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## PART I

### (RE)THEORIZING EPISTEMOLOGY, AUTHORITY, ETHICS, AND PURPOSE IN CRITICAL RESEARCH

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## CHAPTER 1

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# UNCOLLAPSING ETHICS

## **Racialized Sciencism, Settler Coloniality, and an Ethical Framework of Decolonial Participatory Action Research**

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### ABSTRACT

This chapter argues that the IRB process is just a small part of what social scientists must consider in conducting ethical research, and that without a more robust consideration of ethics, academe is complicit in expanding, extending, and legitimizing settler colonial projects under the auspices of scientifically based research production. We present an analysis of ethical considerations that are ignored by the IRB process and contextualize what we call decolonial participatory action research (DPAR). Decolonial research necessitates a posture to ethics that frames discussions of ethics away from an emphasis on procedures that attempt to safeguard individual rights and autonomy toward conversations about relational ethics in which partnership, commitment, ac-

countability, and social justice are its central tenets. Decolonial participatory research ethical concepts are offered as alternatives to IRB-centered ethical analysis, focused on emboldening the public sphere and dismantling settler colonialism.

*The ethical dilemmas that often surface in qualitative research are not put to rest by scrupulous adherence to the standard procedures for informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. "Who owns the data?" is an ethical question that participants in laboratory studies do not think to ask. Whose interpretation counts? Who has veto power? What will happen to the relationships that were formed in the field? What are the researcher's obligations after the data are collected? Can the data be used against the participants? Will the data be used on their behalf? Do researchers have an obligation to protect the communities and social groups they study or just to guard the rights of individuals?*

—Marecek, Fine, & Kidder, 1997 p. 641

Marecek et al. (1997) speak to the limitations of existing ethical regulatory frameworks for attending to ethical quandaries that often arise in qualitative research. These issues are latent in all academic investigations; the vital questions posed by Marecek et al. *should* be applied to all scientific inquiry, but too often they are not. To our knowledge, utilizing experimental design or random selection—tweaking the recipe—has never provided an escape from concerns about ownership, interpretation, self-determination, rights/obligations, and the social justice implications of research.

Decolonial theories and Brown's feminist theories examine systems of global capitalism, White supremacy, and heteropatriarchy as features and naturalized outcomes of settler colonialism. This chapter is premised upon the observation that, in much of social science doctoral ethics education in the United States, the discussion of ethics of research has been collapsed, reduced to the discussion of securing approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). We argue that relying solely on IRB-centered ethical analyses sustains settler coloniality in social science research. We will demonstrate that the IRB process is just a small part of what social scientists must consider in conducting ethical research and that without a more robust consideration of ethics, academe is complicit in expanding, extending, and legitimizing settler colonial projects under the auspices of scientifically based research production. We begin with an analysis of ethical considerations that are ignored by the IRB process. We will present entwined genealogies of the IRB process and of scientifically based research and will map these genealogies onto the historical management of Indigenous peoples and peoples of color via social science research.

We will also contextualize what we call Decolonial Participatory Action Research (DPAR). One of the most distinctive and compelling qualities of DPAR is that it exposes ethical worries that are latent in all social science re-

search. Within this context, we present an ethical framework of decolonial participatory action research in which ethical considerations of reflexivity, expertise, dignity, action, relationality, and theories of change will be engaged as vital components of research as a public science, concerned with emboldening the public sphere. Such a framework is useful in contesting the assumed legitimacy of scientifically based research and also in generating research that is concerned with the redistribution of power, knowledge, and place, and the dismantling of settler colonialism.

### What Usually Counts as Ethical in Social Science Research

Being ethical in mainstream social science research is often characterized as knowledge of and adherence to federal mandates, professional codes of conduct, and ethical principles (Strohm-Kitchener & Kitchener, 2009). Many regulatory frameworks exist that detail the rights of individual human subjects and the responsibilities of academic scientists such as the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, the Belmont Report, and the Common Rule. Novice academic researchers are taught, primarily through graduate-level ethics courses and online computer-based training, three guiding principles of ethical research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons requires researchers to recognize and regard the autonomy of human research participants. This principle requires clearly informing potential participants about the purpose of research and the nature, potential risks, and benefits of their participation, among other information (confidentiality and privacy procedures), which would allow them to decide free from coercion or consequence whether or not they will participate in research. Under this principle, persons with reduced autonomy (e.g., children, prisoners, and the mentally impaired) are afforded extra protections. The principle of beneficence obligates researchers to protect participants from harm (nonmaleficence), to minimize potential risks, and to maximize potential benefits of their participation. Lastly, the principle of justice involves the expectation that researchers attend to how burdens and risks are equitably distributed in research. Beginning scientists are also educated in and required to comply with additional, albeit more practice-oriented, ethical standards derived from discipline-specific Codes of Conduct,<sup>2</sup> promoted by professional research associations if they are members of and intend to present at conferences sponsored by these associations.

Alongside a broad but perhaps shallow education in ethical theory, novice researchers are often socialized to construe concerns of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) as composing the entirety of concerns of ethical con-

duct. IRB panels are mandated (by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) to oversee research with human participants under the National Research Act of 1974. The Common Rule, the federal guidelines that direct the activities of the IRB, define research as “as a systematic investigation, including pilot research, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” IRBs are tasked with reviewing proposed research involving “human subjects,” that is, federally funded. Human subjects are defined, under the aforementioned guidelines, as living persons from whom a researcher will obtain “data” through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable private information (45 CFR 46). Institutional Review Boards have the authority to approve submitted proposals, request revisions to a protocol, or to disapprove of a project.

