

# Indigenous Research Approaches & Indigenous- Based Research

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LITERATURE REVIEW

# Acknowledgements

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RESOLVE Manitoba is based at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

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# Introduction

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Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE) is a tri-prairie, community-based research network, that engages in research and education aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of family and gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls. RESOLVE's offices are based on Treaty 1, Treaty 6, and Treaty 7 territories and the Homeland of the Métis Nation in Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Many participants of RESOLVE's research studies identify as Indigenous<sup>1</sup> (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit). Further, Indigenous women in Canada experience higher rates of intimate partner violence than non-Indigenous women, with almost 6 in 10 First Nations (59%) and Métis (64%); and 44% of Inuit women reporting some form of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse committed by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Statistics Canada, 2021). This is especially the case in the Canadian prairies where Indigenous women are at highest risk of experiencing violence, including intimate partner homicide (Dawson et al., n.d.). This suggests that RESOLVE's research projects should consider Indigenous worldviews, approaches, and experiences when conducting research in ways that are relevant, culturally safe, competent, and informed.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine existing Indigenous approaches to research and the implications for RESOLVE's research activities. Indigenous researchers ar-

gue that Indigenous Peoples worldviews and ethics should be key considerations when research concerns or involves Indigenous Peoples<sup>2</sup> (Kovach, 2021; Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008). The incorporation of Indigenous worldviews and ethics changes research processes and design in fundamental ways. Previously, research processes and designs have been informed by Western epistemologies (Kovach, 2021; Wilson, 2008). In contrast, Indigenous-based research centres on Indigenous epistemologies. This paper reviews Indigenous principles and approaches to inform the work of the RESOLVE Network.

For this purpose, we first discuss Indigenous critiques of Western or dominant<sup>3</sup> research practices, colonization, and ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on gender relations and Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ persons. We critically reflect on the relationship between community-based research methods that emerged in Western methodological approaches and Indigenous methodologies. Further, we review the existing guidelines, principles, and considerations that have emerged from works that developed Indigenous methodologies and the Indigenous research paradigm (IRP), including the five key principles of Indigenous research (i.e., the 5R's of Indigenous research). Finally, we review studies that apply an Indigenous research paradigm within community-based research and discuss the challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes Status and Non-Status First Nations. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, there were 213,900 Non-Status First Nations People mostly residing in urban areas. "Status Indians" are the First Nations People recognized under the Indian Act (1876) by the Canadian government, and "Non-Status" describes people who identify as First Nations but are not "Registered Indians" (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013, p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> We use "Indigenous Peoples" when we refer to diverse Indigenous nations and we use Indigenous People when we refer to Indigenous Peoples in any given nation or "a single one of the distinct societies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada." For example, the Haudenosaunee are an Indigenous People (Younging, 2018, p. 65).

<sup>3</sup> We use western and dominant interchangeably. Michael Hart (2009) uses the term "Amer-European paradigm" to refer to this same concept.

# Indigenous critiques of dominant research practices

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Dominant research practices have been detrimental to Indigenous Peoples around the world (Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008). In Canada, research informed by the “settler-colonial ethics” has been exploitative, detrimental to Indigenous nations’ well-being, and served the interests of the settler-colonial state (Lawford & Coburn, 2019, p. 1). For example, there have been nutrition experiments on Indigenous children in Northern Manitoba (Mosby, 2013), Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine trial on Indigenous infants (Lux, 1998), skin-grafting experiments on Inuit children (Emberley, 2008 as cited in Lawford & Coburn, 2019), among many other research studies that have harmed, dispossessed, and exploited Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Colonization aimed to destroy and make Indigenous Peoples of Canada “cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 5). Research informed by settler-colonial ethics furthered the agenda of colonization by excluding Indigenous Peoples from nation-wide surveys (First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey National Steering Committee, 1999), misrepresenting Indigenous worldviews, constructing and perpetuating colonial narratives and stereotypes (Gaudry, 2011; Kovach, 2021; LaRocque, 2010; Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008), and through deficit theorizing and/or pathologizing Indigenous Peoples (Kovach, 2021; Smith, 2021; Snow et al., 2016). It also marginalized and appropriated their knowledges (Hart, 2009), and dispossessed them of their knowledges and heritage (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022). In addition, research with Indigenous Peoples has often employed the so-called “parachute” or “helicopter” approach, whereby researchers came, collected (“grabbed”) the data they needed, and left communities without continued responsibility, reciprocity, and accountability (Tobias et al., 2013, p. 131).

In the context of Canada as in many settler-colonial states, colonialism has changed its tools and practices but remained as such. Therefore, Cree scholar Michael Hart (2009) argues, there is a need for anti-colonialism against “political, economic and cultural institutions as well as social systems” (p. 30). Anti-colonial research can help to recover Indigenous Knowledges, question the existing

institutions and their relationship to colonialism, and decolonize these very institutions (Hart, 2009). In research paradigms create space for “Indigenous ways of knowing and being and to address the colonial legacy of power within the research relationship” (Pidgeon, 2019a, 419).


## Colonization and impact on Indigenous women, Two-Spirit persons, and Indigenous gender relations

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Colonization was a gendered experience for many colonized peoples across the world (McLeod, 2010). In many Indigenous nations of pre-colonial Canada, women, men, and Two-Spirit<sup>4</sup> persons were recognized and respected for the unique roles they played in the social, economic, and political lives of their communities (Anderson, 2021; 2003). Colonialism continues to play a devastating role in disrupting the relations of Indigenous men, women, Two-Spirit persons, and children with each other, their communities, and the land (Anderson, 2021; National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019). Winona Stevenson (2011) provides an overview of how European patriarchal values have been violently imposed on Indigenous communities in Canada. Indigenous Peoples continue to be negatively impacted by the imposed shift in gender roles, destruction of cultural practices and policies of assimilation (which limit opportunities to pass on worldviews, knowledges, and philosophies to children), displacement from the land, caused by the experience of colonization, and the imposition of colonial structures and institutions, such as the *Indian Act of 1876*, residential school system, the Indian Day school system, and the Sixties Scoop (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019, p. 255; Whitebean, 2019; Stevenson, 2011). Colonizers have systematically worked towards stripping Indigenous women of their status and roles within their communities. French traders, English settlers, missionaries, and the colonial government have consistently misrepresented Indigenous women and have led to the loss of women’s autonomy and their social, economic, and political significance within

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4 The term “Two-Spirit” reclaims Indigenous sexuality that was impacted by colonization, and asserts the “interrelatedness of all aspects of identity, including sexuality, gender, culture, community, and spirituality” in accordance with Indigenous philosophies of Canada (Wilson, 1996, pp. 304-305). It is often used by the Indigenous LGBTQ+ individuals in Canada and the United States (Wilson, 1996).



their communities through legislative means or the “statutory subjugation” (Stevenson, 2011, p. 49). Two-Spirit persons within Indigenous communities also lost their cultural roles because of the imposition of dichotomous and patriarchal constructions of gender (Anderson, 2021). These experiences led to the economic, social, and political marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, especially of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ persons (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019).

Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit persons has been one of the primary concerns of Indigenous women’s activism (Green, 1993; National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019). Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing compared with other groups of women (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019). Indigenous women represent about 5% of all women in Canada but 24% of homicide victims between 2015 and 2020 were Indigenous. Homicide rates of Indigenous women are five times higher compared with non-Indigenous women (Heidinger, 2022). Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people may be targeted by their intimate partners, family members, acquaintances, and serial killers (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019). Intimate partner violence is one of the major problems facing Indigenous women (Government of Canada, 2012). As noted earlier, six in 10 Indigenous women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime compared to non-Indigenous women (four in 10) (Heidinger, 2021). Indigenous women are also likely to experience more severe forms of intimate partner violence, such as homicide, choking, and sexual and physical violence (Heidinger, 2021).

First Nations children, as stated by a Gitksan scholar Cindy Blackstock (2019), are 12 times more likely to go into child welfare care, primarily driven by neglect, poverty, substance use, and poor housing all resulting from the impacts of settler colonialism (in National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 1a, 2019, p. 339; also see Robertson, et al., 2022). The breakdown of Indigenous families remains a strategy of settler colonialism that continues to have dire consequences on Indigenous communities. It is reflected in the Child and Family Services system in Canada today and continues to negatively impact the Indigenous mothers, children, and their families (Robertson et al., 2022). In Manitoba, 91% of all children in care are Indigenous, which is a significant overrepresentation considering that Indigenous children constitute only 22% of all children below 17 (Milne, Petrella, and Trocmé, 2023, p. 4). Indigenous women, children and Two-Spirit people

experience more severe forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and trafficking (Meissner & Whyte, 2017). The existing data suggest that gender-based violence experienced by Indigenous women, children, and Two-Spirit people is not individual, but systemic and is tied to the impacts of settler colonialism that are expressed in economic, social, and political marginalization, racism, discrimination, misogyny (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 1a, 2019), and historical trauma (Fast & Collin-Vezina, 2010).

Sarah Fotheringham and colleagues (2020) reviewed government domestic violence prevention plans in several settler-colonial states, including Canada. They found that domestic violence prevention plans often discuss domestic violence as “a private form of violence” without acknowledging the structural causes of domestic violence in Indigenous communities and exclude Indigenous worldviews that see the individual as part of the whole (family and community). Indigenous worldviews promote a holistic approach to addressing gender-based violence that includes men, women, Two-Spirit people, and children because they are and remain “interconnected through a system of kinship and mutual obligations,” including after the experience of violence (Cripps, 2007 as cited in Fotheringham et al., 2020, p. 12). In addition, services that address gender-based violence should be “based in and led by Indigenous communities” to ensure cultural safety (Fotheringham et al., 2020, p. 12). Finally, work that aims to eliminate gender-based violence in Indigenous communities should also address structural racism because racism and other forms of marginalisation contribute to the prevalence of gender-based violence that is experienced in Indigenous communities. Thus, prevention and elimination of gender-based violence must acknowledge the ongoing harms of colonization, support the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, address structural inequalities, and support the reclamation and reassertion of Indigenous worldviews and ceremonies (Fotheringham et al., 2020; also see Hart, 2009).

## Community-engaged research and Indigenous communities

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In attempts to address the power inequities within research, Western research developed several methodological approaches to community-based or engaged research. Community-based research is “grounded in community,

serves the interest of the community, and actively engages citizens” (Caine et al., 2016, p. 14). For example, Participatory Action Research (PAR) involves participants and researchers in a research collaboration that aims to empower through their active engagement in the research design and process. Community-engaged scholarship aims to create a space for a community to share their knowledges “to improve the quality of life in a given community” (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017, p. 4). Community-based participatory research (CBPR) centres on social justice as an objective of a research project. It aims to contribute to social change and transformation through collaborative work with the communities based on their experiences. Although these approaches can help to ensure community needs and experiences are taken into account in the research process, they do not centre Indigenous worldviews.

Within Indigenous worldviews, the individual is seen as connected to others, nature, land, spirits, and the universe (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017). In addition, the Indigenous research paradigm “go[es] beyond the empowerment of rightsholders<sup>5</sup> to the empowerment of the entire community (broadly defined)” (Pidgeon, 2019a, p. 420).

## Guidelines and principles of Indigenous research

The realization of the harms of past research as well as epistemological differences of Indigenous worldviews has prompted Indigenous Peoples and research institutions (due to Indigenous People’s resistance to continued colonialism) to develop protocols for conducting research with Indigenous Peoples (Hart, 2009; Hayward et al., 2022). In Canada, such protocols include the 2014 Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2), the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) developed by the First Nation Governance Centre, National Inuit Strategy on Research developed by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the University of Manitoba’s Framework for Research Engagement with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, and other relevant protocols and guiding documents (Hayward et al., 2022). In addition to these frameworks, numerous works on Indigenous methodologies outline principles and considerations when working with Indigenous communities.

Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) argues

that an Indigenous research paradigm fundamentally differs from dominant (i.e., Western) research paradigms, such as positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. For example, positivism argues that there is an objective reality and research aims to uncover this reality. Critical theory sees reality as shaped by various social locations and aims to improve social reality. Wilson (2008) posits that these dominant paradigms are informed by the underlying assumptions that are foreign to Indigenous Peoples. The philosophical approach to Indigenous research centres on Indigenous Ways of Knowing (Ontology), Ways of Being (Epistemology), and Ways of Doing (Methodology) (Martin & Miraboopa, 2003).

