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RESEARCH SPEAKER SERIES

Decolonizing Data: Unsettling Conversations about Social Research Methods

Dr. Jacqueline Quinless

University of Victoria

Hosted by Gwen Nguyen and Britt Dzioba

September 19, 2023

BCcampus Research

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Territorial Acknowledgement

BCcampus acknowledges the səl̓ilwətaʔɬ təməxʷ (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíx̱w (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich), and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples, on whose traditional territories we are privileged to live, work, and learn. Through our work we are learning to incorporate Indigenous epistemologies into our actions and understandings, supporting decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenization to advocate systemic changes in the post-secondary environment of B.C.

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Decolonizing Data

SEPT. 19

Dr. Jacqueline Quinless
University of Victoria

A Participatory Design-based Approach to Research

OCT. 31

Dr. Elizabeth Childs
Royal Roads University

Centring Intersectional EDI in Research

NOV. 21

Dr. Moussa Magassa
Mount Royal University

Creative Methods for Participants with Disabilities

DEC. 5

Dr. Jane Seale
The Open University, UK

RESEARCH SPEAKER SERIES

Decolonizing Data: Unsettling Conversations about Social Research Methods

September 19, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

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Dr. Jacqueline Quinless
University of Victoria

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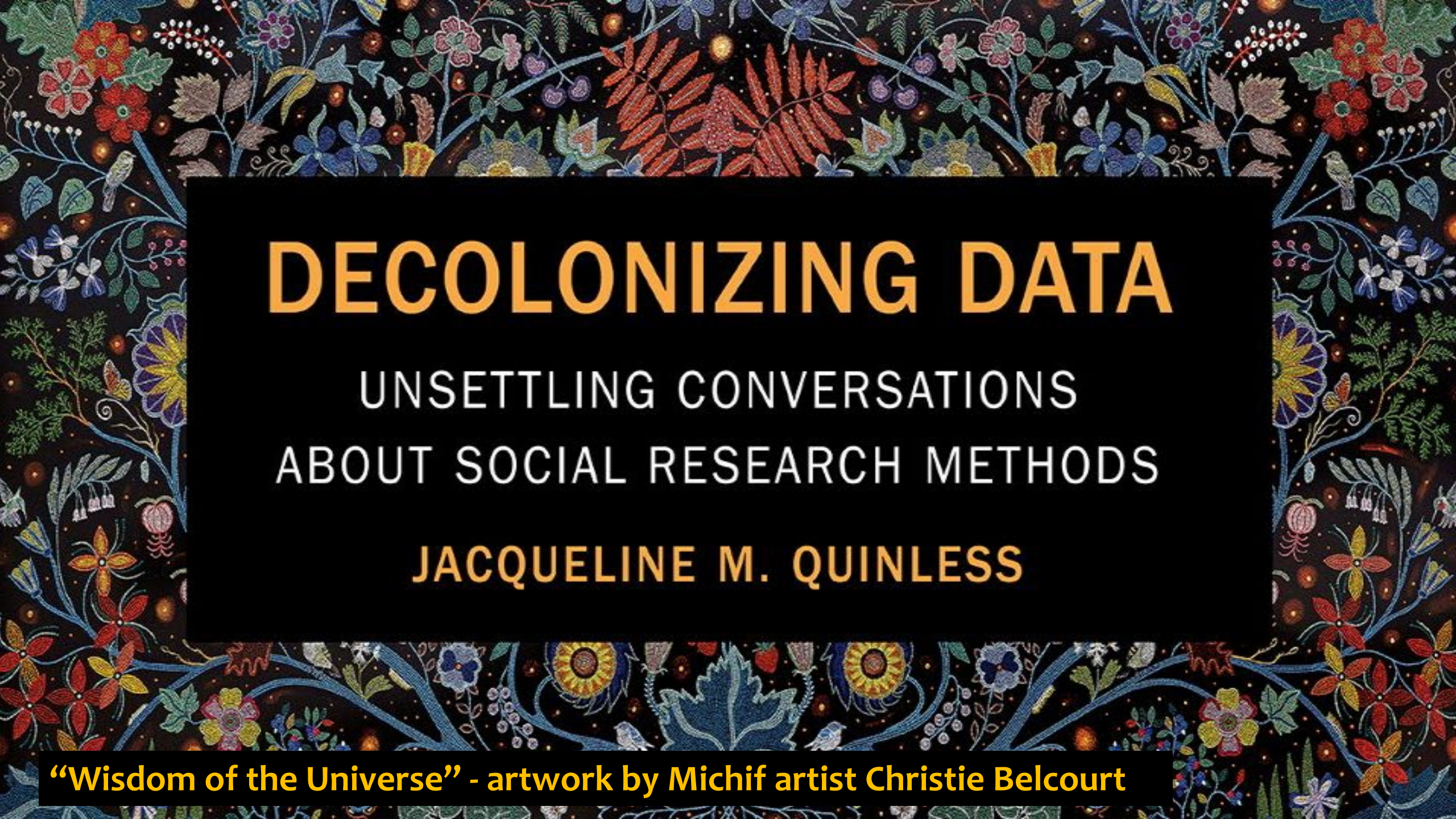
DECOLONIZING DATA