### Decentering the IRB as the Arbiter of Ethics

In our experience, IRBs are constituted by dedicated people who care about the ethical conduct of research. They spend much time educating themselves about the ethical framework and concerns of the IRB process and in many cases, are highly trained to work with academic researchers to refine research protocols that protect human subjects from particular forms of abuse. IRB members invest time and thought into exchanges back and forth with applicants to determine appropriate protocols.

At the same time, we observe that the emergence of discussions about ethics in social science research, and the establishment of IRBs to monitor ethical research practices with human subjects, were prompted by instances of outright abuse. That is Institutional Review Boards, indeed all ethical regulatory bodies, were created reactively; largely in response to public exposure to instances of outrageous abuse such as the Nazi experiments, Tuskegee syphilis study (1932–1972), the Willowbrook hepatitis study (1966) and the deaths of Jesse Gelsinger in the first clinical trial of gene therapy in 1999 and Ellen Roche in an asthma study at Johns Hopkins University in 2001. The Declaration of Helsinki, the statement of Ethical Principles for Medical Research involving Human Subjects, was not advanced until 1964 after the Nuremberg trials and *while* the men, women, and children of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment were being denied penicillin. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research and the Belmont Report were established after Peter Buxton leaked the details of Tuskegee syphilis study to the press (Jones, 1981). The Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections, which conducts oversight of biomedical and behavioral research with special emphasis on vulnerable populations, was created subsequent to

Jesse Gelsinger’s death. It was not until the turn of the 20th century—as a result of organizing by women’s health groups in collaboration with activist researchers—that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services established several task forces and initiatives to address the lack of research on American women’s health and the exclusion of women from federally funded clinical trials.

In the context of the history of this emergence, it is our contention that the proliferation of ethical regulations are actually attempts by social scientists to reconcile their disciplines with their problematic origins. Said another way, although it is well documented that modern discussions of research ethics rose to prominence in response to instances of egregious abuse, interventions such as the establishment of IRBs did not address the ways in which social science theory and methods are complicit in projects of settler colonialism and White supremacy. They did not address how much of academic research was premised on the dehumanization of some “populations” to establish the superiority and betterment of others. Interventions such as IRBs are reactive and partial rather than proactive and holistic. They represent a system of *a priori* checks without attempting to balance or disrupt asymmetrical power relationships in scientific inquiry. IRBs treat the symptoms of abuse and not the causes: abidances to logics of settler colonialism, scientific racism, and White supremacy.

Institutional Review Boards undoubtedly perform an important task within institutions, but they are primarily concerned with protecting the institution from claims of abuse; thus, robust considerations of ethics of research are elided if we mistakenly think of the IRB approval process as anything more than just a small part of what social scientists must consider in conducting ethical research (Flicker, Travers, Guta, McDonald, & Meagher, 2007). The utilitarian principle-based ethical frameworks that guide IRBs have been heavily criticized by proponents of virtue and communitarian ethics as well as indigenous, feminist, and critical race scholars for many reasons; for being

1. Rooted in individualized, colorblind, Western, and white-privileged conceptualizations of risk which too often discount third party and community risk/stigma.
2. More applicable to positivist, biomedical, and clinical research designs than to social, behavioral, qualitative, and/or participatory orientations to research.
3. Rarely inclusive of members of the populations under study in the ethical analyses of research risks, benefits, and burdens, and approval and rejection of protocols.

4. Presumptuous about the moral superiority, knowledge and capacities academic researchers possess compared to the naive and vulnerability of the researched.
5. Inattentive to a "care perspective" on research ethics and thus prioritizing generalizable knowledge over nuanced insight, rights over responsibilities, impartial, formal, and abstract principles over subjective, "contextualized", intimate, and "concrete practices" (Porter, 1999, p. 13).

Adherence to formalized regulations and professional codes of ethics cannot be mistaken for adequate touchstones for ethical conduct in decolonial research because these guidelines and the review processes that enforce them have persistently failed to ensure the safety and well-being and respect the knowledge of Indigenous people, people of color, the poor/working class, and people at the intersections of these heterogeneous communities. Decolonial research necessitates a posture of ethics that frames discussions of ethics away from an emphasis on checklists that attempt to safeguard individual rights and autonomy, toward conversations about relational, dialogical ethics in which partnership, commitment, accountability, and social justice are central tenets.

### **An Analysis of Ethical Considerations That are Ignored by the IRB Process**

With Norman Denzin, we contend, "Ethics are pedagogies of practice. IRBs are institutional apparatuses that regulate a particular form of ethical conduct, a form that may be no longer workable in a transdisciplinary, global and postcolonial world" (Denzin, 2008, p. 97). If contemplation about the ethics of a project by a novice or expert researcher is concerned about only getting the project approved by an IRB, many important considerations are overlooked.

First, IRBs can operate under anemic understandings of respect. In our view, respect for human participants encompasses much more than monitoring informed consent procedures. Respect subsumes the recognition, not the denial of, dignity, sacred knowledges, and counter-storytelling. Researchers who attend to more rigorous notions of respect appreciate that restorative justice is just as important as distributive justice, and researchers are not the only people entitled to or capable of discerning risk.

Second, IRBs advance narrow beliefs about who and what needs protection. With Malia Villegas, Eve has advanced a series of recommendations for ethical and responsible research on indigenous land,<sup>9</sup> which challenge anthropocentric tendencies of established ethical protocols.

