

# “I spent the first year drinking tea”: Exploring Canadian university researchers’ perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples

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*Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is generally understood as a process by which decision-making power and ownership are shared between the researcher and the community involved, bi-directional research capacity and co-learning are promoted, and new knowledge is co-created and disseminated in a manner that is mutually beneficial for those involved. Within the field of Canadian geography we are seeing emerging interest in using CBPR as a way of conducting meaningful and relevant research with Indigenous communities. However, individual interpretations of CBPR’s tenets and the ways in which CBPR is operationalized are, in fact, highly variable. In this article we report the findings of an exploratory qualitative case study involving semi-structured, open-ended interviews with Canadian university-based geographers and social scientists in related disciplines who engage in CBPR to explore the relationship between their conceptual understanding of CBPR and their applied research. Our findings reveal some of the tensions for university-based researchers concerning CBPR in theory and practice.*

Keywords: Community-based participatory research (CBPR), research involving Indigenous peoples, human research ethics, decolonizing methodologies, institutional barriers, TCPS2, research ethics boards

## **«J’ai passé la première année à boire du thé» : une exploration des conceptions que se font les chercheurs universitaires canadiens de la recherche participative axée sur la communauté portant sur les peuples autochtones**

*La recherche participative axée sur la communauté est couramment définie comme un processus par lequel : le pouvoir décisionnel et le sentiment d’adhésion sont partagés par le chercheur et la communauté en question; la capacité en recherche bidirectionnelle et l’apprentissage en collaboration sont valorisés; des nouvelles connaissances sont générées en collaboration et diffusées de sorte que celles-ci puissent être avantageuses pour toutes les parties. Depuis quelques années, il se dessine une tendance en géographie canadienne au recours à cette méthode de recherche participative axée sur la communauté, méthode qui est vue comme bien adaptée et pertinente pour effectuer des recherches auprès des communautés autochtones. Les interprétations individuelles des principes de ce type de recherche divergent et se traduisent sur le terrain par des pratiques variées. Cet article présente des conclusions tirées d’une étude de cas exploratoire de type qualitatif réalisée à partir d’une série d’entrevues semi-dirigés et ouverts auprès de chercheurs spécialisés en géographie et en*

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*sciences sociales provenant du milieu universitaire canadien qui privilégient une approche participative axée sur la communauté. Le but est de se pencher sur les liens qui existent entre leur compréhension des concepts liés à la recherche participative axée sur la communauté et leur recherche appliquée. Il en ressort que le rapport entre la théorie et la pratique de la recherche participative axée sur la communauté entraînent des tensions pour les chercheurs universitaires.*

Mots clés : recherche participative axée sur la communauté, recherche portant sur les peuples autochtones, éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains, méthodologies décolonisatrices, obstacles institutionnels, EPTC2, conseils d'éthique en recherche

## **Introduction: The colonial roots of geography and research involving Indigenous peoples**

Geography as an academic discipline is a product of colonial processes (Godlewska and Smith 1994; Bell et al. 1995; Powell 2008). Arguably, “more than any other [discipline], [geography is] the product of imperialism... [It] was the product of, and implicated in, the expansionist policies of Europe throughout the age of [the] empire” (Painter and Jeffrey 2009, 176). British common law designated much of the Canadian landscape as *terra nullius*, or empty lands, creating the necessary legal conditions for Indigenous<sup>1</sup> communities to be forcefully excluded and marginalized from their traditional territories (Deloria 1969; Borrows 1998; Cardinal 1999; McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004). Mapping and other forms of geographic place-making allowed European powers to lay claim to lands that, although inhabited, were considered un-peopled based on ethnocentric views that those indigenous to the lands had inferior social organizations; this in turn served as justification for the colonizers' actions (Harley 1989; Brealey 1995; McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004; Louis 2007). The Indian Act, among other colonial policies and practices, allowed imperialist governments to apply European notions of property and human-nature relations, thus transforming landscapes to reflect European state systems and European cultural values of land-use

<sup>1</sup>The Canadian government defines Aboriginal as those of First Nations, Inuit, or Métis descent. For the purpose of this paper “Indigenous” will be used in place of “Aboriginal” to counter the colonial definition of identity imposed upon Indigenous populations. When referring to government documents, such as the CIHR *Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (2007), the term “Aboriginal” will be used as it appears within the document.

(Bishop 2003; McGregor 2009; Natcher 2001). Having justified these actions through Eurocentric concepts of state-centred social organization, Canada remains replete with socio-political and physical landmarks of colonization (Bracken 1997; Inglis et al. 2000; Warry 2007; Godlewska et al. 2010).

These geographies of power are still apparent in the contemporary Canadian context with Indigenous peoples deeply harmed by marginalizing governmental policies and practices (Simpson 2004; Alfred 2009). As a result of colonial policy (e.g., the Indian Act, residential schooling, etc.), and when compared with the larger Canadian population, Indigenous peoples endure substantially more social, economic, and health burdens (Reading and Wien 2009). In response, social scientists (including geographers) and health researchers have built careers studying various aspects of Indigenous peoples' lives (Warry 2007). While it is reasonable to assert that positive, relevant, and useful research outcomes do occur in Indigenous research, and geographers have certainly contributed to some of the “good stories” about researchers that circulate in Indigenous communities, those stories are certainly outweighed by the “bad stories” (Smith 1999). Research has often been undertaken by “parachute” researchers who collect data at a time of their choosing (also read as a time of convenience to the researcher) and exit as quickly as they appear with little to no communication before, during, or after the study (Brant Castellano 2004).

In short, the benefits of the academy's research enterprise for Indigenous individuals and communities have not been equally or equitably distributed (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000). Instead, conventional research has often misrepresented Indigenous peoples (Ball and Janyst 2008). Their knowledge has

been appropriated (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000), secondary use of their data has taken place without informed consent (Glass and Kaufert 2007), and the outcomes of some university-based research have clearly resulted in harm to participants and the wider community (Brant Castellano 2004). Work that focuses on pathology and dysfunction rather than understanding Indigenous perspectives and experiences has often led to stereotyping (Reading and Nowgesic 2002; Maar et al. 2005) and neglect of Indigenous peoples' intellectual property rights (Svalastog and Eriksson 2010).

It is no surprise then that research is a "dirty word" for many Indigenous peoples: "it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful" (Smith 1999, 1). Focusing on the need to address the legacy and continuation of colonialism, Smith's seminal work challenged researchers to raise the bar (and change their approach) in terms of research involving Indigenous peoples. In a post-modern era, her writing has contributed to the development of a new generation of researchers who are critically engaged in understanding knowledge and power structures created by research and dedicated to doing research "in a good way" (Ball and Janyst 2008, 33). The need to not only involve, but also collaborate with, communities through all stages of the research process was put forward as a way to address the colonial legacy. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) has been identified as a research philosophy and methodology that has the potential to contribute to efforts to decolonize the university researcher-Indigenous community relationship (Castleden et al. 2008).