Ways of Knowing establishes what is known about entities (such as land, animals, plants, waterways, skies, climate, and spirits) through listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualising, assessing, modelling, engaging, and applying. Ways of Being explores the relationships between these entities contextually, spiritually, and historically, connecting to tradition, worldviews, past knowledges, and contemporary experiences. Ways of Doing can be seen in languages, art, traditions, ceremonies, social organization, land management and aims to maintain the relations amongst entities (Martin & Miraboopa, 2003; Wilson, 2008). Relationality is at the core of the Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008). In this way, Indigenous research constitutes a distinct research paradigm.

Next we present critical considerations, guidelines, and principles that can inform the development of research studies conducted by the RESOLVE Network. These have been drawn from studies that discussed, used, and centred on the Indigenous research paradigm and Indigenous methodologies.

### *Research is not new to Indigenous communities*

Indigenous communities have done research in the past and have their own ways of conducting research and creating knowledge within their communities (Johnson-Jennings, 2019). Indigenous research processes have involved observing, listening, watching, and doing (Johnson-Jennings, 2019; Wilson, 2008). In Canada, the political space for the introduction of Indigenous research paradigm opened in the 1990s with the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). Following this, it was more possible for Indigenous researchers to advocate for the introduction and use of a distinct Indigenous research paradigm<sup>5</sup> that is in line with Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being,

<sup>5</sup> Refers to research participants and is conceptualized by Michelle Pidgeon (2019a) as a term that challenges “conceptions of subjects or participants and acknowledges their inherent rights” (p. 424).

and Ways of Doing<sup>6</sup> (Wilson, 2008).

## *Centring Indigenous worldviews and knowledges*<sup>7</sup>

The underlying assumption of Indigenous research is that all knowledge is situational and contextual (Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009). Within Indigenous contexts, knowledge can be traditional, as expressed in stories; empirical or gained through observation or revealed in dreams, visions, and ceremonies; and contemporary, when knowledge is gained through contemporary experience and problem-solving (Johnson-Jennings, 2019). Indigenous research centres Indigenous worldviews and Knowledges in a holistic manner and aims to de-centre “the ideology and the practice of colonialism” and confront “colonial processes” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 333-334; Hart, 2010; Pidgeon, 2019a).

This process can include such strategies as recovering traditional Indigenous Knowledges and cultural revitalization with the use of “Indigenous voice, words, and languages” based on the realization of the harms of colonization caused to Indigenous Knowledges and “of the historical and institutional structures and contexts that sustain intellectualism and intellectual projects” that harm Indigenous Peoples (Hart, 2009, p. 30-31). Indigenous research commits to decolonization that aims to acknowledge, recognize, and empower Indigenous Peoples Ways of Being, Knowing, and Doing (Hart, 2009). Indigenous research acknowledges that Indigenous worldviews can be overlooked or become fragmented if one looks at it from dominant perspectives eventually leading to the oppression of Indigenous worldviews (Hart, 2010).

Centring Indigenous Knowledges and worldviews is important through all stages of research. During the data collection process, for example, when experiencing challenges, one needs to be humble and open to new knowledge by seeking guidance from Indigenous teachings, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers<sup>8</sup>. Researchers must remember the value of listening deeply within Indigenous worldviews. This may mean abandoning notetaking, listening deeply, being able to let go and trust the process because “whatever we take away is what we were meant to learn” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 338). The data analysis process also should be informed by Indigenous Ways of Knowing. This may mean analysing the data more holistically. For example, Hart and colleagues (2017) have used the format of a sharing circle to bring forward ideas that spoke to each of the researchers instead of analyzing the interviews using Western methods. An Anishinaabe scholar Lynn Lavallée (2017) suggests

inviting community members to participate in the interpretation of research data. Michelle Pidgeon (2019a) urges not to forget to acknowledge Indigenous Knowledge Keepers for their contribution to academic works.

## *Centring relationships and relationality*

*From an Indigenous point of view, relational means self in relationship with the natural world, the human world, kin, community, place, and land; relationships over time; and relationships that are interdependent and collectivist. [...] In the web of relationships, we find attachment in the places of our lives, whether under the cosmos, with nature (land, sea, sky), or among community and kin. (Kovach, 2021, p. 74)*

An Indigenous research paradigm assumes that reality is found in context and relationships or in a “web of connections” “with everything that surrounds us and is within us” (Wilson, 2008, p. 76-77). This is based on the fundamental concept of Indigenous worldviews that centres on relationships and relational Ways of Being (Hart, 2010; Wilson, 2008). As explained by Wilson (2008), relationality is expressed in relationships between people and being connected through knowing a person, friendships, and familial and communal relationships. It also can be found in relationship to land and environment because Indigenous Peoples tend to have a “‘grounded’ sense of identity” (Wilson, 2008, p. 88). This means that they understand themselves and their communities through their connection to the land their family originates from (Wilson, 2008).

Another important component of relationality is the connection with the cosmos and the spirit world. The importance of spirituality for Indigenous Peoples suggests that the inclusion of spiritual practices and ceremonies (such as the sweat lodge, offering of medicines, smudging, sharing of food and other relevant ceremonies and Protocols<sup>9</sup>) in research processes contributes to the holistic nature of research that then has the potential to impact personal and communal lives in fundamental ways (Wilson, 2008).

Ideas are also relational. This means that every idea that we relate with cannot be dismissed and there is no concept of hierarchies. Ideas relate to each other horizontally and equally. Ideas are not expected to be juxtaposed: rather they exist in relation to each other.

These aspects of relationality within Indigenous worldviews then contribute to the development of the concept of

<sup>6</sup> Wilson (2008) borrows from Martin, K. (2003). “Aboriginal People, Aboriginal Lands and Indigenist Research: A Discussion of Re-Search Pasts and Neo-Colonial Research Futures.” [Unpublished Master’s Thesis]. James Cook University: Townsville, Qld.rights” (p. 424).

<sup>7</sup> David Newhouse (2023) differentiates between Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous thought. Knowledge Keepers and Elders carry Indigenous Knowledges, whereas Indigenous academics produce Indigenous thought. Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous thought. Knowledge Keepers and Elders carry Indigenous Knowledges, whereas Indigenous academics produce Indigenous thought.



relational accountability in research. Researcher is accountable to all relations (Wilson, 2008). Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2021) explains,

*“to be relationally accountable is to continually ask of one’s self, as a researcher, questions that are about trust and respect and the axiological premise of the culture where one is conducting research. Has my research hindered or helped to engender a trusting relationship with the Indigenous peoples involved? Does this research assist the community? Do the Indigenous research participants and stakeholders feel respected? Can I, as a researcher, sleep at night? (p. 101)”*

We discuss relational accountability throughout the paper as it is a grounding component of Indigenous-based research.

