Searching for Métis Research Methodologies
natoonikew poor ayshitotamun michif

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Abstract

Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM), and specifically Métis research methodologies (MRM), have not always been valued within scholarship (Cajete, 2000) until recently. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015b) detailed 94 Calls to Action (TRC, 2015a) to privilege Indigenous ways of doing, knowing, and learning. The TRC (2015b) has likely provided the impetus for a shift in which scholarship seeking to reclaim, define, explore, validate, and amplify Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) and critique a reliance upon Western-based paradigms exists (Battiste, 2000; Dei, 2000; Dei et al., 2000; Drawson et al., 2017; Graveline, 1998; Irwin, 1994; Rigney, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Articulating Métis-specific methodologies is congruent with the standard research process of aligning all aspects of the research process. IRM can be adapted to fulfill the requirements of each community, depending on the researcher, project goals, and context. This paper aims to explore existing documented Métis methodologies, noting that most documented methodologies are women-centred. They are effective for research within Métis communities because of how the methods originate from Métis-specific ways that have historically been used to build knowledge in communities. Because limited research on or with Métis women exists (Anderson, 2011; Flaminio et al., 2020; Forsythe, 2021; Kermoal, 2006; Macdougall, 2010; Payment, 2009; St-Onge, 2008), a literature review of this topic is an area for potential contribution.

Key words: Métis research methodologies, Indigenous Research Methodologies, IRM, Indigenous research, Métis research, qualitative research, Métis women

Introduction

Historically, Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) have not been validated within academic institutions (Cajete, 2000), and Indigenous knowledge creation has been excluded by Western frameworks or perspectives (Kovach, 2009). From a decolonizing perspective, numerous scholars have called for a new paradigm inclusive of Indigenous perspectives (Crazy Bull, 1997a; Ermine, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), not only to redefine the research relationship, but to foster Indigenous sovereignty (Martin, 2002) over the process. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015b) detailed 94 Calls to Action (TRC, 2015a) to privilege Indigenous ways of doing, knowing, and learning in all sectors, including research. Paradigms evolve as society changes (Kuhn, 1962), and it can be argued that the TRC (2015b) created an impetus for a paradigm shift. Scholarship seeking to reclaim, define, explore, validate, and amplify IRM and to critique a reliance upon Western-based paradigms exists (Battiste, 2000; Dei, 2000; Dei et al., 2000; Drawson et al., 2017; Graveline, 1998; Irwin, 1994; Rigney, 1999; Smith, 2012).

Developing a Métis methodology is congruent with the standard research process of aligning methodologies with epistemologies. Indigenous worldviews are relational and connected to place; they are not static and can be adapted to fit the needs of each community depending on the researcher and the context of the research project itself. Emerging Métis-specific methodologies, such as gathering and visiting (*kiyokewin*) (Flaminio et al., 2020), *keeoukaywin* (the Visiting Way) (Gaudet, 2017), Métis kitchen table methodology (Agger, 2017; Farrell Racette, 2017; Flaminio, 2018) have recently been documented. These methodologies, among others, align with Métis ontology and epistemology and can be compared to ethnographic research methods and conversational methods (Kovach, 2010) comprised of dialogue that occurs within informal settings with a researcher who is part of the community. Several researchers document limited research on or with Métis women (Anderson, 2011; Flaminio et al., 2020; Forsythe, 2021; Kermoal, 2006; Macdougall, 2010; Payment, 2009; St-Onge, 2008), but recently labelled methodologies could be articulated as Métis Research Methodologies (MRM). These methodologies are grounded within Métis-specific ways that have always been used to build knowledge in Métis communities.

Scholars have connected Métis cultural identity with wellness for Métis women (Auger et al., 2022). As a Métis woman, engaging in research from a Métis feminist perspective, it is critical that I use a Métis feminist methodology in my research. For this paper, I will provide some context in the form of a brief overview of Indigenous scholars' definitions of IRM and their positionality in relation to their work. Next, I will describe the foundational elements of IRM and explore the nuances of MRM, including an overview of the Métis scholars engaged in evolving Métis methodologies. Additionally, I will outline Métis feminist methodologies and engage with reasons for developing a Métis-specific feminist methodology. Evolving Métis-specific methodologies to do research with Métis women can enrich the scholarship available to develop policies and practices to improve Métis women's well-being. Finally, I will use this section to outline ethical and protocol challenges that could be encountered when drawing on several methodologies to develop a foundation for research involving Métis women.