We have framed these recommendations in terms of research on indigenous land to include not only research on and with indigenous communities, but also on indigenous human remains and human tissue; our sacred places, flora, and fauna; our stories, histories, literature and art; our knowledge and knowledge systems; and data, including test scores, graduation rates, birth and mortality rates, employment rates, and other life outcomes. The guidelines apply to evaluations of institutions, programs, and curricula.

We appreciate that much of research is currently divided between research involving human subjects, and research that does not involve human subjects. Our guidelines apply to both sides of this divide because we contend that it is a false divide. This divide does not apply to how we understand the relationships between people, flora, fauna, and place. They emerge from a belief in the power of life in all its forms; and a recognition that human concerns and benefits must be balanced with the concerns and benefits of other life. (Tuck & Villegas, forthcoming)

Third, IRBs can get in the way of a community's research needs. This is because, as Monique has observed, IRBs provide guidance regarding ethical procedures not about an ethics of involvement:

IRBs and existing ethical regulatory frameworks provide little guidance about how to initiate transparent, democratic inquiry; that is, collaboratively designed, conducted, analyzed, and disseminated in the context of equal partnerships between university scientists and members of disempowered groups. (Guishard, forthcoming)

An account of how a university hindered research in one community is Malone, Yerger, McGruder, & Froelicher's (2006) Protecting the 'Hood Against Tobacco (PHAT) project. The project began when university researchers conducted focus groups with community members in order to understand and document their reaction to tobacco industry advertising activities targeting residents of color in two African American neighborhoods in San Francisco. As is common in research on community issues, participants were deeply affected by their participation in the focus groups, particularly the insight into the targeted advertising strategies, and many wanted to share this information with neighbors and "consider smoking cessation."

A community-university research partnership was established wherein some participants agreed to serve as community researchers to investigate tobacco-caused harm in their backyards. The community partners were instrumental in redesigning the study and facilitating a town hall meeting in which data detailing the health effects of tobacco use among African Americans were disseminated. A survey of the community's perception of resources available to aid smoking cessation and impediments to quit-

ting was also conducted. The results of the survey revealed that the sale of "loosies" (single cigarettes) sold to residents illegally, was a major obstacle to quitting. This knowledge energized the community researchers, who "decided to conduct a systematic assessment of the proportion of convenience stores in the community that sold single cigarettes in 'violation of state law'" (Malone et al., 2006). An IRB protocol was submitted to the university to observe single cigarette sales among other activities, but later the community residents, more familiar with their neighborhood, felt that observation was an "inadequate methodology." The community researchers' reasoning was that

some stores were in areas where loitering could be dangerous, and sometimes there was a long time between sales. They argued that it was impractical to wait around to watch for single cigarette sales. Instead, they wanted to make a single-cigarette purchase attempt and document the result for each store. (Malone et al., 2006, p. 1916)

A modified proposal was submitted, which specified that identifying information would not be collected about the stores, employees, or business owners. It also specified that results would be presented aggregately. The IRB rejected the proposal, admonishing the PHAT-proposed research design as one that would "entrap" store owners to commit an illegal act. The IRB stated it "could not approve any university involvement in 'illegal' activity." Malone and colleagues' (2006) research is a powerful example of how IRBs and participatory and community researchers might differ in how they evaluate risks, benefits, respect, and protection in research. It is also an example of the ways in which needs identified by community researchers can go unaddressed by an IRB process, because an alternate protocol was not agreed upon. We have encountered many other unpublished examples of the competing interests between communities and IRBs in our consultative work.

So far, we have demonstrated that "much ethical terrain is uncharted by official guidelines, such as those of the American Psychological Association or of IRB reviews" (Marecek et al., 1997, p. 641). Next we will map the relationships between settler-colonialism, social science, and scientifically based health research. We will argue that narrow conceptualizations of ethics in research are intended to veil scientific research's complicity in sustaining White supremacy, heteropatriarchy, racism, and settler colonialism. In the final discussion, we will introduce decolonial participatory action research as an ethical framework with insights for social scientists working across a variety of methodologies.

## THE RELATED FORCES OF WHITE SUPREMACY, HETEROPATRIARCHY, AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

Our orientations as a decolonizing theorist (Grande, 2004; Smith, 1999;) and a Brown feminist theorist (Guishard, 2009; Hill-Collins, 2000; Keating, 2008) have prompted us to examine the related forces of White supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism in order to locate, in Patricia J. Williams' words, "his attempt to own what no man can own, the habit of his power and the absence of her choice. *I look for her shape and his hand,*" (1991, p. 19; emphasis ours). For the purposes of this chapter, we attend to settler colonialism as a core structure ("his hand") that animates White supremacy and heteropatriarchy, although in other analyses, we might engage another part of the triad as the anchor structure. We pay particular attention to the relationships between settler colonialism and the manufacturing of White supremacy. We observe that much of social science, particularly social science on the public sphere, such as in/on schools, prisons, hospitals, and other public institutions, have relentlessly studied *her shape*, with little more than passing regard for *his hand*—settler colonialism. In other words, social science has been constructed to be concerned with studying mostly oppressed people, without a simultaneous recognition of settler colonialism as the structure that requires their oppression.