CBPR is not a research method per se, it is a process by which decision-making power and ownership is shared between the researcher and the community involved; bi-directional research capacity and co-learning are promoted; and new knowledge is co-created and disseminated in a manner that is mutually beneficial (Israel et al. 2003; Castleden et al. 2008). CBPR is not a novel approach to research outside the academy (Hall 2005) but it is relatively new for university-based researchers engaging with Indigenous peoples in Canada. Rooted in Kurt Lewin's work on experiential learning, social psychology, and group dynamics from the 1940s, the social movements

of the 1970s embraced CBPR as an intervention for positive social change (Hall 2005). Emphasizing community values and autonomy within all stages of the research process (Boser 2007), CBPR focuses on the various social and physical frameworks and structural inequalities that are manifest in the structures of power that exist between researchers and communities (Israel et al. 2005). Redressing the imbalances between knowledge and power, CBPR is intended to work towards change that the community views as tangible and beneficial (Kwan 2004). Through critically addressing the "otherness" involved in working with people of varying epistemological backgrounds (Said 1978), conventional notions of ethics are challenged to promote the social and cultural construction of knowledge (Walwork 2008).

CBPR approaches typically include a number of co-learning and bi-directional learning opportunities. For communities, there are opportunities to learn new knowledge from social, natural, and health scientists; procedural research skills, including data collection and analysis; and also communication skills through writing reports, manuscripts, poster-preparation, and conference presentations. For researchers there are opportunities to learn from keepers of Indigenous knowledge as well as procedural community-specific skills including cultural protocols, ceremony, and relational ethics or, to put it another way, a richer meaning of "respect" in Indigenous CBPR (Meadows et al. 2003; Bergum and Dossetor 2005; Bourque Bearskin 2011). Unlike conventional research, where analysis takes place in the academy, engaging with community members over interpretation of both language and cultural content may also prevent misrepresentation and misallocation of Indigenous knowledge (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000; Brant Castellano 2004). With respect to research involving Indigenous peoples, CBPR's tenets also include "respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility" (the "four Rs") (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991, 1). Operationalizing CBPR and the four Rs may work towards: developing relationships based on trust; challenging conventional research paradigms; creating avenues for Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations to determine the level of involvement they want to take in research processes and outcomes; and

developing stronger ethical guidelines (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991).

While ideal in theory for its capacity to deconstruct power imbalances within research processes, carrying out CBPR can be daunting. This article reports on the findings from an exploratory, qualitative case study that examines university-based researchers' perspectives on CBPR partnerships with Indigenous communities.<sup>2</sup> In the next section, we present a discussion of the evolution of guidelines that seek to address the legacy of unethical research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. Following that, we share the results of our analysis of researchers' understandings of CBPR theory and practice throughout all phases of a research project, from establishing partnerships and designing research to data collection/analysis and dissemination. We conclude with a discussion of the tensions between theory and practice, and an exploration of implications that CBPR can have for partners, both community and academic.

### **Ethical guidelines for research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada: Moving towards a partnership paradigm**

University-based research is accepted as legitimate and is one of the dominant means of creating and sharing knowledge (Louis 2007). Determining appropriate areas of investigative importance—the social and physical issues worth researching—is value-laden and largely in accordance with the worldviews of those in the academy, the majority of whom are still white males (Atleo 2004). Western values are not only imbedded in but have created these research processes; as a result, they remain rooted in colonial and relational power structures (Smith 1999; Louis 2007). Indigenous communities situated in Canada have been subjected to this power dynamic for centuries. Scholarly research has been

on rather than *by, for* or *with* Indigenous peoples (Schnarch 2005; Delemos 2006; Malone et al. 2006; Koster et al., this issue, 195).

Given the growing recognition of unethical research practices involving Indigenous peoples in Canada and in an effort to minimize harm, several national bodies, Indigenous organizations, and funding agencies began producing ethics statements, guidelines, and policies in the early 1980s (see Table 1). These documents are intended to promote and encourage critical examination of the research design in an effort to address imbalances of power and risk. In short, they advocate for community autonomy, offering another avenue that has the potential to contribute to decolonizing the research process (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000). Each is described below, detailing the evolution from one to the next.

One of the first ethics policy statements for research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada was produced in 1982 by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS 1982); its focus was limited to research conducted in northern Canada. Taking into consideration the notion that “community” was not restricted to an area of settlement, the original ACUNS statement outline the multiple roles that community members play within the research process: as research subjects, as part of the research team, providing information, using the completed research, or identifying research needs (ACUNS 1982). This statement was “intended to encourage the development of co-operation and mutual respect between researchers and the people of the North” (ACUNS 1998, 4).

The second edition of the ACUNS statement began to steer towards a partnership approach to research. In addressing the need to increase involvement of northerners, “not only as subjects or passive observers of research but in all aspects of the research process,” emphasis was placed on the creation of relationships with Indigenous communities and peoples (ACUNS 1998, 4). ACUNS posited that relationships based on mutual respect are necessary for both parties and the research itself. Two additional directives to researchers were added in the second edition: 1) the need to abide by local regulations and protocols; and 2) the need to uphold

<sup>2</sup>“Community” can be ambiguous (Silver et al. 2006; Freeman 1993; ACUNS 1982). Defining community is particularly complex based on historical and colonial mis/allocation, place (e.g., on-reserve versus off-reserve) and political externalities (e.g., government designation of “status”). In this study, participants conceptually defined “community” as they saw fit in relation to their community-academic partnerships.

**Table 1**  
Chronology of Indigenous Research Ethics Policy/Guideline Development in Canada

Publication	Year	Organization	Highlights
Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North (ACUNS 1982)	1982	Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for accountability</li> <li>• Advocates co-operation and mutual respect</li> </ul>
Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North 2nd edition (ACUNS 1998)	1998; Reprinted in 2003	Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocates community collaboration in all stages of research</li> <li>• Need to account for cross-cultural contexts/content</li> </ul>
Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 1998)	1998	Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council, and Social Science and Humanities Research Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous collaboration in developing guidelines</li> <li>• Identifies a history of misconduct</li> <li>• Refers to organizations with ethical guidelines (ACUNS and the American Association of Anthropologists)</li> <li>• Suggests best practices</li> </ul>
Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Self-Determination Applied to Research (Schnarch 2005)	2005	National Aboriginal Health Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community control of research process and data</li> <li>• Community choice to establish a partnership</li> <li>• Emphasizes cultural and social importance of knowledge</li> <li>• Community focused</li> </ul>
CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People (CIHR 2007)	2007	Canadian Institutes of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural values/protocols at forefront for healthy research</li> <li>• Community choice concerning partnership</li> <li>• Community control over data</li> <li>• Community focused</li> </ul>
Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition (TCPS2) (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 2010a)	2010	Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council, and Social Science and Humanities Research Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to respect Indigenous people and cultures, concern for their welfare, social justice, and inclusiveness</li> <li>• Further discussion needed for partnership approach, however offers suggestions</li> <li>• Mandatory compliance</li> </ul>

a level of appropriate community consultation at all stages of the research. Building on “appropriate” consultation, researchers are advised to give consideration to “the relevant cross-cultural contexts, if any, and the type of research involved” (ACUNS 1998, 5). Researchers were also encouraged to consider local research needs and the roles of community members within the research process, including community members as (for example): funders, partners in research collaboration, licensors, and people living and experiencing the impact of research (ACUNS 1998).

