship criteria in our institution will mean our community work is recognized and valued. The work we do is so important in effecting changes in our communities—and central to how we understand ourselves as scholars. Yet the stories and experiences of others we work and talk with don’t reflect that intention. We have allies—like you, Catherine. Yet as pre-tenured academics, and Indigenous women, can we afford to take the risk? And if we don’t, will our communities understand?”¹

We write this article as a shared endeavour: one faculty member with tenure and two others, aspiring to that status. We write from the position of strong commitments to education, and Indigenous education in particular. We write as faculty members who value and promote partnerships between Indigenous communities and the university. We know we have many

¹ This fictionalized opening scenario reflects the thoughts and ideas of the authors who worked together to conceptualize and write this article.

privileges afforded to us through this work, and it is from these positions we seek to effect changes in practices and processes that benefit our communities. Yet the discourses and practices of our institution and the socio-political culture of the academy also shape us. In this paper, we explore how these positions and positioning affect our efforts to perform in these dual, and often competing contexts.

According to Indigenous protocols, we will begin by introducing ourselves more fully. Catherine McGregor is an Indigenous ally, a queer woman and white settler who has been a visitor to Coast Salish territories for much of her life. Her disciplinary background is in social justice leadership. Trish (Patricia) Rosborough is from the Kwakiutl First Nation on Vancouver Island. She is an assistant professor in the Indigenous Education program at the University of Victoria and the former Director of Aboriginal Education for the BC Ministry of Education. Her disciplinary focus is Indigenous Language Revitalization and Indigenous Language Education. Onowa McIvor is from Norway House Cree First Nation in northern Manitoba. She is an assistant professor and the Director of Indigenous Education at the University of Victoria; she was also one of the founding members of this academic unit. Her disciplinary focus is both Indigenous Language Revitalization and Indigenous Education writ large. We decided to write a paper for this special edition of *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching and Learning* as we felt our stories as early career Indigenous scholars within a Western European tenure system were important ones to share, particularly in the context of reconciliation. We will also explore our recent experiences of working together on a review of the Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization (BEDILR). While we experienced moments of incredible excitement because of the impact this program is having on/with our community partners, we also experienced frustration and anxiety because of the tools that are used institutionally to measure this and other scholarly work. Our experiences will, we believe, provide evidence of the vitally important work yet to be done to support Indigenous, community-engaged scholars. In telling our story, we weave together the scholarly literature on community-engaged scholarship and reports on how Canadian institutions are revising their assessment and impact policies, and then consider the contradictions that emerge when the literature and reports are examined through Indigenous ways of knowing and calls for decolonizing the academy. We share some examples of how these contradictions have played out for us in our work, and then conclude with some observations and potential implications for university administrators and policy makers.

Community-Engaged Scholarship: Conceptual Challenges

There have been considerable efforts over the last decade to define what is meant by community-engaged scholarship; while there is not always agreement, many institutions reference the Carnegie Foundation's definition of engagement:

[T]he collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity...

[designed] to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (Carnegie Foundation, 2015, para 8)

While references to reciprocity are key, the need to acknowledge power and resource differentials is also important (Jackson, 2014). However, this notion of a university as partner in the creation of a richer, more engaged and socially just world is a fundamental value evident in these expressions of the need for community-engaged scholarship.

There is an increasing level of support for this kind of activity; rhetorical and public expressions of support for community engagement proliferate at the strategic level within Canadian research institutions (see for example, Jackson, 2014; Wenger, Hawkins & Seifer, 2012). However, tensions and challenges emerge within institutional policies and practices, particularly when one considers how deeply scholarship is embedded in the process of tenure and promotion. While definitions of community-engaged scholarship seek to expand the horizon of what counts as legitimate and worthy academic activity—institutional practices and institutional players may still prioritize and privilege traditional forms of scholarship, such as blind, peer-reviewed papers, and indexed and ranked journal tables (Ellingson & Quinlan, 2012). Another limitation comes from characterizations of community-engaged scholarship using Western notions of problem definition and investigation represented thusly:

The obstacle to engaged-community research most frequently mentioned is the typical reward system, which puts the highest value on individual in-depth, theory-based research that expands knowledge within a specific field. In that system, the often more interdisciplinary, collaborative, and real-world applied character of engaged-community research, where a specific problem is the primary focus, is looked down upon or not considered when it comes to determining tenure and promotion. (Scott, 2007, p. 9)

In this example, we can see how the author creates a space for an alternative to disciplinary focused knowledge, but still assumes that scholarship is a function of solving research problems. Thereby, even when the scope of the terrain is widened, scholarship remains grounded in traditional, Eurocentric notions of what kinds of research matter. Such characterizations continue to marginalize forms of community engagement that might emerge from Indigenous epistemologies, conceptualizations of relationality or Indigenous worldviews.

Understanding the limitations of many tenure and promotion criteria, some academic institutions are seeking ways to ‘measure differently’ and so, new rubrics or practices emerge (for example, the University of Regina, University of Victoria, and University of Alberta models of Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) are each identified in an institutional policy review conducted by Barreno, Elliott, Madueke and Sarny, 2013). Yet too often it appears that the assessment is based on either personal advocacy or the support of formal leaders

at the faculty level who promote and support individual scholars and CES. In many cases, systems continue to rank activity on a comparative basis; some categories include things such as the degree of impact, capacity for influencing other colleagues, community decision makers, or research activity (see for example, Jordan's (2006) *Developing Criteria for Engaged Scholars for Promotion or Tenure*). The point here is that in attempting to create a more inclusive space for community-engaged scholarship, many alternative approaches take up traditional discourses of measurement and continue to valorize processes of ranking and labelling.

The final conceptual challenge we touch upon is the broadly inclusive ways in which community-engaged scholarship is defined. In reviewing the literature, we did not find many which referenced specifically Indigenous communities, nor the marginalization of Indigenous scholars in post-secondary institutions. Additionally, we saw no evidence that these discussions about community-engaged scholarship sought to engage with Indigenous scholars about their specific needs or desires for better framing of community-engaged scholarship. It was only when we broadened our search to include "Indigenous research" that we were able to find work that substantially discussed the complexities of Indigenous, community-engaged research. The primary tension identified was the differing value universities and communities place on outcomes. As noted above, the university setting valorizes particular forms of knowledge creation (publications in particular) while the community more highly values efforts that seek to assert and regain control of their histories, communities and languages and lead to action that dismantles community structures (Gaudry, 2015). Gaudry characterizes the university models of research as "extractive" (p. 245) putting the advancement of knowledge ahead of local community needs. Instead he argued for what he described as insurgent research: "Insurgent research is all about relationships, so it directs its efforts at those who will most likely produce real and lasting change: Indigenous communities" (p. 248). This focus is core to what we will describe next: the call to Indigenize and decolonize the academy.

Indigenizing and Decolonizing Approaches to Community-Engaged Scholarship

Like Mihesuah and Wilson (2004), we begin from the premise that "the academy is worth Indigenizing because something productive will happen as a consequence" (p. 5). Indeed we think the processes of Indigenizing the academy parallel many of the goals that characterize those who work in the field of community-engaged scholarship—both seek to challenge dominant, normative practices that marginalize, essentialize, and de-legitimize the work of some while privileging others.

Marie Battiste, a seminal Indigenous education scholar from Canada articulately explains:

Indigenous scholars discovered that Indigenous knowledge is far more than the binary opposite of western knowledge. As a concept, Indigenous knowledge benchmarks the limitations of Eurocentric theory—its methodology, evidence, and conclusions. It reconceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples, and underscores the importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes. Indigenous knowledge fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric

education, research and scholarship. By animating the voices and experiences of the cognitive “other” and integrating them into the educational process, it creates a new, balanced center and a fresh vantage point from which to analyze Eurocentric education and its pedagogies. (2002, p. 7)

Decolonization therefore requires a paradigm shift, a new way of thinking; it is a critical response to the history of colonialism, imperialism, and Euro-centrism that has dominated post-secondary institutions for many years. It requires the work of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics, as we seek to find ways to value and recognize new forms of knowledge, ways of being, and of particular concern to this article, forms of scholarship.

Potential Approaches that Decolonize Scholarly Tools of Measurement

A number of Indigenous scholars have discussed alternatives to Western conceptions of research and scholarship. For example, Gaudry (2015) identifies four potential approaches: 1) the substitution of Indigenous worldviews as valid standards of scrutiny; 2) accessibility of research activity to communities; 3) recognition of relational forms of accountability; and 4) priority given to actions which positively affect community lives. Mihesuah (2004) argued that institutional gatekeeping is alive and well among academic institutions where individuals and institutional practices act as “sentries” and “rulers.” She describes their actions as everything from accepting only “nonthreatening” Indigenous scholars who seek membership within, to undervaluing Indigenous forms of scholarship and using hiring criteria that devalues Indigenous scholars who request recognition of their responsibilities as members of Indigenous communities. The politics of being an individual who serves as “window dressing... that is universities want us, but not our opinions” (p. 44), lays bare the social, cultural and political landscape of the academy that maintains marginalization of Indigenous scholarship. Building on this, Deloria (2004) documented the “extraordinary roadblocks” to academic parity among the growing number of Indigenous scholars in the academy: “Indian scholars must spend considerably more time planning their academic futures, developing allies within academic circles, and cultivating contacts outside the institutional setting in which they find themselves” (p. 26). Additionally, the Indigenous scholar will be the one most likely to do ‘double duty’ as members on university committees, and to serve as “authorities” on any matter Indigenous. He also discussed community service, which, while valued among their non-Indigenous colleagues as a *supplementary* activity, has a completely different purpose and often with completely different outcomes and expectations for Indigenous scholars. Finally, Deloria (2004) recognized the need for Indigenous scholars to take on public debates that marginalize or maintain discriminatory beliefs as a core responsibility of their work. Cavender-Wilson (2004) also described this scope of work as necessary for the process of recovering Indigenous knowledges and ways of living; this revaluing of traditional Indigenous ways

...becomes a conscious political act in which we actively resist the forces of colonialism... [and] any efforts to restore our traditional ways would have to be

matched with a strong community decolonization agenda... Through a consciously critical adaption, these ways can then provide the foundation to carry our people through the twenty-first century and beyond. (p. 72-73)

She goes on to say that documenting these processes is critically important to working as an Indigenous scholar, although such work is often undermined by traditional academic lenses which determine what matters—and mapping and reporting on decolonizing work is not respected as scholarly activity in the way it should be. Cavender-Wilson (2004) gives specific reference to local language revitalization as an exemplar of vital Indigenous community-driven work, but notes how frequently existing academic norms fail to recognize these as scholarly achievements. This observation has particular salience for the two Indigenous language scholars who are co-authors of this article.

In the face of these significant and important criticisms, Tymee-Clark (2004) calls for a “re-disciplining” of the disciplines, a stance that suggests an important emphasis on decolonization efforts throughout the academy. Pidgeon (2016) argued that this is critical if we are to move beyond tokenistic representations of some forms of Indigenous knowledge or curriculum themes rather than deeply integrated within the discipline, with an explicit naming of how dominant, Eurocentric forms of knowledge have been privileged. In the context of community-engaged scholarship, this argues for a re-conceptualization of what constitutes disciplinary recognition, but also involves finding ways to critically explore and make more visible Eurocentric biases and colonial foundations. It also calls for a reevaluation of what matters and what counts, including work that revitalizes a community, such as language learning, participating in traditional land-based cultural activities or spiritual ceremonies that honour Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. In this way, decolonizing the academy is simultaneously an act of restructuring and a support of political sovereignty and self-determination. While we hope that this work will transform post-secondary education so that it serves Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike, it may also bring to the fore critical discussions that consider the ultimate compatibility of these purposes.

Our Stories

As Thomas King (2003) so aptly stated, “The truth about stories is that is all we are” (p. 153). We want to tell you our stories because they will make clear how we understand ourselves, our work and the worlds we care so deeply and passionately about. We hope our stories will give voice to our experiences, and will make visible how particular assumptions and standards operate to constrain in unexpected and contradictory ways—in doing so, we hope this lays bare how much of the work which lies ahead requires making a new path, one not yet fully navigated among academic institutions. The Indigenous co-authors examples will highlight some of the tensions experienced by faculty members employed by a mainstream university while also situated as active members within our own Indigenous communities. Catherine’s story as a settler Canadian and allied community-engaged scholar brings years of experience and a depth of understanding of a system that binds.

Trish's Story

“Do you want tea? Do you want sugar? Do you want milk?” my student asks in Dene Zhatie. I respond with my small handful of Dene Zhatie words, “*Ehé, Íle, mąsi.*” We are outside by the fire where we’re having class this week. I am the instructor of this second year level university course, and yet I am mostly silent, not wanting to disrupt the Dene Zhatie immersion space that we are working hard to create. My role is to support and guide the students in learning to speak and teach their language. I have arrived here with some knowledge about language learning and Indigenous language revitalization and while I have some credentials that have led to my assistant professor position, what the students appreciate most is my own experience as an adult learner of my mother’s first language, Kwak’wala. With the community, we co-create the conditions for learning and co-construct new understandings about indigenous language revitalization.

“*Edi t’á azhú q’te?*” I ask the student while I hold up my teacup. She responds, “*Edi t’á libó á q’te*” and I repeat the word she has given me for cup, “*libó*”. I came into this course thinking I could teach language-learning methods by talking about them, but that is not working. I have to model the methods. I was scared to try to learn more than a few words alongside the students, scared that to begin to learn their language would disrupt what I believed to be the fragile state of learning my own language. But, I’ve committed to walk a journey with this community. I cannot arrive; deliver the content of my 1.5 credit course, and leave. We are on a learning path together.

I drink my tea while students and language mentors tend the fire, cook a meal, and prepare a moose hide for tanning. They are creating language immersion through real life activities. I wish I had the Dene Zhatie words to say, “Wow! How fortunate I am that this is my job.” It is not lost on me what a privilege it is to work in such a cohesive way. There is strong continuity between my life path and my career path. There is continuity between what matters to me, what matters to the communities I work with, and what matters in my scholarship.

Like many of our Indigenous education programs, this program is delivered in community. We are teaching here, because our community partners tell us how important it is to bring the program to them. We are teaching here, because this is where the knowledge and the language live. The community leaders have told us that to start a program in a good way means we must start by building relationships, by connecting with place, and by being on the land.

There is more than meets the eye here. What is taking place around the fire goes beyond the course objectives to increase students’ language proficiency and learning and teaching skills. It goes beyond the goal to work in partnership to contribute to the revitalization of the language of this community. As in the other Indigenous programs where I teach, we are engaged in a process of building new understandings that bridge the divide between Indigenous knowledge and the academy. We are exploring forms of teaching, learning and assessment that are meaningful to the community and hold the rigor required of higher education. In partnership, we are working to develop responsive education to meet community needs. Together we are engaged in a process of decolonization, creating space in the academy for Indigenous knowledge and community voice. We are making change so that the community can benefit

from what the academy has to offer and the academy can benefit from the knowledge of the community.

I experience joy through the continuity that community-engaged scholarship brings to my work. I care deeply about the outcomes of our community-based programs, the lives of our students and the positive difference that what we are doing makes to Indigenous language revitalization. My intent is to work with Indigenous communities to co-construct useful and valued knowledge and understandings in response to community identified needs. In this process of collaborative work, there are no simple lines between the functions of teaching, research and service. For me, community-engaged scholarship means there is intersection and alignment between the work I do, who I am, and my relationship with community. While this continuity makes my scholarship meaningful, it also makes it challenging to provide evidence of my scholarship in a tenure and promotion process that requires reporting of academic activities in the separate categories of teaching, scholarship, and service.

Onowa's Story

Recently the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to a close after five years of hearings, public events, and nation-wide witnessing. The final report included many calls to action, and these were taken up in social media venues in a variety of ways. One of my favourite actions was a grassroots Twitter campaign using the hashtag #MyReconciliationIncludes, where the writer was invited to fill in the blank. Of course, many Indigenous peoples took this opportunity to express what meaningful reconciliation would look like to them but those that surprised me most were non-Indigenous Canadians who spoke up. It boosted my hopefulness about where this all might lead. It also got me thinking about what reconciliation means to me. Of course, one could make a mega-list across so many areas of an Indigenous life, supported and influenced by family and communities that have all been affected in various ways by the hard history of that which is now Canada. However, in my academic life, the list became very short. Simply, let me be me.

My reconciliation would include working for an institution of higher learning that does not judge or punish me for not being *more* European or 'white.' I would be allowed to smudge in my office. I would be allowed to teach without readings. I would be encouraged, celebrated and rewarded for the time I give in community, for the extra time it takes to build and maintain meaningful relationships in all the areas of my work. Where hugging was not strange, where every meeting started in prayer and food was offered. Where meetings were always face-to-face, as equals, and never staring at someone's back or someone raised above the others at the front. Where we genuinely took an interest in each other's families, victories, and losses. Where generosity of spirit and humility are first and foremost. I have often remarked to my Indigenous colleagues, "Oh man, I think this place is making me white!" These thoughts come after moments when I lose my temper, when I forget to be kind first, when my humanity is taken over by frustration, when I buy into individualism (even for a moment), when I am asked/forced to compete for something, rather than serve my people.

The old saying "walking in two worlds" feels quite true a lot of the time, but yet, we

don't really, do we? We are only really ever one person, living one life in one body. How can it be healthy to believe we could be so fractured? And if we try, what does it do to our spirit? As Indigenous scholars, we are often hired to assist with the project of "Indigenizing the academy" (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004). We are called, encouraged and supported to do this difficult heart and head work, sometimes in atmospheres of great resistance. However, when the time comes to do the "counting," Indigenization work is largely devalued. We are measured across three bars, yet two scarcely count (teaching and service), and within the lone remaining (scholarship), there is only one type of production that really matters—the golden egg—the peer-reviewed article. So, let's unpack that. Who are these peers? And why do they matter so much?

Recently I had a colleague share with me a story of submitting an article for publication on research she was doing with a First Nations immersion school. The article was rejected due to the sample size being too small. However, this is the only immersion school within the entire region of that province. This left her with the following conclusion... these are not my peers. The journal she chose was a top-tier journal, the kind that "counts," and, the kind with no Indigenous representation on the editorial board. I work in a department that prides itself in a shift away from "counting" and more towards depth, quality, and diversity of demonstrable influence due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the unit. Yet, following four years as a joint Senior Lecturer, and in a leadership position within our faculty, my time started to "count" when I shifted to an assistant professorship. Then my time came to be considered for reappointment, the first hurdle on the road to tenure. The feedback I received, while largely qualitative in its measurement with supportive narrative, was marked with specific numeric indicators of "too many" (graduate students) and "not enough" (peer-reviewed publications). Fast-forward now to a new Community-Engaged Scholarship (CES) policy recently added to our departmental criteria for tenure and promotion. A giant leap for humankind? A big step forward, yes, but the question yet untested is does this policy actually replace anything or is it simply an optional boost for those so inclined? Does this criteria offer an alternative to the traditional counting (even for those who publically denounce counting) or is it simply a nod to some of the "community-based" work many scholars are doing?

Only time will tell. But one can hope that recognizing CES *is* a recognition and acknowledgement that Indigenous and other communities are also our "peers" and at times our superiors (in the case of Elders), that these communities are partners, consumers of and collaborators with our work. If we truly are here to serve, to teach, to inquire, and to create new knowledge, then it must include all our peers, not just those within the walls of the academy.

Catherine's Story

Measuring change matters; indeed, for me, as a long time social justice activist and now a scholar in the field of social justice leadership, the importance of demonstrating how particular practices, processes, or policies can transform lives has become an essential characteristic of how I conduct research. In 2014, I was fortunate enough to be selected as the lead researcher

who would inquire into the effectiveness of the Bachelor of Indigenous Language Revitalization (BEDLR) offered at the University of Victoria. I worked with an advisory group that consisted of faculty and staff, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members who had served as advisors to the program since its inception. The research design used culturally-inclusive evaluation practices, and included recognition of community protocols, ensuring that the voices of Elders were included and guided our reflective processes, and that our questions reflected the goals, priorities and perspectives of the two sponsoring Indigenous communities (WSÁNE'Ć and Kwagu'ł). This work also involved spending time in each of the communities, and a need to listen with an open heart, mind and spirit (Archibald, 2008) while continually acknowledging the deeply rooted forces of colonization that operate through processes of education and research.

Describing the full scale of the study goes beyond the scope of this article. However, the issues related to supporting and encouraging local language learning and processes of language revitalization, and the transformation of communities by lived language experiences were the strongest elements of the report. The stories I heard in community were powerful; I listened to the words of Elders, students, and instructors, each making evident at every turn the power of their language. As one Indigenous instructor said:

The language holds the people together and tells them what we belong to and are a part of... it will help us heal our past. It will help with our child rearing; it will help us to deal with the damage caused by residential schools to our people. Language is learning, learning that is relevant to our children and our communities.

Capturing the power, passion and experiences of these communities and the learning accomplished was difficult enough, but in the process of examining how the program operated in partnership between the university and community, I began to reflect more deeply on the nature, scope and depth of commitment this work required. I listened and learned about the ways in which faculty who managed the program, instructors who taught in it, and community members who supported students and family members gave deeply of themselves. I considered how their engagement in culturally accepted educational practices such as language apprenticeship, storying, intergenerational learning, land-based and ceremonial activities, and the relational practices of reciprocity and respect were much more than approaches to teaching and learning, but were core to their identities as Indigenous peoples. In typical research reports about program effectiveness, we frequently judge success by mapping the governance structures, listing policies that illuminate shared management, or counting the number of program graduates. Yet clearly the relationality inherent in the approaches taken in the BEDLR program were built from a shared commitment to past, present and future generations of Indigenous peoples; such an ontological frame went well beyond any understandings typically used in program impact assessments. In the months since completing this report, and certainly in light of the literature reviewed for this article, I have been able to better understand the demands for a paradigm shift from Western to Indigenous

frameworks for evaluating, measuring, and judging success. Without a doubt, the tenure and promotion policies and practices I've been familiar with as a Western academic—with its formulas that define teaching, service, scholarship—are far too linear, too boundaried, and too narrowly imagined to adequately capture the scope and depth of the Indigenous community-engaged scholarship.

Implications for Community-Engaged Scholarship: Theory and Practice

Our stories, we believe, are powerful examples of the shifting tides of scholarship within engaged university settings. We know that many institutions across Canada are taking seriously the call to support Indigenous scholars and researchers, that they know of the stories we tell here and are looking to find ways that significantly alter systems, processes, or procedures known to penalize Indigenous academics, regardless of their fields of study. We know, for example, of the national partnership work of a consortium of universities in Canada.² This group has made considerable progress towards mapping the scope of practice in Canada, has profiled developed and emerging best practices in community-engaged scholarship, and has focused considerable attention on how institutions might alter tenure and promotion practices in particular. Yet our stories, we believe, make evident several themes that deserve even greater attention by these groups.

First, we cannot, nor should not, subsume Indigenous community-engaged scholarship under the umbrella of community-engaged scholarship. In part, this is because, as LaVeaux and Christopher (2009) noted, Indigenous scholarship is far more than a thematic research area, but rather an entirely different paradigm, characterized by Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. If colonial orientations are to be dismantled then a genuine valuing of alternative epistemologies involves creating parallel recognition for Indigenous community-engaged scholarship protocols. We cannot continue to layer upon Indigenous colleagues the trappings of the standard ways of serving campus situated students: course readings, office hours, and publications in elite journals that do not address practitioner realities. But even addressing these issues goes only part of the way: the paradigm continues to honour expert knowledge holders as elites rather than community partners invested in shared, relationally built, culturally and spiritually sacred spaces. The academy requires a shift towards the embracing of Indigenous principles of learning, ontological beliefs about the holistic nature of transforming and becoming through experiential sites of shared engagement. Such an approach will look, feel, and enact itself in completely different ways than current systems of recognition do.

This means that we must not build layered systems, but rather we must replace one system with another: we imagine this system as one that provides choices or pathways

² The consortium was formed in 2010; initiated by University of Guelph and the Community Campus Partnership for Health, several other institutions including Memorial University of Newfoundland, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Regina, University of Victoria, University of Saskatchewan, and the Community Campus Partnerships for Health joined. The goal was to strategize and develop criteria and policy that would better support community-engaged scholarship in Canada.

for Indigenous scholars to follow. Instead of measuring against a Western standard of performance that counts community-engaged Indigenous scholarship as an “add on” to the norms of academic performance that matter, these alternative pathways must have equal value and status within the institution. They are both legitimate and legitimized processes of recognition. It is only when this new standard is achieved that the Indigenous scholar will be able to move beyond their status as “native informants or Sherpas—unpaid guides who know the path, know the conditions, and can help us [Western scholars] navigate the treacherous paths to the top of the mountain where we will finally be able to see the truth laid out before us” (Thompson, 2004, p. 388).

Second, we believe that institutions must recognize they cannot be the sole arbiters of what constitutes a contribution to scholarship. The foundations of reciprocity, relationality, and respect, demand that we consider Indigenous communities as core partners in establishing principles of impact and significance. This also means that processes of consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities need to be core to designing and developing guidelines for policies that universities will use to judge scholarly importance and impact. This may also mean that the typical boundaries between service, teaching, and research would be blurred even more substantially; and that community judgments of impact considered on an equal footing with factors such as journal rankings or peer reviews.

Before concluding our article, we know that there are university communities and particular disciplines that may find these moves difficult to make; given this, we also believe that there are interim steps that could be taken that bridge between current tenure and promotion rules and alternative impact measurement tools such as those suggested here. For example, at the University of Victoria an effort is being made to create a directory of exemplary community-engaged scholars who can provide a more typical external review of an Indigenous engaged-community scholar, when requested to do so by an existing department or faculty. This would provide institutions with confidence that excellence and rigor is being maintained, even if the measures are not the same as for other scholars within a discipline. We see this as an active, doable and positive way forward that will provide that kind of alternative pathway that could be used in a transition to a very different model built on an Indigenous scholarly paradigm. Providing official recognition of Indigenous scholarship and research as part of the culture of institutional life is also an important way forward. We know of several Canadian universities who have developed and fund Indigenous Research Centers as a means of supporting Indigenous scholarship and research and these become safe places in which emerging and new Indigenous scholars can be formally and informally mentored and supported. Pidgeon (2016) also notes that a number of institutions are putting in place alternatives to the traditional bi-cameral governance models, ensuring that Elders and Indigenous leaders become part of the formal advisory and approval structures within the institution. These approaches invite Indigenous communities to be partners within, as well as collaborators and co-decision makers, essentially re-making institutional traditions. We think there is incredible value in moving forward in these ways; while we want and need serious system transformation, we recognize that many small steps like these move us incrementally towards our goals.

Conclusion

We began our article with an imagined conversation, one that reflects the very real struggles we face as colleagues with life histories both inside and outside of the academy, and as change agents, each motivated to work in any way we can to make a difference in communities we care so deeply about. We know we have choices, and that we are privileged to do our work in the academy. We have attempted to show a way forward, a pathway that emerged from our lived experiences, while honouring the work of the many community-engaged scholars, university leaders, and community members who have begun to carve out a path by walking it. We suggested that it is possible to embrace tools that better enable the principles of reciprocity and respect to systems of assessing scholarship. We think many of the incremental policy steps outlined in this article are important ways to shift away from privileging certain conceptions of research, and we applaud those engaged in this work because it is shifting practice in important ways. However, we still hold that Indigenous scholarship has unique features, impacts and perspectives that deserve specific attention. We need community-engaged scholars and their allies to continue to argue for diverse and emergent approaches to evaluating and assessing Indigenous scholarship because local cultural and community perspectives must be valued and become embedded as vital features of institutional systems. It is through these efforts that we can celebrate our shared commitment and deeply held beliefs in the power of research to alter lives and communities in powerful ways.

About the Authors

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Pursuing Mutually Beneficial Research: Insights from the Poverty Action Research Project

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ABSTRACT Research with, in, and for First Nations communities is often carried out in a complex environment. Now in its fourth year, the Poverty Action Research Project (PARP) has learned first-hand the nature of some of these complexities and how to approach and work through various situations honouring the Indigenous research principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). By sharing stories from the field, this article explores the overarching theme of how the worlds of academe and First Nations communities differ, affecting the research project in terms of pace, pressures, capacity, and information technology. How PARP research teams have worked with these challenges, acknowledging the resilience and dedication of the First Nations that are a part of the project, provides insights for future researchers seeking to engage in work with Indigenous communities.

KEYWORDS Indigenous research; decolonization; action research; community-based participatory research

Introductory Note: Inclusion of First Nations as Authors

In the spirit of Indigenous research and of the project about which this article is written, the principal author and research teams wish to acknowledge the participation and co-authorship of the five First Nation communities in the preparation of this article. Without the First Nations' collaboration and consent, this essay would not be possible. Breaking from conventions of academic authorship and introducing how the practice of mutually beneficial Indigenous research extends to publications, the five First Nations are acknowledged as equal partners in the preparation and content of this article.¹

¹ Precedence for the practice of listing First Nations as authors may be found in *Pimatisiwin, a Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* (Lonczak, Thomas, Donovan, Robin, Sigo, Lawrence, Suquamish Tribe, 2013) and *Health Promotion Practice* (Smylie, Kaplan-Myrth, McShane, Métis Nation of Ontario-Ottawa Council, Pikwakanagan First Nation, Tungasuvvingat Inuit Family Resource Centre, 2009).

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the research environment involving Indigenous² communities has changed from *research on* to *research with*. Building upon the research approach of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council formally recognized this change in 2015 with the release of a set of principles to be used in undertaking Aboriginal research. These principles have been applied in many ways. The Poverty Action Research Project (PARP) does so in its pursuit of mutually beneficial research. Research that is mutually beneficial for both Indigenous peoples and researchers adheres to relationship-based principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). While Kirkness & Barnhardt (2001) discuss these principles in the context of post-secondary education and First Nations students, they are equally applicable to and echo other authors' calls for respectful and relational Indigenous research (e.g., Kovach, 2009; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Weir & Wuttunee, 2004; Wilson, 2008; Wilson & Restoule, 2010).

Research with, in, and for First Nations communities is often carried out in complex cultural and political environments. Now in its final year, PARP researchers have learned first-hand the nature of these complexities and how to work through various situations while honouring principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). By sharing stories from the field, this article explores how the worlds of academe and First Nations communities differ, affecting the project in terms of process, pace, pressures, capacity, expected outputs, and information technology. How PARP research teams have worked with these challenges, acknowledging the resilience and dedication of First Nations partners, provides insights for future researchers seeking to engage with First Nations communities.

Beginning in 2011, PARP was first conceptualized through a joint partnership between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and university researchers from across North America. The five-year research project is funded through a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute on Population and Public Health, and Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health. The overall aim of PARP has been to work with First Nations communities to develop and begin implementing a long-term strategy to reduce poverty, create a sustainable economic base, and provide the foundation for community health and well-being.³

At the outset, 61 First Nations (FN) communities across Canada expressed interest in participating in the project. Five volunteer communities were selected to reflect the diversity of First Nations across the country. These five communities are Sipekne'katik (Shubenacadie) in Nova Scotia, Opitciwan in Quebec, Eabametoong in northern Ontario, Misipawistik Cree

² For the purposes of this article, the term "Indigenous" is used in general, collective references to Peoples who are the original peoples of their lands. The term "Aboriginal" is used when it appears in a specific organization's name, a publication or website. The term "First Nations" is used to distinguish persons who may previously have been referred to as "North American Indian" and are distinct from other Aboriginal groups such as Métis and Inuit, as articulated in the *Indian Act*. "First Nations" also refers to the communities who are a part of the PARP project.

³ See the Research Proposal Summary "A Poverty Reduction Approach to Improving the Health and Well-Being of First Nations Communities."

at Grand Rapids, Manitoba, and T'it'q'et at Lillooet in British Columbia.

The PARP process is grounded in core principles of community-based participatory action research (CBPR) and, as such, focuses on taking actions by and for the benefit of the people involved (Sagor, 2000). While conventional research tools, such as questionnaires and focus group discussions may be part of a community's process, a main emphasis of this project is the mutual benefit of the research for the community as well as for the academy. As it has been applied in this project, CBPR is distinguished as community-driven and action-oriented rather than researcher-driven and study-oriented. Stiegman and Castleden (2015) note:

A central goal of CBPR involving Indigenous peoples . . . is to radically shift, if not invert, the balance of power between the academy and Indigenous research partners – and to meaningfully acknowledge Indigenous partners as *nations*, not stakeholder groups – with jurisdiction over research in their communities and on their traditional territories (p. 4-5).

Stiegman and Castleden (2015) concur with PARP's approach that “acknowledging the jurisdiction of the nation in question and deferring to their authority” (p. 5) is paramount, since research is being conducted “with their people on their territory” (p. 5). PARP's initial research approach and objectives called for designing and implementing a strategic plan with each First Nation, which could be used to help create a sustainable economic base toward reducing poverty and improving community health and well-being. However, the distinct realities of each First Nation have influenced the nature of the project. Each First Nation has taken a leadership role in directing PARP's work, which in some cases has digressed from its economic development focus. While the five research teams have had different experiences, common themes have emerged that provide an opportunity for others interested in engaging with Indigenous communities to learn from PARP's process as it continues to unfold.⁴

After presenting the overall research process and recognizing the core foundational strengths of participating communities, the nature of the divergent worlds and languages between academe and First Nations is investigated. Experiences are then shared, highlighting these differences as they relate to pace and protocols, pressures and social forces, capacities, and information technology challenges. Finally, insights are shared, summarizing the major findings and underscoring additional work to be done. Space does not permit a thorough inventory of PARP's community initiatives as the article's focus explores how researchers and communities have worked collaboratively to address various challenges of maintaining a long-term, mutually beneficial research process.

Research Process

As in any research undertaking, the project's work plan outlines a general process for all research teams to follow. In addition to researchers traveling to and building positive working relationships with the communities, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was to be

⁴ The five-year project has been extended one year with no increase in budget and will conclude in the spring 2017.

established to guide and approve the researchers' activities, with regular reports to Chief and Council. When the project got underway, however, research teams deferred to the direction of each community. In Opitciwan, for example, the Nikaniw Committee⁵ was established, and includes representation from all interest groups in the community including Band Council, health and social services, education, employment, youth association, women's association, and Elders. For other communities, Chief and Council have preferred to serve as the coordinating body, and no CAC exists. Both approaches have been effective to varying degrees and both have raised challenges, as discussed below.

A Community Liaison also was to be hired by PARP to assist the research team with various tasks. These included, but are not limited to undertaking a community assessment to identify salient characteristics, strengths, challenges, and opportunities; collaboratively preparing an economic development strategic plan; working with the community on its implementation; and eventually undertaking research to measure project outcomes. Every community has successfully hired at least one liaison. In at least one instance, however, the First Nation and project team have opted to work together in a different way (e.g., dealing directly with Council and Band Administration, or with the CAC).

The project has unfolded differently for each community. Now in its final year, PARP has collaborated with the five First Nations to pursue numerous undertakings, ranging from strategic plan development and implementation to capacity building, policy, and governance initiatives within the band administration to cultural and economic development programs to engage the youth and people of all ages interested in seeking employment or setting up a local business.

The Foundational Strengths of the Communities

Research *on* Indigenous communities has often focused on the notion of deficit. Indeed, the objectives of PARP focus on the alleviation of poverty, a condition of deficit in various measures. One thing that was *not* lacking was the determination of community leaders. Throughout the project the people with whom PARP researchers have worked, be they Chief and Council, the CAC, Band staff and management, or community volunteers, have all demonstrated a strong will to improve the health and well-being of their communities. They have been dedicated to the project, working on the many tasks to the best of their abilities even with the demands of their primary responsibilities. As well, they have exhibited both creativity and resourcefulness, drawing on their resiliency, knowledge and skills to pursue innovative alternatives when presented with unexpected challenges. These strengths ground the close working relationships that have developed amongst research teams and First Nations and provide context for the following discussion.

⁵ In the Atikamekw language, "nikaniw" may be translated to mean "go forward."

Different Worlds

An overarching theme that has emerged in the PARP project is the acknowledgement that core differences exist between the world of academe and the five First Nations. Our differences are not to be seen as a negative, for our combined strength lies in the diversity of all our peoples. To ignore our differences and carry on with a research project insensitive to the history and cultural traditions that make Indigenous peoples distinct is inadvisable.

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, Chapter 9, has provided much needed guidance for ethical research respecting cultural protocols and practices of Indigenous peoples. Yet, difficulties in honouring the spirit and intent of these guidelines have surfaced when working through the institutions that govern research conduct, ranging from the funding agencies to university financial administrations and ethics boards (REB) (Stiegman & Castleden, 2015; Glass & Kaufert, 2007; Guta et al, 2010; Guta et al, 2013; Flicker & Worthington, 2011). As Stiegman & Castleden (2015) note, “the REB . . . retains ultimate decision-making over the research process” (p.2). Unless an REB includes Aboriginal cultural representation and a balanced process respecting the adaptive nature that often characterizes CBPR with Indigenous communities, REBs have a tendency to uphold “structures and processes deeply embedded in a colonial institution” (Stiegman & Castleden, 2015; p. 6). The implications of these rigid “structures and processes” for Indigenous research, as experienced by PARP, are the subject of a future publication. The topic is mentioned here to underscore the deep roots of both worlds in different priorities, diverse languages, and varied worldviews. Researchers working with Indigenous communities stand between these two worlds and must be adept at bridging them. The remainder of this article highlights some of these differences, focusing on relations with communities and how PARP research teams have responded to various issues in ways that are mutually beneficial.

Different Languages

Three noteworthy issues regarding language have influenced the PARP project. These include translation requirements both in the community and at national meetings, and different understandings of words based on different worldviews.

For some communities, the primary language for many band⁶ members, especially Elders, is their original, Indigenous language. When holding band-wide meetings, therefore, a bilingual community member translates the presentation into their language. Best efforts are made to use words that are easily translatable, and visual aids are often helpful.

Nationally, in addition to monthly teleconferences, a face-to-face PARP meeting is held annually where research teams and community representatives from all five communities gather, share project updates, and discuss issues—all in English, the common working language for the project. For Ojibwe, where Atikamekw is the first language and French is the second, interpreters are hired for community participants at these meetings. The ability of

⁶ The use of the term “band member” in this article is consistent with how some of the First Nations communities involved in the PARP project refer to their membership.

Opitciwan representatives to participate and interact freely with the group, including members of other First Nations, depends on the skill level and professionalism of the interpreters, including their availability during unofficial activities (such as lunch, dinner, and health breaks). Moreover they must be present in sufficient numbers. As well, when the PARP website was first introduced at the second annual meeting, only an English version was available (www.povertyaction.ca). A French version became available to Opitciwan over a year later.

Another issue surrounding language that reflects differences in worldviews is the different understandings of commonly used English words. For example, the title of the project is “Poverty Action Research Project,” which has its origins with the AFN campaign to “Make Poverty History”⁷ launched in 2006. Most communities have questioned the use of the word “poverty.” While most researchers started the project with conventional understandings of the term, community members have challenged these assumptions, pointing out the stigmatizing connotation of the word “poverty.” They view issues in a more holistic way that includes social, health, educational, cultural, governance, as well as economic parameters. To better understand these community perceptions, the idea was proposed to conduct interviews with key informants. Some communities, however, expressed concern that discussing “poverty” was not seen as helpful. They do not wish to dwell on “poverty;” rather, they wish to focus on issues contributing to improving health and well-being.⁸

At Sipekne'katik First Nation, for example, as a strategic plan was being developed, it was suggested that it be called “Building Our Community Together” rather than having a title featuring the term “poverty.” Part of the rationale for the change was the desire not to isolate or stigmatize one segment of the community. The Misipawistik Cree Nation’s (MCN) advisory committee decided early in its tenure to call itself “E-Opinitawayk Advisory Committee.” “E-Opinitawayk” means “lifting ourselves up” and is seen as empowering for the community, promoting self-reliance in efforts to make a difference. Eabametoong indicated that there was no word in Nishinaabemowin for “poverty” and has preferred to view the project in terms of improving community well-being.

In Opitciwan, the Nikaniw Committee has contextualized the term as “*cultural* poverty,” referring to their people’s, especially the youth’s, ability to follow the values and ways according to Atikamekw customs and beliefs—their ability to speak Atikamekw, to live off the land and in harmony with nature, and to learn from their Elders and storytellers. Based on a lengthy discussion at one of its first meetings, the Nikaniw Committee has focused PARP priorities on their children’s future, rather than reducing poverty through economic development.

A final issue surrounding the use of language concerns difficulties some researchers have encountered training community workers to conduct interviews with a questionnaire. Comprehending the flow of a written set of questions when one is a more aural learner has proven a challenge for some. In addition, one community coordinator reportedly had difficulty recruiting interviewees, in part because of burnout from too many surveys in

⁷ The full title of the campaign is: “Make Poverty History: The First Nations Plan for Creating Opportunity.”

⁸ An article on this topic is forthcoming.

the community by past researchers and government agencies. Other research teams and communities have met with more success. For example, MCN recommended a band member with a master's degree to organize the community and key informant surveys. She hired and trained several band members to complete the survey in a timely and professional manner, avoiding such problems as a low response rate, which was predicted by community contacts if people outside the community were hired. In yet another community, a PARP researcher and community member, after receiving training, visited each house in the community in order to undertake a survey with adults, youth and children.⁹ While the time required to visit each household was lengthy, this process was critical in order to ensure that community members felt comfortable participating in the survey, effecting both a positive experience and high response rate. While some research teams have met with success in administering surveys, others have not, reaffirming the importance of providing sufficient training and supervision as well as allotting sufficient time to conduct the survey in a caring way.

Different Pace and Protocols

Research design involves decisions about research activities and the pace at which these activities are expected to be undertaken. Academic researchers work in an environment that emphasizes timely and concrete outputs that can be reported on yearly faculty performance reports. CBPR, however, occurs in a timeframe appropriate to the community rather than the academy and often requires the building of a relationship that serves as the foundation for working together. As has been noted by many authors, when working with First Nations communities and organizations, taking time at the outset to establish respectful, trusted relationships is of the utmost importance (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Stiegman & Castleden, 2015; Weir & Wuttunee, 2004; Wilson, 2008). Those seeking to work with a community must realize that trust is not given overnight, but earned. When arriving for the first time through the doors of an organization or in a community, one needs to come with the sole expectation of being present, spending time getting to know the people and giving them the opportunity to get to know you. This does not happen in one visit, but several.

The nature of action research also affects the pace of the project. A request for action comes from the community, yet no such request can be expected without a level of trust. One's true intentions have to be seen by the community and the leadership before they will begin entertaining ideas of how the researcher(s) may be of assistance.

Within PARP, each team has had unique experiences during this initial "getting to know each other" phase. Some researchers have had positive relationship-building experiences, such as in MCN where a close working relationship has been established with councilors, and the chief's tenure has been uninterrupted, providing stability for the project. Others have had a

⁹ This was a community-wide health survey and not a survey related to "poverty." The survey was designed with substantial input from the CAC, support from the community, and approvals from the university REB. The Community Coordinator/Liaison expressed concern over delays in receiving REB approval for the questionnaire, which impacted the timing of the survey. Throughout the survey, the research assistant and community member were supported by the PARP Research Lead and the Community Coordinator.

long-standing relationship with their communities so trust already exists. At Sipekne'katik First Nation, the community has had a close relationship with the principal investigator going back decades, which has helped with the acceptance of the project, an acceptance that has bridged usual family-based and political divisions within the community.

For another community, relationships were built during initial visits, which included sharing meals, presenting gifts, and taking tours of the community with members of a newly formed CAC. During the first year of the project, several visits and teleconferences were held to update CAC members and seek their guidance on evolving work. They also helped to establish a comfort level as these social interactions can be quite challenging for shy or introverted community members and researchers (including Indigenous researchers), for whom social interactions may be difficult.

For others, the initial phase of relationship-building has gone less smoothly. One researcher, for example, worked with the community coordinator to introduce the project to band membership in community-wide and kitchen table meetings. While his approach was sound and intentions good, upon implementation he failed to effectively account for political nuances within the community. Even though he invited Chief and Council to these gatherings, they came to very few, if any. In effect, Chief and Council were left “out of the loop,” and two problems arose. First, a number of people who had grievances with decisions taken by Council (or not taken) were attracted to the meetings as were some individuals who had aspirations to run against incumbents in the next election. Second, as a result, Chief and Council came to the view that the project was fostering dissent in the community, and support for PARP by the elected leadership decreased. The researcher was asked not to return, and the future of the project was jeopardized. Another researcher was then asked to assist with damage control and to see if the relationship with the community, especially Chief and Council, could be repaired. He insisted that, to do this, he and the Project Lead must “show up,” spend time with Chief and Council, host a meal, apologize, and discuss how the project will proceed differently. The insistence by the new researcher of sharing a meal together before any formal meetings were held was seen as key to helping renew the relationship. Once Chief and Council accepted the apologies, the new researcher planned several trips to the community simply to show up, observe, and listen. After about a year of these visits, which involved becoming acquainted and establishing trust with a new Chief and Council after elections were held, Chief and Council began approving work for the researcher.

Another factor that has affected the overall pace of the project for a number of communities is one that is out of everyone's control—the weather. In Opitciwan, for example, the trip on the forest road, which is an adventure in good weather, becomes particularly risky in icy, stormy, windy or rainy conditions. On more than one occasion, the research team has arrived late due to bad weather and the need to drive slowly. Another time, they arrived only to be prevented from leaving because the road had been closed and travel forbidden. Other communities have had similar problems, including Eabametoong, which is a fly-in community, and T'it'q'et, which is a full day's drive through the mountains that can be quite dangerous, particularly in the winter.

Other factors are process-oriented. Many, if not all, communities wish to assure community-wide support for a particular “action” being contemplated. Chief and Council or the CAC may wish to hold band meetings to seek broad-based endorsement of an initiative. In Eabametoong, for example, Chief and Council asked the researcher for help with economic development and, together, they began discussing establishing an economic development corporation. Previous attempts had failed, so Chief and Council, understandably, were cautious about trying yet again. After the researcher had explained the issues contributing to these failures and how the approach he was proposing has proven successful for other First Nations, Chief and Council gave consent only if band-wide support was obtained. A number of band meetings were held. In addition, the topic was discussed during phone-in radio talk shows with councilors. Finally, a community vote was taken, approving the concept. Then, the researcher had to wait for the accompanying Band Council Resolutions (BCRs) to be passed, which took a few more months. Sorting out additional details about the corporation regarding directors, a shareholder agreement, and other issues added more time because each decision required a number of discussions with Chief and Council to ensure both clarity and comprehension before voting. Taking the time necessary to ensure understanding and broad-based acceptance has helped reinforce trust in the research team to set up the corporation with Eabametoong’s best interests in mind.

Sometimes, Chief and Council/CAC have requested a community-wide survey to seek support for an initiative if attendance at band meetings has been low. In these cases, time is spent designing an easy-to-understand survey, getting it approved by Chief and Council, and administering it. Once all the surveys are in and results tabulated, more time is often necessary to discuss results and obtain the requisite approvals (or refusals). In all communication tools and strategies, time and care must be taken to convey concepts in layperson terms to facilitate broad-based understanding. Whether in a band meeting or a survey, oral translation into the community’s original language is required. With surveys, a band member may go door-to-door to translate the survey one-to-one, requiring more time.

Illustrating the effect on pace in this circumstance, at Sipekne’katik First Nation, a community survey is being designed at the request of Chief and Council in order to obtain more input and more specific guidance on the design and implementation of their strategic plan. Indeed, it is hard to say when the design process ends and implementation begins. The community has been implementing aspects of the strategic plan almost since its emergence, while still seeking further community input and adapting the plan accordingly.

A constant influence on the pace of the project is the reality that researchers’ time with the CAC, Council or Band staff, as well as other stakeholders, on PARP matters competes with numerous day-to-day obligations and priorities. Many band administrations, unfortunately, are not alone in feeling, at times, overwhelmed with the demanding responsibilities and significant needs of their communities. Housing shortages and repair needs, health and safety issues, and employment concerns are just a few of the constant demands. Eabametoong First Nation has the added stressor of the Ring of Fire negotiations process, which involves numerous meetings with other chiefs in the Matawa Region, as well as calls for input to technical environmental

assessments and other studies.¹⁰ Sometimes, the PARP team has arrived for council meetings and must wait to the end of the day to be seen. At that point, Chief and Council appear to have had their fill and understandably so. Presentations are adjusted accordingly or attempts are made to meet the next day. Sometimes it is not possible, but just being present is important. Spending time there, seeing how one may be of assistance, and visiting during coffee breaks all help strengthen relationships.

The research team in Opitciwan has had similar experiences with the Nikaniw Committee. Attendance by all members of the committee all the time is nearly impossible for many reasons, including job demands, illness, or political and judicial conflicts. For instance, one meeting was postponed due to tensions that had arisen with the provincial government. Another meeting was shortened when important public hearings were scheduled at the same time to review specific claims related to the community's displacement.¹¹

For Sipekne'katik First Nation, an Advisory Committee composed of academics, First Nation leaders and government representatives as well as band members has proven helpful in providing advice to the community. The community is open to such advice but it needs to be done with sensitivity, respecting the fact that the community does not want to be pushed into a non-Aboriginal mold. Additionally, what is offered needs to be clearly defined as advice, not telling the community what to do.

The research team in MCN has maintained momentum with PARP through an effective working relationship with its advisory committee, which does not require regular meetings with Chief and Council. The chief is advised by the community coordinator as to project developments. During PARP, three different councilors in MCN have been project contacts, and two have served as advisory committee co-chairs. The advisory committee has recommended youth-oriented projects that were funded by PARP, and these have had a positive effect on the community and the working relationship with the research team. In summary, research teams have had a range of experiences coordinating with CACs, Chiefs, and Councils. In many instances, flexibility, adaptability, and patience are important for healthy relationships.

Affecting all communities is the unfortunate occurrence of periodic emergencies. Throughout PARP's tenure, all have had to cope with deaths due to illness and suicide, with losses of the old as well as the too young. In many if not all communities, when a death occurs, the band observes the tradition of closing the band office; all work halts so everyone may pay their respects to the family and honour the deceased.

Again, flexibility, adaptability, and patience are key in such difficult circumstances. Understanding the impact a death has on such a tight-knit community is critical. While the

¹⁰ The "Ring of Fire" refers to a massive mineral deposit in northern Ontario estimated to be worth about \$60 million and includes chromite, a key metal in stainless steel, as well as base metals, platinum, palladium, and more. For more information, see: <http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2015/06/23/liberals-failing-to-deliver-on-ring-of-fire-opposition-says.html>

¹¹ Opitciwan has been displaced twice due to flooding of its territories with the construction of the Gouin Reservoir. For more information, see <http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-toward-a-new-relationship-with-the-atikamekw>; and <http://www.nationnews.ca/fighting-for-a-fair-share/>.

community observes their traditions, researchers must be patient and respect the Band's wishes to refrain from work for the amount of time required. While it may affect the pace of our research, life happens and we appreciate the compassionate nature of the chief, council, and band as a whole. In death, as in other crises of life, all else seems trivial and the priority must be to take care of those in need.

Different Political, Academic, and Social Pressures

Generally, First Nations communities and academics live and work in worlds with different pressures that, in turn, have influenced mutually beneficial processes and outcomes. Understanding the pressures and social forces of each participant provides insights for PARP team members and future research undertakings.

In addition to those noted above affecting the pace of PARP, other pressures are worth mentioning. Regarding pressures to develop resources, First Nations are constantly being approached to participate in one socio-environmental assessment or another, enter into negotiations for Impact Benefit Agreements, or listen to another proposal for their community's consideration.

Development pressures felt by Opitciwan have been heightened by the provincial government's allocation of wood quotas in surrounding forests to large firms, disadvantaging the First Nation's sawmill. Quebec's decision sparked a protest, including a blockade by Opitciwan and other Atikamekw communities, followed by negotiations and eventually an in-principle agreement, all of which has monopolized the leadership's time. The Nikaniw Committee has been unable to benefit from the presence of several members during the crisis.

Another constant pressure is each First Nation's numerous obligations to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). First Nations have extensive reporting and disclosure requirements to fulfill on an annual, and sometimes more frequent, basis. Sometimes, application deadlines and forms seem to change mid-stream, creating a challenging environment for band staff to navigate. Opitciwan has the added challenge of currently operating under third party management with INAC. The announcement of the imposition of a Management Action Plan has created a climate of uncertainty. Everyone in the band office has been concerned about job security, and severe restrictions have been imposed on all activities, including PARP's. For instance, a member of the Nikaniw Committee in charge of a key initiative was prevented from purchasing materials necessary for its implementation. As a result, the activity itself was compromised, and the PARP team has had to hold discussions with council to seek reassurances about the status of the entire project.

As well, First Nations who rely on federal transfer payments for their core funding were, until recently, operating in a budgetary reality where the federal government had restricted funding increases to two percent per year, despite higher inflation and population growth rates.¹² Each year, because of this deficit relative to transfer payments provided to urban areas

¹² Retrieved October 4, 2015 from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/how-does-native-funding-work-1.1301120>. Since this article was written, the Trudeau Administration has promised to lift this cap, but the cumulative effect of long-term, inequitable funding continues to impact First Nations.

nationwide, many First Nations are struggling to address the issues that persist for their people. In this bureaucratic reality, dedicated leaders and staff have had to cope with the demands of their jobs with what amounts to diminishing resources. PARP team members are aware of and sensitive to this ongoing challenge for the five communities and are exceedingly grateful that, even in this tough financial environment, they are willing to participate and devote time and personnel to the project. In turn, PARP researchers have a heightened sense of responsibility to ensure that the communities realize some tangible benefit from PARP initiatives.¹³

As if these pressures are not enough, most of the communities still operate with a short electoral cycle of two years as mandated by the *Indian Act*. Some communities are pursuing the change to a four-year term, but this will take time.¹⁴ With a two-year term the reality for the foreseeable future in many First Nations, the implications for leadership are significant. First, when newly elected, getting oriented to the job takes time. In Eabametoong, a council retreat was held one year after elections, at which time Chief and Council discussed how it had taken them that long to get a handle on their jobs. With one year before the next election, time was short to get anything accomplished before thoughts turn to the next campaign. Long-standing chiefs and councils, such as in MCN, have not had these issues. Two elections have been held during the project, and the same chief has been re-elected both times, providing stability for the community and PARP.

If, however, a new chief is elected and a significant turnover occurs amongst councilors, the PARP team will have to reintroduce itself to the new leadership and reestablish trust, affecting the pace of the project. PARP in Sipekne'katik First Nation, for example, has survived two elections so far, each of them resulting in some change of elected leadership. Long-term support for PARP has been aided by the passage of a BCR after initial meetings with Chief and Council in 2011, endorsing the project and specifying a multi-year commitment by the community.

When elections loom, Chief and Council want to show the community all they have accomplished. The PARP team may be pressured to provide evidence of progress, or at least a degree of momentum on its various projects to aid a campaign. For example, during Eabametoong's election process, Council was tempted to alter the original terms of the BCR it had passed for the economic development corporation to show how the corporation will provide jobs in the near term for community members (i.e., voters). The PARP research team had to meet with Chief and Council to underscore the importance for the success of the corporation that politics not interfere with its business, as this is how previous economic development corporations in Eabametoong and other communities have floundered. While jobs may arise for band members in the future, promising jobs in the short-term was not

¹³ To emphasize this point, one community member notes a "... concern in the community that this project would turn out to be just another study that gathers dust on the shelf. This view has been mentioned in the past with other projects and may explain low turnout at community meetings/events" (Billy, D., personal communication with C. Loppie, October 7, 2015).

¹⁴ Lengthening terms is now possible after the *First Nations Elections Act* came into effect April 2015, requiring development of a community election code, adoption by a majority vote of the membership, and passage of a Band Council Resolution.

encouraged, as it takes time for effective economic development corporations to become established and realize business success.

PARP has its own set of academic pressures to balance with those in the communities. Adhering to the project objectives as approved by the AFN and funding agencies, complying with REB protocols, and doing so while maintaining a trusting relationship with the First Nation, is a challenge mentioned earlier. Another is balancing the workload of the project with one's other responsibilities as a university academic (i.e., teaching, administrative committees, supervisory obligations, other research projects, etc.). Both community leaders and researchers are under pressure to 'get things done' and show progress in the project to sustain continued community-wide support for PARP's presence. Researchers also are compelled to complete the project within the funder's timeline. Moreover, community members are not always aware of the spending restrictions on research funds. Consequently, tensions may emerge when researchers must deny a community's request to fund activities that are outside research funding guidelines.

Publishing presents another pressure for researchers and requires fulfilling important responsibilities to First Nations. In order to publish material that is derived from this project, consistent with the principles of respect and mutual benefit, as well as OCAP (Schnarch and First Nations Centre, 2004), the project has adopted a protocol where consent of the communities is sought. As noted earlier, PARP wished to recognize and include participating communities as authors. In seeking permission to do so, each research team presented a draft of the publication to primary contacts within the community and received feedback and suggestions for change on passages and/or stories that related to their circumstances. Sections were edited so that each community was comfortable with what was being shared and how their stories were written. In some instances, they felt a story was important to include but they wished to remain anonymous. Significant effort was made to ensure concerns were addressed and the ultimate choice of words was acceptable. Listing them as co-authors was also discussed, and their consent to do so was given.

The process of preparing articles for publication raises a number of questions. Who benefits from these publications? Who are the authors? Do First Nations wish to receive this sort of publicity? One PARP team member likens Indigenous research ethics to medical ethics where "do no harm" and "act for the good" are central philosophies (D. Newhouse, personal communication, August 27, 2015). Are we doing any harm when sharing stories from PARP's experiences with First Nations partners to illustrate a point made in an article? Is the pressure to publish in the best interests of the communities? These and other questions are important to consider and discuss with each community involved. First and foremost is taking care of the relationship team members have with each First Nation. If something to be published jeopardizes the relationship in any way, the draft must be revised in order to respect and address the concerns. Reiterating Stiegman's and Castleden's (2015) point, PARP is endeavouring to pursue Indigenous research that is mutually beneficial and "[acknowledges] the jurisdiction of the nation in question and [defers] to their authority" (p. 5). Not only is this true for the actual work being carried out in the project, but also when considering the

question of what may be published.

That is, jurisdiction and deference considerations in mutually beneficial Indigenous research may run counter to the convention of academic freedom, exercising a belief in a researcher's ability to write about whatever one chooses. In Indigenous research, however, broader ethical issues are at stake. A researcher's accountability to the First Nation speaks directly to practicing the Indigenous principles of respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Accountability issues also speak to the principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) that ground a great deal of Indigenous research today (Schnarch & First Nations Centre, 2004). Engaging in research with First Nations communities according to these principles generally translates into balancing the fundamental philosophies of "do no harm" and "act for the good" with one's academic freedom. Other authors who discuss philosophies of ethical care in Indigenous research include, but are not limited to, Wilson (2008) with a discussion of relational accountability and reciprocity, Warren (2008) with the practice of "deep care" and the question "is your work clean?" and Dockstator (2014) who refers to both Wilson (2008) and Warren (2008) in an experiential reflection of research as ceremony, where attention to process and protocols as well as the research content is necessary.¹⁵

Capacity Issues

Mutually beneficial research, in addition to respecting the above Indigenous principles, recognizes that potential changes may occur in the actual work itself. The terms of reference and work plans, written long before the commencement of project tasks, need to be written with room for adaptation. For PARP, the work on the ground has, in some communities, been modified to suit the needs of the First Nation, rather than priorities of the academy.

One area in which this has occurred in the PARP project relates to capacity issues. For example, in some communities, Grade 8 may be the average level of formal education attained by band members. Fewer high school diplomas amongst the current leaders of a community are offset by all the learning on the job and life experiences of Chief and Council and senior staff. While formal post-secondary education may be limited, especially in more remote communities, First Nations people have a wealth of knowledge, from traditional knowledge of living on the land and wisdom about local ecosystems, flora, and fauna to experience navigating the complex bureaucracies of provincial and federal governments. Professional development programs for staff and management in band administrations is a constant priority. Additional training in various fields is sought, but this depends on the availability of funds, time, and coverage for those away on training.

Eabametoong is the only fly-in community in the PARP project, and cost is a major factor in professional development. Whether flying someone in to deliver training or sending a group to a course in Thunder Bay, travel to and from Eabametoong is not inexpensive. Sending staff to receive training off-reserve is a major financial and time commitment, not to mention the

¹⁵ See also Kovach (2009); Weber-Pillwax (2001); Wilson & Restoule (2010); Wilson (2001).

additional workload for those remaining in the office. Providing distance learning opportunities in Eabametoong is infeasible because of technological issues, which are discussed below.

As a result, while the work plan for PARP focuses on economic development, Eabametoong's Chief and Council have asked the research team to develop and deliver locally a tailor-made professional development course for band staff and management. The justification for the project's adaptation is that in order to be successful in economic development, building capacity within the band administration is a necessary stepping stone.

A challenge to doing so is the staff turnover rate within the band administration. The hope is that, after PARP ends, someone on staff, such as the Human Resources (HR) Director, will be able to deliver the course to new hires on a regular basis. That said, at the time this article was written, the position of HR Director was recently vacated, illustrating an ongoing struggle First Nations communities may have retaining people in key positions. Being a fly-in community exacerbates the challenge, as the remoteness may not necessarily entice qualified people to apply and, once there, stay with the job long-term.

A significant job vacancy rate, however, is not unique to fly-in communities. Opitciwan, for example, has had two general managers since PARP began and the position is currently vacant yet again. Given the complex environment in which band administrations operate, as described throughout this article, difficulties persist in filling positions. Intervening factors common throughout many communities include the demanding nature of the work, the skill level it commands, as well as interfamilial conflicts among employees affecting workplace relationships and productivity. In addition, for many First Nations, remote or not, the pool of people available for any one position may be limited, and given the small pool, people may not have the requisite skill set for a particular job. As a result of these and other factors, people may simply not apply and positions may remain unfilled for extended periods. If PARP depends on this position in any way, the project may be affected.

Alternatively, a complex situation arose in one community that threatened the viability of the entire project. The community liaison was unable to work with the research team and could not support the project. Concentrated efforts to address concerns were unsuccessful and matters were complicated when band council required that the community liaison continue in the position. Personal dynamics can become easily tangled without malice and with unplanned consequences. Eventually, the situation was resolved without a significant effect upon the project.

Information Technology Issues

An issue related to administrative capacity that has also had implications for PARP research teams concerns a Band's information technology (IT) resources. For some communities, such as those closer to urban areas, bandwidth speed is fast, and technology is present to facilitate effective communications via email and video-conferencing. As a result, distance learning and on-line professional development courses are readily available. Download speeds for email attachments are also relatively quick. For First Nations that are more remote, however, IT problems persist. In bad weather, oftentimes, the internet and telephone lines

have been disconnected for both Opitciwan and Eabametoong. MCN has also experienced internet problems. For Eabametoong, because it is so remote, limitations on bandwidth have restricted internet speeds, access to on-line instruction, and distance learning. Also, capabilities that many academics take for granted are problematic, such as the ability to download and open email attachments quickly, use of programs such as DropBox to transfer larger files, downloading monthly bank statements, loading webpages, and exploring websites for resources and information. While the installation of a fibre optic cable is being planned, this is years away because of the expenses of purchasing rights-of-way and installation through several territories and jurisdictions.

Even seeking assistance to troubleshoot computer problems is a challenge. Excellent IT support is available in Thunder Bay. However, accessing long-distance IT support is an issue, given the limited bandwidth speed and subsequent inability of IT workers to connect directly into the server with a dependable, high speed connection. The PARP team, when present, has provided what support it can. For example, a printer had been off-line for a while, and the staff person had ordered replacement printer cartridges but this failed to solve the problem. The researcher suggested replacing the imaging drum, and once this was ordered, flown in, and installed, the printer started working again. For remote communities such as Eabametoong, these problems persist and have a significant impact on staff productivity, as well as PARP, because so much time is spent on problems such as these, impeding information sharing and timely communication.

Summarizing Shared Insights

Research with, in, and for First Nations communities is carried out in complex environments. Achieving the original vision and overall aim of PARP has had to start with a process focused on developing and maintaining trusting relationships with each of the five communities. Taking time to allow Chief and Council, the Band Manager, the Advisory Committee and the community as a whole, to get to know the researcher and vice versa, listening to and discussing their issues and ideas, and determining and collaboratively planning various initiatives that are given priority by the community are all part of this community-driven action research. With PARP now in its final year, enough time has passed and several initiatives have been implemented, allowing a review of the project to share some insights from our collective experiences.

Beginning with the self-as-researcher, one observation concerns the emotionally challenging nature of CBPR and action research. It is easy to use a conventional lens and see the problems and deficits of a community, but harder to see things through a community lens where determination and resilience are strong. As well, it is difficult to maintain a positive attitude given the challenges that many communities face. Action research is hard yet rewarding work, and one inevitably develops close relationships. Invariably, when working with any community – Indigenous or non-Indigenous – crises happen and work must cease for a time. When a death or other crisis occurs, the distress affects everyone, including the researcher. At times such as these, and in general, taking time to care for oneself according to one's own beliefs and

practices is essential. If the researcher is not healthy in mind, body, and spirit, the project and one's ability to work effectively with a community are likely to suffer. For a project's long-term sustainability and efficacy, therefore, a researcher's dedication to the community and project needs to be balanced with care for one's personal health and well-being.

At the community level, PARP's research approach is rooted in and guided by Indigenous research principles (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Wilson, 2008) and emphasizes care for the relationship between researcher(s) and community. *Respect* for the people, their cultural practices, their strengths, their knowledge, and their creative problem-solving given the challenges they face is key. The above discussion highlights the importance of taking enough time at the outset of a project to develop respectful relations and caring for them throughout the project via clear communications, regular visits, listening, effort, patience, and understanding.

Responsibility and accountability are understood as respecting the leadership and decision-making structure within the community as well as the need to seek community-wide support for different initiatives being proposed. Given the numerous pressures discussed above, the commitment of the five communities to participate in a research project such as PARP carries with it a responsibility for each research team to uphold a community's trust. Therefore, an emphasis on respectful process and careful attention to how researchers conduct themselves to earn and maintain trust are recommended (again, through effective communication, visiting regularly, listening, etc.).

Reciprocity or *mutual benefit* is embodied by identifying work that will realize some benefit for the community, in this case to contribute toward improving community health and well-being. Being flexible and able to adapt the project to ensure reciprocal benefits is essential. For example, providing professional development training may be a necessary intermediate step. Even though the original work plan does not articulate taking action on capacity building measures, Chief and Council or band staff working with the researcher may identify such a need that, if pursued, would help establish a stronger foundation for the community's efforts to improve overall health and well-being.

Ensuring that the work is *relevant* to the community is also key. This may require balancing expectations from the REB-approved work plan with those of the community. In conducting mutually beneficial research, again, flexibility and being able to adapt an academic work plan are important. For example, the project's initial approach to reducing poverty involves the pursuit of economic development strategic plans and initiatives. It has since become clear that conventional academic perspectives of solving poverty issues primarily through economic solutions is only one part of a more holistic, Indigenous understanding of well-being that integrates health (of mind, body, and spirit), social, educational, environmental, cultural, youth, elder, as well as economic issues. Expanding the project's scope from focusing only on the economy has yielded a more diverse set of actions, including land-based programs with the youth and elders, educational and cultural activities, and more.

A final insight is to approach work with Indigenous communities with an open mind and open heart, staying true to the spirit and intent of CBPR and action research as well as trusting that the research process, if properly designed and implemented, will result in 'acting for the

good.’ Entering a community with preconceived ideals and academic rigidity may run counter to the priorities and needs of the community. Keeping an open mind, maintaining flexibility, and adapting personal as well as academic expectations to ensure one is working in the best interests of the community are essential.

The relationship between university researchers and Indigenous communities has changed significantly in recent decades. Many communities have extensive experience with research and researchers. They expect to be involved in all aspects of a project and to benefit from their involvement in the form of improved capacity to conduct their own research, reports they can use to advocate for government funding, or relationships with members of business communities (among other gains). Mutually beneficial research is an opportunity to build communal knowledge that can be used to facilitate change.

In closing, this article has highlighted a number of challenges PARP is managing as its various “actions” and working relationships with the five First Nations continue to unfold. Additional issues are anticipated, especially around the ethics of exiting a community at the end of an extended project. Certainly, this article raises additional points of inquiry that due to space considerations are reserved for future publications. These include:

- Detailed analysis of activities undertaken in communities as part of PARP, exploring objectives, process, outcomes, and evaluations and their implications for future practice;
- Influence of communities on the shape of the research question(s) and on the initiatives and outputs developed in light of any shift in the research question(s);
- Balancing the adaptive nature of a community-driven research process with continued support of funding agencies and university partners, support predicated on a traditional academic approach to the formulation of a research project;
- Exploration of the “academic world” as a monolithic generalization. Is it accurate to characterize academe in this way, in light of research team members who may be members of both Indigenous communities and academic ones?
- Various challenges and implications of working with different kinds of community advisory teams (i.e., CACs, Chief and Council, etc.);
- Investigation of the importance and implications of a strengths-based approach to research, recognizing communities’ inherent fortitude and capacities that contribute to their continued perseverance in the face of ongoing hardships and government controls;
- Exploration of Indigenous understandings of concepts like poverty, capacities, experience, knowledge, etc.

For now, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the five First Nations that have welcomed us into their territories, for jointly and collaboratively pursuing mutually beneficial research, and for allowing us to share what we have learned so far, providing those that follow with insights into engaging in work with and for Indigenous communities.

About the Authors

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Eabametoong First Nation (EFN) is located on the north shore of Eabamet Lake, 360 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. EFN is a member of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Matawa Tribal Council and is a signatory to Treaty 9. Eabametoong is a traditional name, which in *Anishinaabemowin* (the Ojibway language) means “reversing of the water place.” Each year, due to water runoff, the flow of water from Eabamet Lake into the Albany River temporarily reverses. EFN has approximately 2,400 band members, of whom about 1,300 live on reserve with the balance living in Thunder Bay, Geraldton, and other surrounding communities. EFN is accessible year-round only by air. During the winter, residents maintain “ice roads” to Thunder Bay (16 hours), Pickle Lake (9 hours), and other surrounding First Nations.

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The **Misipawistik Cree Nation** (MCN) is located on the northwestern shore of Lake Winnipeg where the mouth of the North Saskatchewan River enters Lake Winnipeg. Traditionally, people from the Misipawistik Cree Nation have considered their community the geographic centre of Manitoba. Misipawistik Cree Nation is approximately 400 km north of Winnipeg and is accessible by Provincial Highway #6, by air and by water. As of 2012, the registered population totaled approximately 1,753 people.

David Newhouse, Onondaga from Six Nations of the Grand River, is Chair of the Department of Indigenous Studies at Trent. His research examines the emergence of modern Aboriginal society. His publications include *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*; *Hidden in Plain Sight: Aboriginal Contributions to Canadian Development and Identity*, Volumes I and II; *Not Strangers In These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*; and *Well-Being in Urban Communities*.

Opitciwan is an Atikamekw nation comprised of three communities: Manawan, Wemotaci and Obedjiwan-Opitciwan. Atikamekw means “whitefish” and refers to the species of fish the people have eaten for ages. Opitciwan was formerly located at the tip of Mékiskan, a site that is accessible by water and is one hour by canoe from the spot that the community occupies today. In 1920, the Gouin Dam flooded the community causing the families to move closer to the bay. The people settled slowly in the territory where the rising rivers meet, hence the name “Opitciwan,” which means “the meeting place of the rising rivers.” Opitciwan is located in the heart of the Province of Quebec north of the Gouin Reservoir in the region of La Mauricie. It is accessible by a 166 km logging road, linking the reserve to Highway 167 in Lac-Saint-Jean. Based on the 2011 census, the community has a population of 2,031 people.

Sipekne'katik First Nation is the second largest Mi'kmaq band in Nova Scotia and includes the communities of Indian Brook Indian Reserve (IR) #14, New Ross, Pennal, Dodd's Lot, Wallace Hills and Grand Lake. Sipekne'katik First Nation has 2,588 band members, with approximately 1244 members residing in the community and 1344 members residing out of the community. The land area of Sipekne'katik First Nation spans 12.13 square kilometres and is located 68 kilometres (km) from Kijipuktuk (Halifax, Nova Scotia) and 28.8 km southwest of Truro, Nova Scotia.