### *Locating self in relation to proposed research*

Neutrality does not exist in research (Absolon & Willette, 2005). Gaining trust is essential in conducting research with participants, including Indigenous communities. Therefore, locating oneself as a researcher is an essential part of the research process. Researchers must explore their self-location, which can help research participants decide if, what and, how they want to share (Johnston et al., 2018). Kovach (2015) adds that the decision to apply the Indigenous methodologies depends on “one’s preparedness,” “individual’s ability to be knowledgeable about, conversant in, and comfortable with speaking to Indigenous knowledge systems and sharing their personal relationship to Indigenous thought,” and “knowledge of the politicality surrounding Indigenous knowledge systems” (p. 57). Locating oneself as a researcher requires the unpacking of one’s understanding and deep self-reflection of one’s cultural context and positionalities.

In addition, researchers need to describe not only “how an Indigenous lens was applied,” but also “how they applied this lens, particularly from a non-Indigenous standpoint” if the researchers do not identify as Indigenous (Kennedy et al., 2022, p. 17). Locating self requires that researchers reflect deeply on the impact of their positionalities on the research design, process, and reporting of findings (Kennedy et al., 2022).

### *Becoming literate about governance structures, political institutions, cultural Protocols, and teachings*

Anti-colonial research “acknowledges, respects, and engages with the Protocols and natural laws of the Indigenous lands” (Carlson, 2016, p. 502). Research should not harm the participants or the land. Researchers have a responsibility to understand Indigenous governance structures, including learning about how Indigenous political institutions work (Lavallée, 2017). Non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous Peoples have a responsibility to learn about the context and better understand the Protocols of the communities they work with as well as the meanings and teachings of the cultural Protocols, such as tobacco ties. Indigenous researchers who work cross-culturally should also be aware of how their individual and communal cultural frameworks define their approach in how they work with other Indigenous groups because there is great diversity within Indigenous communities and among Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples are not homogeneous (Pidgeon, 2019a).

### *Implementing informed and relevant ceremonies*

Wilson (2008) argues that Indigenous research is ceremony. When doing research by, with and for Indigenous Peoples, the approach serves as the foundation for how the research proceeds. For many Indigenous researchers, each phase of research begins with ceremony, perhaps with a tobacco offering and prayers for guidance to do things in good and respectful ways, which will benefit the community (Wilson & Restoule, 2010). All Indigenous Elders, practitioners, and participants should be provided with a tobacco offering for participating in research projects as a sign of respect for Protocols (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017). This is especially relevant in the initial stages of relationship-building (Fontaine, 2023). Elder Norma Jacobs, Elder Gloria Thomson, and Elder Naulaq LeDrew explain that tobacco offering serves as an agreement. Researchers can learn ahead of time about this or ask from Elders or Knowledge Keepers further about gifting and other respectful Protocols. In addition, the preferred gifts and offerings differ among various

<sup>8</sup> It is best to ask how Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers refer to themselves, because not everyone is comfortable with the title of Elder, for example (Elder Norma Jacobs) (Jacobs et al., 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Younging (2018) suggests to capitalize Protocols to mark “the permanence and significance of these systems of knowledge as Indigenous institutions” (p. 36).

nations (Jacobs et al., 2023).

Similarly, offering the use of smudging with sage and other medicines can also help when engaging with Indigenous participants to ground them, to purify the space, and for self-care if there are heavy emotions. Using ceremony throughout the research can help build relationships, seek guidance, show honour and respect, and express gratitude. Once the processes of research collection, analysis, and interpretation of results are complete, closing with a gathering and a feast is an important way to honour the relationship that has been built. This can help with returning the findings to the community and for the collection of feedback (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017; Robertson et al., 2022).

Ensuring food and beverage are available and providing a gift or compensation also honours the value of reciprocity. Sharing food is as important as sharing time, voices, and connecting (Johnston et al., 2018). Gift-giving perpetuates a custom of interacting with others and is given to acknowledge the sharing of information and time, which also honours reciprocity (Johnston et al., 2018). Opening sessions with smudging and having it available during the interviews or focus groups honours the participants and helps them with sharing (Wilson, 2008). Donna Klingspohn's (2018) review of the role of cultural practices for trauma-informed social services suggests the significance of Indigenous cultural practices for survivors of gender-based violence, such as smudging, talking circles, and sweat lodges.

## *Representations, strength-based theorizing and constructive research*

Kovach (2021) suggests that deficit theorizing tends to focus on individual deficits, and not systemic ones, thus blaming individuals for the problems they experience. Deficit theorizing stigmatizes, “strategically diminish[es] marginalized peoples,” and leads to policy decisions that can harm them because it lacks a contextual analysis (Kovach, 2021, p. 238). In addition, deficit theorizing tends to focus on “what is not working” instead of on “what is working” (Morton, 2019, p. 23). This originates in a Western framework that tends to label a “problem” and then focuses on “fixing” the problem (Lavoie, 2017).

In contrast, strength-based theorizing recognizes systemic challenges and barriers, however, also acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' concerns and their agency or the ways they work towards solving the problems they face (Mor-

ton, 2019). Strength-based research builds on the strengths of the community, the family, and the individual (Lavoie, 2017). This goes well with Wilson's (2008) argument that Indigenous research seeks constructive solutions or Hart et al.'s (2017) argument that Indigenous research should seek to create positive social change for Indigenous Peoples and communities.

## *Defining community and implications for relational accountability*

Defining community is an important aspect when conducting community-engaged research. TCPS2 (2022) Chapter 9 defines a community as a “group of people with a shared identity or interest that has the capacity to act or express itself as a collective” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022, p. 149). Community can be territorial (“governing bodies exercising local or regional jurisdiction”), organizational (for example, a friendship centre), or a community of interest (“individuals and organizations who come together for a common purpose or undertaking”) (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022, p. 149). In discussing the definition of a community within a research context, Pidgeon (2019a) suggests understanding and defining community from an Indigenous perspective. The definition of a community from an Indigenous perspective depends on whether we are conducting our research in an urban (off-reserve) or rural (on-reserve) context. On-reserve, the community leaders, and the governance structures “must be honored and respected” (p. 424). Off-reserve, there are Indigenous organizations (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations or governmental bodies) or Indigenous representatives within organizations that may partner on a research project and serve on an advisory council.