Unsettling Conversations About Social Research Methods

Jacqueline Quinless, Phd

UVic Sociology– Adjunct Professor Sociology

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND INTENTIONS

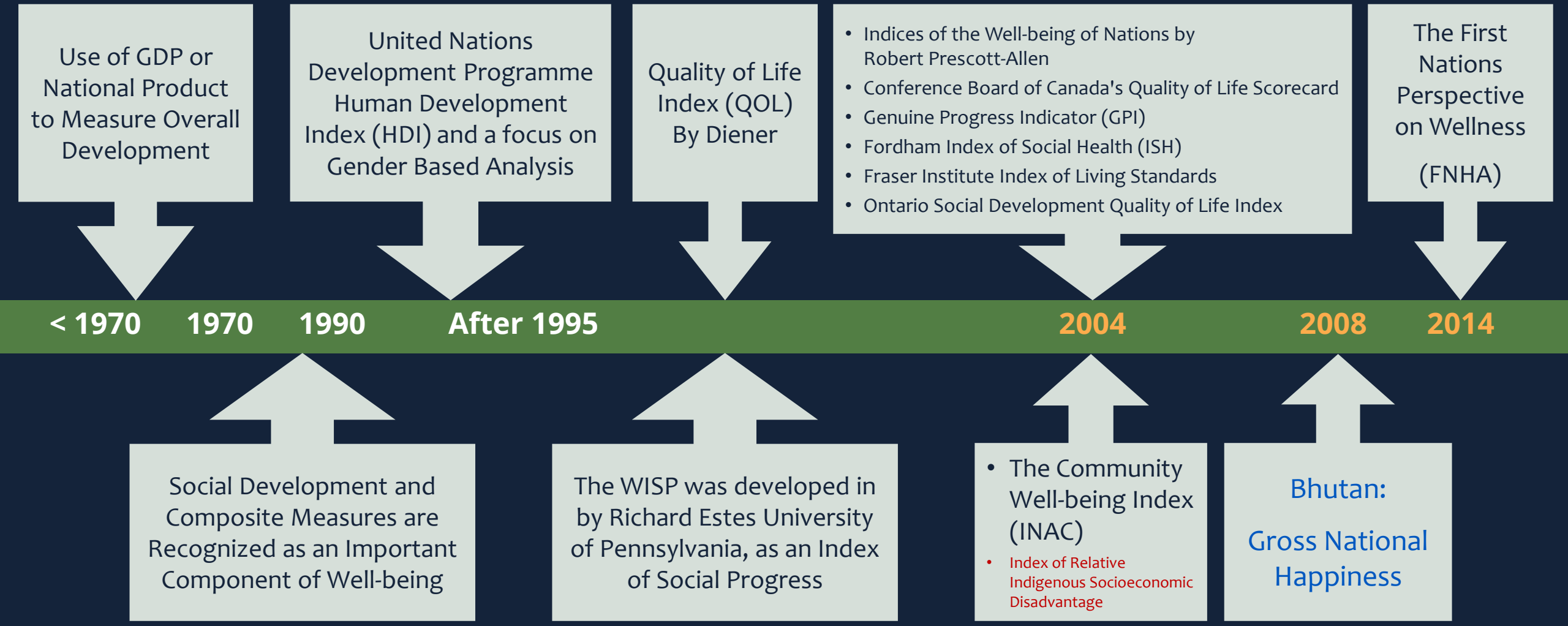


"Wisdom of the Universe" - artwork by Michif artist Christie Belcourt

Colonization, and Social Scientific Research Practice

The effects of data colonialism have impacted Indigenous peoples' efforts to shape and determine their well-being and experiences with land, culture and community.