The **T'it'q'et community** (formerly Lillooet Indian Band), situated adjacent to the town of Lillooet, BC, is approximately 254 km northeast of Vancouver, BC on Highway 99. T'it'q'et is one of eleven communities within the St'át'imc Nation that share a common language, culture, history and territory. T'it'q'et currently has 394 registered members. The band has seven reserves, including the main reserve Lillooet IR #1 and a shared reserve with the Bridge River Indian Band.

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Wanda Wuttunee, Professor in Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, focuses teaching and research on future Aboriginal business leaders and their efforts to benefit home communities. She is also interested in mainstream business/community partnerships that work to enhance vibrant, sustainable and healthy Aboriginal communities.

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Effectively Engaging with Indigenous Communities through Multi-Methods Qualitative Data Collection and an Engaged Communications Plan

Lee A. Swanson, Joelena Leader & Dazawray Landrie-Parker

ABSTRACT A research project on social and economic capacity building through Aboriginal entrepreneurship employed a highly engaged approach with communities in northern Saskatchewan, Canada. The involved communities were viewed as research partners, and the research team applied a comprehensive communications plan to provide community members with relevant and timely information about the project and summaries of its outcomes as those results emerged. The study was designed to empower those who traditionally had been viewed as participants on whom research could be conducted, and ensure that the research was instead conducted with and for them. This research project encouraged youth and adults to express their perspectives in new and engaging ways that gave them the opportunity to more meaningfully have their voices heard. One important outcome from engaging more with communities was that research team members felt more engaged with their own project.

KEYWORDS engagement; Indigenous; Aboriginal; community; engaged scholar; capacity building; entrepreneurship; research methods; qualitative method

A research initiative exploring social and economic capacity building through Aboriginal entrepreneurship in rural and relatively remote communities in the northern part of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan employed a multi-methods qualitative data collection approach. Additionally, this study implemented a comprehensive communications plan to engage with community members. This engagement strategy was designed to empower participants, including high school students, to express their perspectives through their own voices and according to their own unique viewpoints. It was also designed to ensure that the research was conducted *with* and *for* the communities instead of *on* them. This approach helped extend the research project and might improve the potential for funding to support further research on capacity building through Aboriginal entrepreneurship. This article provides a narrative description of the experiences of the research team members as they implemented an engagement plan with communities and the more than 380 research participants in the primarily Indigenous communities across northern Saskatchewan who participated in the first two phases of the research project.

In this article, the term *Indigenous* is used when referring specifically to the descendants of

the original inhabitants of the region being discussed. *Aboriginal* is a broader term that also includes the Métis people, those who are descendants from both Indigenous people and from people who settled in that region after Europeans arrived in North America.

Decolonizing Indigenous Research

The arrival of European settlers in North America over five centuries ago marked the beginning of a period of colonialism that continues to shape the way that researchers view their work with Indigenous communities. There is a significant debate within the literature outlining the issues that arise with research involving Indigenous communities, particularly with the research process itself and the ways in which findings are presented (Chilisa, 2012). One criticism is that researchers often impose methodologies that frame research in a way that does not blend well with Indigenous concepts or knowledge and experiences. This calls for “the need to bring Indigenous methodologies into the research arena” (Chilisa, 2012, p. xv) and importantly, “non-Indigenous researchers need to be mindful of their part in knowledge creation, to be respectful and accountable to the communities they work with, and to ultimately contribute to an increased space within [all] research for Indigenous knowledge and methodologies” (Graeme, 2013, p. 513).

Smith’s (2012) discussion on decolonization critiques positivistic research arguing for the need to find marginalization and to create spaces where Indigenous research agendas are developed. Western research brings a particular set of values and discourses that influence researcher interpretations; however, an Indigenous paradigm does not reject existing approaches. Instead, it seeks to decolonize the process whereby the research does not oppress or misrepresent Indigenous peoples, communities, or cultures. By applying decolonizing methodologies, researchers can position themselves “and their work in relation to the people for whom the research still counts” (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 17). Researchers can do this by carrying out “bicultural research, partnership research and multi-disciplinary research” (p. 17) that includes Indigenous people in mutually beneficial ways with the goal of conducting research *with* and *for* Indigenous people instead of *on* Indigenous people (Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012). This approach should improve the relevance of the research being conducted as it can decolonize the research and meaningfully involve Indigenous communities on their own terms and for their own benefit (First Nations Centre, 2007; Koster et al., 2012; Schnarch, 2004).

Wilson (2008) noted the perception that North American and Australian Indigenous peoples are among the most widely studied, but the research has often not

... been asked for, nor has it had any relevance for the communities being studied. People are accustomed to seeing researchers come into their communities, do whatever it is they do and leave, never to be heard from again. Because community members are for the most part excluded from the research process, they have become resentful of research in general. (Wilson, 2008, p. 15)

From the project's beginning, the Building Northern Capacity through Aboriginal Entrepreneurship (BNCAE) the research team pledged to implement measures to conduct their research in a decolonizing manner. This approach involved ensuring that the people in the participating communities were included and consulted throughout the process, and would benefit from meaningful, timely, and accessible feedback from the research outcomes. The BNCAE research project was to be an engaging and engaged process that fostered collaborative partnerships with stakeholders throughout the region in which the study was conducted.

Research Project Background and Context

The process began in 2009 when three researchers at the University of Saskatchewan combined their expertise in Aboriginal engagement, community development, and entrepreneurship to begin addressing a research gap related to Aboriginal entrepreneurship. A fourth researcher joined this group in 2011 to form what would become the core faculty group of the BNCAE research team.

It was also in 2009 when one of these researchers launched the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development and became its initial director (another BNCAE researcher assumed the directorship a few years later). This marked the start of a comprehensive engagement initiative with Indigenous communities—and with potential Scandinavian research colleagues—that would support the BNCAE research project.

In 2012, the researchers submitted a Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant application to fund a five-year study comparing social and economic capacity building through Aboriginal entrepreneurship in northern Saskatchewan with the experiences from northern Scandinavia. Those two regions are similar in many respects even though Saskatchewan is in a sub-Arctic region approximately 1,200 kilometers south of the Arctic Circle, and the region of concern in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland is primarily north of the Arctic Circle. The communities in both regions are mostly rural and relatively remote, many have largely Indigenous populations, and some are heavily influenced by natural resource extractive industries located nearby. In the regions under consideration in Saskatchewan and Scandinavia, the climate and geography are also similar. For this article, we are not addressing the Scandinavian component of the BNCAE project.

An important element in this application was its focus on meaningfully engaging with local people in northern Saskatchewan communities as research partners. It also indicated a commitment to embrace the results from a report based on a SSHRC dialogue that sought to “capture as accurately, sensitively and pragmatically as possible the many voices, perspectives and suggestions brought to bear on the process of developing an Aboriginal Research Agenda for SSRHC” (McNaughton & Rock, 2003, p. 1).

The application also outlined a knowledge mobilization plan that included a communications plan that would make the research findings accessible in a timely manner and in a form that would be useful for the residents of northern Saskatchewan, the primary region in which the research would occur.

The SSHRC grant request was approved in 2013. By mid-2014, the researchers had assembled a research team, completed the initial project planning, and launched Phase One of the study. Phase One involved formally interviewing six targeted individuals from across northern Saskatchewan who had extensive experience in community development, and consulting with several others regarding how to best engage with communities and participants for the next phase. The results from Phase One included insights, such as the need to ask the youth in northern communities for their perspectives and to better understand the undocumented economy, which led to enhancements to the plans for Phase Two. Phase Two ran through 2015 and into the first months of 2016 and included qualitative data collection activities in seven different northern Saskatchewan communities involving approximately 200 high school students, 150 adult community members, and another 24 Photovoice participants.

One of the first activities during the planning phase in 2014, designed in part to solidify the commitment to meaningfully engage Indigenous communities, was to expand the research question into a full research statement along with detailed descriptions of what each part of the statement meant to the research team. The research statement follows:

We are using participatory research methods to define, describe, and assess the past, current, and evolving states of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northern Saskatchewan as it has and is contributing to social and economic capacity building in relation to local concepts of ‘the good life’, wellbeing, and prosperity. This is a comparative study with Northern Scandinavia.

This statement represents the research team’s commitment to viewing capacity building through the lens of the local people, who might or might not see it as benefiting them. The team wanted to better understand what types of lives people in the communities aspired to have as represented by the local concepts of *the good life*, *wellbeing*, and *prosperity*. *The good life*, or *miyo-pimatisiwin* in one dialect of the Cree language, one of the three main Aboriginal languages in northern Saskatchewan (Dene and Michif are the others), is an important Indigenous concept in the region. The word *pimatisiwin* refers to “ancient knowledge [of] community life, well-being, and sharing of values (Settee, 2013, p. 6); “For Indigenous peoples, land, food, and health are key components of *pimatisiwin*, from the Cree root word *pimatisi* ‘to be alive’” (p. 3). It is the interconnectedness of these components that work together to promote *pimatisiwin*.

Although not explicitly stated in the research statement, the BNCAE team also designed questions to better understand what the term *poverty* meant to the members of the communities being studied. This was meant to provide additional context to respondents’ perspectives on *the good life*, wellbeing and prosperity. It also provided respondents with an opportunity to define *poverty* as they saw it because local characteristics, particularly in rural areas, appear to affect the nature of poverty. Among the regional attributes that shape what poverty looks like in a particular region are “its natural environment, its economic structure, its public and community institutions, its existing social norms and cultural environment, and the demographic characteristics of its population” (Blank, 2005, p. 442).

The BNCAE team felt that measures of poverty generated by Statistics Canada, using quantitative data collected through formal means and primarily based upon documented economic activity, might not reflect how northerners perceived poverty in their communities. Poverty is usually defined as the inability to meet basic needs relative to the norms of the broader community. The Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) measurement used by Statistics Canada represents the income level at which a family must spend a greater proportion of its income on basic needs and necessities than the average same-sized family (Statistics Canada, 2015).

A characteristic of many of the communities in Saskatchewan's north is that much of the economic activity occurs as part of the undocumented giving, sharing, and trading economy. A common example is when a local hunter shoots a moose and shares the meat with community members. Since those people do not need to purchase meat from a registered business, the economic benefits derived from sharing the moose meat are undocumented. This might mean that the only available measures indicate that some communities have high levels of poverty when the local people do not consider themselves to be impoverished. The research team felt that only through engagement with the communities could they capture the essence of the northern entrepreneurial ecosystem in which the undocumented economy was included.

Another indication of the importance placed on engagement by the research team leaders was the method by which the research ethics was secured. The ethics application included a section entitled *Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples* that included 20 sub-sections identifying how the research would be conducted in relationship to Articles 9.1 to 9.22 of the Tri-Council Policy for Aboriginal Peoples, Indigenous Peoples, Community, and Community Engagement. Article 9 deals with research involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada, and addresses the requirement for community engagement, the nature of that engagement from a research ethics perspective, and other elements designed to ensure that Indigenous people are fully and meaningfully engaged with any research conducted in their communities (Tri-Council, 2014).

The Research Methodology

The OECD defines *entrepreneurial activity* as “the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets” (Ahmad & Seymour, 2008, p. 14). Action research (AR) can be a valuable approach to generating new knowledge when considering the complexities of entrepreneurial activity because it takes into account the multiple perspectives, objectives and opinions of those involved. Participatory action research (PAR) goes beyond the basic research goal of producing useful knowledge to generating change that meets social needs (Herlihy & Knapp, 2003).

Community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) is a research methodology that adds extra degrees of engagement as it is done for and by communities with a distinct focus on driving action or transformative community enhancement (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Schmidt, 2009). CBPAR can be a particularly powerful way to better understand

the broader context of community wellness as it considers the perspectives of the community members themselves. This approach is geared toward empowering communities to engage in a collaborative and respectful dialogue while also seeking transformation to accommodate their needs. CBPAR follows culturally appropriate means to investigate social issues, avoids assumptions that academic researchers are the experts and attempts to reverse unequal power relations between participants and researchers that are associated with traditional research methods (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; Schmidt, 2009).

The research team chose to apply CBPAR as a way to ensure it directly involved Aboriginal students, community leaders, and other members of northern communities as research partners while acknowledging and respecting their sovereignty (McDonald, 2004). This type of research methodology has frequently been applied in research projects involving Aboriginal communities where it has been shown to produce positive results (Legat, 1994; Masazumi & Quirk, 1993). Using these methods, Williams (2008) and his colleagues examined Aboriginal economic development practices in British Columbia by engaging chiefs, councilors, and economic development representatives from Aboriginal communities across the province. Tuchak (1997) used a similar approach to investigate community-based economic development by Inuit women. Based on existing academic evidence (Brown, 1985; Hoare, Levy, & Robinson, 1993), the research team believed that applying CBPAR would be an effective and ethically responsible way to achieve the objectives for their research initiative.

Understanding the cultural and historical context of northern entrepreneurship requires listening to communities' needs and providing a space for them to reflect upon their own experiences while they ponder strategic alternatives for transformation designed to be effective in their local context. Participatory action research can be defined as a "highly reflective, experiential, and participatory mode of research in which all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subjects alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research enterprise" (Berg, 2004, p. 196). As a result, CBPAR does not rely on a strict research agenda, but instead, facilitates collaborative relationships and trust between researchers and community members (Edwards, Lund, Mitchell, & Andersson, 2008).

CBPR is based on a number of principles: acknowledging and addressing the imbalance of power; focusing research on important community issues; accepting multiple world views; fostering empowerment; developing community capacity; working with community members as partners; approaching research as education; and respecting the established protocols of working with Indigenous people. (Koster et al., 2012, p. 198)

One key benefit and an important aspect of CBPAR is community capacity building. The term *community capacity building* describes a wide range of community enhancing strategies aimed at improving a community's overall well-being. It is broadly defined as a community group's ability to define, reflect, assess and act on concerns of importance to their members (Labonte, 2007; N. Smith, Baugh Littlejohns, & Thompson, 2001). Such strategies build dynamic social and organizational relationships among individuals, groups, and service providing organizations, and also encourage the sharing of resources. Community capacity building is a process of working with community members to determine their needs and strengths and to

develop ways of using community strengths to meet those needs (N. Smith et al., 2001).

Utilizing culturally sensitive and community-centered methods will enable Northern communities to take effective and sustainable action toward wealth creation and entrepreneurial priorities most meaningful to them (N. Smith et al., 2001). Community capacity building may become an important bridge between action and positive long-term outcomes for Northern communities.

The BNCAE research team was committed to applying CBPAR methods in its work with its participating communities, particularly as some of those communities had planned but not yet executed initiatives to improve their social and economic capacities (Northern Economic Summit, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Whereas CBPAR can involve researchers playing a role in generating change to meet social needs while producing useful knowledge (Herlihy & Knapp, 2003), in the context of the research team's project, its change-generating role was restricted to providing input into community planning processes only when asked to do so by the community members initiating and managing the projects.

As with the grant application process, initial research planning, and ethics application, the research methodology applied for this project was designed to ensure meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities.

Phase One of the project involved doing telephone and in-person interviews with leaders throughout northern Saskatchewan. The purpose was to seek expert advice regarding how to best engage with the communities to earn their invitations to work collaboratively with them during Phase Two. One important outcome from Phase One was the recurring suggestion that the research team engage with the youth to better understand the aspirations the younger generation had for themselves and for the futures of their communities, and to learn from the youth what the communities can do to satisfy their wants and needs. By embracing this recommendation, the research team also provided a forum for knowledge translation between the youth and the adults in the communities.

The Phase Two data collection methods included two workshops, one with the community as a whole and one with high school students. The community workshop included two focus groups and a request for volunteers to participate in the Photovoice exercise. Photovoice is a photo elicitation method whereby participants share their stories through their photos in relation to open-ended research questions. The volunteers were provided with cameras and research questions, and the date was confirmed for the return visit by members of the research team to interview the Photovoice participants. The high school workshop also included two focus groups along with a peer-to-peer video capture interview exercise the research team called *OurVoice*. This exercise provided a unique and engaging way for students to record each other on video while asking each other prescribed interview questions in physical settings that they chose. During both of the workshops, respondents indicated on maps what geographic region they considered to be their community. They also used other tools developed by the research team, including checklists and picture cards, to convey their perspectives about the flow of goods and services within and between the communities. These tools were designed to capture the nature of the trade of goods and services in both the documented and undocumented

components of the northern Saskatchewan economy.

Also informed by the results from Phase One, the research team initiated and implemented a social media-driven communications plan as part of its knowledge mobilization plan. The social media component focused on presenting timely, accessible, and immediately useful information to communities throughout Saskatchewan's north. The information disseminated to communities included some previously existing material from other sources along with outcomes from the research process as they became known. Often the research outcomes were disclosed before the data were fully analyzed and integrated into academic articles and other research documents. The goal was to regularly give something of use back to the participating communities. As asserted by Koster et al. (2012):

any research conducted within a community, regardless of its purpose and methodology, should follow the general principles of Indigenous paradigms, and respect the community by engaging in active communication with them, seeking their permission not only to conduct and publish the research but also with respect to giving results of the research back in ways that adhere to community protocols and practices. (p. 195)

Phase Two data collection began with the Northern Village of Pinehouse Lake, a northern, relatively remote, and primarily Métis municipality accessible by road and located about 500 kilometers north of Saskatoon. The experiences there led to improvements to the processes and tools used in the remaining six communities visited during the fall of 2015 and the winter of 2016. The following sections provide the researchers' perspectives on how the data collection methods and the associated social media-driven communications plans represented Indigenous community engagement and what the outcomes from that engagement were.

Insights from the Community Focus Groups

The community workshop focus groups were held in the evening and all community members were invited to participate to discuss their community's economic and social capacity with respect to the way entrepreneurship can contribute or is contributing to their concept of the good life, prosperity, and well-being. Research team members guided the flow of discussion during the focus groups by following moderator guides that were continually adapted during the data collection phase to improve upcoming workshops based upon the experiences of those already held. The discussions were based on the personal experiences of the participants and storytelling emerged as a preferred way of sharing perspectives and engaging in group dialogue.

One research team member reflected upon her experience moderating one of the community focus groups, sharing that "humor and storytelling was a large part of what got the conversations going and made for a very comfortable space for discussion that, at times, led to some fairly sensitive or heavy topics related to the community's capacity to sustain businesses in the north." This process of storytelling removes the researcher-directed approach that

some focus groups take, and that encourages dialogue catering to what the participants feel the researchers may want to hear. Instead, open conversation and the use of storytelling allowed for organic conversations to flow naturally and provided a rich form of data that helped provide better understanding of participants' perspectives. The organic nature of the dialogue was particularly evident in one case when the participants began telling their stories in their traditional language, with a community member translating for the benefit of the researchers.

During the community workshops, many participants emphasized collectivity as well as tradition, culture, language and land. Overall, the researchers felt the workshop process that enabled storytelling provided community members with ways to build on a conversation that was already happening in the community and allowed for the creation of a more accurate representation of many of the elements of the northern entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Insights from the High School Focus Groups

The youth workshop focus groups held with Grade 10, 11 and 12 students happened in the afternoon during school hours. As in the community workshops, the research team continually adapted the approaches taken following the initial Pinehouse Lake sessions to improve each successive youth workshop without compromising the content consistency of the data collected across all communities. Students were generally eager to participate in the *OurVoice* peer-to-peer video interview process the research team developed and refined (described later in this paper), and this appeared to prepare the students to expand on their responses to the video questions during the group discussions. As explained by a researcher who facilitated one of the youth focus groups: "one thing that we discovered was that the youth's stories aligned very well with those of the community and they had an in-depth understanding of the activities of their community." Following the initial Pinehouse Lake youth workshop, the research team introduced a workbook in which students could write down their responses to the discussion topics. This proved to be a productive engagement tool as it gave voice to students who chose not to speak during the focus groups. The responses provided in the workbooks uncovered youth insights and perspectives that might not have otherwise been disclosed.

Insights from Applying Photovoice

Photovoice is a visual methodology originally developed by Wang and Burris (1997) in which participants share their stories through photographs. Participants are typically asked to express their perspective or represent their community's point of view through their own photography with the aim of uncovering deeper meanings and understanding complex social questions or problems from the perspective of those immediately impacted. Wang and Burris (1997) outlined three main objectives for the Photovoice method: "(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers" (p. 370). One strength and a key element of Photovoice is that discussions and direction of the interviews are led by the participants themselves since images captured are often personal reflections that are important to participants. As a result,

participants often lead discussions and become highly involved in the research process by identifying challenges or issues and working towards finding solutions to barriers (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2005).

Photovoice has been described as an empowering methodology that encourages all members of a community to engage and have their voices heard through their own photography. Photo elicitation often involves in-person interviews and broader group discussions and analysis about individual photographs with participants, the selection of images that are most important to complete their overarching story, and working together to devise next steps and actions to address issues (Wang, 1999). This next step often includes sharing information with the rest of the community, or reaching out to policy makers and leaders. Storytelling through photography assists in building a narrative with nuanced and rich descriptions that enable better understanding and meaning generation of specific contexts about participants' lives (Poudrier & Kennedy, 2008). This type of descriptive process as generated through the power and strength of photographic or visual methods might not be achieved through interviews alone.

Photovoice is often combined with or follows the goals of community-based participatory research, particularly with its emphasis on building relationships and partnerships between community members and researchers. The integration of visual techniques with CBPR provides a creative opportunity for members of communities to create knowledge, engage fully in the research process, and work together to address challenges while also celebrating strengths (MacDonald et al., 2011). Absolon and Willet (2005) argued that "the process of telling a story is as much the point as the story itself" (p. 98). In the case of the BNCAE research project, it is apparent that the Photovoice process provided the participants with the opportunity, not available through traditional interviews, to reflect on the research questions posed and frame their responses in ways that provided richer data for the project. In this case, the Photovoice process was the catalyst that helped enrich the stories told.

One of the research team members involved with the Photovoice interview process said, "I think the best part was hearing what people had to say about their photos and how much they engaged in it. I think the open flexible style is really useful in that we ask fairly open questions and let the participants walk us through their photographs." Another team member commented that one of the best aspects of the interview was "participants being able to choose their own photos and explain them on their own terms."

One team member's critique of the process was that they could have used more time to go through the photos with the participants, and revisions should be made to the planned pacing of the interview. He commented, "I would like more time as I felt somewhat rushed." As in most community engaged research, Photovoice requires a significant amount of time, and participants should be encouraged to take as much time as they need to speak about their photos.

One key theme that came out of the interviews was the concern that development in the region was having a negative impact on the land, and that tradition and culture were being lost. One participant talked about the desire to move back towards a traditional way of life

without western technology and another spoke about the need to have strong leaders who are inclusive of all members of the community and who encourage people to work together. The following image is an example from one Photovoice participant. While acknowledging that the view would be more pristine without the power lines visible in the picture, the participant described the image as “simply amazing...this is what I wake up to every morning and this is what I would look at as the good life; seeing beautiful scenery of nature every day, all day (...) that would be better... just living off the land, like the older people used to.” Common themes that emerged from the Photovoice exercise as well as the community and youth focus groups was the natural beauty of the region and the benefits derived from living off the land.



Image 1. Participant Photograph on “The Good Life”

Insights from Applying OurVoice

In describing the potential use of video to record focus group discussions and interviews, Pink (2007) suggested that researchers must consider the nature of the participants with respect to their familiarity with the media and how it might be part of their culture. Much has changed since she wrote her book, particularly with the proliferation of cell phones with which people regularly record themselves and others. By 2015, when the research featured in this article was conducted, picture taking and video recording in public and among all types of people in groups was so routine in the participating communities in northern Saskatchewan that the research participants would have considered their involvement with video recording (both as a recorder and as someone being recorded) to be commonplace. The research team felt that what the OurVoice method described next was not disruptive to the data collection process, nor an activity that unduly influenced what the respondents said or how they behaved. On the contrary, the BNCAE research team concluded that the use of the OurVoice method empowered the respondents to be more genuine and thoughtful in their responses than might have been the case using alternative data collection methods. The use of peer-to-peer video interviews was an ideal approach that got students interacting and engaging with each other in a comfortable space to prompt discussion about new topics relevant to their community.

The term OurVoice was coined by the BNCAE research team to reflect the enhanced insights into what individuals from communities truly feel when their voices are heard in the free flowing and organic way that occurred when the peer-to-peer video interviews were conducted. The research team thought carefully about the potential benefits and drawbacks from having a researcher interview a youth that they had just met as compared to using the

OurVoice approach where young people who already know each other interview each other in a familiar setting of their choice using prescribed questions while capturing the exchange on video. After careful consideration the research team anticipated that the youth might be more candid and open with their peers than they would with adult researchers that they had just met. While they recognized the potential risk that little of value would be accomplished if the youth did not comply with the directions when they were on their own with the video cameras, they felt that the potential benefits outweighed the risks.

The OurVoice experiment was a success in that the youth were very candid and on-task when asking and responding to the prescribed research questions while on video. The two questions were as follows: 1) what do you like most about living in your community; and 2) what would make your community an even better place to live? The responses were positive and thoughtful, with very little hesitation to speak candidly and honestly to their peers. The research team members who reviewed the videos were struck by the maturity level demonstrated by the students when asked to provide their insights in response to the questions provided. Moreover, the team members conducting the student workshop received positive feedback about the exercise. One research team member said, “we heard from the teachers and school principal that they have never seen their students as engaged as they were during the workshop and overall they were extremely positive and excited about this experience.” Another team member, who had taught in northern Saskatchewan schools, shared what he thought was the most effective and positive outcome from the video exercise and focus group. He indicated that “the way in which the students engaged in the process...they were strongly involved and produced some very thoughtful answers. In contrast, some assignments for students simply do not engage students.” The participation level was exceptional, to the degree that when the researchers returned to some communities a few weeks later, students who did not have an opportunity to participate in the initial round asked to participate at that time.

Engagement Outcomes from the Communications Plan

As part of the project’s overarching engagement strategy, a detailed communications plan was developed to continually and meaningfully connect with communities and key stakeholders participating in the research program. Following a consultation process with northerners and with research conducted by Master of Business Administration (MBA) students from the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan, the research team implemented a social media communications strategy using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A project website was also maintained to ensure that static information would be readily accessible and available as a stored record of all pertinent research activities. During the data collection phases, radio and local news services were used to promote the community workshops. The research team also began producing and widely distributing quarterly newsletters to provide updates about the project and its outcomes.

There were two main purposes for the communications plan. The BNCAE research team wanted to provide timely and accessible information and updates to community members and other partners, and it wanted to promote the project to encourage other communities

to become involved with the research initiative. The information sharing component was intended to inform people of the results of the work within their own communities, and also of the outcomes from the research conducted in other communities. It was an opportunity to share social and economic development success stories across the northern part of Saskatchewan and to acknowledge challenges while demonstrating how they were, or could be addressed. The sharing was meant to occur within and across geographic expanses, but also across generations so that youth, adults, and Elders would better understand each other's aspirations and concerns.

The research team needed a communication strategy to encourage communities to actively engage with the research project, and to have them want to invite the BNCAE research team to work with them in their community. The strategy included developing a master contact list of the relatively extensive network of people that members of the research team had personal connections with throughout northern Saskatchewan. As new student research assistants who were from the region joined the research team, they were invited to add their contacts to the list.

While the team took stock of the range and depth of their contacts in Saskatchewan's north, it identified and prioritized a list of communities from which it hoped to collect data. The criteria used to prioritize the list included the desire to work with communities in each of the general regions: northwest, northeast, northcentral, and the far north, a region that can only be reached by airplane. Another criterion was the intention to work with a representative mix of First Nation reserves, in which some people speak the Woodland Cree, Swampy Cree, and Dene languages, and municipalities, some of which include Métis people who speak the Michif language. Reserves fall under Canadian Federal Government jurisdiction and municipalities are under the authority of the Saskatchewan Provincial Government. The team then began a social media, mail, poster, radio ad, and telephone campaign to seek invitations to work with the highest priority communities. This campaign continued until just before each community visit so that it also served to get participants to the community workshops, at which a catered meal was provided as added incentive for community members to attend. By the end of Phase Two, the team had collected data in seven of these high priority communities.

The research team endeavored to establish connections with the right people at the right times. With First Nations communities, the team engaged first with chiefs and band councils to ensure the proper protocols were followed to help build the research partnerships. When engaging with municipalities, they first approached mayors and councils.

In addressing the potential barriers to communication, including language and the potential difficulty in reaching both younger and older people, the BNCAE research team developed potential remedies. One characteristic of Saskatchewan's north was that both adults and youth were active on social media, but Elders were less likely to access information in that way as they generally relied on word-of-mouth or reading or listening to the news for the information they received. While the BNCAE newsletters were only distributed in the English language during Phases One and Two, publications to be shared with communities in later phases of the research program may include translated versions in the Cree and Dene languages. Additionally,

the team might produce audio recordings of the newsletter in those languages to make the information available to all people in the region. In many cases, community members who used social media helped bridge the technology gap for people who were not as electronically linked in.

For the building relationships part of the communications strategy the team made contacts mostly by telephone unless asked to go to the communities for in-person meetings. In the case of Pinehouse Lake, the research team was invited to, and attended one of the community's Reclaiming our Community (ROC) meetings in the months prior to the data collection visit. That particular meeting helped pave the way for the later trips to the community.

The BNCAE research team engagement activities are represented in the circular flow diagram shown in Figure 1. Those activities represent a continuous cycle of creating new relationships within communities and strengthening existing ones, building trust between the researchers and the community members, working with communities to understand their needs and prepare to collect data, analyzing and reporting the results, and conceptualizing new phases of the research based upon the previous phases. This engagement and communications cycle represents a continuous, fluid, and iterative evaluation of the interactions between the research team and the communities.



Figure 1: The Research Communications Process: Fluid and Iterative

Conclusion and Future Research

During a future phase of the research program, the BNCAE team will share what they learned with community members through a video presentation in their communities. This will provide an opportunity for community members to validate the results relative to their community, and suggest revisions as needed.

The general consensus from the BNCAE team members is that their use of an engaged approach with communities helped each of them feel more engaged with the project. The reason for this might be that the particular researchers who were members of this team were attracted to the project in the first place because of its promise of generating true and meaningful value to communities through enhanced levels of engagement with them. As one team member stated, “I am most attracted to research projects like this because I feel much closer to our community participants; they are not just *research subjects*, they are real people, colleagues even, who can get as invested in the project as we do because they know the outcomes can benefit them.”

Much time and effort went into relationship building with communities. The relationships that research team members built with community members, and especially the youth, indicate the team member level of engagement with the project. A common message from the members who visited the communities was that they “felt like they knew the youth so well” and “spending time in the community was so rewarding.” This extra level of engagement helped the researchers build trust and the necessary relationships with the communities. In turn, this trusting relationship paved the way for the storytelling that community members used to share their perspectives and experiences. One researcher noted that she “didn’t feel like [she] was facilitating a focus group, [she] felt like [she] was having tea with Elders.” This engagement process helped to shift the traditional researcher-participant relationship into one in which researchers and participants were partners working together to discover important insights that would be of use to the communities in which the work was occurring.

The expectation is that, because of the strong and mutually beneficial relationships that were cultivated between the researchers and the communities, new research with an equal degree of engagement will emerge from this project. One highly engaged research project that the team has begun to develop based on outcomes from the current study is focused on leadership in the north.

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Catalyzing Action on First Nations Respiratory Health Using Community-based Participatory Research: Integrated Knowledge Translation through Strategic Symposia

Tarun R. Katapally, Sylvia Abonyi, Jo-Ann Episkenew, Vivian R Ramsden, Chandima Karunanayake, Shelley Kirychuk, Donna Rennie, James Dosman, Punam Pahwa

ABSTRACT *Assess, Redress, Re-assess: Addressing Disparities in Respiratory Health Among First Nations* is an ongoing community-based participatory research initiative involving two First Nations communities in Saskatchewan. The initiative's rationale is grounded in the ethos of transformative community-based participatory research and facilitated through integrated knowledge translation with the aim of building community capacity. The initiative's goal was to engage community members to actively participate in all research phases, from the development of the research questions to dissemination of results and evaluation of community-chosen interventions that evolved from the results. After baseline assessment of predictors and indicators of respiratory health, a program of integrated knowledge translation was adopted. As part of this program, a community-researcher collaboration was put in place that produced two knowledge translation symposia. The two symposia have brought together First Nations community members, interdisciplinary researchers, federal and provincial policy makers, and multiple Aboriginal organizational stakeholders. The symposia provided a pathway for knowledge synthesis and sharing to ultimately integrate knowledge into practice and enable First Nations' community capacity building in addressing and redressing critical respiratory health issues. This article delineates the processes involved in developing this model of integrated knowledge translation and highlights the continuing engagement with the participating communities supported by Knowledge Translation (KT) Symposia.

KEYWORDS integrated knowledge translation; community-based research; Indigenous health

Health inequities among Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) in Canada cause significant disparities in determinants of health, especially rates of non-traditional use of tobacco and increased indoor air pollutants due to inadequate housing (Barsh, 1994; Health Canada, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2008). Disparities in determinants of health in turn lead to inequalities in health outcomes. For instance, poor housing conditions such as housing in need of major repairs (Statistics Canada, 2008); dampness and mould (Lawrence et al., 2001; Michel et al., 1996; Park et al., 2001; Rizzo et al., 1997); adverse indoor air quality due to overcrowding, and both active and passive smoking from the non-traditional use of tobacco (Crighton et al.,

2010), lead to tuberculosis (Brunekreef et al., 1989), severe respiratory infections (Sin et al., 2008), and other respiratory diseases (Clark et al., 2002; Dales et al., 1991; Kovesi et al., 2007).

These inequalities are unsustainable especially due to the faster growth of the Indigenous population in comparison with the rest of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2014). Moreover, with geography primarily determining access to health care (Kirby et al., 2002; Romanow, 2002) and “place” being an important population health variable (Canadian Institute of Health Information, 2006), the respiratory health risks faced by Indigenous Peoples are further accentuated in rural Indigenous populations due to their geographic and economic isolation (Health Canada, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2008).

The aim of this essay is to extend a model of integrated knowledge translation within the context of community-based participatory research with Indigenous communities, by describing how the evidence generated by the main components of a community-based participatory research initiative was translated through two knowledge translation symposia.

Community-Based Participatory Research Initiative

‘Assess, Redress, Re-assess: Addressing Disparities in Respiratory Health Among First Nations People’ is a community-based participatory research initiative in two First Nation reserves in Saskatchewan. The initiative’s rationale is rooted in the concept of participatory action research facilitated by integrated knowledge transfer to build community capacity. The design enables active participation of community members in all phases of research, from the development of research questions to the dissemination of results and the evaluation of interventions implemented based on the results.

Based on Health Canada’s Population Health Framework of understanding the influence of *individual* and *contextual* factors on health outcomes (Health Canada, 1994; Pahwa et al., 2012; Pickett et al., 2008), this initiative aims to implement appropriate community-level (address) and policy-level (redress) interventions to tackle respiratory health inequalities and inequities. However, before developing interventions, the initiative was structured into two key phases: *vision and relationships leading to problem identification and baseline assessment of respiratory health determinants and outcomes*. The “Vision and Relationships” phase involved a two-year dialogue with participating communities, where four exposure-outcome dyads were identified by the communities as key factors driving respiratory health inequalities: i) the quality of housing and mould within the houses—asthma, especially in children; ii) smoking in general, and smoking in homes resulting in environmental tobacco smoke—chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; iii) overcrowding and infections—bronchitis ; iv) body weight—obst sleep apnea (Pahwa et al., 2015). Table 1 is the Logic Model of the initiative, which enumerates the four phases of the study, including the assessment of the four exposure-outcome dyads.

Table 1: Logic Model

Issue (Identified problems)	Assess (Baseline)	Address (Community-level)	Redress (Policy-level)	Reassess (Outcome measures)
Housing Dampness, mould, endotoxin Environmental tobacco smoke Wood/oil heating	Environmental measures Asthma in children	House keeping Managing asthma “Outdoor living room” (celebrating smoke-free homes)	Household mould remediation Housing policy	Reduction in wheezing among children Reduction in smoking in houses with children and older adults
Smoking: non-traditional use of tobacco	Symptoms COPD Lung function	“Breath of Fresh Air Campaign” Management of COPD	Support for culturally appropriate smoking cessation	Reduction in smoking in graduating grade 12 Improvement in lung function
3. Infections Over crowding	Bronchitis	Immunization Flu vaccine Prompt treatment	Housing policy (crowding)	Reduction in flu cases and respiratory infections
Body Weight	Sleep Apnea	Identify cases Community sports Combined initiative with diabetes programs	Access to healthy/nutritive food Equipment for treating sleep apnea	All diagnosed cases of sleep apnea treated Reduction in average weight

Finally, an agreement was signed that addressed co-ownership of data between researchers and communities and respect for confidentiality and privacy. Thereafter, the baseline assessment (data collection and analysis) was completed in two stages in 2012 and 2013 with community members being trained to participate in data collection. The first stage was making people aware of the baseline survey, through door-to-door canvassing, and distributing brochures explaining the need and purpose of the study. The second stage consisted of inviting community members (both children and adults) to participate in questionnaires and undergo clinical assessments. Before conducting the various aspects of the study, a Certificate of Approval

was obtained from the University of Saskatchewan's Bio-Medical Research Ethics Board. Moreover, before implementing the second stage of this phase, informed consent from all participants was obtained. The complete methodology of this community-based participatory research initiative has been published and describes in detail not only the development, but also the implementation of measures (Pahwa et al., 2015).

Action: Community-Chosen and Policy-Level Interventions

The data generated during the baseline assessment phase informed the community and policy-level interventions. The interventions are currently at various stages of development and implementation, and have been enumerated in Figures 2 and 3, the two figures that describe the activities of the knowledge translation symposia. To address the quality of housing at the community-level, an environmental study has been conducted during which 144 homes underwent environmental assessments in the two participating communities between January and April 2014. Environmental assessments included an interviewer-administered housing survey, floor dust collection, and temperature and relative humidity measures. Homes were visited between January and April 2014. Currently the data are being analyzed, and the results will inform a community-level intervention addressing housing conditions.

To address non-traditional use of tobacco in the communities, an evidence-informed and community-driven, community-level intervention called the Green Light Program was implemented with and in the communities. The Green Light Program identifies and celebrates smoke-free homes (Ramsden et al., 2013). As traditional use of tobacco in many First Nations communities is "sacred" and has cultural, medicinal, and spiritual implications, the focus of the Green Light Program is on non-traditional or misuse of tobacco.

Finally, to redress obstructive sleep apnea in First Nations at the policy-level, a complex policy and healthcare program analysis was conducted by interviewing key federal and provincial administrators and sleep specialists in Saskatoon. This analysis was conducted by taking into consideration the historical and jurisdictional complexity of healthcare provision to First Nations. Under the Canadian Constitution, healthcare is a provincial responsibility; however, Indigenous people with "Registered Indian" status are considered the responsibility of the federal system when it comes to extended health benefits (Government of Canada, 2014). The policy analysis generated evidence of bifurcated health care policy resulting in inequities in access to obstructive sleep apnea care. These three interventions are the key examples of the community-chosen intervention projects evolving from the larger initiative of our community-based participatory research project.

Integrated Knowledge Translation

The success of these ongoing interventions is dependent on the principles of integrated knowledge translation. According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, integrated knowledge translation involves the engagement of stakeholders or potential research knowledge users in the entire research process. By incorporating integrated knowledge translation, researchers and community members co-create the research questions which determine the

methodology; that is, how and in what ways they will be involved in data collection, tool development, interpretation of results, and how best to share the results with the community and beyond. This collaborative and action-oriented approach is the essence of our research initiative (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2015).

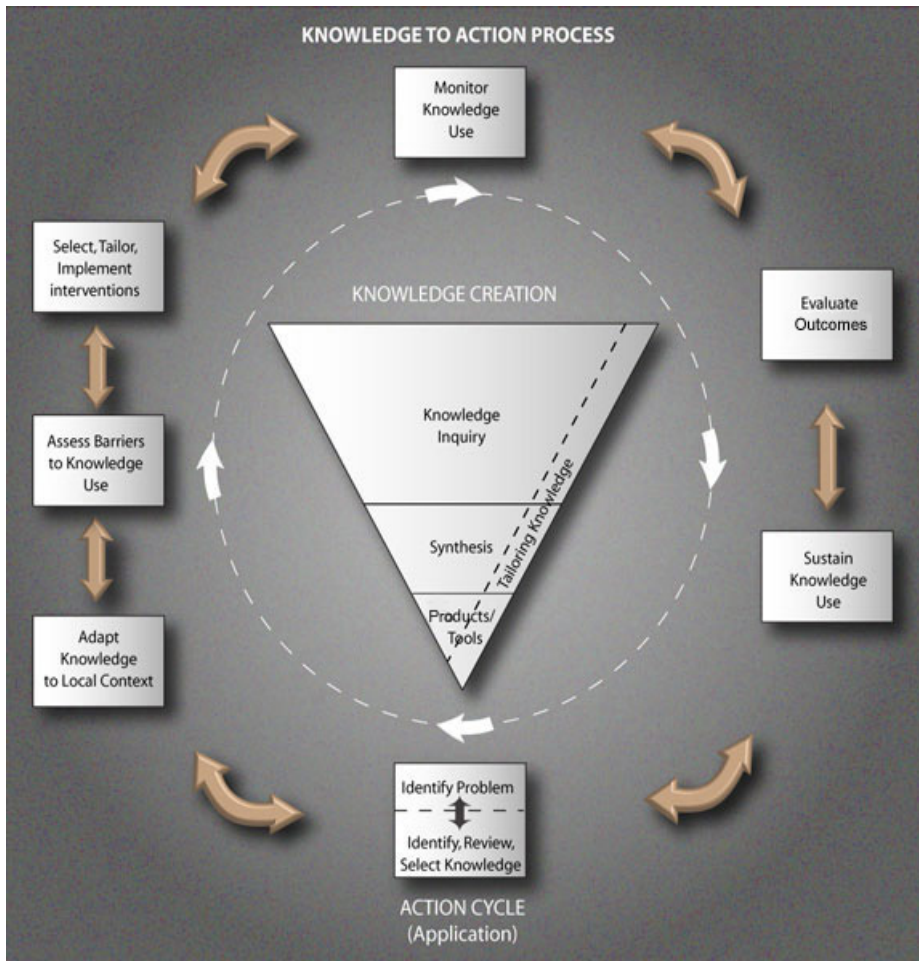


Figure 1: The Knowledge to Action Process
Adapted from CIHR (2013) Knowledge to Action Process

As enumerated in the background section, our initiative began with the development of strong relationships with the participating communities, which led to problem identification and co-creation of the research question(s). Thereafter, the communities have been involved in all phases of the initiative including data collection and the development and implementation of community-chosen and policy-level interventions. In moving from problem identification

to implementation of the community-chosen interventions, and from evaluation of outcomes to knowledge translation with the communities, our approach closely mirrors the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Knowledge to Action Process (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2015). However, the key element in this integrated knowledge translation model was the knowledge exchange between the researchers and the community members that was facilitated during two Annual Symposia.

The Symposia

The two symposia brought together community members, interdisciplinary researchers, federal and provincial policy makers (e.g., First Nations and Inuit Health, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada), and multiple Aboriginal organizational stakeholders (e.g., Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority) to create a platform for knowledge sharing, synthesis and transfer. The symposia were structured to foster debate and discussion among the key stakeholders and to highlight important themes of inquiry, which in turn would provide direction to community-chosen (address) and policy-level (redress) interventions. In terms of building the stakeholder groups, there was a deliberate attempt to create groups that included First Nations housing and health (Aboriginal Affairs and North Development Canada, and First Nations and Inuit Health), provincial First Nations governance, community leaders, members, and Elders. One major challenge that needs to be highlighted here is the difficulty in crossing the structural silos between First Nations housing and health, which was evident in the lack of combined representation from Aboriginal Affairs and North Development Canada, and First Nations and Inuit Health.

Symposium 1 (2013)

The day began with researchers from the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, who are affiliated with the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture and the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre, presenting important baseline results. These results were from interviewer-administered questionnaires (e.g., presence of mould, household smoking) and an objective assessment of respiratory health (e.g., presence of respiratory symptoms). These presentations were carried out in a Rotating Round Table format, in which a researcher was seated at each table and the attendees moved from table to table. Attendees were divided into small groups that included a spectrum of stakeholders.

Each group spent 15 minutes at a table with a researcher who highlighted particular results and facilitated discussion with the stakeholders on the significance of these results. This format allowed the stakeholders to talk directly with each other and with the researcher about specific results. The main research results presented were related to the housing conditions, which triggered the ensuing Round Table discussions around the relationship between respiratory symptoms and poor housing conditions.

At each table, an independent observer captured the discussions in unstructured written notes, often called field notes. Inductive, thematic analysis of these field notes revealed several themes. The themes that evolved were asthma; non-traditional use of tobacco; housing; and, overcrowding. Asthma was perceived to be a common health issue and smoking indoors was believed to exacerbate asthma in children. The conversation then shifted to housing conditions, and air filters were identified as protection for asthma and related symptoms. Housing conditions dominated the conversation at all Round Table discussions. Overcrowding was acknowledged as a major factor that was associated with home damage, sickness and general domestic conflict.

The conversations also captured the challenges faced by the communities in addressing the poor housing conditions. One factor that was mentioned was the fear among community members in losing their housing if they reported the need for repairs. Community members also reported the challenges associated with low income and difficulty obtaining bank loans for house repairs. Despite these challenges, there was consensus among stakeholders that community-based participatory research had a role in advising and advocating with band councils and community members for making house repairs a priority. The stakeholders especially acknowledged the importance of scientific inquiry in informing and influencing policymakers through empirical evidence on social and health problems related to poor housing conditions.

Following the Round Table discussions, a series of presentations focused on possible community-based programs and policy interventions to address and redress the key issues from the baseline research results. Each intervention presentation included discussion time. The day concluded with a multi-stakeholder panel discussion to further highlight emergent concerns and to identify research and intervention priorities moving forward. The Saskatchewan research team met the following day to determine next steps for research and intervention.

This Symposium not only served as a pilot for future dialogue, but also provided essential directions to address and redress the link between housing conditions and respiratory health in two First Nations communities. A follow-up symposium was planned for the fall of 2014, in which the goal would be to translate knowledge on community-chosen interventions and results into action beyond poor housing conditions.

Symposium 2 (2014)

Similar to Symposium 1, Symposium 2 was a daylong event that brought together the key stakeholders and researchers. Based on the positive response to the Round Table discussions during Symposium 1, Symposium 2 consisted of Round Table discussions that extended the knowledge translation beyond housing conditions. Whereas the stakeholders moved from table to table in the first symposium, in the second symposium it was the researchers who moved around tables. This made transitions shorter and less chaotic. Two key interventions that were discussed were the policy-level obstructive sleep apnea intervention and the community-chosen intervention on non-traditional use of tobacco. The discussion on obstructive sleep apnea revealed the need to conduct a community-level intervention to raise awareness and to

reduce obesity rates, as obstructive sleep apnea is closely related to obesity.

The Green Light Program was discussed at length, with community members being provided the breadth of the program across multiple communities in Saskatchewan. The community members responded positively to the fact that the Green Light Program's guiding values are respect for oneself and others; build trust and relationships; responsibility and accountability of individual and the community; freedom of the individual; kindness and compassion; patience; and humility and compassion (Ramsden et al, 2013).

Apart from the discussions regarding the ongoing interventions, Symposium 2 also included Round Table discussion on the role of communities in integrated knowledge translation and the role of Indigenous Knowledge in informing policy and practice. This approach was to reiterate to the communities and the key stakeholders that the ultimate goal of our research is to help build and sustain the community-chosen interventions in and with the community through building capacity.

Next Steps and Future Directions

Following the Logic Model (Table 1), the next phase in this initiative is to “reassess/evaluate” the outcomes of interest and the community-chosen interventions. In this process, a second round of data collection will be conducted in partnership with communities. Building on the previous symposia, the next Symposium will serve to facilitate the knowledge translation of the evaluation phase of the initiative. This approach to integrated knowledge translation aligns with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's knowledge to action process, where the evaluation of outcomes ultimately leads to sustaining the use of the knowledge generated (Figure 1).

The ultimate goal of this research is to generate evidence to de-adopt ineffective policies and practices, and in turn, enable Indigenous communities and stakeholders to empower themselves. In doing this, it is imperative to develop evidence-based knowledge translation models to integrate Indigenous Knowledge and experience with empirical evidence. The model of integrated knowledge translation revolving around the strategic symposia facilitated not only the larger goal of community-based participatory research in a large multi-year initiative, but also provided a platform for replication and transferability in future endeavours.

 Symposium on First Nations Health & Housing November 20, 2013 Hilton Garden Inn, Saskatoon, SK		
Registration (9:30 - 10:00 AM)		
10:00	Opening Prayer	
10:10	Welcome, Structure of Day, Project Intro Co-Chairs: Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew and Dr. Sylvia Abonyi	
Knowledge About Housing & Respiratory Health		
10:20	Dialogue Session (15 minute speed meetings providing face-to-face dialogue opportunities)	
Table 1	Findings from the First Nations Lung Health Study at Montreal Lake Cree Nation & Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation Dr. Punam Pahwa, University of Saskatchewan Dr. James Dosman, University of Saskatchewan	
Table 2	Evaluating environments in First Nations housing Dr. Shelley Kirychuk, University of Saskatchewan	
Table 3	Preliminary results of the Children's portion of the First Nations Lung Health Study Dr. Donna Rennie, University of Saskatchewan	
Table 4	The Manitoba experience: Housing environments & health amongst Manitoba First Nations Peoples Dr. Linda Larcombe, University of Manitoba	
11:20	Facilitated Open Discussion - Co-Chairs: Jo-Ann and Sylvia LUNCH (12:00 - 1:00)	
Addressing Housing & Respiratory Health (Programs)		
1:00	What are the community people saying should be done? Ms. Kathleen McMullin, University of Saskatchewan	
1:30	What we are doing to repair houses in Montreal Lake Cree Nation? Ms. Daisy Gamble, Housing Manager, Montreal Lake Cree Nation	
2:00	Building on success – Celebrating smoke free homes Dr. Vivian Ramsden, University of Saskatchewan, with Elder Betsy Henderson & Jackie Crowe, Greenlight Project team members	
REFRESHMENT BREAK (2:30 - 2:50)		
Redressing Housing & Respiratory Health (Policies)		
2:50	Panel Introduction - Co-Chairs	
3:00	Policy Panel Summary and Discussion Mr. Jeremy Seeseequasis, Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation Mr. Arnold Naytowhow, Montreal Lake Cree Nation Dr. Greg Marchildon, University of Regina Ms. Cassandra Opikokew, University of Regina Dr. Tom Smith-Windsor, University of Saskatchewan	
4:00	Symposium Close & Prayer	
DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT (6:00 - 8:00 PM)		
Station 20 West, 1120 - 20th Street West (hotel shuttle leaves the Hilton lobby at 5:30 pm)		

Figure 2: Program of Symposium 1 (2013)

The Built Environment and First Nations Health: Addressing and Redressing the Issues. A Blueprint for Canada Tuesday, October 21, 2014 Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Saskatoon, SK In conjunction with SHARP 2014	
Registration (8:00-8:30 outside Adam Ballroom - Delta Bessborough Hotel)	
8:15	Opening Prayer - Susanne Seeseequasis, Elder, Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation SHARP Keynote Address: The Built Environment and Aboriginal Health Dr. Malcolm King, IAHR-CIHR, Scientific Director, Institute of Aboriginal People's Health Adam Ballroom - Delta Bessborough Hotel
<i>The Built Environment and First Nations Health I</i>	
9:35	Sheraton Cavalier Hotel - Centre Room Opening Remarks from Co-chairs Co-chairs: Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew and Dr. Sylvia Abonyi
9:40	Diagloue Sessions: Findings from the Aboriginal People's Lung Health Study (20 minute rotating round tables with presentations and discussions of research findings)
Table 1	Chronic Bronchitis in First Nations People - Prevalance and Associated Risk Factors. Dr. Punam Pahwa, University of Saskatchewan
Table 2	Built Environments in First Nations Housing in Saskatchewan Dr. Shelley Kirychuk, University of Saskatchewan
Table 3	The Respiratory Health Awareness Community Outreach and Engagement Model in First Nations, Inuit and Metis Communities Dr. Wayne Warry, Centre for Rural and Northern Research, Laurentian University
Table 4	Prevalence of Ear Infection in First Nations and Rural School Aged Children Dr. William Albritton, University of Saskatchewan
Table 5	First Nations Seniors, Social Determinants of Health, Health Outcomes. Dr. Sylvia Abonyi, University of Saskatchewan
LUNCH (11:45- 1:00)	
<i>The Built Environment and First Nations Health II (Policy and Programs)</i>	
13:00	SHARP Plenary Address: Vulnerable and Migrant Workforces Dr. Marc Schenker Adam Ballroom - Bessborough Hotel
14:00	Sheraton Cavalier Hotel - Centre Room Diagloue Sessions: Addressing and Redressing the Built Environment (20 minute rotating round tables with presentation and discussions of research findings)
Table 1	Integrated Knowledge Translation Tarun Katapally, University of Saskatchewan
Table 2	Provision of Obstructive Sleep Apnea Care in Saskatchewan: Polly Complexities Related to Registered Indian Status Dr. Greg Marchildon, Johnson-Shovama Graduate School of Public Policy
Table 3	Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge to Intervene and Inform Respiratory Health Policy and Practice in First Nations Communities Cassandra Opikokew-Wajuntah, University of Regina
Table 4	The Green Light Program: A Community Chosen Health Initiative Dr. Vivian Ramsden, University of Saskatchewan
Table 5	Colonization, Housing and Health Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew, University of Regina
3:40	Coffee Break
4:00	Group Discussion: Recommendations for Moving Forward Co-chair driven discussion
4:30	Symposium Close & Prayer
Project Team Meeting (4:30-5:30pm) (Light meal provided)	
SHARP Poster Reception Session (5:00 - 7:00 PM) Battleford Room, Bessorough (Appetizers and cash bar)	

Figure 3: Symposium 2 (2014)

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Engaging Indigenous Communities in Higher Education: An Analysis of Collaboration and Ownership in Alaska Native Teacher Preparation

Lenora “Lolly” Carpluk & Beth R. Leonard

ABSTRACT In 2008, our institution was awarded an Office of Indian Education pre-service teacher preparation grant intended to increase the number of Alaska Native/American Indian teachers in Alaska. Our research examines grant objectives and outcomes, specifically related to the institution’s stated focus on “culturally responsive teacher preparation” and “preserving and advancing” Alaska Native languages and cultures. We also explore challenges and opportunities encountered during the development of a cultural mentoring community for Alaska Native pre-service teachers, facilitated through collaboration with two Alaska Native teacher community organizations. Our work is informed by foundational literature in Indigenous culture-based pedagogy (Demmert & Towner, 2003), Indigenous higher education (Brayboy, 2012), and culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Decolonizing methodologies and TribalCrit (Castagno, 2012) are particularly significant in our analysis, as the institution’s mission, vision, and strategic directions initiatives appear to be at odds with outcomes that suggest a continuation of top-down, colonized practices that perpetuate marginalization of Alaska Native students.

KEYWORDS Indigenous education; Indigenous pedagogies; teacher preparation; culture-based education

In 2008, the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education (SOE) was awarded an Office of Indian Education pre-service teacher preparation grant intended to increase the number of Alaska Native/American Indian teachers in Alaska. Our research examines grant objectives and outcomes, specifically related to the institution’s stated focus on “culturally responsive teacher preparation” and “preserving and advancing” Alaska Native languages and cultures. We also explore challenges and opportunities encountered during the development of a cultural mentoring community for Alaska Native pre-service teachers, facilitated through collaboration with two Alaska Native teacher community organizations. Our work is informed by foundational literature in Indigenous culture-based pedagogy (Demmert & Towner, 2003) and Indigenous higher education (Brayboy, 2012), and also scholarship that speaks to culturally responsive, relevant and sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Decolonizing (Battiste, 2013) and Indigenous methodologies (Wilson, 2009) including TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005; Castagno, 2012) is particularly significant in our analysis, as the institution’s mission,

vision and strategic directions initiatives appear to be at odds with outcomes that suggest a continuation of top-down, colonized practices that perpetuate marginalization of Alaska Native students in higher education.

We begin with an overview of the Alaskan educational context, followed by a summary of grant objectives, including how our background experiences in K12 and higher education informed the research orientation. Also significant to the research and program refinement was the community engagement emphasis, an approach that made the Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Project (ANTPP) different from past teacher preparation grants held by SOE. We then discuss pre-service teacher preparation at our institution. Student voices from interviews and field notes support our conclusion as to the success of the partnerships with Alaska Native teacher communities. We close with an overview of evaluator recommendations for refining Alaska Native teacher pre-service programming and summary commentary on the Indigenous space currently occupied by our institution and its publicly stated responsibilities regarding Alaska Native people/communities.

Native Teacher Representation: The Alaskan Context

From 1970 to 2014 (44 years), 172 Alaska Natives—or about 4 per year—earned teacher certification through the programs we reviewed.¹ At that rate, the programs could never produce enough new rural-resident and Alaska Native teachers to increase their representation in Alaska’s rural schools. And several of those programs have now been discontinued. (Leary et. al., 2014, p. 4)

At the time the ANTPP proposal was in draft (2008), SOE had graduated 408 Alaska Native teachers since the rural Bachelor of Education program began in 1970 (Barnhardt, 2002). Despite pre-service education initiatives in the University of Alaska system, critical disparity and equity challenges remain for the State of Alaska in terms of supply and demand, including the diversity of its teaching workforce in relation to the diversity of the student body. Alaska is divided into 56 educational districts; “Regional Educational Attendance Areas” (REAs) were established for smaller communities without a formal “borough” structure. Within the state, Alaska Natives comprise only five percent of the teaching force, while approximately 24% of K-12 students are Alaska Native (80% in rural districts), a disproportionately large gap. Almost 90% of teachers in the State are White. In addition to diversity disparities in the teaching force, teacher and administrator turnover continues to be a major challenge. During the years 2008-2012, about 64% of Alaska’s teachers came from outside the State. Further research from the University of Alaska Anchorage’s Center for Education Policy Research (CAEPR) finds that “annual teacher turnover rates vary hugely among rural districts, ranging from a low of 7% to over 52%, while urban districts have turnover rates that are generally lower and more similar, from about 8% to just over 10%” and “among teachers with less than

¹ Not all Alaska Native graduates were supported by teacher preparation grants.

10 years of experience, those who prepared to be teachers in Alaska have much lower turnover rates than those from Outside” (Hill & Hirschberg, 2013). The 2014 report by CAEPR lists a higher percentage of outside teachers—74%, an increase of 10% from the 2012 statistics. Thus, most Alaska Native students will not have teachers that share similar backgrounds and experiences, necessitating culturally responsive teacher preparation that includes a critical understanding of Alaska Native worldviews and pedagogies (Lipka, Mohatt, & Ilutsik, 1998; Ongtooguk, 2003).

“Preparing K-12 Educators For This...Diverse State”:

[UAF SOE] faculty and staff strive to model, in their interactions with candidates at both the pre-service and graduate levels, the three critical characteristics that our candidates embody when they leave the program: professional, culturally responsive, and effective. These characteristics form the basis for our graduates’ continued professional development and the formation of healthy and respectful relationships with their students, families and communities in which they live and work. ...In this spirit, the School of Education is committed to preparing and retaining the best possible K-12 educators for this far north, geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse state. (<https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/soe-home/> accessed September 14, 2015).

The UAF School of Education includes BA and MEd programs in elementary and secondary education accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation² (formerly the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education). SOE requires that students “understand how the historical, political, economic, and social factors are interrelated and impact culturally responsive education and the issues of access and equity in Alaska’s schools” (University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2013) and “have deep understandings of academic and pedagogical knowledge, the cultural, environmental and emotional contexts of children; and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the students in the community (University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2012).”

Conceptual methodologies and strategies to promote student success for Indigenous students and students of color have been discussed extensively in the literature. Sources relevant within Alaska Native higher education context include “A Yupiaq Worldview” (Kawagley, 2012); “Transforming the culture of schools: Yup’ik Eskimo examples” (Lipka et. al, 1998); Delpit’s discussion of her experiences at UAF in “Other people’s children: cultural conflict in the classroom” (2006), and “Resisting diversity: An Alaskan case of institutional struggle (Gilmore, Smith & Kairaiuak, 2004). Prevalent concepts and theoretical constructs include “culturally-responsive,” “culturally-compatible,” “culturally-relevant,” culturally-appropriate,” “culturally-sensitive,” and “culturally-congruent.” Most recently, Paris’ (2012) “culturally-

² Formerly the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

sustaining pedagogy” extends previous theoretical perspectives “to perpetuate and foster... linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 93). Scholars-of-color, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars continue to sanction multicultural, anti-racist, social justice pedagogies as valid pathways to academic success, critical thinking, and cultural competence (Au, 2009; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). However, coursework that facilitates “deep understandings” of culture, worldview and diversity requires a programmatic commitment beyond the one diversity-focused course required in the elementary program (Leonard, 2013) at that time.³ In the next sections we provide an overview of the project objectives, research questions, and student commentary.

The Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Project

For forty years, the UAF SOE has striven to refine its efforts to bring Alaska Native educators into professional positions in classrooms, administrative roles, and university positions...ANTPP will extend these efforts by creating a cohort of new Alaska Native educators who will accept the explicit challenge of not only advancing their own careers, but also investigating and creating ways that they, and their communities, can impact traditional public school and university education systems (Madsen & Brayboy, 2007)

Responding to the demand for more Alaska Native teachers, the Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Project (ANTPP) proposal was initially drafted by Eric Madsen, a former dean of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) School of Education (SOE), and President’s Professor of Education Bryan Brayboy, a prominent Lumbee scholar. During the drafting process, Madsen and Brayboy asked Leonard (Deg Xit’an Dena/Athabascan) to review the proposal and serve as the principal investigator (PI). The grant application was successful and was supported for four years by the Office of Indian (OIE) Education, a program within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. Following the award of the grant, Madsen and Leonard recruited Carpluk (Yup’ik) as the project coordinator in a term-funded faculty position.⁴ Caitlin Montague-Winebarger, then an interdisciplinary PhD student was hired as a research assistant as her investigation into pre-serve teacher education closely aligned with the project focus.⁵ Malia Villegas (Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) and Susan Faircloth (Coharie) agreed to serve as project evaluators. Unique aspects of the grant included both community participation of the Alaska Native teacher organizations, and the major role of Alaska Natives/American Indians in administering grant operations and objectives.

³ These are part of the SOE Education requirements: “Foundation Coursework and Field Experience” (BA Elementary Education degree checklist https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/soe-elementary/ba/degree_requirements)

⁴ Carpluk was then working as director of Future Teachers of Alaska, a University of Alaska Statewide program designed to recruit high school students into the teaching profession.

⁵ Winebarger completed her degree in 2012 – her dissertation is titled *“That’s a hard question”: Undergraduate students talk about culture* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; University of Alaska Fairbanks).

The majority of grant funding provided financial assistance to the qualified pre-service Alaska Native/American Indian teachers. As is the case for Office of Indian Education professional development projects, in addition to requirements regarding academic placement (junior level) and good standing, participants needed proof of tribal membership or certificate of Indian blood (CIB). Student support included a monthly stipend, tuition, fees, books, childcare, laptop computer, Praxis test fee payment, induction services (assistance for first year teachers), and cultural mentoring support.

We learned that the financial support was not sufficient for the year-long internship and did not adequately meet all the students' financial needs. Although stipends were provided, they were not necessarily provided in a timely manner. Often students had to wait (especially during the first semester as a grant-funded participant), and this presented hardships for the students and their families. The application process required some coordination as the SOE and OIE had their own pre-set guidelines and criteria for qualification. The Office of Indian Education had guidelines for their grant applications, evaluation measures and basically their own agenda, (i.e., "someone else's agenda" as stated in Cornell & Kalt, 2006) that we had to follow to administer the grant. Although the grant included its own goals and objectives, a timeline of activities, and signed consortium agreements from partners on their roles and responsibilities, we were still *limited* by Office of Indian Education's guidelines and the UAF SOE criteria for education interns. Upon graduating from the program, participants were required to accept a teaching position in a school or district with at least 5% American Indian (AI) or Alaska Native (AN) student enrollment (remaining in a district with the minimum percentage for as long as they were supported as a student in the program) as part of their "payback" agreement with OIE.

Through project activities and research, staff actively investigated aspects of culturally-responsive pedagogies in both the mainstream teacher preparation program, as well as those engaged through the Indigenous Education Institutes designed by Carpluk and members of the Alaska Native teacher organizations. ANTPP's research paradigm was inspired by the work of Indigenous scholars and researchers involved in collaborative, community-based and participatory approaches (St. Denis, 1992). Staff submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) proposal in 2009, which was approved as a "program evaluation and assessment" research project that included student-written reports (required by the grant), field notes maintained by staff, and interview data from students and consortium partners. Student and consortium partner participation in interviews was strictly voluntary. Our interview questions included:

- What are effective methods of preparing AI/AN teachers?
- What support systems are needed to ensure the success of undergraduate education students and first year teachers?
- Do SOE programs fulfill the needs of AI/AN teacher candidates?
- What needs to be improved or changed?

Our overarching questions related to community engagement criteria included:

- What does it mean to engage community in higher education?
- How are collaboration and engagement defined, and by whom?
- What are the benefits of collaborative work with communities? Are collaborative efforts a “one-way street” or an authentic sharing of time and resources that provide benefits beyond the entities involved?

Alaska Native teacher mentors: Indigenizing pre-service teacher preparation

...two Alaska Native Educators Associations and the five rural Community Campuses (University of Alaska Fairbanks, undated) have entered into Consortium Agreements under which they will help SOE faculty critically examine its teacher preparation programs toward improving their effectiveness in preparing AN/AI teachers to work with all students, but particularly with AN/AI students. (Madsen & Brayboy, 2007).

SOE has held several past grants that focused on pre-service education for Alaska Native teachers; project partners on these previous grants often included one or more school districts. Although Alaska Native community members often serve on school district advisory boards, Alaskan school districts are largely administered by non-Native personnel. To ensure Alaska Native involvement in the project, ANTPP engaged a community of scholars and educators beyond school district levels, specifically, the Association of Interior Native Educators (<http://www.ainealaska.org/>), and the Alaska Native Education Association, a statewide organization with representatives from each of the Alaska Native teacher associations (see Carpluk, 1997 for the history and descriptions of these initiatives). In addition to the School of Education, university partners included the College of Rural and Community Development (CRCD) and its affiliated rural campuses. During the project period, CRCD was overseen by the former (and late) Vice Chancellor Bernice Joseph, and it bears recognition that VC Joseph was the *only* Alaska Native serving at the executive level at UAF at that time.

Educational philosophies explicitly stated in the grant stressed the importance of culturally responsive teaching, creation of a sense of shared power and authority in the classroom, a co-learner orientation toward classroom teaching, and an explicit anti-racist stance in classroom pedagogy. Key grant objectives required critical facilitation and management of a new conceptual Indigenous framework; this included design of the cultural mentoring and induction services model by project staff and partners. During this process, the Alaska Native educators and Elders reflected on mentoring processes in Western classroom contexts. Mentoring/teaching comes naturally to these educators and Elders; however, adapting their philosophies and activities into a Western framework was often challenging in negotiating two, often conflicting, knowledge and value systems.

SOE programs serve a significant population of Alaska Native students via distance education—and many of the rural areas of the state are “off the road system.” Project staff, some students, and a few Alaska Native educators were based in Fairbanks; however, many

partners, students, and interns were based outside of Fairbanks (and off the road system). Communication with participants required regular phone calls, email, postal mail, faxes, and audio and video conferencing. Other grant-related challenges included a limited travel budget that did not allow partners to meet more than once a year for a face-to-face meeting; more funding was needed for face-to-face strategic planning, especially considering partners' responsibilities to participate in the "refinement of the teacher preparation programs" (as stated in consortia agreements).

Somewhat separate from the cultural mentoring aspects of the grant, although related to student success and completion, project staff worked to develop Praxis study sessions in close collaboration with the Interior-Aleutians Campus (part of CRCD). Praxis is a national testing instrument—and in the case of ANTPP participants, attaining a passing score was critical for progressing to their internship or student teaching year. Alaska's Department of Education sets the passing scores for Praxis—these "passing score" benchmarks are some of the highest in the U.S. Thus, the test functions as another "gatekeeper" for Alaska Native pre-service teachers.

Additional project staff responsibilities included advising students throughout their participation in the grant and in their pre-service UAF SOE program, for example, tutoring in Western educational concepts during their core education courses. Also, the staff advocated for ANTPP participants throughout their participation in the grant, for example, in the case of extended absences to attend funerals for family members or to participate in active student officer roles in the Alaska Native Education Student Association (ANESA).

Prior to beginning cultural mentoring activities for students, consortium partners' roles and responsibilities needed clarification, and a consensus on how to proceed. Partners, with the exception of UAF SOE, were scattered across Alaska and staff and partners were limited to yearly face-to-face meeting. Challenges faced by the Alaska Native teacher organizations as consortium partners included their "separate status" in terms of university affiliation; also, during the course of this project, these associations did not have core staff or sufficient funding to fully maintain their organizations. Carpluk knew and had worked with many of the Alaska Native educators on a statewide basis and documented the early development of these organizations in her master's project (1997). As well, she had close contacts at the College of Rural and Community Development rural campuses. Carpluk had also worked closely with SOE faculty during past projects and was often called upon to serve as a guest lecturer in Alaska Native and cross-cultural communication courses. As such, she was able to effectively coordinate audio conference meetings among the partners and facilitate collaborative decision-making in designing the new cultural components for ANTPP. Through this initial collaborative, community-based process, partners and staff decided on key characteristics of cultural mentoring for all project participants, and induction services for new (first year) Alaska Native teachers. These activities were key to developing a new paradigm for management and leadership within the context of a federal grant-funded project housed within a Western institution.

A third critical component—the Indigenous Education Institute—was piloted in 2009

and continued until 2011. The institute was three days in length with the primary purpose of connecting and engaging the pre-service Alaska Native students with Elders and seasoned/veteran Alaska Native educators. Activities facilitated by the educators and Elders connected Indigenous perspectives on pedagogy, culture-based curriculum development, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Many of our institute faculty had over twenty years of experience in education at all levels, Western and Indigenous, and most importantly shared how they refined or totally adapted their Western teacher preparation training to teaching from Indigenous perspectives. Participants were particularly interested in culturally appropriate reading strategies; these sessions were facilitated by veteran teachers who had previously developed a master’s level course for the UAF Center for Cross-Cultural Studies – “Critiquing Children’s Literature from an Indigenous Perspective.” Facilitators and Elders also discussed authentic methods of engaging the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (www.unkn.uaf.edu).⁶ In an institute evaluation, the following student’s comments reflect her perspectives on the value of these engagements, while also indirectly referencing missing elements in pre-service preparation:

The knowledge that the older teachers could provide, and the ones that have gone through it before us. That’s something that I really appreciate about this program, you get to talk to other teachers who have been through what you are expected to do to, and encountered things that you anticipate encountering, and they give you their insights, what to do, what to expect (personal communication).

Student comments, from institute evaluations and interview data, reveal a deep appreciation for these exchanges. At SOE, most faculty are non-Native (only two are Alaska Native), and few have extensive experiences teaching Alaska Native students in rural settings. After listening to the veteran teachers describe their experiences of adapting from a Western teacher preparation setting into an Alaska Native teaching context, the following student specifically refers to the “enrich[ed]” learning environment provided by the project:

I am so grateful that [ANTPP is] here. It’s something that, especially the connections we have with the other teachers, who maybe didn’t have an ANTTP. A lot of their stories, some are funny, some are sad, and some are frustrating, but we make it, those experiences can enrich our learning (personal communication).