Decolonizing and Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM)

A paradigm can also be described as a philosophical position (Crotty, 1998), a conceptual framework (Kovach, 2009), or a frame of inquiry (Butler, 2006) and is determined and distinguished by unique ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Values that determine a researcher's reality (Held, 2019) guide their actions (Guba, 1990), which become entwined with what becomes validated as knowledge (Chilisa, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2015; Willis, 2007; Wilson, 2008). Because an underlying philosophy underpins and informs all scholarly research (Mertens, 2015), alignment between all phases of inquiry dictates that researchers critically reflect on their beliefs and values because they will guide the research trajectory and questions. An understanding of Indigenous research paradigms (Kovach, 2009) and Indigenous epistemology (Weber-Pillwax, 1999) is integral to engage in work with Indigenous peoples; inform research questions, ethics, methods, data collection and analysis; understand the research; and foster critical relationality.

Calls for Indigenous knowledge–aligned methodologies are numerous (Chilisa, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Weber-Pillwax, 1999) because Eurocentric methods and paradigms are linked to the extractive nature of colonization, rather than those that rely upon consenting participants (Drawson et al., 2017; Kovach, 2009, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and relationality and interconnectedness of all things (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). Weber-Pillwax outlines specific considerations that align with Indigenous values and reminds us that IRM has always had a role in the development of Indigenous knowledge and that IRM would shift numerous aspects of knowledge creation, operationalization, and ownership (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). Various Indigenous scholars mandate that communities drive or create the research design (Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). As an answer, Indigenous researchers have defined frameworks that fit their positionality, location, and subject area.

It is integral to define a worldview that encompasses the participants' belief systems and research that privileges the knowledge systems of the participants' culture, whether that means collecting oral stories, involving participants in a collaborative analysis process, or aligning with their points of view. Indigenous scholarship usually leans toward a purely qualitative approach. Pallas (2001) reminds us that, to ensure research is meaningful, validating MRM is critical to research with Métis peoples because, as a historically marginalized group, we require our own paradigms. As Chilisa (2012) posits: "centering Indigenous worldviews empowers Indigenous peoples to understand themselves through their own assumptions and perspectives" (p. 13).

Indigenous Scholars: History, Influences, and Definitions of IRM

The notion that there could be one methodology to serve all Indigenous research is argued against by most Indigenous scholars. Weber-Pillwax summarized this by stating that it is unlikely that we will be able to "determine one theoretically-derived Indigenous research methodology" (1999, p. 34) to guide all future Indigenous research. Avoiding pan-Indigenous approaches (Kovach, 2009; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021) acknowledges Indigenous diversity (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021, p. 3) and validates unique knowledge systems. While many Indigenous groups in Canada and globally may share elements of and maintain similar belief systems (Graveline, 1998; Kovach, 2009; Steinhauer, 2002), scholars advise researchers to adapt and engage with a local

perspective, specific to each Indigenous community. According to a recent literature review, Drawson et al. (2017) describe IRM as a broadly used phrase, differently operationalized and not clearly articulated (Wilson, 2001). This directly reflects the underlying philosophy that a research methodology must reflect the philosophy of the peoples undertaking the research, resulting in the malleability of IRM to adapt to fit Indigenous communities and their epistemological approaches. Controversy, various viewpoints, and multiple methods exist within the discourse on the topic of IRM. This validates the notion that it is critical to articulate and use Métis methodologies grounded in the values and protocols of Métis epistemology and ontology.

One particularly controversial area of discourse centres around whether IRM can be used by non-Indigenous scholars. Weber-Pillwax (1999) mused about the value of IRM, putting forward the notion that any researcher engaged in projects with Indigenous peoples would benefit from IRM to satisfy the good intentions of research. Preparing non-Indigenous researchers to responsibility and ethically perform this work with Indigenous communities would be sufficient justification and "would move scholars toward a stronger sense of professional and ethical responsibility" (Weber-Pillwax, 1999, p. 38). However, many scholars disagree, adamant that it is imperative to IRM that the researcher is a member of the Indigenous group engaged in the project (Bishop, 2005; Wilson, 2008) or, at the very least, has cultivated a trusting relationship with the community (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2009). Kinship connections benefit the research relationship by creating a comfortable space for research work. For example, Weber-Pillwax (2001) describes meeting Elders in formal administrative settings, witnessing physical relaxation among the Elders upon finding kinship ties between themselves and the researcher.