Measuring Well-being



Community Well-Being Index

- Education
- Labour force activity
- Income
- Housing

"Damaged Centered Wellness"

Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities By Eve Tuck – Aleut, Alaska

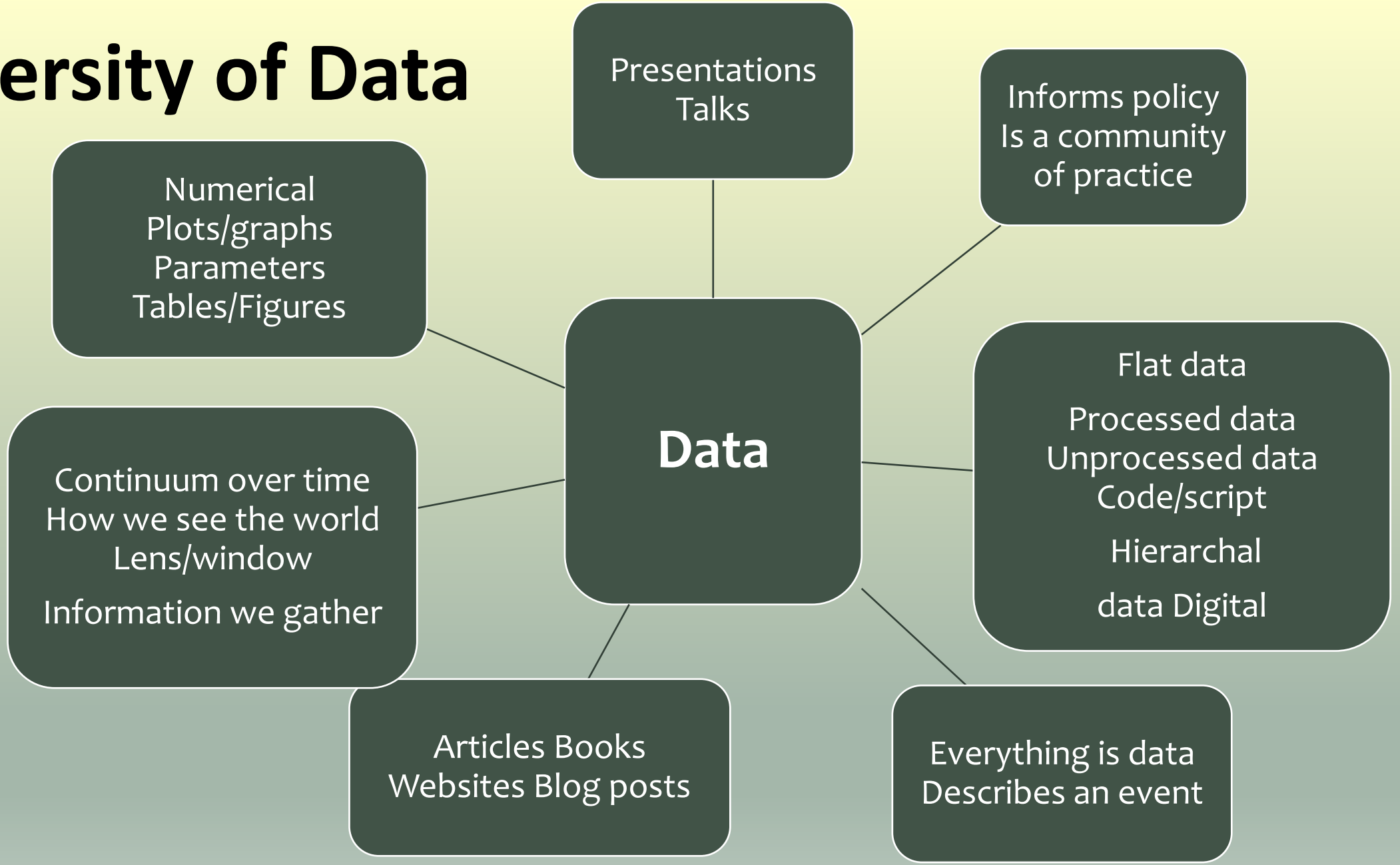
The Harms of Historical and Current Data Collection & Critical Data Studies

- **Data Colonialism**: data gathering practices have created systemic and institutional racism, inequality among many other harms. It continues to dominate through a process of *capitalist accumulation by dispossession*

- The term “data colonialism” was coined by Professors Nick Couldry and Ulises A. Mejias.