When involving or inviting Indigenous Peoples as part of an advisory council or inviting a partner within a research project, especially, when research involves non-Indigenous researchers without community relations and Indigenous researchers with direct community relations, one needs to be aware of the burden this can create for these Indigenous representatives. Indigenous persons carry a heavier burden of relational accountability towards their communities and organizations. If research is unethical and harms Indigenous community members, Indigenous researchers may be impacted negatively, while those without direct community relations may leave, and never return to be accountable to the community (Hart et al., 2017). This means Indigenous researchers who originate from Indigenous communities carry continuous relational accountability and this needs to be considered.

## *Data ownership and consent*

Kovach (2021) argues that data within Indigenous research “are living connections animated through the exchange of story” (p. 156). Research is a process of collecting data, within the Indigenous context, however, “story is a gift” (p. 156). The story is at the centre of Indigenous research and it is sacred because it builds and nurtures human relationships and “allows Indigenous research participants to tell their own story on their own terms” (Kovach, 2021, p. 164).

Indigenous data sovereignty and governance are rights supported under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that strive to ensure that Indigenous Peoples benefit from research activities and mitigate against potential harm (Lovett et al., 2019). The First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP); the Manitoba Métis Federation’s Ownership, Control, Access, and Stewardship (OCAS) principles; the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit discuss ownership, possession, and control over data and information (Hayward, 2022; Lavallée, 2017; University of Manitoba, 2014). These guidelines should be seen as self-determination applied to research (Schnarch, 2004).

These guidelines prioritize the collective ownership of group information, control over research and information, management of access to data, and physical possession of data. Under OCAP and other similar guidelines, community consent is essential (Kovach, 2021). This means there is a need for researchers to obtain free, prior, and informed consent<sup>10</sup> both individually and collectively and neither of these consent processes overrides the other (Hayward, 2022). However, the OCAP and other principles can only be implemented in “Indigenous communities identified as territorial or organizational” and when it comes to communities of interest these are harder to implement (Kovach, 2021, p. 122). In addition to this, often Indigenous communities and organizations may have limited authority, capacity, and infrastructure to store data (Pidgeon, 2019a). Finally, in terms of ownership of data, universities and research institutions have ethical guidelines that allow them to continue to retain ownership over research (Pidgeon, 2019a).

Despite these limitations, the spirit and intent of these guidelines remain relevant regardless of whether research is conducted in a rural or urban community (Masching, 2014). When a research project concerns a community of interest without a formal Indigenous governing structure, an Indigenous advisory group or Indigenous advisors are beneficial to ensure that the research is led in part by Indigenous Peoples (Kovach, 2021). Pidgeon (2019a) suggests that during the process of designing and planning, researchers

and communities need to discuss who the data will belong to and how it will be managed, stored, used, and disseminated following the completion of the research project, especially when there is a lack of territorial and organizational infrastructure to support data ownership. In addition, the rationale of the research projects and the benefits of the research to the Indigenous rightsholders are of paramount importance (Pidgeon, 2019a).

## *Indigenous ethics*

Indigenous Ways of Knowing assume that knowledge cannot exist outside of relationships. Knowledges cannot be owned individually; it belongs to a groups relationship. Knowledges can be obtained through “dreams, the ancestors, stories and experience, and is embedded in the land” (Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009, p. 4-5). Indigenous ethics urges research to be done in a good way and may centre on five principles or 5R’s (respect, relevance, responsibility, reciprocity, and reverence)<sup>11</sup> (Hoffman, 2013; Johnson-Jennings, 2019; Kovach, 2021; Pidgeon, 2019a; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Wilson, 2008). These principles can often be interrelated (Pidgeon, 2019a). Respect entails the recognition and acknowledgment of the cultural context and sovereignty. This recognition then leads to learning about cultural Protocols or the governing institutions and respecting them (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). When seeking knowledge, Protocols should be followed. This can involve gifts, such as tobacco ties. Giving tobacco ties, however is not a universal practice (Pidgeon, 2019a).

Relevance ensures that research attends to the realities of Indigenous Peoples throughout the research process and builds the capacity of the Indigenous communities who participate in the research study. Relevance can be sought through conversations with rightsholders who understand the context. The next steps of research are then based on these conversations.

Responsibility demands that researchers are accountable to the research participants, participating community, and themselves. Clear communication, accountability, presentation, and representation of research results are crucial to the continued responsibility of researchers even after the research project has been completed. The responsibilities and benefits of each party involved in the research project should be agreed upon and clearly outlined (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Pidgeon, 2019a; Rankin & Hafez, 2019).

Reciprocity means that knowledge is created in a relationship. There is a power dynamic in this relationship between the researcher and the rightsholders. Researchers need to acknowledge and work with this fact. Reciprocity requires that researchers develop a genuine relationship with right-

sholders that will continue when the research relationship ends. Knowledge created through this relationship should be shared, respected, and acknowledged. Expectations should be clarified as the relationship with rightsholders evolves. In practice, this can mean that researchers send the transcripts of the conversations (i.e., research interviews) to the rightsholders so that they can provide input and make any necessary changes. Drafts of publications also can be shared with rightsholders so they can review the material and participate in the writing and knowledge translation/dissemination process. The findings of the research should be widely shared with the rightsholders in culturally appropriate ways. The diversity of Indigenous nations suggests that these principles should be matched with relevant cultural Protocols and teachings in the Indigenous communities as well as explicit agreements achieved through the ongoing relationship-building process (Pidgeon, 2019a).

Reverence refers to the spiritual aspects of building relationships and sharing knowledges. Each Indigenous nation has its own spirituality Ways of Knowing and governing relationships. Knowledge-making in the Western sense risks appropriating or even coopting Indigenous Ways of Being, Knowing, and Doing. This principle then asks researchers to continually reflect on which part of reality requires examination and whether it is ethical to explore that part (Pidgeon, 2019a).