Additionally, this increases the likelihood that the research will be increasingly relevant to the community through relationship building, a heightened ethics process, and a commitment to responsible relational research, transforming a previously deficit-focused body of scholarship to a resilience-centered one (Roe et al., 2012). Indigenous education scholar Verna Kirkness outlined the 4Rs of research: relevance, responsibility, reciprocity, and respect (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1999), a widely used framework to guide Indigenous research (Archibald et al., 2006). The 4Rs are foundational values that form an essential framework that others have extended by exploring one aspect more fully. It has come to include a fifth R—Relationship, grounded in relational accountability and reciprocity (Chilisa, 2012; Held, 2019).

Respectful practice necessitates that the researcher listens attentively, especially for the resulting narrative to be authentic (Wilson, 2008). Derived from their research on Indigenous post-secondary student retention, Pidgeon (2018; Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2002) visually organized the *Indigenous Wholistic Framework* to illustrate the interrelationships of the individual within the four Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Various scholars have defined IRM by proposing qualitative data collection methods that are uniquely Indigenous, such as conversation and storytelling (Kovach, 2010), storywork (Archibald, 2008), and yarning (Roe et al., 2012; Russell-Mundane, 2007). Such data collection methods are referred to as culturally relevant for gathering and then communicating the research, ensuring safe and respectful spaces, and negotiating power dynamics between researchers and participants (Drawson et al., 2017). Additionally, digital storytelling, has been used to directly access participant voice (Willox et al., 2013) instead of being mediated through the interviewer.

An overview of IRM in other colonial countries and states, such as Hawaii, is relevant to understand the trajectory or history of IRM and the necessity of plurality of IRM. Much of early IRM development draws on and is influenced by other colonial countries engaged in similar work. Indigenous scholars on Turtle Island (otherwise known as Canada) have worked toward articulating IRM, drawing influence from and influencing scholars in countries such as Australia and New Zealand and the Hawaiian Islands in the United States. Smith (1999) originated and articulated the concept of decolonizing methodologies through examining Māori school curriculum, contrasting marginalized and dominant cultures. Globally, scholars have developed specific place-based methodologies. *Kaupapa Māori* (KM) (McCleland, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) focusing on self-determination, resurgence and privileges methods based upon Māori principles (Drawson et al., 2017; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Like in the 4Rs, relationality is a key factor in KM, which is often used in health research and usually requires community members for data collection. Similar to Kovach and Archibald's methodologies, Samoan methods have used oral storytelling to rediscover ancestral knowledge (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014). Hawaiian scholar Aluli-Meyer defines a methodology predicated upon Hawaiian peoples' sovereignty, land, and relationality (Aluli-Meyer, 2006; Goeman & Denetdale, 2009), which aligns with Weber-Pillwax's (1999) assertion that IRM will impact concepts of Indigenous sovereignty and how Tuck and Yang (2014) define IRM in terms of land, sovereignty and decolonization. Additionally, The *Tobacco Ties* method uses Indigenous protocols to gain consent, recovering and celebrating ceremonial practices (Wilson & Restoule, 2010), an important factor in Wilson's definition and use of IRM (Wilson, 2008).

Through colonialism, Indigenous peoples have been the most researched communities (Tuhiwai Smith, 2005, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2014). Research became a distrusted, *dirty word* (Tuhiwai Smith, 2013). Compounding this is the extractive manner with which research was performed (Kovach, 2012) by non-Indigenous researchers, and without consideration or benefit to Indigenous communities (Tuhiwai Smith, 2005, 2013; Kovach, 2009). By approaching research in a conscious, purposeful, considered way (Weber-Pillwax, 2001) through specifically local paradigms that are rooted in the land (Tuck & Yang, 2014; Aluli-Meyer, 2006) and the local community's values (Davis, 1999; Dei et al., 2000; Henderson, 2000; Little Bear, 2000), specific to each community, Indigenous communities can gain agency over the entire research process, using protocols that follow Indigenous worldviews (Held, 2019; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Wilson & Restoule, 2010).