A first-year teacher commented specifically on the storytelling and cultural values sessions, observing that “another part of her brain opened up”—a telling statement that reflects, to a certain extent, teacher preparation’s disengagement with Alaska Native and Indigenous communities and pedagogies:

I must say that this is another great day in the life of this still new teacher. I feel like my

⁶ See also the State of Alaska’s “Guide to Implementing the Cultural Standards.”

head just expanded or another part of my brain opened up and information filled it. It is such a good feeling to know that we have such amazing role models. I am so thankful that _____ and _____ are here to encourage us and share their wealth of Indigenous teacher knowledge...I think that it is so cool how the stories are connected to the values and that you can use them to teach so many different things. I am definitely going to use story telling in my classroom...what they shared gives me encouragement to learn more and use it in the classroom... I am so encouraged to do more with the Alaska Native Values posters. I will surely hang them with pride and a better understanding of what they represent. Today had such a positive atmosphere, and it was exactly what I looked forward to coming into this Institute (personal communication)

“Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Remains as a Site of Negotiation and Struggle” (Villegas & Faircloth, 2010)

Carpluk’s interest and passion, in the last thirty years working in Alaska Native education, has been in the support of Alaska Native students interested in becoming teachers. Through this evolving work, the development of a more sustainable and comprehensive model remains a necessity considering the “revolving door” aspects of federal, state and private grants. There is scant evidence of sustainable impact of these grants on the preparation of pre-service Alaska Native students and continued community engagement. ANTPP staff were concerned that project activities remained peripheral to an already established program, in which the AI/AN students were required to participate in activities and events beyond their other requirements within the teacher certification program. Institute participation and deeper levels of engagement with community could have benefitted all the pre-service teachers, not just the AI/AN students. As with other grant-funded projects, when the grant ended, so did everything else: Carpluk and project partners were not offered continuing or associated positions at SOE; as well, the expertise in Alaska Native education, a uniquely designed cultural mentoring model, and the yearly Indigenous Education Institute were discontinued.

As a reminder we re-iterate our “community engagement” questions presented earlier:

- What does it mean to engage community in higher education?
- How are collaboration and engagement defined, and by whom?
- What are the benefits of collaborative work with communities? Are collaborative efforts a “one-way street” or an authentic sharing of time and resources that provides benefits beyond the entities involved?

The creators of ANTPP and project staff did seek to engage Alaska Native communities in pre-service teacher education, and were successful on a number of levels. However, some faculty and program leadership were unwilling to support, in many instances, initiatives by project staff in support of the Alaska Native pre-service teachers. In one instance, a student was publicly “scolded” for missing one class because she had planned to attend an Alaska

Native student teacher meeting with the Alaska Commissioner of Education. Other obstacles included SOE faculty resistance to student travel to attend educational conferences, including the state-sponsored Bilingual Multicultural Educational Equity Conference. With advocacy by project staff, a few students were able to attend education conferences and extend their network among Alaska Native teachers statewide: “at BMEEC we were surrounded by Alaska Native teachers from different backgrounds; we felt empowered. We have the encouragement to keep going from Alaska Native mentors” (personal communication).

The Alaska Native project communities that included Elders, students, and educators enacted educational theory and models—culturally responsive, place-based education, and culturally based education—very differently than their Western counterparts. As Carpluk notes,

many concepts in our own Indigenous languages/cultural worldviews do not translate similarly into English. We teach with spirituality as the core and the Western framework does not, creating conflict and uncomfortable situations for our students. Many of our students have very strong cultural identities and if they have to negotiate or adapt to a different worldview in their pre-service program, they need strong guidance and mentoring from our Alaska Native educators, faculty and Elders to affirm and valid their situations.

Carpluk’s comments and observations, drawn from a lifetime of supporting educational initiatives for Alaska Native peoples, were echoed by several of the ANTPP participants, including one young woman who courageously commented:

I say we need culturally responsible professors. We need them [to] take consideration of the hours we put into our communities. We need them to understand our families are much larger than the traditional Western family. When one is injured in our community we [are] all affected. We need them to come in and observe us, and see what is working, not judge us by a few words put on paper.

In their final report, project evaluators (Villegas & Faircloth, 2012) drafted a powerful set of recommendations addressed to the SOE; these recommendations reflected the responsibilities of consortium partners to refine programs in support of Alaska Native students. The evaluation report was shared among consortium partners, and also with the SOE dean and UAF provost. Summary quotes from their four major recommendations are shared below:

First, it is essential that university leaders take responsibility for progressing the development of Alaska Native teachers. It is not enough to acknowledge a commitment to education of Alaska Native peoples without setting clear, measurable goals to enact this commitment for which the university can be held accountable. As such, we recommend that the University of Alaska Fairbanks set annual and five-year targets around the number of Alaska Native teachers it will graduate and place and

make these targets a matter of public record. (p. 20)

Second, it has come to our attention that a rift has recently developed between the main UAF School of Education teacher preparation program and some or all of the rural campuses. Given the rural nature of many Alaska Native schools and communities, it is critical that these entities come together to ensure teacher preparation candidates have ample opportunities and supports to engage in preparation and training at both the main and rural campuses, as appropriate. (p. 21)

Third, we recommend that Alaska Native educators continue to foster cross-community networks in order to share insights and resources and facilitate intergenerational mentoring that is essential to the success of Alaska Native teachers. Organizations like the Alaska Native Educators Association and regional associations of Alaska Natives (e.g., the Association of Interior Native Educators) must be encouraged to create opportunities for Alaska Native educators to come together and to advocate on behalf of Alaska Native teachers with university and state entities. (p. 21)

Fourth, state agencies involved with teacher development need to acknowledge and involve Alaska Native master teachers in planning accreditation, mentorship, and funding initiatives. It is clear that in order to recruit, graduate, and retain Alaska Native teachers, systemic change is required. There are Alaska Native teachers of a sufficient number across the state who could offer invaluable insight about what it will take to grow their ranks. Yet, they are not consulted as part of policy discussions. (p. 21)

These recommendations have yet to be attended to in substantive ways at our institution, although they are referenced in several reports. “Alaska’s university for Alaska’s schools” (Hill et. al., 2013), presents “Initiatives to Increase the Number of Alaska Native Educators” (p. 7):

The Schools and College of Education at the University of Alaska (UA) have a strong commitment to the preparation of Alaska Native and Native Alaskan students for the teaching field. This is supported by multiple program delivery formats including traditional on-site face to-face teaching, e-learning formats incorporating many advanced tools, summer institutes where on-site experiences help build collegial relationships and on-site visits. For example, since 1972 UAF has offered a full BA in Elementary Education degree for students who are in rural communities and who want to stay in rural communities. Nearly all of the students who complete a degree while in their own villages stay and teach in their community or region. UAF also has a fulltime Rural Advisor position to support the rural students in their programs. (p. 7)

The 2011 Teacher Education Plan (referenced in Hill et al., 2013) includes the following recommendations (p. 31-32) regarding “rural and Native education”:

- Stronger collaboration with indigenous organizations to change rural teacher preparation;
- Promote cross-cultural studies of Alaska Native culture, history, and legal status;
- Use, expand, improve UA capacity to reach out to rural population through both face to face and enhanced distance media;
- Integrate traditional knowledge systems into curricula; pair traditional values with western values;
- Recruit and education [sic] more Alaska Native and other minority teachers;
- Build knowledge of Native community, culture, and history through partnership with schools.

These reports are encouraging since ANTPP evaluation recommendations are at least addressed, albeit at a surface level; however, the methods through which these goals might be achieved are not examined in any depth. Recruitment and course delivery enhanced “capacities” are useful to Alaska Native students when curricula, methods and faculty are appropriate to Alaska Native contexts. Authentic, non-appropriating integration of “traditional knowledge systems into curricula” needs careful planning and collaboration with Native communities. ANTPP provided a model that addressed all these recommendations and established a “strong collaboration with Indigenous organizations” resulting in specific recommendations to “rural teacher preparation.” ANTPP’s collaborative initiatives with Alaska Native communities of educators and Elders engaged culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies in unique ways to nurture Alaska Native pre-service teachers.

Indigenous Communities in Higher Education: A Sacred Learning Landscape

In their article “Performing decolonization: Lessons learned from Indigenous youth, teachers and leaders’ engagement with critical Indigenous pedagogy,” Garcia and Shirley (2012) frame education as a “sacred learning landscape,” emphasizing the roles of institutions and teachers in nurturing critical consciousness and “origins of place” (pp. 77-78). The learning landscape currently occupied by UAF has been an Indigenous space and Alaska Native community place for millennia:

The late Traditional Chief Peter John of Tanana Chiefs Conference⁷ of interior Alaska said, “Our people used to come to this hill to pick Troth... Troth Yedha’ was important, a meeting place. The grandfathers used to come to talk and give advice to one another about what they were going to do. When they learned this place would be used for a school, the university, they came here one last time, to decide what they should do. They decided that the school would be good and would carry on a very similar traditional use of this hill--a place where good thinking and working together

⁷ Tanana Chiefs Conference is a consortium of 42 Athabascan tribal governments in interior Alaska.

would happen...They were also giving a blessing to their grandchildren who would be part of the new school (University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2012).

In describing the gifting of 'Troth Yeddha' to the then Territory of Alaska, the Tanana Dena claim an Indigenous pedagogy of place—a hope that “good thinking and working together” will continue and that their grandchildren will be included and appropriately served by this new school. Chief John's words serve as an example of “learning relationships in context” as described by Tewa scholar Cajete (2000, p. 183), both the relationship of UAF to the land, or physical place, as well as the pedagogical place envisioned by the Dena communities.

Both UAF and the University of Alaska (UA) Statewide offices are located on *Troth Yeddha*'. If the system seeks to “build knowledge of Native community, culture, and history,” the institution needs to actively engage this place in public policy documents, reports, programs, and curricula. This is not currently the case in terms of UAF's public “face” and institutional discourse. In our concluding comments below we discuss UA and UAF policy statements that reference responsibilities to Alaska Native peoples.

Concluding Comments

In “Ancient wisdom, modern science” (Boyer, 2010) discusses the significance of Indigenous knowledge[s] including in tribally controlled colleges:

I believe we are performing acts of decolonization by giving our students access to their tribal knowledge. We are adding experiences and knowledge back rather than taking something away from our students or leaving them with a vacant space. We are helping students relearn their personal and community history. We are helping them regain their connections to the land. (pp. 27-28)

UAF is not classified as a tribal college as such; however, it has a significant percentage of Indigenous students, and publicly stated responsibilities to Alaska Native students and communities. Core themes within UAF's strategic plan include a commitment to “incorporate traditional and local knowledge more fully in appropriate curricula at every level from college preparation to graduate programs” (p. 3) and “double the number of Alaska Native graduate students” (University of Alaska Fairbanks, undated, p. 5). UAF's academic plan highlights the institution's pledge to provide “service to rural and Alaska Native peoples...as central to the strategic direction of UAF” (p. 1), as well as fostering “the success of Alaska Native students and research concerning Alaska Native peoples, including documentation and preservation of languages and culture” (University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2015, p. 2).

“Shaping Alaska's Future” (SAF) (University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2014) was published in 2014, as a strategic directions initiative designed to shape policy at each of the major administrative units and their affiliated rural campuses. Key statements referencing Alaska Native peoples, cultures, languages and knowledge include:

- UA recruitment, retention and graduation rates are low, especially for disadvantaged and minority populations and for Alaska Natives. Effect: UA graduates reflect the diversity of Alaska (University of Alaska, 2014, p. 7).
- Some Alaska Native languages and cultural traditions are endangered. Many communities do not have sufficient resources to safeguard and nurture culture and the arts, so UA plays a vital role in preserving and advancing this knowledge and these traditions. Effect: UA is a major center of culture and the arts in Alaska and is a center of excellence for Alaska Native and indigenous research and scholarship (University of Alaska, 2014, p. 13).
- Circumpolar communities are experiencing rapid social and economic transformation...These communities need research-based and indigenous knowledge in order to adapt. UA has the expertise to assist these communities, and to do so must effectively communicate with those who need it...Effect: Alaskans and their communities use research-based information, enriched by traditional knowledge, to successfully adapt to change (University of Alaska, 2014, p. 13).

There are a number of problematic orientations in the SAF document: these include deficit assumptions regarding Alaska Native people’s abilities to maintain their cultures and languages and the overt hierarchal separation of “research-based [knowledge]” and “Indigenous knowledge.” In any case, fulfilling these commitments continues to be a decolonization challenge without adequate numbers of Indigenous faculty who can shape recruitment, teaching, research, and service policies *with and for* Alaska Native communities. The University of Alaska Fairbanks has a significant number of Alaska Native students—18.5% as of Fall 2014—however, Indigenous faculty number have never exceeded 5% in terms of total faculty numbers. And this percentage is ambiguous because there are several different categories of faculty at UAF including permanent (tenured) faculty, those eligible for a permanent position (tenure-track) and those under term/temporary contracts.

In closing, we propose an engagement in higher education with Grosfoguel’s (2012) notion of a “pluri-versity”; that is, a critical, decolonized orientation necessary to authentic, collaborative engagement between Indigenous communities and Western institutions.

Not a *uni*-versity (where one epistemology defines for the rest the questions and the answers to produce a colonial, *uni*-versal social science and humanities) but a *pluri*-versity (where epistemic diversity is institutionally incorporated into necessary inter-epistemic dialogues in order to produce decolonial, pluriversal social sciences and humanities. (p. 84)

About the Authors

Ac'aralek Lolly Sheppard Carpluk (Yup'ik) was born and raised in Mountain Village, Alaska. Her Yup'ik upbringing and perspective are continually supported and nurtured by a large extended family. Her formal Western education began in an elementary school in Mountain Village. Carpluk went on to attend both Mt. Edgecumbe and St. Mary's Catholic high schools, and received a BA in sociology, an elementary and secondary teaching certification, and a Master's degree in education, all from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The majority of her work experience has been in education. Carpluk has served a variety of committees, including the Native Educators' Conference Planning Committee, the Native Educators' Advisory Committee to the Commissioner of Education, Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literatures Committee, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Native Education.

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The Community Readiness Initiative in Kugluktuk, Nunavut: The Challenge of Adapting an Indigenous Community-Based Participatory Framework to a Multi-Stakeholder, Government-Designed Project Environment

Chelsea Gabel, Emilie Cameron

ABSTRACT In April 2014, McMaster University and Carleton University collaborated with Kugluktuk, an Inuit community in Nunavut to survey community views on resource development and produce a larger community report. This was part of a Community Readiness Initiative (CRI) piloted by the Canadian Northern Development Agency (CanNor) to assess the socio-economic needs of communities across the North prior to mine development. Kugluktuk is the first of seven communities across Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon to produce their final report. Universities have started to play an important role in developing a ‘third mission’ whereby researchers are encouraged to collaborate with non-academic organizations. This collaborative approach can include contract research and consulting, as well as informal activities like providing ad hoc advice and networking with practitioners. Working as an academic in this environment can create tensions, but it can also create opportunities to foster and ensure meaningful input and consultation from a variety of stakeholders. This paper focuses in depth on the collaborative nature of the CRI process that began in April 2014 and ended in August 2015 with an emphasis on the community-based participatory research approach that we took. With insights that apply equally well outside of the Kugluktuk context, the approach that we took also provides a useful model for engaging with issues on mining and resource development opportunities.

KEYWORDS Nunavut; resource development; community-based participatory research; collaborative research; capacity building; capacity exchange; academic consultants

The rapid growth of mineral exploration and development activity in Nunavut over the last decade is reshaping the economic, social, and environmental geography of the region. From a low in the early 2000s (after the closure of Nunavut’s two operating mines), the mining industry now constitutes a large proportion of the territorial economy. Between 2009 and 2013, mineral exploration and development expenditures surged from \$187.6 million to \$426.5 million. This period also saw the opening of the Agnico-Eagle Ltd. Meadowbank gold mine near Baker Lake, which will soon be succeeded by the company’s Meliadine gold mine near Rankin Inlet, now under construction. There are also several major new developments on

the horizon, such as the Mary River mine on north Baffin Island and the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine near Baker Lake. The Nunavut government predicts that the mining sector alone could create 1500 new jobs for Inuit and eventually account for 12% of the territorial workforce (Nunavut, Department of Economic Development and Transportation, 2009).

Although there are several advanced exploration sites in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, no mines are currently operative within the region. However, Kugluktukmiut (“people of Kugluktuk” in Inuinnaqtun) have long been involved in the resource extraction sector. Beginning with involvement in mineral exploration through the 1950s and 60s, through to participation in offshore oil and gas exploration in the 1970s, employment at the Lupin Mine south of the community in the 1980s, and involvement in the development and operation of the NWT diamond mines from the 1990s to the present, Kugluktukmiut are familiar with the mining industry. Furthermore, the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement included delineation of Inuit surface and subsurface rights within the territory, and established new institutions involved in assessing and licensing proposed mines. Today, Kugluktukmiut work at the diamond mines in the NWT, are employed at various mining camps in the region, and also work in the various institutions governing extraction in the territory, such as the Nunavut Impact Review Board and the regional Inuit association, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA). It is anticipated that over the next several years up to eight mines will open in the Kitikmeot region.

In April 2014, McMaster University was approached by the Hamlet of Kugluktuk to engage in a “Community Readiness Initiative” (CRI) being piloted in seven northern communities by the Canadian Northern Development Agency (CanNor). The purpose of the CRI was to “help empower communities to begin to take a more active management role in managing the impacts from resource development” (CanNor, 2013, p.1). McMaster University partnered with Carleton University to undertake a CRI in Kugluktuk and produce a larger community report. The CRI brings together the community of Kugluktuk, non-governmental organizations, land claims organizations, various levels of government, industry, and academic partners. Kugluktuk is the first of seven communities across Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon to produce their final report. All partners have provided input into the CRI process and have worked together to refine the project questions, methodologies, knowledge outcome and dissemination strategies.

Several community members highlighted the importance of engaging in a broader, community-driven discussion about resource development within the context of the CRI process:

I have a ton of nieces and nephews that are going to be just finished high school, or that are going to be looking for work. My biggest worry for them would be are they going to be ready for that? ... Is the life they have now preparing them for what's to come in the future? Are they going to be able to make it through high school? By the time they're done are they going to be ready and are they going to have enough self-confidence and have that drive and ambition to succeed outside the school? Are they

going to want to work in a mine? (Interview, May 1st, 2014)

It's Inuit land, it's destroying Inuit land when they mine. They can have all the safety practices and all the environmental practices to it, but when they do a mine, you're carving out a big spot out of the land and how do you reclaim that? (Focus Group, April, 29th, 2014)

We need to know what the community needs, so we have a good idea what we need to do in the future to make things work for this community. For one, is this community ready for development, for the type of development that might happen? Are we ready, that's the question. (Interview, April 30th, 2014)

You know, we learn from our elders, we watch our elders, we hear our elders, and what they do we see. What we learn from our elders we pass it down to the youth so that they can learn from us. Because they're thinking if we do this [community readiness initiative] for our community, it would be a good thing so that we could have a healthier Kugluktuk and we would all be working together. (Focus Group, April 29th, 2014)

The university has a history of engaging with and contributing to society (Trencher et al., 2014). Today, academic researchers are strongly encouraged to collaborate with non-academic organizations. This collaborative research includes contract research and consulting, as well as informal activities like providing ad hoc advice and networking with practitioners (Perkmann et al. 2013). The consulting relationship in particular has become an important social function of the university and is one way that researchers can make their knowledge and expertise available to government, public sector organizations, community groups, and industry. For example, in the community of Igloolik, UN partnered with Carleton University in 2009 to undertake a major socio-economic baseline study that could be used to understand the community's status prior to the beginning of major resource development in the region (Kennedy and Abele 2010). The Igloolik Hamlet Council identified a need for more data about the community to establish this baseline and help with local decision-making, and initiated a partnership with researchers from Carleton University, working together to design the project and carry it out. In academic literature, this type of partnership has become known as a "third mission." While the concept of a third mission is somewhat ambiguous, in principle, it refers to diverse activities not covered by the first mission (education) and second mission (research). The third mission includes active university, industry, and government partnerships promoted in public policy. Vorley and Nelles (2008) define the third mission as a "phenomenon, articulated in policy, in which higher education institutions are encouraged to realise their broader socio-economic potential through knowledge exchange and partnerships" (p. 2). Trencher et al. (2014) are critical of the third mission regime arguing that it is too narrow in scope because of its economic focus (p. 157). Alternatively, we suggest that our approach is more closely situated within what Trencher and his colleagues refer to as an emerging mission, i.e., a large-scale coalition that brings

together both specialists and non-specialists from academia, industry, government, and civil society. The emerging mission moves beyond the creation of economic development to the creation of social transformations to materialize sustainable development (2014, p. 158). The successful alliance that we describe in this article harnessed the knowledge and expertise from academic, government, industry, community and civic actors with the potential to transform the social structures in Kugluktuk, Nunavut.

The study team assembled for this project included recognized experts in community-based, participatory research, research in Indigenous communities, survey design and implementation, statistical analysis, and northern resource development, as well as researchers with direct experience conducting research in Kugluktuk and across Nunavut. Furthermore, the study team brought together researchers from two universities, who have access to a network of colleagues with direct experience conducting baseline socio-economic and community-mapping work in northern and Indigenous communities, as well as with experts in mineral development, labour policy and northern policy. Both McMaster University and Carleton University have strong traditions of interdisciplinary collaboration and policy-relevant research. Furthermore, both universities have a strong record of networks that extend beyond the institution. These collaborations take different forms, and occur with a broad range of communities and organizations. Some researchers conduct “community-based or engaged research” (CBR/CER), working closely with community members to create research questions and to build the capacity of community organizations. Other researchers conduct quantitative and/or qualitative analyses which can be used to inform policy development or to help organizations measure the socio-economic impacts of their work. Still other researchers are shaping collaborations which connect research, education, policy and practice.

One of the issues that we encountered early on in the CRI process was that the methodology outlined by the funding agency, CanNor, was not consistent with community priorities for research as conveyed to us by the Advisory Committee, the Project Coordinator, and previous experiences conducting research in the community.¹ These include an interest in building research capacity among Kugluktukmiut, undertaking culturally-appropriate research, and engaging in a genuinely community-based and participatory project where community members have the opportunity to assess their community on their own terms, for their own purposes, and for the possibility of “owning” the process and the outcome. We thus undertook a lengthy process of negotiating a modified approach to the CRI in Kugluktuk. The purpose of this paper is to focus in depth on the nature, scope and collaborative nature of the CRI process as it unfolded in Kugluktuk, between April 2014 and August 2015, with an emphasis on the methodological approaches that we undertook. The paper will describe the research framework that we drew on as researchers and discuss the benefits and challenges that we encountered while working as academics in a multi-stakeholder environment. This paper also considers how a third or emerging mission can positively reinforce the dynamics of these partnerships through their recursive and reciprocal development (Trencher et al., 2014). The

¹ One of the research team members has been involved in research in Kugluktuk since 2005.

model used for this project is one that academics, consultants, and Indigenous communities could draw on or adapt as they embark on similar collaborative processes.

Community Profile of Kugluktuk, Nunavut

Kugluktuk is located at the confluence of the Coppermine River and the Arctic Ocean (Coronaton Gulf). It is the westernmost community in Nunavut, close to the border of the Northwest Territories, and accessed primarily by air. Formerly known as Coppermine, Kugluktuk has a population of approximately 1,500 people, of which approximately 90% are Inuit. Inuit in Kugluktuk trace their ancestry from across the circumpolar Arctic but are primarily Inuinnait. Inuinnait have lived in the region for centuries, and settled in the communities of Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Bathurst Inlet, and Holman (Ulukhaktok, NWT) through the latter half of the twentieth century.

Kugluktuk has a medical facility/clinic, a community recreation complex, elementary and secondary schools, a campus of Nunavut Arctic College, several churches, offices of the municipal and territorial government, and a handful of community organizations. Food and other supplies arrive regularly by plane and several times during the summer months by ocean freighter. Food is sold at both the Coop and the Northern Store. The enormous cost of market foods is somewhat offset by wildlife harvesting, a highly important cultural and economic practice in the community.

Partnership and Collaboration

Overall, the CRI brought together the community of Kugluktuk, non-governmental organizations, land claims organizations, various levels of government, industry, and academic partners. All partners provided input and worked together to refine the project questions, methodologies, knowledge outcomes, and dissemination and communication strategies. The project began with the establishment of a Community Readiness Initiative Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Advisory Committee was to provide direction and oversight for the CRI process, and to play a hands-on role in determining the project questions and research design, along with methodology, knowledge exchange, and communication. The Advisory Committee was instrumental in providing detailed feedback concerning the development of specific research instruments and measures (e.g., the major household survey design), research ethics, and budget management. They also provided strategic advice, offered input and suggestions regarding the broader goals of the project, received and reviewed regular project updates, and addressed potential conflicts when they arose. The researchers worked closely with the Advisory Committee, the Project Coordinator, and a team of university-based researchers and assistants to design and undertake the research that underpinned the final report.

Two key documents governed the management of the project. The first document is a signed agreement between the Hamlet Council and the academic research consultants. The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the research consultants in examining the potential involvement and willingness of the community to participate in resource development occurring near Kugluktuk. The second document is a research agreement between the Advisory

Committee and the research consultants. The detailed research agreement was put in place to clarify and confirm mutual expectations between the community and the research consultants.

Independent of the governance structure, the researchers, project manager and project coordinator had regular meetings and conference calls to ensure all parts of the project were moving along. Additionally, graduate research assistants were closely integrated into the intellectual work of the project.

Methodology: Overview

The Kugluktuk CRI Advisory Committee selected our proposal based on its strong participatory and community-driven elements, the range of skills and experiences offered by the research team, and the strength of the existing relationships between one of the researchers and community members developed over the preceding ten years. Once the contract was awarded to the research team, however, it became clear that our approach to the project was inconsistent with the methodological approach and final report template developed by CanNor for the CRI. We thus undertook many weeks of discussion and negotiation to come to agreement with CanNor and the Advisory Committee about the approach we would undertake.

The CanNor approach and template had a number of strengths. It involved multiple research tools (SWOT, PEST, and VSEC analyses; a community skills survey) and was designed to unfold over more than one visit to the community. It involved the Advisory Committee in reviewing and validating existing socio-economic data and participating in the identification of knowledge gaps that might be filled by the CRI process. It was also standardized for use in all seven CRI pilot communities (although the CRI coordinators were cognizant of the need to adapt the CRI approach to specific community needs, and validation of the approach to the CRI process by the community Advisory Committee was part of the early phases of the project phase template). For CanNor's purposes, a single, standardized methodology and report template, applied across the CRI pilot communities, would allow for easy comparison between communities and a more direct evaluation of the pilot program, before unrolling the CRI process across Northern Canada. Such a uniform template would also allow consultants working in more than one community to maximize efficiencies in terms of research design. For individual participating communities, however, standardized comparison with other communities was of less practical value than the identification of community-specific needs and priorities, and the range of other benefits that come from participatory, community-based research design and implementation.

Indeed, although it had strong elements of community consultation embedded in its design, the CRI template was not participatory or community-driven in research design or methodology, which we identified as a significant concern, nor was it explicitly Indigenous or Inuit-specific. As a result, it did not emphasize relationship-building, did not require extensive time in the community, did not emphasize capacity building, did not involve the community in all phases of the research, did not emphasize the four principles of Indigenous ownership, control, access and possession of research results (OCAP), and did not integrate Inuit understandings and approaches to well-being or other culturally-specific values and priorities.

Overall, the project did not prioritize what Janet Tamalik McGrath (2011) describes as Inuit ways of being-knowing-doing-accounting, a concept she links to Shawn Wilson's writings on Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, and methodologies (Wilson, 2008). Partly owing to these limitations in design, and partly as a result of the mandate of the funding agency, the CRI methodology and report template was also, we felt, too narrowly focused on "mine-readiness" as a matter of education and skills development, rather than as it relates to overall individual, family, and community wellness.

Our challenge was thus to bring as many elements of an Inuit-specific, community-driven, participatory research paradigm as we could to the process, to integrate aspects of capacity building into the project, and to broaden the scope of "mine-readiness" as it was defined in the CRI template, while ensuring that the modified approach would satisfy the multiple stakeholders involved in the process.

The approach we ultimately developed is grounded in a community-based participatory research (CBPR) paradigm, and draws upon both quantitative and qualitative methods. Indigenous peoples are often excluded and disengaged from the research process (Battiste, 2001; Battiste, 2000; Brubacher, 2007; Castellano & Reading, 2010; Castalleno, 2000; Jackson, 1993; Mitchell & Baker, 2005; Porsanger, 2004; Smith, 2006; Wilson, 2008). CBPR addresses this by creating bridges between researchers and communities, through the use of shared knowledge and experiences. It further lends itself to the development of culturally appropriate measurement instruments. CBPR also engages communities in generating knowledge about themselves, rather than being simply the objects of study. In this project, for example, community members were trained in various research methods and were directly involved in designing and carrying out focus groups and in conducting the household survey. CBPR promotes community ownership of both process and outcome, enhancing the quantity and the quality of data collected but also the overall sense of community control and ownership over the process. For example, all data and research instruments generated in this process have been passed on to the community for their own use, including follow up studies. Overall, CBPR can result in a deeper understanding of a community's unique circumstances and challenges, a more accurate framework for adapting best practices to the community's needs, and a greater likelihood that findings and recommendations will be implemented.. The core elements of a CBPR approach, we felt, were appropriate for this project given the need to learn from community members about the strengths and weaknesses of their community, and the challenges and opportunities they feel will accompany major resource development.

CBPR methodology is grounded in extensive consultation and relationship-building at the beginning of a project, before any research is carried out, and, ideally, before research questions or methodologies are even identified. In this context, a set of deliverables was expected by the funder within a relatively short timeline, and the CRI governance structure did not allow us to extensively modify the project's overall structure or revisit its core objectives. Nor was this necessarily a community priority: although participants were clear that they wanted the CRI to be as participatory, collaborative, and meaningful as possible, they were also keen to ensure the process worked for (and was legible to) government and industry stakeholders,

and that the results would be mobilized to create meaningful change. We thus redesigned the methodological template to allow for extensive, open-ended consultation at the start of the project, through one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups and informal household visits. In concert with the existing knowledge and long-term relationships with community members that one of the research team members brought to the project (see Cameron 2011; Cameron 2015), this allowed us to more thoroughly engage the community in the development of an approach that was in line with their concerns and priorities.

Our overall approach to the project involved a) grounding the project in an Inuit model of wellness and Inuit models of consultation; b) introducing extensive front-end consultation through focus groups with a range of stakeholders (youth, elders, women, men, mine workers, industry representatives and others) and semi-structured interviews with community leaders, organizations, industry, government, and other stakeholders (with expertise in health, education, housing, criminal justice, wildlife, economic development, culture, and other key issues); c) increasing the involvement of the Advisory Committee in research design; d) redesigning and expanding the CRI community skills survey template in order to deliver a major omnibus survey that was consistent with existing government and community baseline socio-economic survey instruments; e) changing the assigned “Valued Socio-economic Components” (VSECs) to better reflect Inuit frameworks of wellness and Inuit cultural priorities; f) local employment and capacity building (training of community-based surveyors, training in research methods, training in SWOT, i.e., Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats and PEST, i.e., Political, Economic, Social and Technological analysis); g) expanding the conceptualization of “mine-readiness” underpinning the project to include the range of social determinants that impact wellness in the community, in addition to education and skills training; and h) the use of social media.

Methodology: Project Phases

The research and report writing phases of the CRI unfolded over 16 months, culminating in the submission of a final CRI report. Below, we describe the approach and project phases that we undertook as part of the CRI process in greater detail.

1. Preliminary Meetings, Relationship-Building, and Preliminary Data Collection (April/May 2014)

Our first step was to undertake an initial fact-finding meeting to Kugluktuk where we introduced ourselves and CRI at a community feast.



Figures 1 and 2: Community feast to kick off the CRI Initiative (Courtesy of CRI Facebook page)

Following the feast, we held a number of discussions with a range of representatives and key stakeholders about their interests and the overall scope of the project. We also conducted a preliminary mapping of community assets and concerns at the community level, household level, and individual level by way of focus groups with women, men, elders, youth, mine workers, hunters and others as identified by the advisory committee. Additionally, we conducted semi-structured interviews with a number of community members including medical staff, RCMP, teachers, housing, economic development officers, and others. Interviews and focus groups were also carried out in Yellowknife with government and industry partners, to further ground our understanding of the issues and various stakeholder priorities.

The semi-structured interview and focus group format is beneficial because it encourages interaction between community members and helps to generate conversation and identify group priorities and norms. We felt this methodology allowed for more culturally appropriate, inclusive, and open-ended conversations at the community level.

A Facebook page for the Community Readiness Initiative was designed and launched by the Project Coordinator in May 2014 and was an important venue for sharing information about the project, recruiting participants, and maintaining community interest and momentum. During this phase we also conducted a thorough review of the academic and grey literature relevant to the project, as well as existing socioeconomic data.

2. Development of Inuit-specific Approach to the Project

Community members emphasized the importance of ensuring that the Kugluktuk CRI process drew, as much as possible, on Inuit frameworks of knowledge and practice, and we aimed, as much as possible, to ground the CRI in Inuit frameworks of knowledge production, decision-making, and consultation. Jackie's Price's (2007) extensive study of Inuit governance highlights the myriad ways Inuit governance systems are undermined in government, academic, and industry processes, and proposes a "Kitchen Consultation Model" of decision-making grounded in Inuit values, practices, ways of knowing, and relationships. Although the context, timeline, and governance structure of the CRI did not allow for a fully robust "Kitchen

Consultation Model” to be undertaken, we aimed to integrate some of the key principles of this approach, including placing the Advisory Committee at the core of decision-making (moving decision making power away from outsiders and/or government and into the hands of community leaders); emphasizing an open-ended, ongoing, informal discussion at the household level; and involving community members in carrying out their own research as part of the CRI (several focus groups that informed the final report, for example, were designed, carried out, and reported on exclusively by community members, and none of the research team was present).

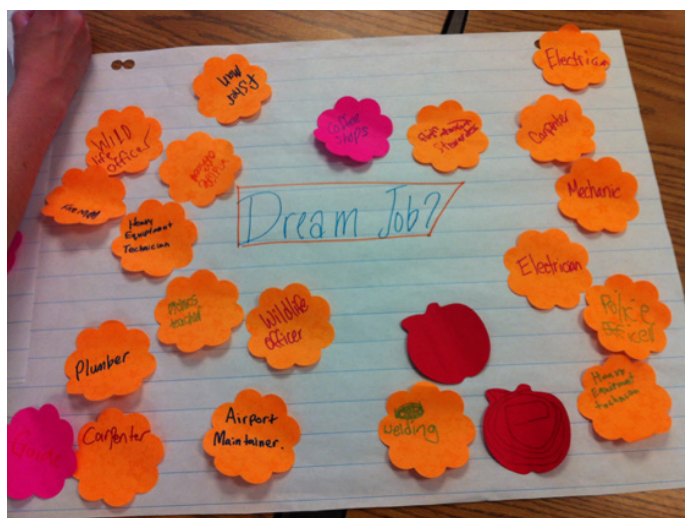


Figure 3: Youth Focus Group and Brainstorming Session

The initial request for proposals outlined a methodological approach involving the identification of Valued Socio-economic Components (VSECs). VSECs are a standard approach to socio-economic study within the environmental assessment industry, including submissions to the Nunavut Impact Review Board, and are intended to identify the characteristics that collectively make up what is of value at the community level. Although the VSEC approach has its strengths, we proposed an alternative methodology. We proposed grounding our understanding of what is “valued” by Kugluktukmiut in an Inuit framework of wellness, and proposed modifying the assigned VSEC elements to reflect more fully local understandings of the foundations of individual, family, and community well-being. In so doing, we also committed to working with the Project Coordinator to ensure that the final report would link these revised components to the standard VSECs, to promote maximum legibility and uptake of the report and its recommendations.

We grounded our understanding of what matters to Kugluktukmiut in the inuuqatigiingniq, inuuhiqattiarniq, and niqiqainnarniq (peoplehood, personhood, livelihood) model articulated by Janet Tamalik McGrath (2011). Developed in conversation with the late, highly respected elder Aupilaarjuk, McGrath explains that well-being, in an Inuit framework, is based on the

interrelation of collective and individual well-being, and grounded in collective and individual capacities to provide food and livelihood. Peoplehood, personhood, and livelihood are interdependent: all must be strong and valued for overall well-being.²

One of the reasons the Advisory Committee preferred the *inuuaqatigiingniq*, *inuuhiqattiarniq*, and *niqiqainnarniq* model is that it makes a strong connection between waged work and Inuit values of procuring and sharing food. As we describe in the CRI Final report (Cameron and Gabel 2015), *niqiqainnarniq* (livelihood), in an Inuit framework, is not reducible to either waged work or the ability to eat (*niqiqainnarniq* translates as “always having meat”). Although food is, of course, of fundamental importance to well-being, and waged work plays an important role in Inuit capacities to provide their families with food, *niqiqainnarniq* also refers to cherished skills, relationships, and practices that build individual and collective wellbeing overall. What matters about “always having meat” is not just that people have their nutritional needs met, but rather that people are grounded in the skills and relationships that enable them to contribute to their community, provide for themselves and others, practice skills, nurture relationships with the land, and promote overall social, cultural, and economic well-being. This offers a very different conceptualization of the importance of both waged work and food provisioning in Inuit communities than the model employed in most government programs and assessment processes.

What difference does it make to assess well-being in this way? As many local mine workers and their families emphasized, part of their pride in maintaining jobs at the mines was related to their capacity to purchase snow machines, ATVs, and other resources necessary to harvest wildlife, not just for their own use, but also to contribute to extended family and community networks. The *inuuaqatigiingniq*, *inuuhiqattiarniq*, and *niqiqainnarniq* model also highlights broader Inuit values about the land, that are not well encapsulated by *Qablunaaq* (non-Inuit) understandings of the environmental impacts of mining. As one community member noted regarding the risks posed to the land from mining:

If say 5, 10 mines pop up just around Kugluktuk, then how is the community going to be affected? Will we be able to have clean drinking water? Or clean fish? Or healthy caribou? Or will the air be polluted? Those would probably be my biggest concerns. (Interview, May 1st, 2014)

Within Inuit frameworks, it is clear that what is at stake in discussions of the land is not just ecological integrity, but also a fundamental set of relationships that enable social, cultural, economic, physical, spiritual, and collective well-being. Traditional VSECs identified by government for this project included components such as religion, spirituality, crime and fate control, as well as several other characteristics. Many of the VSECs did not adequately capture

² McGrath notes the resonance between “*Aupilaarjuk’s triad*” of *inuuaqatigiingniq*, *inuuhiqattiarniq*, and *niqiqainnarniq* and the IQ Task Force’s emphasis on the foundational importance of four primary relationships: relationship with the land, with family, with inner spirit, and with social grouping (IQ Task Force, 2002). The two models are comparable and both underpin the Kugluktuk CRI’s overall approach to assessing and characterizing the well-being of Kugluktukmiut.

Inuit values or the specific concerns of the community. Drawing on the inuuqatigiingniq, inuuhiqattiarniq, and niqiqainnarniq model, we modified the approach and identified eight components of wellness in Kugluktuk, which we described in detail in the final report. These eight components include Land and Environment, Social Relations (including Crime) Physical and Mental Health and Wellness (including Food Security), Education and Training, Employment and Economic Activity, Community Services and Infrastructure, Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being and Self-Determination. Each was assessed more fully in the following phases of the project, and ultimately recommendations were developed to support each component.

3. Development and Implementation of Household Survey (June-August 2014)

The CRI template included a community skills survey designed to gather information about the education and skills of community members, as well as some basic demographic information and information about harvesting practices. We opted, instead, to carry out a major omnibus household survey that would provide substantial baseline socio-economic information as well as pose questions about broader social, economic, political, environmental, cultural, and health issues. The survey instrument was designed to be consistent with existing government and community household surveys (it drew on the survey instrument used in the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics' 2001 Nunavut Household Survey and a socio-economic baseline survey undertaken in Igloolik, NU, in 2009) to promote comparability with existing and future surveys.

The community was instrumental in shaping survey design and in implementing the survey itself. The overall focus of the household survey was agreed upon through meetings with the CRI Project Coordinator and the Advisory Committee in June 2014. Final approval of the survey instrument was granted by the Advisory Committee in July 2014. The Project Coordinator tested the survey in early August 2014 and four community based surveyors were hired and trained to carry out the survey. The research team and community-based surveyors surveyed every day from August 15 to August 27, 2014, primarily surveying in peoples' homes, but also offering community members the option to respond to the survey at the Hamlet office or another location of their choosing. Awareness about the survey (and the larger CRI process) was boosted by radio announcements, signs in key community venues, and the Facebook page, which had significant traffic during this time. Everyone involved worked very hard to maximize the response rate, and as a result 416 surveys were completed, representing over 40% of the adult population. This is a significant response rate and allowed for robust claims to be made about the resulting data, including disaggregation of the results by Inuit and non Inuit residents of the community. The survey findings significantly informed the CRI process and report. The benefits of conducting a survey specifically designed for the community, and drawing on existing territorial and community survey templates, is that: a) we asked questions of particular relevance and importance to the community in addition to the questions usually asked in household surveys; b) community-specific questions enhanced community "buy-in" to the survey, which promoted a higher response rate; c) the survey can be replicated in future years to measure change over time. Furthermore, because the Kugluktuk Household Survey

was an omnibus survey – a survey which contains questions about a range of topics – we can better understand the relation between different aspects of the lives of Kugluktukmiut. For example:

- The KHS showed that approximately 50% of adult Inuit are dissatisfied with the health services available to them, and 43% of adult Inuit are dissatisfied with the mental health services available.
- The KHS allowed us to note that persons who had worked for wages in the year prior to the survey were more likely to self-report their harvesting activity as Active (as opposed to Occasional or Rarely/Never/Do Not Know) than those who had not worked for wages in the year prior to the survey.

Graduate students were hired and trained to input all survey data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in September and October of 2014. In January and February 2015 preliminary statistical analysis was undertaken and shared with the CRI Project Coordinator and further statistical queries were identified. A final statistical report on the survey findings was submitted in May 2015. Results of the household survey directly informed the community readiness process in Kugluktuk. The research team also prepared a separate, stand-alone survey report for the community so that it can be put to use in other settings, including for ongoing monitoring or for use as a submission in various environmental assessment and other decision-making processes.

A BBQ was held to thank the community for participating in the survey and it was successful with over 220 people attending.

4. Capacity Building and Training in Research Methods (August 2014 – February 2015)

As researchers, we felt that training, capacity building and capacity exchange were essential components of our approach to the project. Four community members were recruited and trained in community survey techniques in August 2014. They were instrumental in conducting the household survey. Additionally, the research team subcontracted two independent researchers to run a two-day workshop that enabled community members to learn about Indigenous and social research methods used by universities and consultants and learn how to use those methods themselves. In particular, community members were familiarized with several of the tools typically used in government and industry consulting processes, including the CRI. When we redesigned the project methodology, we agreed to package our findings in ways that would be legible to government and industry, particularly the SWOT method. A SWOT analysis refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. We trained community members in the SWOT method. We also familiarized workshop participants with the “PEST” approach, which refers to Political, Economic, Social and Technological analysis. SWOT and PEST approaches are traditionally used by consultants, business and government to explore internal and external factors in order to decide future directions and actions (Van

Wijngaarden, Scholten, & van Wijk, 2012). Rather than simply apply these methods in the community, we thought that it would be useful to have a workshop to inform community members about these methods and their uses, and modify these methods in a way that fits the community. As a result, participants worked together to redesign the SWOT and PEST methods for use in Kugluktuk, and practiced applying them. The Project Coordinator attended the training session and the research team supported her as she undertook SWOT and PEST focus groups on her own in the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015 with various community groups. The Project Coordinator provided reports and transcripts from the workshops which informed the overall report findings.



Figure 5: Dr. Bernice Downey (McMaster University) leading the SWOT and PEST Community Workshop

as she undertook SWOT and PEST focus groups on her own in the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015 with various community groups. The Project Coordinator provided reports and transcripts from the workshops which informed the overall report findings.

5. Analysis, Knowledge Dissemination, Mobilization, and Reporting (May 2014 – July 2015)

The phases described above resulted in a rich repository of qualitative and quantitative data. The focus group and interview transcripts were analyzed using Nvivo 10 qualitative data analysis software. Nvivo is a useful tool in assisting researchers to identify and code themes from large data sets. The in-depth nature of the interviews and the wide range of topics discussed made Nvivo especially useful for the CRI project. In analyzing the data, a grounded approach was taken in which the themes and coding categories were developed primarily from the content of each focus group and interview. This inductive method to developing the thematic analysis gives prominence to the voices of the interviewees, allowing for the self-described needs and interests of the community to be accurately reflected in the coding results. Qualitative findings were combined with the household survey data and other available data and reports to develop a rich, 133-page report covering community perspectives, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and priorities for moving forward. In January 2015 we hosted a three-day meeting in Ottawa where preliminary findings were shared and discussed with the Project Coordinator and our core analysis was undertaken. These meetings helped refine priorities for the report, sharpened analysis of key findings, and ensured that the CRI process was in keeping with community priorities and interests.

A draft report was prepared in May 2015 combining comprehensive discussion of findings, with links to preliminary community mapping findings. Additional focus groups, interviews, and one-on-one meetings were held in the community in late May 2015 to discuss the draft report, refine key findings, and provide input for finalizing the community map. A roundtable

meeting of stakeholders with interests in the CRI process was also held in Kugluktuk on May 27, 2015 to present the draft report, validate key findings, and gather input before finalizing the community map. The final report compiled and synthesized this feedback and was submitted in July 2015.

To protect the privacy of the people who answered the questionnaires, the original survey information is stored securely at one of the host universities. It will be released only to researchers identified by the Hamlet for the purpose of conducting a follow up study. An anonymized copy of the survey database was provided to the Hamlet, however, to allow the Hamlet or other parties to query the results in the future. As per our research agreement, the researchers are also able to publish academic articles based upon what we have learned in Kugluktuk.

Knowledge was also disseminated throughout the life of the project over the Facebook designed and launched by the Project Coordinator in May 2014. It was an important venue for sharing information about the project, recruiting participants, and maintaining community interest and momentum.

6. Implementation and Legacy

Kugluktukmiut emphasized throughout the CRI process that implementation of the project findings was of primary importance. Concern that the CRI report would simply “sit on a shelf” was expressed by many community members. Implementation and long-term change requires community ownership and involvement in every stage of the project. We therefore recommended that funding for a community-based project coordinator extend over the six months following submission of the final report. The task of the project coordinator for this phase of the project would have been to: a) coordinate a three-day meeting in Kugluktuk bringing together stakeholders from across the community to discuss the final report, prioritize recommendations, and take ownership of specific initiatives; b) move forward with priority recommendations, in coordination with relevant partners; and c) help secure funding and other resources to support longer-term objectives and priorities identified through the CRI process. To our knowledge, this recommendation was not taken up, but the Project Coordinator was retained for a short period following submission of the report, and there have been some follow-up actions in the community related to the CRI.

Project partners are currently investigating how best to move forward with the implementation of the fifty-two proposed recommendations that resulted from the final report. The recommendations focus on actionable steps that can be taken at the community level to address issues facing the community. There is widespread consensus in the community that the first priority action is to address mental health and wellness in the community. Currently, community stakeholders are looking at implementing some of the report recommendations and are in the process of developing a proposal for a series of mental health focused workshops. Without significant investment and improvement in individual and community mental health status, the community feels it simply cannot take advantage of resource development. The report also contains recommendations that have broad community support and could be

implemented quickly. These include a program to facilitate criminal record suspensions and programs to improve financial literacy within the community. These are also being investigated by community partners for implementation in the near future.

To support ongoing monitoring, planning, and funding application work in the community, we have provided the community with an electronic database of key project files, including research instruments and results. An anonymized copy of the survey database was also provided to allow the Hamlet or other parties to query the results in the future.

Discussion

The collaborative experience and the methodological approach that we describe above reflects a strong commitment to Indigenous individuals, communities and organizations. Having participated in extensive consultations, discussions, surveys, interviews and focus groups in Kugluktuk on the impacts of mining and resource development, we gained an awareness of the dynamics of community, government, and industry relations and became increasingly sensitive to the challenges that are faced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders in community, government, and industry consultations. While there were several occasions when we left a government or an industry meeting feeling that we were approaching the issue from a very different place, all stakeholders were genuinely committed to making the CRI work, and we were often inspired by individuals in all sectors who had committed themselves to such a complex initiative.

One of the biggest challenges of this project was to adapt the existing methodological and final report template provided by CanNor to be more participatory, community-driven, and Inuit-focused, and to ensure that capacity building and community ownership were emphasized. We also wanted to ensure that the data generated throughout the project would be meaningful and useful, that the community would have ownership over all research tools and findings, and that inquiry into the broader social determinants of wellness, as understood by Inuit, would underpin the project. Ultimately, all parties were very pleased with the outcome, and the final report has been praised by industry, government, and community leaders for its rigor, usefulness, and detailed findings. This was achieved through continuous communication between the different partners involved in the CRI and us, and by putting extra time and resources into ensuring that the report was legible and accessible to all involved.

It is important to note that our approach to the CRI process was successful in part because we also had at our disposal a number of resources including graduate student support, large networks of experts in the field and access to other consultants. Because the money that went into this project was earmarked for community re-distribution and not the researchers themselves, coming in under budget was not the driving factor. Realistically, our approach would not be feasible for consultants but could be adapted to make their own practice more community-based and culturally-appropriate.

The process was also successful, we feel, because we understood and respected the reasons underpinning the original design of the CRI. CanNor's approach has rigor and was based on many months of planning and the experience of senior staff with long term connections with

northern communities. It was also consistent with processes that a number of governments and organizations have undertaken, and we understood the importance of ensuring that the project resulted in findings that were legible to government decision-makers and other stakeholders, and that allowed for some comparability with other pilot communities. Indeed, that is one of the main reasons that we designed the survey to be consistent with past Nunavut household surveys and other community-driven baseline studies in the territory. Comparability over time and space can be an important tool in planning and monitoring socio-economic issues, and we wanted to ensure that the baseline study be of use beyond the confines of the CRI.

Although the standard CRI template had many merits, as researchers we did not feel that it was possible to follow the government template as it was laid out and also undertake a community-based, culturally-sensitive, and participatory project in Kugluktuk that would result in increased capacity and significant community ownership of findings. In fact, our fear was that if we carried out the project in exactly the way it was proposed, we would risk reproducing and exacerbating exactly what Indigenous northerners have repeatedly raised as a major concern: they are tired of being researched by outside consultants and academics for the purposes of reports and findings that have no meaning to them, and that are used to make decisions on their behalf. Or, as many Kugluktukmiut repeatedly emphasized, they are tired of participating in studies that result in reports that “sit on the shelf” and are never implemented. This phenomenon is exacerbated when there is a lack of community leadership and buy-in, and we thus aimed to promote as much community ownership of the entire process as possible.

As a result, we included elements that we believed added a great deal of value, including the implementation and development of a major household survey that was agreed upon through multiple meetings and discussions with the CRI Project Coordinator and the Advisory Committee. Additionally, we prepared a separate, stand-alone survey report for the community so that it can be put to use in other settings, including as a submission in various environmental assessment and other decision-making processes. We provided training for the Project Coordinator and other community members in SWOT, PEST, and Community Needs Assessment tools, and the facilitation of a workshop whereby community members had the opportunity to engage with the VSEC model and determine culturally-appropriate, community-specific metrics and protocols that make sense to them. We involved highly-respected cultural consultants in this process who are recognized experts in community-based participatory research method, Indigenous methodologies and in Inuit-specific forms of knowledge production. And, we grounded the project, as much as possible, within Inuit frameworks of knowledge.

Academics who work as both community advocates and consultants are challenged with the task of navigating these different worldviews. The balance of power and authority becomes altered because the researcher is a representative of an academic institution whose desired outcome of research is to benefit a community rather than to benefit the academy, government, or industry. On the other hand, the researchers in this context are also required to take on the role of consultant whereby partnering with government and industry and adhering

to their procedures and processes is expected. A further challenge for academics taking on this type of role is having the ability to navigate existing tenure and promotion structures in academia which tend to value the legitimization of new knowledge (through publications) and its potential for production (through research grants and funding). Building long term societal relationships, which are both important yet complex, is at odds with an academic career progression that values a constant stream of research outputs (Trencher et al., 2014, p. 170). As a result, the university is in a unique position to place more value on collaborative partnerships and propose an alternative academic model of innovation and societal engagement more aligned to the needs of the 21st century.

Conclusion

A number of stakeholders across diverse sectors in the north share a deep interest in issues of mining and major mineral development, including a range of government and non-governmental organizations, industry, community groups, and other stakeholders. The Community Readiness Initiative that took place in Kugluktuk, Nunavut, provides a window into the complex challenges of academic engagement and collaborative work in a multi-stakeholder environment. With insights that apply equally well outside of the Kugluktuk context, this approach also provides both a quantitative and qualitative model for engaging with issues on mining and resource development opportunities. Indigenous communities that choose to work with consultants and/or academics outside of their community could draw on and/or adapt this approach as a way of fostering and ensuring meaningful input and consultation from different stakeholders.

The approach described above was the right one for this type of initiative. A collaborative, participatory, and Inuit-focused approach to the CRI ensured that the project engaged and was accessible to all audiences, and promoted the development of intellectual, cultural, social, economic and policy-related benefits to a wide range of stakeholders. These benefits transcend what could be delivered by any one individual or partner. Ultimately, despite its challenges, we hope the CRI supports the community of Kugluktuk to realize their vision of engaging with the mining industry as a strong people, as a community of healthy individuals and families, in ways that support sustainable and satisfying livelihoods, and in ways that ensure the long term well-being of the land and peoples' relationships with the land.

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Research as Reciprocity: Northern Cree Community-Based and Community-Engaged Research on Wild Food Contamination in Alberta's Oil Sands Region

Janelle Baker

ABSTRACT In this paper I suggest that it is possible to participate in research as an act of reciprocity; when a community asks a researcher for help on a specific topic, the application of that researcher's skills can be one of the ways they show appreciation for being welcomed into a place. I also argue that a researcher needs to be sensitive to, and participate in, systems of respect and reciprocity belonging to the people, ancestors, and sentient landscape of the place they are doing research. I critique the extraction of traditional knowledge in the traditional land use consultation industry in Alberta, Canada that is used in place of the Federal Government's duty to consult First Nations regarding their Treaty rights. As an alternative to traditional land use assessments I provide a description of the methods used in projects that test Fort McKay First Nation and Bigstone Cree First Nation's wild foods for contaminants resulting from oil sands activities in northern Alberta's Treaty No. 8 region.

KEYWORDS community-based monitoring; oil sands; Treaty No. 8; pollution; traditional land use

It was a life-changing coincidence. I defended my Master of Art's thesis in anthropology at the University of Alberta the same year that the Mikisew Cree Nation defended their Treaty rights to be consulted regarding the impacts of industrial development on harvesting from their traditional territory (S. C. o. Canada, 2005). At the time, I was only vaguely aware of the case and its implications, since I had been working with a *Wixárika* (Huichol) community in Mexico for my Master of Arts research. This research in ethnoecology and environmental anthropology coincidentally prepared me for employment in Alberta at a time when government agencies and natural resource extraction companies grappled with the ramifications of the Mikisew Cree Supreme Court ruling. I was hired almost immediately after completing my degree to work for a small consulting firm to assist in traditional land use assessments and studies. These assessments, based on methods from earlier traditional land use and occupancy studies (Tanner & Rigney, 2003; Tobias, 2000), are designed to predict the future impacts (Westman, 2013b) proposed projects will have on First Nation's Treaty rights. Government and companies use traditional land use assessments in place of consultation and roll them into the environmental impact assessment application process. Both the Alberta and Federal Governments have drafted

guidelines for traditional land use consultation (Alberta, 2007, 2013; Government of Canada, 2011) that transfer their duty to consult to “third parties” (meaning project proponents) and a consultation industry has grown out of these requirements.

While I criticize this replacement of the duty to consult with traditional land use assessments in more detail elsewhere (Baker and Westman, forthcoming), as do other scholars (Laidlaw, 2014; Passelac-Ross, 2007; Reddekopp, 2013; Westman, 2006, 2013a, 2013b)2014; Passelac-Ross, 2007; Reddekopp, 2013; Westman, 2006, 2013a, 2013b, it is worth noting here that the Provincial and Federal governments are in clear violation of the Treaties signed in the region (G. o. Canada, 1899)and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, especially the right to free, prior, informed consent (Council, 2015; United Nations, 2008). In my job at the consulting firm, I quickly realized that traditional land use assessments are not truly consultation, but are instead an unchallenging hurdle for companies to pass over in the approvals process. Traditional land use assessments are a part of the science-for-hire processes that enable companies to develop on First Nations’ traditional territories unfettered, by claiming that their projects will have “no significant impact.” Consequently, in just over a year I left the firm and became an independent consultant for First Nations, on a contract basis to assist with the unending influx of requests for consultation First Nations receive from project proponents, with impossibly short deadlines.

After about six years of doing applied research, I was frustrated with the imbalance in power in the northern Alberta oil sands region, and I wanted to respond to the concerns from First Nations that I was hearing repeatedly, concerns that are being whitewashed through the environmental impact assessment process. I knew that I needed to reciprocate within the personal relationships that had come to me through traditional land use fieldwork and to reciprocate for all of the knowledge I had extracted to put into reports. Not only had people helped me go out on the land and complete my work, but they continue to share with me and have ongoing conversations with me in ways that are meant to teach me specifically (Cruikshank, 1998). I enrolled in doctoral studies at McGill University in anthropology with the idea that it was the best way to gather resources and dedicate my skills towards the concerns that people had shared with me but that were not being addressed: mainly, those of contamination of the landscape and wild food sources.

In this paper, I suggest that it is possible to participate in research as an act of reciprocity; when a community asks a researcher for help on a specific topic, the application of that researcher’s skills can be one of the ways they show appreciation for being welcomed into a place. I also argue that a researcher needs to be sensitive to, and participate in, systems of respect and reciprocity belonging to the people, ancestors, and sentient landscape of the place in which they are doing research. I am by no means suggesting that all communities should expect or be grateful for the work academics do, nor am I trying to justify the colonial structures that exist in academia (Todd, 2016b). Rather, I am encouraging research that communities find useful and research that functions within the community’s systems of respect and reciprocity (Wilson, 2008). As Zoe Todd explains, “Indigenous thinking must be seen as not just a well of ideas to draw from but a body of thinking that is living and practiced by peoples with whom we

all share reciprocal duties as citizens of shared territories (be they physical or the ephemeral)” (2016a, 17). I will describe two community-based and community-engaged projects that I support with my research skills as an intended act of reciprocity through relations to the communities and their territories who host and care for me.

“Why Bother?”

Many people with whom I have worked have a profound sense of frustration and helplessness in regard to development in their traditional territories. Too often I have heard people lament, “Why bother, they’re just going to go ahead anyway” during traditional land use research. People are tired of being asked the same questions over and over again and being asked to identify impacts of industrial development on sacred landscapes without any action coming from their responses and concerns since no one responds or listens in a meaningful way. I often hear consultants refer to the concept of “Elder fatigue,” meaning that certain Elders get invited to so many consultation meetings and assessments that they get worn out from it. I understand the comment “why bother” and the idea of Elder fatigue as acts of refusal (A. Simpson, 2007, 2014) and resistance from community members towards the consultation and research process. Too often consultants and “social responsibility” representatives from companies interpret acts of refusal as proof for the ever-pervasive assimilation myth (see King, 2012). Likewise, when an Elder or knowledge holder claims, “I don’t know,” they are more likely saying that it is inappropriate for them to speak about a certain topic at that time or that they are subtly refusing to share that information with the consultant. Company representatives assume this means that Elders are “fatigued” or have been assimilated and that they should just go ahead with the work without asking too many questions.

Working as a consultant, or doing research for money, on traditional land use assessments is full of contradictions. It is fun and exciting to be on the land with Elders and Knowledge Holders; meanwhile it is depressing and sickening to know that the places you are visiting and recording are likely to be mined or dramatically altered by industrial development. While you are establishing a record of impacts and perhaps even protecting certain sacred sites and landscapes, you realize that companies just want locations on a map that they can avoid or “mitigate.” Mitigation in this context means that the company will argue that while the site in question will be damaged or destroyed, there are similar sites within the First Nation’s territory, so they are having “no significant impact.” Ultimately I came to see my work at best as a way of providing resources and income to people to go on the land and share knowledge with one another, and at worst as a form of knowledge extraction (Wheeler, 2005) an act of aggressively taking knowledge from people for profit to be filed away into documents that have no effect on the trajectory of industrial development of First Nations territories. Traditional land use assessments in place of consultation are extractive in that they take knowledge from communities without giving back; violating (in this case) Cree expectations of respect and reciprocity.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes about the irony that after years of discounting Indigenous knowledge, colonial powers are now interested in collecting and “integrating” it,

especially the more “practical” types of knowledge that fall under the umbrella of traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) (2004). The irony lies in the fact that the knowledge of interest is that which is most similar to science and can provide answers and solutions to environmental problems resulting from the activities of colonizing societies (L. R. Simpson, 2004, 373). Meanwhile, the spiritual foundations of this knowledge are not used in science and governance because they present opposing ideas to those of the dominant regimes. The problem for Simpson is that, “[r]emoving Indigenous Knowledge from a political sphere only reinforces the denial of the holocaust of the Americas and trains a generation of scientists to see contemporary Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge as separate from our colonial past, as an untapped contemporary resource for their own exploitation and use” (ibid., 376). Our governments facilitate the environmental destruction of traditional territories by enabling corporations to impede Indigenous peoples from living their knowledge (ibid., 378). The relationships Indigenous peoples foster with nature are encoded in indigenous language and political and spiritual systems and “without ecosystems, Indigenous Peoples cannot nurture these relationships” (ibid.).

Hugh Brody published his book *Maps and Dreams* in 1981 about an occupancy and land use study he prepared for Moberly Lake First Nation in northern British Columbia, and very little has changed since this time. Reminiscent of my own research in Alberta, he observes, “I was haunted by a thought that must have bothered many researchers: you might find out five or ten years later whom you were really working for” (Brody, 2004[1981], xxiii). Brody suggests that it is a blessing for a First Nation to be neglected by scientists, explaining that what he calls the accumulation of knowledge and what I perhaps more harshly call knowledge extraction from indigenous peoples is often an integral component of colonial control and exploitation (ibid., xxi). Perhaps research that is designed within indigenous systems of reciprocity is a step away from knowledge extraction (Smith, 1999).

Research as Reciprocity

As a child, whenever I misbehaved, my Métis grandmother (the unchallenged matriarch of our family) would chastise me (smack me upside the head) and tell me, “Mind your relations.” It was not until I was working in northern Alberta that I realized this phrase is commonly used by Métis grandmothers. Even as a child I understood that the relations my grandmother told me to mind were not just my immediate family, but my extended family, ancestors, community members, and even strangers and that I was not just meant to mind them, but to also mind my relationships with them, and my connections with the world (including plants, animals, and spirits) (for a similar description see Todd, 2016a, 18). My behaviour reflected my relations, and so it was shameful to behave badly; even if my relatives were not physically present, relations still existed and mattered. As with Métis “relations,” the term “relation” in English has many meanings and uses; embedded in it are ideas of connectivity, family, meaning, narration, and respect. In research, we need to always mind our relations.

“Gifts from the earth or from each other establish a particular relationship, an obligation of sorts to give, to receive, and to reciprocate” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, 25). When an Elder

teaches me about a plant, or shares a story, they are giving me a gift. Certainly I have offered them tobacco, lunch, fuel, and an honourarium as protocol requires for that person and day, but what about the larger gift they have given me? I have learned new things about the world, about how to behave and harvest food. They have shared their time, wisdom, friendship, humour, stories, and sometimes their food and homes with me. Of course I help out in ways that I can, but what about the problems with consultation, contamination, and appropriation of lands they are pointing out to me with their words, actions, and experiences? I am not certain that doing more research is the answer, but by dedicating some time and effort to the problems that people consistently present me with, I hope at least, it shows that I am listening and paying attention. Winona Wheeler describes the Cree way as an oral and listening culture, “We are a people to whom understanding and knowledge comes by way of relationships - with the Creator, the past, the present, the future, life around us, each other, and within ourselves. And, like my ancestors, I am here on this earth to learn” (Wheeler, 2005, 190). As Robin Wall Kimmerer explains, “The moral covenant of reciprocity calls us to honor our responsibility for all we have been given, for all we have taken” (2013, 384).

In 1969, Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. described “anthropologists and other friends” who travel to Native American communities to perform research in a critical and comical manner. He advocates a policy for indigenous peoples to use to clarify the respective roles of anthropologists and communities:

Each anthropologist desiring to study a tribe should be made to apply to the tribal council for permission to do his study. He would be given such permission only if he raised as a contribution to the tribal budget an amount of money equal to the amount he proposed to spend on his study. Anthropologists would thus become productive members of Indian society instead of ideological vultures. (Deloria Jr, 1988 [1969], 29)

Currently, in northern Alberta, a prospective researcher *is* required to submit and present a proposal to the Chief and Council of the Nation in which the researcher wants to operate. This first step is virtually impossible unless members of the Chief and Council know the researcher or a respected community member endorses them. If the governing body approves the work after reviewing the proposal, they author a band council resolution (BCR), which is a sort of bylaw allowing the researcher to work and live on reserve. Usually included in the BCR is an information sharing agreement that requires all information to be verified by collaborators and Chief and Council prior to publication, and for all information gathered to be housed with and to be owned by research participants or the First Nation. Based on my previous work and relationships, I am fortunate to have been given permission from Fort McKay in 2011 and a BCR from Bigstone Cree Nation in 2013. As described below, I have assisted in acquiring funds to support projects related to my research, that are managed by each of the communities in which I work.

Of course, reciprocity in research extends far beyond financial reciprocity. In his book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Shawn Wilson advocates for research that is

based on relationality and accountability to relationships (Wilson, 2008). Relationality is the shared aspect of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology, and Wilson claims that the “shared aspects of relationality and relational accountability can be put into practice through choice of research topic, methods of data collection, form of analysis and presentation of information” (2011, 7). Similarly, Margaret Kovach explains that a “relational research approach is built upon the collective value of giving back to the community” (2009, 149). Sharing knowledge is the most obvious way a researcher can give back; however, significance, relevancy and accessibility of the research are also crucial (Kovach, 2009).

Ethnography in late industrialism, which is arguably our current historical period characterized by degraded infrastructure, exhausted paradigms, and the incessant chatter of media, is an ethnography that is “attuned to its times” (Fortun, 2012). This sort of ethnography uses techniques to loop back on itself, so that further ethnographic research is responsive and creative and attends to emergent realities. These techniques discern the discursive risks and gaps of a particular problem domain and feed ethnographic findings back into ethnographic engagement (Fortun, 2012). In late industrialism, ethnographers need to collaborate with those whose problems they are studying and activate new idioms and ways of engaging the world: “It is activist, in a manner open to futures that cannot yet be imagined” (Fortun, 2012, 459). Meanwhile Mario Blaser reminds us that Indigenous communities do not simply resist development, but they also sustain “life projects” (Blaser, 2004):

Life projects are embedded in local histories; they encompass visions of the world and the future that are distinct from those embodied by projects promoted by state and markets. Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people’s experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus, life projects are [premised] on densely and uniquely woven ‘threads’ of landscapes, memories, expectations and desires. (Blaser, 2004, 26)

Therefore, research can contest the denial of historical and current relationality to create an ethical space between First Nations individuals and researchers (Donald, 2009, 5).

Cree Reciprocity

In the Cree world, everyone's personal, family, and regional histories interconnect and overlap; all are extensions of the past, and all are grounded in *wahkotowin, kinship/relations*. According to Nehiyawihihtamawakan, *Cree teaching, etymology*, we inherit relationships and obligations from and to the generations behind, among, and before us, to life on this earth as we know it, and to our homelands. Our histories are infused in our daily lives - they are lived experiences. So it is that the memories of our forefathers and foremothers become our own. And we are burdened with the obligation to keep them alive...In the Cree world, our sources are our teachers, and the student-teacher relationship proscribes life-long obligations, responsibilities, respect, and trust. (Wheeler, 2005, 196-197)

As a student of Cree teachers, how can I be learning about Cree ways of life, without adjusting my research to those protocols and responsibilities? I am in no way am professing to be some sort of authority on Cree forms of respect and reciprocity, but I explore some of the existing literature on the topic below, as there is a wealth of scholarship on the topic of reciprocity in Canada. David Anderson notes that in northern ethnography the term “reciprocity” has become a central concept similar to the term “culture” in anthropology (Anderson, 2014, 15). Reciprocity in northern ethnographies typically refers to the exchange of gifts, offerings, and ethical acts of respect towards all living beings. Many indigenous origin stories remind us that humans were the last species to arrive on earth and so are dependent on the wiser, older beings for their mercy and offerings (Watts, 2013, 25). Humans came into already functioning societies with particular values, cultures, and ethics and had to enter into agreements with these societies as relations (Reder, 2012, 509).

Based on his work with the Manitoba Rock Cree, Robert Brightman describes Cree respect for animals, including spiritual observances surrounding animals, as being born out of necessity (Brightman, 1993, 103). As long as hunters and trappers act appropriately, through song, dream interpretation, butchering, and other observances and rituals, animals will decide to make themselves available. An animal must sacrifice itself in order for a hunter to be successful and the animal will be reborn and continue in this cycle, as long as the hunter does not offend the animal (ibid.): “The most commonly expressed Rock Cree ideology of the hunter-prey relationship postulates an endless cycle of gift exchanges between humans and animals” (ibid., 187). Animals take pity on the hungry hunter and give their bodies as gifts and the hunter in exchange treats the animal’s body in a respectful fashion and makes offerings to the animal’s soul at feasts, and if done properly, the animal is restored to the living condition (ibid.): “Hunter and prey are thus successively subject and object in an endless cycle of reciprocities” (ibid., 187-188).

Colin Scott describes how James Bay Cree obligations for respect and reciprocity are based in the personhood that is recognized in all beings. Humans are not distinct or set above other creatures, but are instead one type of being that interacts with “a network of reciprocating” beings (Scott, 1996, 72). “These reciprocative interactions constitute the events of experience” (ibid.). All beings express and interpret signs and respond in reciprocal relations to degrees of respect shown. Illness, pollution, and harvesting success for example are all based on interactions of reciprocity (ibid., 73). An animal or medicine offers itself to a respectful harvester, and then that harvester is respectful to their community members by sharing the bounty, who later reciprocate by sharing their bounties. This is not to imply that Cree harvesters do not also have technical knowledge about harvesting and precise and accurate ecological knowledge (Brody, 2004[1981]; Scott, 2006), as they often do, with an emphasis on “‘relational sustainability’, not ‘system management’” (Langdon, 2002). Reciprocity governs all relations between beings, whether positive or negative (Scott, 2013), which is an important concept to keep at the forefront of research activities, as a reminder that research can easily enter relationships of negative reciprocity.

Kluanes also believe that one must maintain respectful relations with human and non-

human beings alike through the practice of reciprocity (Nadasdy, 2003, 85). All beings are intelligent, social, and spiritually powerful and are subject to complex reciprocal relations with one another, and this is vital to physical and cultural survival (*ibid.*, 108). Kluanes, like Crees, take delicate care as to not act in ways that will offend other beings or to enter into relations of negative reciprocity. Interestingly, many First Nations peoples see scientific wildlife research to be disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour towards animals (*ibid.*, 109). I have heard Bigstone Cree Nation members talk about how the catch and release style of fishing is “playing with” the fish and disrespectful. If the fish offers itself to you, you need to kill it. I have heard the same about eagles, when a Frog Lake Elder asked me what he was supposed to do when the bird is protected under the Endangered Species Act, but he is required to kill it out of respect when it offers itself. For Kluanes, physically bothering animals with radio collars, studying scat, and catch and release fishing are offensive, as is bothering anything within the animal’s realm (Nadasdy, 2003, 109). In this sense, scientific research is too rushed and treats animals as if they are unintelligent. Community-based and community-engaged research, in contrast, has the freedom and foresight to design research that is grounded in concepts of respect and reciprocity towards all living beings.

Community-Based Contaminants Studies

Inspired by my experiences as a traditional land use consultant, my intention for my doctoral research was to focus on Cree indicators for pollution that are embedded in spiritual, emotional, and symbolic perspectives. The last thing I wanted to do was to duplicate applied work that acts to prove or disprove what First Nations are observing in the environment; rather I wanted to record Crees’ observations and explanations for wild food contamination. This is still a large part of my work. However, as I met with Bigstone Cree Nation and Fort McKay leaders, it quickly became clear that they wanted me to help acquire funding so that they could do their own environmental monitoring and sampling; they wanted to be able to fund their own scientific research and testing of their wild food supply that they could trust. So I am assisting both communities on different projects that sample wild food for testing. Surely, the process and results from working with scientists and laboratories to complete scientific testing of food items will prove fruitful for my research as well.