Data and Relationality: The Data Life Cycle

Diversity of Data



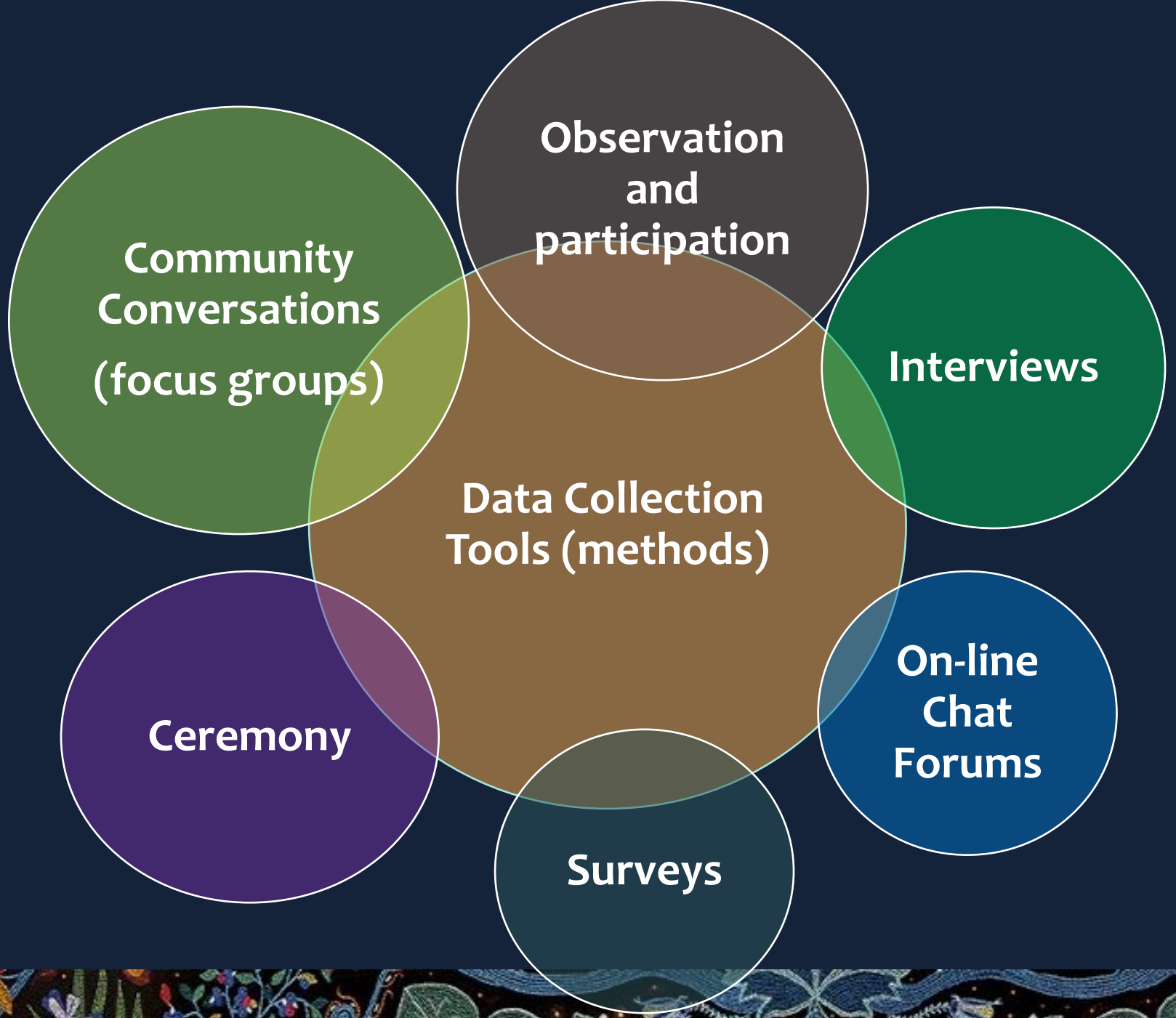
Diversity of Data Across the Digital Landscape at a Post Secondary Institution