Settler colonialism is a form of colonization in which the colonizers come to stay. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event; settler colonialism is something that persists and defines a society, irreducible to the unfortunate beginnings of a new nation. The viability of the settler colonial nation-state depends on the removal and destruction of the original inhabitants (Indigenous peoples) and the transporting and domination of an outside labor force (chattel slaves). Thus, settler colonialism can be characterized by the simultaneous erasure of Indigenous peoples, and the dehumanization of other peoples, captured and enslaved for labor. Within the settler colonial structure, it is Indigenous land, not Indigenous people that holds value; this is why Indigenous people must be removed somehow, be it physically eliminated or displaced, being absorbed, assimilated, amalgamated, or erased culturally (Verancini, 2011, p. 2). Conversely, within the structure of settler colonialism, it is the body or the labor of the chattel slave that is valued, thus she must be kept landless. Verancini (2011) observes that what may constitute labor can change over setting and time, and can include not only labor as physical, but also as spiritual, consumption, sexual, reproductive, and so on. In settler colonialism, the settler is valued for his leadership, ingenuity, and pioneer spirit.

We understand the dynamics of the structure of settler colonialism, between those valued for their land (thus erased), their labor (thus contained), and

their intellect (thus profitable), as dynamics that have shaped settler colonial nation-states, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. In the United States (and elsewhere) the structure of settler colonialism has undergirded ideologies of White supremacy, in which white skin and White ways of knowing and being are constructed as both superior and normal (Jordan, Bogat, & Smith, 2001; Martín-Baró, 1994); and heteropatriarchy, in which a particular male and straight gender and sexuality expression is constructed as both superior and normal. Heteropatriarchy, then, is the presumption that nuclear domestic arrangements should be the building blocks of the nation-state. Within settler colonial nation-states, White supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and heteropaternalism are naturalized, regarded as components of civil society. Settler colonial nation-states are typified by a kind of genteel violence, in which the abject dispossession and dehumanization of non-White, not-heteronormative people is so commonplace that it is practically invisible.

Importantly, Indigenous scholars have observed that neoliberalism, the force most central to this edited volume, is not a new phenomenon, but an extension of (settler) colonialism (Bargh, 2007; Tuck, 2012). Neoliberal restructuring has focused on building a seamless global market, at the same time diminishing the public sphere in ways that make everyday people more politically and economically vulnerable, more fully exposed to the dips and turns of the speculative market, and ultimately, more poor (Saugar, 2007, p. 65). It is our view that neoliberalism and divestment in the public sphere are part of a very particular trajectory of human thinking (not inevitable) and reflect shared aims with logics of settler colonialism and manifest destiny.

### Entwined Genealogies

Various scholars have connected the origins of their academic disciplines to the maintenance of settler colonialism, and its apparatuses, such as White supremacy (see Gould, 1981; Selden, 1999; see also Kelley, 1997, on the scripting of race and racism). Patrick Wolfe (1999) has traced anthropology's ideological entanglements and the modes of production of anthropology to their appropriation into settler colonial practice. Wolfe is concerned not with "detai[n]g" ourselves with talk of colonial handmaidens or with trying to decide whether particular anthropologists were good guys or bad guys," but with how the "contoured logic of colonialism can be tracked to the minutiae of individual texts, where authors grapple to contain the contradictions that [anthropological theory] generates, . . . the social effects of the publicizing of their theories," and the "conditions under which particular theories become suitable for appropriation to political ends" (p. 5).

Robert Guthrie (1976) tells the story of the emergence of the field of psychology as a tale in which anthropologists relinquished a portion of their

ownership of the study of race, bestowing on the emergent field the "racial systems needed to justify intellectually the existence of difference among human beings" (p. 31). Such schemes relied upon physiognomic (deriving analyses of character from the face or body) impressions of different groups to determine a scale of superiority and inferiority of the races, and involved measurements of skin tone, head size, skull shape, and other countings of bones and teeth. Thus, many of the early activities of the field of psychology were concerned with scientifically establishing/proving White supremacy.

Catherine Myser (2003) has excavated the normativity of Whiteness—a marker of location within a social-racial hierarchy—in the history and practice of bioethics (p. 2). Her caution is that, in obscuring the ways in which actions by the first U.S. Congress in 1790 required a person to be White to become a naturalized citizen, the construction of cultural and ethnic "others" to define and delineate Whiteness, and the prominence in bioethics and of "personal whiteness" (DuBois, 1920), White academics in bioethics and other fields risk "reproducing white privilege and supremacy in this ob-cultured practice" (Myser, 2003, p. 3). One potential problem in this obscuring is that the dominant White center is never troubled, displaced, or relocated (Batiste, 2008; Myser, 2003; Smith, 1999, 2005).

Eve's (Tuck, 2009a) work has sought to understand how educational research has been consumed by the practice of damage-centered research, in which researchers set about proving how individuals, tribes, schools, and communities have been impacted by deprivation, trauma, and loss. In this kind of research, there is a general belief that effectively documenting damage will convince those in power to give up power and resources, and make needed change. Concerned that such political and sovereign "wins" rarely come through, and that individuals and communities are pathologized and become singularly defined by their purported damage, Eve has observed that such research frameworks operate within colonial theories of power and change (Tuck, 2009a, 2010).

Gerald Coles (2007) notes that "forging facts to 'prove' and predetermine 'scientific' explanation is an enduring stratagem," (p. 27) of social control. His analysis compares the "misuse" of science by the George W. Bush administration in the early 2000s to research and policy practices in the 19th and 20th centuries that were determined to prove the inferiority of poor people and people of color in order to justify unfair social policies. Coles quotes a statement by the Union of Concerned Scientists (2006) regarding the Bush administration's configurations of scientifically based research, concerned that "When scientific knowledge has been found to be in conflict with its political goals, political supporters in various Federal departments have been censored and scientific Federal reports whose findings run contrary to the Bush administration policies have been suppressed." The statement expresses deep worry about the consequences of "distorted

facts and suppressed truth," in numerous areas of public safety, about which the Bush administration had ideological differences with widely held scientific findings, including drug safety, air pollution, reproductive health, and global warming (Coles, 2007, p. 28). Coles observes seven methods of "forging the facts," or methods of manipulation that are comprised in common practices in which data and findings are contrived to support ideological policies that seek to divest in the public sphere. They are: build a procrustean pen; inflate facts; make the meaning of facts acquire a new meaning; refashion no comparison into an informative comparison; misrepresent causation; keep unwelcomed outcomes far away from the procrustean pen; ask the wrong question and thereby avoid necessary facts (pp. 32–41).