In its expansion of the need for community involvement, the ACUNS statement was a guiding document<sup>3</sup> for the three national research granting agencies in Canada—the Canadian Institutes

of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (commonly referred to as the Tri-Council)—to develop the 1998 *Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. TCPS includes a brief section entitled *Research Involving Aboriginal People* (sections 6.1–6.4) (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 1998). The 1998 TCPS provided an introductory disclaimer stating “[t]he Agencies... have not held sufficient discussions with representatives of the affected peoples or groups, or with the various organizations or researchers involved” (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 1998, 6.1). This disclaimer was necessary due to TCPS’ non-compliance with one of the recommendations coming from the Royal Commission

<sup>3</sup>So was the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996).

on Aboriginal Peoples' final report (1996), which called for the active involvement and consultation of Indigenous peoples for decisions affecting Indigenous people and communities.

Among other things, the TCPS was the Tri-Council's contribution to the ethics discourse concerning research involving Indigenous peoples. However, no formal policies were established as the TCPS was "intended to serve as a starting point for such discussions" (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 1998, 6.1). In addressing the collective nature of knowledge and "distinct perspectives and understandings embodied within [Indigenous] cultures and histories," (6.2), the TCPS suggested, in fact, that conventional research ethics review boards and ethical requirements might not be suited to uphold ethical conduct in Indigenous contexts. As a result of the lack of capacity at the university, researchers and university-based ethics review boards were encouraged to "consider the interests of the [Indigenous] group" (6.2). The TCPS list of best practices, directly influenced by the 1998 ACUNS statement, proposed an adaptation of academic ethics codes, and highlighted the need for community consultation throughout the research process and the need for researchers to respect cultural protocols in Indigenous communities.

The Tri-Council's 1998 edition attempted to address power imbalances within research by initiating discussions with academic administrators and researchers; however, these decolonizing initiatives, intended to shed the paternalism embedded within the research process, remained largely theoretical in nature. Thus, while "ivory tower" actions were shaping national policy, Indigenous individuals, communities, and organizations began creating their own ethics protocols. Territorial, cultural and Indigenous organizations, such as the Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch (n.d.), the Aurora Research Institute (2011), the Nunavut Research Institute (2011), and the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project (2007), as well as governing bodies such as Band and Tribal Councils, began installing their own ethical checks and balances to ensure that research would be conducted with communities in a manner that respected cultural and ethical protocols. Thus, once university researchers

gained ethical approval from their institutions, additional licensing, research agreements, and/or community-based ethical approvals were becoming necessary, particularly in the North, prior to commencing research.

In 2005, the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) released their policy on research: *Ownership, control, access, and possession or self-determination applied to research: A critical analysis of contemporary First Nations research and some options for First Nations communities* (OCAP) (Schnarch 2005). Intended to guide community and researcher decisions involving health research, this document provided guidelines for community empowerment within the research process. The OCAP principles were essentially NAHO's efforts to address knowledge misappropriation and cultural misrepresentation by establishing community ownership of cultural knowledge, data, and information; community control of all aspects of their lives; community access to data and information about themselves; and possession of all data (Schnarch 2005, 4-5).

In the same year that the NAHO released OCAP, the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (one of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research), established an Aboriginal Ethics Watch Group (AEWG), which, in collaboration with an Aboriginal advisory committee composed of community members and researchers, and additional non-Aboriginal researchers and institutions, created the *CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (CIHR 2007). The resulting fifteen articles outlined in that document were intended to "promote health through research that is in keeping with Aboriginal values and traditions" (CIHR 2007, 2); these articles have become instrumental in informing ethical research practices for health researchers working with Indigenous peoples and communities. While CIHR was diligent in its efforts to engage in extensive community consultation, these guidelines—and the TCPS—have also been criticized as too prescriptive and perpetuating colonial practices (see, for example, Eyre 2010).

Soon after the publication of the *CIHR Guidelines*, the Tri-Council began a consultative process to revise the entire TCPS. With respect to the minor section in the 1998 version entitled *Research Involving Aboriginal People*, the Tri-Council engaged again with the AEWG,

Indigenous organizations, community leaders, and university-based researchers to revise the TCPS's content concerning Indigenous research. What resulted was an entire chapter (Chapter 9) devoted to ethical considerations for research involving Indigenous peoples. After moderate academic review—and to a much lesser extent, Indigenous community review—open debate, sharp criticism, and subsequent revisions to that chapter, the Tri-Council approved the release of the second edition in 2010. Referred to as TCPS2, this document has replaced earlier guidelines as the ethical standard that informs the deliberations of institutional research ethics boards across Canada. TCPS2 is intended to “bridge conceptual worlds, not repeating errors of the past by assuming that Aboriginal peoples needed instruction in ethics but, rather, connecting with those deep currents of ethical sensibility that live on in contemporary community life” (Brant Castellano and Reading 2010, 3).

Partnership approaches informed by community collaboration is clearly necessary as demonstrated in the evolving ethical guidelines of the past two decades. Although open-ended, which inevitably leads to more questions than answers, these documents have been integral to informing researchers and helping develop policies on matters of Indigenous community-university partnerships. What follows are the findings from our exploratory case study undertaken in 2009<sup>4</sup> that investigated the challenges associated with CBPR from university-based researchers' perspectives. By engaging in this dialogue, our goal is to contribute to the work of decolonizing the academy; beginning the dialogue within geography—a disciplinary product of colonialism—is a logical (if not more correctly, an ironic) point of departure.

## Methods

This exploratory study investigated Canadian university-based researchers' (primarily geographers) perspectives on the involvement of Indige-

nous partners in CBPR. To maximize the quality and depth of the data, a semi-structured and open-ended interview guide was developed (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Participants were purposefully recruited on the basis of three criteria: 1) they were social science faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, or PhD candidates in their final year of study at a Canadian university; 2) they responded in the affirmative that they employed a CBPR approach to their research when recruited; and 3) their research involved Indigenous communities in Canada.

The lead author, a non-Indigenous woman, human geographer, and CBPR researcher herself, identified a preliminary group of potential researchers who met the three criteria. The second author, a non-Indigenous woman and paid research assistant, recruited researchers via email. Of the 18 researchers contacted, 15 agreed to participate in the study<sup>5, 6</sup> (see Table 2). These respondents were given an information sheet and an informed consent form that outlined the nature of the study along with the option to review their interview transcripts for accuracy as well as how quotes were used in context prior to publication (Baxter and Eyles 1997).

Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. The second author conducted all of the interviews to ensure consistency in the use of the interview protocol. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Respondents were asked to discuss their most recent community-academic partnership in detail. All three authors<sup>7</sup> analyzed the transcripts both independently and collaboratively, striving for dependability, confirmability, and credibility with respect to the research findings (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Whittemore et al. 2001). Using a constant-comparative approach (Aronson 1994) and drawing from

<sup>4</sup>Interviews were conducted after the release of the draft version of the TCPS2. While it was still under review, all researchers were aware of it and had reviewed Chapter 9—*Research Involving Aboriginal People in Canada*.

<sup>5</sup>Two of the fifteen participants identified themselves as members of First Nations. One of these participants is a university-based research coordinator who was invited to participate based on their knowledge and experience of community-university research partnerships.

<sup>6</sup>The richness of the data, not the number of participants, determines sample size in qualitative research (Maxwell 2005).

<sup>7</sup>The third author, a non-Indigenous male, had recently completed an undergraduate honours thesis in Geography on CBPR under the supervision of the lead author. He was engaged during the data analysis and contributed to the writing of this manuscript.

**Table 2**  
Respondents' Background Information<sup>8</sup>

Respondent*	Gender	Tenured	Length of Partnership <sup>9</sup>	Research Focus	Region of Research
1	F	Yes	7 years	Health and place	Atlantic
2	M	N/A	N/A	Health services	Western
3	F	Yes	11 years	Social relationships	Northern
4	F	No	3 years	Tourism	Northern
5	F	Yes	5 years	Education	Western
6	F	Yes	8 years	Health and place	Western
7	F	Yes	2 years	Health and place	Northern
8	M	Yes	13 years	Health policy	Atlantic
9	F	Yes	8 years	Child and youth care	Western
10	F	No	3 years	Ethnoecology	Western
11	F	Yes	10 years	Ethics and education	Central
12	F	No	6 years	Global change	Northern
13	F	Yes	15 years	Health policy	Central
14	M	No	4 years	Health and global change	Northern
15	F	Yes	30 years	Social-ecological health	Western

\*Respondents' quotes are followed by a number (e.g., R1) in subsequent sections so that their quotes may be further contextualized.

grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), data were thematically coded to highlight overarching and recurring themes from which several factors were identified to explain the challenges facing university-based researchers engaged in CBPR involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. These factors are described in detail through the examination of tensions that emerge during the four key stages of conventional research: design; data collection; analysis; and knowledge translation/mobilization.<sup>10</sup> *Who was involved* and *how they were involved* in each of these four stages became the subject and focus of our analysis.

involved is as important as *who* is involved in maintaining a collaborative and respectful research project, a focal point of many ethical guidelines. The findings are, therefore, framed around the four methodological stages inherent in university-based research projects: 1) research design; 2) data collection; 3) data analysis; and 4) knowledge translation/mobilization. These four stages are used to draw out the tensions researchers experience in their CBPR partnerships with Indigenous peoples. Our goal is to create a platform from which CBPR researchers may critically reflect on their own practice.

**Findings: Researchers' perspectives on CBPR from theory to practice**

Within the context of CBPR, *how* people are in-

<sup>8</sup>Researchers who participated in this study requested anonymity. In accordance with TCPS2, the research team has limited participants' demographic information in order to ensure that their responses remain confidential.

<sup>9</sup>Researchers were asked to elaborate upon their most recent partnership with an Indigenous community and/or community organization. At the time of interviews, all partnerships were ongoing, therefore, lengths reflect the time reported when the interviews were conducted.

<sup>10</sup>In this paper, we employ CIHR's definition of knowledge translation: "a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically-sound application of knowledge" (CIHR 2008).

**Research design**

Unlike conventional research, the creation and nurturing of researcher-community relationships, from design to dissemination and beyond, is integral to CBPR. However, how that relationship begins varies widely. "In an ideal world, community-based research is initiated by the community" (R3) but the reality is that, more often than not, CBPR research is still researcher-initiated. "Frequently the motto that I preach, which is responsive research and community led and so on, tends to be more rhetoric than practice... [for] lots of really good reasons. Communities are busy, there's lots of reasons why these things don't always work out the way you

think they might ethically” (R5). Less than half the respondents reported that their most recent research project stemmed from their own pre-existing relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations. Research partnerships typically formed as a result of working in collaboration with a community or organization. Over time, and by demonstrating the “four Rs of Indigenous research” (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991, 1), these relationships grew into community-university research partnerships.

Although researchers and Indigenous communities may agree in principle to partner on a project, this agreement does not automatically signal the start of a conventional study (i.e., data collection does not necessarily begin immediately).

My Dean asked me two years into my project why I hadn't published yet out of it and he had no idea what I was talking about when I told him I spent the first year drinking tea, you know? [laughter] Because it took several visits to the community, a lot of patience and sitting down and talking to people and deciding how would be the best way of going about doing this, getting them to a point where they trusted me to be a partner in doing [research] with them and to do it the right way, before we ever really even embarked on collecting any kind of data. (R7)

Respondents agreed that spending time in Indigenous communities engaging in conversation with members of the community and actively listening to and respecting the ideas of Indigenous knowledge-holders is essential to establishing relationships based on mutual trust. “The challenges and the opportunities that you can have in engaging communities starts with... a respectful standpoint, an ethical standpoint, reciprocity and listening, listening to what communities want” (R2). Finding that time, however, was cited as one of the greatest challenges; other challenges include institutional barriers and financial resources.

There's this kind of constant Catch-22 where you need to have ethics approval to go and work with communities, which is understandable but you can't really develop a proposal or get the ethics unless you actually go and talk to them first. So, it kind of goes back and forth. Same with

funding. You need funding to get up there, but if it's not research you often can't get funding... I think that's kind of a critical issue that a lot of people face in trying to do this kind of work. (R12)

Being welcomed into a long-standing partnership based on affiliation with a senior scholar who has a pre-established partnership was another means for gaining access to Indigenous communities and organizations. In other instances, respondents stated that they were known to the Indigenous community through previous work as consultants and were subsequently approached by the Indigenous community for scholarly research. While many academics occupy both roles, these respondents were explicit about the fact that they were actively sought as consultants first. Once they began academic careers, they were further sought after as research partners, having already invested the time to establish mutual trust. In one instance, an Indigenous community approached a university-based researcher (R14) to partner on a project of mutual interest (the “ideal” CBPR process). During the proposal development phase, both the researcher and the community decided that developing a research partnership would be effective and beneficial for both parties.