In addition to these widely acknowledged principles, Pidgeon and Riley (2021) add the principle of identity, wholism, and Indigenous ethics. Identity is crucial because there are multiple Ways of Being in the world and the positionality of the researcher informs the research frameworks, their epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Wholism refers to the Indigenous worldview that views each person as “a whole being with an emotional, cultural, physical, and intellectual self” with connections to their “families, communities, and Nations through relationships of extended kinship” and to the lands, waters, and territories” (Pidgeon & Riley, 2019, p. 5). In addition, wholism also connects the physical to the metaphysical. Indigenous ethics outlines relational and cultural aspects of research processes. Relationships do not stop when research ends, and the researcher has a responsibility to inquire and understand Indigenous ways of relating to knowledge, including the ethical protocols and OCAP.

## *Working across contexts and settler researcher as an ally*

While the number of Indigenous researchers remains relatively low, many research teams include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. According to Hart and colleagues (2017), research about Indigenous Peoples and communities should ideally be conducted by Indigenous Peoples and for Indigenous Peoples. In instances where research is conducted across settler/Indigenous contexts, it must be conducted in an anti-colonial and Indigenist framework and led by Indigenous members of the team, as the settler researcher must never “wear the ‘expert’ hat” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 341). Further, Hart and colleagues indicate that it is the Indigenous research team that should decide if a settler is an ally and can, therefore, partner with them to conduct the research (Hart et al., 2017). Kovach (2015) argues that the use of Indigenous methodologies depends on the research question and researcher’s positionality. The choice of methodology requires the researcher explaining how they relate to the Indigenous research paradigm and its principles.

## *Ethnic fraud and Indigenous research*

*“An increasing number of non-Indigenous people are self-identifying as Indigenous for the sake of personal, professional, positional, and financial gain” (Lawford & Corbun, 2019, p. 3).*

Recently, there have been multiple cases of falsely claiming Indigenous identity, including within academia. To address this challenge, Karen Lawford and Veldon Coburn (2019) suggest developing a mechanism of verification. This can be done, for example, by requesting Indigenous students to provide a declaration of the familial connection to an Indigenous nation and address how their community is considered Indigenous (including clarifying how they are recognized as Indigenous within their context, their community’s “historical continuity” with pre-colonial societies, and provide names of those who can confirm their affiliation).

The University of Manitoba report, “Listening to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities: Engagement on Recognizing and Supporting Indigenous Identity and Kin-

<sup>10</sup> One of the key Indigenous rights in UNDRIP.

ship” (2023) provides recommendations to prevent identity fraud. The report acknowledges the harms of colonization and calls for the University to find a balance between preventing identity fraud and identity questioning because formal documentation can be re-traumatizing and difficult to obtain, especially for survivors of the Sixties Scoop and residential schools, those removed to sanatoria, those who were involuntarily enfranchised due to military service, those involved in the child welfare system, and those rejected for status due to the second-generation cut-off amendment in Bill C-31 (University of Manitoba, 2023). The report recommends that the documentation requested could include identification issued by the federal, provincial and Indigenous governments and organizations, “genealogies, community connections and identity circles,” and “a signed declaration that demonstrates community connection or involvement with a specific First Nation, Inuit, or Métis Nation community” (University of Manitoba, 2023, p. 30). The submissions can be oral.

### *Knowledge mobilization and sustainable community engagement*

Knowledge mobilization has not been done in a good way when research involved Indigenous communities. Knowledge mobilization done in a good way requires a sustained practice of Indigenous ethics (Johnson-Jennings, 2019; Rankin & Hafez, 2019; Pidgeon, 2019b). Even when the research is finalized, researchers are still responsible to the community and have an obligation to give back to the communities beyond a final report. This should be part of the agreement between the rightsholders and researchers. Researchers can mentor the next generation, organize lectures, and presentations through digital storytelling, community movie screening, and photo projects, provision of financial support, support to community projects and initiatives, and through various other means as agreed between the rightsholders and the researcher (Johnson-Jennings, 2019; Rankin & Hafez, 2019; Pidgeon, 2019b).

### *Indigenous women and Indigenous methodologies*

Australian Indigenous scholar, Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2013), developed Indigenous women’s standpoint methodology, which is centred on Indigenous women’s knowl-

edges. This particular qualitative methodology acknowledges the gendered experience of colonization, Indigenous women’s strengths/resistances to colonization, the diversity of Indigenous women’s experiences, and their connection to the land, ancestors, spirituality, and relations. Indigenous women’s standpoint research methodology is based on Indigenous women’s Ways of Being, Ways of Knowing, and Ways of Doing. She points out the centrality of land and one’s relationship to the land to Indigenous women’s Ways of Being. This then informs the Indigenous women’s Ways of Knowing, which is based on relationality that derives in the common, yet diverse, experiences of dispossession, colonization, “multiple oppressions,” and resistance to the “hegemonic white patriarchal society” (pp. 341-342). Indigenous women’s Ways of Doing are based on this understanding of relationality. It is a

*“circuitous process of listening and hearing, talking, watching and thinking [...] to generate a problematic” and research (p. 342).*

## Applying Indigenous methodologies to research

Many Indigenous cultures around the world have strong oral traditions because stories were the main way through which knowledge was shared from generation to generation (Bessarab & Ng’andu, 2010). This is why storytelling as a method has become central to Indigenous methodologies globally. For example, Dawn Bessarab and Bridget Ng’andu (2010) introduced the method of “yarning” that they used in their research with the Indigenous Peoples in Australia and Botswana. They borrowed the term from the Indigenous Peoples of Australia, who use this term to indicate the “sharing of stories and information” (p. 38). In Botswana, the Indigenous communities also have a similar concept. Based on their reflections in Australia and Botswana, they suggest that the yarning research process involves several stages of yarning: social yarning, research topic yarning, collaborative, and therapeutic yarning. Social yarning is an informal conversation that helps build trust. Research topic yarning is a conversation that relates to the research question at hand. Collaborative yarning involves “exploring similar ideas or bouncing difference ideas in explaining new concepts” (p. 41). This can involve discussing the research methods, research questions, and other things that may relate to the research process. It is important to let go of conventional ways of doing research in this process

<sup>11</sup> These principles need to be discussed and clarified with each community because there could be contextual differences.

and listen intently. And, finally, therapeutical yarning takes place if the participant discloses traumatic or emotional information. In this case, the researcher turns into a listener and a supporter who helps to “re-think their understanding of their experience in new and different ways” (p. 41).