Taken together, these analyses concretize the ways in which social science research is complicit with logics of settler colonialism, promoting, at times, the projects of Indigenous erasure, the subjugation of peoples of color, and White supremacy. At the same time, under the banner of "scientifically based research," problematic and unethical practices of contriving findings flourish. Other scholars, including many in this volume, have explored the misinformation, errant policies, and profits made under the promotion of "scientifically based" research practices. Our critique in this chapter scratches at the ways in which methods of academic research, such as those methods outlined by Coles (2007) above, undermine the ethical practice of social science research.

### AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF DECOLONIAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Now we turn to the ways in which participatory action research is counter-hegemonic to the ethical modus operandi of much of mainstream social science research. We are especially interested in drawing out the components of what we are calling decolonial participatory action research (DPAAR); research that is conducted in and with community, not on communities, and in ways that are anticolonial, not imperialistic.

Broadly, participatory action research (PAR) is best understood as an orientation to collaborative research rather than as a particular set of methods. PAR has varied characteristics and promiscuous roots. It may be qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed method. PAR can be located in communities, the academy, or in co-constructed spaces. PAR involves a continuum of research activities that employ varying modes of participation (from cursory to more thorough) and control between community-based entities and academic researchers (Chataway, 1997; Fals-Borda & Muhammad, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

Participatory action research disquiets many of the presumptions of mainstream social science research, especially those components of social science that still embrace positivism. In PAR, the following notions are disbelieved: Distance is required between "knower" and "known" to achieve "objectivity"; the researcher has expertise and can observe truths about the subject's life that she cannot observe; erudite researchers approach their subjects and fields in ways that are unbiased and value free; the purpose of research is "discovery" in order to contribute to a generalizable knowledge base. Instead, participatory action researchers contend that people have deep and significant knowledge about their everyday lives, and that people are complex and have valuable insights about the world and institutions they inhabit. PAR shifts notions of the purposes of research, validity, rigor, and generalizability away from fantasies of discovery toward aims of co-constructing knowledge for social change.

We are admittedly skeptical, given the complex histories of our respective peoples with exploitative research, about the role research will ultimately play in achieving social, environmental, and economic justice for all; in dismantling settler colonialism (McKoy, forthcoming; Selden, 1999; Smith, 1999; Tuck & Villegas, forthcoming; Washington, 2006). Yet we firmly believe that participatory research holds revolutionary possibilities for restructuring relationships between academic scientists and communities. PAR projects have been successful in enhancing academic and lay understandings of social theory and practical problems.

Our enthusiasm about the possibilities of PAR for *disrupting* problematic social science research practices, however, cannot be divorced from shared worries. We worry about an overemphasis on the specialness of PAR. We worry about the racist-classist-paternalistic language, practices, and group dynamics of positivistic research and bioethics infecting collaborative inquiry. We worry about PAR being touted as a panacea for the social and ethical dilemmas that confront social science research. Lastly, we worry about the ostensible appropriation and commodification of PAR as federal granting agencies seek to redefine intervention, promoting the use of participatory methods in order to conduct translational research without attention to participatory epistemologies.

There is nothing about PAR that intrinsically serves as a cure-all or magic bullet for the many biases and moral quandaries that plague social scientific inquiry, especially those that derive from complicity in relations of settler colonialism. There can be a general misconception that by simply building participation into a project—by increasing the number of people who collaborate in collecting data—ethical issues of representation and voice, exploitation, consumption, voyeurism, and reciprocity are resolved. The misconception that participation is merely about including more people in the same problematic research approaches doesn't appreciate that *participation*



refers to an epistemological stance, to a set of beliefs about knowing and knowledge. This is why we have differentiated between PAR and decolonial participatory action research in this chapter. Participation can be superficial and performative, and simply increasing the number of bodies in the conduct of positivistic or colonial research does nothing to decolonize it. Although the relationship between the researcher and the participant are intentionally shaped differently in PAR, this difference “does not circumvent ethical dilemmas. Indeed it raises new dilemmas, and these often collide with institutional ethics procedures in especially problematic ways” (Cahill, Sultana, & Pain, 2007, pp. 305–306). By nature of being collaborative, even intimate, concerns of respect, compensation, representation, interpretation, relevance, fairness, and accuracy burst to the forefront in PAR. At the same time that we highlight, we do not want to overstate the special nature of ethical dilemmas within PAR that Marecek et al. (1997) adeptly detail, because PAR exposes ethical concerns that are latent in *all* social science research. Thus, critically engaging ethical concerns within participatory action research can yield insights for other methodologies of social science research in which negotiations of these concerns may be less transparent. We turn to such an engagement in the next section.