Meeting community representatives or organizational leaders at events such as conferences and community gatherings was another way to exchange research ideas and initiate contacts. However, partnerships do not always result from deliberate planning. As one respondent noted, “It started out as a research project for which we [the researchers] were seeking funding and thought there was some applicability to issues that we had observed in that [Indigenous] community... [We] approached the community to see if they would be willing to have their name on the research proposal” (R7).

While the majority of respondents indicated that community partners were involved with the initial design and provided continuous intellectual input during research proposal development, two respondents indicated they initially suggested and “pitched” (R3) the study to their Indigenous community partners. “This was part of the challenge, when we actually got the [seed] funding then we sent out invitations to... all First Nations [in the region] mainly for

geographic purposes because then we could actually do it without spending a small fortune to travel" (R9). In these situations, it was only after the community agreed to participate as partners in the research project that the community's vision was integrated into the proposal.

Respondents who directly approached Indigenous communities indicated that this was the only way to establish a relationship and initiate research within their area of expertise; while it was not the ideal, it was a step they found ethically and practically necessary to conduct CBPR. Recognizing the potentially problematic nature of this approach, a respondent described her initial contact as follows: "I didn't bully my way in, but I certainly wasn't invited" (R4).

### Data collection

Conventional research is often viewed as a one-way transfer of information from participants to researchers that is then analyzed and interpreted before being disseminated to the academy and broader society. One respondent commented on this unilateral process as expressed to her by an Indigenous community member:

There is a playful analogy [about] researchers and snow geese [in the community]... snow geese [and researchers] arrive in the beginning of the summer, they make a mess of everything—and you know what kind of mess I mean—and then they leave at the end of the summer without saying goodbye... only to come up the following summer without invitation to make a mess all over again. (R4)

But CBPR, in theory, is rooted in a process of knowledge exchange that by and large takes place during the data collection phase; one respondent describes this process as: "a two-way street [with] the researcher learn[ing] as much from the community as the community will learn from the researcher" (R2). Moreover, most researchers working with Indigenous communities are non-Indigenous and this brings additional opportunities for cross-cultural learning and reflection (see de Leeuw et al., this issue, 180). "This type of cross-cultural exchange between researchers and community is very, very important because [we] can [all] understand and respect that there are differences [between us]" (R2). Getting knowledge exchange underway through the

data collection phase in CBPR often involves the employment of local community members. Of the 15 respondents, 13 indicated they had employed local community members for the purpose of collecting data. Hiring community translators for the data collection phase was also a means of involving additional members of the community in situations where there was a language barrier. As one respondent put it, community researchers from the Indigenous community were "much more effective [in initiating] the data collection process and be[ing] the primary person of contact... because they are trusted" (R7).

While hiring local people to contribute to a project has a wealth of benefits, there are also some challenges to consider. For example, community dynamics and inter-personal relations are complex, an issue that some respondents did not anticipate at the outset of their research projects. One respondent noted that "[the community researcher I hired] was well-liked in the community, which as I found out with other people I'd worked with, it was really important to try to find people that were (pause) didn't have too much baggage, which is hard in small communities... I mean, wherever you live" (R4). In another instance, a community resident employed as a research assistant was attempting to recruit a community member to a study through a home visit; the research assistant was asked to leave immediately but not until the "potential recruit" criticized the individual and the research project. The university-based researcher later discovered that this research assistant had previously been involved in a relationship with the community member's relative that had not ended well. This is a challenge for "outside" researchers who conduct fieldwork with no knowledge of interpersonal community or organizational dynamics.

Of the respondents who hired local data collectors or translators, half provided their community-based assistants with additional training on university-based research ethics involving humans or research methods. This point is particularly worth noting given the legacy of unethical research on Indigenous peoples. Interestingly, the benefits of this form of capacity building for the community were largely viewed by the respondents as an indirect benefit from a research project rather than an explicit

goal. Given that the tenets of CBPR include community-level empowerment, sharing knowledge on ethical guidelines and university-based protocols of (for example) informed consent is important as highlighted by the following story recounted by a respondent from a story told to her by a community member:

You [the university-based researcher] would be so proud of me [Indigenous community member]...we had a Band Council meeting today and they pulled me in... there was somebody there who wanted to do some research in the community and they gave us very little information about what they wanted to do and just assumed that...we'd put a rubber stamp on it and let them go about their business...and I gave them a really hard time...based on everything that I now understand research to be and what the obligations of the researcher are to the community. (R7)

Rather than perpetuating a legacy of unethical research, involving community from design to dissemination in CBPR contributes to capacity building as well as autonomy by “giv[ing] people a better understanding of research and therefore the confidence to participate more in research, to interact better with researchers who come into their communities,” (and, by the same standard, rejecting research proposal that do not fit with community concerns) and developing skills that could be of use “long after my project is gone” (R7). In terms of positive “legacy” outcomes of CBPR, over one-third of the respondents noted that community members who had worked on research projects had gone on to pursue undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate training.

### Data analysis

Although engaging members of Indigenous communities in data analysis contributes to a robust interpretation of both language and cultural content, in only one instance did a community-based researcher participate in the analysis and writing phases. According to the respondent, approximately “85 percent of everything [we did went] through [this community research assistant]” (R12). However, of the remaining respondents, only two indicated that community members were involved with data analysis leading to preliminary findings. Most of those interviewed

indicated that, whether through a community meeting or by providing a copy of the preliminary findings prior to the writing phase, community members were able to actively review findings. However, many respondents also agreed that community members are often uninterested in reviewing lengthy, jargon-filled, academic manuscripts (see Koster et al., this issue, 195). One respondent noted that “when we would go back with reports and things, most of the time they didn't particularly want to spend a lot of time vetting things. They just trusted that we were doing the right thing and doing it well and off we went” (R6). Respondents empathized with the lack of interest in reviewing such documents and considered community meetings to be the best means of engaging community members in the review and corroboration of results.

Respondents also alluded to the trepidation they experienced in sharing intellectual control: “there's nothing scarier than [CBPR]. You're at the mercy of the community” (R3). While this demonstrates one respondent's reservations concerning the risks associated with engaging in shared analysis with community partners, it also highlights the power imbalances that remain within conventional research processes. CBPR is intended to reverse the conventional power dynamic in the research process by giving voice—and control—to those participating in the research:

[Shared analysis] increases accuracy, it provides context, it ensures a community voice, it's respectful, it's [analysis] with community not about community. [In our case], when the results were mixed, including some negative results, we had a long discussion with the community as to whether they should be published or not because negative results always lead, can lead to stigmatization and other unforeseen consequences afterwards. (R13)

All of the respondents noted the impact of financial and time constraints on their CBPR relationships. This was particularly on the minds of those respondents engaged in partnerships with northern and remote Indigenous communities. In preparing proposals and managing budgets, some of the respondents acknowledged that budgetary constraints led to decisions to exclude Indigenous community members in data analysis. Moreover, respondents said that despite a

willingness on the community's part to engage, the time and space to do so were limited. The ability for (often small) Indigenous communities to partake and invest their members' time in research initiatives was identified as one of the most practical yet challenging aspect of CBPR (see de Leeuw et al., this issue, 180).