Similarly, Kovach (2021) argues that the story-telling approach in research is in line with the Indigenous epistemology because “story nurtures relationship. Story kindles reciprocity. Story compels responsibility. Story thrives where there is respect. Story is a gift.” (p. 156). Storytelling should be allowed to flow naturally directly or indirectly addressing the research questions without interruptions. Research conversations can happen through an exchange of stories. Sharing circles<sup>12</sup> are another form of hearing and sharing stories. Researchers should listen deeply, share their understandings if needed, and engage emotionally as stories unfold. Structured interviews will not work within an Indigenous research paradigm because, in a structured interview, the power remains in the hands of the researcher (Kovach, 2021). Before the sharing circle or a research conversation, the researcher should dedicate time to building relationships with the rightsholders. Prior preparation is crucial, researchers should understand the social and political context of the Indigenous communities. The researcher has to understand that “story is a gift” and there are responsibilities that come with it (pp. 166-169). The pre-interview process includes a cup of tea, gifting, or sharing food. The process of building a relationship can take time. During the sharing circle or a research conversation, the researcher can share their reflections and experiences but should listen actively. The researcher can record conversations without note-taking because note-taking can disturb the natural flow of sharing a story. Conversations or sharing circles should be seen as an experience not only for the participants but also for the researcher. Rightsholders should be informed about the duty to report child abuse and neglect disclosures prior to participating. Digital recorders should be turned off when asked. Arrangements should be made beforehand in the event a rightsholder becomes distressed. The researcher can ask rightsholders whether they have support systems available and agrees ahead of time on what support or

debriefing will look like in case of an emotional impact of the conversation either on the rightsholder or the researcher (Kovach, 2021; Richardson, 2020) The relationship is reciprocal and continues after the research conversations and sharing circles have been finalized. Reciprocity can be upheld by sharing research results and presenting them in an accessible manner (Kovach, 2021).

Community-based research requires community engagement. The University of Manitoba Community Engaged Learning (CEL) developed a framework for Working in Good Ways with communities based on consultations with Indigenous communities in Manitoba, Belize, Ecuador, and Chile. The framework for engaging in a relationship with communities involves five key steps. The first step is to seek out Indigenous teachers, spaces, and resources, to introduce oneself, and to learn. This step requires self-reflection and spending time with the community members. The second step involves forming the partnership, building a stronger relationship based on trust, finding a mentor or cultural interpreter, defining clear roles, designing the research that benefits the community, assessing and planning for the impacts of the relationship, and allocating the necessary resources equitably. The third step is to maintain the partnership by making decisions together with the community, reflecting on the relationship, letting the community take the lead, and assessing the nature and impacts of the relationship on an ongoing basis. The fourth step is closing the partnership by recognizing the work of those who contributed to it, saying goodbye properly following Indigenous Protocols, demonstrating gratitude, celebrating the work done, and clarifying continued responsibilities. The fifth and final step involves following through on commitments, providing continuous support, and assuming institutional relational accountability. The assumption is that relationships are continuous (Ferland et al., 2021).

The Two-Eyed Seeing approach is another approach researchers can adopt. This approach was conceptualized by Mi'kmaq Elders, Albert and Murdena Marshall as an approach that enables researchers “to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western Ways of Knowing and to use both of these eyes together” (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012 in Peltier, 2018, p. 2). While the research process may follow the dominant ways of conducting research, the Two-Eyed Seeing approach is informed by Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, and takes into consideration the principles of an Indigenous research paradigm and has Indigenous community's interests and concerns at the centre of the research project (Peltier, 2018). Kelley Bird-Naytowhow and colleagues (2017) observe that the Two-Eyed Seeing approach revealed to them



that the Western approach is largely concerned with the what of research (reliability, validity, institutional ethics review, etc.), while Indigenous methodologies are concerned with the how and why and aim to see the research being done in a good way and serve a good purpose.

Suzanne Robertson, Carey Sinclair, and Andrew Hatala (2022) researched the experiences of Indigenous mothers with Child and Family Services in Canada. They conducted qualitative research utilizing Indigenous research lenses. They opened the research project in ceremony where the project was given a spirit name. After going through the standard institution ethics, participants were offered a smudge. The interviews were semi-structured and conversational with an overarching theme of exploring women's experiences with the child welfare system. The data analysis process was done with the support of a Knowledge Keeper. Knowledge Keeper also advised the research process starting from its design to its conclusion.

Another research study conducted by Kelley Bird-Naytowhow, Andrew Hatala, Tamara Pearl, Andrew Judge, and Erynne Sjoblom (2017) with urban Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan was community-based and employed Indigenous methodologies using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach. This meant that Indigenous spiritual values guided the research process and centred on relationships. The Youth Resilience Project evaluated strengths in youths' experiences and stories, thus, moving away from deficit theorizing. Indigenous youths were positioned as co-researchers. The research aimed to empower youths to explore their stories and co-create knowledge with community-based organizations and external researchers. This ensured that the research centred on the unique experiences of the participants.

They used two methods in their research design: conversational/talking circles. This allowed horizontal sharing of experiences and was consistent with the culture of the Indigenous youths' heritage (Plains Cree). The researchers also suggested creative methods, such as photo-elicitation, which allowed youths to be comfortable with sharing their stories by reflecting on their creativity. This process of interacting with youths was centred on key Indigenous values of "reciprocity, humility, reverence, and compassion," in addition to trust, transparency, caring, and honesty (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017, p. 7). These values brought spirituality into the research process, which is essential in Indigenous worldviews that sees an individual as a whole (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017). The whole represents the "interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe" (La-

vallée, 2009 as cited in Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017, p. 4). Self-reflexivity was a continuous process throughout the research, especially for the participating researchers. The cultural Protocols followed the Plains Cree ways (this included tobacco gifting and smudging with sage or sweet grass) before all stages of the research process. In addition, OCAP principles were followed and the relationship with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) was established. STC became "the stewards and owners of all emergent 'data'" (p. 8). This meant they had the power to decide the access and possession of data in consultations with youths and researchers (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017).