Decolonial participatory action research is concerned with emboldening the public sphere and dismantling settler colonialism. Lorenzo Veracini (2011) differentiates settler colonialism from colonialism defined by exogenous domination in that the former is typified by a “persistent drive to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operation, in order to ‘tame’ a variety of wildernesses, . . . effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities, and productively manage ethnic diversity” (p. 3). It thus, “covers its tracks and operates towards its self-supersession” and cannot be struck down using modes of exogenous decolonization (Veracini, 2011 p. 3). In fact, some strategies, such as the sanctioning of equal rights, have “historically been used as a powerful weapon in the denial of indigenous entitlement and in the enactment of various forms of coercive assimilation” (Veracini, 2011 p. 6). This decolonization “actually enhances the subjection of indigenous peoples” and is “at best irrelevant and at worst detrimental” to Indigenous peoples living in settler colonial societies (pp. 6–7). Thus, the decolonial intervention to *settler* colonialism will necessarily take a different course than other approaches to social justice.

Decolonial PAR is a public science, meaning it seeks to be accountable to real people, to tangible relationships, and it disbelieves the permanence of the settler-colonial nation-state. In part, the project of decolonial PAR is to expose the matrices of settler colonialism and the ways in which neoliberal logic—the most recent iteration of settler colonialism—works to undermine and dispossess the public sphere. It is to make that which is concealed apparent and to attend to the lines of power that course through settler co-

lonial nation-states. Decolonial PAR projects are crafted to provide participants and community members with multiple points of entry and multiple opportunities to draw meaning, value, and action from the work. They are designed to have continuity between the research and community life, and for collaboration to move in recursive ways. Decolonial PAR is anticipatory and proactive (not reactive) with respect to ethical quandaries, and proposes an ethical framework including components of reflexivity, expertise, humility, dignity, action, and relationality. We now will discuss each of these components in turn.

### Reflexivity

Decolonial PAR is reflexive with respect to many things: about the purpose of research, about the stance of researchers and participants, about theories of change, and about the risks and potential consequences of research. DPAR embodies a critical approach to social science research. It is critical in that it aims to challenge hegemonic paradigms, leaving behind a

naive approach to issues of power, and engages in careful self-reflection regarding the possible shadows of its research presence and processes. This reflexivity involves researchers in a critical stance toward the processes and uses of research in the history of their discipline(s), and asks them to be willing to dis-identify with aspects of their training and practice that reinforce the divides a critical participatory action approach questions and works to heal. (Watkins & Shulman, 2008, p. 69)

As we have noted, decolonial PAR can be defined as a web of beliefs about how knowledge is generated and remembered, where it comes from, and how ideas are vetted and revised. Decolonial PAR holds that people have deep, often generational, knowledge about their lives, institutions, places, and communities. Those who engage in this kind of research do so because they believe that collaborative research strategies yield strong and compelling data; that knowledge is more powerful when collectively conceived.

Implicitly (but better to make it explicit), decolonial PAR requires researchers and communities to ask and answer, “How do we believe that change happens” (Tuck, 2009b)? Before engaging in research, communities must ask themselves three important questions: What is our theory of change? What role does research have in our theory of change? And what role (if any) might an academic researcher have in this research (see also Tuck, 2009a)? Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes, “At a common sense level, research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument” (1999, p. 3). To be reflexive about theories of change,

researchers and communities must consider how the aims of research can be useful to communities instead of academe.

Ethical decolonial PAR is also self-conscious about the consequences of a researcher's actions and the legacy of scientific research products, not just to IRBs, grantors, and academic peers but to human relationships and to social, economic, and environmental justice. It embodies Dillard's endangered feminist epistemology, which views "*research as a responsibility* answerable and obligated to the very persons and communities being engaged in the inquiry" (2000, p. 666; emphasis in original). Without this reflexivity, participatory researchers permit, "the whiteness of ethics to go unmarked, we risk repeatedly reinscribing white privilege—white supremacy even—into the very theoretical structures and methods we create as tools to identify and manage ethical issues" (Myser, 2003 pp. 1–2).

Finally, while reflexivity is a core component of doing this work, there are different ways of thinking about how and if expressions of self-reflexivity are represented in public. This idea is taken up further in our discussion of the sacred.

### Expertise

Ethical community-based participatory research interrupts knowledge hierarchies not just in the beginning, but in all phases of a research project (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Eickland, 2006). Ethical decolonial PAR complicates expertise and takes seriously that lived experience is a powerful location and criterion of meaning (Hill-Collins, 1998, 2001). Michelle Fine writes,

Participatory action researchers ground our work in the recognition that expertise and knowledge are widely distributed. PAR further assumes that those who have been most systematically excluded, oppressed or denied carry specifically revealing wisdom about the history, structure, consequences and the fracture points in unjust social arrangements. PAR embodies a democratic commitment to break the monopoly on who holds knowledge and for whom social research should be undertaken. (2008, p. 215)

Said another way, ethical DPAR does not give voice to or build consciousness for marginalized people. It does not presume that before researchers intervened they were previously speechless or that the foundational plains of sociopolitical critique were barren. DPAR researchers do not esteem themselves to be positioned to observe truths or reality more clearly than people in lived lives. DPAR is not merely receptive to community concerns, but profoundly respectful of and responsive to community knowledge and organic expertise.

### Humility

Being ethical in participatory research requires researchers to embrace humility; "the ability to balance listening and offering input, and to negotiate rather than impose expectations and roles" (Shore, 2006, p. 11). Humility requires researchers to abdicate the throne of knowing and of moral superiority; to understand that there are unforeseen risks and problems with their chosen methodology, research questions, and modes of informed consent, among other issues about which community partners are more knowledgeable. Humility is an extension of reflexivity, requiring researchers to be *more* reflective and *more* transparent about our standpoints as well as the limits of our theories and analytical strategies (Guishard, 2009). If we are serious about decolonizing and democratizing research, we should highlight our blind spots and biases with as much detail as we spotlight the seeming contradictions and inconsistencies of the people with whom we conduct research, because as the late Cynthia Chataway (1997) advised, "This is a method within which the researcher cannot escape vulnerability, nor should he or she try, since mutual vulnerability allows the effects of domination to be reflected upon more accurately and safely."