- *"a manila folder in a filing cabinet and that's our data"* (Humanities)

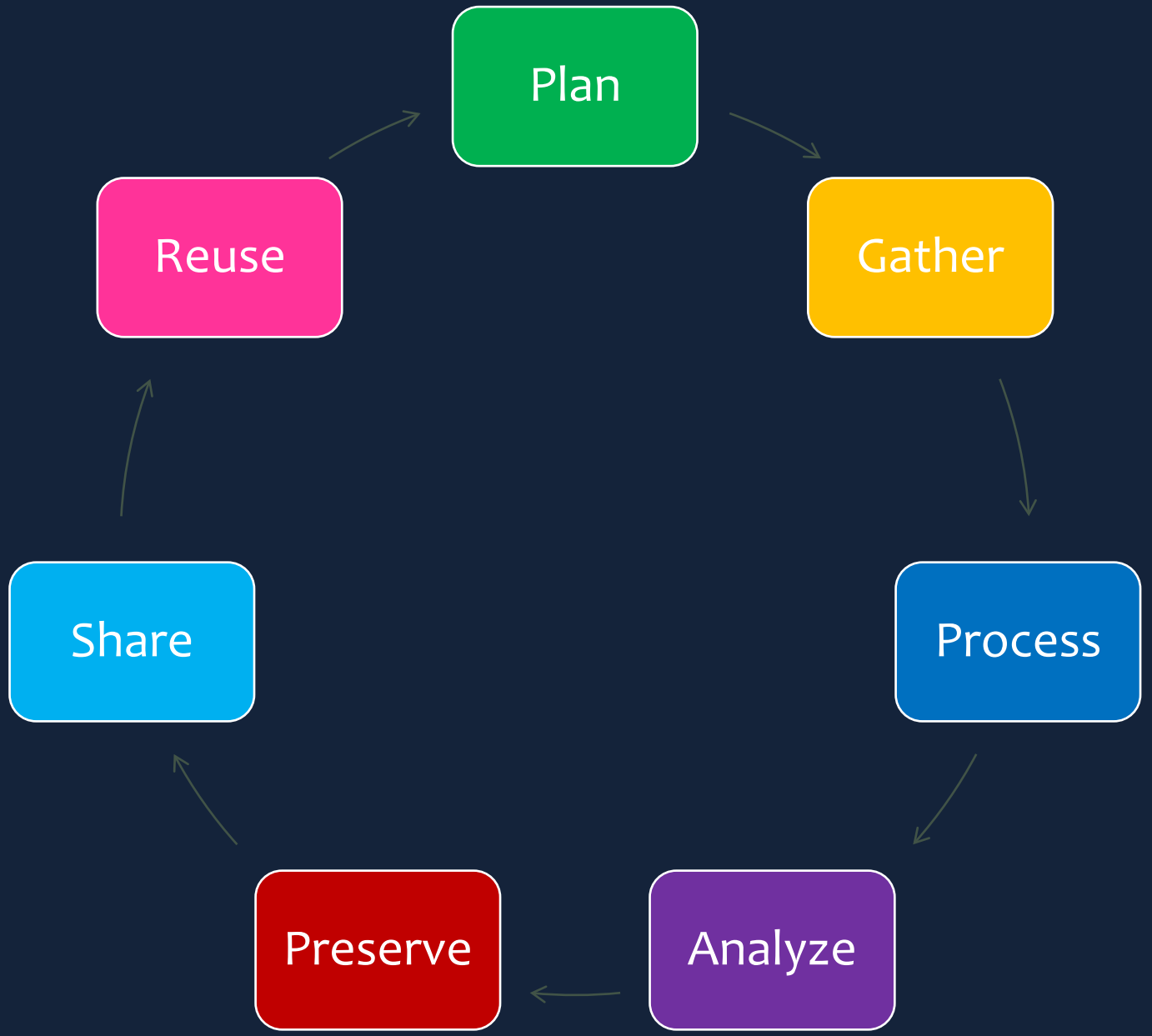
- *"we're creating image files, we're creating PDF's, we're creating XML, we're creating websites, etcetera, but it's still flat data"* (Humanities)