Bigstone Cree Nation is a Cree community and Fort McKay is a Cree and Dené community that also works closely with the related and neighbouring Métis. Both Nations are located in northern Alberta and their reserves and territories are on top of the Athabasca oil sands deposit. Fort McKay is the community closest to oil sands mining activities and therefore is the most impacted by the Alberta oil sands operations. I have worked for both First Nations on and off for over eight years. These communities have adjacent and overlapping territories because the concepts of tribe or band are introduced (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000); people in Bigstone Cree Nation and Fort McKay are interrelated, as before settlement people moved around in familial groups according to seasonal harvesting, and they still do so in many ways. In spite of having been confined to reserves, people continue to have much larger territories and networks for harvesting and spiritual and social exchange than is typically acknowledged

by the Provincial and Federal Governments.

As previously mentioned, I have permission from both communities for the research described below. I have ethics clearance from McGill University for my doctoral research, and I voluntarily abide by the International Society of Ethnobiology's (ISE) Code of Ethics (Ethnobiology, 2006): "The fundamental value underlying the Code of Ethics is the concept of *mindfulness*—a continual willingness to evaluate one's own understandings, actions, and responsibilities to others" (Ethnobiology, 2006). While the entire seventeen principles in the Code of Ethics and their associated practical guidelines (Ethnobiology, 2006) are relevant to this discussion, I will briefly focus on most pertinent of the principles below.

Principle 5, the Principle of Active Participation (Ethnobiology, 2006) recognizes that community members must participate in all phases and activities related to research "from inception to completion" and including the application and publication of results. Principle 10, the Principle of Active Protection (Ethnobiology, 2006), requires that researchers take measures to protect communities' relationships with their environment and cultural and biological diversity. Principle 12 of the ISE Code of Ethics is the Principle of Reciprocity, Mutual Benefit and Equitable Sharing, and it recognizes that communities must benefit from "tangible and intangible processes" and the ongoing results and ramifications of the research (Ethnobiology, 2006). It states: "Mutual benefit and equitable sharing will occur in ways that are cultural appropriate and consistent with the wishes of the community (Ethnobiology, 2006). Finally, Principle 13 is the Principle of Supporting Indigenous Research, which recognizes the need for research undertaken by Indigenous peoples and communities based on their own methods, protocols, and information sharing and storage systems. Researchers need to support these efforts in any way possible and include them in research design.

Since 2011 I have worked on a research project with Fort McKay and the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA), a non-profit organization that monitors air quality in the Athabasca oil sands region. Fort McKay is a founding member of WBEA and is hosting a pilot study to monitor berries for contamination in its traditional territory, due to its concerns about berry health and requests for this project. I work with a group of twelve to fifteen Fort McKay Elders and youth to record their teachings, memories, insights, environmental knowledge, and observations of four different berry patches. WBEA also funds and assists us in using passive air monitors, weather stations, and in testing the berries for contaminants and nutritional quality. In a beautifully written article based on his own experiences as a northern Woodlands Cree scholar, Herman J Michell uses berry-picking as a metaphor for community-based research (2009): "Gathering berries helps people communicate with that quiet stillness where peace and wisdom dwell. It is through berry picking and prolonged periods of time out on the land that we bond with the natural world" (Michell, 2009, 66).

We started the project with a series of focus group meetings in 2011 and then decided to begin visiting berry patches in 2012. I was aware from my traditional land use work that a lot of Elders in the region want to go out on the land, but often lack transportation and general assistance because a lot of their children and grandchildren are employed in the oil sands mines and related industries and are therefore unavailable on a regular basis. So we started off

the project by simply providing transportation and lunches to visit berry patches in the Fort McKay territory. We quickly realized that a lot of the community's berry patches have been mined and others are no longer accessible due to blocked roads and construction. The group eventually chose three berry patches near Fort McKay and another farther away in a sacred area known as Moose Lake (Cuerrier, Turner, Gomes, Garibaldi, & Downing, 2015). Each of the patches are historically important for the community and located in areas that the Elders wanted to monitor for various reasons. One patch is very close to the Fort McKay hamlet, another is near the Athabasca River, another is near mining activities, and the one at Moose Lake is farthest away from mining activities (although various companies are now constructing projects in the area).



Figure 2: Blueberries ready to be sent for testing

to share and have recorded. Interestingly, in 2012 the group collected berries from each of the patches and took them home, but during the following year when they got to know me better, they told me that they did not consume any of the berries from the patches near Fort McKay, because they did not trust them due to the proximity of the respective patches to oil sands developments. Although the patches near Fort McKay are important historical familial and social places, people now travel much farther to collect berries; or if they are not able to travel, they are unable to access berries they trust are edible. The berries from Moose Lake, the berry patch that is the farthest from Fort



Figure 1: Fort McKay berry project participant holding blueberries

During the first year of visiting the berry patches people checked the patches and/or picked berries, had lunch, and shared knowledge and stories about the places (see Basso, 1996). It seems that everyone is in a good mood in a berry patch. The group decided to focus the project on two cultural keystone species (Garibaldi & Turner, 2004): velvet-leaved blueberries (*Vaccinium myrtilloides*) and cranberries (also commonly called lingonberries; *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), although the group regularly talks about and collects other edible and medicinal plants, and I record everything that anyone wants



Figure 3: Bigstone Cree Nation Elder Clement Auger recording landscape observations

McKay and oil sands mines, are the only ones the berry group trusts and consumes regularly. They consider the place to be “clean” and they always collect enough berries from this location to share with family members, Elders, and people with health problems (see Parlee & Berkes, 2006).

Due to these concerns about the berries, the Fort McKay group decided in 2013 that they wanted to introduce the use of science to monitor the berry patches. Following this decision, the WBEA erected passive air monitoring stations in each of the berry patches and began testing berries tested for nutritional value and contaminants. The berry group continues to assist with maintaining the air monitoring stations, changing the filters, doing regular readings, and collecting berries for testing. The group has also recently requested that WBEA add weather stations, plant observations, and snow sampling to the monitoring scope. The Elder’s wisdom is incorporated into this process. For example, in 2015 after Elders from the berry group noted that berry plants do well in foggy or misty areas, WBEA added humidity-measuring equipment to the weather stations. The berry group meets regularly to discuss and decide about how they want the project to proceed. I work with WBEA to provide a yearly report that the group verifies. Members of the group also attend conferences and co-present project results with me. I provide regular updates in the Fort McKay newspaper, the *Red River Current*. It is everyone’s intention and wish that the project continue for years into the future in order to have long-term results. The project has also enabled the group to be a socially tight and cohesive unit. We are currently completing a publication that demonstrates the correlation between the project’s traditional and scientific results and a book chapter on the use of cranberries as medicine in a volume Professor Leslie Main Johnson is editing based on the 2015 conference “Wisdom Engaged: Traditional Knowledge for Northern Community Well-being”.



Figure 4: Fort McKay Elder Howard Lacorde assists WBEA technician Natalie Bonnell to change passive air filter

My past work for Bigstone Cree Nation on traditional land use studies and assessments is one of the major inspirations for my doctoral research. I have spent more time on the land in their territory listening, fishing, hunting, trapping, and plant gathering, than in any other place. People have welcomed me into their homes and patiently taught me *Sakaw* (Bush or Northern) Cree (Westman & Schreyer, 2014) and continue to do so (my Cree still needs lots of work). Over the years, people have often shared their concerns and observations about wild food contamination. Most Bigstone Cree Nation members living in their territory prefer traditional foods, but are increasingly anxious about the safety of wild food due

to industrial pollution. Representatives of the Bigstone Cree Nation administration responded immediately after I contacted them about my doctoral research proposal. They told me that they had recently been given deformed fish and oily ducks from members who had been out

fishing and hunting. They did not trust the government agencies that had offered to send the animals for testing, and so they asked me for assistance. We partnered with toxicologist Dr. Nil Basu at McGill's Centre for Indigenous Nutrition and Environment to apply for a grant from the First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program; and, were awarded funds for 2014-2015. Bigstone Cree Nation has a large number of environmental monitors who are trained through Eco-Canada's Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (for which I am an instructor). They have worked hard with local harvesters to collect 150 samples for testing. When needed, I complete reports, assist the monitors, and perform informal interviews with Elders and Knowledge Holders. Bigstone Cree Nation plans to use this project as a pilot for a much larger long-term community-based environmental monitoring program.

Conclusion

"If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (Wilson, 2008, p. 135). My experiences with applied and doctoral theoretical research are not clear cut and defined as separate activities. My relationships are not formal and do not end when specific research projects are over. I intend to know and spend time with people who teach and humour me for the rest of my life. It deeply concerns me when I hear someone claim that they do ethnographic research "in the field" and that they keep a distance from the field location while not doing formal research. Individuals are not research subjects; they are people with whom we have relations. Friends teach me Cree, take me moose hunting, and tell me stories about how to hunt a bear in its den. When I am worrying about something, they make me feel better. They worry about their territory being damaged and their treasured bush food being contaminated by companies. I can only hope that my efforts to record their concerns and knowledge, coupled with my ongoing engagement in inquiry with them about the safety of their food supply, will reciprocate in the gift of shared knowledge and life projects (Blaser, 2004).

In this paper, I suggest that it is possible for research to be a reciprocal, rather than an extractive endeavour. In my experience with traditional land use research in Alberta, applied research tends to be the latter, and it can easily be argued that academic anthropological research also has a history of and continued tendency towards extractive practices. In order for research to be reciprocal, it needs to be attuned to the community's desires for research, questions they want answered, and concerns they would like to be addressed. Financial reciprocity is an obvious first step, but research also needs to work within the community's own systems of respect and reciprocity to humans, plants, animals, landscapes, and other sentient beings of the land. I simply hope that as someone trained in research skills that I can be helpful to the people of the land in the area I have been raised, and to contribute to decolonizing processes.



Figure 5: Bigstone Cree Nation Elder Clement Auger netting fish

About the Author

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Traveling Together? Navigating the Practice of Collaborative Engagement in Coast Salish Communities

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ABSTRACT Academics widely understand participatory action research (PAR) to be relevant to communities, collaborative from project design to dissemination of results, equitable and participatory while also action-oriented in pursuit of social justice. In this article, we suggest that there is much need to address both the challenges and opportunities that researchers encounter when applying participatory tools within an Indigenous context. In September 2013, the University of Victoria research team began a transportation safety project in partnership with the University of Windsor and participating Indigenous communities across the country. This project entailed both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including a national survey in addition to community conversations, to promote community health and injury prevention. Responsible for outreach to coastal communities in British Columbia, the interdisciplinary research team employed PAR methodologies to address local and national transportation safety concerns ranging from booster seat use to pedestrian safety. In this paper, we ask: what can participatory approaches offer the study of community-engaged research (CER) with Indigenous communities? First, we assess the promises and perils of PAR for community-engaged research when working with Indigenous communities; second, we aim to demystify the process of PAR based on our experience working with the Tsawout First Nation to “Light up the Night” through participatory video with Indigenous youth; third, we reflect on what we learned in this process and discuss avenues for further research. Our submission entails a written article and accompanying videos that illuminate the creative approach to collaborative engagement with Indigenous communities.

KEYWORDS participatory action research; community engagement; Indigenous communities; participatory video; transportation safety

Research sometimes takes academics outside of the university setting and into communities. This journey involves encounters with “situated knowledges” and thus requires conceptual sophistication and methodological innovation (Haraway, 1988). In this article, we discuss and assess the promises and challenges of participatory action research (PAR) while collaborating with the Tsawout First Nation on understanding and reducing the risk of vehicle-related injuries and fatalities involving Indigenous peoples, which have serious socioeconomic implications for their communities. In general terms, PAR is widely understood as an approach that is

relevant to communities, collaborative from project inception to the dissemination of results, equitable and participatory while also action-oriented in pursuit of social justice. There is much need to address both the challenges and opportunities that researchers encounter when applying participatory tools within an Indigenous context.

The impetus for this particular site of community engagement with the Tsawout First Nation stems from the work of Dr. Leslie Brown, former Director of the Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community University Engagement (ISICUE) at the University of Victoria, as a research collaborator on a national research network headed by Dr. G. Brent Angell, Principal Investigator, from the University of Windsor. Funded by AUTO21, which is an initiative of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Secretariat of the Canadian Government, ISICUE's participation provided an opportunity for Indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia to have presence and voice in this nationwide research endeavour. The project's methodology is founded on PAR principles and tools selected to better understand the challenges faced with respect to vehicle-related injury prevention. Through community engagement, this project envisioned better understanding of how Tsawout community members define and address the transportation safety challenges they face. The PAR approach aims to be grounded in the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of Tsawout participants and their shared sociocultural worldview. As such, depending upon a particular community's need and interest, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies may be relevant in determining what is at issue and how best to move forward in resolving identified difficulties.

Using creative visual tools, ISICUE's BC-focused interdisciplinary research team ("the research team") applied the PAR methodology to partner with Indigenous communities in the hope that local concerns about vehicle injuries could be addressed, which in turn could contribute to a national conversation about injury prevention. In this paper, we ask: What can participatory approaches offer the study of community-engaged research (CER) with Indigenous communities in the context of the work done in British Columbia? First, we assess the opportunities and challenges that PAR methods bring to CER when working with the Indigenous communities we were engaged with; second, we aim to explain our experiences using PAR with the Tsawout First Nation to "Light up the Night" through participatory video with Indigenous youth; third, we reflect on what we learned in this process and discuss avenues for further research. Our submission entails a written article and accompanying videos that illuminate a creative approach to collaborative engagement with Indigenous communities based on our experience working on this project in British Columbia.

Participatory Research and Ethical Engagement in Coast Salish Territory

Situated on the territory of the Coast and Straights Salish people, the University of Victoria is located within and in relationship to surrounding Indigenous peoples, who view life as a part of a bio-psychosocial-cultural-spiritual-physical ecosystem. This ecosystem provides context, life, meaning, and knowledge on their particular relationship with the land, water, plants, and animals. As researchers affiliated with an academic institution, we acknowledge

that our work is influenced by our position as visitors on the traditional territories of the WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees) and Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples of Coast and Straights Salish Nations. Collaborating ethically with local Indigenous communities requires recognition of the fact that academic institutions sit on Indigenous lands and territories from which many Indigenous peoples were displaced as a result of colonization. Understanding that as researchers we are implicated in oppressive relationships, it is imperative that we conceptualize our working and travelling together in our learning journeys as co-creators of knowledge founded on anti-oppressive practices and methodologies.

The University of Victoria has a long history of its researchers working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and communities. An opportunity to build on those relationships by being a part of the network of researchers working on the vehicle injury prevention project was viewed as a positive way to collaborate promising practices aimed at furthering the wellbeing of Indigenous children, families and communities. Research in and with Indigenous communities necessitates awareness and commitment to principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) in addition to self-determination (NAHO, 2005). When conducting research projects, both the University of Windsor and the University of Victoria use protocol agreements with communities as a way to reflect their accountability to OCAP and to distinct communities and Nations. Beyond the specific agreement developed for the transportation safety project with Tsawout, the University of Victoria has an overarching collaborative agreement with the WS'ANEC' School Board, to which Tsawout is party, that sets out the relational principles between the university and the WS'ANEC' communities. The WS'ANEC' – University of Victoria Collaborative Agreement articulates, in both English and SENĆOŦEN languages, principles such as collaborative decision making, respect, transparency, excellence and honouring of cultural practices (2014). This agreement describes how we are going to *be* together. As such, it inspires and grounds our approach to PAR through our unique emphasis on CER. In addition, the agreement developed specifically for the transportation safety project in Tsawout describes what we are going to *do* together and how. This agreement guides our ethical practice.

Informed by PAR principles and practices, CER refers to a continuum of research approaches in which researchers work with, for, and alongside communities. It refers to speaking and partnering with rather than researching 'on' or speaking 'on behalf of'. The lengthy history of disembodied, extractive and objectifying research with Indigenous communities is now well documented (Smith, 1999; Strega & Brown, 2015). CER aims to counter these conventions while taking citizens' experiences, narratives and stories seriously as a kind of evidence and truth in pursuit of social justice and change. In this respect, research serves as a tool of "resistance" to inequity and celebrates the "resurgence" of Indigenous knowledge (Strega & Brown, 2015). The fabric of the research process itself can be a powerful anti-oppression tool oriented towards the interruption of injustices such as racism, colonialism and patriarchy. As Community-based Research Canada (CBRC) scholars and affiliates highlight, CER entails several crucial components: *community relevance*, *research design*, *equitable participation* and *action and change* (Ochocka & Janzen, 2013; Wiebe & Taylor, 2014). In general terms, this refers to

involving collaborating communities in all stages of the research process from design right through to dissemination.

At its core, CER involving Indigenous engagement must build upon principles of respect, relationship-building, reflexivity, reciprocity. The project in British Columbia employed a PAR approach, through community engagement in accordance with the following principles (Tuck et al., 2008):

- There is transparency on all matters of the research;
- The research questions are co-constructed;
- The project design and design of research methods are collaboratively negotiated and constructed;
- The analysis is co-constructed;
- The products of the research are dynamic, interactive and are prepared and disseminated in collaboration.

Participatory methodologies are often seen as ‘sister’ approaches to Indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2005). There are particular ethics and accountabilities that arise when researchers engage with Indigenous peoples and communities. Robina Thomas and Leslie Brown’s *Protocols of Dignity* framework for working with Indigenous communities posits that the past, present and future are all connected in each moment (Thomas & Brown, 2015). Understanding our individual and collective relationships to the past and future impacts how we choose to relate in the present. Our historical, current, and future relationship to colonization, for example, is evident in each research interaction. Holding relationships as the crux of CER with Indigenous peoples requires this critical approach. As a form of “critical reflexivity,” engaging with dignity is necessarily complicated and uncomfortable as it forces us to critically self-reflect on our practices (Strega & Brown, 2015). This informs our collaborative approach with members of the Tsawout First Nation.

Reducing injury from vehicle collisions is the overarching interest to the researchers on this project and stems from the systemic risks posed to the health and safety of Indigenous people living in reserve communities today. Infrastructure is vital to the health and well being of several communities in British Columbia and elsewhere. For instance, the 2006 Highway of Tears Symposium report draws attention to the numerous Indigenous women who have gone missing or been found murdered along a 724 km. highway from Prince Rupert to Prince George, BC (Carrier Sekani Family Services, 2006). This report highlights the great need for safe transportation routes for the health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities and signals the need for further research on this crucial topic across the province and beyond. While traffic-related injuries and deaths are among the leading causes of death around the world and in Canada, Indigenous peoples are uniquely affected (WHO, 2012, StatsCan, 2011, UNICEF Canada, 2009). As Angell (2012) writes, it is not an over-stated fact that the health status of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people falls below that of the rest of the Canadian population. According to Health Canada (2011), and Pike MacPherson and McDonald (2010), injuries

within First Nations communities are the leading cause of death, estimated at twice the national average. Furthermore, there is limited research focusing on vehicle driver, passenger, and pedestrian safety with this population (Angell 2012). Indeed, a Transport Canada (2003) study involving three First Nations communities in Manitoba revealed very low rates of child-seat use, particularly in school-aged children. The *First Nations and Inuit Children and Youth Injury Indicators Working Group* noted that vehicle crashes are the main cause of injury and death of Aboriginal people under 25 years of age (Pike et al., 2010). With the aim to better understand and reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities from all manner of vehicles, Angell's prevention initiative in collaboration with researchers and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities is geared to address this gap in knowledge and to create conversations within Indigenous peoples about how best to respond in partnership to deal with these ongoing challenges.

The British Columbia based members of the research network team aimed to 'travel together' with ISICUE and partnering Indigenous communities in theory, method, and practice to raise awareness about ongoing transportation safety concerns. Guided by Angell's research leadership on the AUTO21 funded project, the partners at Tsawout First Nation, and the ISICUE transportation safety research team included Director Dr. Leslie Brown, Post-doctoral fellow Dr. Sarah Marie Wiebe, graduate research assistants Kelly Aguire and Amy Becker from the University of Victoria and community research assistant Israyelle Claxton from Tsawout. The local research team organized transportation safety-themed events, which included collecting community experience with aspects of transportation safety and feedback about local transportation safety concerns. A community conversation format provided a useful foundation for the development of locally-situated PAR initiatives. In Tsawout, this process facilitated the visibility of the British Columbia-based research team in the community and raised awareness and curiosity on the topic of transportation safety, while creating an inviting atmosphere of engagement. As we discuss in the next section, in the Tsawout First Nation, with the support and mentorship of community-based research assistant (CRA) Israyelle Claxton, we concentrate on some of the issues related to youth safety through a participatory video project organized on the theme of "Light up the Night." In addition to making the British Columbia-based research team visible as partners through the community conversation process, we too sought to assist the community with their own vision of brightening up their streets to make them safer, more accessible, and more enjoyable. Using participatory tools, during this process the community was involved in all stages of research engagement from design to knowledge dissemination.

In accordance with ethics and protocols of dignity and respect, the BC-based research team began its outreach in connection with our existing relationships and affiliations with Indigenous leaders from the First Peoples' House. Early in 2014, we called a meeting to discuss an appropriate strategy to engage Indigenous partners in a conversation about vehicle safety and injury prevention. During the meeting, hosted by the Office of Indigenous Affairs at the University of Victoria, we agreed to invite local community representatives to a lunch gathering at the Songhees Wellness Centre. Tsawout First Nation was one of the communities

whose members attended and expressed interest in being a part of the collaboration. From there, the BC-based research team began to meet with community representatives to determine how the research would be conducted and what protocols would be followed. As part of the discussion, the community members were informed of the intention of the project to engage the people in the communities on ways to reduce the risk of vehicle-related injury and death using their expertise and vision. Designed collaboratively, the project reflected the needs of the community and their insight and knowledge to plan a way forward. This necessitated a discussion of time and resources needed to make the project a success. The funding subgrant from Angell's AUTO21 research award enabled the hiring of the graduate student researchers to work with the community on the project and paid for travel costs. Additionally, Angell provided 20 child booster seats for participating communities through the Children's Safety Project Trust Fund (CSPTF), which he established at the University of Windsor. These state-of-the-art child booster seats were distributed to families in Tsawout as part of the project during a community conversation event.

Lighting up the Night in Tsawout First Nation with Participatory Video

STÁUTW (Tsawout) is home to approximately 749 people and is part of the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) Nation with territory centred on the Saanich Peninsula and southern Gulf Islands (First Peoples' Language Map, 2015). Their territory includes land and water (Claxton, 2014). The WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) First Nation is a single Nation that was historically split into four First Nations according to the imposed village site by the Canadian government. In 1850, colonial authorities in London, UK, appointed the Hudson's Bay Company to establish a colony on Vancouver Island (Tsawout First Nation, 2015). At this time, colonial authorities saw these lands as empty of law and jurisdiction and thus rendered the importance of Indigenous peoples and their relationships to their lands and resources invisible. James Douglas completed 14 purchase agreements with Vancouver Island Indigenous nations, which are often referred to as the "Fort Victoria Treaties" or "Douglas Treaties" (Tsawout First Nation, 2015). As Tsawout member and Indigenous scholar Nick Claxton articulates, colonial authorities and Indigenous peoples had very different understandings of what these treaties meant and how they would be applied (Claxton, 2015).

Today, the STÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation, also known as Indian Reserve No. 2, is centrally located on the east side of the Saanich Peninsula, approximately 20 km. north of the City of Victoria. The community runs municipal services including a capital structure for sewer services. The community's territory also includes lands and waters on the Gulf Islands including Saturna, Pender, and Saltspring. Their territories include single family residential as well as leased manufactured, or prefabricated homes. Other buildings include band, community and commercial developments such as motels, restaurants, offices, and gas stations (First Peoples' Language Map, 2015). Pat Bay Highway #17 splices through the reserve's 595 acres reserve land base.

After several planning meetings, it became clear to the British Columbia research team from their discussions with Indigenous partners that youth engagement was a priority for the

people of Tsawout. We worked closely with the community-based research assistant who was recommended by the community's health department. She skillfully facilitated the interactions between the partners during a time of community restructuring and transitioning. Early on we agreed on the importance of creating an atmosphere of engagement in order to produce research-based meaningful promising practices with lasting impact for the community as well as for the academic community. During our initial meetings, we assessed different research processes and it soon became clear that in order not to become what community-based research assistant Israyelle Claxton referred to as a “flash bang” project—an extractive model of knowledge gathering where researchers merely drop into a community, collect data and leave—relationship-building over time would be crucial. To avoid the prospect of falling into the described historical model of researchers doing hit-and-run style research, the BC research team decided to support the community through a series of participatory video workshops.

We continually negotiated between the parameters of project administration and community approaches to CER. Initially, our funding for participatory action aimed to support graduate student development as “highly qualified personnel”—language created by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)—which did not include budget support for food or for associated project costs. Collectively, we had to be innovative – including Dr. Brent Angell's success in securing funds from the First Nations Children's Safety Project Trust Fund – to meet the project's needs, which involved fundraising to hire a community-based research assistant. We will discuss this as one of our significant challenges in the concluding section. During our frequent research team meetings, the theme of youth leadership and community safety emerged. Soon, the “Light up the Night” project began to take shape in Tsawout First Nation.

We employed participatory video (PV) techniques and principles to engage a group of Tsawout youth with the subject of transportation safety in their community. We had originally hoped to engage a group of youth around driving age (16 years of age in British Columbia). Israyelle and her colleagues suggested this process might result in a video that could be used as a public service announcement, available on the Nation's website and periodically displayed on their electronic notice board in the community centre lobby. Based on past experience using video as a means for creative community engagement, our team considered PV a relevant, fun, and exciting method for the PAR portion of this project. PV is often publicized for its action-oriented nature as a means for deeper involvement in the CER processes, its low-cost and ease of use of film equipment, and its high-impact materials, especially in the age of the Internet (Benest, 2010; Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Tremblay & Jayme, 2015; White, 2003). The PV process, we expected, would engage local youth in the subject of transportation safety while also developing their skills in digital video creation. Moreover, there would be a digital product for the community to use afterward, and our team could report on the insights we gained from the PV process. Finally, we expected the PAR/PV process had the potential to enable local, community-based action and change on the issue of high incidences of transportation-related injuries and death among Aboriginal people and on-reserve.

Our PV process took on an experimental quality as challenges and opportunities arose.

Some of the challenges we faced were an initial lack of interest from youth (despite keen community leaders' interest), project timelines and budget constraints. We adapted to these challenges with a flexible atmosphere of engagement, collaboration and enjoyment created by the research team, and the youth and the community leaders who supported the project. We found that by doing this a younger group of children interested in vehicle safety and injury prevention emerged.

In the early stages of project design, our community partners identified youth as an important group to reach in our project. In addition to weekly filming workshops that ran in conjunction with the Nation's weekly youth night, we held an event called "Light up the Night." The event included the screening of our first video, which was an advertisement for the "Light up the Night" event, created during the previously held weekly PV workshops with youth. The event also included food, activities such as community mapping and bike decorating, and the filming of another [video](#) *Don't Text and Drive: SLÁLE, HÁU, E (Safe Travels)*—a public service announcement about the dangers of distracted driving. At a later date, we facilitated a community conversation with 10 interested adults about the subject of transportation safety,



Figure 1: Tsawout youth mapping

which also informs our analysis. What follows is an overview of, and critical look at, participatory video as a method for community empowerment and action as well as a discussion of how our PV process unfolded and what we learned about the Tsawout community's transportation safety concerns during the process.

Participatory video projects typically involve collaboration between the research team or PV practitioners and a community group with particular needs and concerns. In the same way that PAR projects involve collaborating with

communities at all stages of the research process, a PV project is often considered ideal or successful if community members participate in, collaborate on, and take ownership of each step of their story and video creation. Based on popular PV guidelines (see Benest, 2010; Lunch & Lunch, 2006), the research team guides community members through five main steps: (1) idea formation, (2) storyboarding, (3) shooting (filming), (4) editing, and (5) screening and dissemination. We used this PV model as a guide for our workshops and events; however, some aspects of these guidelines were more engaging than others to the youth involved, and it seemed that a less-structured approach was preferable within the context of this project.

For the filming workshops, or PV sessions, the community-based research assistant arranged for our research team to drop-in on the Nation's youth night at the local community centre. Youth night, during the six weeks that we dropped in, was characterized by youth

of all ages, mostly male, playing group sports in the local gymnasium. The Nation's youth coordinator supported us by gathering the youth for us to pitch the idea of making a video about transportation safety in their community. During our first session, we played ice-breaker games and facilitated a few standard PV exercises to familiarize the youth with the cameras. Several youth at the end of our first session expressed interest in learning to shoot and edit video; however, their interest waned by the next session. We tried to keep our presence consistent by attending youth night every week for the following five weeks, during which we facilitated filming activities in a room adjacent to the gym. This also meant that the youth could participate some days and not others, based on their interest. We felt that this would be an appealing, flexible approach that would allow for new participants as time went on; however, we found that the same five or six youth, between the ages of 8 and 12, attended the workshops or opted-out on any given day.

Participatory video is often described as a research process that has empowering effects, particularly on marginalized people (Benest, 2010; Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Kindon, 2003; White, 2003). Cited benefits of PV include building capacity and community cohesion, engaging and giving voice to individuals who have historically been silenced, and developing culturally relevant visual and aural representations of the experienced life (Benest, 2010; Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Kindon, 2003; White, 2003; Willox et al., 2013). Kindon (2003) argues that PV approaches to community-based research are a way for researchers to “speak nearby” rather than ‘speak for’ less powerful Others in their research processes” (p. 149). It is hoped that PV processes create change, especially when the videos made by community members are used to communicate with policy makers about their experiences in the world (Kindon, 2003).

Recently, however, scholars have become critical of the idealized, and often sensationalized, emancipatory power of participatory principles (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Walsh, 2014). Milne et al.'s (2012) *Handbook of Participatory Video* encourages us to interrogate the often-circulated assumptions of participatory video's empowering nature and ability to bring about social change. As High et al. (2012) point out; the emancipatory effects of participatory video have not yet received much study. Indeed, Mistry et al. (2014) argue that “to date, there is little evidence in the literature that communities themselves are the primary champions and users of participatory video” (p. 6). Quite simply, there can be logistical challenges to “equal” participation between the community and researchers. As Wiebe (2016) points out, participatory practitioners must remain continually aware and adaptive to community realities, notably that community participation is time and resource intensive. There are also theoretical assumptions underlying participatory principles that merit reflection. Walsh (2014), a participatory-video practitioner herself, argues that the notion of having disempowered people “speak for themselves” to



Figure 2: Tsawout youth videographer, Light up the night.

achieve empowerment is an unquestioned liberal assumption underlying the ideals of PV, which may be more patronizing than emancipatory. Furthermore, Low et al. (2012) argue that studies in PV “seem to equate the subject’s participation with her agency—that is, her participation is seen as both the evidence and the actualization of an agentic self” (p. 55). The assumption then becomes that empowerment and social transformation follows necessarily from participants’ expressions of agency within PV projects.

When taking a more critical eye to PV practices, it is clear that PV is not a neutral process whereby participants’ voices and interests are uninhibited: PV is more often a negotiated relationship that must attempt to balance the interests of the researchers with the community as well as the varying interests *within* the community itself. It is not uncommon for tension to exist between the goals of an organization (and funder) and the interests of PV participants, and this kind of tension is an example of the ways in which participation is negotiated and mediated in participatory research (Low et al., 2012).

This continually negotiated relationship influences the kinds of participation that occurs. The previously established transportation-safety theme of this PV project, for example, was a factor influencing Tsawout youth’s participation in the project, no matter how creative we tried to be around the subject. Our first insight into Tsawout youth’s perception of transportation safety, perhaps unsurprisingly, is that transportation safety is not the most engaging topic for youth around driving age. None of the older youth present at youth night volunteered their time to work on the PV project, perhaps not only because of the subject matter but also because being involved would mean less time playing sports. Even the younger group of participants who were involved did not engage as strongly as we had hoped with forming a story about their experience with transportation safety in their community. However, after having already consulted with several potential community youth leaders, and considering the limited timeline of the project, we decided to move forward with the youth night strategy despite the younger age range of interested kids and their lack of interest in the subject. Thus, our research team took more leadership in visioning for the videos while the youth participated in acting, directing and learning how to use the equipment. The research team’s strong participation in story formation was perhaps flawed when considering an idealized PV project in which there is equitable participation and participants take strong ownership of telling a story.

Scholars point out that there is great diversity in the projects that fall under the label of “participatory video.” Indeed, High et al. (2012) argue that “there is no common understanding of participatory video” (p. 35). Mistry and Berardi (2011), for example, define participatory video as “a process involving a group or community in shaping and creating their own films according to their own sense of what is important and how they want to be represented” (p. 110). Other definitions add non-negotiable criteria, such as “enabling positive change and transformation” (InsightShare, “Values and Core Charter”). But High and Nemes (2008) prefer a more broad definition, simply that PV is about “[m]aking films *with* people for social learning” (qtd.in High et al., 2012, p. 41). They emphasize *with* as opposed to *about* in their definition, and assert that PV “can be very generally conceived as filmmaking that includes its

subjects, and others, in the creative process” (High et al., 2012, p. 41; Tremblay & Jayme, 2015). They point out that the more difficult phenomenon to assess according to this definition is whether social learning occurred. But they argue their open definition is based on the history of PV, which is characterized not by a single methodology but diversity “that emerges from the openness to difference and innovation” (High et al., 2012, p. 41). What’s more, they advocate for an emphasis on “skills and values” in order to “keep the nature of participatory video open and experimental while still reserving space to make judgements about good participatory video practice” (ibid.).

Kindon (2003) argues that PV should equally position the researcher and research participants in front of and behind the camera, “symboliz[ing] a degree of destabilization of conventional power relations in the research relationship and of particular claims to the unquestioned transparency of the image” (p. 146). Our research team was significantly present as participants during this PV project. Our first video shoot was an experimental and experiential atmosphere that blended learning to use the filming equipment, acting in front of the camera, and playing with reflectors and lighting to find fun ways to light yourself up as a pedestrian at night, all the while documenting the participatory process. Roles (actor/camera operator/director) were decided in the moment as the youth told us what they were interested in. Our strategy that night was to bring plenty of transportation safety-related props, cameras, tripods, a few ideas of what we could shoot, and see what emerged. Together with the youth, we experimented with filming the effect of glow sticks, glow-in-the-dark tape, and flashlights decorating helmets, skateboards and bodies in a dark room. The [final video](#) from this shoot was a montage of clips from that night, showing everyone, researchers and participants, behind and in front of the camera, with an overall aesthetic that highlighted how lighting yourself up at night can be a fun and creative thing to do. Although the youth displayed a general lack of interest during the editing phase (besides the choice of background music), we decided to use the footage from this fun night of filming as an advertisement for the subsequent “Light up the Night” event. We put on the “Light up the Night” event to try to engage more youth and adults in the one-day creation of a more structured transportation-safety public service announcement, the storyboard of which our research team created before the event.

While there may not have been strong youth ownership of story and idea formation for either of the videos, our visioning of “Light up the Night” was supported by feedback from Israyelle, other community members, and the youth. Early on, Israyelle made it clear that dark streets were a well-known safety issue in the community, and this concern came up time and again in our conversations with youth and adults during the filming workshops as well as during the “Light up the Night” event and the community conversation. Working with younger youth brought our attention to pedestrian safety in relation to dark streets because primary modes of independent transportation for children and youth were walking, skateboarding and biking. This was particularly true for access to the community centre where youth night and our filming sessions were held. Because we were concerned with social learning and actionable outcomes, as well as the creation of a public service announcement, we focused on mobilizing a message about what individuals could do to prevent transportation-related injury. Thus, our

[first video](#), the event advertisement, focused on individuals making themselves visible at night. At the “Light up the Night” event, in response to community feedback, our team decided to move our attention from pedestrian responsibility to driver responsibility, and we then filmed a story about the perils of distracted driving.

Particularly when working with children and young people, and in the context of creating a public service announcement that includes an achievable call to action, our research team focused on story formations that moved back and forth between issues of pedestrian responsibility and driver responsibility. However, as we discuss in the next section, our conversations with adults, parents, and caregivers at the “Light up the Night” event and during the community conversation shifted attention from individual driver and pedestrian responsibilities and highlighted the interface between the two: infrastructure—sidewalks, bus routes, street markings, signage, etc. This raises crucial questions about responsibility for transportation safety within Indigenous communities. The responsibility of pedestrians to be visible at night and take the necessary safety precautions when riding bikes and skateboards, and the responsibility of drivers to buckle up and avoid distractions were clearly important and necessary responsibilities to promote according to Tsawout members. But, as we next discuss, a lack of necessary road safety infrastructure was just as important, and greatly impeded access to community events and the independence of children in the neighborhood. As one community member said, “We want our children to be independent, not scared to walk around” (Nadine, personal communication, March 30th 2015).¹

Traveling Through or Traveling Together?

On March 30, 2015, we hosted a community conversation and lunch in Tsawout to share the PV work we had done to that point, distribute booster seats to families, and facilitate a focused discussion on transportation safety. As noted, infrastructure (road lighting, markers, signs, sidewalks) and the practicalities of day-to-day travel (such as pedestrian interactions with vehicular traffic, especially youth endangerment) emerged as major concerns (Community Conversation Participants, March 30, 2015). However, complex questions also began to emerge concerning the fundamental causes of traffic conditions on reserves. It seemed necessary to account for these questions in our discussion of improving community safety and promoting conditions for injury prevention. Uncertainty about accountability and jurisdictions came to the fore regarding, for example, responsibility for transportation safety awareness initiatives as well as resource development and availability for such initiatives and infrastructural upgrades.

Much of the community observations and feedback seemed to ask: “Who is responsible for transportation safety in Tsawout?” What may have originally appeared as a straightforward and narrow track of inquiry expanded in response to the contextual particularities of the Tsawout community. This PAR project began to resist the institutional or structural constraints that still lead many community-engaged researchers (often unwittingly) into “flash-bang” dynamics. Discussing how to improve transportation safety in Tsawout raised broad questions

¹ Pseudonyms are used here to maintain the privacy of Community Conversation participants.

of accountability and governance, relationships with surrounding communities, and land-use and development. It became evident to us that transportation safety or vehicle safety are not isolatable issues with straightforward avenues for amelioration. For example, while important, attempting to decrease vehicular-related injuries through the promotion of generalized safety device skills and traffic awareness at the level of individuals, families or even the community does not address the sources of heightened endangerment for First Nations people or Tsawout members in particular compared to the general Canadian population. Such initiatives may be considered a symptomatic or mitigating approach to complex issues that manifest as incident or accident statistics.

Themes arising in the project resonated with us as appropriate metaphors for some challenges we found in navigating CER relationships responsibly. Sometimes it seemed we were aiming for a predetermined destination along frequently intersecting, often dimly illuminated or unclearly marked routes, with a map and set of road rules that didn't quite match the layout and patterns of movement on the ground. An example of this is the basic terms of the broader research project we were a part of. A premise as seemingly straightforward as vehicular injury prevention and safety in Tsawout is immediately complicated by the realities of permeable reserve boundaries; travelling on, off, around and through the reserve is complicated by attitudes toward safety that change when those boundaries are crossed. They act as filters.

In our community conversations, we listened to stories of how accidents and “near-misses” with pedestrians frequently involve non-member drivers treating the reserve as a kind of physical and metaphorical zone of permissibility. As voiced by several community members, this kind of attitude is influenced by road-safety infrastructure: “There are no lines dividing the road, so that kind of creates a free-for-all mentality” (Rose, personal communication, March 30, 2015); another community member said: “Drivers don't have the same courtesies that they would have off-reserve” (Charlie, personal communication, March 30, 2015). Here, any consideration of promoting traffic law and safety awareness *in Tsawout* confronts jurisdictional uncertainty; for example, due to uneven infrastructure standards on and off-reserve, a common-sense particular to Tsawout regarding safety and how these factors of mobility (how we move and what moves with us) implicate larger relations of privilege. The question then becomes who is the *community of responsibility* for transportation safety in Tsawout?

The project also required us to navigate by multiple, fluctuating, and at times seemingly competing codes of communication, conduct and expectations for research outcomes. This arose from range of factors as varied as mid-project staff-turnovers and the difference between the formality of academic training and on-the-ground community expertise. Varying codes of conduct include those of the community (through its liaisons, governance structures, etc.), the research leads and funders, the University of Victoria and ISICUE, individual research participants, as well as other governments and agencies like surrounding municipalities and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Despite the functionality of instruments like the project research agreement between the Tsawout First Nation, ISICUE and the University of Windsor to ensure mutual understanding and continuity, and provide guidance, the right of way was not always immediately apparent. However, our commitment to OCAP principles

suggested that any balancing of interests at moments of uncertainty should err on the side of community needs and protocols in keeping with this rootedness in PAR ethics. Conducting ourselves in a good way requires identifying to *whom* we must defer at different junctures in the project. This in turn necessitates judging the appropriate lines of accountability and understanding how they are drawn and are to be followed in those circumstances. For example, at one point in the project a challenge arose for the BC-based research team that stemmed from contrasting desires and expectations between the community and the funding body. Revisiting the primacy of the WS'ANEC' – University of Victoria Collaborative Agreement helped the team to be guided by the best interests of the ongoing relationship between Tsawout and ISICUE. Thinking in terms of relationship and keeping the past and future of that relationship alive in the present research project is in keeping with a protocol of dignity (Thomas & Brown, 2015).

For a CER research team that initiates and sustains direct relationships with/in the community, proximity and a range of methodological and experiential backdrops affect our personal sense of accountability. We are the faces, hands and voices of the project and act as conduits between the community and university. We acutely perceive and shoulder the immediacy of any theory/practice disjuncture and manage the minutiae of collaboration. We have to gauge and be responsive to what is workable or essential for maintaining successful partnerships on the ground, mostly by trial and error. As already mentioned, an example from our experience with event-planning and PV workshops in Tsawout required creative solutions to address spending restraints of the project set by the funders, which did not entail provisions for community meals and refreshments. These are crucial and culturally important gestures of hospitality in Coast and Straits Salish territories. As we learned, to display and portray intentions of reciprocity, when a researcher approaches a community with an expectation for knowledge exchange and in pursuit of making a meaningful connection, certain hospitality protocols are imperative. We certainly noticed that having locally catered food available created a welcoming atmosphere for community members to speak with us and learn about the project. There are also general considerations for ensuring the comfort of participants (especially youth and elders) in research activities who may be choosing between these and other priorities, which might interrupt their daily routines including mealtimes. The BC-based research team knew what protocols were regarding the sharing of food and thus made efforts to make sure these protocols were followed so that all participants were respectfully invited and included. It is arguable that the principles of access and *equitable participation* might have been compromised otherwise.

Perhaps the greatest overarching lesson, if not learned then reinforced through our project with Tsawout, is one which Indigenous thinkers on methodology and research ethics have expounded on eloquently for a long time. This is the fundamental appreciation of and responsiveness to community distinctiveness, their situated knowledges and land/place-based perspectives as well as a corresponding account of self-location in the *research design* (Strega & Brown, 2015). We cannot engage in projects as interchangeable vehicles carrying interchangeable passengers through interchangeable space. Furthermore, it is critical that

researchers treat community members as experts to inform the project's overall structure and are responsive to their research needs.

Insofar as proceeding from *community relevance*, the team had to *generate* interest in the theme of transportation safety for the PV workshops as it was predetermined, rather than self-determined by participants. Researchers who bring projects to communities rather than the reverse can shift energies, regardless of those projects' adaptability. Several adult participants suggested that transportation safety, especially pertaining to children and youth, is an important concern but one that had been previously overlooked as a health and wellness priority among others that appear more pressing. We did hear that there was an appreciation of the opportunity to generate community dialogues about their connections, with one elder sharing that she had never heard of a similar initiative in the community before that got the attention of youth like her great-grandchildren (community conversation participants, March 30, 2015).

Finally, how did and can we apply the concepts of *action and change* in this CER process? Despite the possible critique that the idealization of an emancipatory promise in PAR projects may replicate liberal paternalism, our creative collaboration has shown their potential as a still-relevant approach toward transforming institutional research relationships with Indigenous peoples. However, at the same time, this hinges on more movement to shift our thinking about collaboration and projects; that is, regarding their purpose, assessment, trajectories and ends. Establishing continuity and incorporating capacity-building support for the community to sustain and grow initiatives that show traction is crucial, whether they veer down other roads or the journey exceeds intended timelines (they always will). To continue to grow this work and enhance the likelihood of the project's sustainability, through crowdsourcing at the University of Victoria's "100 People who Care" initiative, our research team was successful with securing funding to support the community-based research work and to address the critical question of: Who is responsible for transportation safety in Tsawout?

Conclusion

We must situate ourselves and be mindful of the legacies of extractive research relations between academia and Indigenous communities in any effort to avoid the replication of these methodologies. We are all travelers from different directions, responsible to where we come from, where we are and where we are going and how we engage when our paths meet. This is where we decide, are we simply travelling through? Or are we travelling together? We must begin to take seriously what that distinction may really mean.

Distracted driving ended up being the subject of our public service announcement-style [video](#), which involved youth in the community in order to speak about a critical issue. At the same time, it is an apt metaphor for the demeanor that many academics are perceived to have when entering communities, distracted by administrative parameters and time constraints mandated by the traditional funding cycle, which can affect the time needed to build and maintain relationships.

Finally, in conclusion—which we conceptualize as an invitation to further conversation

rather than a form of closure—we will shed light on three key challenges that emerged during our collaboration. First, we needed to be more mindful of how to ensure and secure adequate resources to support our CER initiatives whether they be personnel or material (i.e. camera gear, projector, sound equipment, food, meeting space, etc.). Funding constraints and planning require creative planning and implementation to ensure the success of any research, particularly PAR projects that are community driven and variable from site to site in terms of requirements. The standard university ethics and grant administration protocols often mean that the authority for dispersing project funds rests within the academy rather than the community. Second, like many kinds of relationships, community partnerships are continually shifting. Transitions in community governance prompted our research team to also adjust accountability structures in order to accommodate for changes in pre-established staffing positions at the community centre. Given our research team’s grounding in the WS’ANEC – University of Victoria Collaborative agreement, we acknowledged the importance of continuing to follow through on our commitments to the community despite turnover in leadership. In this way, we see our research ethics as more than a document about protocols but fundamentally about cultivating long-lasting relationships, which may extend beyond the research project’s anticipated end date. Third, in the final stages of our project, it became clear during our community conversation that developing a better understanding of jurisdiction for critical infrastructure—that is, who is responsible for Indigenous people’s transportation safety and Tsawout’s in particular—became a significant question. In response, we used our funds crowdsourced from the “100 People Who Care” initiative to continue working with Israyelle and to highlight transportation safety concerns local to Tsawout and co-produce a mini-documentary that includes the voices of band officials and representatives from the Greater Victoria Capital Regional District.

Our experiences with PV suggest the need for its processes to be adaptable to community dynamics. We learned many lessons along the way. Although the youth did not take a strong ownership of the story formation during the early phases of our research design, social learning occurred as community members perceived the PV process and the “Light up the Night” event as innovative and engaging processes. Going forward, as collaborative researchers, we acknowledge our responsibilities to foster critical conversations about *action and change* that are rooted in community perspectives. These responsibilities are ongoing and last beyond the project end as we continue to learn about how to work and travel together, rather than traveling through communities, now and into the future.

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Working Together with South Saami Birth Stories – A Collaboration Between a Saami Midwife and a Saami Researcher

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ABSTRACT This paper presents some results from a community-based project among local South Saami in the Norwegian and Swedish part of Saepmie. I was co-coordinating a two-year community-sponsored project in the community (Røyrvik) in which a local South Saami midwife documented stories from elder Saami about childbirth in earlier times, both from their own memories and from stories they knew. Her work became an article in a book, and the project helped us to understand much more about childbirth and general living conditions for Saami one to three generations ago in this area. As a PhD candidate, I have complemented her work with a theoretical framework (Indigenous Research Methods, colonial perspective), a historical analysis, and a contemporary context. Apart from presenting an example of stories she was given and how they can give us new knowledge. But I will focus on the meanings, processes, theories and practices of engaged Indigenous community research. I will describe our different methods and the benefit of working together and will point out how it will further research.

KEYWORDS methodology; Saami people; revitalization

This article is about Saami practice and Saami attitudes to pregnancy and child-birth in an area of South Saepmie (Norway and Sweden). It is also an article about stories, and how to be able to use stories as a successful tool among the colonized and silenced south Saami people, when documenting Saami oral tradition and Saami holistic epistemology. It is also a step toward a research methodology that equalizes the power relation between the researcher and the researched.

Angela Cavender Wilson states in “American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History” (1998) that “American Indian History is a field dominated by white, male historians who rarely ask or care what the Indians they study have to say about their work. Under the guise of academic freedom they have maintained their comfortable chairs in archives across the country and published thousands of volumes on white’s interpretation of American Indian history” (Wilson, 1998, p. 23).

The statement is valid for the Indigenous people, the Saami, in Saepmie¹ the regional home of the Saami of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia as well. Saami have been unable

¹ The word Sápmi is the more well-known north Saami name of the same region.

to influence their written history until recently (Lehtola, 2004, pp. 34-35). We must also take into account that the majority of the Saami researchers with power to influence historic writing, as well as the majority of Saami in other power positions in the dominating society, belong to the regional, cultural and linguistic majority of the Saami—the north Saami. That means that voices of the south Saami people, as a minority within the minority, struggle with more difficulties to make themselves heard. Local areas in the south of Saepmie are thus more vulnerable to oppressive power. Such an area is *Frostviken/Namdalen*, the area focused on in this article.

Røyrvik is a community situated in the southern part of Saepmie, on the Norwegian side, in *Nord-Trøndelag*, neighboring *Jämtland* district to the east, on the Swedish side. The community is inhabited by approximately 500 people, of which 10 % - 20% are believed to be Saami. It is a part of a culturally coherent area that I call *Frostviken-Namdalen* in Norwegian and Swedish, as it has no name in Saami language.

From a south Saami perspective, this region is among the most culturally strong and significant areas, as many Saami have their origin here. Among them are important and powerful persons in south Saami history, such as Ella Holm Bull (1929-2006) a preserver of the Saami language, who produced a considerable amount of educational literature and music in south Saami, and was an initiator of, and for a couple of years the principal of, the Saami school *Åarjel saemiej skuvle* (Hermanstrand, 2009, p. 345).

The geographical area of the *Røyrvik* community was colonized rather late in Norwegian history. Colonization, with the mining and the building of dams in the 1950s, dramatically changed the daily life of the reindeer-herding Saami in the *Røyrvik* area. Reindeer herding was disturbed, for instance, by the damming of the lake *Namsvatn*, where a whole village was submerged and had to be rebuilt in a new place (Jürgensen, Svestad, and Fiskum 2013, pp. 93-94). Many lakes are believed to be sacred among the Saami, and the lake name *Namsvatn* implies that this might be the case. Place names surrounding the lake also indicate that it was likely a sacred site (Viridi Kroik 2010). These things are rarely talked about in public among the Saami themselves and are studied with difficulty in the contemporary south Saami society. As is the case with many other Indigenous peoples, Saami are often described as silent (Svestad, 2013, p. 57; Devy, 2006, p. 55; Dahl, 1940, p. 192; Mihesuah, 1998).

The Saami's traditional reindeer-herding economy is vital in today's society and an important sector of the economy, an economic force that cannot be neglected by community politicians. There have been and, and still are, strong ties between the Saami on the Norwegian side and those on the Swedish side. The national border was delineated in 1751 and split a coherent traditional Saami area in two—yet another trauma of many, in the history of the south Saami people. However, it never completely divided the Saami people who were connected by intermarriage, genealogy, culture, economy, and a common history (Viridi Kroik, 2007, pp. 29-30). Nevertheless, the Saami have been culturally influenced by the nation state they are members of, and by its dominating culture. That is evident, for instance, in their first language which is often, although not always, that of the national majority. Still, they suffer from being made invisible in history, and neglected in many other ways.

The Saami have been victims of an aggressive Christian mission, especially during the eighteenth century when a number of Saami were sentenced to death for using their traditional drums. When the national states of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Russia were competing for access to territory and the right to tax the inhabitants in the northern geographic areas, the Saami became pawns; their territory, their resources, and their independence were taken over by the colonizers, who re-organized the Saami ways of living (Bäckman, 2013, pp. 11-22; Rydving 1993).

During the last hundred years, the Saami had to face two destructive state policies: one used mainly by the Norwegian state and called *förnorskeningspolitiken*, was designed to assimilate the Saami into the dominating culture; and the other, used mainly by the Swedish state and called *lapp ska vara lapp politiken* took the opposite position and focused on separating the Saami from the majority culture and preserving them from outside influence as much as possible. The two policies have sometimes been used at the same time, and can still be seen in active use, in different ways by the two political states.

The situation for the Saami was also strongly affected negatively, by two influential academic theories and schools. The first was race biology that had its starting point in Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin's theory of evolution was adapted to Scandinavian conditions by, among others, Anders Adolf Retzius (1796–1860). This scientific school published photographs of naked Saami and other minority groups, taken under humiliating circumstances, pictures that can still be accessed online from Uppsala University.² The other is the historic Immigration Theory³ that claimed that Saami had not always inhabited the southern areas they now lived in, when the theory was formed in 1889, but had immigrated there during the 16th century (Hermanstrand, 2007 p.486; Zachrisson, 1997 pp.18–19; Åhrén, 2004 pp.65–67; Dunfjeld-Aagård, 2007 p.53; Lundmark 2004).

Conflicts were intensified between reindeer herders and settlers in Røyrvik during the 1920s and 2000 decades, but were dealt with in a historic theater project called *Bruer mellom kulturer* (“Bridges Between Cultures”). The project involved an impressive portion of the total inhabitants of Røyrvik community. The traumas caused by the revival of collective memory were dealt with by sharing stories with each other and by together creating the manuscript for the performance of these stories. The participants of the project were also actors and members of the choir with some help from a few professional outsiders. Stories are well suited for Saami epistemology, i.e., its holistic and non-verbal nature, and the project had a calming effect on the increasingly heated emotional climate. There were moments of insight and regret during the work with the project, which were described by some participants as very powerful. Stories are claimed to be a powerful tool in the work of healing historical traumas, as was validated by the results from this project (Jürgensen, Svestad and Fiskum, 2013, p. 94; Episkenew, 2012; Wilson, 1998).

² I don't provide the URL for Uppsala University's homepage where these pictures can be seen online because I don't want to encourage readers to look at the pictures and reproduce the humiliation. Instead I have provided the URL for the Facebook group protesting against Uppsala University for making the photographs available.

³ *Framrycknings teorin* in Norwegian or *Invandringsteorin* in Swedish.

I was employed as a coordinator for Saami language and culture by the community of Røyrvik from 2008-2010. A few years had passed since the completion of the theatre project and there was fear that the contradictions would come back. The racist political party *Framsrittspartiet* was increasing its number of voters in Røyrvik, just as elsewhere in the country. I heard people ask for the show to be put on again. There were also Norwegian voices recognizing the need for working on a common identity, together with the local Saami within Røyrvik, and stating that the distance between the Norwegian inhabitants and the Saami was too wide. The Saami, on the other hand, had other needs. They had no need for a local identity, but due to the dominating Norwegian influence, they felt culturally and territorially threatened. There was a need among them to have somewhere to go, and to have someone in a position of power to listen to them. My position in the community house meant that there would at least be *one* Saami representing them there on daily basis. While the norms and structures in society were benefiting the majority, the Saami asked for special activities to revitalize and reinforce their language and culture. My task was to meet the different needs.

Why was I chosen for this task and why did I take on the challenge? My personal story will answer those questions. I grew up in a village in the mountain area on the Swedish side of south Saepmie. My Saami village, *sameby*, (the term for a specific Saami geographical area and an economic, social and juridical organization) is named *Voernese* and is a neighbor to *Østre Namdal's* reindeer-herding district, *reinbetesdistriktet*, (the equivalent to *sameby* in Norwegian) in which Røyrvik community is situated. I grew up in a reindeer-herding family. After completing undergraduate studies in one of the closest colleges in the coastal area about 400 km away from my home village, I moved to the capital of Sweden, Stockholm. I earned a Master's Degree while working in various occupations. It was possible for me to study, thanks to the owner of the room I rented, who charged me very little. I have learned that Saami who are able to take higher degrees in the formal educational system, are often funded by various benefactors. Saami, just as most other Indigenous people, seldom have the means to finance higher formal studies. The opportunity to go back and work in my home area and Røyrvik came after many years as an urban citizen, and after beginning a family. I took my family with me, bought a house, and spent 3 years in an area where most Saami were relatives of mine. Many of them were familiar, although not well known to me, as I had most often met them in situations where the work with reindeer had been at the center. During these three years, we had the privilege to get to know the extended family better.

My theoretical purpose was to empower the most vulnerable segment of society through activities formed in a way they would fit the Saami inhabitant and encourage them to participate in them, and when possible, to make them and their competence more visible to the local community. A strategy often employed by vulnerable groups is to make themselves invisible (Devy, 2006, p. 31). Increased visibility is often thought of as increasing the risk of becoming targets for attacks in the form of hurtful comments, violent attacks on their reindeer, or other expression of racism. Such attacks may not always be consciously or intentionally performed by the attacker (Habel, 2012, p. 46), but they are nonetheless painful for the victims, and a good reason for keeping themselves, their knowledge, and their resources hidden. It's also

a good reason for grouping together and firmly excluding outsiders. My ambition was to involve all ages and make at least one project for each age group, as I thought the project belonged to ALL Saami in the area. Typically, project workers target the most active, busiest, and most visible Saami, the reindeer herders. Herders are highly visible since they often have to defend their animals and their economic lifestyle, and therefore other Saami voices tend to be neglected.

One project involved two Saami midwives. One of the midwives, Jonhild Joma, wrote an article about her work, included in a book that I published concerning my years in Røyrvik (Joma, 2010). I took advantage of her skill and interest in the topic; she developed the research questions herself. She thought it important to preserve the knowledge about the birth stories and ask elders who had lived through a time of rapid change for the Saami. As Jonhild herself was close to retirement, she was familiar with many of these changes, a great help for accessing very local knowledge. Her concluding remark in her article shows the meaning she found in her work: “For a people that has been exposed to the dominating society’s power, it is inspiring to discover that we still get strength in identifying our own culture. We have to take responsibility to preserve our legacy and transfer it to those who come after” (Joma, 2010, p. 84).

Jonhild Joma grew up as a nomad in the reindeer herding district of Østre Namdal. She became a very important person for me as a culture holder with great knowledge in various fields. She also became a very good friend, and we had many enjoyable moments in her kitchen, on journeys, and on tours in nature. Jonhild collected stories. She wrote them in the same style as they were told, often with humor. This is her story of herself and her work in the article she wrote, translated from Norwegian to English by me.

Jonhild Jomas’ Story

I grew up as the youngest of five children. My parents were reindeer herders and our winter pasture was situated west of *Geitfjellet*. During winter, we lived in a *gåetie* (traditional Saami tent similar to a teepee) at a place called *Snåsabeia* which is still a place for reindeer herders on wintertime. In summer, we lived in *Jobkegaske* in the area of *Børgesfell*. My siblings were born before the war, two of them at my mother’s mother’s place and the other at my father’s mother’s place, both in Røyrvik community. When I was born, we had come into a new era, as my mother expressed it, and she took the train about 170 km to *Namsos* where she gave birth to me in a hospital. She was alone at that time. She had given birth to five children and did not want to complain. I was born in December. As an adult, I have thought about how dramatic that the journey home must have been: First we went by train to *Brekekvasselv*, and from there by horse and wagon in bad



Figure 1: Jonhild found a way to collect stories about birth, pregnancy and children - a topic so close to everyday life that it is rarely documented.

weather over the mountain *Steinfelet* to *Gjersvika*. My father was waiting there with a boat that took us over the lake *Limingen* to the village *Liminglia*, where we rented a house.

I was educated as a nurse and continued to study to become a midwife in the city of *Bergen* in the south east of Norway. In 2003 I participated in a project as the only Saami. It was an interesting theme to work with. When I was asked to work in Åsa's project in 2009, I was inspired to start again. Now I would be freer, and could write about what I wanted. But there was a lack of time. I have talked to ten Saami from the age of approximately around fifty or sixty, to older than ninety. I have talked to both men and women, and all of them told me in the beginning that they didn't know anything. I taped the conversations, but at times people asked me to turn it off, and I considered it necessary. All of them have a connection to *Røyrvik*, but lived in different places. When I asked and received information, new questions were raised, such as "How did my grandmother know that it would be easier to kneel at beech delivery?" I have asked where the women gave birth. Were more children born in certain times of the year? Who was with the mother and did several people help? Did she lie down when she delivered or did she use another position? If a skin was used, what did they do with it after the delivery? What happened with the placenta? How was the umbilical cord removed? Were there any preparations, like massage, for example, during the pregnancy? Where were elder siblings during the childbirth? Did any mother or child die during delivery or soon after? To what degree was the child-giving woman active after the delivery? Did she get any special attention when she was expecting the child?

Methods and Results

Jonhild put her energy into talking with Saami and documenting living Saami memories about pregnancy and birth. I'm glad she did so. I, as a younger Saami without her network or experience, would not have been able to do the work she did. I have, though, been able to use her systematization and find relevant information as a complement to hers. As we have already seen, Jonhild used her own mother and herself as sources. She took an interest in the often-dramatic stories and circumstances in which the actual delivery took place. She showed the conflict between the old lifestyle, where birth took place in the Saami's ordinary setting, with the contemporary custom of giving birth in hospitals. The distance to such facilities made the Saami undertake journeys they would not have done in the past.

In one story, the father placed the wife in labor on a toboggan, and hired help for the transport to a midwife. In the forest, they realized that they would not get there in time, so he lit a fire and arranged a place under a tree. After the birth, they went back home, and the woman said that it would have been so much better to stay at home in the first place, instead of being transported to the forest to give birth under a tree (Joma, 2010, p. 80). Many stories show that birth took place in homes. Jonhild concluded that before 1945, most women gave birth wherever they were at that moment, some with their mother or mother-in-law. They did not seem to choose any particular place to give birth; they just sat down to wait for the delivery to begin (Joma, 2010, p. 78). When Harry Kappfjell announced his arrival, the father, Nils Olav, begged his wife Ivara to hold back until they had better time. They were in the middle

of the autumn slaughter and had no time to get the midwife. Harry could not be convinced to stay inside his mother though, and so he was born there in Ivara's parents house in *Graneskogen* (Joma, 2010, p. 80).

My colleague Jorunn Jernsletten, who is a north Saami and did her dissertation fieldwork in a neighboring area to ours, was able to collect a story about a woman and her child who died close to a stone that was sheltering them (Jernsletten, 2010, p. 103). Such stones were remembered, and the story was told whenever Saami passed it (Jernsletten, 2010). While working in Røyrvik, I, together with locals, did investigations in the landscape following the stories and memories people gave us. Some of these locals were reindeer herders, while others were farmers. There were also a few Saami who joined while visiting the area and wanted to see their ancestral areas. We went to look at a place where we knew an old Saami woman was born. She was not able to come with us, but together with an archeologist, we found many hearths at the place and other traces showing that it had been an important place for reindeer herding. The river was also shallow and wide there leading us to think that it was a good place for reindeer to pass. Not far from the investigated place, the archeologist was able to find a pit trap, probably of older date.

Children and women had their own spiritual guardians. The most important was Maadter-aahka. She was responsible for the creation of human beings and for their protection. Her location in the traditional home, *gåetie*, was as far away as possible from the fireplace, near the wall. She had three daughters. They helped and supported those who lived in the *gåetie*. Another guardian, Saar-aahka, had her place under the hearth, close to where the food was. She protected home and family, and was a supporter through childbirth. South Saami professor emerita Louise Bäckman (Stockholm University) has thoroughly investigated Maadter-aahka and her daughters in the old sources and confirms the particular importance of Saar-aahka's role in child delivery (Joma 2010, p.78; Bäckman 2013, pp. 107-116).

As is common among people of all societies, not all infants are healthy and well-formed. Therefore, customs arise whose purpose is to prevent deformities or still births. Jonhild recorded several such practices, although she was unable to judge what people really believed and what had been said just to frighten pregnant women into being careful. It was a common belief that if the mother was pleased during the pregnancy, the child would likewise be easily pleased. On the other hand, a frightened mother could be dangerous for the baby. A pregnant woman should also not see certain animals. A hare could, for example, make the child hare-lipped. A mouse could be dangerous for two reasons: it could give the baby birthmarks or the mother's startled fright could have consequences for the child's intellect. Jonhild didn't find any information about the pregnant woman's diet, or any listing of foods that should be avoided. However, expectant mothers didn't participate in slaughter and did not use heavy tools like scissors, axe or similar implements (Joma, 2010, pp. 76-77). According to a nineteenth-century source, neither the mother-to-be nor the father-to-be should cut a cow's head, as it might harm the baby (Drake, 1979, p. 237). I was able to find good documentation from this in book. As most documentation and research about the Saami has been done by non-Saami men, such issues are rarely mentioned in their work.

In many cultures, men are separated from birth-giving and all rituals connected to birth. This is not the case among the Saami. In one case, I heard about a father assisting with the delivery of all his five children. Jonhild found that men were often involved with the act of giving birth, sometimes assisting the wife. Johan Westerfjell, 85 years old, told Jonhild that his mother Elle was born at a *gierkie-libpie*, a big sheltering rock.. Mathias, the father, assisted. Everything went fine and afterward Serine, the mother, went to pick berries and milked a reindeer so they would have milk. Nils Mathias, on the other hand, was exhausted and had to take a nap (Joma, 2010, pp. 79-80). Another story recorded by Jonhild concerned a Saami man in the company of several men from the majority culture. While they were together, a young pregnant woman also present went into labor and locked herself in a nearby room, groaning in pain. While the other men uncomfortably avoided the room, the Saami knocked on the door and told her to open because he knew what was going on. He was not afraid to her assist her in the delivery of her first-born. Many of the stories told to Jonhild informed her about how the father transported the woman to get to a midwife or to find shelter when she gave birth, reminding Jonhild about her own mother and her journey to and from hospital. Fathers also took part in burying the afterbirth, which was the custom in the past, and is sometimes even done today. That men were so active in the preparations during women's pregnancies and during delivery was one of the surprises of the study.

One of the oldest written sources, Procopius, from around 550, informs us that as soon as a Saami woman has given birth to a child, she wraps it in a fur and hangs it in a tree. She gives the baby a piece of bone with marrow to suck on and then goes hunting with the men. Feeding babies with marrow is a familiar custom, and the practice of hanging a baby in a tree can be better understood when you know about the *gierkeme*, a kind of cradle, also used for carrying babies, that is still widely used. Jonhild writes that it was commonly used among her storytellers; one of them even remembered that a bigger one was made when twins were born. She relates that the *gierkeme* was borrowed, inherited, or made by the father or the grandfather. It was made from a hollowed log, covered with reindeer skin and decorated with ribs and other items. In the bottom *gvepmie*, tinder from a stock or *suejnie*, hay for shoes was placed. On top of that was placed a reindeer calf's fur. Babies in a *gierkeme* can be breastfed without being removed from it, and if it is extremely cold, an extra fur can cover the whole *gierkeme*. It is a good place for babies (Joma, 2010). What Jonhild and I found was that, among the Saami nomads of the previous generations, childbirth was something considered more natural and a part of the ordinary life than it is today. Women gave birth with the help of the family, sometimes the father, and sometimes children. It was common that in-laws helped each other.

Considerations of Meaning, Value, and Theory

The stories that Jonhild was collecting contained knowledge that is rarely talked about and that seems to have had little value for previous researchers and documenters. Possibly previous researchers did not even have access to such stories as Saami deliberately or unconsciously seem to have excluded outsiders from such information. But Jonhild had access. When she asked for specific memories, the act of asking gave them value. The stories tell us that the south Saami

had their own attitudes, knowledge, practices and ideas about childbirth that differed from the majority culture and that still characterize their ways of thinking today. The memories of the older times are still alive and could become the subject of future studies, provided that the interviewer is someone who knows what questions to ask, preferably someone who is a part of the group, who is engaged in the traditions.

In the current culture, in Norway and in Sweden, the assertion that the Saami people form a distinct group of people is politically sensitive, as certain political powers claim that there is no difference between them and the majority. In extreme political circles, the statement that the Saami are the indigenous people of Scandinavia is questioned in both Norway and Sweden. Jonhild's study, however, provides a more intimate glimpse of the relations between the Saami and their neighbors. Her stories show that the Saami sometimes were discriminated against by Norwegians; for example, a Saami woman, even in labor, was not permitted into the house of a Norwegian to give birth to her child. Jonhild did not include that information in her article, due to political sensitivities. In this English version, she and I decided that it could be included.

That picture of differences and discrimination is confirmed by the historian Håkon Hermanstrand, who wrote a book about the Røyrvik Saami at the same time as I was working there. In his work, he differentiates between the words *samieb* (the south Saami word for Saami) and *laedtieb* (the south Saami word for persons of Non-Saami origin), and notes that even though he has heard many stories of positive relations between the two groups, there are also many Saami stories of conflict, hurtful memories, arrogant attitudes and feelings of unfairness. His intention was not to make new conflicts, but neither was it to deny what has happened (Hermanstrand, 2009, p. 11). Jonhild likewise confirmed the existence of positive relations by pointing out that Saami women were appreciated for their skill in helping women to give birth. She also mentioned that it was common for a house owner, often a Norwegian or Swede, renting out room for nomadic Saami when passing with the reindeers, to be asked to become godparent to a newborn Saami child (Joma, 2010, pp.79, 84).

By involving all ages in my work as a co-ordinator, I highlighted a holistic perspective. It showed the Saami people's vulnerability, special needs, and distinct knowledge. Focus has been, and still often is, on the reindeer herders, leaving out men with no reindeers, the children, the women, the handicapped and other groups among the Saami. To work as Jonhild and I did makes it possible to empower the most vulnerable Saami through activities solely or partly designed to include them, and when possible, make them and their competence more visible to the local community. This is important to preserve and increase the status of Saami knowledge.

In my introduction, I cited Wilson and others who claim that sharing stories is healing and medicinal for the sharers. My intent was to show here that stories can help to improve the status of an underprivileged group through making public its neglected history. Stories bind people together as participants of the same common past. Stories from the past can explain cultural differences in another way and with a different authority than the modern Saami can. The stories can also provide explanations concerning why certain things are important for

Saami today.

In the last decades, Indigenous people have criticized traditional Western research from within the academy. Indigenous scholars have claimed that researchers are biased, that they exclude the knowledge, history and experiences of Indigenous people for their own benefit, careers and power positions. In every research project, the researched – Indigenous people – should be included in the full process from beginning to end, including some follow-up afterwards to maintain good relations and provide important feedback. Indigenous researcher have also stated that their knowledge and cultural competence can be particularly beneficial because they will choose a methodology that is more compatible, ethically and politically, with the Indigenous people's cultures (Porsanger, 2004; Kuokkanen, 2008; Smith, 2012).

As I mentioned in the beginning, stories are well suited for Saami holistic epistemology. Stories show that there is knowledge among the Saami that their non-Saami neighbors are not always aware of and that is not always accessible to them. A common assumption is that old Saami traditions have diminished, but in this project we found that with the right competence, attitude and ethics, the worldview of the Saami people can be accessed, although rarely talked about. In particular, spiritual matters could be discussed and older beliefs could be determined, even though popular opinion, even expressed by some Saami themselves, claimed that religious beliefs had disappeared.

As Saami historically have had a marginal status because of colonization, their self-esteem is low. Although attitudes have changed in the last decades to the benefit of Indigenous peoples, there is trauma and distrust to be overcome. The work of increasing the status of the Saami will take time, and the risk is that traditional knowledge will be lost as the society as a whole is changing. But that makes Saami more receptive to documentation, in particular when they are involved in the whole process, hold positions of power, and can control access to. The work with documentation is in itself strengthening for the south Saami people as a whole and functions as a resistance against assimilation. The storytellers help each other to remember and are proud of their skill and of being who they are - south Saami.