Humility can be the gateway to mutual vulnerability, assisting decolonial participatory research partners' recognition of their complicity in each other's lives. Our colleagues Maria Torre and Jennifer Ayala (2009) call this collision of identities wherein research team members perceive themselves as both we and other *choques*; "moments of contestation and creative production" that birth

knowledge *entremundos*, between the cracks of multiple experiences, undescoring relationship and interdependence... the foundation of a PAR for social justice—one that asks questions at the intersections of daily life and complex social systems; where individuals are allowed to hold varied and contradictory identities. (p. 390)

### Dignity

Ethical decolonial PAR endeavors to preserve dignity. It does not modify or appropriate, instead it builds on the existing strengths and talents of community collaborators while assisting in the cultivation of new capacities and skills. Ethical DPAR honors the "self-defining identities of the peoples who have been colonized and oppressed," and also the private spaces, personal stories, and community knowledge (Smith, 2005, p. 86) to which we are privileged to gain access, document, and bear witness. Collectives formed by researchers, participants, and community members are key,

and perhaps rare, sites of self-determination, in which members speak what is otherwise silenced, make transparent that which is otherwise concealed, and make meaningful that which is otherwise forgotten or devalued. There is dignity in the work of creating a space for ourselves, the kind of space that has been systematically denied to us.

Decolonial PAR also recognizes/cultivates dignity through the practice of what Eve has called "theorizing back" (Tuck, 2009c), which engages everyday people in rejecting and reclaiming theories that have been used to disempower them: "theories that we have mis/believed about ourselves, that have fed our own self abnegation, theories that have made us rely upon, cater to, offer gratitude to, and even congratulate the colonizer" (Tuck, 2009c, p. 120). Theorizing back shifts the gaze of research onto the institutions and structures that maintain settler colonialism.

An additional aspect of dignity within decolonial PAR work is the differentiation between the public and the sacred. Research collectives can decide which elements of their work to open source; meaning that the methodology, methods, theory, data, and analyses can be shared and potentially used by others. Materials determined to be sacred can be shared only with community members, perhaps in community newsletters or community forums. They might be talked about, but never written down. They might never leave the research collective. Some examples of private or sacred materials that might never be made public are sacred tribal stories, stories of humiliation that rehumiliate when told, and stories that can serve as examples that reify stereotypes. In part, to consider the public and the sacred is to consider the idea that the academy does not need to know everything, or even most things, uncovered in a participatory research project. There are some stories that the academy has not proved itself to be worthy of knowing.

### Action

DPAR locates action and sustainability as primary and not tertiary or endgame goals of collaborative research (Zeller-Berkman, 2007). It endeavors to sustain transparency in collaboration by describing research methods, agenda, goals, and deliverables in jargon-free terms. Action in decolonial PAR cannot be reserved just for the final stages of a project. Action is vital to a collective's learning and satisfaction in a decolonial PAR project. It is crucial that action happens early and often, over the course of a project. It is important that the collective decides what constitutes short- and long-term action. Academics often conceptualize dissemination of a study's findings at conferences and through publication in scientific journals as action while community collaborators do not. One approach is to design research methods to blur the lines between method and action so they are pedagogical

cal or provocative and serve as dynamic interventions to unfair practices for all contributors (Tuck, 2009b).

### Relationality

One approach of decolonial PAR is to refuse to make people into objects by making them the subjects of research. The focus of the research is not on people, not on their bodies, but on the relationships between bodies, ideas, and institutions. The gaze is not on people or things, but the spaces between people or things. This intentional change in object relations is one way DPAR may be distinct from other forms of PAR.

Relationality is an alchemy of trust, representation, and reciprocity. Decolonial participatory action researchers focus their efforts not on establishing trust but on being trustworthy. Communities, individuals, and tribes may come to a project after having been betrayed by other researchers. Warnings of caution about participating in research are often passed from one generation to the next. Stories, artifacts, and knowledge have been stolen; tissue and blood samples, sacred ideas, and endorsements have been mishandled. Acknowledged or not, this is the legacy of research that social scientists have inherited. To require or expect trust from a community that has been betrayed isn't useful or realistic. However, a researcher must show herself to be trustworthy by doing what Linda Tuhiwai Smith has called "showing face," by participating in important cultural events and following "protocols of showing or accepting respect and reciprocating respectful behaviors, which also develop membership, credibility, and reputation" (1999, p. 15). While some methodologies may position the needs of a community as a hurdle or nuisance to research, indigenous and decolonizing approaches

tend to approach cultural protocols, values, and behaviors as an integral part of methodology. They are "factors" to be built into research explicitly, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of the study, and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood. (Smith, 1999, p. 15)

Trustworthy researchers take the time to grow an understanding of the sociopolitical context of the community partners' realities, to learn about nuances and comprehend a community's diversity (Cahill, 2007). They make time for discussion, for negotiation, and to develop mechanisms of transparency and accountability.