Kovach refers to the "power politics of knowledge and the research practices that produce it" (Kovach, 2005, p. 50), which speaks to the interest in shifting knowledge creation to the community rather than simply developing career-building research of the academy (Mitchell & Baker, 2005). Early in IRM development, controversy surrounded data ownership and control due to tensions regarding the interest in Indigenous self-determination in research (Schnarch, 2004). Indigenous communities wanted to ensure that knowledge remained in the community (Kovach, 2005). Negotiating data ownership has been documented by researchers (Mitchell & Baker, 2005). In the preceding example, raw data remained with the participants. As data was de-identified, wider access would become available dependent upon the research phase. IRM was viewed as a threat to institutional knowledge creation and ownership, which has culminated in the development of OCAP® (Schnarch, 2004) in which data collection and ownership rules

(First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC], 2020) determine that the community must own the data and govern its dissemination, a departure from typical institutional regulations. This has resulted in communities creating their own research protocols. For example, the Secwépemc Nation has released its own Secwépemc Research Guidelines (Secwépemc Nation, 2022) for the Secwépemc Nation.

For most scholars, IRM principles are intertwined and established through relational accountability (Archibald et al., 1995, 2006; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1999; Lavallée, 2009; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2014; Wilson, 2008). Meaningful research partnerships can support critical relationships (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021; Pidgeon, 2018; Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2002), which are methods of honouring "cultural expectations of responsibility, relevance, and respect for Indigenous knowledge, goals, and aspirations" (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021, p. 1). The potential for inquiry to invasive (Tuck & Yang, 2014) highlights the requirement for a relational approach—one that honours Indigenous community-specific protocols (Wilson & Restoule, 2010) and the role of ceremony (Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2008). In this way, relationality is embedded within the methodology (Kovach, 2005).

In IRM, respect for participants and community is paramount (Archibald, 1999; 2008; Archibald et al., 1995; 2006; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Simply avoiding harm and liability is not sufficient. Research should be a process of fostering relationships (Hays & Singh, 2012). At the very least, it must follow the TCPS-2 guidelines in Chapter 9 (TCPS-2, 2022) of the Tri-Council regulations. It can be operationalized through responsibility to ensure that the research is relevant to the participants, either led by (Kovach, 2010), desired or requested by the community; that reflection upon research methods is continual and often; transparency and data ownership are negotiated (FNIGC, 2020); outcomes benefit the community (Tuhiwai Smith, 2013; Wilson, 2003, 2008) and Indigenous and cultural knowledge is foregrounded (Aluli-Meyer, 2006; Lavallée, 2009). According to most scholars, reciprocity is an inherent part of IRM (Archibald et al., 2006; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), which can include traditional gifting and ensuring the community benefits from the research.

According to Pidgeon and Riley (2021), responsibility speaks to Indigenous sovereignty and decision-making. University ethics boards (also called Institutional Research Boards or IRBs) have been criticized for not approving collaborative and participatory designs (Denzin, 1994) required for Indigenous projects (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Wilson, 2009). Denzin (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2012) noted that this may be because IRBs do not have provisions for Indigenous research ethics, creating challenges for ethical community-based research (2003) that go beyond what IRBs require (Aluli-Meyer, 2006; Kovach, 2010). Additionally, research applications may be approved but may not necessarily align with Indigenous values, research ethics, or protocols (Wilson, 2009). Either way, collaborative creation is desired and required of IRM (Wilson, 2009), which can result in a more complex and time-intensive process to develop. Ethical solutions lie in co-creation, which relies upon relationships, moving beyond the Belmont principles of beneficence, respect, and justice, which were primarily developed to manage risk and liability (Hays & Singh, 2012), rather than co-create with participants.

Several scholars have articulated unique approaches to IRM (Held, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2014; Wilson, 2008), either overlapping or interrelated with the 4Rs. A wholistic approach (Pidgeon, 2008; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021) is critical to gather multiple perspectives. Multiple layers of experience and types of knowledges are key to understanding (Brant Castellano, 2000; Dei et al., 2000; Hampton, 1995; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021) and unique to one's cultural context (Mika, 2015, 2016). Concepts of interconnectedness, *wahkohtowin*[1] (Cree, Michif) and *kweséltken* (Secwépemc) refer to relationships inclusive of the spirit, physical, and all lifeforms (Mika, 2016), valuing spiritual, not just empirical knowledge (Steinhauer, 2002). For example, Chickasaw Elder Hampton shared a metaphor for the value of multiple perspectives, highlighting the multiplicity of viewpoints critical to knowledge creation: "You and I together can see six sides of this box" (Hampton, 1995, p. 42).