- *"ways that our community, kind of relates to the world, so it's our worldview, it's got to be embedded in the sense of language, ceremony, the land or the water that you're in, and our histories so those interrelationships are key to I guess what you think of especially in Indigenous forms of knowledge or data"* (Indigenous studies)

- *"it's unprocessed data, processed data, images, continuous live data coming through on time, body composition over time"* (Sciences)
- *"it's everything, knowledge, information, stories, gossip, rumours, songs"* (Fine arts)



Some Examples: Types of Data Collection Tools



The Data Life Cycle:

What Does this Mean for Indigenous Research Data?

Data Management

Data management includes all the activities involved with managing data effectively.

Key components include:

- Acquiring data
- Processing and analyzing data
- Reporting data
- Implementing and maintaining technology
- Describing data (documentation and metadata)
- Managing data quality
- Storing and protecting data
- Sharing

Data Curation

- **Creating:** Collecting and taking care of research data.
- **Sharing**: Revealing data's potential across domains (indexing, cataloging, archiving)
- **Preserving**: Promoting the re-use and new combinations of data

Data Curators

- Data Curators are owners of data sets and their metadata to ensure more context for data users.

Data Stewards

- Data Stewards are also owners responsible for the databases or knowledge systems.

Decolonizing Data:

Supporting Indigenous Data Governance and Management

Recognizing and Honoring Rights:
United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

- Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, which includes all forms of knowledge – medicines, sacred living histories, oral traditions and all ways of being and knowing

- Indigenous peoples also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property

Upholding Rights:
Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIPA Act) B.C. and Data

- The provincial government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)* into law in November 2019.

- *"The legislation must enhance First Nations governance of First Nations data, and this will both build trust and create higher quality data. First Nations participants noted that this recognition of data sovereignty must be done with a view not just at the provincial level, but with First Nations individually."*

- *"BC First Nations also see the potential to use data in accordance with their knowledge systems to govern and promote the well-being of their communities."*

Data Governance

Data governance includes the organizing laws, policies, frameworks, and systems that ensure data is managed properly. It is the guidance and oversight function.

Key components include:

- Decision-making body structure and roles (ex. will there be a data governance board or committee?)
- Defining support team roles (ie. job descriptions for roles such as data manager)
- Legal/regulatory and policy framework (ie. all data related laws and policies)
- Accountability mechanisms (ex. keeping a decision ledger)
- Key relationships (ex. relationships between academic institutions, relationships with Statistics Canada)
- Establishing ownership of data (ex. Who is maintaining ownership when data is shared)

Indigenous Data Sovereignty,

Indigenous data sovereignty can be understood as the right of a nation, group of people, or individual to exert control over the governance of data collection, application, and ownership. Data governance is the responsibility that goes along with assertion of the aforementioned right

Indigenous –Led Initiatives

Source: Russo Carroll et al, (2019). Indigenous Data Governance: Strategies from United States Native Nations, *Data Science Journal*, 18(1), p.31. DOI: http://doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2019-031

Data Principles: FNIGC and OCAP

The First Nations Information Governance Center (FNIGC) and Ownership, Control, Access and Possession

https://twitter.com/i/status/1424845947578707987

https://libguides.msvu.ca/c.php?g=114557&p=745504

Data Principles: Open Access Data, FAIR and CARE

- FAIR principles : findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable
- The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance are people and purpose-oriented, reflecting the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics)

Key Points of the Book

1. Data Colonialism and the creation of health inequality
2. Applying Two-eyed Seeing in health research by acknowledge power imbalances
3. Decolonizing Data for non-Indigenous researchers and practitioners:
   - Data principles: Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®)
   - Decolonize thinking and practice
   - Indigenize data tools, collection and dissemination – Indigenous led
4. Looking ahead: Data Sovereignty, Data Justice, Digital ethics, Anti-racism and Anti-oppressive research

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