With community members, trustworthy researchers address issues of representation, which can include discerning the public from the sacred,

determining how analyses and counteranalyses will be shared, and thinking through issues of authorship. Authorship is highly valued within academe, but may be less or even more valued by a community partner. Authorship is one of the ways that emerging scholars earn a reputation, but also earn reappointment, tenure, promotion, and salary bonuses. Someone who is unfamiliar with academe may not understand how high the stakes of authorship may be for someone trying to make a career in the academy. They may not fully appreciate that a scholar's career is, in many ways, built upon her publications, indeed, built upon what she says about her research. A trustworthy researcher does not attempt to downplay or diminish the significance of authorship in her own life, but fully discloses the expectations, benefits, and politics of publication.

Trustworthy researchers also learn from community partners about what might constitute meaningful reciprocity. Going beyond fast-food gift certificates or other tokens of appreciation that might be encouraged by IRBs, meaningful reciprocity may mean time spent addressing direct needs in a community partner's life, such as tutoring, advocacy, childcare, translation, even laundry. Meaningful reciprocity can emerge over time as different parties become more mutually implicated in each others' lives.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Having outlined a framework for ethical decolonial participatory action research, one might surmise that these are worthwhile aspirations, but still ask, how exactly does one embody, implement, or ensure ethical decolonial participatory research? One might further question whether we are suggesting replacing one regulatory framework with another, which, albeit well intentioned, represents more laborious ethical review processes that potentially could deter prospective decolonial research projects. There are no simple answers to these questions, and most often, we are left to feel and grapple our way through because, according to Eikeland (2006), "there is hardly an affluence of extant literature on action research and ethics" (p. 39). There are numerous examples of Indigenous communities and urban communities who have developed their own ethical review processes, usually with a board that will approve or deny applications to conduct research (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010; Battiste, 2008; Tuck, 2009a). Such endeavors are concerned with educating IRBs about the ethical particulars of PAR, revising the Belmont Report principles, and cultivating scientific literacies among community members to become involved not only in conduct of research conducted in their communities but also in the ethical review of research. Indeed,

formulating regulations and ethical judgments solely on the basis of opinions expressed by experts in the scholarly community and IRB members risks treating subjects like "research material" rather than as moral agents with the right to judge the ethicality of investigative procedures in which they are asked to participate. (Fisher, 1997, p. 2)

Although we wholeheartedly support these initiatives and see research as a crucial topic of community education, our lingering worry is that the creation of parallel regulatory boards, while importantly disrupting the monopoly of academe over research (see Fals-Borda & Muhammad, 1991), does not require academic researchers to reconsider their complicity in settler colonialism. Reiterating our claim from earlier in this chapter, current conceptualizations of ethics have been generated in response to the symptoms of abuse, not the causes, which are settler colonialism, White supremacy, and heteropatriarchy.

Monique's current research aims to critically examine social research ethics education for how it primes participatory researchers about how to think and enact respect, accountability, and relationships using a decolonial and Brown feminist framework. It is her position that the ethical deliberations, which most often get written up as field notes outside of formal academic publications, might prove insightful and instructive about how to responsibly conduct ethical decolonial research (Guishard, forthcoming). She hopes to eavesdrop, with permission, on

the messy, behind-closed-door conversations PAR researchers often have as we negotiate the ethical quandaries that riddle our research, writing, and theorizing...grappling with the politics of collaboration, positionality, accountability, and responsibility. (Cahill et al., 2007, p. 305)

An initial finding of Monique's current work concerns the promise for participatory action researchers in their positions *between the cracks*. Borrowing from Borderlands/Mestizaje scholarship, Monique conceptualizes participatory researchers as *nepantleras*:

"in-betweeners," "those who facilitate passages between worlds" "(Un)natural Bridges"...nepantleras are threshold people; they live within and among multiple worlds, and develop what Anzaldúa describes as a perspective from the cracks. Nepantleras use their views from these cracks-between-worlds to invent holistic, relational theories and tactics enabling them to reconceive or in other ways transform the various worlds in which they exist. (Keating, 2008, p. 8)

Excavating nepantlera ethical decision making will hopefully provide a more tangible, less antiquated, less classist, racist, sexist, and homophobic

ethical compass for unsuspecting researchers while traveling what can be “tricky ground” in participatory research (Smith, 2005).

In closing, we contend that settler colonialism is not yet adequately acknowledged and addressed within conversations about combating the retrenchment of the public sphere. To prompt the inclusion of analyses of settler colonialism in such discussions, we have used this chapter to map the deep relationships between various social science disciplines, settler colonialism, scientifically based research, and contemporary ethical regulations. As a whole, these relationships have worked to produce research as racialized scientism that maintains a different kind of status quo than is being defended in this edited volume: that of White supremacy and heteropatriarchy, and the erasure of Indigenous peoples.

A startling question remains (startling because it is not at all rhetorical, but asked in earnest), is it even possible for academe to reduce or deter its complicity in projects of settler colonialism? Novice researchers need more than one course or a computer-based training and certificate program to learn what they are inheriting in becoming researchers. Novice and expert researchers need a more complete understanding of what constitutes ethical considerations, beyond those basic parameters outlined by an IRB process. Much more needs to be done to reconcile social science disciplines with the settler colonial histories of their emergence. Reconciliation will never be total, as Sandy Grande (2004) observes, “No reparation, no penance, no atonement can ever erase the eternity of genocide” (p. 31). Is there anything rescuable in social science research? Can it be rescued in time to intervene upon the retrenchment and divestment in the public sphere? These questions hang unanswered, and necessarily so, as we do the difficult work of uncollapsing the ethics of social science research.

## NOTES

1. Black and Latina feminist epistemology.
2. American Education Research Association Code of Ethics and American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct
3. Many would argue that all land is Indigenous land.

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