### Knowledge translation/mobilization

Respondents undertook a wide range of approaches to knowledge translation/mobilization. While some took on the role themselves, others engaged community members in meaningful ways at various points throughout the study (integrated knowledge translation/mobilization) and at the conclusion (end-of-grant knowledge translation/mobilization) by means of co-presentations at conferences, encouraging community members to write about the research for local newspapers, or co-writing the results of their research (see Mulrennan et al., this issue, 243). "Community members receive national [and] international invitations to present and consult with either Indigenous research projects or other participatory-based research projects. For instance, one community member and myself were just back from presenting as keynote speakers to [an international health research conference]... on community-based participatory research" (R13). Beyond disseminating results in conventional peer-reviewed academic journals and at conferences, all of the respondents indicated that they used additional communication outlets to ensure community participants, leaders, and members at large were able to access the outcomes of their studies. For example, interactive blogs, radio announcements, public dialogues, posters, high-quality photographs, short films, curriculum development, science camps, school lectures, and summaries printed on assorted paraphernalia (e.g., coffee mugs) had proven successful amongst these respondents. There was general consensus amongst the respondents, however, that knowledge translation/mobilization was context-specific and that what might work for one community might not work for another.

Knowledge translation/mobilization, especially with respect to academic publication, was often discussed as a particular challenge of the

partnership. Without a memorandum of understanding or formal research agreement outlining publication expectations and intellectual property ownership at the outset of a research project, respondents often felt torn between the publishing requirements of their institution (for tenure, promotion, and annual salary review) and the preferences of the community. They were also aware of the importance of continually maintaining open lines of communication about other non-academic publications and presentations related to their research with community partners. One respondent acknowledged this by saying, "I'm always worried when anything gets out that I haven't told them about first because it can be perceived as me violating the conditions of our partnership" (R7). Furthermore, the researcher who expressed concern with involving community partners in data analysis also expressed concern over community disagreement with findings:

Certainly I've heard a number of stories about [researchers] ...where the [Indigenous] communities have said, "No, sorry, you can't [publish] any of the data you've just collected over the last three years. You're done." So, I think there's always that terror and ... [it is] something that motivates you to act ethically but it also can be a bit paralyzing. (R3)

For respondents involved in partnerships where there is no formal agreement, publication protocols were determined mainly on a case-by-case basis. Of the 15 respondents, six reported using formal agreements or memoranda of understanding prior to commencing the research project. In these cases, dissemination protocols were pre-determined and helped minimize the potential for conflict concerning issues such as shared authorship. Providing a level of predictability within the often-unpredictable realm of research partnerships, formal agreements were seen as an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities. Not all respondents agreed on the usefulness of formal agreements, however, with one participant describing them as "quasi-legal documents" (R11), whose meanings remain open to interpretation, with an ironic parallel to the complications of modern interpretations of historical treaty language, a highly contentious issue in many Indigenous communities. Additionally, formal

agreements were seen as having the potential to fracture a trust-based relationship within pre-established partnerships. At the same time, other respondents saw these protocols as a signal to all researchers that, as predicted by the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Indigenous Peoples were gathering strength and confronting colonial practices.

Aboriginal ... communities are becoming more educated to say, "We want this, this, this, this and this in place before we're even going to let you talk to us." ... I mean, we have specifically heard from people in all the communities we've been in, "You're not like X who did this, and it's important that you know that you don't do that, otherwise you wouldn't be here."... They know much more about what they want and how to go about it. So things need to shift for people who want to do community-based research. (R6)

As tools for understanding and navigating partnerships, however, all respondents agreed that, when used, the terms of formal agreements should be conceptualized and mutually developed within the context of each community-university partnership and applied according to the will of the partnering community. Meanwhile, institutional barriers to upholding these agreements exist. "One of the things I've had to fight with [institutional] ethics [review boards] about with community-based research is anonymity. A lot of people, when they give traditional knowledge, they want it acknowledged as theirs and a lot of ethics boards want you to keep everyone anonymous. So, I've had to fight that fight quite a few times" (R3).

Coming full circle back to the importance of relationships in CBPR, there was general consensus from the respondents that while a research project may come to a natural close after the knowledge translation/mobilization activities have run their course, the researcher-community relationships in CBPR are expected to continue.

It's not about the research anymore, it's about the relationship, and continuing to reciprocate and support and help... the expectation is, in some way, to continue the relationship, and to support in areas that might have absolutely nothing to do with the research. So I'm the support person, and

whatever I can do to help, I would be expected to help. (R6)

But like any interpersonal relationship, some respondents found that giving up control in CBPR and allowing the time for the "4 Rs" to germinate can be a major challenge, especially for junior researchers: "Let's say you're a student and you're doing a Master's thesis or a PhD, and your committee's pushing you to get done, you know, within a year or whatever... [getting community approval throughout your study and to publish the results of your CBPR work] is a very time-consuming process... and therefore somewhat nerve-wracking" (R8). With the pressures of the academy as well as those stemming from partnering Indigenous communities bearing down on researchers, we see evidence that CBPR in practice is much more challenging to operationalize than CBPR in theory.

### **Discussion: CBPR—All my relationships**

Geographers' engagement with the discipline's central themes (e.g., time, space, place, scale, human-nature relations) has contributed to ongoing colonial relations in Canada. Geography, like many other disciplines, has also undergone paradigm shifts from a focus on description, to deeply racist characterizations of the "other", to largely unreflective positivism, and from there to structuralism, humanism, post-structuralism, feminism, etc. (Clope et al. 1991). Throughout these paradigm shifts, research has generally remained rooted in a researcher driven four-staged procedural model. Beginning with research design, leading to data collection and analysis, and concluding with knowledge translation/mobilization, this approach is intended to produce new knowledge of use to the discipline and the academy (Kwan 2004). While Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholar-allies argue that this model is complicit in producing socio-historical circumstances that are undermining Indigenous peoples' autonomy in Canada despite emerging ethical guidelines (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000), CBPR is an attempt to challenge this convention, empower Indigenous peoples through shared ownership of

the research processes and outcomes, and reduce power imbalances between university-based researchers and Indigenous communities.

By undertaking research *with* rather than *on* Indigenous communities, CBPR has the potential to break down conventional research processes by emphasizing a robust level of community involvement that (ideally) leads to the co-production of culturally respectful, relevant, and empowering knowledge. However, as the findings from this study suggest, individual researchers' interpretations of the principles of CBPR and how they are mobilized remain highly variable. We contend that while the theory behind Indigenous CBPR is sound, putting CBPR into action is not without its challenges. The problems or tensions that emerged from the data are discussed in detail below, framed by the four phases of the research enterprise. Ironically, these tensions have a geographic bent to them, particularly with respect to the ways in which social relations occur through time and space/place.