About the Authors

Åsa Viridi Kroik (*corresponding author*) is a 51-year-old South Saami woman born in a small village, Borgafjäll, on the Swedish side of Sápmi. For the last four years, she has been a PhD student in the history of religion in Uppsala University, Sweden. Her field of interest is Saami religion, power structures and different issues concerning the South Saami people. She is also focused on Indigenous methodologies and has analyzed the way field workers have developed their own version of Indigenous methodology in co-operation with the South Saami center Gaaltije. She is also a writer and has published four books, several articles, a children's book,

and poetry. Before beginning her PhD studies, she worked in Röyrvik as a coordinator for Saami language and culture. Email: kroik@bahnhof.se

Jonhild Joma is a retired South Saami mid-wife. She was born in the area of Röyrvik in the Norwegian part of Sápmi and has spent most of her life there. All her life she has been active in Saami associations and cultural work and is well known for her knowledge of Saami traditions and language. For a long time she wanted to publish her knowledge about childbirth among elder South Saami and did so in a community-based project that I coordinated.

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Crafting Culturally Safe Learning Spaces: A Story of Collaboration Between an Educational Institution and Two First Nation Communities

Joanna Fraser, Evelyn Voyageur

ABSTRACT This is a story of crafting a culturally safe learning space in the context of First Nations communities. It is told by two nurse educators working together, one who is Indigenous and one who is not. The word “crafting” is used to describe the collaborative and aesthetic process of co-constructing learning with students, community members and the environment. The relationship between the educational institution and the First Nations communities was guided by the concept of cultural safety. Cultural safety politicizes the notion of culture and disrupts the power imbalance between nurses and the people they work with. A process of collaborative conscientization was used to decolonize our institution and ourselves. This led to new possibilities of crafting an ethical learning space where Eurocentric ideologies could be dislodged from the center in order for Indigenous ways of knowing and learning to emerge. Students experienced a form of relational accountability for their learning through participation in community ceremonies and protocols. What resulted was a unique and transformative learning experience for fourth year Bachelor of Science in Nursing students offered in collaboration between an educational institution and two remote First Nations communities.

KEYWORDS decolonization; indigenous knowledge; cultural safety; nursing education

Since 2007, North Island College has been collaborating with the Wuikinuxv and Dzawada’enuxw Nations to offer a unique field school experience for fourth year nursing students as part of an advanced nursing elective. The experience of developing, implementing and evaluating this field school involves an uncovering of the Eurocentric processes embedded in educational institutions. It requires education, practice, and community to develop new ways of forming relationships and new processes for working together (Battiste, 2013). Through engaging with each other, we began to decolonize our institutions and ourselves. What resulted was the crafting of an ethical learning space in partnership with community, where the possibility of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning could emerge (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004). What is learned, and, more importantly, how it is learned, emerges as the field school unfolds and is influenced by all who are involved. Accountability for learning is established through protocols and ceremony in relationship with community (Wilson, 2008). The field school is taught or “crafted” by Evelyn, a nurse and North Island College Elder,

from the Dzawada'enuxw Nation, and by Joanna, a non-native nurse educator. We choose to see our role as “crafting” in order to describe the collaborative and aesthetic process of co-constructing our learning with the students, community members and with the environment. This is our story of crafting a culturally safe learning space through a process of collaborative conscientization (Battiste, 2013).

The field school is offered as part of an advanced nursing elective, Health and Wellness in Aboriginal Communities. Originally, the course was delivered in a typical classroom setting where First Nations' knowledge keepers were invited to participate. The involvement of First Nations people was provided generously with minimal remuneration. Although Indigenous ways of sharing knowledge were supported, control of the learning environment remained largely in the hands of the instructor. The learning space remained subject to the multiple forms of institutional hegemony that are afforded to academia (Battiste, 2013). What we learned is that our educational processes, no matter how well intentioned, continued to perpetuate dominant Eurocentric values and consequently continued to oppress Indigenous ways of knowing and learning (Battiste, 2013).

Recognizing the limitations of the way the course was initially structured, we began to engage in a process of collaborative conscientization with individuals through practice, education and community. Battiste (2013) describes collaborative conscientization, from the perspective of an Indigenous educator, as consisting of two important steps. The first is developing awareness of the “colonial and neo-colonial practices that continue to marginalize and racialize Indigenous students” (Battiste, 2013, p. 69). The second step is to “convince them [Eurocentrically educated Canadians] to acknowledge the unique knowledge and relationships that Indigenous people derive from place and from their homeland” (Battiste, 2013, p. 69).

Nurses, along with all other professionals and people educated in Canada, have been subjected to a process of cognitive imperialism that has made it difficult to value other ways of knowing (Battiste, 2013). Cognitive imperialism is considered to be the universal application of an Eurocentric worldview to determine what constitutes reality and truth over all other worldviews (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 37). All people educated in the Western tradition, including those educated in residential schools, need to go through a process of unlearning and unknowing in order to respect and honour the unique knowledge that Indigenous people and communities hold. The process of decolonizing both our institutions and ourselves is a political process that disrupts the power structures used to promote an Eurocentric worldview. For those of us who have been afforded the privilege of being aligned in some way with these power structures, such as through birth or education, it can be a painful process of exposing and uncovering our vulnerabilities. I (Evelyn) experienced this when I went to work with my people as a nurse. I realized that I held judgments against them for the way they were behaving. I didn't understand why they were drinking and not looking after themselves. I had to learn about how my people had been colonized and then I had to learn about myself. This had a big impact on me. Now I don't judge my people. Instead, I am amazed at the miracles of people who have overcome hardship and become healthy by reconnecting with their culture and with themselves. We must all go through a process of decolonizing ourselves, and our institutions,

in order to disrupt the power held by Western ideologies and reclaim Indigenous knowledge systems (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Nurses in particular need to examine the ways we have taken up ideologies around the concept of culture. Our understanding of cultural competency has been largely informed by Leininger's (1999) Transcultural Nursing Theory with a focus on identifying differences in cultural practices. This has, in many cases, led nurses to believe that we can become culturally competent through learning about the traits and traditions of different cultural groups. There is a risk of viewing the mainstream or dominant culture as being the cultureless norm that all other people who we identify as different, are compared to. The risk of essentializing culture and applying our knowledge assumptions to people whom we perceive as belonging to a cultural group is that it tends to racialize and stigmatize them (Smith, 2012). What we need to understand is that culture is not a neutral concept, but rather that it can be used to privilege and oppress groups of people (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Discourse on cultural safety, a concept originally derived from nursing education in Aotearoa, New Zealand, politicizes the notion of culturally competent nursing practice (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). Nurses need to see their cultural location as being in relation with the political and personal context of the people they work with (Doane & Varcoe, 2015). Ideas of cultural safety disrupt the notion that nurses can determine if they are providing culturally competent care. Instead it gives power to the person receiving the nurses' care to decide if the relationship is culturally safe or not (Papps & Ramsden 1996). This is consistent with the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) position statement that "Cultural safety refers to what is felt or experienced by a patient when a health care provider communicates with the patient in a respectful, inclusive way, empowers the patient in decision-making and builds a health care relationship where the patient and provider work together as a team to ensure maximum effectiveness of care. Culturally safe encounters require that health care providers treat patients with the understanding that not all individuals in a group act the same way or have the same beliefs" (NAHO, 2008, p 19). Cultural safety as described in the practice framework of the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada includes a focus on the nurses' role in addressing unequal power relations and in recognizing that all nurses and patients are bearers of culture (Hart-Wasekeesikaw, 2009). During the field school experience, we were told by an Elder from the community that "when you know you have full understanding of one another, and feel comfortable because you have found yourself, you feel you belong" (G. Johnson, personal communication, June, 12 2007). We believe that cultural safety is not a goal or a competency but a process of uncovering ourselves in relationship with others. In order to engage with each other in a way that opens our hearts and our minds, we need to experience the paradox of feeling safe enough to be vulnerable. It is a political act of resisting the forces of othering and seeking places of belonging together (Cash et al, 2013). We strove to engage with community members in a culturally safe way throughout all aspects of crafting the field school.

In 2005, at an inaugural meeting of what was to become the Learning Circles for Aboriginal Nursing (LCAN), we began a discourse on cultural safety. LCAN is a consortium of First Nations

Health Authorities, nursing education institutions, and Aboriginal organizations. LCAN's vision is "Staying Connected to the Circle...Changing Hearts." Their mission is to create culturally safe learning and practice environments for students, nurses, clients, communities and institutions (LCAN Memorandum of Understanding, 2008). LCAN provided a forum for discourse aimed at untangling the dominant worldviews embedded in nursing education and practice that continue to oppress Aboriginal people (Doane & Varcoe, 2015). At an LCAN workshop entitled *Integrating Culture into Practice*, an Aboriginal leader asked why we weren't "integrating practice into culture" (F. Johnson, personal communication, April 7, 2006). This question illuminated how we were still viewing nursing practice as the central experience that culture needed to be integrated into. In order to dislodge our power structures, we recognized the need to place First Nations people and their homelands in the center of our relationships. We needed to integrate our practice as nurses into the lived world of First Nations people. This elder invited us to bring nursing students to learn in his remote community. This opened up opportunities to realize Battiste's (2013) second stage of collaborative conscientization and to acknowledge that learning with First Nations people requires learning in the context of their homeland. What began to emerge was a shared vision for a field school where nursing practice and education could be integrated into existing community culture. This preliminary stage of decolonizing both our institutions and ourselves through relationship building and collaborative conscientization was fundamental to the eventual crafting of a culturally safe learning space where Indigenous ways of knowing and learning could emerge.

An important part of crafting a culturally safe learning space during both the development and implementation phases of the field school involved developing a shared understanding of the four "R's." Originally the four "R's" of "Relationship," "Respect," "Relevance," and "Reciprocity" were identified by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) as principles for Indigenizing postsecondary education. As each participant, including students, instructors, and community members, shared their personal meaning of these principles, we began to co-construct or craft a deeper understanding of how we wanted to be together. The meaning of the "R's" has had specific relevance for the field school experience. The first "R," Relationship, guides us as the context for our learning. Students come to experience a deeper connection to the environment and to all living systems (Rasmussen & Akulukjuk, 2009). The second "R," Respect, is seen as unconditional positive regard for all people because they are human. Respect is also recognized as essential in sharing the deeply personal nature of each other's stories (Archibald, 2008). Relevance, the third "R," is found in the authentic relationships that are developed based on the real experiences of community members and participants (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Finally the fourth "R," Reciprocity, reminds us to be aware of the moral and ethical impacts of our relationships with each other, and of the need to actively engage in decolonizing ourselves and our institutions (Smith, 2012). Additional "R's" have subsequently been added by community members and participants. "Revealing" was added to mean exposing power, using understandable language, and recognizing differences in assumptions, values, and beliefs (Smith, 2012). "Reverence" reminds us to be open to wonder and appreciation for the unknown and unexpected (Wilson, 2008). Importantly, from the

Aboriginal worldview, reverence means gratitude. (P.Willie, personal communication, June 11, 2007). “Rights” were an important reminder to know our history, particularly as it pertains to the rights of Aboriginal people (Battiste, 2013). It also came to represent the right to be who you are, to be visible, and to respect yourself. These principles were incorporated into every aspect of the field school.

The field school, as one component of the advanced nursing elective, occurs over the course of seven days in one of two remote First Nations communities on the Central Coast of British Columbia. Two other components of the course were also developed and refined over the past ten years in an effort to support and extend the learning that occurs during the field school. The first is an online component designed to prepare students for the field school experience. The focus is on developing foundational knowledge related to Canadian colonial history and contemporary issues effecting the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. The final component, completed after the field school, is a reciprocal learning project. The project is designed by the students with the goal of making their learning visible to themselves and to others including the First Nations community that the field school is held in. It is also expected that the project will be a giving back to the community or a paying forward of the experience in some way. Some examples of reciprocal learning projects are the creation of art pieces, the public sharing of the experiences in a variety of forums, the influencing of practice, policy and curricular changes in a variety of organizations. There is a continuous cycle of reflection and learning with the community in order to craft learning experiences that are congruent with indigenous forms of pedagogy.

The first field school occurred in June of 2007 in Rivers Inlet with the Wuikinuxv Nation. Following our first field school, we wrote the following reflections that demonstrate the differing orientations we had as instructors to this learning experience.

Evelyn’s reflection: As we traveled northward to the land of the Hamatsa, I did not feel any apprehension as I had been there many times. As a child, with my whole family, I had traveled to the fishing grounds of the Inlet. Then I became their Community Health Nurse when I was located in Bella Bella, and they opted to come with me when I moved to Port Hardy. So I serviced the health needs of this beautiful village for a number of years. But even before all this, I was connected to these people, for my great-great grandmother originated from this valley. So these people are my people. Every time I come here, I am greeted, “Welcome Home.” I still go there a lot, for they call upon me to help with their potlatches. However, because this has never been done before, bringing students to a First Nations village for their learning, I did have some questions going through my mind as I watched the waves rising and falling in that big Pacific Ocean. How will the program turn out? Will the students adapt to this way of learning? Will they have open minds and be flexible enough to embrace the differences? Will they find themselves?

Joanna’s reflection: As a nursing instructor, I felt accountable for the success of this course to the organizations within the community, and to the individuals involved.

I found myself caught between the academic world of evaluation, standards and measurable learning outcomes, and the need to value other ways of knowing and doing. My role, as I saw it, was to become a crafter of learning spaces where other voices could be heard and individuals would feel safe to examine their own cultural assumptions and identify their own learning. I felt my own vulnerability in the process of letting go of my assumptions about my role as a nurse educator. I found myself in a continual process of building structure with the community, the organizations, and the individuals involved with what we would be doing and learning. At the same time, I was tearing down those same structures because of the assumptions and expectations of learning embedded in them. It was more like building with wet sand than strong beams.

Through a process of critical reflection and collaborative conscientization, each successive field school experience became a unique weaving of different world views. The experience is co-constructed by all those involved with relationship and community as the context for learning. It is politicized by making the cultural intersections and tensions explicit in the weaving together of Indigenous and Western worldviews (Doane & Varcoe, 2015). Eurocentric assumptions and values about knowledge and learning are still present, but they are dislodged from the center, allowing space for other ways of knowing and learning to emerge (Battiste, 2013, p. 104).

On arrival in the community, students are billeted, ideally with local host families. Through sharing stories and living with host families, students became more aware of the effects of colonization and the privileging of some peoples' experiences over others' (Smith, 2012). The living arrangements encourage the opportunity to develop meaningful interpersonal relationships through story sharing, where deep learning can occur (Archibald, 2008). Participants also experience their own vulnerability as they become dependent on their hosts for basic needs such as food and shelter. Students have the opportunity to uncover their own assumptions, values, and unexamined privilege as they learn to live in the context of their host family's lives.

During the week-long field school, our classroom was the Big House, our ceremonial and spiritual building. As we entered the Big House, we learned protocols for awakening the ancestors and asking for guidance in our learning. We learned about the knowledge keepers of the community, who are represented in the four corner poles and cross beams that hold up the very structure of the building. A man from the community looked after the fire for us daily. He started it and kept it going for as long as we had need. We also began and concluded our sessions with a prayer. It is very important in the First Nations culture to thank the Creator for everything in our lives. Community members were encouraged to participate, and the door was open for all who wanted to join us. This was something different from the standard classroom setting where it would have been considered an intrusion, but we did not feel that. One day we were honored by the presence of the elders. The elders shared stories of long ago, about how life was before contact. Some of them even recounted stories of their negative experiences in the residential schools. We learned so much from these stories. My (Evelyn's) brother works

in the community, and he contributed to a lot of the lessons the nurses received. He made us realize that we all have a dance, that it is one of the special gifts we receive in our lives. He told us the history of the land, its origin, as well as many other lessons. The learning was constructed in relationship with community and happened in the context of peoples' lives. Minimal structure was imposed on the learning experience so that authentic opportunities to be in relationship with community members could emerge. What we experienced was an ethical space of learning where Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous knowledge were valued.

The idea of ethical space has been applied to the bringing together of Eurocentric and Indigenous knowledge systems in a research context by Willie Ermine. Ermine describes an ethical space as an "in-between" space where the power imbalance of Western knowledge systems and Indigenous knowledge systems can be dislodged (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004, p.20). It is a space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can engage critically in deconstructing their shared history and in reconstructing a decolonized future (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004, p.20). Marie Battiste (2013) describes this ethical space in an educational context as contentious, but also offering exciting possibilities (p.105). The challenge of creating an ethical space in education lies in resisting the forces of colonization that have created the classroom in the first place (Hampton, 1995, p.37). The physical set-up of a typical classroom supports didactic teaching styles and disconnects students from being in relationship with each other and with the natural environment. Cajete (2000) describes education from the Indigenous perspective as "being about finding face, finding heart, finding foundation and doing that in context of family, of community, of relationships with a whole environment" (p.188). By situating the learning experience in the Big House and not imposing external structures on the experience, we experienced exciting possibilities where Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning could be shared.

A typical afternoon during our stay in the community would include an outing. We would go crab gathering, berry picking and hiking. Some of the nurses even helped me (Evelyn) by picking some herbs that are used to relieve pain. Students experienced learning in relationship with the environment and developed their own connections with environment, community, and wellness. The importance of this way of learning is best described by Tommy Akulukjuk who said, "To educate by books about the environment is to belittle the environment, to make it less than us: and makes us think that we are the kings of this world and we hold the fate of this world. Little do we know that the environment holds us rather than us holding it" (Rasmussen & Akulukjuk, 2009, p. 289).

During the course of the week, students had the opportunity to attend community events and ceremonies. These events included a welcoming dinner and a ceremonial closing feast. During the closing feast, community members shared traditional dances and ceremonies with the students. Because First Nations communities value reciprocity, the students were guided in a gift-giving ceremony as a way of formally thanking the community for their teachings. The formal and informal ceremonies and protocols we engaged in connected us to the place and to the people we were learning from. This taught us about the accountability we have

to the community for what we have learned. This is a form of relational accountability that requires a high level of personal integrity (Wilson, 2008, p. 102). It is a very different form of accountability from what is expected in the typical post-secondary classroom. Such relational accountability is exemplified by the following student comments after the field school: : “I believe that the gift we were given is rare and special, and that it was given to us by the people of Wuikinunxv, not lightly, but with the responsibility to carry it with us into our practice”; “No book or history lesson could have touched me so deeply. What is our social conscience? Our ignorance is not excusable, our silence stings.” These comments illustrate the responsibility that students have not only to be accountable to the community for what they have learned, but to be accountable for incorporating that learning into their future practice.

Western forms of education have tended to reduce accountability for learning to the achievement of a measurable letter grade based solely on Eurocentric standards. These standards are articulated to students in the form of learning objectives and measurable outcomes for each course. This requires educators to make an assumption that there are measurable competencies for working with Aboriginal people that can be uncovered and categorized by non-Indigenous people. In order for Indigenous ways of knowing and learning to emerge, these Eurocentric structures need to be disrupted. Hampton (1995) describes the intentional and hostile process in which educational standards have perpetuated one way of knowing as superior to all others (p. 37). In order to honour the profoundly personal nature of the learning that occurs in relationship with the community, evaluation of the students learning is not incorporated into the field school component of the course. Evaluation for the other two components of the course are done collaboratively with the students in ways that are consistent with co-constructed forms of pedagogy. The deconstruction of accepted educational practices around evaluation led to the possibility of new ways for students to be accountable for their learning during the field school. What emerged was the crafting of curriculum with a respect for community protocols and Indigenous ways of knowing (Battiste, 2013). This requires people with multiple types of authority within the educational system to be willing to contest Eurocentric educational assumptions and to recognize different ways of constructing learning as being at least equally valid. It is in this political arena and ethical space where exciting possibilities, including Indigenous forms of pedagogy, can emerge.

This is our story of crafting a culturally safe learning space through collaboration between an educational institution and two First Nations communities. We have learned that we have all been influenced by cognitive imperialism to support a Eurocentric ideology in education (Battiste, 2013). To move forward, a willingness to take personal and political action is required to change the existing hegemony by all those involved. An ethical space can be created when Eurocentric ideologies are dislodged from the center allowing for Indigenous ways of knowing and learning to emerge. This requires a continuous process of critical reflection and collaborative conscientization to uncover and counter the effects of cognitive imperialism. Engaging in this process has been transformational for us, our institution and for our students. We experienced a relational way of learning that established a respect for Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, and connection to the environment (Hampton, 1995, p. 18). The field

school experience is an act of resistance against the colonization of education (Smith, 2012). It is an example of engaging in new ways of learning in collaboration with Indigenous people that has the potential to benefit all learners and the communities they learn in.

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Negotiating and Exploring Relationships in Métis Community-Based Research

Amanda LaVallee, Cheryl Troupe, Tara Turner

ABSTRACT Adding a Métis voice to the larger discourse on Indigenous (Métis, First Nation, and Inuit) health research, this work shares experiences and insights gained in relationship building from a community-based Métis research project entitled, *Converging Methods and Tools: A Métis Group Model Building Project on Tuberculosis*. A collaborative partnership between PhD student Amanda LaVallee, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) Health Department and two independent health researchers, the project, conducted from 2010 to 2012, incorporated a System Dynamics participatory methodology called Group Model Building (GMB), with Métis research methods, ethics, and knowledge, to build a model of tuberculosis (TB) experience in Saskatchewan Métis communities. This article examines the co-author's experiences with these collaborative methodologies and with the other partners in the research project, as well as the relational research stories that were essential to the practice of Métis community-based research. Moving beyond discussion of objectivity toward transparency about our presence within the research relationship, this work offers our collaborative experience as a success, and provides inspiration and insight on how to engage in ethical, competent, culturally appropriate, and relevant community-based research.

KEYWORDS Métis research, indigenous research, relational research, Métis community-based research, and Saskatchewan Métis Research

In 2010, PhD student in Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan, Amanda LaVallee began meeting with Dr. Tara Turner, then Director of Health for the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S), to discuss her proposed dissertation research. For the following two years, LaVallee, together with the MN-S Health Department and two independent health researchers worked toward incorporating a Euro-Western computer science-based participatory methodology called Systems Dynamics Group Model Building (GMB) into Métis research methods, ethics and knowledge, in the examination of tuberculosis (TB) in Saskatchewan Métis communities.¹

¹ System dynamics (originally developed in the 1950s) is a modeling paradigm for looking at systems and understanding dynamic problems. System dynamics takes a broad perspective of seeing overall structures, patterns and cycles in systems rather than seeing only specific events in the system. System dynamics models are built around a specific problem (for example: chronic and infectious diseases) (Sterman, 2000). Group Model Building is a participatory system dynamics method introduced in the 1980s. This method facilitates an inclusive, participatory, and collaborative effort of stakeholders in understanding and dealing with dynamic problems. Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations who have an influence on or

The MN-S is the governing body that represents Saskatchewan Métis people on political, social, and community issues. The health department in MN-S provides advocacy to help improve the health and wellbeing of Métis people in Saskatchewan. The department strives to improve the health status of Saskatchewan Métis people through a coordinated set of plans and actions that focus on community and stakeholder engagement, collaborative action, relationship building, data collection, research, and advocacy that are grounded in Métis understandings of community health and well-being (Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, 2012). Rounding out the research team was the then-assistant director of health for the MN-S, Cheryl Troupe, a Métis woman experienced in Métis community-based research, methods, ethics and protocols, as well as Karen Yee and Dr. Irini AbdelMallek, both experienced in Euro-Western research and methods, population health, system dynamics and GMB.² Five years have passed since we embarked on this research. While we initially debriefed at the conclusion of our data collection, time has allowed us the opportunity to reflect on the process and outcomes of the research. As Métis community members and researchers, we have relied on reflexive practice and analysis through storytelling and story listening to inform this article. We have shared our experiences with community-based research and the challenges we encountered in merging Western and Indigenous research paradigms. We have integrated pieces of our stories from the original research (included in Amanda's dissertation) with our current reflections on the methods and ethics that guided us and on the relationships that were created.

As Métis community members and scholars, we understand that there are different kinds of knowledge and different ways of acquiring that knowledge. One can learn through theory and one can learn from the practical application of theory. Rather than have a theoretical discussion of our research process and methods for this paper, we chose to share the knowledge we gained through the practical application, and the specific techniques and tools that enabled us to have a successful research relationship and project. Some things can be learned only through experience; that is what we are sharing here.

Culturally Responsive Research

Métis peoples have existed at the margins of the Canadian historical, cultural, and social settings, and have been largely ignored as a distinct category in the production of most health statistics or in health research. This is due in part to failure of grant agencies to fund Métis-specific health research, as well as the lack of federal government responsibility for Métis health and well-being (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2014). Even though Métis people comprise over thirty per cent of the total Aboriginal population in Canada, there is a clear and troubling under-representation of Métis-related research in the literature. Significant

will be influenced by a project or its outcomes. They are individuals who may be affected by decisions as well those that have the authority to make decisions such as managers, supervisors, front line workers, and community members (Vennix, 1996).

² This project would not have been possible without the collaboration of Karen Yee and Dr. Irini AbdelMallek. While very important members of the original research team, they have not contributed to the co-authoring of this article due to their own personal and professional commitments. PhD research was completed and successfully defended in April 2014. To access completed dissertation refer to <https://ecommons.usask.ca/bitstream/handle/10388/ETD-2014-04-1535/LAVALLEE-DISSERTATION.pdf?sequence=5>

progress is required to learn about the health of Métis populations in Canada. Evans et al. (2012) outline four related, practical barriers to Métis community's health research: first, a lack of Métis-specific health care centers; second, limited human resources; third, reliance upon volunteers, which does not promote capacity building within Métis organizations; and fourth, political instability, which prevents long-term strategic planning and goal setting. Due to the challenges associated with obtaining appropriate and adequate health data indicators, we do not have a true picture of population health and well-being of the Métis in Saskatchewan. Accurate, adequate, and available research data on the health of the Métis population is needed to understand their health status and the disparities they face. Therefore, understanding health and wellness in Métis communities is critical in addressing health and health care disparities among Métis people; thus any research involving Métis peoples' health needs to be rooted in the community (Anderson & Smylie, 2009).

As a team we desired to create capacity and knowledge about Métis health, research and methods; topics that have not been adequately addressed in academic literature (LaVallee, 2014). Therefore, in an attempt to add to the body of scholarly health research, LaVallee and the MN-S Health Department chose to study tuberculosis (TB) because Métis peoples have and continue to experience this infectious disease at disproportional rates compared to non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006).³ Moreover, little is known, understood or published specifically about Métis people's past and present experiences of TB.

Today, much research indicates that TB is heavily influenced by the social determinants of health, and is thus more prevalent in populations that experience racism, discrimination, poverty, lower education levels, overcrowding, poor water quality, and food insecurity (to name a few) (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). For these reasons, understanding TB in Métis communities requires culturally appropriate, responsive, and holistic research paradigms, methods, and ethics. Consequently, the GMB method was a means to begin community conversations and entry point in discussing the determinants of health impacting Métis peoples with regard to TB.

Relationships, Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity and Responsibility

Currently in Canada, most of the Indigenous health research methodologies and paradigm come from a First Nations and Inuit worldview, and Métis people are almost always considered part of that worldview. Past and current Indigenous scholars have been paving the way for an Indigenous research paradigm and methods to be recognized and utilized in our universities. Moreover, they are creating a body of Indigenous theoretical approaches, methods, protocols, and ethics in use by Indigenous researchers in the study of Indigenous peoples. The main

³ TB cases and rates in Canada indicate that TB among Indigenous peoples is higher than in non-Indigenous population within Saskatchewan (SK). The total SK Indigenous rate for reported new active and relapsed TB is 35.3 as compared with the non-Indigenous rate of 1.0 and a total Canadian-born rate of 8.1. Métis communities in SK reported an incidence rate of 19.9 per 100,000 compared to 7.3 per 100,000 across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009).

objective to date has been to ensure that research on and with Indigenous peoples is carried out in a culturally appropriate, respectful, ethical, truthful, responsive, and beneficial manner (Smith, 1999). Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), Smith, (1999), Wilson (2008), and Kovach (2009) are a few of the influential and contemporary Indigenous/non-Indigenous scholars who have encouraged our awareness, knowledge, interest, and work in the field of Indigenous research. These scholars believe that Indigenous research is connected to the dismantling of the consequences of colonialism and is part of the self-determination process. Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), and Kovach (2009) agree that Indigenous research should be rooted in Indigenous culture. Therefore, an Indigenous research paradigm reveals Indigenous values and beliefs, and therefore, Indigenous life (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009). These scholars assert that “Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology” (Smith, 1999, p. 15).

However, to date, there is little information on Métis-specific research paradigm and methods. Most of what we have learned in this project about a Métis research paradigm and methods has been through experience and by working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in our community. As well, we (Amanda, Cheryl, and Tara) relied upon our individual and collective understandings as Métis women, and our experiences with conducting community-based research; we also borrowed and adapted from numerous Indigenous research methods that were applicable to our project. We are keenly aware of the complexity and fluidity of Métis identity,⁴ which is not necessarily based on legal or bureaucratic terms. We understand that there is not one Métis identity, thus, not one Métis methodology, so we drew upon Indigenous methodologies in general. The methodologies we chose were grounded in teachings from our knowledge keepers, the relationship we formed with one another and the values of respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility.

Many Indigenous cultures in Canada and abroad believe that relationships are a vital part of our lives. Relationships not only involve people and places, but also the earth, sky, sun, moon, stones, plants, animals, spirits, ancestors, and the Creator. Central to this belief is awareness that all life is interconnected and that “we are all related.” These relationships allow us to learn about ourselves, our families and communities, and the physical and spiritual world. Relationships are considered essential because they allow for the transfer of knowledge between individuals and generations (Kovach, 2009; NAHO, 2010; Settee, 2007; Wilson, 2008).

Creating and maintaining relationships is a process of personal growth and spiritual well-being. As Métis individuals, we have been taught that we must nurture the relationship that we have with ourselves in order to fully participate in relationships with others. This includes listening to our spirit and trusting our intuitions, values, beliefs, and morals. Being true to these teachings and ourselves allows us to have clarity, compassion, respect, and honesty with those around us. Engaging in relationships encourages listening, observing, and being present when participating with another person, people, or the environment. In a Métis research context, we

⁴ See works by Chris Anderson, Michelle Reidger, and Brenda MacDougal who have all theorized and written on Métis historical and contemporary identities.

understand and appreciate that part of building relationships with individuals and community is dependent upon being present with all members involved. Creating space for relationships to develop includes introducing ourselves, and sharing with others our family and extended family histories—where we come from and what our connection to the community is. We have been taught that to build trust in a relationship we must share our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual selves. Trust is maintained in a relationship by being true to our words, keeping our commitments, listening, and being consistent in our actions. Trust is established in what we say, how we verbalize our values, how we talk with others, and what we share about ourselves (LaVallee, 2014).

To respect means to “feel or show honour or esteem for someone or something; to consider the well-being of, or to treat someone or something with deference or courtesy” (Bopp & Lucas, 1989, p. 76). Kovach (2009) argues that fundamental to any relationship in a personal or research context is the importance of respecting and valuing people and their knowledge. Respect develops in relationships grounded in connection, communication, transparency, honesty, and trust. Respect can be seen in specific actions and conduct, such as introducing people involved in the research, listening and observing, and allowing others to share about themselves, their families and experiences. Respect is also shown in the protocols through which we engage with others in research (NAHO, 2010). The offering of tobacco or a small gift to an individual demonstrates respect and is a non-verbal agreement that we will respect all individuals involved in the research by listening intently, being present, and honoring their presence as a community member, partner, collaborator and/or research participant. This protocol demonstrates that that we value their time, energy, and wisdom. In understanding Métis history and experience, we recognize that many Métis follow Catholic or Protestant religious beliefs and that the symbolic expression of respect, particularly the offering of tobacco, will look differently for these individuals. Elder Maria Campbell supports offering a small gift such as a bag and/or box of dried tea⁵ as an appropriate gift in showing appreciation and respect, as it is the gesture of offering that is important (M. Campbell, personal communication, January 10th, 2012). For our research we chose to offer tobacco in a small bag, decorated in a traditional Métis art form and made by a local Métis artist. This gift we felt was a demonstration of cultural pride, respect and a way of honouring our research, partners, collaborators and participants. With this gift, we also provided a small jar of homemade jam. We felt confident that this offering, together with the tobacco, would be respectful and appropriate (LaVallee, 2014).

Creating relationships and partnership with individuals and community members ensures they have an equal voice and participation in the research. This allows them to explore topics that are important, and therefore relevant to them (NAHO, 2010). Individuals and community members help to guide the research agenda, as well as ensure its accuracy through reading and writing aspects of the proposal, methods, and results before dissemination (LaVallee, 2014).

⁵ Offering a small gift is not limited to a bag or box of tea. It can be any gift, as it is the gesture that demonstrates respect, not the specific gift.

Reciprocity is integral to Métis research. It is the building, nurturing and maintaining of relationships, not just between individuals and communities, or between the researcher and the community, but also with all of creation, including the land, sky, sun, moon, stones, plants, animals, spirit helpers, ancestors, and the Creator/God. It is based upon the understanding that we are connected to all things around us such that we should honour and give thanks to the air we breathe, the land we live on, and the resources that earth has provided for us to sustain our life. Reciprocity in a Métis research context may involve sharing stories, life experiences, events, and family history with individuals involved in the research—the act of storytelling and story listening. This is seen as an act of giving oneself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. However, as highlighted by Michell (1999), reciprocity can also be shown in symbolic forms such as giving tobacco to a research participant, collaborator, partner, mother earth, and/or the Creator. These reciprocal relationships can be seen as a sacred ceremony (Hart, 2010; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Responsibility and accountability are also fundamental to conducting Métis research. Engaging in research with a community means that we accept responsibility and accountability for the impact of the research on the lives of the community members with whom we will be working (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Responsibility involves the assurance that we will work in an ethical way and be respectful of the community/organization and individual(s) that chooses to work with us. Wilson (2008) states, “The responsibility to ensure respectful and reciprocal relationships becomes the axiology of the person who is making these connections” (p. 79). Responsibility dictates that we must continually nurture the relationships we have created with individuals and with the community long after formal research has ended. We have a duty to uphold this kinship by maintaining contact with the community and helping if we are called upon (LaVallee, 2014).

Relational Stories of Engagement: Reflection as Analysis

As community members and research partners, we recognized the necessity of a strong research relationship as foundational to the success of our research. We chose reflexive practice to evaluate our work because in this instance we are analyzing our research relationship and not the actual outcomes of the research project. In doing so, we agreed that reflexive practice was well suited to the evaluation of our research relationship and that it aligned with our positionality as both community members and researchers. Reflexive practice is the dynamic process of critical reflection of the interaction within and between ourselves and our research partners, collaborators, participants, and the data (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexive practice appreciates that it is impossible for the researcher to remain outside of her own subjective being while engaging in research with individuals, collaborators and community (Creswell, 2003). As a result, we believe that using reflexive practice as an analytical technique allows us to contribute to community-based research methodologies for Métis research. To begin, we relate how we developed our research team, and then discuss relational stories with each other and the methods employed.

As a research team, we acknowledged and celebrated our diverse professional, educational,

and cultural backgrounds. We recognized the need to establish personal and professional relationships with each other in order to build a cohesive and consistent research team. To do so, we engaged in weekly two-hour meetings over a seven-month period. During these meetings, we had to be precise in our intentions and goals, as well as create a relational space that honoured our social connections. It was our goal to build a relationship based on reciprocity, respect, relevance and responsibility. Meetings were held in a comfortable location, away from the institutional structures and offices of the research partners, allowing us to have dedicated and uninterrupted time for our relational processes. Amanda's house provided a friendly, open atmosphere that was removed from institutional parameters, designations, and authority. As a team we acknowledged that when we are at work or school, we might become employees and/or students first, and then individuals; and when we are in community, we are individuals first, and then employees and students. Sitting on a couch listening and watching a power point presentation on the television was very different than sitting in a boardroom in an agency or institution. Listening, laughing, learning, and sharing were transformed into a relevant relational context. How much, and what we shared, was very important in bridging our diverse cultural understandings as a collaborative and cohesive team (LaVallee, 2014).

For many of our meetings, team members took turns in the lead role of educator/facilitator. Facilitation was the act of guiding the meeting process to respect people's time, create opportunities for equal participation, and to achieve the meeting goals. The first task on every agenda was sharing our perspectives, thoughts, and experiences personally and/or professionally. Each week Amanda emailed a meeting agenda to partners, which highlighted the meeting topics. Co-facilitation of the meetings created a power shift, allowing the student researcher to learn from others, and respecting the diverse areas of expertise and experience in the group. As well, sharing food at each meeting was a simple yet important gesture. In our cultural teachings, sharing food and drinks nurtures our emotional, physical, and spiritual beings. Food preparation and sharing is an expression of the symbolic importance of fostering good relations and creating a sense of community. The act of making and sharing food can be seen as a ceremony; it is a welcoming ceremony and bonding ceremony. Thus, each research partner and collaborator volunteered to bring food from their respective cultural backgrounds. Each consecutive week, the team member who brought food would also provide a story, teaching, and/or meaning concerning their food or culture (LaVallee, 2014).

Scheduling time, choosing a casual meeting location, sharing facilitation roles, as well as sharing our expertise, food and drinks, became the foundation for a cohesive, trusting, and transparent relationship among members of the research team. This relational work facilitated our co-creation of formal documentation necessary to meet the research and ethical obligations of the University of Saskatchewan, while also honoring the research ethics and protocols of the Métis community. Through these meetings, the research team was able to outline project research methods, ethics, knowledge translation, and dissemination. This documentation included a collaboration agreement, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among research team members, and a research ethics application for the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Over the course of seven months, the MN-S Research

Team worked collaboratively to write all process documents. Although this took considerable time and effort, the process and the documents were built on the foundation of respect, reciprocity, and relevance.

MN-S Health Department Relational Stories (Cheryl Troupe & Tara Turner)

To begin, we must emphasize that this research could not have been conducted had we not made the time and effort to build a strong relationship between Amanda and all members involved in the project. The MN-S Health Department understood that as health workers, educators, and researchers, we should not be working in isolation when it comes to Métis community health issues. Entering into this research, we recognized the value of strong research relationships and various experiences with different research projects and relationships. At the outset we agreed that it would be fundamental to the success of the project to take whatever time necessary to build a relationship of trust, mutual respect, and responsibility. Therefore, each team member deliberately dedicated their time, attention, and self, entirely.

As a research team, we agreed that the proposed research methods were in alignment with a Métis research paradigm in that it privileged stories and valued holism and interconnections (all things are related). Initially it was our data collection plan to conduct a two-day group model building workshop where participants would share their TB stories and experiences that would then be translated into a causal loop diagram.⁶ The participants would work to sort the parts of their stories into positive and negative impacts and influences of TB. As a team, we spent much time learning about GMB methodology, sharing Indigenous methodologies and cultural understandings with non-Indigenous team members, and discussing the ways in which GMB aligned with and was challenged by Indigenous understandings and methodologies. As the team delved deeper into the group model building methodology and examined the tools and activities necessary to conduct a GMB workshop, we were confronted with a number of practical and intellectual challenges. We identified that a number of changes to the GMB method would be necessary in order to conduct the workshop and the research in a way that was meaningful, useful, ethical, responsible, and respectful for Métis communities.

Through our research relationship, we were able to trust and respect one another, to create a supportive environment where we were not afraid to question and challenge each other on issues as they arose. For instance, as the MN-S Health Department learned more about GMB, we became hesitant over the appropriateness of using such a method with Métis peoples. The workshop structure, with its prescribed roles and responsibilities seemed rigid and not conducive to the way in which stories are often shared in Métis communities. To us, it appeared that the process of documenting stories into a causal loop diagram could be disruptive and therefore disrespectful to the storyteller. As a result, the MN-S Health Department encouraged

⁶ Causal loops are one way of diagrammatically representing a problem in the context of a system, and they involve capturing stakeholder stories, perceptions, experiences, knowledge, expectations, and conclusions about a systems problem (Albin, 1997). Causal loops consist of arrows connecting variables in a way that shows how one variable affects another over time. They are circular paths of cause and effect. Drawing a causal loop diagram is a good way to show how a change in one factor may impact another factor, which will then affect the first (Sterman, 2000).

Amanda to approach the workshop using a more Indigenous methodology, such as the Sharing Circle method.⁷ While we were confident that the Sharing Circle methodology would be more culturally responsive and appropriate, the MN-S Health Department initially received resistance from Amanda. Through the research relationship, we were able to challenge Amanda on her hesitancy in committing to Indigenous methods.

As the community partner, we noticed that Amanda often sought validation from her academic supervisor and co-supervisor, rather than trusting the expertise of community research partners. This resulted in the MN-S Health Department members feeling as though we did not always have an equitable partnership with Amanda. It seemed as though our opinions at times were not as valid as Amanda's academic supports. The privileging of Western academia over Indigenous ways, we believe had much to do with Amanda being a graduate student, trained in Western academic research methods, and the pressures to complete her doctoral degree. We understood that was important that she meet the requirements of her academic program, but we strongly encouraged her to trust the expertise, knowledge and wisdom of community, community practices, ethics and protocols. As community partners we wanted to nurture and mentor Amanda because we desired her to grow as a Métis woman grounded in her community, and in Indigenous research methods. While privileging Western methodologies and practices was certainly not Amanda's intention, we learned that Amanda was acting out of fear and her feelings of vulnerability; she knew the tension of being a Métis woman within a Euro-Western academic institution. Understanding her position, we were able to have very candid and often difficult discussions about the challenges and necessity in working to meet the rigor of the academy and the community. While confident that the research would be grounded in community ethics and protocols, we also needed to ensure that the research would be academically rigorous.

I (Tara) recognized the challenge of completing Métis research within a Western academic setting because of my own personal and academic experience completing my PhD a couple of years before. I understood this as a person who was not raised in a Métis community, and who had learned much about Métis identity through community connections gained in university, and also through my own PhD research on my Métis identity. Like Amanda, I was the first in my family to attend university. I saw myself in Amanda, recognizing both the opportunity, but also the challenges of being a Métis graduate student. I wanted to support her as a Métis person and researcher. When I was a graduate student, I felt extreme pressure both to conform to mainstream worldviews and to the other students, but also to act as a cultural representative for all Indigenous people. From my experience, Métis people, history, and culture were not well understood by many of my peers and my professors (if it is understood at all). This lack

⁷ Sharing Circles provide individuals the opportunity to share their personal stories, experiences, memories, thoughts, reactions, dreams, and feelings. In a Sharing Circle there is no beginning or end. Participants are neither first nor last. If they seat themselves in a circle, everyone can see each other. The circle establishes a safe non-hierarchical place in which all individuals have the opportunity to speak without interruptions. Without judgment or criticism, individuals share their stories and listen to others with their whole being: mind, body, heart, and spirit (Archibald, 2008; Hart, 2002; Kovach, 2009; Settee, 2007).

of understanding has led to a lack of representation of Métis approaches to research within my field. As a graduate student, I was also struggling to gain firmer grounding in my own Métis identity and culture. It was hard to know how to move forward in a Métis way, how to explain to my committee so they would understand and support it, and how to stay true to my own growing identity as a Métis person. As academics and community members, we have all felt the pressure to privilege the academy over community. As Métis scholars and community members, we know that this academic environment can create extreme vulnerability in a new Indigenous researcher. I believe community and cultural supports can help the academic and personal journey be more fulfilling. Moreover, these supports have the potential to positively impact the cultural and personal identity, as well as create Indigenous researchers who will do engaged research with community.

I (Cheryl) came into this research project with more community research experience than either Tara or Amanda, so in many ways I was able to act as a cultural and community guide to the research team. Being a member of the Métis community in Saskatchewan and having worked with Métis communities for quite some time, I was confident in my experiences and knew that embarking on this project with Amanda would be an opportunity. In my own research experience, I have been fortunate to work with many knowledgeable cultural teachers and Old People that encouraged me to ground my work in community history, experience, culture and worldview. To me, embarking on this research with Amanda was an opportunity to share some of the lessons learned and challenges encountered in my own community-based research. I saw it as an opportunity to provide mentorship and support to Amanda, on her research journey. One of the most important lessons I wanted Amanda to realize was the importance of her Métis identity to the research. As Indigenous researchers, we have the responsibility, I strongly believe, to position ourselves within our research and address the multiple roles we fill as individuals, community members, and researchers. For that reason, I was willing to question Amanda on how this research process was intersecting with her own identity as a Métis woman, and as a member of community. And, because we had built a strong, trusting research relationship, I was not afraid to challenge her on the ways in which she was, (or was not) willing to incorporate her own understanding of Métis identity into the research. Often in the research process, I recognized Amanda's hesitance in fully embracing Indigenous methods (such as seeking guidance from an Elder and conducting a Sharing Circle). Through sharing our thoughts and feelings, I learned that Amanda was dealing with insecurity, vulnerability and the need to "measure up" as a member of the Métis community, and academia. In hindsight, I think that being honest, respectful and present in these discussions helped to alleviate some of these fears and insecurities, but also reaffirm and strengthen Amanda's identity as a member of our Métis community, and also bolster her confidence as a Métis woman conducting Indigenous research with and within community as well as within the Euro-Western academy.

At the time of this research, the MN-S Health Department had limited capacity in time and resources that we could commit to the research. However, we were willing to work with Amanda because we saw the value in supporting new Indigenous health researchers. We understood the long-term rewards of this, such as creating capacity in the field of Métis health

research, in the MN-S Health Department and within our own community. We chose to push forward with this research because we had the passion, drive, and grounding but also because we were in positions of authority within the MN-S to make this choice. We saw the value in the GMB method as innovative, with the potential to be flexible and inclusive in uniting Indigenous methods. As well, we saw the opportunity to challenge Euro-Western methods with Indigenous methods, and expand Euro-Western academic understanding of ways of conducting community-based research. Moreover, we wanted to be an example of how to more fully engage community, while demonstrating the value of Indigenous methods. We realized as the Health Department that we pushed Amanda harder than we might have pushed other researchers because she is a Métis woman, a Métis researcher, and we knew that her work would impact our Métis communities. We knew she was invested in us, her research, and community, and we felt the same level of investment in her. We knew that it was worth the risk to press her outside of her comfort zone, because our relationship with Amanda was strong enough to withstand challenges. We were driven by the desire to create an environment where researchers like Amanda can be members of their Indigenous community, and researchers grounded in their cultural identity.

Partnering with Amanda for this research project, the MN-S Health Department demonstrated that we were able to engage as full partners in Métis health research, and contribute to the knowledge available in Métis-specific population health research. The MN-S Health department was able to demonstrate the validity of a student researcher utilizing Indigenous methodologies within a mainstream Euro-Western institution. We could work with Amanda in a way that we feel was much more equitable than many of the research relationships we had previously been involved in. With limited capacity in terms of time and resources, we were able to use our relationships to create a team that provided the expertise and commitment required in completing this research. As diverse research team, we shared our academic, personal, and cultural worlds with each other, and we all learned and grew from our experience. By creating space and honoring Métis research methods, Amanda was supported in becoming a stronger Indigenous researcher.

Student Researcher Relational Stories (Amanda LaVallee)

Through extensive and sometimes hard conversations with Cheryl and Tara, I realized that my academic training and personal assumptions with regards to research legitimacy, validity, reliability, and rigidity in conducting “proper” scientific research was getting in the way of listening to my community partners and collaborators. I feared that if we engaged in Métis health research and incorporating Métis methods within group model building, the academy, the population health field, and the GMB community would see our methods as unscientific and invalid. During this time I was privileging my Euro-Western academic knowledge over my Métis knowledge. I did this because I was extremely insecure in my own being, feeling as though I was not Métis enough to engage in Métis methods. I felt as though my fair skin and education disenfranchised me from my Métis knowledge and culture. As a Métis scholar living and working in my community, I have been faced with tensions between our community

knowledge and my academic training. I felt a consistent struggle between my feelings of legitimacy within my community and those within the academy. I was constantly negotiating Euro-Western and Métis knowledge. I was terrified about what my community might see or think of me; and I also felt the overwhelming pressure to complete and successfully pass my dissertation. I was fueled by the fear of what other people thought of me, the potential judgment of others, and the fear of the unfamiliar (Métis research methods: for example, Elder guidance and Sharing Circles). I felt completely vulnerable. For me, this was about the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure of being Métis in a Euro-Western system. I was taught that vulnerability means weakness. However, I realize now that vulnerability is about having the strength to be completely me. Being honest, transparent, revealing, trustworthy, accessible, and reliable are the foundations of building strong relationships (LaVallee, 2014).

Tara and Cheryl often had conversations with me about the extent to which I was willing, as a Métis woman and as a health researcher, to trust in the strength of my identity, my community, and to challenge myself to overcome my own hesitancy, fear and vulnerability. They encouraged me to not just observe the protocols I was comfortable with, but to seek out guidance from my cultural teachers, as well approach an Elder for guidance. What I discovered was that seeking support and guidance from a Métis Elder was integral to the research process.

I was anxious to approach and talk with Maria Campbell because I had never asked for guidance and support from an elder before. I knew that working with an elder meant a level of responsibility, accountability, and availability for and within my community that I was unsure I was ready for. I have known Maria Campbell for many years, and I have attended marriage and naming ceremonies where she was the ceremonial elder, conferences and workshops where she was the keynote speaker, and a graduate course where she was the professor. Although I had met her numerous times and have enjoyed our interactions and friendship, I was afraid that approaching her as an elder for guidance would open me to potential negative judgment. I was afraid that she would judge me as not being 'Métis enough' and question my community involvement. Moreover, she might disapprove of the research. However, my fears were completely unjustified; Maria was forthcoming, welcoming, and supportive. She reminded me that we are friends, and that I could seek her guidance, support, mentorship, and friendship at any point. Her knowledge and teachings were all grounded on the values of respect, reciprocity, relationships, and relevance. Seeking support and guidance from a Métis Elder was integral to my connections with community, my research collaborators, and as a Métis health researcher. In an effort to respect local Métis community protocols, culture, and values, Maria Campbell provided me with valuable lessons in honoring and appreciating diversity amongst our Métis communities, as well as how to create a culturally respectful and relevant GMB workshop (LaVallee, 2014).

As a student researcher, I felt immeasurable pressure from the institution to complete the research within the given time of four years. I was trying to progress quickly through the research; however, I continually underestimated the amount of time necessary to build trusting and transparent relationships with my community partners. I understand now that there should be no limits on the time it takes to building and maintaining relationships. However,

given the nature of academia and the work of completing a dissertation, time frames exist and these can dictate the research process, and, unfortunately, also the outcomes. For example, an ethics application can often be written in solitude by an independent student researcher, with support from her supervisor and/or co-supervisor within one day to a week. However, writing the ethics application with a community can take considerable time (within our project, seven months), given the nature of collaboration and giving choice and voice to the community. However, this is necessary if the partnership is to be equitable and mutually beneficial.

During the course of this project, we all had times of vulnerability in sharing our personal and professional lives. Being vulnerable was hard, but it was and is worth it because we shared laughter, tears, joy, happiness, anger, frustration and worry. Vulnerability and authenticity was at the root of my being Métis and doing Indigenous research and these were the glue that held our relationships together (LaVallee, 2014).

Overall, I learned some very valuable lessons; I learned that when I engage in relational research, I must be prepared to fundamentally alter any preconceived assumptions that I may have about my role in my community, in academia, and in research. I learned that relationships provide an opportunity for ethical enhancement by helping me to recognize my potential as a Métis community member and researcher. I believe all researchers need a community of people to share the joys and the struggles of research because solidarity can enhance research projects processes and outcomes (LaVallee, 2014).

This research is one example of Métis community-based research. Taking the time to create and strengthen relationships, as well as define the research process, methods, and ethics together, can result in the growth of knowledge and understanding for the researcher, for the community, and for the discipline and methods brought from Euro-Western academic traditions. Our research relational stories stand as a guide for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers engaging in community research, and, more specifically provide encouragement to community organizations to partner with researchers to help build and shape the research they need for their communities and organizations, even with limited resources. When researchers and community members are engaged in relationship, there is the potential to create long-term, community-driven research agendas, that can sustain community research goals, as well as the goals and research agendas of the researcher.

Conclusion

Successfully conducting TB research with Métis people could not be accomplished through the standard toolbox of research techniques. We understand now that it was not one specific method or tool that characterized the success of our process: it was all of the Western and Métis methods and tools that collaboratively and synergistically worked together. If the outcome was the destination, our collaborative, relational process was the vehicle that got us there. Smith (1999) reminds us that “in many projects the process is far more important than the outcome. Processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate. They are expected to lead one small step further towards self-determination” (p.128).

In taking the time to reflect on this research since its completion, we have gained insights into the process of undertaking community-based research from our personal experience, and have shared with academic researchers and Indigenous communities. We know that relationships built on trust, collaboration, and respect, are central to the success of this kind of research. Community-based research required commitment from everyone involved, and values partner with experience, capacity exchange, and expertise. Community-based research is successful when it is flexible in meeting the needs of the community, the researchers, and academia. And while community-based research is demanding, the benefits can far outweigh the challenges.

Our personal accountability was a humbling experience that helped us understand the colonial legacy of TB in our families and communities. We believe that health research requires collaboration among institutions, organizations, and stakeholders, dedicated to the health needs of Métis people. Engaging in community-based research that creatively merges research paradigms and methods, individuals, sectors, and institutions may help Métis communities to conceptualize and organize sustainable solutions to address health issues of importance (LaVallee, 2014).

In community-based research, researchers have the opportunity to build relationships with community members, not as research subjects or participants, but as individuals and communities. We have learned that doing community-based research has the potential to expand, stretch, and teach the researchers, collaborators, partners, and community members involved. This demanded vulnerability from each of us. However, it allowed us to learn about being researchers as well as being Métis community members within our research relationship. Overall, the relational foundation of this project was the key determinant of our success in conducting this Métis community-based research.

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Creating Ethical Research Partnerships – Relational Accountability in Action

Robert Henry, Caroline Tait, STR8 UP

ABSTRACT Research that focuses on Indigenous street gangs is primarily derived from the experiences and expertise of individuals who work in the criminal justice system or community-based organizations and not street gang members themselves (Grekul & LaRocque, 2011). The primary reason for this is that it is difficult to build research relationships with individuals who, for the majority of their lives, have tried to keep their lives hidden from those who they consider as outsiders. However, it is these narratives of those who have been directly involved with street gangs that provide the greatest insight into what attracts individuals to join, the realities of street gang life, and what is needed to support individuals to exit street gangs. The current article examines how relational accountability framed within the 4Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) was used to engage in a photovoice research project that focused on how Indigenous male ex-gang members came to construct their notions of masculinity within local street gangs. To engage the men in the research, relationships were built with STR8 UP, a community-based gang intervention program located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. By building relationships, the foundational components to Indigenous research, trust between researcher and participants was established where modifications within the research methods could occur to engage the men's participation more fully. The current article also examines the importance of critical reflexivity within relational accountability, as it provides researchers with a tool to understand their social privileges and how this can impact the research process

KEYWORDS Relationality; participatory research; photo voice; Indigenous street gangs

“I got lost in the wild, the wild people took me in and helped me, made me their king, and I lived to tell civilization about it.”

Victor Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*

We begin with words from Victor Rios who challenges researchers, specifically those who conduct research with street gang members, who continue to maintain the “saviour trope,” in which outsiders—in particular “rogue sociologists”—enter into a mysterious land or environment and through their own strong will and determination, emerge to tell the story of the “other.” Rios explains that “this self-aggrandizing narrative, perpetuate[s] the flawed

policies and programs and public understanding[s] of the urban poor as creatures in need of pity and external salvation” (Rios, 2011, p. 14). This holds particularly true within the history of Western colonial research on Indigenous peoples, in which Indigenous peoples and cultures are placed under a microscope to be deconstructed, defined, and positioned as the “Other” (Smith, 1999; Louis, 2007; Brooks, Poudrier, & Thomas-MacLean, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Absolon, 2011). To challenge dominant forms of research practices that position the research as superior and those under study as lacking knowledge, researchers who intend to conduct research with and within Indigenous communities must engage in a relational research process, one that is built on Indigenous concepts of relationality (Wilson, 2008) with the intention of creating decolonial spaces to improve relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and peoples.

Our intentions here are to show the importance of relational accountability and its application in a photovoice research project that focused on Indigenous ex-gang members. We explain the importance of relational accountability, framed by Kirkness and Barnhardt’s (1994) 4Rs – respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility – for researchers. Reflexivity is central to the process, since at all stages, researchers and their partners must become consciously aware of their cultural capital and its impact on the research process. It is through this process, or relational accountability, that agency can be acknowledged and research methods can be modified to fit the social realities of the participants and community.

To show how relational accountability can be fostered within research projects, we focus on research conducted with the authors and their community partner. We explain how relationships became the foundation for research to be conducted with Indigenous men who were at one time involved in the street gang lifestyle. We begin by discussing the important effect that community partnerships and collaborations have on the active engagement of participants. We follow this with a description of the research framework—the 4Rs—which is needed to strengthen relational accountability (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1994) and to move research forward in an ethical way. (Louis, 2007; Wilson, 2008; Absolon, 2011).

Getting Started – Utilizing Prior Relationships for Recruitment

A primary issue for street gang researchers is to find participants who are willing to partake in the research process. Much time and many resources are often needed to build trust with street gang members; the researchers have to prove that they are not there as undercover informants searching for information against individuals (Bourgois, 2009; Vanketesh, 2009). Some researchers use prior relationships with individuals from their old neighbourhoods, whom they have met before (Rios, 2011). Most researchers, though, recruit participants through organizations (criminal justice and community-based) that work directly with street gang members (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008; Garot, 2010). For this study, a partnership was created with the community-based organization STR8 UP. STR8 UP is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization that supports individuals as they try to remove themselves from gangs and the street lifestyle. STR8 UP’s mission statement states:

STR8 UP assists young men and women to master their own destiny in liberating themselves from gangs and criminal street lifestyles. STR8 UP builds healthy families and endeavors to provide individuals and their families with the skills and resources they need to become responsible citizens which will lead to a positive and gang free lifestyle. (STR8 UP, 2012, p. 1)

STR8 UP strives to provide support through outreach and connecting members with other community organizations. STR8 UP has built strong relationships within the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon and other smaller First Nations communities in Saskatchewan through their outreach work and presentations to educate people about the realities of the street gang lifestyle.

STR8 UP was founded in 1998 when some Indigenous men in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC) approached Father André Poilièvre, at the time the centre's chaplain, for advice on how to get out of their gangs. At the time, there were no programs in Saskatoon that provided interventions for individuals who were trying to exit their street gang. As Father André stated during a conversations about the history of STR8 UP:

I remember two guys came up to me and I knew they were active gang members. We had talked and they had indicated that they wanted out. I don't remember the occasion, the time, the details, the circumstances, except that they were struggling with it. And so this other guy came up to me and says, "If he leaves, I leave, but we don't know what to do. We don't know anybody that's left, we don't know what happens." So that's where it started. I just said, okay, let's work at it.

With a high Indigenous membership, STR8 UP incorporates Indigenous perspectives and concepts into its programming. STR8 UP focuses its programming around a Medicine Wheel framework which symbolizes the four aspects of self—mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual (King, Smith, & Gracey, 2009). As Marlene Brant Castelleno (2000) explains: "The [M]edicine [W]heel teaches us to seek ways of incorporating the gifts of the other quadrants. It encourages us to bring more balance to our own lives or and to form relationships and work in teams." (p. 30). The Medicine Wheel is used to help STR8 UP members frame their journey of recovery and healing by balancing the four aspects of self and contextualizing how an individual moves through the different phases of life, i.e. child, youth, adult, elder.

STR8 UP encourages its members to talk about their experiences. To create a platform, STR8 UP asks its members to take an active participatory role when they go to speak to schools, programs, and organizations about the street gang experience. As Dave (27, STR8 UP member) explained:

I went for coffee with him and he was like, "Do you want to come and see what we do?" So, I went to it and he did his little spiel on STR8 UP, did his whole demonstration and wrote everything out on the white board for me and I was like, holy s***! This guy understands—for the first time, somebody actually made sense of everything.

I actually spoke at that one, because I saw all those kids sitting there; I never, ever thought that I'd be talking to kids? I was seeing all those kids there... see I could just see it, you could just see it in kids' eyes, man. You can just see the hopelessness sometimes. But in any case, that's the start of STR8 UP for me. For the next year and a half, I didn't miss one presentation. I didn't care if I have to walk to it. I was getting there. And with the support of this thing, I am where I am today.

Such experiences are important as they provide members the opportunity to build connections with other members and share their experiences as a way to give back to the community.

As in the STR8 UP model, the building of relationships was central in the research process for our project. Because relationships were important, we adopted a flexible methodological approach, modifying methods to support the current realities of the participants. For example, some of the men were living healthy, stable lives, while others had just exited correctional institutions and were dealing with addictions, mental health, poverty, housing, and street violence. Therefore, some individuals had opportunities to move more easily in and out of the community, while others needed transportation support. STR8 UP supported the project and provided transportation for individuals to come to interviews. Although relationships were important, we also had to recognize that visual research (photos, videos) could enforce negative stereotypical perceptions of Indigenous men, violence, and street gangs.

Ethical Photography – Breaking the Colonial Lens

The capturing of Indigenous peoples in their “natural state” through photographs has had a long and often troubled history in Canada. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographers such as Edward Curtis set out to photograph Indigenous peoples with the intention to photograph the “features of the Indian life and environment-types of the young and the old, with their habitations, industries, ceremonies, games, and everyday customs” (Vervoort,



Figure 1: Bones took me to a now abandoned apartment building that he and his gang used to hang out in. He talked about one night where gunshots were fired in the building and went through this window.

2004, p. 464). Daniel Francis (1992) describes how the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) used photographs of Indigenous peoples to create a specific experience of the “West” to promote tourism. The most sought-after photographs depicted Indigenous peoples in “traditional clothing,” or partaking in “traditional activities.” To support the consumer appetite of the travelling settler, most photographs were staged, as Indigenous peoples were instructed by white photographers to wear traditional regalia and remove anything European (i.e. clothes and

tools). Such staging helped to maintain the nostalgic colonial ideology that that Indigenous peoples could not change or adapt to European culture (Francis, 1992). Through the staging of photographs, the CPR and their photographers reinforced the colonial gaze; clearly the civility of Europeans was needed to tame the “Wild West” (LaRocque, 2010). As a result of this history, photo-based research with Indigenous peoples must avoid marginalizing Indigenous peoples even further through photographs, particularly of those seen to occupy the edges of “civil” society (Castleden et al., 2008). Although such concerns are valid, visual research has great potential in Indigenous research methodologies.

The use of photographs and other visual methods as qualitative research tools is relatively new in research of street gangs (Kontos, Brotherton, & Barrios, 2005); however, photographs in research such as photo elicitation have been widely used by anthropologists and sociologists since the turn of the twentieth century. Researchers at this time used photographs as a way to elicit longer and more comprehensive interviews with individuals, in cases where cognitive delays and language were barriers (Harper, 2002). However, the importance of photographs was secondary to the research process and methodology when results were published. As Castleden et al. (2008) state:

Photography in academic research is not a novel approach. It has been an accepted tool in fieldwork practice since the 1920's... While visual data is increasingly recognized as an effective method for shared interpretation in participatory research, references to photography in academic literature remain sparse. (Davidson, 2002, p. 1395).

With a lack of academic literature on photography as a research process, traditional qualitative and quantitative research methods are still preferred, specifically with street gang research. This is troublesome because photographs can enhance the research process and provide researchers with a visual pathway to support the perceived realities of those involved, or who have been involved, with street gangs.

For this project, photovoice methods were used to understand the experiences of the participants. Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris describe photovoice as a “process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique” (1997, p. 369). Most commonly, participants are asked to portray their knowledge of aspects of health through photographs (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999; 2003). The intention is to provide marginalized populations the opportunity to capture images from their perspectives and reflect on them, thus acknowledging them as experts on their own realities (Wang & Burris, 1997; Castleden et al., 2008; Mitchell, 2011). Photovoice research then is a transformational research approach that allows researchers to learn from those most impacted by the experience, as participants give researchers and the broader community a reflection of how they view the experience under study.

The importance of photovoice is in its focus on transformational methodology (Friere, 1970), in which participants become active agents in the research process and are situated as the experts of their own lives (Wang & Burris, 1997; Castleden et al., 2008). Although research

ethics involving Indigenous peoples of Canada have shifted, with the creation of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) and Tri-Council Policies for Indigenous research partnerships, Indigenous voices continue to be silenced due to systemic power structures (i.e. continued colonial policies) of exclusion (Spivak, 1988; Smith, 1999; Koukkanen, 2007; Blodgett et al., 2011). Photovoice methods shift traditional research ideologies by creating an opportunity for those people most affected within a phenomenon to become actively engaged in the research process (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2001; Wang, 2003; Brooks, Poudrier, & Thomas-MacLean, 2008). Through reflexivity, photovoice methods can then be used as a tool to support Indigenous male ex-gang members as they reflect back on their life history and the connections to masculinity, identity, and street gangs.

However, caution is needed when working with vulnerable research participants, as visual representations can be double-edged. For example, images can inadvertently reproduce commonly held stereotypes or prejudices of the community being represented (Daniels, 2008; Mitchell, 2011). To limit misrepresentations, participants must be included in the dissemination of any photograph that they personally take. If ethical protocols and reflexivity are ignored during the research process, the photographs taken of or by marginalized participants can be used to reproduce socially constructed stereotypes (Daniels, 2008).

Research Framework – Relational Accountability, Ethical Reflexivity, and the 4Rs

Historically, research and science have often been used to enforce oppressive ideologies over Indigenous peoples and support colonial occupation and control (Smith, 1999; Brown & Strega, 2005; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). For example, during the Enlightenment period in Europe, craniometry was used to support the racialization and poor treatment of non-white Western Europeans by quantifying particular skull characteristics supporting a hierarchy of intelligence (Omi & Winant, 1993; 2014). Through “objective science,” doctors would skew results when they challenged the social understandings of civility and intelligence (Omi & Winant, 1993; 2014; Dei, Kumanchery, & Kumanchery-Luik, 2004). Thus, craniometry rationalized Western colonial ideologies of racial superiority to control Indigenous peoples and resources.

Research through an “Imperial gaze” has impacted colonial relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples (Smith, 1999; LaRocque, 2010; Razack, 2015). In Canada, much research with Indigenous peoples has and continues to be framed through Western colonial lenses, limiting Indigenous knowledge and contributions to the research process (Brant Castellano, 2004; Alfred, 2005; Kovach, 2009; Absolon, 2011). Because colonization is imbedded in Canadian social systems, i.e. justice, health, education, research is often used to support neocolonial policies to control Indigenous peoples and their movement (Koukkanen, 2007; Sinclair & Grekul, 2012; Razack, 2015;). Research by Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard (2008), and Tomas Flanagan (2008) on economic and policy development, and Mark Totten’s (2010) work on Indigenous street gangs have been used to influence policies that negatively impact Indigenous peoples. For example, Mark Totten has attempted to create linkages among three social issues—fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, gangs, and

sexual exploitation of Indigenous men and women—with little evidence to support such claims (Henry, 2013); however, because these linkages are already present in the Canadian consciousness about Indigenous peoples, they are easily accepted as truth (Henry, 2013). News media outlets then use this “research” and create stories that connect tragedies of Indigenous peoples in communities to street gangs and the overall ill health (predominantly mental health, i.e. addictions, substance abuse, violence, etc.) of individuals and the community to their own poor choices, with little space to assess the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples and communities (Razack, 2015).

So how can researchers challenge the imbedded socialized perceptions of those living in marginalized spaces? And how can researchers and their collaborators work together to decolonize and create an agency of change that reflects the realities of those who are most impacted? It is here where we turn to the importance of relational accountability in the research process.

Relational Accountability - Relationality and Community-Based Indigenous Research

Relationality or relational accountability is an important concept in many Indigenous communities (Louis, 2007; Wilson, 2008; Absolon, 2011; Macdougall, 2011). It is grounded in Indigenous epistemologies in which researchers position themselves within a larger web of relations to their environment and research partners (Simpson, 2000; Grande, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Hart, 2010; Macdougall, 2011;).

It's collective, it's a group, it's a community. And I think that's the basis of relationality. That is, it's built upon the interconnections, the interrelationships, and that binds the group...but it's more than human relationships. And maybe the basis of that relationship among Indigenous people is the land. It's our relationship to the land. There's a spiritual connection to the land. So it's all of those things. (Wilson, 2008, p. 80)

According to Wilson, relationality is complex and is the interconnected space where individuals come to understand their cultural capital and how they are to act within local codes (see also Bourdieu, 2001).

Notions of interconnectedness are also emphasized by Brenda Macdougall's (2011) research on familial histories of Métis peoples in northwestern Saskatchewan. She explains that, through the Cree word *wahkootowin*, Métis peoples maintained an identity and familial relationships across cultures, communities, environments, and time:

In short, this worldview, *wahkootowin*, is predicated upon a specific Aboriginal notion and definition of family as a broadly conceived sense of relatedness with all beings, human and non-human, living and dead, physical and spiritual... Identity, in this conceptualization, is inseparable from land, home, community, or family. They are all one and the same. (p. 3)

Relational webs must be carefully understood and navigated accordingly to construct ethical research space within Indigenous communities. The processes to engage communities in research differ depending on the community and the relationship with the researcher. For example, prior to conducting any research, some researchers who have worked in Indigenous communities have participated in spiritual ceremonies such as a pipe ceremony or a sweat-lodge (O'Rielly-Scanlon, Crowe, & Weenie, 2004); some spend the first part of their research speaking with the community members and creating relationships prior to conducting any research (Innes, 2009; Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012); while others use community connections or "gatekeepers" to help navigate the research in the community (LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009). Whatever the process, researchers must be willing to abide by and respect the community's wishes to forge ethical research relationships.

Due to the precarious conditions of the lives of the men, prior relationships between Father André Poilièvre (founder), Stan Tu'Inukuafe (STR8 UP coordinator) and the researchers were essential in the recruitment of the research participants. Both men are respected by STR8 UP members and others living a street lifestyle in Saskatoon. It was through relationships with them that trust would be built with STR8 UP participants. The approval of the project by Father André and Stan encouraged some STR8 UP members to participate in the project. Therefore, André and Stan could be viewed as gatekeepers (LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009), since it was through their recognition, approval, and recruitment of participants that the researchers gained access to a cohort of men involved in street gangs. While gatekeepers can provide the connections, it is up to the researchers to build the relationships. This is very often difficult to do when working with marginalized populations, as it takes a lot of time and energy on the part of the researcher to break down personal and social perceptions that could be potential barriers to the research process.

To break down socially constructed barriers caused by colonization, researchers must first be able to listen to Indigenous partners. This means that open conversations need to occur before researchers can understand what barriers might hinder the research process and think of ways to adjust research methods for full engagement. Conversations held with Father André, Stan, and some of the participants prior to the research commencing aided in creating an ethical space to discuss issues of concern. As Ermine (2007) states:

The sacred space of the ethical helps us balance these moral considerations as we discuss issues that are trans-cultural, or trans-boundary in nature...With this notion of ethics, and juxtaposed on the broader collective level, we come to the inescapable conclusion about our own agency in the kind of civilization we create to live in. (p. 196)

It is within Ermine's concept of ethical space that researchers must begin the difficult process of reflexivity and learn how one's unearned privileges impact the research process.

To construct ethical space in the research process, researchers must engage in a critical reflexive consciousness to understand how their social identities shape the researcher/

participant relationship. Since research is never truly objective, researchers must learn to unpack their cultural baggage to understand how they have come to interpret their worldviews (Friere, 1970; Kleinman, 1977; Bourdieu, 2001; Nussbaum, 2015). Such positioning is important in gang research because poor and ethnic minority youth are constructed as *de facto status* (Cacho, 2012) gang members as a result of their social identities (White, 2009; 2013). To challenge this subjectivity, researchers must use a critical self-reflective gaze in order to understand how their epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies shape and affect the research process (Wilson, 2008). Critical self-reflection allows researchers to acknowledge how their unearned privileges, i.e. whiteness, have come to shape their knowledges and perceptions of truth (Friere, 1970; Louis, 2007).

By working from places of humility and honesty (two core values of STR8 UP), the participants and Robert constructed ethical researcher/participant relationships. To begin with, Robert opened up about his past and the intentions of the project. He engaged in critical self-reflection on his privileged status, beginning every session by talking to the participants about how he came to be conducting research on Indigenous street gangs. The intention of the conversations was to create relationships through noting the similar experiences that Robert may have had as a Métis living in Prince Albert and the participants themselves may have had. Relationships became central to the research process, as STR8 UP members could ask questions or voice concern about the project or Robert's intentions.

Through critical self-reflection, researchers can work to dismantle and decolonize what they have taken for granted as a result of their privilege. The result is a broader ethical research framework of relational accountability that is built from respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. The result is the construction of a web, where if one section is weakened, the research loses its connection to community agency.