Additionally, IRM aspires to facilitate emancipatory outcomes (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008), empowerment (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), capacity building (Drawson et al., 2017; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021), giving back to the community or inspiring action (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Weber-Pillwax, 1999) similar to the Western transformative models (Held, 2019) such as Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). Castleden et al. (2008) point out the similarities and adaptability of CBPR as a Western method complementary to IRM, including advisory boards, high transparency levels, and equality as integral factors. Drawing from photovoice, Lavallée (2009) used a culturally relevant PAR approach to enable participants to create artwork to express their thoughts. The emancipatory and liberatory aspects of an Indigenous approach also align with a transformative perspective (Rigney, 1999).

Scholars have demonstrated the value of a blended approach—the most foundational of those approaches is the ontological model of *Etuaptmumk,* or *Two-Eyed Seeing* in English (Bartlett et al., 2012), coined by Mi'kmaq Elder Marshall in 2004, in which research can be guided by the strengths of Western and Indigenous perspectives. Numerous non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers, in various sectors, such as public health and science education, have used this theoretical framework to guide their process. I have listed just a recent few (McKibbin, 2023; Wali et al., 2023; Young, 2023; Yarchuk, 2023), and many utilize the term as a model, framework, methodology and guiding principle, all of which carry different meanings (Zeyer, 2023). However, it is a testament to how flexible an Indigenous framework can be, but also that it is interpreted by others in different ways.

Finally, Tuck and Yang (2014) mandated that a rejection of Western axiology and the settler gaze is necessary, arguing that Western-based methods are incongruent within an Indigenous project. To engage in Indigenous research, the only way to move forward is with Indigenous participants and to co-create Indigenous knowledge collaboratively. This is evident in the challenges outlined by one study in which participants expressed concern that chunking each

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[1] The Michif/Cree word is often spelled slightly differently, typical of an oral language translated into text. It is a reference to an overall well-being, harmony, and balance, reflective of the Michif and Cree worldviews of maintaining balance and well-being. It is indicative of a broad concept including how all things are related within Cree worldviews (Wildcat, 2018). For example, Macdougall (2010) uses the spelling *wahkootowin*. Dorion (2010) spells it *wahkotowin* and it has been spelled *wahkowtowin*. I have tried to maintain the integrity of each other's spelling preferences.

story into codes lost its original meaning (Dumbrill & Green, 2007). Yet, some scholars argue that Western methods can be used, provided that the design is undergirded by an Indigenous worldview (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001). Collectivity is core to IRM (Kovach, 2005), so methods such as storywork (Archibald, 2008), storytelling (Kovach, 2005), collaborative analysis, or similar methods of pattern finding may have worked better for the project described above. This validates the criticality of aligning research methods with each community's epistemological views and for the researcher to remain willing to adapt methods as necessary, employing a transparent, iterative approach (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021) preferably co-created with each community.

Ethical Considerations and Protocols

Due to problematic relationships with researchers that have existed (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), over the last fifteen years, communities and institutions have been engaged in creating increasingly rigorous ethics processes and data ownership guidelines, such as OCAP™ (AFN, n.d.; RCAP, 1999; FNIGC, 2014; Métis Centre, 2010; CIHR, 2006; Secwépemc, 2022). This leads us back to the tension between IRB and community ethics. To align with OCAP™, data ownership requires consideration. To ensure that studies align with Métis research interests, relying on the framework from the Métis Centre (2010) and working with official Métis governance bodies or grassroots communities can support protocols, ensuring the research is desired by Métis people and potentially develop data management frameworks and tools.

Collaborating with grassroots women to co-create and design research activities contributes to respecting the voice, privacy, and sacred knowledge inherent to IRM (Wilson, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Participants should have an opportunity to shape any research they are engaged in (Weber-Pillwax, 1999) by reviewing their transcripts as a form of member checking (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam, 1995). To comply with the Respect for Persons Act, and one of the 4Rs (Archibald et al., 2006; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), and minimize harm during interviews or conversation circles, Elders or trusted persons can accompany participants, mitigating harm. Additionally, counselling can be made available for discussions involving challenging topics such as, but not limited to, gender-based violence, residential school, and trauma.

To successfully incorporate IRM, researchers must position themselves in the context of the research (Steinhauer, 2001). One aspect of IRM is that participants are valued as the source of expertise (Steinhauer, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 1999) and can articulate the phenomenon's impact (Kenny et al., 2004). Integral to any data gathering process is to ensure that the resulting knowledge translation (KT) activities would provide some aspect of reciprocity to benefit the participants (Kovach, 2009). For this reason, developing a methodology that encourages the freedom to reflect upon and offer what is important to each participant is critical.