During the initial phase of research team development and design, it was clear that the four Rs of Indigenous research (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) were on the minds of these researchers and at the forefront of their decision-making. As one researcher (R3) said, the "ideal" way to engage in Indigenous CBPR is for Indigenous communities to approach researchers. Herein lies a gap, especially for junior scholars or established scholars wanting to transition into Indigenous CBPR as neither will have established relationships with Indigenous communities. How do they begin the conversation, let alone develop relationships, in the absence of familiarity? While some researchers were introduced by way of already-established relationships or through senior scholars, others placed cold calls and still others secured funding and then approached communities with a funded project in hand. Thus research questions and research designs were often pre-determined.

Two equally important courses of action are available to address this gap. First, several Indigenous organizations, some of which receive Tri-Council funding, now work effectively to match researchers with Indigenous communities. For example, the nine CIHR-funded NEAHR (Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research) Centres across Canada provide a bridge

between communities and researchers to express their interests, develop relationships, and build partnerships; the NEAHRs also provide seed funding for research development. Other organizations include the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health and the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network; both provide similar support. Interestingly, similar to its lead role in research ethics development (i.e., CIHR's *Guidelines*), health research policy appears to be at the forefront of addressing gaps in Indigenous research as they emerge. The other course of action is simply to get involved in local events: attend cultural activities, visit the local Native Friendship Centre, read local and national Indigenous-owned newspapers, and listen (listen, listen) respectfully to the community members, leaders, and Elders concerning the issues that are important to them. As relationships form and relevant research ideas germinate, those considering research partnerships will have opportunities to actively investigate community-specific cultural protocols and values. By taking the time (weeks, but more often, months, and longer) to learn about a community's previous experiences with research, researchers may engage with the community more effectively through a nuanced and holistic understanding of past and current issues. Doing so will indicate whether a particular set of research skills can be applied to a particular problem facing an Indigenous community or communities and equally important, it will lead to the development of mutual trust in forming a partnership (see Mulrennan et al., this issue, 243).

These two courses of action naturally lead to a second gap, already hinted at: should funding for research be sought and secured before conversations begin? Given the substantial time (and often) financial commitment to undertaking the critical activities described above, this is a complicated matter, especially when the proposed research setting is in a geographically isolated or remote location, as is the case for many Indigenous communities in Canada. Is the range of activities associated with CBPR even possible for urban-based university researchers wanting to engage geographically distant Indigenous communities? And if so, *who* should initiate research. On the one hand, the CBPR "ideal" would indicate that relationship building and

partnership development should take place, initiated by the community, before funding is sought. On the other hand, the CBPR “reality” for most in this study suggests that this is precisely where CBPR theory and mobilization first diverge. Either way, there are costs associated with the initial research development phase: people’s time, travel, meeting space, refreshments, gift exchange where appropriate (as per relevant cultural protocols), and honoraria for engagement with (especially) Elders and other expert knowledge-holders in the community who may not hold full-time employment or have research as part of their employment portfolio. These individuals often become critical cultural guides and communication conduits to the community and, when asked in a culturally appropriate way, are frequently willing to either serve as members of the research team or as the research team’s community-based advisory committee (these roles also need to be considered when developing research budgets in terms of compensation for their time throughout the duration of the study). A place for these knowledge-holders is also needed in the academy (e.g., thesis committee membership, external examiners, peer-reviewers, etc.).

CIHR, again, has responded to this issue by creating a granting program to support “meeting, planning, and dissemination,” available during three periods of the yearly granting cycle. SSRHC has also recently established research partnership development grants (which have some degree of similarity to SSHRC’s former Community-University Research Alliance research grants). NSERC appears to have similar capacity in this area as well. Speaking only with respect to CIHR and SSHRC, evidence of community support is required. This support often must be shown in the form of letters of community collaboration but also, in some cases, the completion of standardized electronic CVs, which is a further time, coordination, and accessibility complication. Beyond that, another major issue is that Tri-Council-funded principal investigators and their co-investigators cannot be paid from a grant; if Indigenous communities are participating in or leading the direction of the research, they may not benefit financially according to the Tri-Council’s allowable expenses. The Tri-Council’s financial policy contradicts its own ethics guidelines (TCPS2), which

states that Indigenous communities should guide and benefit from research. As a result, structural inequalities and insensitivities built into the Tri-Council funding process itself make ethical research very difficult (Office of Community-Based Research 2009).

Moving to the second phase of research, the data collection period for most of our respondents was also a period when the four Rs of Indigenous research (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991) continued to be centre-stage. Of the 15 respondents, 13 engaged community members directly in the research enterprise by hiring members of the Indigenous community to coordinate or assist with data collection, either through recruitment and translation when the research involved human participation or with physical data collection when the research involved biophysical studies. While employing and training community members in research is a laudable trait of CBPR, it is not without its own complications (e.g., understanding and navigating interpersonal community dynamics). The reality is that Indigenous communities are complex social, economic, and political contexts; these complexities are exacerbated by colonialism. But also, as the literature points out and further to the analogy about researchers likened to snow geese, there is concern among some scholars and Indigenous communities that implanting western research theories and methods—and, therefore, western values—into communities is simply another form of colonialism. They call for Indigenous methodologies (see, for example, the notion of research as ceremony found in Wilson 2008) and the blending of Indigenous and Western methodologies (see, for example, the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing found in Bartlett et al. forthcoming) to approach research involving Indigenous peoples.

Involving community in all stages of the research process is integral to upholding the tenets of CBPR. It was during the third stage of data analysis, however, that we see a substantial reduction in the level of engagement amongst the researchers in this study. This was true for both the extent of the engagement of the researchers in the community as well as the extent of the engagement of community members in the research. In pragmatic terms, the time and cost commitments are high. Shrinking research budgets and the already higher cost of

engaging in CBPR in contrast to conventional research make mobilization at this phase particularly problematic. There are also the temporal barriers to engaging in CBPR. Most universities operate on a semester system whereby researchers typically have teaching responsibilities from September to April and university-based service (e.g., student supervision and committee work) as well as grant writing and writing for publication year round. This leaves relatively limited time to drink tea (relational ethics) or collect data: the summer months. But it is at this time, the "snow goose" season, when Indigenous community members who might otherwise be quite willing to engage in research are often out on their traditional lands.<sup>11</sup> Analyses, therefore, tend to be undertaken back at the university in between these other academic responsibilities with preliminary and final analyses returned to the community for corroboration. Creativity and innovation in the academy is clearly needed to address these challenges and to make community engagement in data collection and analyses more meaningful, with more opportunity for knowledge exchange and the co-creation of new knowledge.