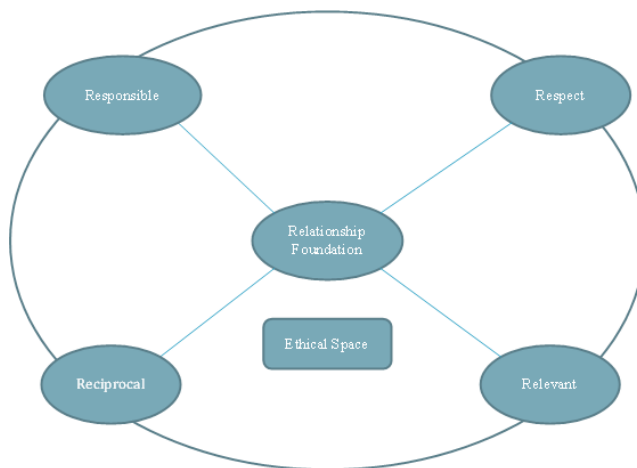


Figure 2: Relational Accountability Model

It is within this framework that relational accountability is able to strengthen the research process. The model is not designed as a step-by-step process; rather, depending on the research relationships already in place, different researchers may choose different starting points. For example, those researchers who have a history of doing credible research with community partners may engage at the point of relevance, because they have a level of respect from the community from previous work. It does not matter where one begins; for the relationship to strengthen, all four sections of the outer circle must be addressed. If not, the relationship will cease to move forward and the research process will halt or become difficult to complete. For our intentions, we began with the concept of respect and worked clockwise, because beginning researchers need to prove their intentions first of all and then build trust with their new community partners.

Respect – You Get What You Give

Respect within the research process is fundamental to strengthening, nurturing, and cultivating relationships (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Because respect is earned on the street through violent actions, STR8 UP works with its members to redefine respect in a positive way. For example, there were times in the men's lives when respect meant enacting violence to gain respect through fear. Adam (36) explained:

It seemed like everybody respected you because you got in a fight, you stabbed somebody, you robbed somebody. You know women look at that being like a gangster...the worse I got, the more friends I had.

There were other times, when the condition of being respectful or respected was demonstrated through one's ability to care and nurture in reaction to a traumatic event. As Dwayne (29) explained:

I was bleeding and they were dragging me by my hair. They pulled my braid out, hitting me and I was bleeding. I don't know where this Native guy came from. He was an adult and he picked me off the ground and I was bleeding and crying. I don't know who he was; but I have nothing but respect for him. I'll never forget what he told me. He said never to let anyone take my pride away. Be proud of who you are; be proud of being Native. Your hair is beautiful.

These are two examples of how respect was shown or earned in the lives of the men. An individual felt himself respected when he committed violent acts, yet respected others for their compassion for those who were victimized.

Within academic contexts, respect may have different meanings, as Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) cautions:

In academic contexts, respect is often reduced to mere tokenism or, even worse, empty rhetoric...Mere respect tends to create a climate of "repressive tolerance" in

which [I]ndigenous people[s] and their epistemes are allowed to exist in the celebratory spirit of different perspectives or points of view but are not recognized, heard, or understood except superficially and relativistically. (p. 79)

Because of the potential for tokenism and empty rhetoric, respect as a concept must be explained as it can have different meanings for different people involved in the research process.

Within the research field, a researcher's actions or non-actions can affect the research process. If individuals lack respect for one another, then people will find ways to create barriers making the research process difficult to undertake, complete, or not begin at all. Thus, respect is earned and measured based on one's trust of the other. Respect in research occurs when those involved understand the goals, objectives, and one another's roles in the process. According to Renee Pualani Louis (2007):

Respect is not just about saying "please" or "thank you." It's about listening intently to others' ideas and not insisting that your ideas prevail (Steinhauer, 2002, p. 73). It's about displaying characteristics of humility, generosity, and patience with the process and accepting decisions of the Indigenous people in regard to the treatment of any knowledge shared. This is because not all knowledge shared is meant for a general audience. (p. 133)

If researchers do not respect their partners, then the relationships built will be strained or broken, leading to disengagement from the research process (Smith, 1999; Castleden et al., 2008; Absolon, 2011).

To build respect with the men, listening became central to the process. It allowed researchers to understand possible social barriers that could impact the research process. For gang research, this means that researchers be open-minded and not pre-judge gang members as "bad people." For many, this is difficult because of the violence and trauma that they have inflicted on others; however, through becoming learners in the research process, researchers can slowly comprehend why the men made such decisions. This respectful learning position gives researchers the opportunity to make connections to the larger socio-political histories of colonization and their impact on available choices.

Over the course of the data collection, engagement with some men focused strictly on talking about their experiences through one-on-one interviews. Others needed support from both STR8 UP and the researchers who entered the community as they took photographs and talked about their different experiences and memories. The variance in how the interviews and data were collected shows the different levels of respect and trust that were built among some of the men. Through the acknowledgement and respect of the men's knowledge, and the shaping the research to help others, the men began to see the overall relevance of the research project to themselves and others.

Relevance – Making Research Worthwhile

The construction of meaningful and respectful relationships can move discussions towards understanding the need and/or importance of the research for participants and the broader community (Koukkanen, 2007; Absol on, 2011). If a researcher is not from the community, sitting, listening, and speaking to community members will be a necessary process (Absolon, 2011). Questions such as “is the research important to the community?” “Is the community



Figure 3: Bones talked about the trauma that he faced as a child, teen and adult. He explained that one way to deal with everything is to get lost in drugs. Through this photograph, Bones explains how drug usage became more difficult to escape because of the actual and perceived threat of violence.

at a point that the said research can be undertaken?” must be asked to see if the research project is worth it or helps to improve the wellness of the community and members overall. Agency and research relevance can be established when the research methods and outcomes are made to fit the social realities of the community (Castleden et al., 2008). If the communities cannot see the benefit of the research, or resources are insufficient, or more pressing issues exist in the community, then the research becomes irrelevant.

Within the prairie provinces of Canada, Indigenous street gangs are regarded as a root cause of many criminal justice and health issues affecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Criminal Intelligence Services Saskatchewan, 2005; Grekul & LaBoucane-

Benson, 2008; Bracken, Deane, & Morrissette, 2009; Comack, Silver, Morrissette, & Deane, 2013). With little information on Indigenous street gangs outside of criminal justice surveys and annual reports in Canada, communities continue to look to American policies and utilize suppression strategies to target street gang activities and members (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008). For example, in the United States “gang sweeps” have become popular in urban centres as a way to “round up” potential and known gang members. However, rather than creating safety within the community, these sweeps create animosity between law enforcement and the peoples who are targeted, specifically black and Latino youth in impoverished neighbourhoods (Bjerregaard, 2003; Barrows & Huff, 2009; Van Hofwegen, 2009). To avoid the increase of suppressive tactics in addressing Indigenous street gangs, comprehensive and relevant research is required to create a more accurate and broad understanding of the issues related to Indigenous street gang involvement.

With limited research on Indigenous street gangs, the information available does not reflect the historical and social conditions of those who are the most impacted by the gangs or the policies created to address them. As a result, the majority of prevention, intervention, and suppression programs continue to rely on positivistic criminological theories to frame street gang programs. Such programs focus on education or curriculum-based prevention to help

individuals make the “correct” choice. The difficulty is that choices do not reflect the lived realities (Korp, 2008; Klein & Maxson, 2010). Rather, education programs (i.e. Drugs and Alcohol Resistance and Education-DARE, and Gang Resistance, Education, and Training-GREAT) have little impact on making a change in the lives of the youth that they claim to help (Klein & Maxson, 2010).

To move beyond broad-based educational prevention approaches and suppressive policies that racially target communities, spaces need to be created to include the life histories of the individuals who have been involved in street gangs. Public presentations are a good way for individuals to have the opportunity to speak about their past and their present. Such approaches can be seen to follow Indigenous sharing circle models, restorative justice, and addictions programs (Alcoholics Anonymous), where individuals have the opportunity to share, be heard, and be respected. As a result, individuals have the opportunity to express themselves in a group setting, find support through other individuals who have shared similar experiences, (Lavalée, 2009) and educate others about the harsh realities of street gangs and the street gang lifestyle.

STR8 UP provides its members with the opportunity to present and talk to others through community presentations. All members are given the opportunity to speak to youth and the broader community to educate them through their own personal narratives. The men who participated in this study emphatically reiterated that this research would help them to share their narratives with others in the community. As Baldhead (24) states:

I can get on so many different stories to talk to a specific group...addiction, gang prevention, drug and alcohol awareness for the youth at-risk, I can get on different topics. I started telling my story to people and I started to see what it was doing for people...kids started coming up to me from the streets...telling me their problems and stuff like what they are going through with school and stuff. I noticed that I started making an impact on kids and kids were coming up to me asking me for advice.

Similarly, Emil (42) explained feeling rewarded for passing on the lessons he has learned to young people:

I heard about STR8 UP and I remember hearing someone say that you go talk to schools. You go talk to kids. I remember them saying that it was ex-gang members talking about how their lives changed with drinking and alcohol. I thought that I would like to be a part of that. It would be good. It would be some sort of good for humanity. If I could tell my story and some kid would turn away from the life of gangs.

It is through their connections to the streets and their lived experiences that the men in this study can shift the community opinions about Indigenous street gangs. The men’s narratives are what make this research relevant as their stories need to be used to inform policy and

support effective prevention and intervention programs such as STR8 UP. This leads directly into the next phase, which is the notion of reciprocity or giving back to the community.

Reciprocity – Appropriating Knowledge Transfer and Mobilization

One of the most precarious barriers in research is that of knowledge power or whose knowledge is seen as dominant, as it shapes the selective process on determining what knowledge is to be valued (Friere, 1970). Western colonial knowledge is positioned as objective truth and thus other knowledges have been subjugated and analyzed through its perspectives (Smith, 1999; Louis, 2007; Denzin et al., 2008; Kovach, 2009). However, following the work of feminist, anti-racist, and critical scholars, research has begun to center the experiences of others as legitimate and valid (Castleden et al., 2008). To dismantle barriers created through colonization,



Figure 4: Dave and Robert went to Dave’s old neighborhood in Regina to take a photo of it. There three members of the Native Syndicate Killers (NSK), one of Dave’s old rival gangs, approached them. Seeing him as a threat since he was wearing all black clothing, they challenged Dave’s identity and masculinity. After some tense moments, the three men saw that Dave and Robert were not a threat. One even posed for Dave for a photo, which was used as the cover of *Brighter Days Ahead*. The individual posing had asked to be on the cover of any book that was produced.

concepts of reciprocity can remind researchers that “all research is appropriation” (Rundstrom & Deur, 1999) researchers and participants should ensure that participation benefit either directly or indirectly from research (Louis, 2007).

Reciprocity with Indigenous peoples is more than just acknowledging ownership of one’s knowledge. It is also about recognizing that knowledge must be “gifted” (Koukkanen, 2007). Traditionally and culturally for many Indigenous peoples of the Prairies, this was done through the gifting of tobacco when one inquires of an Elder for knowledge or advice. Most often, reciprocity comes in the form of monetary honorariums or gifts (Swartz, 2011). For this study, participants were given \$40 for each interview as well as digital cameras for them to take their photographs.

Participants were cautious in their participation during the research process; this can be attributed to their socialization (parents, peers, street codes) and past experiences with individuals outside of their community. They were socialized not to trust individuals who were not from their community or those that they did not have relationships with. For example, Larry (31) explained that when he was growing up:

...anything that had to do with, let’s just put it bluntly—white people—back then, anything that had to do with white people you never trusted

them you stay away from them.

Therefore, the men exercised caution as a way to analyze the benefits in relation to the cost of the information that they were giving. The concept of caution that the men expressed leads into the final phase of the relational accountability: responsibility.

Responsibility – Researcher and Participant Accountability

Responsibility within an academic research context has shifted over the last twenty-five years, when “there has been a trend toward demanding that universities be accountable to government and to society as a whole” (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 113). In a historical context, research within Indigenous communities has often lacked accountability to the community (Smith, 1999; Kovach, 2009) and Indigenous knowledge at times has been used by colonial governments to exert control over Indigenous peoples themselves (Battiste, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The research landscape with Indigenous peoples has changed considerably in Canada with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) and OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) principles being discussed in university ethic committees. At the university level, checks and balances are used to ensure the safety of the researcher and the research participants, and that the research is within the standards set by TCPS2, including research with Indigenous peoples. However, approval by university ethics boards does not give researchers the privilege to conduct research in Indigenous communities. Often this privilege is earned over time through the building of relationships with Indigenous partners.

Responsibility is found through all aspects of the research framework. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain that responsibility is only a phase within the process. However, it is the final process binds a relational research framework:

Responsibility links consciousness with conscience. It is not enough to merely know one’s responsibilities; one must also be aware of the consequences of one’s actions. Without this awareness, there is a risk of the arrogance of a “clean conscience,” a stance of studied innocence by privileged, hegemonic academics who can afford to be indifferent and not-knowing. (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 115)

It is through responsibility that relational accountability shifts research from just knowledge gathering and reproduction of knowledge, to a sense of agency that shapes the development of policy and ethical change for communities.

Those researchers who work with Indigenous communities must be responsible with the knowledge that they have gained, mobilize it in ways that create positive change, and support agencies for change (Smith, 1999; Castleden et al, 2008; Denzin et al., 2008), or what Paul Farmer (2003) views as pragmatic solidarity. It is in this movement from knowledge of facts to knowledge for agency that a shift in the political nature of research can occur. As Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) states:

Information amounts to little more than a collection of facts; knowledge is the result of the ability to learn and perceive. For information to become knowledge, one must do something with it. There can be no responsibility in the academy when there is merely information. Besides knowledge, responsibility requires action. (p. 114)

In other words, if it is not helping the community, or the community cannot use the information because it is not accessible, than what good is the research for the community? Responsibility is integral in the development and maintenance of relational accountability. Responsibility strengthens relationships by showing commitment and ethical conduct during the research. Post-research, responsibility allows researchers and participants to maintain their relationships, knowing that the knowledge will be used in a good way.

Responsibility was integral in this project due to the current and historical relationships that participants had with settler colonials and colonial institutions. To maintain ethical responsibility of the collected information, participants were informed that they would have the opportunity to remove any information from their transcripts. This was important because the focus of the interviews was to collect their life stories and those specific experiences that led them to become involved in a street gang. Because of the secrecy surrounding street gangs and the negative label of the 'informant',¹ it was important that participants had the opportunity to remove any names of street gangs or gang members so that they would not be viewed negatively in the community.

A second way that responsibility was taken into account was the use of pseudonyms for the men. The choice to use a pseudonym was offered because some of the men wanted people to know who they were, while others wanted to use their street names because of what those names meant to them. When we offered the choice, the men were able to maintain a level of ownership of their knowledge.

Finally, regarding the photographs, participants were reminded that due to privacy laws, they had to be responsible and inform others if they were going to take pictures of other people and why they were taking them. To gain permission to photograph others, participants were given photograph release forms and were instructed that they had to inform others about the project and its intentions. Thus, the participants also became responsible agents within the process, as they needed to be consciously aware of the impacts that their actions could have on others.

When responsibility becomes a core feature of a research project, it binds together the agency needed to make positive change within communities. It helps researchers with reflexivity and helps them to understand that their work does not end after the project. Rather, responsibility helps to maintain relationships for future research opportunities because the researcher will be remembered as having done the research in a good way.

¹ This label has extreme negative connotations for individuals as the label can severely impact their status within street fields.

Conclusion

As we reflected on the methodological processes that were undertaken for this project, we realized the extent to which relational accountability guided the research process. When research relationships are constructed through an ethical lens, researchers have the opportunity to create a space of critical reflexivity. Questioning oneself by asking: “Why am I doing this research?” “Why am I using these methods?” or “Is my research even relevant?” is important because such questions help the researcher to begin to create a critical self-reflexive gaze. Through critical reflection, researchers have the opportunity to “unlearn” how they have been socialized to see the world, and open it up for new ways of interpretation (Danius, Jonsson, & Spivak, 1993; Spivak, 2011). This critical self-reflection is important when conducting research with Indigenous peoples in Canada, as it allows non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers to critically assess their social privileges and biases constructed through Canadian socio-political histories that have been framed through colonization.

Through previously established relationships with STR8 UP, the recruitment of a cohort of Indigenous male ex-gang members who had participated in street gangs across the Prairie Provinces was attainable in a short time period. Relationships with Father André and Stan helped to build trust with the men, as both are well respected by STR8 UP members and the broader street community. Once we had gained their respect, participants were more open to the possibility of opening up about their experiences.

As the research progressed, specific attention was given to the ways that ethical space between researcher and participants were created. By carrying out their research within a framework of relationality, researchers had the opportunity to reflect on their spaces of privilege. By understanding how social spaces of privilege shape relationships with marginalized populations, both researcher and participant alike can work together to break down barriers that promote privilege and division (race, class, gender). For example, on conclusion of the research, the participants were asked to reflect on their first meeting with Robert. The majority stated that upon first meeting Robert, they thought, “What the hell does this white boy want from me?” As a result of colonial histories of violence and control, it was necessary for Robert, even as an Indigenous person, to understand how his white-skin privilege had shaped his experiences, opportunities, and social capital. Thus, over the course of the research project, Robert needed to come to terms with his own privileges and personal history, and become aware of how they impacted the research relationships and the research process itself.

Relational accountability is a process, and it is within this process that respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility intersect to strengthen research partnerships. The process of relational accountability is important as it helps researchers and Indigenous community partners to create ethical boundaries, expectations, and fluidity that can benefit all those involved. Relational accountability provides Indigenous partners the potential to be involved in the research process in an effort to create and support a Frierean space of collaborative-transformational pedagogy and agency (Friere, 1970). Research through a Frierean perspective shifts the historical research perspective from researcher as knower to researcher as learner.

For Indigenous researchers and communities, a relational accountability framework

allows for stronger connections to community agency for improved wellbeing. Indigenous epistemologies are built from relationships, relationships to land, time, self, and space. Relational accountability as a paradigm then is the key to community-engaged ethically sound research. Because the model here is not framed within cultural appropriation (the adding of a culture to make it relevant), it is easily adaptable to Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge frameworks in a global context. A relational accountability research framework provides a roadmap for junior and senior researchers to follow in efforts to improve relationships between Indigenous and settler nations to decolonize minds and create spaces of opportunity for all.

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STR8 UP, 10,000 Steps to Healing Inc., is a non-profit community-based organization in Saskatoon that focuses on supporting individuals who are exiting the street gang lifestyle. STR8 UP focuses its program within a holistic approach through the use of the Medicine Wheel, where healing from trauma and addictions becomes the focal point for change. STR8 UP has provided over 1000 presentations across Saskatchewan to educate youth, community members, policy-makers, and frontline workers on the realities of those who find themselves involved in a street gang lifestyle.

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Co-Producing Community and Knowledge: Indigenous Epistemologies of Engaged, Ethical Research in an Urban Context

Heather A. Howard

ABSTRACT Until recently, the specific and unique ethics considerations of research with the large and diverse populations of Indigenous peoples living in cities have not been adequately addressed. With its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and beneficial outcomes for research participants, community-based participatory research (CBPR) has been described as intrinsically ethical, and in many cases, consistent with a generalized understanding of Indigenous moral values. Through a retrospective reflection on community-engaged research in the urban context of Toronto, this essay examines critically transformations in the conceptualization of ethical research and of CBPR with Indigenous peoples. Historical analysis of urban Indigenous community epistemologies is presented as a dynamic process which informs ethical practice in the production of both community and of knowledge. Community-initiated and implemented research highlights the complexities in urban Indigenous authority-making, complicates contemporary iterations of CBPR, and offers insights for ethical research in an urban Indigenous context.

KEYWORDS Urban Indigenous community; research ethics; community-based participatory research

“Epistemology is the understanding of knowledge that one adopts and the philosophy with which research is approached. This issue cannot be disentangled from history or from the social position one holds within society as a result of that history” (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 24)

Very little attention has been given to the specific and unique ethics considerations of research with Indigenous communities in cities, although two-thirds of the Indigenous peoples in Canada and the U.S. do not live on reservations (Howard & Lobo, 2013). Some scholars writing on Indigenous research ethics recognize the importance of addressing diversity in Indigenous identities and frameworks, and note that urban contexts present particularly complex problems because of the presence of multiple stakeholders and competing agendas (Ball and Janyst, 2008, p. 48; Ferreira and Gendron, 2011, p. 153; Laveaux & Christopher, 2009, p. 5). However, often these concerns appear as issues “beyond the scope of this article,” and stop short of

tackling the dilemmas of applying Indigenous ethics protocols in urban communities. Even the *First Nations Urban Aboriginal Health Research Discussion Paper* devotes only one quarter of a page to “Ethical Issues in Research in Urban Contexts,” where the main focus is the need to “explore in future research” questions that include the following:

What constitutes the “community” in urban settings? How is the diversity of people in urban settings accounted for in relation to “community consent”? What does community consent mean in urban contexts? and is it possible? How is community or individual ownership of data addressed when diverse communities of people, leadership and organizations are involved? Who can reasonably be involved in community reviews of research protocols in urban contexts? Once community is defined, how are the relevant authorities within the community to be ascertained when multiple authorities may be involved? (Brown, MacDonald, & Elliot, 2009, p. 41)

While all these questions cannot be answered within the scope of this article either, I suggest that historicizing the production of knowledge by and with Indigenous peoples who have formed urban communities is key to addressing research ethics in these complex contexts. Researchers who aim to act as ethically engaged scholars with urban Indigenous communities can look to the ways in which Indigenous epistemologies have taken shape within these communities. That is, research should be prefaced by local Indigenous “understanding of knowledge and philosophy with which research is approached... not disentangled from history” (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 24).

In this article, I examine the historical conceptualization of engaged and ethical research in Toronto where Indigenous people have a long-standing interest in research since the 1960s. In this history, research has been situated in Indigenous principles and articulated through movements to draw attention to issues specific to the urban population. It has involved strategic collaborations with non-Indigenous researchers to further community-defined agendas, and sometimes correlated to broader activist and social movements. In the city, Indigenous community epistemology is a dynamic process which intersects with the ways in which community, politics, social order, and ethical practice are produced (c.f. Tuck, 2009). It is also negotiated through multicultural Indigeneity and diversity, the re-territorialization of place, and state-Indigenous relations around social concerns. These are particularly invigorating contexts for the elaboration of Indigenous epistemology and co-productions of theory about the conceptualization of community and ethics of research practice. Indigenous epistemology thus provides researchers with perspective on local meanings of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity, just as it does for and by community members.

My main purpose in emphasizing research driven by local Indigenous epistemology is to encourage engaged scholars to critically assess community-based participatory research (CBPR), often represented as a panacea approach to conducting ethical research with Indigenous communities. With its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and beneficial outcomes

for research participants, CBPR has been described as intrinsically ethical, and in many cases, consistent with a generalized understanding of Indigenous moral values (Kaufert, 1999; Harrison, 2001; Hudson & Taylor-Henry, 2001; Brown, 2005; Smith-Morris, 2007; Fleurh-Lobban, 2008; Guta et al. 2012). However, I contend that CBPR should also be historicized in relation to its applications in urban Indigenous research.

While CBPR may align with policy and guidelines recommended for research with Indigenous peoples, truly ethical practice involves researchers becoming familiar with and understanding local complex epistemologies. These inform the production of community and the authority-making structures within which researchers must operate. CBPR has also been generally represented mechanically as a process of methodology rather than as one registered with community production of authoritative knowledge. There is little critical discussion of the positioning of CBPR in relation to the political dynamics within community, nor of the structural inequities which often define the need for research. As I describe first below, CBPR has evolved from a research practice originally shaped by social justice change goals, to one which glosses over Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination and often focuses on internal community or behavioral change. The historical legacy of Indigenous-led research in Toronto re-centers the production of knowledge on critical transformation of the structures of oppression. I begin with a critical review of the shifting conceptualization of CBPR in relation to research with Indigenous peoples, and through the Toronto example, raise cautionary concerns about the political sanitization of engaged research employing this model.

CBPR, the TCPS-2, and Urban Indigenous Research

CBPR is seen as commensurate with Indigenous political, cultural, and social perspectives on the production of knowledge, and represented in much of the literature as a solution to the generalized Indigenous malaise with and rejection of academic study, often referred to as “parachute” or “helicopter” research (Harrison, 2001; Brown, 2005; Sahota, 2010; Castelden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012). “Gold standards” of CBPR, as most appropriately matched to the expectations of Indigenous communities, include the goal of mutual beneficence and the conscious equitable distribution of power between university researchers and community-based partners over research design, methods, data collection, ownership, and dissemination of findings. CBPR is an iterative process which recognizes, privileges, and fosters community strengths and resources; aims for community life improvement; and utilizes a holistic framework for understanding health, social and other targeted topics of research, all actions that correspond to Indigenous community interests (Laveaux & Christopher, 2009; Sahota, 2010).

CBPR is recommended in the Canadian federal ethics guidelines for research with Indigenous peoples promulgated in Chapter 9 of the *Tri-council Policy Statement-2 Canadian Federal Guidelines on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (Government of Canada, 2010), or TCPS-2 for short. Collaboration and “engagement” are loosely defined as ranging from review by and approval of community authorities to complete shared leadership (p. 108).

It makes building capacity, reciprocal learning, and skill transfer more achievable, and can serve to document circumstances which facilitate communities to communicate their needs to relevant authorities, and allow for greater opportunity to anticipate risks and benefits (p. 124). The guidelines are clear that they are not intended to provide communities with the power to block publications but rather to be given the “opportunity to contextualize the findings” (p. 128). Participatory research is further delineated as not only including “the active involvement of those who are the subject of the research” but also recognizing the action-oriented purpose of the research, and the need to involve subjects in the definition of the research question, research design, data collection, interpretation and dissemination (p. 123).

CBPR and Tempering of Critical Examination of Power

TCPS-2 also references the unique cultural and governing structures of Indigenous communities, requiring further that research respect Indigenous peoples’ governing authorities, recognize the role of Elders and knowledge holders, and be respectful of community customs and codes of practice. The engagement of Indigenous knowledge for benefit in contemporary community uses is a critical factor in research in the sense that the policy, “acknowledges the role of community in shaping the conduct of research” (Government of Canada, 2010, p. 107). The guidelines call on researchers to critically examine how colonial structures and systems can exercise authority over Indigenous peoples, and to recognize the complex authority structures and diversity within Indigenous communities, although these politically-charged precepts are not elaborated with the same degree of analysis as other aspects of the TCPS-2 collaborative imperative.

With few exceptions (e.g., Fletcher, 2003; Mariella, Brown, & Carter, 2012), CBPR in Indigenous contexts is represented as a relatively contemporary approach which has emerged primarily in the areas of public health and education since the 1990s (Ferreira & Gendron, 2011; Sahota, 2010; Laveaux & Christopher, 2009; Peterson, 2010; Wallerstein & Duran 2006; Harrison 2001). The earlier roots of CBPR in North America are usually traced to non-Indigenous social justice movements rather than to earlier Indigenous community-based research experience (Ferreira & Gendron, 2011, p. 154-155). While a nod is given to Columbian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda’s attention to the fact that “the roots to participatory research can also be found long before in the applicative combination of theory and practice as evidenced in the individual and collective lives of those from indigenous societies” (p. 155), Ferreira & Gendron’s extensive review discusses no comparative legacy for CBPR in Indigenous peoples’ social movements in North America. Likewise, Laveaux & Christopher’s (2009) review assumes no CBPR or precursors to CBPR in Indigenous community practice.

The volumes by Chilisa (2012) and Denzin, Lincoln & Smith (2008) describing Indigenous methodologies frame research practices in constructive and invaluable analyses grounded in decolonizing, critical race, queer, and feminist theories and pedagogies but separate current practice from traditional historical CBPR origins or distinguish between transformative types of participatory research ranging from those aimed at altering research practice to those focused on community behavioral, and social change. The broader critical assessment of structural

inequalities and social justice aspects of CBPR (Fluehr-Lobban, 2008) is largely sanitized and privileges methodological issues with social processes such as trust-building over long-term commitment and shifts in the balance of power between researchers and researched. This reflects a general trend in the public health application of CBPR that Smith-Morris (2006: 85) refers to as “hackneyed.” As I elaborate below in describing the Toronto case, Budd Hall (1981), often credited with originating Participatory Action Research (PAR) in Canada, emphasized the ultimate goals of PAR as “fundamental structural transformation... community control of the entire process of research... focus on exploited or oppressed groups... [and] support to mobilizing and organizing” (p. 7-8). These are generally absent in the current upsurge of CBPR in favor of focusing on the iterative nature of the method, and its objectives to draw on and strengthen community resources, as noted in the oft-cited review of CBPR for public health by Israel et al. (1998).

Attention to structural and historical relations of oppression, including colonialism and racism, is advised as an “additional” principle for CBPR practice particular to Indigenous experience (Laveaux & Christopher, 2009; Brown, 2005). Aimed primarily at the implementation of intervention, programs, and community services, CBPR is framed as a process which produces more accurate, and therefore scientific, knowledge because the voices of those most impacted are at the center. Generally, transformation is aimed at behavioral change in the community rather than at structures of power (Harrison, 2001; Burhansstipanov & Schumacher, 2005). CBPR is politically de-charged and represented mainly as a methodological mechanism. Thus, for example, “empowerment” is a crucial principle; however, its meaning and implications for power shifts within community which emerge from the CBPR process itself are not fully explored (Harrison, 2001, p. 38). Smith-Morris (2006) cautions that more careful consideration should be given to the meaning attributed to both core concepts of “community” and “participation” with attention to how political, cultural, gender, economic and other forms of diversity impact their deployment in CBPR practice.

The impact of historical relations of power on the contemporary relationship of Indigenous people to research is also a pivotal consideration, but it is rarely demonstrated in the intervention or outcomes of CBPR practice in Indigenous communities. Sovereignty and self-determination are vital additional political considerations in the application of CBPR in Indigenous communities although other than understanding tribal government standing and protocols, or who the gatekeepers are and how to work with them, the deeper implications of researcher recognition and alliance with Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination goals, as for example a challenge to the very existence of the nation-state, are not elaborated. As the Toronto context illustrates below, Indigenous epistemic framings of research are fundamentally grounded in relational understandings of power and self-determination which are inseparable from responsible and respectful practices. To be truly shaped by local Indigenous epistemology, contemporary CBPR must also prioritize broader structurally transformative goals which re-center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Recognizing the inadequacies, contradictions, and inappropriateness of several of the guidelines of the earlier tri-council policy statement (1998), Chapter 9 of the TCPS-2 is the

result of more than a decade of consultation and discussions with Indigenous communities, scholars, and other stakeholders. During the process, a number of critiques by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars emerged. These analyses range from appraisals of the instrumentality of the earlier guidelines in ongoing internal and external colonizing processes and cooptation of Indigeneity, to positive reflections on collaborative research experiences guided by the developing principles. Some draw attention to an increased sloping rather than leveling of the research playing field due to the ways research practices may further formalize and ensconce the inequalities of existing elitist and exclusivist power structures within Indigenous communities and in the relationships between them and outside forces such as non-Indigenous governments and funders (Ball & Janyst, 2008; Brown, 2005; Cole, 2004; Stairs, 2004; O’Riley 2004). While there is no doubt that TCPS-2 improves on earlier guidelines and is far more comprehensive, broader structural inequalities remain concerns, particularly in urban contexts.

Urban Challenges Are Also Opportunities

In a policy paper prepared for the National Congress of American Indians, Puneet Sahota suggests that the models used for American Indian and Alaska Native community research review committees can be replicated in urban communities, where tribal jurisdiction is assumed to extend to tribal citizens living in cities (Sahota, n.d.). The TCPS-2 recommends that regional or urban Indigenous organizations should be considered “organizational communities” vested with the authority to vet and sanction research to be carried out with individuals for whom they have a mandate to serve (Government of Canada, 2010, p. 107-115). However, in addition to problems with the allocation of resources, recognized by Sahota, her suggestion does not consider the diversity and autonomy of urban Indigenous communities with long-standing histories and inclusivity of Indigenous people who are not members of federally recognized tribes or First Nations in Canada. In Toronto and elsewhere, these histories also include reference to the specific exclusion of off-reservation First Nation band/tribal members from equity in distribution of resources or participation in leadership electoral procedures, for example, as well as the record of conscious building of urban community as I detail below.

The TCPS-2 concedes that “prospective [research] participants may not necessarily recognize organizational communities or communities of interest as representing their interests” (Government of Canada, 2010, p. 115), yet this does not preclude the researcher from the obligation to engage with the organizational community. That is, research cannot be carried out strictly with individuals; collaboration with organizations or communities of interest is a requirement and individuals are to be informed of the collaboration. While most of the organizations to which the TCPS-2 refers are non-profit organizations with elected boards, the guidelines extend an understanding of power which problematizes the individualist prerogative for consent and considers the consequences for broader communities of participation in research (c.f. Smith-Morris, 2007). However, these may also contradict the processes by which authority is constituted in organizational communities.

FitzMaurice & Newhouse’s (2008) study of urban Indigenous research identified a

number of ways in which to address these and other concerns. These include privileging flexibility and local understandings of ethics; participatory methods that strive to transcend power hierarchies (between researchers and respondents, and within community structures); involvement, training, benefit to local researchers with understanding of larger institutional implications of the research; local urban Indigenous process for determining the ethics of research when there are multiple layers of ethical review; research that is initiated in response to local research interests; recognition that not all Indigenous people are vulnerable or readily identifiable with a particular collective body; and a flexible interpretation of the requirement for collective consent (FitzMaurice & Newhouse, 2008, p. 25-28). I turn now to share some aspects of the historical evolution of Indigenous-led knowledge production in Toronto to illustrate how research which is justly community-based and participatory should draw on the intellectual traditions of the local epistemological context. The section emphasizes the co-production of community and knowledge through intersubjective and iterative processes of relationality and practices of responsibility, and described first and foremost in the voices of community Elders.

Intersubjective and Iterative Knowledge and Community Production in Toronto

Experience is the foundation for learning. Understanding experience develops over time through dialogue. Learning is a process that is accomplished through interaction with others; it is always a shared, cooperative venture. The foundation of interaction with others is expressed through respect, feeling, a good heart, good intentions, kindness, sharing and a knowledge of self...The community and the individual have reciprocal responsibilities. Learning... is a process that goes through the stages of “seeing” (vision), relating to what it is, figuring it out with heart and mind, and acting on findings in some way (behaviour). Everyone has a responsibility to give back and to consider their actions in light of their effect on generations to come. Elders of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (Stiegelbauer, 1997, p. 82-83).

Since the 1940s, the urban Indigenous community in Toronto has grown from a few hundred people to approximately 70,000 today. While the predominant Indigenous cultures of the immediate region – Anishinaabe and Haudensaunee – and of other areas of Canada figure significantly in this number, Indigenous persons from throughout the Americas may be considered members of this community, making it perhaps the most multicultural Indigenous community in the world. Of course, community is not a stable, geographically fixed, or readily legible object. It is a dynamic process in which people produce and reproduce combinations of meaning and social action in their everyday life “not by rules, but through experience and circumstance” (Halperin, 1998, p. 307). Further, this process is mediated by changing power relations among Indigenous people, as well as between Indigenous people, their institutions, and the state. These power relations constantly reify and modify the ideological frameworks of community.

The most visible structure of the Toronto community is in its complex network of several dozen Indigenous-run social service, health, and cultural programming agencies. Organizations play a significant role in the production and control of knowledge about culture and community. In Toronto, service organization authority is vested in their accountability to community in ways which mirror the intersubjective and iterative reconstitution of community described in the Elders' quote above, and not simply by their non-profit mandates. As I have written elsewhere, organization leaders and employees may be highly scrutinized, including in their "private" lives, on their everyday practice of community (Howard, 2004; Howard, 2011a). Drawing on its long-standing history in the community and distinctive identity as a sacred space, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (NCCT) generates cultural models utilized by its programs, which may in turn be elaborated on or challenged by other Indigenous organizations and by individual community members. Moreover, the ways in which the NCCT plays a role in the generation of a sense of unity among the diverse, multicultural Indigenous community while serving as an ambassador to non-Indigenous people who are curious and interested in "Indigenous culture," creates a politically-charged space of complex competing discourses that reify, reinvent, and adapt concepts of community identity, membership, and self-determination (Howard, 2011a). As Rapaport (2008) has described for the Indigenous organizations in her research, they are "palimpsests of multiple ethnic boundaries that are continually negotiated and renegotiated... culture, particularly as a self-conscious process of construction is fundamental to indigenous discourses" (p. 20), an idea which also resonates in the words of the Elders above.

The NCCT is the oldest Indigenous community and social service delivery organization in Toronto, established in 1962. As a social movement organization which has moved from a social, justice, volunteer-based community center to a professionalized service delivery institution over five decades, the NCCT has played a central role in Indigenous community and knowledge production (Howard, 2011a). The NCCT is, thus, also the custodian of a wealth of community-generated historical material in the form of serial publications, photographs, reports, and administrative documents. Because of its long legacy in the production of knowledge from Indigenous perspectives, I focus primarily on the NCCT and early related organizations to historicize Indigenous epistemology for research purposes.

The documents of the NCCT collection were first organized in 1995 by the Toronto Native Community History Project (TNCHP), and of which I was a founding member. Indigenous community members and allies came together with the common interest of preserving the documentary record accumulated by the NCCT, but also with a vision to apply this record in generating research for popular education activities and youth training opportunities. This vision aims to promote Indigenous perspectives on history, develop respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and reverse racism and popularly-held stereotypes of Indigenous people. The TNCHP rebranded itself in 2012 as First Story Toronto, which is composed primarily of a volunteer committee of "history activists," who provide one mechanism through which the NCCT is held accountable in its relational responsibilities within the community, beyond the usual accountability of non-

profit organization membership. Ongoing First Story Toronto activities include bus tours of the city (Johnson, 2013), the First Story Toronto smartphone application (Howard, 2015), and specific projects such as “Indigenous, Women, Memory and Power” (Abel, Freeman, Howard and Shirt, In Press), and Memory, Meaning-Making and Collections (Howarth & Knight, 2015; Krmpotich, Howard, & Knight, 2016). These research-action projects are informed by the original vision of the TNCHP and understanding of local Indigenous epistemological framings of the city as a site of self-determining reclamation, which I explain further in the next section.

First Story Toronto: Engaged Research for Indigenous Reclaiming and Representations of Urban Place

Urban places are characterized by their thorough transformation of the landscape and complete erasure or control of nature, and epitomize settler society predicated on not only the physical but also the social displacement of Indigenous peoples, who are in turn positioned by dominant discourses within the untamed world of nature (Peters, 1996). As stereotypically “natural” beings, Indigenous peoples have historically had no place within colonial society unless destroyed or utterly transformed (Wolfe, 1999). Indigenous people in Canada have resisted this paradigm in many forms including in urban contexts, where they have rejected being defined in diametric opposition to the ‘civilized’ urban environment. From a longitudinal perspective, there is continuity in the negotiations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people over the meaning of place, identity, and sovereignty, which extend the Canadian colonial encounter into the present, and into spaces like cities.

In Toronto, acts of production of knowledge such as those engaged by First Story Toronto actively re-territorialize the city as an Indigenous place, physically as well as socially and culturally. While the landscape is changed, its fundamental elements may be reinterpreted in Indigenous understandings of value. The pre-contact history and sacred nature of the area is a significant part of contemporary discourse and in the production of knowledge which frames the conceptualization of the Toronto Indigenous community (Howard, 2011b; Bobiwash, 1997a; 1997b). First Story Toronto engages in research which revises history toward social justice outcomes, challenges settler society to reformulate relationship to the urban landscape in new ways, and in the process, generates an Indigenous epistemology of the production of knowledge.

The historical and continuing socio-cultural processes engaged in the production of urban Indigenous community (Howard, 2011a), depend on the “practice” of community (Halperin, 1998) described by the Elders above and extend organically to shape CBPR practice as one which first necessitates that researchers learn how to be community members. The research engaged to bring to fruition these actions comprises productions of knowledge about the topical subject matter (urban Indigenous history) as well as the constitution of urban Indigenous community. This includes concomitant ethics of research practice which hinge on understanding how community is conceptualized in relation to the evolution of Indigenous epistemologies of ethics in research practice. I turn now to these details.

Relationality and Control in Toronto Indigenous Community Research History

As the First Story archive was organized and we unpacked dozens of bankers' boxes that had been in the NCCT basement since 1976, it became clear that research, in various forms of community-based inquiry, had been for some time a vital part of the organization and development of the urban Indigenous community in Toronto. These were articulated since the 1960s through movements which have drawn attention to issues specific to the urban population, and which re-positioned rather than displaced scholarly engagement with Indigenous peoples.

In 1969, NCCT board member Harvey McCue coordinated an Indigenous-controlled research project called *Indians in the City*. Among other significant roles, McCue was also a board member of the *Indian Historian*, the publication of the American Indian Historical Society, established in San Francisco in 1964, which played a crucial role in the development of critical perspectives as well as in an analytical dialogue between Indigenous scholars, activists, and academics (Howard, 1999). *Indians in the City* originated with the collaborative advocacy and action research work of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada (IEAC),¹ a citizens' organization formed by the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) in 1957. The project evolved the conceptualization of PAR from one in which largely non-Indigenous experts led, and Indigenous people were employed or were used as field researchers, to an approach in which Indigenous people assumed control over the full scope of the research with non-Indigenous academics and other professionals volunteering as advisors (*Toronto Native Times*, 1970, p. 1).

Based on a "pioneering" earlier action research project called "Indians and the Law," led by the Canadian Welfare Council, in 1967 the IEAC called for a research project in which Indigenous people "should be involved in the planning, organizing, and conduct of the study" (Indian Eskimo Association of Canada, 1967, p. 7). As sponsorship for the project was sought, questions were raised by Indigenous people about the power dynamics and control of the project. Finally, in 1970, when the Union of Ontario Indians² provided lead sponsorship of the project, non-Indigenous professionals involved had been warned that it could not be a "sterile project: one that could not rock the boat," nor one that was just "another interview project for some non-Indian to earn further merit degrees, and not really benefit Indian people" (*Toronto Native Times*, 1970, p. 1).³ "Action-research," the Union noted would, "use political pressure to change such legislation [which negatively impacted Indigenous peoples

¹ The Indian-Eskimo Association was renamed the Canadian Association in Solidarity with Native Peoples in 1973.

² The Union of Ontario Indians, now the Union of Ontario Indians Anishinabek Nation, was formed in 1949 as the Ontario regional branch of the National Indian Brotherhood (today Assembly of First Nations, a political advocacy organization made up of the elected leadership of First Nations) <http://www.anishinabek.ca/union-of-ontario-indians.asp>.

³ Sociologist Mark Nagler had conducted a study based on participant observation and interviews with one hundred and fifty Indigenous people in Toronto between 1963 and 1964, published in 1970 as a book called *Indians in the City: A Study of the Urbanization of Indians in Toronto*. He worked closely with the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada and was involved in their efforts to develop the action research project. However, as critical voices were raised about too much non-Indigenous control of research, Nagler stepped back from working on Indigenous topics of research, although he found the concerns raised to be understandable (personal communication, July 18, 2012).

in cities]... Action-research can make changes that will affect Toronto, Ontario, and perhaps all of society. The project will be about Indians, By Indians, for Indians” (*Toronto Native Times*, 1970, p. 1, emphasis in original).

Indians in the City estimated the Toronto Indigenous population at 15,000 with a growth rate of 1,500 per year. The Native Concerned Citizens Committee (1971-1975) was formed as a result of this study to define the needs of the Toronto Indigenous community and assert Indigenous control over the design and delivery of social services by creating culturally-specific structures necessary to the autonomy and economic development of the community (Obonsawin, 1987, p. 26). The Committee helped establish such programs as Indigenous-controlled housing, legal services, and a drug and alcohol rehabilitation residence. They discussed Indigenous/non-Indigenous exploitative and unequal power relations in addressing the research needs of urban Indigenous people. These discussions framed a number of needs assessment reports and found their way into a publication crucial to local Indigenous organizing in the 1970s, the *Toronto Native Times*. This tabloid-size monthly newspaper was started in 1968 by the Youth Group of the NCCT and an Indigenous research center which existed for a brief period called the Nishnawbe Institute.

The Nishnawbe Institute set up a publishing house which, like the *Indian Historian*, attempted to establish a dialogue between Indigenous activist/thinkers scholars, and non-Indigenous academics. One such publication was edited by Wilfrid Pelletier, a past president of the North American Indian Club, a forerunner to the NCCT. His *For Every North American Indian Who Begins to Disappear I Also Disappear, Being a Collection of Essays Concerned With the Quality of Human Relations Between the Red and White Peoples of This Continent* was published in 1971. The Nishnawbe Institute, or Institute for Indian Studies (IIS), was founded in 1967 in connection with the establishment of the (in)famous Rochdale College, which emerged from the long-standing Campus Co-operative Residences of the University of Toronto. Named after the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, a cooperative commissary organized in England in 1844, Rochdale College was a short-lived utopian community in which the members “envisioned a ‘democratic and community oriented’ school where ‘individuals and groups of people can create their own educational experiences’” (Rochdale College Education Project, 1971). This “free university” was particularly notorious with its opening appearing on the front page of the *New York Times*, and *Newsweek* running a story on its “intentionally mixed bag of radicals, revolutionaries, hippies, and fairly straight people” (quoted in Treat, 2003, p. 97). The curriculum, determined by the students, was carried out in spontaneous discussion sessions inspired by invited “resource people.” As reported by the CBC Radio program *Concern* in 1969, among various foci, “it could be an encounter in the Institute for Indian Studies where Indians and non-Indians can explore together the values and culture of the North American Indian.” One student at Rochdale described what was going on as “social action sort of things – the work with North American Indians... that kind of work is action-theory, learning processes” (CBC Digital Archives, 1969).

Wilfred Pelletier, who presided over the opening ceremonies of the NCCT’s first building in 1962, along with Bob Thomas, the Cherokee anthropologist, and Ian MacKenzie, a priest,

organizer and educator in the Anglican Church, were Rochdale resource people who established the IIS (Treat, 2003, p. 83). The ISS provided a space in which Indigenous-led collaboration transcended Indigenous and non-Indigenous conflict through intellectual pursuits. On the inside cover of his “Two Articles” (Pelletier, 1969), a booklet published by the IIS, Pelletier described it as “an educational-residential centre which provides an opportunity for Indian people to study and teach their own languages, histories, and cultures in their own way.” Pelletier, like many other Indigenous people in Toronto, saw solutions and the basis for Indigenous organizing in terms of the need for self-determination, particularly over Indigenous education and cultural development.

However, Pelletier’s assertion of Indigenous control is grounded in a complex relational framework that links the production of community and of knowledge. Writing on the co-authored autobiography of Wilfred Pelletier with Ted Poole, *No Foreign Land* (1973), literary scholar Carolan-Brozy (1995) argues that the book’s emphasis on collaboration is in part because Pelletier viewed his identity as relational and not autonomous. Similarly, Tuck (2009) describes an Indigenous notion of collectivity that does not merely extend the needs and goals of the individual to the group, but rather begins with the collectivity to “include, celebrate and support the diversity of its members” (p. 61-62). This relational quality of the self and community, also reflected in the NCCT Elders’ words above, is examined in depth by Pelletier as he contemplates how the urban experience in particular brought this into relief for him. The city, he explains, requires Indigenous people to work to stay Indigenous and form community, or as he puts it to become “even more Indian” than the ones back home (Pelletier, 1973, p. 137) and later he concludes, “That whole Toronto thing was a way to find our way home” (Pelletier, 1973, p. 139). Pelletier describes community as a corporate or communal consciousness, which is based in “a kind of trust that people outside the community can hardly imagine and which the people inside cannot name” (Pelletier, 1973, p. 198). Understanding this trust is the basis for community membership but also for “outsiders” to learn, earn, and apply in the intersection of Indigenous and non-Indigenous experience particularly inevitable in the city. These early examples of scholarly engagement, and the nature of the relationships which shaped them, speaks to the co-productive processes of community and knowledge significant for truly transformative research in the urban setting. They also provide evidence of early CBPR and PAR projects in the city, which emphasized Indigenous leadership and outcomes which transformed structural inequalities.

What took the “Action” out of Participatory Research?

As described above, Budd Hall is often credited with originating Participatory Action Research in Canada. Although not directly involved in the collaborations initiated at Rochdale or from within the Toronto Indigenous community at the time, his work, and that of other PAR practitioners provide vital evidence of early practices that were also framed in terms of Indigenous epistemologies of community, knowledge production and ethical research (Hall, 2005, p. 15). In his 1982 co-authored introduction to a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* that is focused on community-based research, the self-determination

of Indigenous peoples globally is the collective interest which frames the discussion. This is described as the “right to exist as distinct peoples and to prosper in their own cultures and traditions” at the local level and as part of an international movement (Jackson, et al., 1982, p. 1). Contributors emphasized the importance of connecting CBPR practice with Indigenous sovereignty movements and the critical transformation, even eradication, of the structures of oppression which sustain and legitimize the nation-state and growing global inequalities. They warned that to lose the lessons of the history of community-based research in Indigenous communities and separate this socio-political justice imperative from community-based research would signal a failure on the part of researchers which “the struggle cannot afford” (Jackson, et al., 1982, p. 8). Critical social movement discourse is described as essential to the way knowledge production is understood in these early examples of Indigenous CBPR (Jackson, et al., 1982, p. 6).

These activist-researchers were perhaps feeling the change in momentum that accompanied the waning of social movements which occurred in no small part as a result of government initiatives aimed at their suppression (Cunningham, 2007). As I have examined elsewhere (Howard, 2011a; Howard, 2014), in the Toronto Indigenous community, this shift occurred in the 1980s and into the 1990s as government funding strategies of Indigenous affairs transformed social movement organizations like the NCCT from social justice, volunteer-activist based practice to professionalized and bureaucratized service provision. This transformation was marked by the ways in which community need and identification responded increasingly to funder-driven priorities and gave rise to intra-community competition. The institutionalizing transformation of Indigenous social movements into professionalized social and health service delivery organizations in Toronto illustrates a shift in the form and distribution of cultural capital from one centered on anti-colonial action to a more apolitical, reified deployment of culture (Howard 2014; c.f. Smith-Morris, 2007). This displacement of relational responsibility from community to non-Indigenous forces remains at the center of calls to urban Indigenous organizations to be accountable to community and challenges their authoritative power. This is an important consideration that bears on contemporary research within the community. However, the “new” CBPR which has since emerged appears soft in the domains of structural change, perhaps reflecting what Tuck (2009) refers to as the “con-testy” quality of research (p. 57) when it contests hegemony, linearity, and unilateralism. As she explains,

Folks are fine (even if uncomfortable) when groups of youth or first peoples or disenfranchised peoples educate themselves; but when these groups begin to openly and creatively challenge dominant assumptions, rhetoric, and colonial infrastructure, the groups are discredited as unintelligible, undeveloped, and unpatriotic. (Tuck, 2009, p. 57)

On the other hand, the expansion of CBPR across a broader disciplinary spectrum has formalized and entrenched the implementation of regional and national Indigenous research ethics guidelines and protocols, which have in turn contributed significantly to a much-needed

shift in the power relations and dynamics of research with Indigenous people more broadly (Castelden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012).

Conclusion

CBPR is not a new concept to Indigenous people in rural or urban Canada as many seem to contend, but rather one which originates with them. The complexities of trust as an ongoing relational process integral to the practice of community are reflected in the historical examples described here, and expressed best in the words quoted earlier of the Elders of the NCCT and in Wilfred Pelletier's collaborative autobiography. Indigenous community in Toronto is made and remade from the social ordering concomitant with the processes of the production of knowledge evolving from infinite intersections of diverse social actions. As FitzMaurice & Newhouse (2008, p. 16) have summarized, "Building meaningful and trusting relationships can lead to a sense of community and common interests which has much less to do about our rights against each other, than it is about our responsibilities towards each other and a sense of mutual accountability." Community membership is defined by practice: the choices of individuals to actively contribute to collective social responsibilities. This is highlighted in the cultural diversity of the Toronto Indigenous community where conflict (in terms of class, gender, cultural and other ideas and actions) and the attempt to synthesize varied Indigenous perspectives into a multicultural Indigenous (as opposed to pan-Indigenous) framework for action, are part of a continuous process that builds community. Further, this process is mediated by changing power relations among Indigenous people as well as between Indigenous people and the state. These power relations constantly reify and modify the ideological framework of Indigenous social action in the city, and the shape of engaged scholarship.

The urban "community" is more relational than physical, drawing individuals into practice with each other through processes that generate multiple avenues for oscillating layers of resistance and creative adaptation, and provide for varying degrees of independence and autonomy (c.f. Lobo, 2001). As any Indigenous person must work at community membership in the city so too do community leaders. The flexibility, and the principles of "reciprocal responsibilities" between the individual and community which are integral in the production of Indigenous community align with a number of the tenets of ethical and CBPR practice described here. This therefore provides an opening for researchers to engage in a form of community membership conditioned by their relational participation in the community-producing process, where they can, as Rapaport (2008) describes it, "inhabit a kind of inside in concert with indigenous activists" (p. 13).

A key factor in the successful application of Indigenous ethics to research according to numerous scholars is open identification of a researcher's personal subjective position and recognition of the power dynamics which flow from this position in relation to the Indigenous community with which she conducts research (Schnarch, 2003; Harrison, 2001). Ball & Janyst (2008) state, "researchers who hope to engage with Indigenous people need to be able to account for themselves, for example, by providing details of their ancestry, family life, scholarship, and intentions, not only during initial introductions, but throughout the project" (p. 38). It is

unlikely, but not fully off the mark that a requirement be written into an ethics protocol that researchers do the work of establishing trust not just for the sake of conducting research but because we make a life-time commitment to Indigenous justice and self-determination, and provide “evidence of political solidarities” (c.f. Speed, 2006). Issues with the establishment of trust are not reducible simply to an Indigenous/non-Indigenous divide, but reflect historical relations of dominance, oppression and resistance which both defy this divide and create dissonances and inequalities within Indigenous communities. In this context, researchers must also practice community.

The urban research setting highlights a number of complexities of researcher subjectivity in relation to the Indigenous community. Bases of knowledge collapse as boundaries between personal, field, and academic circles may overlap and flow into each other, and the opportunity arises to explore and negotiate the ethics of research (Howard-Bobiwash 1999). In the city, there may be considerable overlap and continuity, or conflict and incommensurability between the researcher’s academic institution, Indigenous community organizations, persons, and activities, which contribute to diverse and continually changing perceptions of research and individual researchers. Moreover, researchers have opportunities to participate in regular Indigenous community events, open programs, and activist activities. Some develop kin relationships through long-standing involvement in the community, which comes with its own sets of responsibilities, including nomination to leadership positions, which may in turn present further ethical dilemmas. Thus, when I entered the Indigenous community, I entered a complex context of historically established and elaborated Indigenous epistemology of the production of knowledge and the role of CBPR. My role as a researcher and member of First Story Toronto, a person who is engaged in the production of knowledge, and continues to engage with the politics of ethics and practice of community. At the local level urban Indigenous community, there is significant conscious, vigilant understanding of these processes and politics of knowledge production, as well as of the value of research and its impacts on social order. Hopefully, this will have a greater impact in the dialogue on the elaboration of Indigenous ethics and the utilization of CBPR approaches as we move forward in engaged Indigenous scholarship.

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Tanning, Spinning, and Gathering Together: Intergenerational Indigenous Learning in Textile Arts

Cindy Hanson, Heather Fox Griffith

ABSTRACT *Intergenerational Learning in Indigenous Textile Communities of Practice* was an interdisciplinary arts- and community-based study that inquired into the intergenerational practices of beading and weaving in two Indigenous contexts – one in Southern Chile and the other in Northern Saskatchewan, Canada. The research process involved building relational networks, developing decolonizing methodologies, and working with collaborators, elders, community coordinators, and members of Indigenous textile communities of practice. The research methods, which are a focus of this article, included the use of artifacts to draw out memories and stories of intergenerational learning and to engage the communities in deciding how to share the knowledge generated. Both the data gathering methods and the knowledge mobilization led to arts-based outcomes. The study specifically inquired into how learning is structured and passed on to subsequent generations within communities of practice and the findings provide insights into the way this knowledge is transferred and/or disrupted. Critical reflection on the process highlighted some of the challenges that arose – both with the academic researcher and the community and inside the community.

KEYWORDS intergenerational learning; indigenous research methodologies; arts-based research; material culture; community of practice

“Epistemology is the understanding of knowledge that one adopts and the philosophy with which research is approached. This issue cannot be disentangled from history or from the social position one holds within society as a result of that history” (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 24)

The concept of space is an important one in Indigenous arts. Mary Pratt (1991) describes Indigenous arts as taking place in the “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (p. 34). Pratt (1991) refers to this space as “the contact zone” (p. 34). Similarly, Celia Haig-Brown (2008) argues that “When we really begin to take Indigenous thought seriously in our theory and in our practice, we move to inhabit border worlds” (p. 14). The study *Intergenerational Learning in Indigenous Textile Communities of Practice* demonstrated an example of research in this space.

Efforts to understand and build meaning in this borderland included attention to critical Indigenous methodologies (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). In practice, this meant making the kind of postcolonial commitment suggested by Kajner (2015), which is built on disrupting colonial patterns through attention to reciprocity and equity. Among other things, this postcolonial commitment included considerable efforts toward building relational networks



Figure 1: The Ruka for the Petrukin focus group.

with Indigenous communities, developing ethical and appropriate frameworks, and drawing upon postcolonial methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Artifacts were used to draw out memories and stories of intergenerational learning evident in the traditional ‘material culture’¹ of beading, weaving, textile and garment making. These methods are described in this article.

According to McNiff (2004), arts-based research can be characterized as the systematic study of artistic processes or artistic

expressions to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the researcher and study participants. Although the study on intergenerational learning was not originally framed as an arts-based inquiry, both the data gathering methods and the process of research mobilization led to arts-based learning and outcomes. Arts-based research that is focused on artifacts created by artisans who are knowledgeable and skilled in traditional ‘material culture’² requires a deep understanding of how quickly the forms of these artifacts can change and devolve when an experienced teacher is absent, when materials are changed or become unavailable, or when the learning is disrupted (Markowitz, 1994; Tehrani & Riede, 2008).

During the focus groups and interviews, the weavers and beaders had opportunities to share stories, ask each other questions, and compare their work and experiences. These exchanges

¹ According to Tehrani & Riede (2008), a material culture in the context of Indigenous artifacts, exists when traditional knowledge and skills are passed down from generation to generation, whereby “recognizably coherent lineages of tool-making and craft production can be traced through continuities among artifacts produced hundreds, even thousands of years apart” (p. 317).

² Distinctions between objects are typically framed as arts or crafts, with crafts perceived as more functional and art as more aesthetic. The distinctions are contested. The authenticity and intention of an individual artist is expected to be evident in an art piece according to Western distinctions, whereas the aesthetic of Indigenous crafted objects may reflect community values, attention to the materials utilized in the creation of the work and the natural world from which they originate, as well as the authentic intention of the artist in its creation. The distinctive valuation of handcrafted arts and crafts originates as a European concept, primarily defined in ways that have historically served the interests of male artists. These distinctions have typically undermined or negated the value of objects created by women, individually and collectively, and left unrecognized the traditional knowledge and skill expressed in their making (Markowitz, 1994; Tehrani & Riede, 2008).

shaped deeper understandings of their artistic creations, for both the weavers and beaders and the researcher. In a broad sense, this model allowed the research to include storytelling and artistic processes involved in the making of traditional arts and crafts as a means to better understand and to rethink the interactions between the members of the communities of practice and their work.

Framing the study around the concept of a community of practice (CoP), that is, a community involved in textile practices, was a way to explore knowledge transmission, sharing, and change over generations of learners. A CoP is “formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain” (Wenger, 2006, p. 1), and it is a situated and local site of learning where people are linked by a sense of belonging, meaning, identity and practice. Thus, the CoP constitutes a valuable site for research on informal learning because of its stability (Lave & Wenger, 1991). One of the goals of the study then was to offer a particular example of how an Indigenous CoP supported intergenerational relationships, situated ontologies, and provided a forum for understanding and reacting to an increasingly globalized economic system. Snyder and Wenger (2004) argue a CoP has three basic characteristics which they described as domain, community, and practice. The domain is the shared interest of the group, in this case, weaving or beading, which the members feel so passionately about it becomes part of their identity. The community describes the engagement and relationships among the members so that they can learn with intentionality from each other (Wenger, 2006). The practice is the actions or shared repertoire of the group, including the tools, methods, stories, or models used for learning (Wenger, 2006).

The study explored informal³ adult learning and textile production in two Indigenous contexts, one in southern Chile and the other in northern Saskatchewan, Canada. The research sites were chosen based on the researcher’s experiences working with Indigenous peoples in Canada (Saskatchewan) and Chile and as an ally in struggles for social justice. The beaders in Saskatchewan identified as coming from Metis, Dene, and Cree ancestry. The weavers from Chile identified themselves as Mapuche.

The inquiry operated within an interdisciplinary space that was shaped by ideas borrowed from Indigenous studies, social learning, adult education, art history, and anthropology. In addition to Wenger’s conceptualization of CoPs, the study drew heavily upon poststructural understandings and critical Indigenous methodologies. This framework was intended to assist the researcher to be self-critical, reflexive, and aware of taken-for-granted knowledge that could emerge from pre-conceived ideas and well-established academic practices. Poststructuralist notions and Indigenous methodologies helped the researcher question the privileging of academic discourses in determining the legitimacy of other forms of knowledge, including knowledge from the study’s participants. A fundamental principle of poststructuralist thought is to avoid the assumption of self-transparency. This is considered essential for a truly “legitimate” research practice, for as Peters and Burbles (2004) note, the concept of

³ Informal learning is defined by Coombs in Merriam, Cafferella and Baumgartner (2007) as learning that takes place daily in our relationships and encounters inside the home and in public places. It is usually not planned like non-formal learning that usually is delivered in workshops or a structured encounter.

“self” as a single, coherent entity is a fictional construct. According to this poststructuralist outlook, researchers and participants might have different ideas about knowledge and identity, shaped by language, culture, spiritual beliefs and traditions, collective history, gender, class, and family (Sinclair, 2014), but studies usually ignore such underlying issues and present one “coherent” and privileged story. With this in mind, the goal of this study was to create a multi-faceted interpretation of the research work and what we thought we had learned from both the storied experiences shared by the study participants and our shared experiences. This knowing also challenged us to avoid unnecessary bias and broad generalizations. Finally, in keeping with arts-based research and Indigenous methodologies (Wilson 2008) and to illustrate how reflexivity was built into the study, the researcher (Cindy Hanson) frequently inserts her personal perspectives using first person narration, which helps move the discussion beyond academic borders.

Engagement in Indigenous Research Methodologies

The research was positioned as an engagement in methodologies that weave ethical approaches, reflexivity, a critique of a researcher’s social subjectivities, and Indigenous research worldviews within cross-cultural research. As Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) asserts, contemporary research involving Indigenous peoples and communities must address the “relationship between knowledge and power, between research and emancipation, and between lived reality and imposed ideals about the other” (p. 165). Thus, it is necessary that research methodologies engage with decolonizing processes that seek to unhinge power relations and provide an ethical, culturally based foundation for practice (Ermine, 2000). For example, the translation for Indigenous languages, the participation of elders, the location for meetings, as well as the time built into the data collection process for eating together and building informal relationships were considered valuable in the data-gathering process.

Indigenous scholars frequently write about the importance of relationship-building and relationality (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009). Shawn Wilson (2008), for example, asserts that for Indigenous people “a relational way of being [is] at the heart” (p. 80) of the practice. He describes it as collective, community-centered, and built upon interconnections between and among humans and the land. The development of relational networks did not start with the study. They started with earlier life experiences. For example, in 1993⁴, I received a Canadian International Development Award (CIDA) to work alongside Mapuche women at *Casa de la Mujer Mapuche*. This organization worked in health and education, but most significantly, it worked with approximately 130 women in 12 Mapuche communities, assisting them with improving and marketing their woven textiles through the organization’s storefront. While *Casa de la Mujer Mapuche* no longer exists, most of the people involved are still situated around Temuco. Around the same time, I was also building relationships with Indigenous youth and teaching Native Studies in Canada. Additionally, I coordinated an elders’ program at a community college and assisted with course development for Dumont Technical

⁴ As iterated earlier, the researcher, Cindy Hanson, inserts personal reflections to illustrate connections to this work that extend beyond academic boundaries.

Training Program, a Metis training institute. I was then, and remain now, an ally of Indigenous struggles for justice. These relationships planted the seeds for this inquiry.

The relational networks in the study involved iterative and culturally-explicit work with Indigenous academic collaborators, elders, community coordinators, and CoPs. For example, relational networks in families and communities became the trails through which study participants were recruited. While recruitment for the study was not specific to women, only women volunteered to participate. Altogether, 37 Indigenous women in the two countries were involved as study participants. The community coordinators assisted in finding appropriate places to meet, in getting the study participants together, and in providing translations as necessary. Together, the collaborators and study participants developed several study questions: How is learning structured and passed on to subsequent generations within the CoP? Are there ways that intergenerational learning can be enhanced or sustained in the community, and how would the CoP benefit from this? How are identities (particularly cultural and gendered) of members of the CoP embedded in the practices of weaving or beading? In what ways, if any, might the community wish to mobilize and disseminate knowledge about the results of this study to a wider community? Being mindful of Indigenous methodologies, the decisions around how the knowledge would be shared beyond academic communities involved the participation of the members of the CoPs themselves. Although the questions, like the study itself, were never originally planned as arts-based, both the subject of the study and then the methods used for gathering data changed the inquiry into one that can be described as arts-based.

Arts-Based Methods

Historically, Western research methodologies and Eurocentric ideologies have exploited Indigenous communities and knowledges (Ermine: 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Today, Indigenous scholars argue instead for processes that are holistic and mutualistic (Battiste & Henderson, 2000), community-driven, and guided by the elders (dé Ishtar, 2005), with the researcher locating his or her personal and social position as part of a decolonizing practice. The choice of research methods was, therefore, critical in this study. The study used mixed methods, including interviews, two story-circle focus groups, and symbol-based learning, inspired by Indigenous research methodologies. The study drew upon the work of Lavallée



Figure 2: Gathering items for story circle focus group.

(2009) who used sharing circles and Anishnaabe symbol-based reflection as an arts-based method that emphasized story-telling and community engagement. The symbol-based learning and story-circle focus groups emphasized oral traditions and learning based on senses, including the visual, aural, and tactile (Bourdieu, 1991; dé Ishtar, 2005). The study also drew upon Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical work, which explored how knowledge can be expressed and conveyed through postures and gestures, which articulate deeper emotional aspects of the participants' memories (dé Ishtar: 2005). The use of symbols in the circle created opportunities for the participants to draw upon their memories and deeper emotions associated with them.

The data gathering methods used in this study could be described as a way to evoke *blood memory* or *narrative memory*, which are teachings and cultural practices, including rituals and ceremonies, that extended kinship pass from generation to generation (Allen, 1999; Henderson, 2000). According to Lavallée's (2009) doctoral study, knowledge can be transferred via spiritual means such as dreams or visions and "it is believed that thoughts, beliefs, and actions are conveyed from one's ancestors through the blood" (p. 22). The stories are, thus, personal and shared, individual and collective, and they give voice to experience. The stories and the memories evoked illustrate the concept of cultural *métissage*, whereby the learning of traditional and Indigenous arts-based processes demonstrate transformations and intersecting spaces in language, culture and practice (Viera, 2014).

Storytelling is recognized as an Indigenous form of research as it is central to understanding Indigenous epistemologies (Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2008). According to Kovach (2009), stories serve to "elevate the research from an extractive exercise serving the fragmentation of knowledge to a holistic endeavor that situates research firmly within the context of relationship" (p. 99). This study used symbol-based learning and story-circle focus groups which privileged oral traditions and were premised on the reciprocal relationship between the teller and listener (Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009). The familiarity of such approaches to those who have grown up in Indigenous communities contributed to local and personal knowledge-sharing while exposing important socio-political realities.

The practice of using story-circle focus groups in Saskatchewan involved participants sitting in a circle with items symbolic of their weaving or beading experiences placed on a cloth in the centre. Similar to a talking circle, the study participants responded one by one to a study question by taking turns speaking in a clockwise direction. Often, one of the speakers would point or pick up an item from the centre of the circle and use it to embellish or tell their story. For some participants, the items had spiritual significance and meanings that reflect Indigenous cultural practices and ways of knowing (Lavallée, 2009). In this way, the arts themselves play an integral role in sustaining the memories, teachings and material cultural practices implied by their design and creation (Tehrani & Riede, 2008). As one Saskatchewan beader said, "It's not just a sense of living, it's a part of making, it's a piece of art. It expresses how you feel, it expresses what you are doing at the time." Trust, equity, and reciprocity were advocated through adherence to the principle of a talking circle, respect for the symbols within the circle, and a decentered position for the researcher.

Study Participants and the Gatherings in Saskatchewan and Chile

Saskatchewan. In keeping with Indigenous methodologies, Indigenous-centered research sites were sought for the story-circle focus groups. The first story-circle focus group, which had double the number of participants expected, involved 14 beaders, aged 24 to 95 years, who met at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, an Indigenous World Heritage site. The site was chosen because of its significance to Indigenous people as a “gathering place” and “a global centre of excellence in fostering education and respect for the land based on expressions of Indigenous culture” (Wanuskewin Heritage Park, 2016). Most of the participants were originally from northern communities in Saskatchewan. The session was opened by an elder and then participant consent forms and the University of Regina behavioural ethics approval were described in simple English. Participants consented separately to both audio and visual recordings. Indigenous students who worked on the study also had the opportunity to participate and learn in the process. Translation was available at all times, and three participants chose to speak in Cree, interspersed with English. A second story-circle focus group was held at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, a youth cultural centre in the core area of Saskatoon that is “dedicated to improve the quality of life and health for children, youth, young adults and their families in the inner city through integrated, holistic support services” (White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 2016). One study participant, who was reluctant to participate in the story-circle focus group, was interviewed separately.

The study participants were asked in advance to bring samples of their beading work so that it could be shared with others in the group. This contributed to the informal learning that the research offered as well as to the community-building and gathering of “tools” for the story-telling pedagogies (Archibald, 2008; Deniston-Trochta, 2003). Stó:lō scholar and storyteller, Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) describes storytelling as a form of pedagogy that puts Indigenous epistemologies and principles of “respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy” (p. 2) at the core. Time was built in for eating together, sharing knowledge informally, and responding to the research questions. The informal sharing was considered part of both the research process and the relationship building.

Chile. In Chile, finding research sites involved working with the relational networks I already established in Chile during previous work alongside the Mapuche and working with a collaborator at the *Universidad de la Frontera* in Temuco. In total there were 23 study participants in Chile from four communities. In three of these communities, the study participants had always worked with sheep and wool; the other community, Tirúa, had a larger number of women weavers, but the local research collaborators pointed out that weaving was not traditionally done in that community. Weaving in Tirúa had been assimilated into the community though an outside group as a way to generate economic activity among the women. I point this out as it suggests weaving may have different meanings from location to location. This may also be an example of cultural *métissage* whereby the assimilation of the weaving activity for economic purposes demonstrates a transformation of Indigenous identity (Viera, 2014). The inclusion

of weaving as part of that identity appears not to have encroached on traditional Indigenous identity, despite being adaptive to changes that can be interpreted as colonial in nature.

Most of the participants in these four communities were unfamiliar with the other communities. Initially, the research team met with individuals in each of the four communities involved in the research. Two-three women from each of the four communities came together at a museum in Temuco for a larger focus group after the research was done in their original communities. Time was also built in for the women to visit the museum and socialize. A translator for *Mapudugún*-Spanish was also present.

Understanding the Stories: Examples

The stories shared by the participants illustrated sensory as well as narrative richness and were highly significant to the study. Two of those stories, one from Saskatchewan and one from Chile, are shared here. To protect the identity of the study participants, pseudonyms are used in the stories, and in the quotes which follow later in the article. In all cases, the quotes from Chile have been translated from Spanish into English. Quotes in Cree from one participant in the Saskatchewan circle story focus group were also translated into English. The story from a Saskatchewan participant which follows was delivered in English.