Métis Research Methodologies

Working within academic systems creates a challenge for Indigenous scholars, necessitating that each scholar must determine how to navigate and balance the duality required of research produced within Indigenous projects, using both Western and Indigenous worldviews and tools

for knowledge creation. By Indigenous research standards, a high level of responsibility sits with each researcher because of the potential impact on each community and, if Indigenous, their responsibility to their own community members (Weber-Pillwax, 2004). This raises the notion that from an Indigenous perspective, research methodologies and methods can be viewed as a way of being with community, employing care/responsibility, rather than transactional fact-finding.

It remains a current challenge to tread carefully in both worlds. There has been movement toward the ability to create and adapt methodologies being more readily accepted by institutional Research Ethics Boards (REB) and institutions generally, which bodes well for articulating Métis methodologies so that adapting a methodology will distinctly serve the purpose of the research agenda and community. More emphasis is placed on who we are in relation to our community, our participants, and our place in academia—this is all woven into the choice of research project and methods and methodologies adopted. Relationality is a critical aspect of methodology used in Indigenous and Métis research and is key to knowledge creation rooted in our own culture (Macdougall, 2018).

Current Landscape of Métis Research Methodologies

Because of the complexity, politically and sociologically, of Métis identity, just as with IRM, MRM can be referred to as plural—"there is not one Métis identity, thus, not one Métis methodology" (LaVallee et al., 2016, p. 170). Additionally, it is important to discuss recent academic articulations of various MRMs, and the criticality of developing and articulating those methodologies academically for research with Métis peoples. Due to the cultural revitalization, it has become more desirable for my generation and others to re-connect and rekindle connections with our identities (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2013). Because of this, and likely due to the inclusion of Métis as one of the three constitutionally protected people determined under the 2016 Daniel's Decision (2016), it has allowed scholars and artists to revitalize and recognize methodologies and scholarship specific to Métis peoples.

By contributing to Métis-specific methodologies, we continue to assert pride in and responsibility for our Métis communities, Elders, children, and ourselves, which is critical to the future of Métis peoples and current cultural resurgence. I want to remind us of Weber-Pillwax's (1999) important statement that one Indigenous voice does not serve all Indigenous peoples or the collective, and for this reason, we must articulate various methodologies to serve various voices and identities. Disagreement or variety does not equal confusion (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). Because of the lack of research with and for Métis women (Anderson, 2011; Flaminio et al., 2020; Forsythe, 2021; Kermoal, 2006; Macdougall, 2010; Monchalin & Monchalin, 2018; Payment, 2009; St-Onge, 2008), it is integral to research with women to articulate methodologies that can be useful. Despite this area beginning to develop a body of literature, it remains an opportunity for contribution.

Several Métis scholars have noted the relationship between land/place as integral to Métis identity. Ferland's (2022) master's thesis speaks directly to Métis identity as connected to land. Flaminio et al. (2020) make a place-based distinction in their research related to visiting and how it impacts Métis women's wellness. Auger (2021a) speaks to the notion of the expression and

connection to a Métis identity influencing the health of Métis families, and this extends to using Métis methodologies to discover knowledge in our communities and build future knowledge that supports our peoples' dreams and policy creation.

Community is important to Métis identity. Kermoal (2016) found that, to Métis women, a relationship to land is an essential component of community wellness. Similarly, Macdougall used *wahkohtowin* as a methodology in her research practice (2017) because she stated that her personal well-being is tied to the well-being of others. Dorion (2010) further explained that laws and principles are embodied within the values of *wahkotowin*, which guide how family and community function.

Gender can have an impact on the methodology chosen or developed to work with Métis communities on research that is important to them. In a report for MNBC on the topic of women's experiences with violence (Clark et al., 2021) in which over 400 qualitative responses were analyzed, Métis women's specific stories of neglect, poverty, lack of access, violence, educational attainment disparities, and access to the services that can improve health span. This overwhelming interest and response to this survey speaks to the desire to use a Métis feminist lens in establishing research about us. It is well researched that cultural identity, community connections and belonging (Auger, 2021a; Flaminio et al., 2020; Goudreau et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2016) and culture, land, and identity (Auger, 2016; Monchalin, 2019) and language expression (Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2012) are critical to Métis peoples' health. Especially with so many Métis women experiencing challenges directly related to our Métis identities, or lack thereof, a Métis feminist methodology is important for projects involving women (Davey, forthcoming) and gender-diverse individuals.