On a more fundamental level, while many respondents were comfortable with sharing preliminary results of analyses with community partners, there was reluctance to loosen intellectual control over analysis. Doing so, however, can provide opportunities for researchers to engage with potentially re-orienting characteristics of different epistemological beliefs<sup>12</sup> and ontological positions, and to explore how these may influence our own. Furthermore, this phase, which

was described by one respondent as "nothing scarier... You're at the mercy of the community" (R3), has the potential to be a process by which mutual respect and community empowerment takes place. By inverting the researcher's decision-making power and putting this power in the hands of the researched, CBPR researchers can contribute to the process of decolonizing the academy (Castleden et al. 2008). Just as conventional ways of knowing have produced particular physical, social, and political realities, Indigenous ways of knowing may "formulate new paradigms or explanatory frameworks that help us establish a greater equilibrium and congruence between the literate view of the world and the reality we encounter when we step outside the walls of the 'Ivory Tower'" (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991, 8). This creation of new knowledge will be important in addressing issues critical to humanity over the course of the new millennium. For example, active engagement in analysis with Indigenous knowledge-holders may give us additional insights with which to address issues such as climate and land use change by, for example, the development of sustainable resource use and stewardship (see Ford et al., this issue, 275).

Respondents typically re-engaged the tenets of CBPR in integrated and end-of-grant knowledge translation/mobilization activities. As noted in the literature, one of the most often cited problems with researchers entering Indigenous communities is the "parachute" nature of their engagement in which researchers collect data at a time convenient to them, with little to no communication before, during, or after the study. The respondents in this study expressed the same concern and relayed such community comments as "[other researchers who had been here] didn't even send a final report" (R6) in reference to this practice. In contrast, our respondents used multiple avenues to not only share the results of their co-created knowledge but also to acknowledge Indigenous contributions towards achieving those results in academic and community knowledge translation/mobilization activities (for a detailed discussion of these respondents' perspectives on authorship in CBPR, see Castleden et al. 2010). However, there was a range of perspectives amongst this small pool of respondents concerning what constituted "enough" integrated and end-of-grant knowledge

<sup>11</sup>Of course with appropriate resources, researchers can connect with community members out on the land and, in many instances, this is actually preferable.

<sup>12</sup>When referring to community-university partnerships and the presence of different foundational epistemologies, most of the partnerships operated within a cross-cultural context wherein non-Indigenous researchers work with Indigenous communities, and operated from a different cultural background than the Indigenous participants. However, both within this study and within academia, there is an increase, albeit slow, in which Indigenous scholars are working with Indigenous communities, even their home communities. Although beyond the scope and focus of this paper, these situations can present tensions of a different nature (for a discussion on insider-outsider Indigenous research see Castleden and Kurszewski 2000; for additional discussion on Indigenous scholars balancing academic and community obligations see Turner 2006).

translation/mobilization and ways of acknowledging contributions by non-academic members of research teams. Interestingly, while three of the 15 respondents mentioned the OCAP principles at some point in their interviews, making reference to the existence of these principles, only one respondent (R8) actually clarified how their partnered research met the criteria.

Clearly, the ways in which these respondents mobilized the tenets of CBPR varied from researcher to researcher. Also, for any one researcher, these processes vary from project to project. These variations are not due to a lack of understanding of what CBPR is in theory; the literature makes this quite clear. It may be due to the amount of experience a researcher has in terms of engaging in CBPR or it may be related to the length and depth of relationships between researchers and Indigenous community partners. These are directions for future study. Other matters that we have not explored in a systematic way, but that are worthy of consideration, are gendered analyses of CBPR and the stage of career for those engaged in what Indigenous communities consider research "in a good way" (Ball and Janyst 2008, 33). Of the 15 respondents in this study, 12 are women. It would be interesting to expand on this study to look at whether more academic women are engaging in CBPR, why they are choosing this path, and how they juggle their academic-community-personal responsibilities. It is also worth noting that of the 15 respondents, 10 were tenured; conceivably they may be able to devote more time to develop relationships but this notion needs further exploration. Notwithstanding the above research directions, perhaps most important is an exploration of how Indigenous communities understand and value the ways in which university-based research is being undertaken in light of TCPS2. Further research with Indigenous communities is warranted to identify, document, and understand their perspectives regarding the ethical challenges they face in terms of participating in CBPR.

## Conclusions

The findings from this exploratory study suggest that the theoretical tenets of CBPR,

shared decision-making power, co-ownership, bi-directional research capacity, co-learning and cross-cultural exchange, and co-creation of new knowledge, are not easily mobilized in practice. Theoretically, adhering to the tenets of CBPR will lead to the creation of an organic research relationship; one that has the ability to operate with the community's priorities for research that is meaningful and useful. For researchers, academic obligations including semester-based teaching and committee work as well as funding cycles, lengthy ethics review processes, and tenure and promotion requirements, make mobilizing CBPR from the academy a clear and persistent challenge. Community obligations including relationship building and relationship nurturing activities as well as political cycles and lengthy periods in which community members are out on the land or inaccessible for other reasons, make the reality of operationalizing CBPR in the community a "fight" (R3) with REBs, and a "scary" (R3) and "nerve-wracking" (R8) proposition for even those researchers who are already actively engaged in forms of CBPR. These tensions may lead researchers to short-cut the tenets of CBPR and ultimately, as one respondent (R5) stated, engage in more "rhetoric" than ethical practice. This is not to say that a standardized or overarching framework should be forced upon researchers or the Indigenous communities with whom they partner. There is no one-size-fits-all CBPR framework. It is the dynamic nature of CBPR that allows the negotiation of a delicate balance between communities' needs and researchers' agendas.

Despite the many incompatibilities between the tenets of CBPR and the structure of the academy, it is essential that the ideas and needs of community partners be addressed and respected in the academy as increasingly complex research projects are undertaken. There is a growing demand to see collaboration and partnership in research from the Tri-Council (e.g., SSHRC's original CURA grants and now its new programmatic architecture includes Partnership grants; CIHR is putting out more calls for grant proposals that engage knowledge-users in the research design). Accordingly, this exploratory article is intended to contribute to dialogue amongst Canadian geographers and others about ways in which tensions between CBPR theory and practice can

be minimized. Geographers engaging in research involving Indigenous peoples are encouraged to critically reflect on their own practices to better address the history of unethical research that has, for decades, plagued Indigenous communities. For those who are considering this approach, a good place to start is the TCPS2 Tutorial for Chapter 9 (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 2010b); an even better place would be over tea in the community.

### Acknowledgements

The authors wish to gratefully thank the research participants who willingly took part in this study. The authors also acknowledge and appreciate the constructive critiques received on earlier versions of this manuscript from the guest editors of this special issue, the editor of *The Canadian Geographer*, and three external reviewers; any errors or omissions are our own. The lead author was a postdoctoral fellow with and received seed grant funding from the Network Environments for Aboriginal Research British Columbia (NEARBC) during this study.

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