The researchers incorporated various manners of community engagement into their research. The community engagement and capacity-building components were built into the research design at the individual level (through articulating their visions for their communities, for example), at the group level (through building and strengthening relationships by participating in ceremonies, various activities, such as overnight camping), and at the community level (by working with and actively engaging community-based organizations and strengthening the work they do and connecting the youths to these organizations). In addition, connections with the media were strengthened through interviews, exhibitions were organized, and relationships were bridged (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017). Joshua Tobias, Chantelle Richmond, and Isaac Luginah (2013) employed CBPR with Anishinabe communities on the North Shore of Lake Superior. They started by presenting themselves to a potential collaborating community. This initial step led to the development of a relationship and the formulation of research questions based on the needs and the analyses of the communities. Series of community consultations were crucial in formulating the research questions. Researchers were attentive and open to new ideas that emerged from these consultations.

The authors argue that researchers need to reflect on the power differences and their positionalities as well as ensure skill and knowledge transfer. Living nearby to the communities, hiring local research assistants, and consulting with Elders were seen as important aspects of building relational accountability. Researchers also set up local advisory committees in participating communities that advised the research team on various aspects of research, such as recruitment and research methods (Tobias et al., 2013).

The knowledge produced from the study was seen as the commons. They suggest clarifying how traditional Knowledges is shared with the public, how contributions are acknowledged, and that publications need to be agreed upon and the plan for reviewing publications should be put

in place. The data analysis process further strengthened the relationship between the communities and researchers. The analysis results have been shared throughout the data analysis process at key moments: the presentation of themes with relevant quotes and then a further deepening of the analysis through a reflective focus group discussion to identify action points. Finally, they point out that even after the research has been finalized, researchers have the responsibility to keep and nurture the established relationships by reflecting on their motivations once again (Tobias et al., 2013).

## Challenges of community-based Indigenous research

The introduction of Indigenous Knowledge-making and epistemologies into the academic realm that is dominated by Western ways poses challenges both to Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). Researchers may be worried that this praxis can lead to commodification, appropriation, and co-optation without decolonization or “unsettling” that involves a “repatriation of land” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 19-21). In addition, researchers may fear misinterpreting and/or disrespecting Indigenous Knowledges. This concern can be especially pertinent for settler researchers who identify as allies and Indigenous researchers working cross-culturally. These fears can be addressed with the help of creating opportunities for Indigenous scholars and researchers and establishing Indigenous advisory councils (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021).

The application of the Indigenous research paradigm requires more time for building trusting and continued relationships, also in situations of staff and leadership turnover (Anderson & Cidro, 2019; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). Being respectful of Protocols sometimes means that researchers may need to take time off from working with the communities. In other situations, relationships need to be sustained even after the project has been finalized and this may require additional resources to maintain the relationship (Anderson & Cidro, 2019). This time required is often not accounted for by the funding agencies and the academic structures, which work around tight timelines and deadlines (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). A revision of institutional policies and infrastructure can support the relationship-building that an Indigenous research paradigm requires (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). At the level of the university, this means understanding that research with Indigenous Peoples takes

time (Anderson & Cidro, 2019).

Scholars who work within academic institutions may face challenges with the academic culture that assesses productivity through publications in peer-reviewed journals while within the Indigenous research paradigm, the rightsholders should be able to contribute to such outputs and this requires time (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). One cannot start working with communities without the ethics approval, even though according to the indigenous research paradigm, research should be informed by the communities’ needs. As research evolves, every change should be reported to the REBs. In addition, if the communities have their own ethics review, this means researchers have to write multiple ethics proposals. This has implications in terms of the time Indigenous researchers spend on their research projects, which then eventually can affect their tenure applications (Anderson & Cidro, 2019).

Indigenous researchers who participated in Anderson & Cidro’s (2019) study indicated that OCAP principles are necessary, but many are still trying to understand its implementation. Some Indigenous researchers experienced barriers in their work due to OCAP because it “has created more controls for those [Indigenous researchers] who have always been working with and in community” (Anderson & Cidro, 2019, p. 227). There are intersectional experiences within Indigenous communities based on gender, class, age, religion, and other social identifiers. Some power imbalances within Indigenous communities can lead, for example, to “gatekeeping and prohibiting research that might be unpopular” (Anderson & Cidro, 2019, p. 227). This can especially be the case for researchers who study gender-based violence, whereby “some members of the leadership” might be threatened by research that can potentially compromise their reputation and political positions (Anderson & Cidro, 2019, p. 227). This consideration can be especially relevant when research involves rural and on-reserve communities (Anderson & Cidro, 2019).

OCAP can lead to insecurities around data ownership, privacy concerns, and confusion about data storage. Indigenous researchers can also face challenges juggling conflicting regimes of OCAP and privacy protection (Anderson & Cidro, 2019). Anderson and Cidro (2019) suggest looking at OCAP as a set of principles that allows for a certain level of flexibility. This means researchers may need to agree with each jurisdiction about what OCAP principles mean in their context.

Finally, Indigenous researchers may feel pressured to always have community-driven research that aims to effect change, despite their personal interest in topics that may

<sup>12</sup> Sharing circle carries sacred meaning for some Indigenous nations, therefore, others call this practice a talking circle (Fontaine, 2023).



seem uninteresting to the Indigenous rightsholders. In addition, the conceptualization of research as an agent of change can also put pressure on Indigenous researchers to effect change (Anderson & Cidro, 2019).

These discussions about challenges that Indigenous research poses point to the fact that there is extra work that Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers need to undertake due to regulations and principles of Indigenous research. Therefore, the recognition of the harms of research on Indigenous peoples should also lead to changes within institutions as well as the recognition of the nature of the work of those researchers engaged in community-based research. For RESOLVE, this means being mindful of these challenges and also being supportive of researchers who will be involved in Indigenous-based research.

## Conclusion

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In this paper, we have reviewed the impact of dominant research on Indigenous Peoples and impact of colonization on gender relations in Indigenous communities in Canada. We also examined Indigenous approaches to research, challenges, and opportunities for RESOLVE. The review demonstrates that there is a need to formulate our own internal guidelines for working with Indigenous community-based organizations and Indigenous Peoples. We suggest several important considerations in developing new ways of conducting Indigenous-based research. The discussion of challenges of Indigenous-based research and the application of Indigenous research methodologies demonstrates that researchers at RESOLVE will need to be mindful and aware of these and other challenges, and continue to learn and update the guidelines.

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