Contextualizing a Métis Methodological Approach

IRM requires researchers to adhere to ethical guidelines (Kovach, 2009), including but not limited to a mutually respectful approach, research relationships, negotiated informed consent, and a research outcome that is not exploitive and benefits the community. Researchers can achieve these goals by using Métis ethics framework (Métis Centre, 2010) and centring Métis women's voices, exploring their experiences and discovering strategies and solutions. These solutions are derived directly from the participants' own experiences within social settings such as visiting or ceremony. Weaving together an approach that combines participants' Métis perspectives and Métis protocols and ways of building knowledge will inform our own understanding of Métis culture and be integral to an exploration of colonial heteropatriarchy as it has shaped Métis women's experiences.

Recently published Métis methodologies such as gathering and visiting (*kiyokewin*) (Flaminio et al., 2020) including *keeoukaywin* (the Visiting Way) (Gaudet, 2017), Kitchen Table Methodology (Farrell Racette, 2017), *wahkotowin* (Flaminio, 2013), *wahkootowin* (Macdougall, 2010) lead the way in defining Métis methodologies. Flaminio and colleagues articulate gathering and visiting as a methodological approach that aligns with Métis epistemology in the kinship area of St. Louis, Saskatchewan (2020). One of the findings was the importance of women as researchers and participants gathering in homes or in ceremony and the connection to wellness. The overall research purpose was to document a methodology, a Métis women's unique

ways of generating and transferring knowledge, including kinship connections to others and the land (Flaminio et al., 2020). Macdougall uses the principles of *wahkootowin* as a method to guide all aspects of research because it is understood as an overall ethical framework for behaviour within communities. For example, if we are all related, then reciprocity, relationality and responsibility are placed at the forefront of any research with community to support community needs and well-being. Flaminio blends *wahkotowin* and *kiyokewin* as a specific methodology that combines community and relationship as a kinship-visiting methodology (Flaminio, 2019) to learn rich perspectives of the community. Gaudet (2019) refers to *keeoukaywin* as being instrumental to community, differentiating it from Western research protocols of fostering relationships to gather data. *Keeoukaywin* includes a deeper, spiritual component and works within a kinship community who have "relational obligations" to one another.

Other researchers have articulated the importance of surfacing women's knowledge through women's gatherings and a Métis way of visiting with each other (Auger et al., 2022, Flaminio et al., 2020), which has been a way of sharing knowledge traditionally, especially to pass on women's roles, crafts, artwork, and expectations. My aunt Verma talks about the way in which women engaged in handwork. Not just for commerce purposes, it was how they engaged over cooking, taking care of family, and producing handwork for survival, for themselves, or for others (personal communication, March 2023). Gathering in homes was always a space of learning by doing, transferring knowledge to younger generations (Flaminio et al., 2020). Kermoal specifically speaks to the "ongoing transmission of knowledge" (Kermoal, 2016, p. 111). Relational and intergenerational spaces like this provided opportunities for sharing knowledge about the community. Flaminio et al. (2020) speaks to the value of visiting for several and varied reasons that are highly integral for community relationships. Dialogue and decision-making are just two that are listed (Flaminio et al., 2020) and that these visits maintained *wahkohtowin*, reflected through the complex social and political relationships (Macdougall, 2010). These gatherings were ways to support our well-being (Flaminio et al., 2020), and if this is the case, then they might be gleaned to discover ways that can support Métis women in the present and future.

As Auger and colleagues (2022) mention, women are reconnecting through cultural resurgence, which underscores the importance of a traditional Métis artform such as beadwork as a lens through which to mediate research (Farrell Racette, 2004). For the connection of culture, economics, and agency that it provided women, it is an appropriate backdrop, if not a main vehicle to produce knowledge. The fact that many reconnecting and already connected Métis have deep associations of culture through artwork as collective identities (Auger et al., 2022) is additional validation to use and foster a Métis feminist methodology. Considering the aspect of visiting while collectively engaging in traditional handiwork could be another way to tap into the knowledge built and passed down in these contexts.

Métis Feminist Methodology
Articulating a Métis feminist methodology is important because Métis people require specific strategies and paradigms by which to view their circumstances (Bartlett et al., 2007; Smylie, 2006) that are responsive to our cultural perspective (Kovach, 2010; Tuhiwai Smith, 199l, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Combining methodologies can strengthen a research design, which is particularly

relevant to the Métis because it mirrors the hybridity of our ancestral identities. Blending the most relevant and useful methods with a Métis feminist worldview will contribute to a Métis-specific feminist methodology. Researchers can be guided by the question: What are my obligations and responsibilities (Wilson, 2001) to my community and my participants?