Patricia: A Cree Story from Saskatchewan

Often the stories shared in the Saskatchewan story-circle focus group, and particularly those shared by elders and middle-aged women, started with a description of hunting moose or tanning hides. The following story was told by Patricia, a beader. It was edited for length.

As long as I can remember, I've seen beads. Like maybe I was 3 or 4 and I seen *mikisak* [beads] all around the house, all the time, because my *kookum* [granny] was a beader. Both my *kookums* were beaders. And my mom was a beader and she always had *pabkeekin* [hide] all over the house because when she said [pointing with her lips to another beader] "When you smell hide, you know you're coming home," it brought memories back because I remember when I used to go in to my granny's house and I used to like that smell.

And all my uncles and my dad, they're all hunters and they trap in the winter so I've seen lots of beaver pelts, [inaudible], oh everything, when I was growing up. When I was growing up I seen a lot of that, but my kids never seen that because we were already in the "civilized era" [laughter]. I used to go to my Auntie Jean's and she used to love to make hides every day. She always had one in the [front], and another drying and another one ready to be smoked. Constantly. She always had one hide almost done and one getting started. And my cousins used to come, and say "Come visit me!" and I'd say "Oh why?" and they'd say, "My mom's gonna do a hide." [I'd think] oh, I know what this means [laughter].

Another participant stated: [time to] pull the hides! [group laughter].

Patricia continued:

So every time they asked me to go over I'd say "no!" because I knew I'd be *matabikevin* [scraping hides] or something. [laughter] My other *kookum*, she used to always make me pull hides, eh? And I could never stand straight! [laughter] She used to always tell me "try and stand ... pull away from me" and then she'd pull and I'd be right SHHHHH [pulling motion/slumping over - laughter] I could never beat her. I tried, but I was too small. I think she just liked laughing at me.

When my *kookum* [granny] was done her hide, she'd post it inside the house, and she'd start everything going again. Like what you said [pointing to Deborah] -- they were constantly multi-tasking, eh? They're cooking, they're making bannock and you know, you're just sitting there like "What do I do?" and they just throw you a pan of beads or something and say, "Here! Keep busy! [laughter] Make a necklace or do something." They'd say, "*kitapam* [Look at her], she's just going really fast and making her mukluks or whatever she was making." One day she'd be done a pair of mukluks or something, and I'd just look at it and think "how can I do that?" and watch her do that all day. She'd get tired of me, looking at her, and get me to move, to get tea or something, just to get me out of her hair. [laughter] Cause I used to be just right there! [laughter] Then she'd push me away. That's how I learned to bead at a very young age. My mom too, used to just to keep me out of her hair she'd give me some beads and tell me to think of something to make. I made two pair of mukluks, and I've made a vest and I've made about, I don't know, 3 or 4 pairs of gauntlets.

As the stories were told, memories of relationships and of working together were continually being presented. These were amplified further when study participants took an object from the pile of objects in the centre of the circle just to illustrate a point. Frequently, as in Patricia's story, the memories included examples of the work women did in the home along with experiences such as tanning hides. Noticeable in the stories shared in both Saskatchewan and Chile were the ways the women reminisced about their familial relationships and how these relationships were impacted by global changes. Angela's story, which follows, illustrates this.

Angela: A Mapuche story from Chile⁵

Angela, an elder of Mapuche ancestry, sits at the head of her dining table with her two adult daughters at her sides. Her long, grey hair is pulled back into a braid. She speaks softly but directly to her daughters in *Mapudugún*. She invites the research team to sit with her. One of the daughters passes the traditional local drink, *mate*, around the table, and we all share the mate through the same straw, and eat some fresh, home-made baking. We introduce ourselves, and we start to talk.

Angela used to be a weaver until her eye sight started to deteriorate and then an arm

⁵ As reported in Hanson, Fox Griffith & Bedogni (2015).

injury permanently impeded her ability to weave. However, she still enjoys separating and spinning the wool, which her daughters then dye and weave. When asked about her identity, she describes herself as the owner of the house, a mother of eight children, all women (and some weavers), and a long-term widow. She talks with pride about how all her daughters are independent and how they learned to look after each other after their father, Angela's husband, passed on.

Angela learned how to weave from her mother when she was 22 or 23 years old. As a child, she watched her mother and other elder women before she started weaving herself. She says that women used to weave more back then because "they did not need as much money as they do nowadays." They used to make their own blankets, and other household items and clothing that now they can buy. She also remembers Mapuche women wearing the traditional handmade *chamal*, which they now use only on special occasions, as industrial clothing has become the standard.

She describes the lengthy process of weaving, from looking after the sheep from which they get the wool, to spinning the wool and setting the loom. She talks about how she and her daughters used to make and mix coloring dyes from natural roots and plants, to apply to the wool and textiles. She recounts with a nostalgic delight how her daughters learned about weaving and dying, by playfully participating in the different steps of the weaving process. She laughs in complicity with her daughters as they share some funny anecdotes about their everyday childhood games and sisterly competitions involving the spinning of the wool, the *huso*. She talked about how the designs she learned from her mother have changed. She proudly discussed her oldest daughters, Magdalena, who lives in Santiago, and weaves on demand using patterns and designs that customers ask for and which are different from the traditional ones. She stated that the designs once came to the weavers in dreams.

Angela explains that she taught her daughters to weave because a woman who knew how to weave earned respect from her community. Women who wove were considered knowledgeable, and the weaving was traded for other goods to feed the family. In a matter-of-fact way, she acknowledged that the global economy affected this lifestyle.

Throughout the conversation, Angela struggled to find the right words in Spanish, mixing her discussion with *Mapudugún*. She lamented how her grandchild, along with other Mapuche youth, are losing their language, *Mapudugún*, because of Spanish and now English, which are taught in the school system.

The stories gathered in the study demonstrated Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies as multi-faceted—contextual, embodied, historical, and spiritual. The stories also helped to explain some of the contextual knowledge and comparisons between research sites and communities. This is explained further in the next section.

Dealing with Contextual Knowledge, Comparisons, and Generalizations

The original intent of the research was to share the experiences of the participants at each research site with a broader audience by creating two case studies based upon the stories shared by the women in each community. However, significant overlaps in the experiences

of the women in Chile and Saskatchewan were observed and inevitable comparisons and generalizations were drawn from the findings. For example, the communities and the women themselves valued the practices of beading and weaving and overtly spoke of these practices as part of their Indigenous identities. Greenwood and Levin (2008) discuss the challenges involved in abstracting results from context-centered knowledges, comparing, generalizing, and communicating them, notably to academics. There was an attempt in analyzing the data to uphold these valuable practices, but also to use caution, in particular recognizing observations that evidently run counter to the dominant findings. The examples that follow illustrate commonalities and contextual knowledge.

In both locations, textile and garment work was considered to be something a Cree/Mapuche woman ought to know. The Mapuche women spoke with pride about weaving as the greatest heritage they have from their mothers or grandmothers and said it defines their sense of culture and pride.

I learned in the courses how to weave and how to draw and now I'm teaching to my daughter who is fifteen, and to other girls. For us, this is a way to pass on our culture and that it remains in the textiles. We teach them how to weave so that they keep our culture in the textiles even if they want to do something else when they grow up. (Maria, Tres Cerros Chile)

Weaving was perceived as a way in which Mapuche women could make money because women have control over the money they earn from weaving. Weavers in Tirua, for example, illustrated this in Chile and a couple of the northern Saskatchewan beaders spoke about beading as a way of making some money when no other means was available. For the most part, however, both beading and weaving were seen by the study participants as activities that were outside of the global marketplace and not part of the dominant economic narratives. For the women, trading beaded and woven items was considered a traditional form of sharing (*bartar*), which might also, inadvertently, be measured as a form of resistance or resilience to the external pressures of the marketplace. According to the literature, there is a common thread connecting beading and Indigenous art; it is living, adaptive, and resilient, and it remains rooted in tradition (Robertson & Farrell Racette, 2009). Blady (1997), for instance, suggests:

The adaptability, perseverance and ingenuity of the Métis people is seen in the elaborate and delicate beadwork they produced...The floral beadwork of the Metis is not only refined and understated in its aesthetic characteristics, but also as a medium of cultural expression and unity (pp. 142-143).

According to Ohmagari and Berkes (1997), the transmission of Indigenous knowledges through observation and emulation was impaired by the movement of people from traditional lands, changes in traditional pedagogies, and changes in value systems. Their findings seem to parallel the experiences of the weavers and beaders in Chile and Saskatchewan. More

recently, the increased valuing of Indigenous ways (named by participants in both locations), including environmental awareness, is perhaps offering new incentives for, or a re-valuation of, traditional arts and ways of living off the land.

Many study participants felt that urban migration and globalization⁶ have strongly impacted younger generations. They lamented that when children left the community to pursue formal education, intergenerational learning was disrupted. Furthermore, school curricula, especially in Chile, have ignored Indigenous knowledge. Many participants said children are now more concerned with technology and making money, and not returning to Mapuche communities. The participants had very mixed responses to the values associated with dominant global trends. In both locations, however, study participants noted that a renewal of Indigeneity and an interest in Indigenous lives from non-Indigenous communities, including less overt racism, have made it easier to continue textile work.

The stories shared by the weavers and bead makers provide a sense of place and demonstrate pieces of cultural and social history that sustain meaning in a world troubled by chaos and trauma. While Indigenous women in Canada were highly esteemed for their central role in securing the health and well-being of their families and communities (Brant Castellano, 2009), imposed colonial policies that systematically denigrated these roles and identities (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009). The Cree women's stories, however, suggested that beading provides a sense of relief from daily pressures, as explained by one study participant:

We're survivors. And that's what it [beading] is, it's surviving. It's surviving what society's been trying to put away. You know, they've done everything they can to try to make First Nations disappear, but as long as we keep sewing, as soon as we keep beading, as long as we keep making moccasins, whether it's hides or whether it's something like - on our regalia or anything. It's surviving. It's making our kids proud of who they are (BH, FG1).

The Mapuche women in Chile also shared how weaving reduced stress and led to feelings of well-being:

[I]t is a feeling of joy when you are working on a piece [of textile]. I love to work on the loom, that is what I like the most, I feel happy while I am working because I will make some money... I do something good and pretty and people like it. (B-DH, FG1, Tirua)

Although the research sites were both isolated Indigenous communities, the concept of CoPs opened a space to consider perspectives that were both local and global in nature. In this space, the local and global boundaries could be seen as blurred and yet, interconnected. In addition to lessons on how knowledge is transmitted between generations, the study provided

⁶ Globalization refers to the global trade in goods and services that form the basis of world economic systems. Such systems are increasingly dominant and governed by capitalism and free enterprise values.

valuable lessons in the resilience of Indigenous communities when faced with discrimination, and their creative, perhaps unintentional, resistance to the demands of globalization.

Local livelihood development provides alternatives to the macro-development inherent in globalization by offering alternate sources of income for families and communities and by strengthening “women’s confidence in their ability to learn and contribute to their communities” (Jongeward, 2001, p. 96). A deeper understanding of how the context of globalization created spaces for resistance, that is, how Indigenous peoples simultaneously resist liberalized trade through cultural practices that defy the marketplace and which connect culture, communities and identities was an important outcome of this study. A powerful example of this was shared by Deborah, a woman from Saskatchewan, who did beadwork on a deer-hide jacket she had purchased at a garage sale. The symbols on the jacket—the prairie lilies, the infinity symbol or joining of two peoples, and the turtle as an Indigenous symbol associated with the earth—were beaded by Deborah to represent the identity and culture of the owner who is Metis. The jacket was also borrowed and worn by the President of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan when he appeared before the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, both as a symbol of pride and identity, but maybe a suggestion of resistance to the lack of empathy from the Canadian government towards Indigenous people living around abandoned uranium mines in Northern Saskatchewan.

The stories shared by the participants also displayed differences in the histories of producing textile goods and garments in Chile and Canada. While many of the items were made for family use, the women in both countries relayed stories from the past and in the present where the woven or beaded items were used for trade or barter rather than cash. Here are quotes from both sites which illustrate this point:

I used to look at my mom weaving. Then she would go the border to trade for yerba (mate), sugar, flour, and they traded, they (speaks in *Mapudugün*), she never did it for money. She traded, always; she traded her weaving items for other things not for money. (P1, FG Temuco)

She said when we were young, my mom used to make a bunch of these moccasins and that, she made baskets and gloves, so that’s what she’s- that’s how they learned and that’s how they lived. They’d make their living from selling or trading them for something to eat and all that.... (Cecile, FG1, Saskatoon)

Beading is a necessity to feed my family. Because some of us are on welfare, and being on welfare is not enough to feed yourself for the whole month. So you got to have another means of supply. (Dot, FG1, Saskatoon)

Another learning garnered from the study participants was that beading and weaving are primarily learned intergenerationally. The participants described how they learned their skills by observing a family member. Both beaders in Saskatchewan and weavers in Chile noted that child’s play and observation were the most common ways they learned the textile practice.

Participants also discussed how learning through observation taught them patience. Older Mapuche women frequently laughed as they acknowledged that if they made mistakes, they were hit. Here are a few examples:

[My mom] asked me to help her to spin, and that is how you learn, you weave little by little, and if you messed up, you got a hit in the hand. So you better learn [laughs] (P7, Tirúa III)

Oh, anyways, all my aunties taught me how to do all of this. My father's sisters. They taught me how to fish and how to hunt and how to make hides. How to do berries and how to do everything to make us so we could survive without anybody around other than ourselves. I could dry meat. I could dry fish. I didn't go to school until I was 14. (Beatrice, FG1, Saskatoon)

Women noted that while beading or weaving, they were occasionally supervised, and frequently corrected, but that they had no formal training. They expressed, however, that this was changing and younger generations also talked about learning through university workshops and continuing education, not from their family members. Women in Chile also shared stories of learning to weave through cooperative organizations that were emerging to help with marketing their products. The cooperatives or community organizations were especially attractive for the older women who wanted to perfect and innovate their knowledge and techniques, as well as have the chance to speak their language and share with other women. As one participant in Chile explained, “[W]e built this cooperative, the women... Because the community is very small, and we didn't have a place to get together” (P9, FG Temuco). For the Saskatchewan women, the various aspects of hide preparation seemed to be primarily a skill of older generations. All the elders began their stories about the beading process with the hunt and the tanning of the hide, while the younger generations generally spoke only about the act of beading. One participant, Beatrice, described how the traditional, indigenous way of life she learned prior to being sent to an Indian Residential School, included learning all of the steps involved in harvesting and preserving food as well as making garments from the hides of the animals they hunted. She stated:

If you didn't know how to do this you weren't much of a woman. You had to learn to do it all, not just the fancy stuff. I had to learn to skin the moose, and do everything, hang it, take and put it on a stretcher, take everything off right from square one, put it in the water, smoking it and everything because we did it along with our food. You know, you dried the meat at the same time that you dried the hide. (B-DH, FG1)

The same tendency was found among the Mapuche weavers, wherein older women referred to the weaving process by first talking about the care of the animals from which they extracted the wool. One of the participants explained: “I learned when I was little, watching... my grandpa who wanted me to take care of the sheep... first I got the *“palito”* [stick], and that's

how you learn.” These comments seemed to imply Indigenous epistemological understandings of the land and the animals as interconnected to human lives. Nevertheless, while older women provided more ‘holistic’ descriptions of the weaving and beading processes, the younger participants were more specific and less likely to comment on the natural context of their textile work. In any case, questions about how the sources of the textile production are changing between generations remain open to further consideration.

Among the Saskatchewan women, there was a strong desire to share their knowledge about the textile production, especially within their families. In the community of the beaders, women spoke about how their sons, other male family members and the larger community were involved in the process, most notably in stretching the hides, but also in beading. The following exchange illustrated the involvement of some men.

They [the men] join in with the wives. They take out the flesh and the hair. The heavy part, hey. And the ladies do the smoking of the hide. I know of one guy that does [bead] he’s a pow wow dancer, so his grandmother showed him how to bead and he was able to bead his own regalia (Ida, Interview).

Among the Mapuche participants from Chile, no stories of men weaving were shared. The participation of men was mostly described in relation to caring for the animals from which the wool was obtained. Although Mapuche boys and young men might occasionally help with setting up and other tasks, they are not expected to learn the skill of weaving, which is traditionally considered women’s work. As one participant from Tirúa stated, “My son helps me sometimes, but he has his own job in agriculture.”

Reflections About the Findings

The study provided lessons in working between and within Indigenous communities and identified possible challenges for adult educators interested in the ways younger generations interpret cultural knowledge. The results also illustrated ways in which epistemological understandings create different approaches to living, knowing, and being in the world. For example, the dominant view of the participants was that the textile work represented cultural identity and social relationships, particularly inter-familial.

Challenging the idea that study participants experienced the research equally is important in this kind of study and although initial generalizations about participant experience were made, the local collaborators and community coordinators provided reminders that context and local histories play a significant role in shaping experiences. For example, in Saskatchewan, interest in the practice of beading varied from spiritual to economical with many points in between. In Chile, some communities had developed a CoP due to available external funding and economic need. For instance, in Tirúa the weaving was supported by an NGO and although weaving was widely practiced there, it was not traditional to that area. Thus, the participants’ stories were different, as were also the meanings associated with learning, teaching, and working with textiles in that area.

Some research findings showed how textile work was integrated into the lives and well-being of the learners and their communities. Conversely, the implications for intergenerational learning when youth are taken out or leave their communities to attend school, whether it was Indian Residential Schools in Canada or secondary schools outside of the communities in Chile (and Canada), are worthy of additional research. Removing the youth interrupted the informal learning cycle associated with textile production and created ruptures in the kinds of values and meanings passed on to the younger generation. Explicit in the results obtained in this study was the role of intergenerational learning in the sharing of contextual and cultural knowledge, particularly language. The translation of traditional languages such as Cree and Mapudugún into English and Spanish was a challenge to researchers and participants alike, who recognized how easily the subtle, more nuanced meanings intended by the Elders were changed or lost. While the use of Indigenous languages was widely encouraged, for the most part, participants spoke in English in Saskatchewan or Spanish in Chile, occasionally adding words in their Indigenous languages. The efforts made to accurately translate Indigenous languages when spoken by the elders in the telling of their stories, often by participants from the younger generations, may also demonstrate the concept of cultural *métissage*.

In Saskatchewan, an unexpected outcome of this study was the increased involvement of community members in the practice of beading. For example, in one community, a few of the study participants decided to hold their own gathering of beaders. From this gathering they learned that there were beaders in their own family who had not shared their beading previously. Importantly, they acknowledged the value in sharing with family. A key component of the Indigenous research methodologies used in the study was working with participants to decide how the knowledge generated would be shared with the public. This resulted in an art exhibition and a publication. While this added to the complexity of the study, upon critical reflection, the researcher was awakened to how this ensured more equitable distribution of power in the research process.

Sharing the Results

The research mobilization phase of the project involved asking the study participants how they wanted to share the results of the research to a wider audience. In Saskatchewan, Canada, the study participants requested an exhibition; in Chile, they asked for a book about the study (Hanson, Griffith & Bedogni, 2015). In Saskatchewan, several art and craft galleries were approached and an art gallery in northern Saskatchewan agreed to host the exhibition. Importantly, it demonstrated a commitment by the CoP to teach others. While the organization of the event alone was challenging, a second challenge was in relation to the lack of previous connections and relationships between the gallery and the beaders. Consequently, the participants' comfort levels in entering the gallery, even to put their items on display, was fraught with unexpected tensions and doubts from participants about whether their work was appropriate. One reluctant participant eventually showed up at my house with her items sorted into frames and she meticulously shared the story they told of intergenerational learning in her family. In addition to the items displayed in the show, a poster was developed for each beader,

which represented a bit of her history and included a quote about her work.

Challenges also arose while writing the book requested by the weavers in Chile. One significant challenge was representing the learning and understandings that emerged from the study in written form, albeit for an audience of participants from an oral culture. The research collaborators in Chile, while willing to distribute the book to the study participants, were unable to participate in the writing of the book as originally hoped. Consequently, writing the book requested by the weavers became the principle responsibility of the researcher along with two graduate co-authors. The bi-lingual book, titled *Tejiendo Historias entre Generaciones: Weaving Stories between Generations* was published in paper and e-book formats. Copies of the book were distributed to all of the study participants in Chile by the researcher and community collaborators in Chile.

The local delays in knowledge mobilization also illustrate the complexities particular to working with marginalized populations in contrast to the demands of funding and academic schedules. They are, however, part of understanding a decolonizing methodology and of deconstructing how representational and political borders limit possibilities for fully understanding interconnections between people and places.

Enter the Contact Zone: Concluding Thoughts

Ten days prior to the opening of the art exhibition – *Beading Between Generations* – there was nothing to put on display. To get the items for the exhibition, I spent many hours driving to reserve communities, meeting people in parking lots, and spending time, via relational networks, to contact study participants by phone. The conundrum, however, opened up opportunities to attend feasts and develop new relationships in Indigenous communities as the beaders introduced me to their families and local band councils.

In addition to introducing the work of the Indigenous women to a wider audience—academic, community-based, collectors, artists and the public—the exhibit was a source of pride and, additionally, a way for women who previously had not entered the art world of galleries to make their presence known. The process, which could be described as “crossing borders” (Pratt, 1991) involved trying to connect the art world with Indigenous community-based knowledge and connections between different Indigenous cultures that morphed with textile learning. Perhaps it illustrated Pratt’s notion of contact zones which refers to the geographical and ethnographically conceived places and spaces where disparate cultures meet and try to engage.

Engaging in research that involved a non-Indigenous researcher building relationships and collaborations that value Indigenous people’s lived experiences and epistemologies took personal commitment beyond the scope of traditional Western academic paradigms. This commitment involved crossing borders. Along with patience and a solid belief in the importance of the research to the lives of the women and communities involved, the research process included building relationships with communities, developing ethical and appropriate frameworks, and implementing Indigenous arts-based methodologies. The methodologies and methods provided important insights into how learning in the CoPs was structured and

passed on to subsequent generations. The engagements with the CoPs built relationships with a wider public including the art gallery, the academic collaborators, Indigenous places such as Wanuskewin, the art curator, and so on. When the women in one community formed their own beading group, they demonstrated how such learning could be enhanced or sustained within the community itself. This kind of intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer seems reconciliatory, perhaps an area of additional inquiry. Meeting the dynamics of engagement and maintaining the rigour of the research was possible because of the relational networks and also by flexibility throughout the process.

Flexibility helped to alleviate some of the resistance of participants to the study and the researcher, as did community coordinators who deferred to local experience and helped to bridge the border worlds at each research site. For example, signing the ethical consent forms was viewed with suspicion by two Chilean participants, but when local community coordinators first explained the consent form in simple Spanish, it was more easily accepted. On another occasion, an elder questioned why children under eighteen could not participate in the study noting that this was contrary to Indigenous traditional ways of living and learning together. While the researcher explained that this was due to university guidelines and ethical considerations, it was the community coordinator's explanation that was most easily accepted. This may be due to her position within the community and personal relationship with the study participants.

The experience of the research mobilization offered flexible ways of sharing and understanding knowledge, some of which interrupt traditional power dynamics and challenge Western, colonial values and institutional norms. Most importantly, the study provided entries for new ways of imagining intergenerational learning and collaborative research based on mutuality, well-being, decolonizing practices, and holistic understandings.

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Cross-Cultural Digital Storywork: A Framework for Engagement with/in Indigenous Communities

Christine Rogers Stanton, Brad Hall, Lucia Ricciardelli

ABSTRACT While Indigenous peoples have long urged attention to Six Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, relationality, and representation) that are important to community-engaged work, application of these principles has been sporadic within the filmmaking industry. Many Indigenous communities do not have the technical expertise and/or resources needed to support professional quality audiovisual production. As a result, they rely on predominantly White filmmakers from beyond the community. Unfortunately, mainstream filmmaking practices have historically demonstrated a disregard for Indigenous ways of knowing, and a scarcity of meaningful relationships between filmmakers and community members has further contributed to a legacy of insensitive filmmaking within Indigenous contexts. In addition, internet-based distribution of cultural content raises questions about post-production sovereignty. In this project, Tribal College (TC) students and faculty partnered with students and faculty from a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) to develop culturally sustaining and revitalizing documentaries using storywork, digital storytelling, ethnocinema, and community-centered participatory research. Throughout the Digital Histories Project, TC participants gained technical expertise, PWI participants learned about culturally sustaining/revitalizing filmmaking, and faculty leaders identified ways to support use of the Six Rs within social science, history, and teacher education. Results offer methodological and pedagogical insights for scholars, educators, tribal leaders, and filmmakers.

KEYWORDS Indigenous; Native; documentary filmmaking; story; participatory

“The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.”
(Thomas King, 2003, *The Truth About Stories*, p. 2)

Stories shape our individual and collective histories, and they are central to our cultural identities. Within Indigenous¹ communities, stories have served to sustain Native knowledges in spite

¹ While it is preferable to refer to groups using specific tribal or community names, especially if those names represent the traditional names the people of those groups gave themselves (e.g. “Apsaalooke” or “Pikani”), it is not always appropriate within scholarly contexts. Such specificity can compromise privacy and culturally sensitive understandings, particularly given the small populations within many Indigenous communities. In work that strives to advance broader methodological and/or theoretical practices, using more general terms can be a way to demonstrate unity across diverse tribal communities. However, the danger is that such generalization might suggest a lack of inter- and intra-tribal diversity. To protect specific communities,

of centuries of efforts to assimilate, oppress, terminate, and colonize the First Peoples of the Americas. Over the past two decades, digital approaches to the telling and sharing of stories have presented new possibilities and new challenges. For example, though documentaries that are disseminated via social media offer opportunities for great numbers of people all over the world to share and access information in a timely manner, they can also result in inappropriate diffusion of culturally sensitive content.

To promote culturally responsive storytelling, research, and education, Indigenous communities have long urged attention to Four Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Unfortunately, within the film industry in the United States, application of these principles has proven challenging due to a legacy of stereotypical representations and a scarcity of meaningful relationships between predominantly White filmmakers and Indigenous communities (Kilpatrick, 1999; Seixas, 2007; Stoddard, Marcus, & Hicks, 2014). The purpose of this article is to highlight efforts to advance culturally sustaining and revitalizing education (McCarty & Lee, 2014) and scholarship through a cross-cultural documentary project.

As part of the Digital Histories Project, Tribal College (TC) students and faculty partnered with students and faculty from a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) (Willie, 2003). The Project's goals included: 1) to cultivate meaningful cross-cultural relationships; 2) to provide TC participants access to semi-professional filmmaking equipment and technical expertise needed to serve their community; 3) to prepare PWI participants to advocate for culturally sustaining/revitalizing filmmaking; and 4) to help faculty advance culturally sustaining/revitalizing education and research within social science, history, and teacher education. Broadly, this article addresses the question: How can digital cross-cultural storywork advance the goals of Indigenous Research Methodologies, culturally sustaining/revitalizing education, and community-engaged scholarship?

Theoretical Framework

Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRMs) provided the foundation for the Project's design. As McGregor and Murnane (2010) note, *methodology* refers to the broader philosophies underlying research, while *methods* "are the techniques and procedures followed to conduct research, and are determined *by* the methodology" (p. 2). While IRMs provide a framework to guide the development, selection, and application of methods, it is important to note that they are not in and of themselves set, prescriptive methods. Instead, they offer a methodological orientation to research, learning, and filmmaking that supports culturally sensitive decision-making throughout the process. Although multiple scholars and Indigenous communities have contributed in unique ways to the development of IRMs, there are areas of intersectionality, including calling for practice that is critical, action-oriented, and aligned with traditional Indigenous knowledges/ways of knowing (Brayboy, Gough, Leonard, Roehl, & Solyom, 2012;

encourage theoretical and methodological unity, and remind readers of the diversity within and across communities, this article alternates between "Indigenous," "First Nations," "Native," and "tribal" and uses plural forms to refer to peoples, knowledges, histories, experiences, and communities.

Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008), and recognizing the importance of story as method and as counter-narrative to settler-colonial understandings (Brayboy, 2005; Grande, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999).

Wilson (2008) builds on the Four Rs (respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relevance) identified by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) by noting the need for Indigenous scholars to consider research as a cultural responsibility grounded in collectivity and relationality. Kovach (2009) argues that Indigenous research differs from most Western research given its relational and participatory demands. Brayboy et al. (2012) emphasize the need for scholarship that advances community participation *and* an emancipatory agenda.

Brayboy (2005) highlights the need for Native counter-narratives—stories that offer an alternative to as well as a critique of settler-colonial perspectives—within educational research in his argument for *Tribal Critical Race Theory* (TribalCrit). Grande (2008) also notes the power of story through *Red Pedagogy*, as a means to critically interrogate mainstream understandings of teaching and learning. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (1999) encourages research that expands participation of Indigenous community members and elevates attention to story. However, Smith also cautions that Indigenous stories, especially those shared via digital media and the Internet, can affect entire Indigenous communities in either positive or negative ways, so they must be shared only after collaboration with community leaders.

Throughout educational research, critical scholars have encouraged attention to historically marginalized cultural knowledges (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Paris, 2012). McCarty and Lee (2014) propose *Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy* (CSRP), which emphasizes purposeful efforts to reinvigorate traditional Indigenous knowledges, both within Indigenous communities and within cross-cultural contexts. CSRP recognizes the importance of community-based accountability, particularly as related to tribal sovereignty. Through collaboration with Native communities, educators—including non-Native teachers—can identify, confront, and resist colonizing influences that continue to affect decision-making related to teaching and learning. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators are important in terms of decolonizing education and research, especially given the small number of Indigenous peoples currently engaged in teaching and educational research (Kovach, 2013).

To advance CSRP, the Digital Histories Project synthesized these key understandings from across the Indigenous educational research literature. In particular, the Project endeavored to engage Native participants as active decision-makers throughout the research and storytelling processes. To challenge narrow views of research and film production, the Project focused on aligning methodologies, methods, and Indigenous ways of knowing. To guide this alignment, we applied a framework consisting of six Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, relationality, and representation) identified by Indigenous scholars and reaffirmed by Indigenous community members participating in the Project. We discuss and contextualize each of these Rs in the “Storywork for Sovereignty” section below.

Methods: Attention to Community-Engaged Process

It is important to note that the project outlined in this article is not meant to serve as a

prescriptive toolkit, but rather as a means to illustrate application of IRMs using a specific example. Within our unique contexts (a TC located on a reservation in the Northern Plains of the U.S. and a PWI located approximately 250 miles from the reservation), elements of Indigenous storywork, digital storytelling, ethnocinema, and community-centered participatory research informed the design of the Digital Histories Project. When integrated, these methods promote a shift of control from the typically White scholar/filmmaker to Native communities. In addition, combining these methods supports inquiry into learning and research processes, given their inherent attention to the ways that values and beliefs influence decision-making. Within cross-cultural contexts, in particular, this combination offers the potential to advance culturally sustaining and revitalizing education, given its potential to engage non-Indigenous allies with Indigenous communities (Kovach, 2009).

For the Project, Archibald (2008)'s *Indigenous Storywork* guided the research and storytelling processes. As Archibald emphasizes, story and culture are inseparable within Indigenous communities, and learning through story is central to sustaining and revitalizing cultural knowledges. Given this integrated and iterative nature of storywork, it is important for scholars—and all learners—to engage dynamically with multiple community members throughout the development and dissemination of cultural stories. Within storywork, the process of storying is as important as the product of the story itself.

Iseke and Moore (2011) highlight several *Indigenous digital storytelling* projects that foster collaboration, benefit Indigenous communities, and promote learning across and between generations. As Iseke and Moore (2011) explain, “Indigenous digital storytelling integrates indigenous stories and sacred places and artifacts in innovative ways, is created by and for indigenous communities, addresses change, reflects community knowledge and perspectives, and enables negotiation of the community’s social priorities” (p. 32). Indigenous digital storywork, therefore, differs from mainstream filmmaking approaches, which have historically excluded members of Indigenous communities at various stages of the production process. The examples provided by Iseke and Moore (2011) offered guidance for the Digital Histories Project in terms of involving community members throughout the process, editing footage for effect without compromising the integrity of stories, and honoring nonlinear story structures.

Ethnocinema is related to both storywork and Indigenous digital storytelling, although it differs in its cross-cultural focus. Ethnocinema can be broadly defined as ethnographic documentary filmmaking, or, more specifically, as a “qualitative method of intercultural collaboration [which] prioritizes creativity, mutual identity construction, and the principles of critical theory” (Harris, 2010, p. 769). Harris also notes that ethnocinema emphasizes process, as well as product. In other words, ethnocinema is a departure from the majority of filmmaking efforts within Indigenous communities in that it is not merely about the finished film: It is about the relationships formed and the mutual meaning-making throughout the planning, filming, and editing processes.

Community-centered participatory research values methods that are collaborative, that are guided by community interests, and that engage community members as co-scholars in place-conscious learning (Gruenewald, 2003; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Northway, 2010;

Stanton, 2014). Depending upon community needs and values, co-scholars may select a variety of methods to guide the process. In this project, elements of storywork, digital storytelling, and ethnocinema informed the research design, with the principles of community-centered participatory research guiding the application of those methods within our specific context.

While Iseke and Moore (2011) identify as Indigenous and work with members of their own communities on digital storytelling projects, the Digital Histories Project team consists of both Native and non-Native filmmakers, scholars, students, and faculty leaders. Such a composition creates both new challenges and new opportunities for ethnocinema and digital storywork. Several years ago, the TC faculty leader began thinking about a collaboration that would support the exchange of cultural and technical expertise. From the Project's inception, the faculty leaders recognized the importance of these diverse forms of expertise: The TC is on the leading edge of community-based Indigenous research, and the PWI offers an internationally renowned program in film. Together, we believed we could develop a cross-cultural model that would advance culturally sustaining and revitalizing education for both Native and non-Native peoples.

Project participants included faculty and undergraduate students from the TC and PWI, graduate students and recent graduates of the PWI, Native scholars, and tribal community members. The TC faculty leader identifies as Native, and he is a well-respected member of the tribal community. The TC student participants also identify as Native, and several consider themselves to be "traditional" in terms of practicing cultural beliefs. Both PWI faculty leaders—one a professor of education and one a professor of film—identify as White women who have experience studying and teaching about colonization and culturally responsive pedagogy. All twenty PWI student participants, who enrolled in a film seminar, identify as White. Most are not originally from the area, and only one had experience working with Indigenous communities prior to the start of the Project.

The Project consisted of a planning phase, five workshops (two based at the PWI and three based at the TC), and a community showcase. While the entire process spanned two years, the series of workshops and the community showcase occurred during a short time frame of nine months. The first workshop introduced TC and PWI participants to the Six Rs and a variety of documentary filmmaking modes. Participants then formed teams to share storytelling ideas and develop storyboards. The workshop concluded with an orientation to the filming equipment (i.e. camera, tripod, and lighting/sound equipment). The second workshop began with a discussion of research ethics in tribal communities and the role of the Six Rs in guiding Project decision-making. The PWI participants then shared "Storyarc PowerPoints" and mentored the TC participants as they developed their own PowerPoints to refine project planning. The second half of the workshop focused on an introduction to iMovie editing software and guided practice using the camera.

Originally, the Project leadership team planned to hold the first two workshops in the tribal community. We changed the location to the PWI for several reasons, including limited funding (e.g. we would have been able to support travel for only a few of the PWI students enrolled in the seminar, which would have reduced participation) and expanded availability of filmmaking

technology (e.g. at the PWI, we had access to semi-professional camera equipment, lighting kits, and computers with editing software). Following the second workshop, we discussed an additional, unexpected benefit of holding the first workshops at the PWI: The Project format allowed PWI students to develop relationships with TC participants before traveling to the tribal community. Our prior experience leading short-term, reservation-based experiences for PWI students suggests that such experiences can reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them, especially given the influence of stereotypical imagery within popular media. Since the Digital Histories Project focused on building relationships first, the PWI participants who attended the third, fourth, and/or fifth workshops felt more comfortable asking questions and confronting stereotypes.

The third workshop, which was based in the tribal community, provided targeted and individualized mentorship. PWI participants helped TC participants address footage challenges, practice interviewing skills, and refine use of software and equipment. The fourth and fifth workshops, also held at the tribal college, focused on editing and finalizing digital stories in preparation for the community showcase. The showcase, which was held in conjunction with a four-day community-wide cultural and research celebration, included an overview of the process as well as the premiere of one of the student-created films.

In addition to the formal workshops, much of the cross-cultural learning occurred in informal settings, such as during meals. At the end of the second workshop, the PWI faculty leaders hosted a dinner at one leader's home. This was an event that proved to be a highlight of the Project for PWI and TC students and faculty alike. Dinners involving participants and family members were also held during the third and fourth workshops. A celebratory dinner followed the community showcase at the end of the fifth workshop.

Multiple forms of data contributed to the study of the Project, including planning materials, workshop observations, researcher memos, focus groups, interviews, workshop artifacts (e.g. video products, storyboards), and social media exchanges. A combination of open and focused coding was used to analyze the field note, artifact, interview, and focus group data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition to the faculty researchers, the student participants contributed to analysis. For example, workshop artifacts included storyboards (visual templates to guide organization and film planning) and theme cards (identifying key themes from footage). The TC students interpreted these artifacts, instead of the faculty researchers. As a result, it became clear that the TC participants interpreted data differently from PWI students and researchers. For example, the TC participants recognized the cultural significance of certain allusions and elements unknown to the non-Native researchers.

To further refine themes, the faculty researchers applied the Six R framework for focused coding. This framework emerged as the result of combining the Four Rs identified by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) with two additional Rs (relationality and representation) discussed by tribal members and student participants during the first workshop and emphasized across the literature describing IRMs. These Six Rs frame discussion of findings (see below).

Storywork for Sovereignty: Applying the 6 Rs to Research

The Project's main purpose was to support development of Indigenous researchers who are able to use filmmaking to tell their communities' stories in ways that are culturally appropriate and high in technical quality. While both TC and PWI participants engaged in documentary storywork, all major content and procedural decisions remained under the control of the Native participants. Therefore, the findings we share here focus primarily on the process that guided the Project, rather than the content of the resulting products (i.e. student documentaries), since that content remains in the control of the tribal community.

Respect

Respect for Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing is fundamental to IRMs. Wilson (2008) notes that respect demands deep listening and sustained engagement with community members. Brayboy (2005) emphasizes that respecting Indigenous knowledges relies upon appreciation for story and storytelling. Respect for Indigenous worldviews is not only essential to sustainability and revitalization of cultural knowledges; it is also important for the retention of Indigenous students in higher education. Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) explain that a lack of respect for Indigenous "cultural knowledge, traditions, and core values" constitutes "the most compelling problem that First Nations students face when they go to the university" (p. 6). Engaging in collaborative, participatory scholarship can offer a way to integrate Indigenous values and traditions more effectively into cross-cultural learning contexts, such as PWIs.

Several examples from the Project highlight the potential for cross-cultural storywork to promote respect for Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing throughout the documentary filmmaking and research processes. Before the first workshop, the PWI and TC faculty members led activities related to perspective within visual media, cultural bias and stereotyping, and the importance of deep listening. The TC students met weekly to build rapport, share film ideas, and discuss their concerns about collaborating with the PWI students. The PWI students met as a class, where they learned about the importance of identifying and confronting romanticized and stereotypical perspectives of Native stories. For example, the PWI students completed an activity comparing and contrasting photographs of life on a reservation. Throughout this activity, the students discussed the use of visual media to draw upon emotion, including emotions generated by romanticism and poverty. The activity also drew attention to the influence of the photographer/filmmaker on the creative process and final product. We asked students how films made by cultural outsiders might differ from those made by Native filmmakers, even if the location, subjects, and ideas are the same.

Despite these preparatory activities, both Native and non-Native students expressed anxiety about participation in the Project. One PWI student, in particular, was extremely reluctant to attend the first workshop, given her fear of being blamed. To promote collective agency and ally building, we encouraged students to think about ways to use filmmaking in response to White guilt and historical trauma. We also noted that the workshops offered a space for dialogue that is rarely available outside of collaboration between institutions of higher education. As a result of these efforts, we were able to convince even the hesitant PWI

student to attend the first workshop.

To start the first workshop, participants introduced themselves, identified their goals for participation, and shared any ideas they had for film projects. As a whole group, we determined that the most important goal of the project was to elevate awareness of and respect for Indigenous experiences, histories, and perspectives. Tribal community members echoed the importance of increasing respect for Indigenous views, especially given the prevalence of predominantly White communities and institutions within the region.

Also during the first workshop, the TC participants shared powerful stories of struggle, persistence, and renewal (e.g. overcoming addiction, living in poverty, struggling with language and identity). These discussions allowed PWI participants to realize that challenges are situated within a complex socio-historical landscape. In addition, the trust and openness demonstrated by the TC participants helped the PWI students realize the importance of the Project and the willingness of the Native community to collaborate in cross-cultural contexts.

Midway through the workshop, the PWI student who had been reluctant to attend pulled a faculty leader aside to explain, “This isn’t what I expected. I’m learning so much.” At the conclusion of the workshop, an elder who had been collaborating with the student thanked her with a hug. This example demonstrates the complexity of respect within cross-cultural documentary storywork. Since many PWI students may lack a foundational understanding of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, it is important to move beyond sharing examples of stereotypical or overly simplistic work without engaging students in dialogue with Indigenous peoples. Without the cross-cultural interaction, students tend to impose their own perspectives on the topic, which results in a focus on White guilt and inaction.

To sustain cross-cultural interaction throughout the Project, participants worked closely with tribal members from the community during each phase. For example, an elder provided the research topic idea for films, cultural leaders reviewed content and made recommendations, and completed films were shared with the public as part of a community-wide showcase on the reservation. In addition to honoring traditional models of leadership and mentorship, engagement and collaboration with various community members allowed the PWI participants to learn about cultural protocol within documentary filmmaking practice and research.

The PWI participants served as technical mentors who provided guidance for equipment and software use, as a means to support the Indigenous knowledges, values, and beliefs comprising the specific projects. For example, the PWI faculty members introduced a variety of documentary filmmaking modes, which allowed the TC participants to choose one or to blend several modes most appropriate to their chosen topic. When TC participants expressed concerns (e.g. “I don’t like how distracting it is to see the people walking on the side”), the PWI participants provided technical guidance (e.g. “I can show you how to crop the frame to minimize that movement”). Throughout the Project, the PWI participants were coached in terms of using listening and questioning skills, instead of dictating and taking control of projects.

Relevance

While the topics, methods, and products deemed relevant to a specific community may be unique, the process for promoting relevance can be considered across contexts. Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) emphasize attention to aspects that are relevant for all Indigenous communities, such as spirituality, tradition, history, vitality, conflict, place, and transformation. For many Indigenous peoples, stories serve to sustain and revitalize memory, but they also serve as “meaningful, theory-full practice” (King, Gubele, & Anderson, 2015, p. 9). In other words, storywork extends beyond the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of stories: It is a relevant and dynamic process grounded in Indigenous worldviews.

Each of the documentary topics focused on community interests. For example, a tribal elder who is one of the few remaining fluent speakers expressed her concern about the loss of Indigenous languages. She encouraged the TC participants to research the importance of language and to share the results through film. In addition to supporting relevance for the community, asking the tribal members to select topics helped promote trust. Although the topics were deeply emotional, the TC participants hoped the filmmaking process would allow an opportunity to confront personal and collective trauma. The PWI participants were “shocked at how willing [the TC participants] were to share really deep, personal stuff.” The process proved to teach the emerging filmmakers about themselves and each other. While powerful, a focus on relevance also has the potential to, as one faculty researcher noted, “open old wounds.”

In the Project, awareness of relevance extended beyond the selection of topics to procedural decisions (e.g. how to conduct interviews, what to include or exclude from final products, etc.). For example, workshops were planned based upon feedback from participants. When TC participants expressed an interest in additional interviewing practice, a workshop session focused on team practice with planning for interviews and using the equipment. At the end of the workshop, the TC participants had developed the confidence needed to interview the president of the tribal college. During selection of supplemental footage, the TC participants carefully reviewed historical photographs, paying attention to the names of people in the photos (“I know that is a [specific tribe] name”), places, and other visual cues (e.g. attire, tipis, etc.) in order to ensure relevance for the specific tribal community. Editing processes further demonstrated attention to culturally relevant decision-making. For example, TC participants noted that it was important to see the markings on the bottom of a tipi, given their cultural significance. When cropping an archival photo, the participants made sure the final product included a view of the markings.

Additionally, it was important to the participants and leaders that the process and products be shared in relevant ways with the broader tribal community. We provided an overview of the Six Rs and examples from the Project’s workshops during a community showcase. Following the presentation, the TC filmmakers premiered one of the Project films. Research is rarely shared with the community in accessible formats, and film offers a powerful way to provide examples of research processes in action.

The PWI students and faculty struggled with the tenet of relevance in several ways.

For example, it proved challenging to “hold back” as TC students created storyboards and edited projects. The desire to control these processes was likely informed by multiple factors, including a genuine interest in helping ease the learning curve for TC students, enthusiasm about the topic and teaching, and familiarity with making decisions related to filmmaking. After introducing explanations and examples of the Four Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) at the start of the first workshop, the participants were invited to discuss additional values and principles to guide the Project. As a result, the TC participants added relationality and representation to the Project framework. From the first moments of the first workshop, the participants were reminded of the importance of centering the interests and values of the Native community throughout the Project.

Responsibility

Responsibility within Indigenous contexts holds broad meaning, including accountability to community members (including elders and youth), stewardship of place, and ethical attention to sustainability and revitalization of traditional knowledges (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Kovach, 2009; Lomawaima, 2013; Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2009) explains that IRMs demand collective and ethical responsibility. In other words, decisions made by scholars affect individuals and communities. Furthermore, Indigenous research depends upon a critical orientation, which demands both knowledge and action (Brayboy, et al., 2012; Kovach, 2009). Researchers are expected to be purposeful with the knowledge they acquire: They must *do* something with the results of their work.

Throughout the Project, the participants demonstrated various perspectives of social responsibility. Although the PWI participants often choose film topics related to social issues, their ideas for topics typically reflect of individual interest, whereas the TC participants focus on the interests and perceptions of the broader tribal community. Along these lines, the TC participants recognized urgency for sharing the stories, as tied to collective healing. One TC participant noted,

We're at a crucial time. We're risking the loss of our language and our culture. This [documentary project] comes at the right time to point us in the right direction for healing. Instead of carrying all that baggage by yourself, [hearing about the stories of others] lightens your load.

This sense of cultural responsibility also extended beyond topic selection and initial filming. For example, one TC participant emphasized the importance of sharing the interviews “in a good way.” Such sharing demands a sophisticated understanding of cultural protocol, which is something few of the PWI participants think about in their day-to-day filmmaking work. For example, a TC participant noted, “We need to check with [a cultural leader] about that, because I don't know if we can use that.” In another case, the TC participants were concerned that an interviewee's wording might offend elders in the community. While they wanted to honor the speaker's ideas, they were also keenly aware of the duty to honor tribal values,

such as respecting elders. For the TC participants, making such decisions was at the heart of demonstrating a responsibility to self and others in the community. Iseke and Moore (2011) call this a “kinship responsibility” that demands culturally responsive editing of digital stories (p. 33). For the PWI participants, new understanding of the complexity and importance of responsibility to the community has positioned them to advocate for adherence to cultural protocol within documentary work.

As a result of the Project, the TC participants developed technical skills needed to mentor other tribal members in future documentary filmmaking endeavors. Following the community showcase, several community members approached the filmmakers and research team to share ideas for future projects. Importantly, the TC participants did not view their responsibility as a burden, at least not as the Project unfolded. As one TC participant noted, “It [participation in the Project] started out as a workshop for credits. It turned out to be a new dream I didn’t even know I had.” For this participant, the Project offered a way to align educational goals with her responsibility to the community.

Reciprocity

Kovach (2009) notes that reciprocity is inseparable from respect and responsibility—in order to respect collective knowledge, one must take action that benefits the Indigenous community. Wilson explains that reciprocity is more than one-time gift-giving: It demands a sustained, interactive partnership. In order to support reciprocity, non-Indigenous faculty members and scholars must endeavor “to understand and build upon the cultural background of the students,” while simultaneously supporting access for students “to the inner-workings of the culture (and the institution) to which they are being introduced” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, p. 9). In the case of the Project, ensuring reciprocity meant honoring Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing while expanding Indigenous participants’ access to technical filmmaking skills and equipment.

Research and filmmaking within Indigenous communities has—historically—benefitted dominant culture researchers/filmmakers more than the communities themselves. Early in the workshop series, the TC and PWI participants and community members discussed examples from various documentaries, which allowed for a critique of the motivations of filmmakers. As they planned for their own filmmaking projects, the participants were thoughtful about ways to ensure meaningful, reciprocal relationships with the community. For example, during the first workshop, an elder asked, “What are you going to do with the films when we’re done?” This question initiated a discussion about sovereignty, culturally sensitive content, and responsibility. Both the TC and the PWI participants realized that reciprocity is integrated with responsibility, as are many of the other Rs. In particular, for the TC participants, reciprocity is the outcome of a sense of collective responsibility.

Accountability to the community should extend throughout research and filmmaking projects. Since filmmakers are not always associated with academic institutions, they may not be expected to follow protocol for ethical research and creative activity. In this case, plans for the Project were reviewed and approved by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of both the

PWI and the tribal nation. As part of the agreement with the tribe's IRB, participants were expected to share an overview of the process and resulting films, as deemed appropriate by the TC participants and tribal community members.

To further adhere to the tenet of reciprocity, the TC participants and tribal community members controlled decision-making about both the process and the final products. DVD copies of the film that premiered at the community showcase were given to the interviewees and several elders, and the film was uploaded to YouTube and shared through social media. In this example, the content was determined to be appropriate to share with the public, including non-Native viewers from outside of the community. The TC filmmakers chose to exclude ceremonial images and songs so the film could be disseminated more broadly. However, as previously discussed, although digitizing stories can expand access to Indigenous knowledges, and although expanded access can advance efforts to revitalize traditional knowledges, unrestricted access has the potential to compromise culturally sensitive content.

To support culturally sustaining/revitalizing education, benefits from research and filmmaking efforts must transcend the project's timeframe. One of the key goals of the Digital Histories Project was to develop Indigenous researchers and filmmakers who are able to serve the community beyond the project. In addition to developing films that can influence education within the community, the TC participants used their skills to film a community discussion, and they shared footage at events to honor a community member who had passed away.

Finally, attention to both the process and product advanced community-wide conversations about collaboration, Indigenous research, and education. As the TC faculty leader noted during the community showcase, the Project has the potential to be "history-making work" in that it engages Native student researchers in controlling community-based research and filmmaking processes and products. For the tribal college, the Project provides a model for cross-cultural research across disciplines.

Representation

King (2015) emphasizes that visual representations of Indigenous peoples by non-Native peoples have long been problematic, as they are rooted in fascination with the primitive other, savage, or "vanishing Indian" (p. 23). Today, mainstream media continues to perpetuate stereotypical Indigenous imagery. Through reclaimed representations, Indigenous peoples can sustain and revitalize cultural knowledges and epistemologies, a process Vizenor (2008) terms "survivance" (p. 1).

From the beginning of the Project, the leaders and participants considered the importance of appropriate representation. For example, during the first workshop, the participants discussed popular portrayals of Indigenous peoples in film and other visual media. They agreed that how Native experiences, histories, and peoples are represented affects the potential to sustain and/or revitalize cultural knowledges. This discussion generated interest in adding a fifth "R"—representation—to the Four Rs offered by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001).

Thinking about representation proved transformative for PWI participants. Prior to the first workshop, several of the PWI students noted that they expected TC participants to

engage in filming stories based upon romantic Indian imagery (e.g. powwows) or stereotypical reservation challenges (e.g. poverty, addiction, etc.). The PWI students were surprised by the personal connections: Instead of superficial romanticism or stereotyping, the TC projects demonstrated depth, authenticity, and complexity.

An example from the third workshop further illustrates the importance of honoring cultural perspectives in terms of representation. The TC and PWI participants were discussing how to break up interviews for a more appealing visual effect. A PWI student suggested weaving segments of a traditional song throughout an elder's account. Fading in and out of the song and the spoken words would better hold the viewer's interest, he argued. While the suggestion demonstrated attention to artistic quality, a TC participant explained that such a representation would potentially be disrespectful since neither song nor story would be fragmented in traditional storytelling contexts. This discussion resulted in a plan to consult cultural leaders prior to additional editing.

Decisions about representation were not limited to the specific content. For example, during the third workshop, one TC participant expressed her belief that the team should adhere to a linear storytelling structure, which is common within mainstream filmmaking and which the participant assumed is more "right" than nonlinear, culturally congruent structures. The team was encouraged to trust cultural perspectives in terms of organizing footage and developing the film's story arc. Toward the end of the editing process, the team selected a title for the film screened at the community showcase that recognizes the circular nature of Indigenous storytelling. In the end, the structure became a way to represent and honor Native ways of knowing.

As a TC participant noted, the digital storywork process offered a "culturally valid" means of disseminating interview data. Iseke and Moore (2011) explain "Indigenous digital storytelling challenges not only the stories of the dominant society but also oppose the exclusivity of text-based resources" (p. 34). One TC participant echoed this awareness by suggesting that "film has a more powerful impact [than books] . . . It's recreating the oral tradition." Another TC participant also noted a connection to the oral tradition made possible through filmmaking: "[It] becomes more personal when you see the person telling the story. It's different from reading a book, where you can't see the person."

Relationality

Although Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) did not specifically mention relationality as one of their "Rs", the participants emphasized its importance early in the first workshop, and it is emphasized across much of the Indigenous research literature (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). It is important to note that the term *relationality* is multi-dimensional. Indigenous scholars explain that First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing are cyclical and interrelated (Wilson, 2008). Brayboy (2005) explains the critical orientation of the "dialogical relationship between culture, knowledge, and power: culture is the base for knowledge that ultimately leads to power" (p. 436). In addition to relationships between aspects of knowledge, there are also relationships among and between individuals, communities, governments, and the land

(Brayboy, 2005; Kovach, 2009). Therefore, Wilson (2008) argues for “relational accountability” (i.e. accountability to various members of the community with whom scholars should have sustained and respectful relationships) throughout scholarly endeavors.

The Project would not have been possible without a focus on relationship building between participants and between faculty leaders. While the Project itself spanned a short timeframe, it was built upon pre-existing relationships between members of the leadership team. The PWI and TC faculty leaders have collaborated for several years. Given their membership in a small, close-knit community, many of the TC students knew each other before joining the Project. However, the depth of the TC participant relationships varied (e.g. some participants were closely related to each other, while two were returning to the reservation after growing up in other communities).

The Project provided opportunities for PWI and TC participants to learn from and with each other. Several TC and PWI participants chose to work throughout multiple workshops and to remain connected outside of the workshops. As a result, participants developed trust and confidence. For example, a TC student who was intimidated by the interview process partnered with a PWI student for the majority of the third workshop. The individualized attention provided opportunities for the TC student to build confidence in her interviewing and filming skills, while the partnership allowed the PWI student to become comfortable asking questions about cultural topics. Social media has allowed participants—even those who have graduated—to remain connected with others who were involved in the Project.

The learning was not limited to interactions between TC and PWI participants, though. Project efforts transcended generational lines, as participants worked with tribal elders and youth. For example, a film focusing on language revitalization included interviews with community members from various generations, which demonstrated the importance of Indigenous language to people of different ages. Multi-generational storywork can be a powerful approach for culturally sustaining and revitalizing education (Iseke and Moore, 2011).

The PWI students and faculty developed a new awareness of relationality within research and filmmaking practice as a result of the Project. During the second workshop, a TC participant tentatively asked if it was acceptable for filmmakers from different teams to share footage. This request demonstrated the importance of relationality between participants and between elements of knowledge. The PWI film instructor noted that her students rarely, if ever, consider sharing footage. The TC students, however, had a difficult time imagining *not* sharing experiences, resources, and understandings, since those knowledges overlap in daily life.

Early in the workshop series, the PWI faculty leaders were challenged in terms of relationality. At the start of the second workshop, a TC faculty member expressed concerns about the formal workshop space located on the PWI campus. While the space supported collaboration and technology use, working in an institutional setting generated some discomfort and inhibited trust building. The TC faculty member explained that traditionally learning occurs in informal environments within the tribal community. To address this concern, the PWI faculty leaders hosted a group meal at a leader’s house. The setting provided an opportunity for more relaxed

conversation surrounding the sharing of cultural knowledges. The evening also supported recognition of the TC faculty member's leadership.

While the Project provided opportunities for the PWI and TC students to get to know each other both within and beyond the research setting, it is important to note that the Project is only the beginning of the relationship. Work is underway to sustain the Project within the tribal college, expand to other communities and institutions, and prepare students and faculty who can provide on site technical mentoring in tribal communities.

Conclusion: Implications for Community-Engaged Scholarship

The Digital Histories Project offers multiple insights related to community-engaged research. First, the Project presents documentary storywork as an approach to advance culturally sustaining/revitalizing research and education. Even in short timeframes, it appears possible for documentary filmmaking to provide meaningful learning for both Native and non-Native participants. To determine long-term outcomes, the faculty leaders plan to continue to communicate with Project participants through social media. We hope to explore if/how participants apply the Six Rs as they develop documentaries with diverse communities, even after they graduate from the PWI or TC.

A second insight relates to the collaborative potential for storywork. Cross-cultural contexts complicate understandings of responsibility, since scholars and filmmakers may feel responsible to individuals they portray, to communities, to multiple generations, to diverse audiences, and/or to society at large in different ways. Community-centered participatory research may offer a model for thinking more comprehensively and holistically about responsibility. Of course, the Project also offers examples of limitations in terms of responsibility, given its short-term implementation and its small number of participants from the tribal and PWI communities.

The Project leaders learned important lessons from the initial workshop series. Most importantly, we are interested in finding new ways to more effectively support TC participants between workshops. The TC participants noted a lack of confidence, especially in terms of the editing process. A structured and institutionalized program, such as a filmmaking course at the TC, could provide more incremental guidance and benchmarks to support individual and team progress. However, it will be important to also honor the different views of progress within the community. For example, one TC participant was eager to try using the equipment and software, even if he made mistakes. Other TC participants were more reflective; they wanted to observe and then practice in private before working with the PWI students.

Finally, meaningful incorporation of Indigenous storywork within the Academy offers an opportunity to counter settler-colonial narratives, connect with communities, and integrate Indigenous values into research and education (Clark, 2004). Within higher education, there is a growing interest in developing and sharing participatory and culturally responsive research methods. This interest is due, in part, to a "nation-building renaissance" occurring in Indigenous communities, which has resulted in increased expectations for Indigenous-led decision-making and tribal research sovereignty during university collaborations (Norman & Kalt, 2015, p. 3). In addition, funding agencies are more frequently encouraging work that

strives to advance social justice, especially through the use of digital media. Unfortunately, there is also a potential for digital media to “commodify” culturally sensitive content (Smith, 2005, p. 95), since such media can expand access for members of the public beyond the specific tribal community. Therefore, it is critical for filmmakers and scholars to consider the potential for research and filmmaking to either advance or restrict tribal sovereignty with regards to cultural knowledges.

Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) encourage both institutional and community-level responsibility in terms of promoting culturally sustaining/revitalizing education and research. In particular, institutions can advance Indigenous educational self-determination by involving community leaders in the design and enactment of mission and vision statements. The same concept can apply within cross-cultural research. In the case of the Digital Histories Project, members of the Indigenous community initiated the project design and contributed to ongoing planning and evaluation. It is important to note that, to be meaningful and fulfill the expectations of the 6 Rs, leaders and participants must walk the talk of their culturally sustaining/revitalizing mission or vision. As Kovach (2009) argues, responsible scholarship requires both knowledge *and* action. In the Project, we regularly revisited our goals, then noted specific actions that aligned with or distracted from those goals so we could make adjustments.

Since stories are “all we know” (King, 2003, p. 2), learning from and through cross-cultural storywork may offer a way to recognize Indigenous sovereignty *and* raise social justice awareness for non-Indigenous participants. In particular, the Project highlighted in this article demonstrates the potential for the Six Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, relationality, and representation) to promote culturally sustaining and revitalizing community-engaged storywork with/in Indigenous communities.

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Indigenizing Digital Literacies: Community Informatics Research with the Algonquin First Nations of Timiskaming and Long Point

Rob McMahon, Tim Whiteduck, Arline Chasle, Shelley Chief, Leonard Polson, Henry Rodgers

ABSTRACT Community-engaged digital literacies initiatives can greatly benefit from knowledge and practices developed by Indigenous peoples. In this paper, we describe a research project to develop digital literacies with two Algonquin First Nations in Quebec: Timiskaming and Long Point. This project reflects a First Mile approach to Community Informatics, informed by the theoretical framework of Indigenous resurgence and by engaged research methodologies. In telecommunications and broadband terminology, communities are typically framed as the ‘last mile’ of development. The First Mile approach challenges this situation by encouraging projects that emerge from the locally determined needs of collaborating communities, who gain ownership and control of processes and outcomes. Drawing on community-engaged research methodologies, university-based researchers facilitate this work while community-based researchers integrate data collection, analysis, and public outreach activities into the lived realities of community members. We discuss how digital literacies projects can benefit from the theoretical framework of Indigenous resurgence, which stresses the daily practices that support the continual renewal of Indigenous communities.

KEYWORDS information and communication technologies; community-engaged research; indigenous peoples; digital literacies; First Mile; Timiskaming First Nation; Long Point First Nation

Digital literacies initiatives can greatly benefit from knowledge and practices developed by Indigenous peoples. Recent developments in the study of digital literacies stress the need to encompass social practices as well as technical skills and knowledge: that is, how people and communities can effectively shape and use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). Gillen and Barton (2010) write that: “Digital literacies are always dynamic – in part because technology is perceptibly developing so fast in front of our eyes – but also because human purposes continue to develop and are reshaped in collaboration” (p.8). From this perspective, digital literacies are grounded in – and emerge from – the many ways that people collectively make meaning through their ongoing interactions with ICT.

Indigenous theorists of resurgence illustrate how all kinds of daily practices contribute

to the continual renewal of Indigenous communities by embedding Indigenous cultures in different aspects of life (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Simpson, 2011). This observation can be seen in a number of contexts, including in the development and use of ICT and digital resources by Indigenous peoples (Haas, 2014). For example, Beaton and Campbell (2014) demonstrate how First Nations are cultivating resilience through the daily use of online applications, social media and broadband-enabled public services by continually shaping and using these digital tools in ways that build on the knowledge and experience held by members of communities. Building on this work, in this paper we describe a collaboration among researchers from two Algonquin First Nations in Quebec, a researcher from the University of New Brunswick (UNB) – now at the Faculty of Extension in the University of Alberta – and the director of technology at the First Nations Education Council (FNEC). These partners aimed to develop a flexible digital literacies methodology and toolkit that can be taken up, modified, adapted or dropped according to local needs and interests.¹

Our process involved a long-term collaboration with local leadership, education directors, community research coordinators, and youth.² Project partners set out to identify knowledge, skills, data and outcomes associated with digital literacies that are relevant to the needs of community members. In the course of designing and implementing household surveys to research these issues, we held ongoing discussions on the nature and focus of research; engaged community members as research participants; and outlined agreements concerning research data, analysis and outputs. Once data was collected we analyzed it together, discussing how to best leverage our findings for both academic and community use. Finally, we explored how the two projects might inform one another by sharing experiences, resources and lessons learned among project participants in the two communities.

We encountered many divergences in the course of this work. These included shifting project priorities, changes in team composition, and challenges in on-the-ground data collection and analysis. Our experience confirms the need for a dynamic, flexible project methodology that incorporates long-term capacity building as well as concrete research outcomes. This observation is consistent with other scholarship on community engaged ICT research (Ramírez, Aitkin, Kora & Richardson, 2005; Hollander, 2009; Lang, Stillman, Linger, Dalvean, McNamara, McGrath & Collins, 2012; McKemmish, Burstein, Faulkhead, Fisher, Gilliland, McLoughlin & Wilson, 2012).

We end by reflecting on our digital literacies project as an application of the First Mile model of innovation (McMahon, Gurstein, Beaton, O'Donnell & Whiteduck, 2014). In telecommunications and broadband terminology, communities are typically framed as the 'last mile' of development. The First Mile concept challenges this situation by stressing that communities be put first, which involves working with local communities to identify resources and expertise to carry forward ICT development initiatives. Drawing from engaged research

¹ Research described in this article was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick.

² This work was guided by plans and protocols jointly developed by project partners. These include a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Chiefs of Timiskaming and Long Point that outlines how we are presenting project data and methods in this journal article. This MOU is presented in Appendix 1.

methodologies, collaborators jointly shape the scope, focus and outcomes of research so that projects emerge from the locally determined needs of participating communities. The next step involves building relationships among communities and regional community intermediary organizations to share resources and lessons, and extend projects to new partners. First Mile projects thus emerge from the unique circumstances of diverse communities, while also providing opportunities to scale up local initiatives through collaboration. In this paper, we discuss how the knowledge and processes about digital literacies developed with Indigenous peoples through our project contribute to this First Mile model of innovation.

Framing Digital Literacies as Expressions of Indigenous Resurgence

Over the past decade, understandings of ‘digital literacies’ have shifted from a focus on technical skills and knowledge to also encompass the much broader set of social literacies that people use to engage with the platforms and applications of the network society (Rheingold, 2012). For example, compare the *Computer Use Complexity Scale* developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (2007) with a report from the Canadian Council on Learning (2009). The *Complexity Scale* focuses on five levels of increasingly complex technical tasks tied to the specialized use of software and hardware, while the Canadian Council of Learning’s report stresses the effective use of such tools in situated social settings, described as ‘digital environments’.

This more social practice-oriented definition of digital literacies is reflected in works by scholars like White and Le Cornu (2011), who provide a strong illustration of it in their study of ICT use by ‘Digital Visitors’ and ‘Digital Residents’. They discuss the ways that people use ICTs for both discrete tasks (Digital Visitors) and as platforms of ongoing social engagement (Digital Residents). From this perspective digital literacies encompass the integration of social practices and technical skills. Gillen and Barton (2010) similarly tie digital literacies to the varied practices that people use to navigate our increasingly connected lives:

“As digital technologies have spread, matured and developed, more people are participating in the creation and collaboration that have become characteristic of the Web 2.0 wave....The distinction between software engineering and the use of ‘applications’ has become more blurred as so many more users have become actively engaged in the creation of applications” (pp.4-5).

The field of Community Informatics (CI) takes this insight as a starting point for research and practice (Gurstein, 2000). CI projects seek to identify and leverage the knowledge, resources and skills held by members of communities to inform technology development and use (Longford, Clement, Gurstein & Regan Shade, 2012). For CI researchers and practitioners, “Meaningful access to new ICTs calls for the development of a complementary social infrastructure of access to accompany the technical one” (ibid, p.16). In this context, ICTs are malleable resources that people can appropriate to meet their self-determined needs. Efforts to build digital literacies are therefore not only a means to transfer technical knowledge about

ICTs to people, but provide knowledge and tools that people can use to adopt and adapt ICTs to fit their lived realities.

As reflected in research undertaken by the First Nations Innovation project (FNI), Indigenous peoples are leaders in such efforts to shape ICT development to meet community needs (see for example O'Donnell, Johnson, Kakepetum-Schultz, Burton, Whiteduck, Mason, Beaton, McMahon & Gibson, 2013).³ This may in part be due to their awareness about the potential negative impacts of externally-driven ICT development initiatives. Some studies frame ICT development and use in Indigenous communities as a trade-off between 'traditional' and imposed cultures. For example, one paper discussing digital inclusion among the Orang Asli peoples of Malaysia argues that: "being digitally inclusive is not an easy process as minorities, particularly the indigenous people or 'orang asli' would have to sacrifice some aspects of their culture or lifestyle" (Hashim, Idris, Ustadi, Merican & Fuzi, 2012, p.80).

To address this challenge, CI research stresses the need for university-based researchers to partner with community-based researchers to support mutually beneficial projects. This practice reflects suggestions made by proponents of Indigenous methodologies. For example, in her landmark book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Tuhiwai Smith (2012) calls for a critical understanding of the assumptions, motivations and values that inform research projects involving Indigenous peoples. Researchers should situate their work in particular cultural and social systems, while recognizing that colonialism continues to impact Indigenous peoples. Further, Indigenous projects necessarily involve community members developing and carrying out their own research agendas. In the context of CI projects, such an approach involves partners working together to jointly facilitate the conditions that give rise to effective ICT development and use in a community (Ramírez et al., 2005). This perspective can contribute to efforts to Indigenize digital literacies, since the voices of community members are engaged in research design, interpretation and application, therefore providing them a means to embed aspects of ownership and control of ICT development and use in their communities.

A strong example of this approach is the Ktunaxa Nation Community Learning Centres project in British Columbia (Stacy, Wisener, Liman, Beznosova, Novak Lauscher, Ho and Jarvis-Selinger, 2014). This three-year partnership involved three First Nations located the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation, and the eHealth Strategy Office in the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine. These research partners worked together to build Community Learning Centres (CLCs) as local hubs for Internet access, and an online community focused on health education. The project was one component of the Ktunaxa Nation's strategic plan to shape and use ICT for broader community goals, including to

³ The First Nation Innovation (FNI) research project started in September 2006. Based at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) and funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), it is a partnership with several regional First Nations technology organizations, including K-Net Services (part of the Keewaytinook Okimakanak tribal council in Ontario), the First Nation Education Council in Quebec, and the Atlantic Canada First Nations Help Desk, part of the Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey educational organization in Nova Scotia. The project examines broadband communications in remote and rural First Nation communities in Canada, and explores new ways to work together in participatory research when partners are separated by vast distances. For more information, please visit: <http://fn-innovation-pn.com> and <http://firstmile.ca>

preserve language and address health priorities. Utilizing a participatory research design, university-based partners engaged local facilitators to set up and manage the CLCs. These facilitators conducted surveys and interviews to identify health priorities and develop online health resources that met community needs. The communities retained ownership and control of the research process and outcomes, and took a flexible development approach to ensure that the project evolved in response to changing needs. Over time, they worked to integrate the initiative into the social realities of the communities, expanding the project's scope to encompass the research process itself as a tool for community empowerment.

Framed as a CI project informed by Indigenous resurgence, the Ktunaxa CLC initiative reflects both the social practice orientation towards digital literacies, and the desire of Indigenous peoples to secure control over technology developments that impact their communities. In this way, it seeks to embed the continual renewal of Indigenous communities in the everyday use of ICT resources.

Along with benefits associated with this kind of CI work, researchers have identified several challenges. These include: the differing goals and expectations of researchers; unequal power relations in the design and implementation of research; and practical challenges stemming from project roles, processes and outcomes (Hollander, 2009; Lang et al., 2012; McKemmish et al., 2012). Further, the diverse nature of Indigenous communities has led some researchers to conclude that no two community-engaged Indigenous research partnerships are alike (Adam & Faulkhead, 2012). In the next section, we reflect on our two digital literacies research projects in Quebec, and consider the lessons they illustrate with regards to these challenges. Similar to the Ktunaxa project, these initiatives evolved from household surveys designed to learn about digital literacies in Timiskaming and Long Point, to ongoing efforts to integrate digital literacies in the social practices of community members. In the course of this work we encountered several challenges that illustrate the need for digital literacies projects to undertake a flexible research methodology and a strong grounding in Indigenous resurgence.

Project 1: Digital Literacies Research with Timiskaming First Nation

Our Timiskaming digital literacies project comprises a partnership between UNB, FNEC, and the Education Department of Timiskaming First Nation. The partners connected through Tim Whiteduck, Technology Director at FNEC, which is an FNI research partner with UNB, and provides ICT services to Timiskaming. Arlene Chasle, Education Director at Timiskaming, wanted to build local capacity to more effectively utilize ICT – particularly in the area of education – and held early discussions with FNEC on this topic. The three partners – including Rob McMahon from UNB (now at the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta) – began jointly developing a digital literacies project in Summer 2014. Arline from the Timiskaming Education Department was interested in gathering data from community members regarding their use of and interest in ICT, and then using that data to inform the community's strategic technology plan. As well, the availability of local technology support is a challenge due to a lack of trained staff, and so the Education Department was interested in building digital literacies to increase engagement in ICT tools among community members. In

this context the project became a natural opportunity to both learn about existing ICT capacities and resources held by the community, and to collect information to help Timiskaming develop digital literacy workshops shaped to local interests and needs. Because Tim Whiteduck's primary objective was to establish a baseline on the level of technology infrastructure and use in the community, the research was also seen as a planning tool to help determine what services the organization needs to focus on and plan for the future. Rob McMahon at UNB sought to develop academic outputs related to Indigenous ICT development and use. Following the FNI publication policy, these outputs would be co-authored with the community, with the topics, focus and argument of papers determined collaboratively by the partners.⁴

Drawing on experience and knowledge gained from earlier FNI projects, the team used multi-site videoconferencing technologies to support ongoing research discussions from remote locations (Gratton & O'Donnell, 2011) and undertook field trips to build relationships (Gibson, Thomas, O'Donnell, Lockhart & Beaton, 2012). We began by establishing a formal relationship between university-based researchers, community leadership, and FNEC. This involved jointly preparing a proposal to guide our research, which was formally approved by Chief and Council through a signed MOU, after a presentation in the community. FNI researchers are required to develop formal agreements with community partners prior to any field research being conducted. This is done to provide: background on project collaborators; a summary of community and university research interests; project objectives and deliverables; project method and research approach; and a work plan. The team engaged a local project liaison to guide fieldwork planning and help develop project methods, analysis, interpretation, and deliverables. We spent a lot of time developing these relationships and project resources, with many changes along the way.

Our experience highlights the need for CI projects to remain flexible. The project methodology evolved over the course of our discussions. We decided to work with local high school students to conduct household surveys about digital literacy, access, connectivity, and effective use of ICTs in Timiskaming. We designed the survey as a communication tool as well as a data-gathering instrument. This was done to raise awareness about different aspects of effective ICT use and digital literacies in the community – a focus is in line with methods undertaken by other FNI project researchers (see Beaton & Carpenter, 2014; Beaton, Seibel & Thomas, 2014). To raise community awareness of the survey, and of digital literacies more generally, we promoted the project in an article in the local Kiwetin school newsletter, and also through word of mouth.

A field visit in late October 2014 launched the survey project. The team presented to local high school students and service providers (education and health staff, Band Office employees, and Band Councilors, among others). At each presentation we solicited feedback to improve the work moving forward. For example, during a discussion with teachers at the local elementary school, participants raised several important points that helped shape the project, including questions regarding community ownership and control of research data.

⁴ To read the FNI publication policy, please visit: <http://firstmile.ca/resources/sharing-resources/>

The visit also finalized the project MOU, which was reviewed and approved by Chief and Council after a presentation led by Tim Whiteduck. At the request of Arline Chasle from Timiskaming, we also added a second round of surveys tailored to community services to further support community ICT planning.

The fieldwork activities helped raise awareness of digital literacies among several different sectors of the community, and also contributed to the project research methodology. As a result of our discussions, we invited 10 high school students to collect data through door-to-door surveys delivered to approximately 208 homes (roughly 20 houses each). Each student was given an individualized information package that included a brief explanation of the survey and a prize draw ballot for an iPad (an incentive for respondents).⁵ Audrey McLaren, the coordinator for Timiskaming's Education Partnerships Program, managed the students and worked with teachers to ensure that their volunteer hours would be accepted as graduation credits. The project offered several other incentives for students, including honoraria; experience in community-based research; a reference letter; and the opportunity to be acknowledged by name (if they wished) in publications resulting from survey data.

One youth researcher also got involved in early-stage data analysis. Dana McLeod, a co-op student working at the Band office, helped the team input survey data into an online program (Survey Monkey). This allowed Timiskaming to retain control of project data and remotely share survey results with the university researcher through the online platform. Through this project, Dana gained training in data entry methods, which also helped speed up data analysis.

We emphasize that this research process unfolded in an unpredictable manner, with lots of setbacks and unexpected developments. We faced challenges in retaining youth researchers: as time passed, some students were unable to complete their household surveys. Many people in the community spend time away from home, which complicated attempts to distribute surveys to all households. At the suggestion of the community partner, to address this situation we hired a local adult to distribute remaining surveys. This person was paid from the project budget. These experiences further illustrate the need for a flexible, emergent methodology that is integrated in the shifting realities of life of the community – and the practical research challenges that can arise in the course of data collection and analysis.

The long-term nature of our revised project provided us with opportunities to conduct additional public outreach on digital literacies. To this end we re-framed the household surveys as 'community questionnaires', which have a different focus, methodology and approach than 'scientific surveys'. Rather than drawing on a representative or randomized sample of a given population, a community questionnaire seeks to engage as broad a population as possible. This allowed us to use the surveys as communication tools as well as data-gathering instruments. To this end, we extended the data collection phase of the project to ensure that all households in the community participated in the survey. This aim is distinct from scientific sampling

⁵ We recognize the challenges and bias that may emerge through the use of student researchers. For example, respondents may feel compelled to answer questions. As well, in small, tight-knit communities, respondents may feel uncomfortable answering sensitive questions. That said, our questions avoided sensitive issues, and we told students they would receive credit regardless of whether all their surveys were answered or not. We designed the survey research to alleviate these challenges.

methods that focus on a relatively small number of randomly chosen individuals, or online surveys emailed to respondents in a chosen population group. Undertaking the project this way fit the team's focus on using the survey process itself as a tool to raise awareness of digital literacies among community members.

The public outreach impact of this process not only supported our goal of building digital literacies in Timiskaming. It also generated a higher-than-average survey response rate among the First Nation respondents - a population group historically less likely to participate in surveys undertaken by external researchers (see Health Canada, 2012). According to our calculations, 45% of eligible respondents in Timiskaming completed our surveys (176 of 391 eligible individuals).⁶ This high response rate reflects that of other community-based First Nation research partnerships, contributing to growing evidence that community-engaged approaches result in increased participation in research (for example see: Latycheva et al., 2013).⁷

Once we completed the surveys, and after discussion among project researchers, the team decided to base our analysis on two data sets: a general analysis of all 176 survey results; and a comparative analysis separated into three age categories: "Youth" (18-34 years; 58 responses); "Adults" (35-54 years; 82 responses); and "Seniors" (55-65+ years; 41 responses). When we separated our survey data into these three age categories, distinctions emerged with regards to how people use technology, attitudes about technology, issues of access and affordability of technology, and other issues. These findings will help Timiskaming's Education Department design and promote ICT workshops to different segments of the community. They also sparked ideas for follow-up projects. For example, Timiskaming's Education Department is interested in learning more about local Internet service providers, such as what speeds they offer, how reliable their services are, and what a monthly residential Internet plan costs. This information can be shared in the community to ensure that residents are aware of local Internet service. It may also support the community's efforts to advocate for more equitable rates and quality of service guarantees.

During a second field visit, we met in person to discuss the next steps for the project.

⁶ According to the most recently available federal government records, the total population of Timiskaming First Nation is 2,074 (AANDC, 2014). Of this total population, in April 2015 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) lists 583 people registered as living on-reserve (294 males; 289 females). Slightly older AANDC statistics (from 2011) indicate that the total population of registered Indians on the reserve was 490 people (240 male; 245 female), of which 39% (190 people) were between 0-19 years of age. We estimate the number of minors (0-17 years of age) in 2011 as approximately one-third (33%, which is 6% less than the 0-19 population) of the total population. For the purpose of this project, we estimate that a similar ratio of one-third (33%) of the total population of registered Indians living on-reserve in April 2015 will be minors (0-17 years of age). Therefore, of the 583 people registered as living on-reserve at the time of the Timiskaming survey (2015), approximately 192 will be minors – and therefore not eligible to take the household survey. This leaves us with 391 eligible survey respondents.

⁷ In total, 176 people responded to our household survey. Of these, 91% indicated that they lived on-reserve. However, upon consultation with Timiskaming partners, we learned that the 9% of people who indicated they do not live on-reserve do live in the community – just on parcels of land that do not hold the same legal status as reserve land. Therefore, we jointly decided to include all 176 of the survey respondents, since they live within the place-based boundaries of the reserve, and are registered members of the Band. All of these respondents are 18 or older (they indicated their age on the completed surveys).

These included presenting our findings at the annual conference of the Canadian Sociological Association, held in June 2015 at the University of Ottawa. Representatives from all three partners attended the conference, with our presentation equally divided between Shelley Chief (a member of Timiskaming Council who holds the Education portfolio), Tim Whiteduck from FNEC, and Rob McMahon from UNB. We also discussed how Arline and Audrey from the Timiskaming Education Department could present the household survey results in a community newsletter.

The team also discussed lessons learned through our project, including the need to hire an on-site community researcher to coordinate local data collection and analysis; to adopt a flexible methodology that allows for changes; and to adapt research outcomes, recognizing that both process and results can be purposed in many different ways. These discussions informed the adoption of our research methodology for a similar project in the nearby Algonquin community of Long Point, which we discuss in the next section.

Project 2: Digital Literacies Research with Long Point First Nation

As the digital literacies project in Timiskaming was underway, Rob McMahon and Tim Whiteduck started a similar initiative with Long Point First Nation, another Algonquin community located a few hours drive from Timiskaming. Long Point First Nation is an Anishinabeg community located in the unceded territory of Anishnabe Aki. The First Nation has approximately 800 members – around half of whom live within the community. In terms of ICT infrastructure, it currently has fibre connectivity in place for public service organizations, and FNEC is working with the community on a fibre optic expansion project to improve household Internet connectivity and affordability. The community also recently completed construction of a new school – at the time the research was conducted many students bussed to a community located one hour away.

Tim Whiteduck had approached Leonard Polson (Education Director) and Henry Rodgers (Principal at Amo Ososwan School) in Long Point to work together on a digital literacies project that adapted the methodology used in Timiskaming. Similar to that project, the Long Point initiative was jointly developed by the three partners and approved by Chief and Council through a signed MOU, clarified after several discussions and meetings. As a first step, Tim Whiteduck and Rob McMahon presented findings and lessons learned from Timiskaming to local leadership. We noted the project involved a long-term partnership that adapted over time due to logistical setbacks experienced by the community researchers. We also stressed the importance of hiring a community-based project coordinator, and also setting up that person's role as encompassing public outreach as well as research activities.

The Long Point team decided to adapt existing research materials from Timiskaming (with permission from that community). While employing a similar method – household surveys conducted by community-based researchers – the Long Point team had different project goals. Specifically, Leonard and Henry wanted to collect and analyze survey data to inform technology planning for the new school. Based on the team's discussions, we modified the questions and added several new ones on topics such as whether people in the community are

interested in cellular service, what kinds of technology parents would like to see in the new school, what community leadership can do to meet household demands for Internet, and how community leadership can ensure that ICT is accessible to everyone in the community.

The household survey process also drew on – but adapted – the approach developed in Timiskaming. The project researchers developed a series of tools: project consent forms, a bank of survey questions, and a ‘how-to’ guide for local researchers. We modified these resources to meet the community’s interests. The team decided to distribute household surveys to 80 households in the community and several off-reserve homes. Incentives for students and respondents remained the same: a gift card and letter of recognition for students, and a prize draw for an iPad for survey respondents. We hired a community research coordinator, Audrey Polson, to help with distributing surveys and inputting data into Survey Monkey through a customized link created by Rob McMahon at UNB. As in Timiskaming, all survey data remains the property of Long Point First Nation, with UNB and FNEC asking permission to use it for academic or other outputs decided on in consultation with the community. Articles and other outputs are co-authored with Tim Whiteduck, Leonard Polson and Henry Rodgers, who had the opportunity to review them before publication.

A field visit to Long Point in Spring 2015 to introduce the project included meeting with the Chief, Leonard and Henry, and potential student participants. During this visit the Long Point partners suggested that the team issue regular memos and other communication materials to keep the community informed about the project. This idea helped us build awareness of digital literacies in the community. We hired Audrey Polson as a local research coordinator, and put together household survey toolkits that include instructions, surveys, prize draw receipts, and a ‘to do’ checklist. We also approached student researchers to distribute and collect the surveys.

When put into practice, much like in Timiskaming, the survey process in Long Point unfolded in an unpredictable manner. The local students initially involved in the project declined to participate later on. This may be due to several factors. Fewer students live in Long Point, and those who do are younger than those in Timiskaming (in Grades 9, 10 and 11). These younger students also do not require community service credits as part of their coursework. The survey project in Long Point also took place in summer, a time when many students are away on holidays or working. Given this situation, similar to Timiskaming, Audrey, the local community research coordinator, completed survey distribution.

Due to other commitments, once data collection was completed Audrey was unable to continue with the project. The team identified another community member, a local Youth ICT Worker named Alexia Pichette, to contribute to data entry work. Alexia completed inputting the data into Survey Monkey, and as in Timiskaming, the team jointly analyzed the survey data and produced reports that the Long Point team might use to inform community projects moving forward. Similar to in Timiskaming, this project resulted in some interesting data regarding ICT use in the community, raised local awareness of digital literacies, and provided community-based researchers with experience in designing, conducting and interpreting a survey project. Tim Whiteduck is planning a return visit to Long Point to present the results of the household survey, including this article, to Henry, Leonard and others in the community.

Reflecting on commonalities and contrasts between the two digital literacies projects, it is clear that in community engaged research with Indigenous peoples, no two partnerships are alike (Adams & Faulkhead, 2012). The First Nations partners in Timiskaming and Long Point each had different ideas regarding the focus, process and outcomes of their digital literacies projects. The two communities also had different resources available to support their involvement. In Timiskaming, the project engaged a full-time research coordinator who was on staff at the Education Department, as well as a number of local youth, including a co-op student who worked at the Band office. In Long Point, the researchers benefitted from the involvement of two local adults, who organized youth engagement, public outreach, and data collection and analysis for the project. The communities also shared information about their projects with one another, and the planning discussions helped the project team develop ICT research toolkits that are now available to other communities interested in learning about and promoting digital literacies. These resources include a process to plan household surveys, a list of potential survey questions, and other research tools such as survey consent forms. The team has also presented these tools to another Indigenous community and to researchers affiliated with the FNI project for consideration in their own digital literacies projects.

Building Digital Literacies in Communities: From Research Outcomes to Research Process

The First Mile model of innovation (Paisley & Richardson, 1998; Strover, 2000) provides a conceptual framework we use to reflect on our engaged research project methodology, and proposes a series of steps that other researchers can apply in similarly focused initiatives. McMahon et al. (2014) describe a two-step model of First Mile innovation that involves first working with local communities to identify resources and expertise to carry forward ICT development initiatives. Project collaborators in engaged research jointly shape the scope, focus and outcomes of research. The next step involves building relationships among communities. This includes partnering with regional community intermediary organizations such as FNEC to access expertise, economies of scale, advocacy support and other benefits of larger-scale aggregation. This two-step process highlights how First Mile projects emerge from the unique circumstances of diverse communities, while also providing opportunities to scale up local initiatives through regional collaboration, such as knowledge-sharing between Timiskaming and Long Point. Table 1 compares aspects of the engaged research process that we adapted in our First Mile project with more conventional approaches.

Table 1: Steps in Engaged Research Process

	Engaged research process	Conventional research process
Research Conceptualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities as co-researchers who work with university-based researchers to leverage their internal resources and capacities over a period of months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities as research subjects studied by outside ‘experts’, often for a fixed period of time
Research Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upfront, reciprocal and collaborative engagement with the community actors who drive project relevance and sustainability • Case studies and community engagement activities focus on situated processes rather than generalizable findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research designed by university-based researchers, sometimes independent from community input • Standardized research can support generalizable findings
Data Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community actors in data gathering to facilitate the conditions that give rise to effective ICT development and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External researchers conduct data-gathering activities
Data Analysis and Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively incorporate the voices of community members in data analysis and proposing solutions to policy or practical challenges • Co-constructed findings can support culturally appropriate research and ethical imperatives to reduce harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis is conducted by institutional experts, typically external from the community • This is to maintain objectivity and reduce interpretive bias

Research Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities retain ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) over project data and outcomes • Partnerships with regional community intermediary organizations enables communities to access expertise, economies of scale, advocacy support and other benefits of larger-scale aggregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities or other research organizations extract informational resources held by Indigenous communities for their own purposes
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As noted earlier, Indigenous peoples have long argued that they must drive research and development agendas (Tuhivai Smith, 2012). Over the years, Indigenous organizations and their research partners in universities have developed ways to support communities in developing and retaining project processes, data and outcomes, as expressed in the formal principles of Ownership, Control, Assess and Possession (OCAP) (Assembly of First Nations, 2007; FNIGC, 2014; Schnarch, 2004). Such engaged research aims to provide opportunities for the multi-directional transfer of skills and knowledge between community-based and university-based researchers. This principle of reciprocity includes support for Indigenous ownership in and control over research data and outcomes.

In Canada, this focus is also reflected in the ethical conduct required of researchers by federal funding agencies. For example, Chapter 9 (Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada) of the 2nd edition of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* points out the importance of trust, communication, mutually beneficial research goals, appropriate research collaborations or partnerships, and ethical conduct in research with Indigenous peoples (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014).

Observing OCAP principles means that university-based and community-based researchers can shape collaborative projects over time to involve all partners from the earliest stages of project conception and design, through to the analysis and dissemination of results. Communities retain ownership of research data and project deliverables, and universities request permission to use these materials for jointly-authored research and public outreach materials. University-based partners benefit from this process, since the community knowledge they draw on is collected, interpreted and validated by involved people. This supports efforts to conduct appropriate and relevant research. Community-based researchers also offer invaluable logistical support for field visits, connect university-based researchers with local contacts, manage interviews, and act as guides. Importantly, these various activities and process come

together in long-term and ongoing partnerships that explore how projects and their outcomes might be integrated in the lived realities of community members. Table 2 illustrates the benefits of this multi-directional process.

Table 2: Benefits of Engaged Research Process

	For University-based researchers	For Community-based researchers
Formal Research Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish relationship based on clarity, respect and trust • Clarify roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish relationship based on clarity, respect and trust • Clarify roles and responsibilities
Discussions on Nature, Scope, and Focus of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational and logistical support for field research • Connect with local contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit from research outcomes • Ensure research meets local needs
Involving Community Members in Data Collection and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local support for research activities • Validation of culturally appropriate research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building in research activities • Local employment
Guidelines on Collection and Use of Research Data and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfill research ethics requirements • Generate academic outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain OCAP over data and outcomes

As discussed throughout this paper, the dynamic and uncertain nature of ICT development and use makes digital literacies research and practice a necessarily fluid endeavor. The rapid speed of technological innovation often outpaces that of research activity – particularly in projects that aim to provide concrete, sustained benefits for involved communities. Furthermore, the unique contexts present in diverse communities means that digital literacies projects must be adaptable and flexible: practical setbacks can emerge in the course of research. In this paper we described several unexpected developments that occurred during our projects with Timiskaming and Long Point. We also discussed how community engaged methodologies support research partners in identifying and leveraging the resources and capacities already held by communities to address these challenges.

The theoretical framework of Indigenous resurgence provides strong lessons for how research partners located in universities and in communities can generate mutually beneficial projects. It provides a perspective that stresses the importance of weaving Indigenous knowledge, resources and learning into the fabric of research initiatives created in partnership

with communities. This approach provides important lessons for all kinds of community-engaged research projects. Indigenous resurgence can help increase project sustainability over time, while meeting ethical imperatives to practice respectful research. It can also generate high levels of project relevance and sustainability among community members. For all these reasons and more, practices of Indigenous resurgence will be of interest to community-engaged researchers working in a wide range of contexts.

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Reports from the Field

Strengthening All Our Relations

Sylvia Moore

ABSTRACT This article is a reflection on an education research project, based in a Mi'kmaw community, which brought together staff and students from North Queens School with community members from Wildcat First Nation to collaborate in a project involving Atlantic salmon and bass in the Mi'kmaw community. Framed in the Mi'kmaw concept of *msit no'kmaq* (all my relations), the writing explores four strands of interconnectivity that exemplify how engaged scholarship with Indigenous communities is based in respectful and reciprocal relationships. The four strands represent relationships: between adults, adults and children, humans and salmon, and people and the land.

KEYWORDS collaborative research; interconnectivity; relationships; engaging community

This is a reflection on research that brought together the members of the Mi'kmaw community of Wildcat First Nation as well as the staff and students of North Queens School in southwest Nova Scotia. The research, extending over a period of eight weeks in the spring of 2008, examined the work of the K-6 school staff and the Mi'kmaw community members in centering and legitimating Mi'kmaw knowledge in education. The focus of the collaborative work was a salmon project in which Atlantic salmon were raised and then released into the local Wildcat River. The project was based in Wildcat First Nation where the hatching of three hundred salmon eggs could be observed and where participants were invited to share knowledge through stories (Moore, 2017).

The collaborative research team involved Todd Labrador, Jamie Jerney, Tina Dixon, shalan joudry, and Sylvia Moore. Todd is an Elder and traditional teacher, Jamie is a traditional teacher who regularly came to the school to work with teachers and students, and Tina was the Aboriginal Student Support Worker. Todd, Tina, and Jamie are all members of Wildcat First Nation. Shalan is a traditional storyteller who is a member of Bear River First Nation and she is my daughter. At the time of the salmon project, I was a teacher and school administrator at North Queens Community School and was undertaking research as part of my PhD studies in education. Todd, shalan, Jamie, Tina, and I had all worked together for several years on various projects, guided by valuing children and youth as the heart of a nation. This particular research contributed to our on-going efforts to promote culturally relevant curriculum in the education of our children and grandchildren, and it also fulfilled my university research requirements. The research developed into long-term sustained work between the school staff and the Mi'kmaw community whereby the groups continued to collaborate in an annual salmon project.

I used Indigenous research methodology by promoting the well being of the community (Jimenez Estrada, 2005; Smith, 1999; Rigney, 1999; Kovach, 2005) and by privileging Indigenous scholars and theories in framing and analyzing the research (Battiste and Henderson, 2000).¹ The conceptual framework for this research was *msit no'kmaq*, a Mi'kmaw phrase acknowledging "all my relations." Elder Albert Marshall confirms that "our [Mi'kmaw] teachings are based on the interconnectedness of all things" (Collaborative Salmon Initiative Planning Committee, 2007, p. 17) and relationships are at the very core of this connectedness. Several Indigenous researchers address the importance of the researcher's relations. Jean Graveline (1998) refers to the researcher-in-relation, Margaret Kovach (2009) discusses the relational skills of researchers, and Sean Wilson (2008) stresses researcher accountability to all our relations. Vine Deloria (1999) states that relationships can be used as a research tool.

The foundation of the work between school educators and Mi'kmaw community members was respectful and reciprocal relations in working together in the salmon project. However, there were other relationships that also reflect the ways in which people were engaged in the research. These included relationships between adults and children, humans and the salmon, and participants and the land. These four categories of relationships are like the strands of a braid that are interwoven and together represent strengthened research engagement. In this article, I reflect on each of those four strands and explore the nature of those relationships.

Strand One: Relationships Among the Adults

At the center of this research project were the three hundred salmon eggs obtained from a local federal fish hatchery in the spring of 2008 and placed in a glass tank in Wildcat First Nation where they were accessible to the participants. Staff and students from the school travelled to the community to learn about the salmon by observing them as they hatched and by participating in learning activities, including the salmon release. Staff, students, parents, and the public were also invited to participate in weekly learning circles to learn more about salmon through the shared stories of Elders, traditional teachers, biologists, and circle participants. Lori Lambert (2014) describes circles as inclusive and within sharing circles all participants are viewed as equal (p. 10).

Each learning circle began with Todd smudging the area and offering a prayer. Prayer is "a cultural learning process which promotes the principles of respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity" (Archibald, 1997, p. 1-2). During the sharing circles, people told stories about catching salmon, preparing and eating salmon, the health of the salmon population, the life cycle of the salmon, and the state of the local river. All people had an interest in the salmon and all had stories to tell. The people and the salmon are both part of the life on the land in this region. The learning circles honoured people as everyone listened and everyone's voice was valued in the learning.

The circles were occasions for talking and listening, and it was through this listening and

¹ The "P" in this writing is inextricably connected to, and reflects the work of, the research team that included Todd Labrador, Tina Dixon, shalan joudry, Jamie Jerme, and myself.

sharing of stories that we got to know one another better. In considering the skills researchers require to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities, Kovach (2009) writes, “[T]hey know when to step up and when to step back...my experience tells me that these folks have humility, a sense of humor, and are attuned—all of which are relational skills (p. 65).” As I reflect on the salmon project, I realize that such skills were reflected in the relationships of adults involved in the salmon project. Humility meant that people came into the learning circles with an open mind and a good heart to learn from others. There was laughter in the circles, which eased tension and contributed to the good-natured atmosphere of the event. Being attuned to other people requires respectful listening. Evelyn Steinhauer (2002) quotes a Cree manual when she writes: “By listening intently you show honor, consider the well being of others, and treat others with kindness and courtesy” (p. 73).

Having the salmon project in the community rather than at the school was important because it located the community as the center of learning. It was also a way to welcome increased parent involvement in education. Mi’kmaw Elder Murdena Marshall reminded me, “Remember that it was only until recently that Mi’kmaw parents were allowed to be in schools. Parents are still not comfortable in schools” (personal communication, October 23, 2009). In this research, the school staff was reaching out to Wildcat First Nation to learn from them and with them. This validated and legitimated the knowledge of community members (Moore, 2012). The research was an opportunity for teachers themselves to learn more about Mi’kmaw ways of doing, knowing, and being.

Jamie later reflected on the on-going relationship between community members and teachers:

We cannot look at the participants in work such as the salmon project as Native or non-Native. We all want to teach the youth. We all want to make life better for others. But our community has to heal. Teachers can help us heal by teaching our history in the schools. We talk, we teach, and we heal. (personal communication, August 31, 2009)

The relationships between people were nurtured through sharing in a number of different ways. We shared the experience of watching the salmon eggs hatch, we shared stories, and we shared food at the end of each learning circle and after the salmon release. There was also sharing of the responsibility of releasing salmon into the river. Each person could release some of the salmon and participate in the ceremony. Sharing is a way of Mi’kmaw life that includes materials, considerations, friendship, and knowledge (Prosper, Paulette, and Davis, 2004, p. 8).

The research drew people in and engaged them by the very nature of the activity. The community was inviting and the project was open to all people. “Learning for all,” as Todd once described it. I have often heard him quote his father, Hereditary Chief and Elder Charlie Labrador: “If you look underground you will see that all the roots of all the trees and plants are spread out and touching one another. It is as if they are holding hands. We, too, need one

another and reach out through our relationships in the world to support one another.” The feeling of holding hands was synonymous with a sense that we were all in the salmon project together and supporting one another in the learning experience.

Strand Two: Relationships Between the People and the Salmon

The people who joined in the project were interested in the salmon and thus the fish became a connector of the participants. People would stand at the tank watching the salmon, sometimes in silence and on other occasions they talked to the salmon or other people who were also watching. The change in salmon eggs, as they hatched, was difficult to discern. When they



Figure 1: Student holding salmon (May 18, 2008) Photo by: Salmon project team

began to hatch, each salmon was held close to the bottom by the weight of the egg sac still attached to it. The sac not only nourished the salmon until it was old enough to find its own food, but the weight also kept each one safely hidden amongst the rocks on the bottom of the tank. The viewers had to be keen to see the small fish.

Gathering in the room with the salmon eggs and sharing talk was a celebration for both the new life that was emerging and for the opportunity that we, as humans, had to witness it. Albert Marshall describes the salmon as a “revered species” that has been both a food source and “used in spiritual celebrations as an expression of gratitude to the Creator for what he gave to us” (p. 12). When I talked with Albert about the salmon project, he explained that learning about something is “surface learning.” But when we learn from something, we are in a respectful relationship with the entity and the learning is deep (personal communication, October 23, 2009). Shawn Wilson (2001) explains that knowledge is relational through relationships with all of creation: “It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge” (p. 177).

Tina explained to me the impact the salmon had on the community:

The salmon gave us a connection as community members and revitalized the community. We nurtured the salmon. It was like a rebirth or a beginning. [Elder] Frank [Jermy] used to tell me that when he was a boy the river was teeming with salmon. You could look into the river and see them. When we released the salmon, it gave us hope that the rivers will be alive again. It brought people into our community. It gave us a new sense of ourselves as Mi'kmaw people, as a community that had something to offer. We had knowledge to share with others. It was the rebirth of the community. (personal communication, March 15, 2009)

The project ended with a ceremony and release of the salmon. Each person had a cup with

two or three salmon in it. While waiting for the release, people looked at “their” fish, talked to them, showed them to other people, and strengthened the connection between humans and fish. The release ceremony included smudging, prayers, drumming and the offering of tobacco to acknowledge the spirit of the salmon. We had indeed learned in relationship with the salmon.

Strand three: Relationships between adults and children

The research addressed the needs of the community to have their children educated in culturally relevant ways and to have them learning culturally relevant knowledge. The salmon project promoted the community in playing a lead role in education not only as the site of the learning but also by sharing their teachings from Elders, traditional teachers, and storytelling. It was an opportunity for the community to contribute to the education of their own, as well as all other, children. If, as Marie Battiste (2008) writes, research with Indigenous peoples “should empower and benefit Indigenous communities and cultures, not just researchers, their institutions, or Canadian society” (p. 501), then one way of doing that is to work with children and youth.

Parents, grandparents, and extended family want the children and youth to get an education and do well in school. They want children to be happy and to have good lives, however that may be conceptualized. Adults have the understanding that the children and youth of today will be the adults and leaders of tomorrow. Hence, in working with children and youth, there is an important relationship between the present and the future, between what we do now and what happens in the next seven generations. Indigenous communities have a vested interest in the well being of their children and the coming generations of children and they are engaged in efforts that support children and youth. Mi’kmaw Chief Darlene Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation gives voice to the fundamental values of work with children: “At the end of the day it’s about the children; it’s always about the children” (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006, 0:20). The salmon project was open to all students and teachers as well as all community members and, as such, it was an opportunity for the adults to work together for children.



Figure 2: Mother and child (May 18, 2008) Credit: Salmon project team

The research team and Mi’kmaw community members had also supported Mi’kmaw student Nicholas Whynot (Whynot & Moore, 2003) in creating the video documentary *A’tugwet*, in which Wildcat community members shared stories about their traditions and experiences in the community. During the video production, community members were open to participating in the school project that extended learning in a Mi’kmaw studies course. The video was later

issued by the Nova Scotia Department of Education as a learning resource for Nova Scotia schools.

Russell Bishop (2008) refers to “a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations” (p. 446) in which a positive relationship between the teachers and students is paramount to the engagement and success of students in learning. Taking students to the salmon project in Wildcat First Nation was an example of the teachers’ efforts to work with the Mi’kmaw community to support student learning. I watched as the students arrived in Wildcat First Nation, stepped down from the bus, and rushed to the river’s edge to explore. They viewed the salmon and commented on the changes since the last time they visited. The students listened as community members spoke, telling stories about salmon, the culture, and the community, thus demonstrating the “intergenerational communication of essential ideas” (Lanigan, 1998, p. 103).

Children and adults alike were excited on the day of the salmon release. Children spent time playing under the trees or looking for life that lives on the banks of the river. Parents held their young children, and teachers and parents closely supervised all students to ensure their safety along the water. The concern for the children and their learning was evident in the assurance that all children had cups containing salmon before the adults themselves took the remaining cups. Adults could be heard discussing the salmon with children and prompting their thoughts with talk of the growth of the salmon since hatching, the long journey the salmon undertake from the release site to the Atlantic Ocean, and thoughts of salmon safety in the river water. Adults further encouraged students’ thinking with questions such as “Do you notice...? What do you think...? Can you imagine...?” These conversations were an indication of the adults’ relationship with the children and their sense of responsibility for the children’s learning.

The youngest students were the first to approach the water’s edge, gently lowering their cups into the water and allowing the salmon to swim into the open water. Then older children released their salmon, and finally adults lowered their cups into the water. Immediately after the release, I noticed that some children stood quietly gazing at the river and others lingered by the shore to play in the water.

Strand Four: The Relationship of People and the Land

The traditional territory of the Mi’kmaq² encompass the lands now called Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. Wildcat First Nation is located in Kespukwitk, which is one of seven districts of the Mi’kmaw Nation. The Wildcat River, a tributary of the Medway River, flows through the community to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Wildcat River is one of several natal rivers, in the region, for Atlantic salmon. The concern for the salmon was, by default, also a concern for the environment in which they lived.

² In explaining the proper use of the terms “Mi’kmaq” and “Mi’kmaw”, the “Mi’kmaw Resource Guide” states “Mi’kmaq” refers to “The Family”. Mi’kmaw is the singular form of the word and is also an adjective when it precedes a noun (eg. Mi’kmaw people) (p. 2). (The Union of Nova Scotia Indians, The Native Council of Nova Scotia, and The Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, n.d.).

The adults and students alike could understand that humans impact the river. For example, pollution, acid rain, and forestry all affect the quality of the water in which the salmon live. Robin Wall Kimmerer defines watershed health as “a community of reciprocity, a place where all the pieces are intact and interact with one another in a mutually beneficial, reciprocal way” (Wall Kimmerer, 2012). Contemplating the health of the salmon habitat was a way that people became closer to the land. During one of the learning circles, participants walked along the river with Todd



Releasing the salmon (May 18, 2008)
Credit: Salmon project team

as he talked about how plentiful salmon were during his childhood. Others joined in with their own stories of salmon size and population or with other stories of events that took place many years ago along the river. The past, the present, and place all connected people to time, land, and our human lives. While walking along the river that day, some speakers pointed out and told stories about the places of fast current as well as eddies and still ponds. There were also descriptions of how the river floods areas of land as the snow melts in the spring. This understanding helped people to know the nature of the river. During their visits, groups of students explored the river, the trees and bushes growing along its banks, the granite rocks protruding through the earth, and the occasional small gravel areas that allow one to stand barefoot at the water’s edge. Everyone became more familiar with the river and the land.

Before the salmon release, biologists and Elders explained that the small salmon would do best if released in a place where the water was slow moving and vegetation was hanging over the bank. Walking along the shoreline looking for such a place on the day of the release was another opportunity for people to be in close contact with the river and the land. Fred Metallic (2008) describes the Mi’kmaw connection to the land when he writes:

in accepting that we have always lived from our land, in accepting that the land has taken care of us, we also accept that the land is a gift given to us by the Creator. By acknowledging the land in this way, we affirm our relationship to its beings. (p. 62)

Concluding Comments

This educational research set out to explore the ways in which Mi’kmaw community members and school staff could collaborate to center and legitimate Indigenous knowledge in an education project focused on raising and releasing Atlantic salmon. The Mi’kmaw concept of *msit no’kmaq* (all my relations) provided a framework for this reflective writing that explored other relationships that strengthened people’s engagement in the research. In addition to the relationships between adults, there were also adult and child, humans and salmon, and

people and land connections that engaged participants in the educational needs of the present generation of children as well as the coming generations.

About the Author

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Engaging Indigenous Communities in the Classroom: The Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and Miami University

Robin Dushane, Sandra Garner, Casey Smitson, Jason Banks

ABSTRACT This article explores the concepts of community driven research and experiential learning in the context of partnerships between universities and indigenous communities. Specifically, this article examines the successes and challenges of Miami University's partnership with the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma (ESTOO). Taking a dialogic approach, a professor, two students and a tribal leader, reflect on their experiences within the partnership and provide insight into how partnerships between universities and indigenous communities might develop, function, and serve both students and community members.

KEYWORDS community driven research; experiential learning; Indigenous communities

In 1969, Vine Deloria, Jr., offered a powerful critique of academic research *on* Indigenous cultures as he drew attention to the negative impacts on the very communities being studied. His now canonical chapter, "Anthropologists and Other Friends" in *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, clearly articulated the complicity of researchers in the continued colonization of Native American communities (Deloria, Jr., 1969). Since that time, scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) have proposed guidelines for decolonized methodologies, and many scholars, both Indigenous and non, have sought to engage in more equitable, sensitive, and collaborative research relationships with the communities they study.

However, little focus has emerged regarding teacher/scholar models in which students contribute on the ground *in* Indigenous communities. How can scholars incorporate culturally sensitive approaches, theory, and methods into classrooms, frequently filled with non-Native students who have little or no knowledge about the histories and cultures of Indigenous communities and, to be honest, have little desire to learn (at least in regards to the numbers necessary to fill classes within the institutional structure)? Two programs have provided inspiration and demonstrate the breadth of what teaching models may look like: the Myaamia Center (Miami University) and the Cherokee Study Abroad program (University of North Carolina).

Since 2012, a course that is part of the core curriculum for American Studies majors (AMS), at Miami University (Oxford) has provided community-driven research and products for the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma (ESTOO). Each year the tribe identifies projects needed for their community, and students collaborate with tribal members to complete these

assignments. Student research has resulted in an article written for the tribal newsletter, *The Shooting Star*, which has a readership of more than 3,000, a short film about the tribe, a collection of Shawnee myths, and in 2014 a service learning, summer workshop to support the ESTOO's summer youth culture camp was added.

This article is a collaborative effort that reflects on the successes and challenges of this type of experiential, service learning from three perspectives—that of the Indigenous community (ESTOO), the teacher/scholar, and two students who have been involved in a variety of projects over two years (2013—2015). In the first section, we'll provide some background about the institutions involved, describe the projects, and introduce the collaborators involved with this article. The second section of this paper is a dialogic exchange from the three perspectives. Finally we'll conclude with a summary of what we've learned from this process and offer our focus for future efforts.

Background, Description, and Introduction

There is a long, rich history of Native presence in present-day Ohio. For millennia, indigenous cultures such as the so-called Adena, Hopewell, and early Woodlands era people to historic tribes such as the Shawnee have called this geographical location home. When Ohio became a state in 1803, there was still a significant Native presence in the state. After the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, tribal groups were removed, during a series of waves that lasted from the early 1830s through the late 1840s, to "Indian Territory." As a result of this history, in spite of the fact that there is a Native population in Ohio, for today's 21st century university student in Ohio, Native presence is invisible. There are no federally recognized tribes in the state. In this historical context it is not surprising that for those students who attend Miami University, Native Americans are invisible or a people of the past.

Miami University was founded in 1809 and is the oldest university in the state of Ohio. It is a public university located in a rural area about thirty-five miles northeast of Cincinnati, which at present (2015) serves more than 15,000 undergraduate students. For decades the university has been touted by students and alumni as "the Ivy league of the Midwest" and current marketing campaigns promote the university as a "Public Ivy League" institution. This is an important context as it speaks to the sense of privilege and lack of diversity that marks the overall student body. Learning about the original inhabitants, the Shawnee, has the potential to broaden these students' understanding.

After the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, many Shawnee began moving west, but some remained in Ohio, and in 1817 three reservations were established in the northeastern part of the state: Hog Creek, Wapakoneta, and Lewistown. The latter reserve has a direct ancestral relationship with the contemporary tribe ESTOO. In September 1832, the Shawnee residing on these reserves began the long walk to Indian Territory. The inhabitants of Lewistown arrived at the site of their new home in Indian Territory in December 1832. Thirty percent of the group died during the removal process.

Today ESTOO tribal membership exceeds 3,200 members. The tribal complex remains at the site of their removal destination near the Oklahoma-Missouri line in Ottawa County,

Oklahoma. The tribe's three casinos, travel center, hotel and administrative offices employ over 600 people and each of these facilities is owned outright by the Tribe. Current land holdings of the ESTOO exceed 1,700 acres. These holdings are all within the tribe's original reservation, as assigned in 1832. The nine buildings which house the administrative staff of the tribe have all been constructed since 1980 to the present. The Administrative Offices of the ESTOO include twenty-five separate departments.

The primary department which serves as the contact point for the relationship between the service learning, experiential community outreach classes taught at Miami University is the Cultural Preservation Department whose mission is: "Promoting knowledge of historical and participation in Contemporary Shawnee Culture." Robin Dushane serves as ESTOO's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) and has been employed by the Tribe for ten years. She began as the Cultural Preservation Director, re-establishing the department after an absence of ten years. Her many accomplishments include arts revitalization, directing the NAGPRA office, language preservation, monthly cultural events, directing the Tribal Museum, and establishment of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (funded through the Department of Interior). She is a tribal spouse of seventeen years. As the THPO for ESTOO her motivation for seeking a partnership with academia was to pursue further assistance with tribal research and support, vis-à-vis camp counselors for the ESTOO youth summer culture camp.

Sandra Garner, an assistant professor in American Studies, serves as the primary contact person from Miami University and teaches the research course and summer workshop that are involved in this collaborative relationship. A graduate of The Ohio State University, her broad research and teaching interest focuses on culture, specifically issues of identity, belonging, difference, as well as, intercultural awareness and understanding—particularly the construct of Indigenous identities emergent from settler colonial contexts. Her pedagogical approach seeks to engage students in community outreach through experiential learning activities and the development of community-driven research projects. To date, her research has focused on Lakota on the Rosebud Reservation, where she was a tribal spouse for more than 20 years. She came into this working relationship with little specific knowledge about Shawnee history or culture, but was inspired to offer assistance as a result of meeting ESTOO Chief Glenna Wallace.

Two former students that have been associated with the Miami University courses also collaborated on this article in order to provide a student perspective of the projects. Jason Banks is a recent graduate of Miami University (2015) receiving his BA in Political Science with minors in Management and Latin American Studies. As an undergraduate student, Bank's first introduction to ESTOO came as a result of a course he took with Dr. Garner. His team's final research paper on Quatawapea (Col. Lewis), a Shawnee chief instrumental in founding the Lewistown reservation in Ohio, was published in the ESTOO's newsletter, *The Shooting Star*. He has traveled to Oklahoma on three occasions, on two of which he served as a counselor in the Summer Youth Culture Camp. Banks plans on pursuing a graduate degree in Public Policy.

Casey Smitson graduated from Miami University (2014) with a double major: an honors distinction in American Studies and German. Smitson served as an Undergraduate Associate

for the American Identities course (2014) and developed a pilot summer camp program with the Eastern Shawnee as part of her senior honors thesis project. After graduation, she spent a year living and teaching in Düsseldorf, Germany as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant. She is currently back at Miami University pursuing a master's degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education.

The collaborative research engagement between ESTOO and Miami University is beginning its fourth year and has involved two courses, as well as a senior honors thesis, and several independent studies. AMS (American Studies) 301 titled "*American Identities: Community-driven Research*" is a mid-range required course for AMS majors that focuses on research methods and analyses used in the field of American studies. In addition to teaching students to formulate and implement a research plan, the course is designed to build an ethos of teamwork and to develop projects that speak to different audiences. Each year the ESTOO communicates ideas about research projects, and students present their final projects to the tribe. All research materials and final projects are donated to the tribe.

In 2015, a summer travel away workshop: "Engaging Shawnee Youth" was officially offered for the first time. The summer workshop was based on a model developed by Smitson as part of her thesis the previous year. In 2014, three students traveled to Oklahoma to implement the model as a trial. This was a volunteer service activity for these students. In 2015, the workshop received official course approval and five participated in a ten day long trip to support the ESTOO's Youth Culture Camp. In the remainder of this article, we (Dushane (RD), Garner (SG), Banks (JB), and Smitson (CS)) reflect on these projects from a variety of lenses: tribal, academic, and student. We begin by offering our initial impressions, a discussion of specific aspects of the various projects, and concluding with what we see as the strengths and weakness as we plan for the future.

Initial Impressions

Robin Dushane: I knew I needed assistance and that I needed help from an academic institution. Establishing a long-term, consistent relationship has been an important part of this process. We took the necessary time and effort to establish a relationship, it was not something that we accomplished and knocked out real fast. It helps to build trust. Establishing a regular routine of communication is working very well. Whenever we have something to be talked out, we are able to do that and we are getting better at it. For people who don't see each other but one week a year we have good communication. This builds a bridge of trust; it made me realize that I'm working with dependable people. I wouldn't have felt good about it if I was just working with a professor that didn't have experience working with Native cultures, that was the key, I think. You always listen to us. You don't tell us what we need. This relationship was a godsend and I'm really looking forward to seeing where it goes.

Sandra Garner: Two goals motivated me to initiate this in partnership. First was a strong desire to contribute and support Native communities with projects they identify and define as important. Second was a desire to model a pedagogical approach that understands student

learning about different cultures is limited by classroom-only education and that students value the experience of producing products that have real-world meaning. Experiential learning is a powerful tool to understand issues of power, difference, and other world-views.

I went into this collaborative process knowing that there would be a learning curve as I worked to build a level of trust with the community—trust both in the sense that we would listen to the community’s needs and feedback, but also that we are dependable and would consistently return over time. I did not anticipate the learning curve in two regards. First, although I have a great deal of experience working with Native communities and have a strong foundation regarding Native American history and culture, I had little knowledge specific to ESTOO, which may be one of the most difficult tribes to trace from a historical perspective. Four years later I’m only beginning to get a handle on the basics. This relates to the second issue, how to provide students with the necessary foundational knowledge and skills to actually conduct meaningful research for the tribe. I have depended greatly on student feedback in order to shape course content. It is only after four years of reworking the syllabus, that I feel I have struck a good balance and this year will replicate the initial readings meant to contextualize the projects that the students will develop.

Jason Banks: As a recent graduate of Miami University, I never anticipated my research in Dr. Garner’s class to have had such a strong impact on the lives of others. Learning how to produce adequate research materials has definitely been a journey. Prior to taking AMS 301 (fall 2014), my inexperience with research methods meant I did not have the skills to uncover historical information pertaining to ESTOO. My former experiences and expectations with research were from a naïve point of view, since my only understanding of research was finding information and stating my conclusions. I soon learned, research could take on a life of its own, especially when I realized my contributions not only affected how well I performed in the classroom, but more importantly how my research affected those outside of the classroom. Researching ESTOO provided me with a unique experience to work independently on numerous projects and allowed me to engage in experiences that I never thought I would appreciate so much.

Casey Smitson: Working with the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma was a truly transformational learning opportunity that challenged me to grow both personally and academically. Serving as an Undergraduate Associate (UA) for Dr. Garner’s AMS 301 course and then later partnering with ESTOO as part of my senior thesis introduced me to vibrant community and challenged me to think critically about service and what it entails. Through these experiences, I developed a better understanding of the Eastern Shawnee and their stories and graduated with improved research skills, ability to communicate, and confidence in my ability to respectfully serve and contribute to diverse communities.

AMS 301: “American Identities: Community Driven Research”

Sandra: When I was first asked to teach this course, the title was “Methods and Practices in American Studies” and student learning objectives included developing and implementing a research project. It is a preparatory course for senior capstone projects. The idea of developing research projects that would contribute to ESTOO provides students the opportunity to think through a research plan and create projects in multiple media that address a variety of audiences. Each year the projects identified by the tribe differ and after the 2013-2014 school year I switched and started teach the course during spring semester.

This course has historically had low student enrollment. This is helpful for managing this type of classroom, but makes institutional buy-in difficult to maintain. After the first year I taught the course, the name was changed to “American Identities” and the learning objectives remained unchanged. Faculty thought the name change would generate greater student interest and indeed it does. Yet, it has created some confusion for students registering for the course. Below is a brief description of the projects to date.

Year 1 (FA 2012): Students produced posters that summarized research topics they chose. Chief Wallace came to campus at the end of the semester and students presented their research to her.

Year 2 (FA 2013): Four projects were identified by Chief Wallace and the THPO, Robin Dushane. These included: 1) identify and collect Shawnee myths and legends; 2) create a google map of the removal route of the Shawnee from Lewistown (Ohio) to Oklahoma; 3) research and write a biography of a Shawnee Chief (Quatawapea, Col. Lewis). Lewis was instrumental in the formation of the Shawnee reserves in Ohio and Lewistown was named for him; and 4) create a brief film about Shawnee history geared toward a general audience.

Year 3 (SP 2015): Three projects were identified: 1) revise the film after feedback from the tribe; 2) biographical research on early Shawnee leaders in Oklahoma; and 3) planning and marketing the Summer Travel Away workshop to support ESTOO’s Youth Culture Camp.

Jason: I selected Dr. Garner’s AMS 301 course with little prior knowledge about Native cultures, minimal research experience, and an unclear concept of community-driven research. I chose to take the class because it fit well into my schedule and because I was curious about American Studies at Miami. I quickly realized that I was in for much more than I had bargained for. When I first saw the course syllabus, I was shocked by both the course workload and the expectations surrounding the research component of the class. I immediately considered dropping the class. After Dr. Garner explained the various projects and their significance to ESTOO, however, I decided to stay in the class. I was intrigued by the idea of doing research for a community instead of for the sole purpose of achieving a letter grade. My interest surrounding the projects quickly lead to excitement, and I became more willing to tackle the unknowns of the course and the daunting workload. Knowing that my work would serve ESTOO motivated me to take on new challenges and to fully commit to the class.

Despite my initial enthusiasm, the research proved challenging, and I discovered that my research skills needed to improve in order to retrieve the information requested by the tribe.

The expectation to do original research meant that I was required to collect and synthesize information to tell the story of a historical figure that had never been told before. Thankfully, I was not alone in this process; I had the support of the three other students in my group and of Dr. Garner, who was always there to offer words of wisdom, assistance, and reassurance. She taught me to research by allowing me to stumble and then try again. This sometimes meant that research was more time consuming and strenuous than it should have been, but the extra effort was always worth it. Each obstacle that I encountered helped me to better understand research and provided me with the opportunity to better learn how to discover, interpret, and revive historical information. Dr. Garner understood that research is best learned by doing. She provided guidance but not answers, allowing me to develop a connection to my research and to appreciate and discover on my own how research functions.

Casey: My initial sense of detachment from the Eastern Shawnee and the projects set for the AMS 301 (2014) course changed when I went to visit the Eastern Shawnee in Oklahoma with Dr. Garner in preparation for the class. In Oklahoma, the Eastern Shawnee welcomed us as honored guests. We stayed in the Chief's home, were given personal tours of the tribal facilities, spoke with tribal leaders, and were invited to participate in community dinners and Shawnee language courses. These small glimpses of ESTOO life, introduced me to a dynamic community mobilizing itself to rediscover its culture, relearn its language, and assert its relevancy in the modern world. I left Oklahoma with a new understanding of ESTOO and with an excitement for the class and the opportunity to learn more about the ESTOO story.

When classes began, Dr. Garner and I had the task of communicating the importance of partnership and our excitement for it to a class of students who, like myself, had very little to no knowledge of Native cultures and communities. The class was small to begin with, but became even smaller after several students saw the rigorous syllabus and chose to drop the class. The student groups and I were not entirely sure of how to approach a class and the partnership with ESTOO and were uncomfortable with this uncertainty. Once the projects began to materialize, however, we began to acknowledge our experience, research skills, and overall ability to contribute. As a result, we were able to locate, organize, and present historical materials to ESTOO, which they will use to help tell their story of struggle, survival and modern resurgence. Serving ESTOO empowered us to identify our ability and responsibility to be agents of social change and to understand research as a skill that can be used to serve and energize diverse communities.

Sandra: Casey and Jason's comments are an affirmation for me in that they confirm my initial presuppositions about the course from a student perspective. Certainly the two do not represent all of the students who have participated in the course, and many are turned off by the amount of labor they perceive is required. Casey talks about the rigor, but in reality the readings and short response papers are no more onerous than those in other courses I teach. What does differ, however, is that in order to succeed the student must be able to conceptualize and complete a project that has a "real-world" audience and implications. In

order to do so, the student must be self-motivated and be able to work independently. While I think these are necessary skills for the working world, they are not frequently implemented at the university level.

Jason points to an issue that I face every time I teach this course. Research and critically evaluating sources is hard work. I do provide guidance in ways to approach the research process and work to communicate the importance of the thorough documentation of one's research. It is a lesson that many of us in academia have learned the hard way. You learn by doing and making mistakes. I'm heartened that Jason is reflective about this and those students who follow through with their projects have their "aha" moments. The sense of responsibility that comes from this collaborative relationship with the tribe does, as we see from the examples of these two students, have transformative potential. I'd like to reflect now on the specific projects that have been accomplished through this course.

Year 1—Robin: The posters were a wonderful starting point, a kick off for collaboration. The posters were helpful, we displayed two of them in our museum, but apart from that they were used rather minimally. Although we did not use the posters extensively, they were what we needed to engage in a small scale project and they helped us to focus on future projects. The first iteration of the course was more about an exercise of the partnership than the products produced, it was during the second and third years that we were able to do some focused planning together.

Sandra: I couldn't agree more with Robin. In fact, I was a bit embarrassed by the projects produced the first year, the quality of research was superficial and the posters not particularly good. But as Robin notes, it was the process that was beneficial.

The high point for me that semester was watching the students present their work to Chief Wallace. An educator herself, Chief Wallace was engaged and patient with the students and they learned a great deal from her. It was not until this moment that they really grasped that their work had an application in the real world. During the first year, to build a foundation for the project I chose readings about decolonizing research methods, practices, and the power of knowledge. Student feedback showed that this did not provide enough of a framework about the Shawnee specifically and I made major revisions the second year the class was offered.

Year 2--Robin: During the second year the projects were more focused and more useful to us. We were just so overwhelmed and so pleased that the projects were getting better and that we had products in our hands. The Colonel Lewis project and the collection of myths were the strongest projects from the second year. We published an article on Captain Lewis in our *Shooting Star* newsletter and used a small portion of the project to help us get started on our history grant application. In this way, the initial student research projects turned into bigger research projects. We read myths at our winter gathering and since the reading, people have become more interested in traditional stories and presenting them.

JG: There was a huge improvement the second year, and two of the four projects contributed significantly to tribal efforts. The class presented their projects to tribal employees via a Skype

session, and it was great for the students to hear feedback from a number of tribal members. It was heartening for me to attend the tribe's winter gathering in January 2015 and hear some of the Shawnee stories collected by students told at the event. The publication of the Lewis article in the tribe's newsletter was also an exciting, unanticipated bonus for the students who worked on that project.

Two of the projects were not as helpful. One group developed a google map that traced the tribe's removal route from Lewistown to Oklahoma. While the tribe has not directly used this project yet, it may still be of some future value. The fourth project, a brief film about the ESTOO, was admittedly not great. But it was helpful in that it gave us feedback from the tribe and laid the groundwork for a re-envisioned film the following year. To provide a framework for the students (based on student feedback from the previous year) I assigned materials that were Shawnee specific. This was the other extreme and based on that year's student feedback I reworked the initial readings for the third year's project.

Year 3--Robin: The third year was when everything stepped over the top. The video that one of the student groups produced was really something special. We shared the video at our community wide annual event called the Elder's Breakfast during our annual powwow. The event was attended by 250 people. What is different about this event is that many people arrive from all over the United States to come home. These are members that aren't local community, they come from afar. We have members all over the United States, but they don't come around but once a year. Everyone really appreciated that university students had taken interest in their community. The audience felt that we were important enough that college students came to make a video, and it was good. It is hard to express the impact that the video made on the community; it evoked a sense of pride. This whole processes, proliferating our history, when people outside the community are interested in our history, it gives more incentive to our people to learn their own history.

JG: The projects this year were exceptional, particularly the short film developed by the students. It is important to emphasize that the work on this film would not have resulted in such a great project, had students the previous year not developed a film. We were able to learn from the mistakes of the first year. For example, one area that was weak was in regards to the script and voiceover. The first year students provided the voiceover and did not adequately pace themselves--sometimes speaking too fast and at other times too slow. This year a professional offered his services and provided the voiceover for the script. It worked very well.

Another area that I changed going into the year's projects (based on student feedback) was setting the groundwork through initial readings. After three years I think I've finally hit on a combination that works. The students spent four weeks reading materials that provided a broad Native perspective on important issues such as language, history, sovereignty, land, "religion" and storytelling. Then each group spent two weeks reading Shawnee specific materials that related to their group projects. This seemed to work and I'll follow this approach in next year's projects.

There were two additional projects that came out of Year Three's class. One group

researched tribal leaders who had signed treaties and were referred to as chiefs during the early post-removal years. While they did not find anything to substantially add to what the tribe already knew, they were able to compile the sources into one location. The third group were assigned to the project of working with the tribe to plan the summer youth culture camp and to market the summer workshop to Miami students. The camp is described in more detail below.

Summer Workshop: Engaging Summer Youth

Robin: Camp couldn't have been done if I hadn't had assistance. We used to put on a small camp program, but we did not have many resources or campers. We only had two staff members and eight campers participate. At the beginning, I didn't realize how beneficial working with Miami would be to us. The camp experience has been elevated by the relationship; we are now able to have overnights and have more activities. Having organized activities and having a schedule were helpful. This partnership—producing a camp shaped by ESTOO goals and Miami's help achieving these goals—is working.

Casey: After the AMS 301 course concluded, I felt a connection to ESTOO and knew that I wanted to continue working with the tribe. I was particularly interested in learning how I could serve ESTOO youth. Looking back on my trip to Oklahoma, I remembered being struck by how the youth were not only learning their language, history, and culture but also applying these lessons to their daily experiences. Moved to support ESTOO youth, I approached ESTOO about the possibility of partnering with the tribe to create a culturally relevant summer camp program for my senior thesis. I proposed the creation of summer program aimed to provide a place for ESTOO youth to build community and relationships, learn about their culture, and to work on further discovering for themselves what it means to be Shawnee in a modern world.

The process of bringing the program to fruition was much more difficult than I ever imagined. Facilitating communication over the phone across both culture and distance proved to be particularly challenging. Although I regularly communicated with Robin Dushane, two tribal elders, and Dr. Garner, we often struggled to reach consensus on decisions regarding the program structure. Much of this difficulty stemmed from the fact our roles within the group were never clearly defined. This struggle was frustrating for me. I spent an enormous amount of time on the project, and sometimes had to check myself from the idea that the camp program was “my project.” The camp program belonged to ESTOO, and it was important for me to remember that just because I invested a significant amount of time on the project did not mean that I knew best. It was through this process that I truly came to understand community driven service. The project was not about me, it was about ESTOO youth.

Sandra: What Casey does not mention here is that she also honed her diplomacy skills during her work on the planning phase. She had to negotiate conference calls with Robin in Oklahoma and the elders, who were going to run the “culture” programming and live

on the west coast. All of those involved had very different visions of how the camp would work. Robin also had to negotiate these different participants who came to the process with very different backgrounds and motivations.

Implementation over Two Years

Casey: The implementation of the 2014 Culture Camp pilot was far from perfect, but was both fun and productive and represented a good first attempt. The program was successful in that it provided twenty ESTOO youth, ages 7-14, with a place to build relationships and to learn about and engage with their culture and identities. The campers practiced archery, played lacrosse, built a traditional housing structure, and assisted in preparing a meal from a three-sisters garden. Shortcomings included our failure to adequately staff and logistically organize the program which exhausted the counselors and detracted from the campers' experience. Further, some of the activities emphasizing Native worldviews and themes also fell flat. Thankfully, the partnership continued after I graduated and Dr. Garner and her AMS 301 course were able to implement a much improved program the following summer.

Robin: I wanted our tribal elder to oversee and help produce the schedule and oversee the activities. Sande came to me and said that she thought that Casey was capable of more of a leadership role. We adjusted and compromises were made. Casey was allowed more voice but the elder continued to offer input. The fact that Sande wanted to do camp again the second year was a testament to how well it went the first year.

Sandra: I chuckled when I read Robin's reflective description of how well the camp went the first year. It was a struggle in two regards. The Shawnee elder and her family ran all of the cultural activities and this was great as we (the students or myself) do not have the cultural knowledge or expertise to teach these segments. While their focus was on teaching these activities, they were also in charge of the overall flow and rhythm of the activities; the structure of the camp. This was an area with which the Miami students could assist, but there were not enough of them. While three students and myself went that year, only two were there for the entire camp. And two overnights were scheduled. In other words, two students--Casey and Jason--were the primary caretakers of the youth for four days with two overnights. It was too much for them. Driving home after camp we were all exhausted and I'm not sure at that point any of us would have said the camp went well! But, I was certain we could do it again and do a much better job, particularly with more students and a clearer definition of roles.

The second year, the planning phase of the program was handled by one team as part of the AMS 301 course. The elders did not return, but local elders from the tribe taught the cultural component. There was consistent, regular communication between Robin and the group and that was helpful. Five students from Miami registered and participated in the camp and the increased number of counselors helped relieve a lot of the stress. Throughout the semester these students researched and practiced leading numerous filler, team-bonding activities, which also really helped with the flow of the camp. Camp was extended from four

to five days and there was only one overnight stay. Twenty-two ESTOO youth participated and we asked three of the oldest males to participate as junior counselors. This was good as they then felt more invested in the program.

Reflections on Camp

Robin: Kids don't come around to the tribe that much, but they look forward to camp. We had a lot of repeat campers this year, which serves as a testament to the camp. It was really wonderful having college students as counselors. The age of the college students and their cultural sensitivity was a really good mix. The students were able to relate well with the campers. Because of their closeness in age, they had similar interests with the campers and were able to identify the kid's needs while at the same time being respectful of the camper's ESTOO culture. It was also great that the Miami students had an interest and brought their talents. We did not necessarily have those resources, so it was nice that students were able to bring their individual skills. For example, there was a young woman who played collegiate lacrosse who was able to help teach the campers the game in a way that we would not have been able to.

Jason: Attending the summer workshop for two years helped me to grow personally and to develop an appreciation for modern ESTOO culture. My first trip to Oklahoma was humbling. I arrived believing I was well versed in Shawnee culture after researching it for a whole semester. Upon arrival, I was disappointed to discover that ESTOO people were not like the static portraits of their ancestors in the histories that I read. I struggled to reconcile the images that I saw in history books with the ESTOO youth that I was working with. I now know that it was ignorant of me to hold this romanticized view of ESTOO. ESTOO culture still lives on, but not in the way that I imagined. Returning to camp the second year helped me to understand that it is not my place to decide what is and what is not authentic ESTOO culture. It is ESTOO's right to develop their identity and to tell their own stories. Visiting ESTOO definitely helped me to understand, respect, and appreciate ESTOO as they see themselves presently.

Sandra: The camp experience was much better the second year due to the larger number of Miami participants and our greater familiarity with one another. Jason makes a point that I think is an important one and underpins what I think is so important for Miami University students to have these sorts of experiences. The traditional classroom setting is seriously limited for providing students with opportunities for intercultural dialogue and understanding. It takes personal exposure for students to begin to grasp in a real world experience those concepts that they may seem to grasp intellectually. Jason is not the only student to have this experience.

This year an incident occurred on the first day of camp when a student dressed in a tank top—the temperature was in the mid-nineties, and this student was working with ESTOO youth on lacrosse. It did not occur to me that her attire might be considered inappropriate by

community members as it was not out of line from what I'm used to seeing on the college campus and it *was* hot. At the end of the day, Robin pulled me aside and expressed that the top was considered too revealing and that Native values promoted modesty. Robin asked if I wanted her to communicate this with the student or if would I prefer her to do so.

Robin: Communicating the Native, cultural value of modesty became an issue when one female university student wore a tank top considered to be too revealing and not considered to be congruent with the ESTOO value of modesty. I notified Sande and she was able to talk to the student. This was a cultural teaching moment. **SG:** I agreed to talk to the student in private. It was an awkward and emotional conversation as the student was hurt, embarrassed, and defensive. She described how for many years she had worked to deal with issues around her body image and was just beginning “to feel comfortable in her skin.” Why, she asked me, did she have to change her values and norms in order to conform to those of the ESTOO?

Concluding Thoughts

Jason: Working on numerous projects with ESTOO exceeded my expectations primarily because I was able to travel out to Oklahoma and see the importance and the effects of the projects. Knowing that my research has meaning and having the opportunity to meet the community it serves is highly motivating. It was really impactful for me to realize that my research was about more than a letter grade. Seeing how my research positively contributed to the ESTOO community helped me to understand the power of research on a deeper level. Research can be about much more than writing a term paper. It can be more than a grade; it can be an idea that can eventually affect a community. You are giving life to past history and it is finally being applied into the world once again. Maybe this is why it was difficult for me to let go of a project since I had nurtured and collaborated on it for countless hours for someone else to try and interpret its significance.

Casey: ESTOO invited me to share in the story and history of their community and in doing so helped me to begin to identify and articulate my own personal story and purpose. It is in large part due to my experiences working with ESTOO that I developed an interest in community driven projects and research and that I am pursuing a master's degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education at Miami University. I am looking forward to continuing to work with ESTOO and it is my hope that as a student affairs professional that I can empower students, as Dr. Garner empowered me, to serve diverse communities in a very authentic and productive way.

Robin: The relationship has addressed our needs very, very well. We learned from the students and they learned from us. The relationship was reciprocal; we were able to enrich the students' lives and they were able to enrich our lives. This year we had a stomp dance and the college students were able to participate in the dance, and I think that they left with a deeper understanding and appreciation for ESTOO culture. They participated with us. We want and

are happy to share this culture with anyone, especially with the people that help us

One gentleman on business council has twin boys who attended camp. He is not one to volunteer praise but was happy and impressed that Jason and Brooke came back, allowing for consistency with counselors. They were glad to have Jason back. It was the consistency that impressed—that Jason and Brooke returned after graduation was a personal commitment that wasn't mandated—it was a true giving of the spirit. This relationship was a godsend and I'm really looking forward to seeing where it goes.

Sandra: Each year I can see tremendous progress in terms of the work being done in both the AMS 301 course and summer workshop. Building long-term relationships is the key and it requires time and patience. I do worry that the consistency of returning students is difficult to maintain, for the camp in particular; Miami students are only here for four years and I usually do not have interaction with the students for this class until their third or fourth year. That students have returned is testament to the sense of accomplishment that they receive from their efforts. I am concerned about the long-term viability of the workshop from the institutional perspective (Miami), where it is getting more and more difficult to keep courses on the books with a handful of students. If I had twenty students register for the summer workshop, I wouldn't know what to do with them. So keeping the numbers of responsible students at a level that facilitates the camp in balance with the numbers required by the university to have the course is a tight-wire balancing act. I do get the opportunity with my long-term relationship to see the value of it for my students and ESTOO. We still have a great deal to learn, but are willing to do so.

About the Authors

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Sandra Garner, (*corresponding author*) is an assistant professor in the department of Global and Intercultural Studies teaching primarily for the American Studies major. Her broad research and teaching interests focus on culture, specifically issues of identity and, intercultural awareness and understanding—particularly the construct of Indigenous identities emergent from settler colonial contexts. She is the author of *To Come to a Better Understanding: Medicine Men and Clergy Meetings on the Rosebud Reservation, 1973-1978*, which examines the possibilities and limits of intercultural understanding (2016). Garners2@miamioh.edu

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Book Reviews

We Are Coming Home: Repatriation and the Restoration of Blackfoot Cultural Confidence by Gerald T. Conaty (ed.) 2015. AU Press: Edmonton, AB. 299pp. ISBN. 978-1-77199-017-2

Repatriation is a complex practice that involves the dedication and patience of both museum staff and community ceremonialists and members. However, histories of repatriation events are not often discussed, in part because of the lengthy process of each single repatriation; but also because repatriation often blurs the lines between the professional, personal, and communal. These are the issues that are best captured in Gerald Conaty's edited volume, *We are Coming Home: Repatriation and the Restoration of Blackfoot Cultural Confidence*. It is a unique example in the literature, as it is a single volume dedicated to repatriation cases that involve Blackfoot materials and sacred bundles. Read together, the chapters document an important aspect of the history of repatriation in Canada – a discussion that has long been dominated by conversations regarding American repatriation legislation.

With contributions by museum professionals and academics (Robert Janes, Gerald Conaty, John Ives) as well as Blackfoot ceremonialists and traditionalists represented by the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai Nations (Chris McHugh, Herman Yellow Old Woman, Allan Pard, Jerry Potts, and Frank Weasel Head), each chapter speaks to (and occasionally against) dominant repatriation narratives that focus on western bureaucratic negotiation. As a whole however, the volume adds new dimensions to repatriation discussions in academic texts. Each author contributes personal stories of the relationships that are made or rekindled in order to return museum objects back to their communities or rightful caretakers. Where some have argued that a greater discussion of the legal framework developed in Alberta is necessary, this volume also offers a welcome move away from seeing legislation as the most important part of repatriation work, and focuses on the interpersonal relationships and networks that are often built in order to facilitate the return of cultural heritage.

As other reviewers have observed, this volume contributes unique insight into the career of the late Gerald Conaty, whose work in museums and the academy in Canada is rightfully highlighted. However, as one reviewer also notes (Krmpotich, 2016); this makes it a difficult text to critique. One strength of this volume is the way in which each chapter tells a distinct story, and each authors voice stands strongly alone. The volume does not superimpose a grand narrative of Blackfoot repatriation, but instead allows each individual author to put forth their own personal histories and arguments about the processes they have experienced. This is a reflection of the fact that there are often a plethora of voices involved in repatriation work. These voices do not necessarily all agree, and this is an important part of collaboration and negotiation that is often elided once projects like these come to an end. Therefore, this volume stands, as Frank Weasel Head expressed in his chapter, as an important, albeit Westernized “paper” document of each individual’s repatriation experiences and thus illustrates the role of individuals in repatriation history (152).

Another important strength is the focus on the history of repatriation in a specifically

Canadian (and Albertan) context. Many chapters examine the history of repatriation in Canada broadly – and careful attention is paid throughout the book to the creation of the only existing Canadian legislation concerning the return of objects in Alberta: The First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act (known as FNSCORA). Conaty’s first chapter narrates this history well, although it lacks some connections to current and evolving literature in the field that may make it seem out of date to a contemporary audience. John Ives’ chapter gives a much-needed overview of the process from the view of the Royal Alberta Museum (RAM) as loan procedures were conducted and as FNSCORA was prepared. His chapter highlights the difficulties in establishing new laws in any governmental system, and would serve as a useful introduction to museum legal issues in Canada. Equally useful is Conaty’s chapter on the culture and history of the Blackfoot people; this gives an excellent amount of context on the history of the Blackfoot for those unfamiliar with Blackfoot territory and cultural history.

These contextual chapters are necessary to set the historical stage for the other chapters that document the lived experience of Blackfoot repatriation written by Alan Pard, Jerry Potts, Frank Weasel Head, Chris McHugh, and Herman Yellow Old Woman. These chapters raise important issues concerning the resurgence of cultural practices and the uneasy relationship between Euro-American legal frameworks and Blackfoot protocols and ways of being. This is highlighted by Jerry Potts when writing about the challenges of working with the provincial government where they would find themselves working within “the language of the Alberta government’s legal team to appease them” while also maintaining “the integrity of what we were representing” (145). This theme – of “appeasement” to Euro-American forms of government and ownership – will resonate with anyone who has conducted repatriation work. Indeed, these negotiations are not only difficult because they are personal and important; they are difficult because they are concerted attempts by groups of people to negotiate across and between knowledge systems.

As Potts and other authors correctly point out, often Indigenous peoples are put in the position of working within a way of being that has been forced upon them, one that is strategically and historically opposed to Indigenous ways of knowing. Because of the dominant political systems in North America – the Canadian and American Nation States – first peoples are often required to divide groups across borders. The Blackfoot therefore face unique challenges when it comes to repatriation requests, as Canadian groups cannot request back their material from American museums, for example. Many authors in this book cite the difficulties when working within these geopolitical boundaries and appealing to the American Blackfoot groups is often the only way to receive materials that are in American museums. John Ives accurately summarizes these challenges when he writes about the complexity of drafting repatriation legislation because there “existed a genuine tension between the public needs of legislation and the private world of Blackfoot ceremonial life” (234). This tension is not only about legislation, but about a more pervasive western societal standard that occludes Indigenous knowledges and history. When objects are returned, and where communities like the Blackfoot drive the process, issues like these are often encountered.

Several authors also focus on addressing claims that objects could potentially be replicated

or reproduced instead of returned. In many documented cases, the Blackfoot were encouraged or offered the option to borrow or replicate the objects instead of requesting for their return. Replicating bundles, as this volume shows, has been done in certain cases but is not necessarily beneficial for all Blackfoot groups or in all repatriation cases. Importantly, as Allan Pard notes, often a community may not have the art or materials necessary to recreate each bundle as well (132).

Where there are occasional lacks in current literatures, and often sweeping generalizations of other museum practices elsewhere in Canada and in Europe, there are indeed a wealth of experiences and memories recounted in this volume. More than a simple legal decision, repatriation is highlighted as an ethical and *logical* stance. Frank Weasel Head writes: “If you don’t understand something, why keep it?” (179). The authors articulate that the majority of knowledge about Blackfoot bundles still lies still with the Blackfoot themselves, and objects must be brought back to the ceremonial lives of these communities. It is the focus on these stories that make this volume succeed as important documentation concerning the history – and future – of repatriation in Canada.

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Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning is Canada's online, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary journal committed to profiling best practices in 'engaged scholarship' informed by community-academic partnerships in research, teaching and learning.

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