Data analysis can be mediated through researcher identity, perspectives, and biases. Informed by Indigenous, feminist, critical frameworks (Absolon, 2011; Bernal, 1998; hooks, 1984; Macdougall, 2017), methods such as participant-driven data collection and a co-constructed analysis process (Wilson, 2008), with participants whose lived experiences align with IRM. Using a critical Indigenous feminist (Lavallée & Poole, 2010), Métis (Adese, 2021; Clark et al., 2021; Davey, forthcoming; Macdougall, 2017) Indigenist lens (Wilson, 2013) to discover what structural factors have combined to create the experiences that face Métis women today. Using this lens can have an emancipatory impact on participants' lives, potentially through policy change and program development by Métis organizations.

Nabigon et al. (1999) define IRM as creating opportunities in which to collectively surface knowledge to support movement forward. The Métis have long been known as the *Flower Beadwork People* (Brasser, 1985), beading and clothing decoration an important distinction of the Métis. Farrell Racette describes a design analysis by Sharon Blady in her thesis as a "window into the resilience, ingenuity, and strength of Métis women, reading beadwork as social text" (2004). This decorative practice was always a Métis women's practice. Sitting together, engaging in collective craft—whether beading or any type of handwork—has traditional and modern cultural relevance to Métis women and can also serve as a tool to foster a deeper trust than might be possible for those outside the community. A Métis women gathering can foster this kind of atmosphere in which many fragments or stories can bind together to form a collective whole. Engaging in the ways Métis women have always gathered aligns with existing ethnographic methodologies, in which informal conversations are held by participants and researchers from the same cultural background. The dual role of community member and researcher (*insider/outsider)* can afford the researcher deeper insight into the phenomenon. Women gathering to engage in collective beading as a place of knowledge transmission allows us to see it as a fertile ground for re-discovering or surfacing Métis experiences, knowledge, and ways of knowing. If knowledge is passed down through social relationships (Hodgson & Kermoal, 2016), then using those social connections to discover knowledge in a research context is a relevant methodology.

Limitations and Opportunities of Using Métis Research Methodologies in the Academy

A limitation that can be anticipated is the difference in time and potential shift in trajectory that can result from using MRM. It requires more time to foster meaningful relationships with participants (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). Because conversations will continue as long as necessary, increased time and energy may be spent building research relationships. Additional considerations include creating a research agreement in lieu of a Métis research ethics guide and sorting out data ownership. All the above contradict Western ways of measuring scholarship (Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). As Weber-Pillwax stated (2004), "it can take many years to establish the kind of relationships and acquire the kind of knowledge that permits a researcher to actually

access and participate fully in the experiences of community as Indigenous peoples experience community" (p. 86).

Conclusion

Specifying a Métis women-specific methodology will not only further knowledge created and remembered by women, and for women, but also for our futures as Métis matriarchs guiding the next generations of little ones toward a proud Métis future. Dreaming is a theme of this volume, and in considering how to incorporate the theme into my work, I realized that many of the women in my family had dreams as young women—of families, independence, and well-being. While these have not always been realized, we dream nonetheless and hope that we can shift policy and practice for subsequent generations. Weber-Pillwax (2004) stated this best when she described her research approach: "I will look for methods that enhance cooperation, require collaboration, depend on mutual thinking and reflection, spark creativity and inspire visions and dreams and the sharing of visions and dreams" (p. 81). The concept of surfacing knowledge with a group of women while beading and engaging in a creative endeavour is empowering and speaks to the nature of using research to move policy and practice forward to further an understanding of how we learn, do, and express a vision for the future. Gathering to bead, dream and vision like our ancestors did can fuel future research that supports women's well-being across the lifespan.

Biography

I have a BA in Art History (UBC), an M.Ed. (TRU), and I am a PhD candidate entering the fourth year of a doctoral program at SFU in Educational Technology and Learning Design. My research examines how Métis women's intersectional identities, family history of intergenerational trauma, experiences with marginalization, and resulting self-concepts have shaped access to and engagement with online post-secondary education. As a faculty member in TRU's Career and Experiential Learning Department, my initiatives create opportunities for Indigenous students, strengthening relationships with community organizations to create pathways for student employment. I was awarded a NEIHR Doctoral Scholarship (2021) and a SSHRC Graduate Fellowship (2022–2025) to support my research at SFU.

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