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Abstract

A historical backdrop of oppression and exploitation has set the stage for distrust in research relationships with many indigenous communities. Although distrust poses a barrier to conducting research with indigenous communities, it also provides a distinct opportunity to examine factors related to trust development. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to understand the factors that relate to trust development in research relationships with indigenous communities in the United States. This qualitative descriptive study explored the experiences of 13 indigenous and non-indigenous researchers working with indigenous communities. Historical oppression, risk and reputation, power balancing across multiple levels, reciprocity and benevolence, and cross-cultural collaboration were emergent themes related to trust development with indigenous communities. Activities between researchers and indigenous communities occurred within a broader context of historical oppression and were on a continuum between trust-building and trust-breaking.

Trust Development in Research with Indigenous Communities in the United States

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A historical backdrop of oppression and exploitation has set the stage for distrust in research relationships with many indigenous communities. Although distrust poses a barrier to conducting research with indigenous communities, it also provides a distinct opportunity to examine factors related to trust development. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to understand the factors that relate to trust development in research relationships with indigenous communities in the United States. This qualitative descriptive study explored the experiences of 13 indigenous and non-indigenous researchers working with indigenous communities. Historical oppression, risk and reputation, power balancing across multiple levels, reciprocity and benevolence, and cross-cultural collaboration were emergent themes related to trust development with indigenous communities. Activities between researchers and indigenous communities occurred within a broader context of historical oppression and were on a continuum between trust-building and trust-breaking. Keywords: Qualitative Description, Indigenous Communities, Trust Development, Research, Cross-Cultural

A historical backdrop of harm and exploitation has set the stage for distrust in research relationships with many indigenous communities worldwide (Burnette, Sanders, Butcher, & Salois, 2011). Smith (1999) stated, "Research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (p. 1). Smith explained how colonial settlers collected information on indigenous communities, which was used to manipulate and control them. More presently, scholars reported that researchers have been opportunistic and have used research with indigenous communities to further their academic careers, while offering no tangible benefit to the indigenous communities being studied (Smith, 1999; Sobeck, Chapleski, & Fisher, 2003; Weaver, 1997).

The resultant, and understandable, mistrust of outsiders and research is widely documented, yet the terrain of research is changing as evidenced by the rise in community-based and culturally-sensitive research methodologies (Burnette et al., 2011; Christopher, Watts, McCormick, & Young, 2008; Holkup et al., 2009; Holkup, TrippReimer, Salois, & Weinert, 2004; Letiecq & Bailey, 2004; Norton & Manson, 1996; J. Poupart, Baker, & Horse, 2009; L. Poupart, 2003; Salois & Holkup, 2006). According to Burnette, Sanders, Butcher, and Rand (2014, p. 2), *culturally sensitive research* "incorporates into its design and implementation the historical context, and cultural experiences, norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a distinct ethnic or cultural group."

Despite distrust posing a barrier to conducting research with indigenous communities, it also provides a distinct opportunity to examine factors related to trust development. *Trust development* is the process of learning about the trustworthiness of others (Williams, 2001); it is based on prior interactions and experiences (Zhang & Han, 2007). Research on trust development with indigenous communities is needed, not only to extend

knowledge development about trust, but also by the ethical mandate to conduct culturally sensitive research that is not harmful to its participants. A failure to understand the intricacies of trust and research with historically subjugated populations is a failure to account for power dynamics that may perpetuate oppression. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) reported that the reproduction of the status quo of race, gender, and class is perpetuated by mainstream research practices.

In reviewing current research, no other qualitative descriptive studies investigating the factors related to trust development in research with indigenous communities were found. Because of the historical context of harm and exploitation and the resultant distrust (Burnette et al., 2011), understanding trust development in research relationships is integral in the formation of collaborative partnerships with indigenous communities. Despite some research examining the complexities of research with indigenous communities (Holkup et al., 2004; Salois & Holkup, 2006), there is an absence of research that incorporates theory to explain reasons for these complexities. Although theoretical research on trust is growing (Cook, Yamagishi, Cheshire, Cooper, Matsuda, & Masshima, 2005; Kollock, 1994), it hasn't been applied to the context of research with indigenous communities, an area where this trust (or its absence) is quite salient (Christopher et al., 2008). Therefore, the purpose of this article is to understand the factors that relate to trust development in research relationships with indigenous communities in the United States. This information can be used by researchers and research institutions to develop trust-building strategies to provide culturally sensitive and beneficial research for indigenous communities.

Literature Review

Multiple concepts are salient for trust development with indigenous communities, including historical oppression, trust, risk and reputation, power asymmetry, reciprocity and benevolence, and social distance. These multiple concepts that are prominent in existing research on trust development are contained within the conceptual framework portrayed in Figure 1.
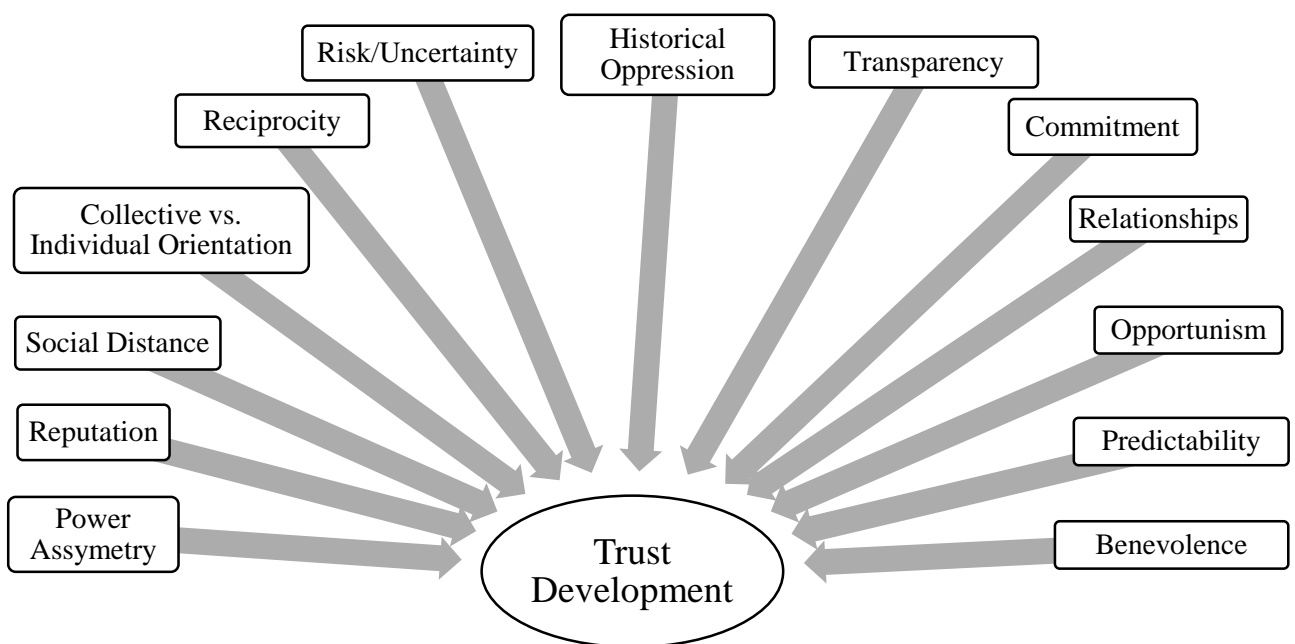
Figure 1.Multiple Factors Relating to Trust Development

Figure 1. Multiple concepts are relevant to trust development, however they have not been examined in relationship to research with indigenous communities. An inductive qualitative inquiry is instructive to delineate how these factors might relate to trust development with communities, such as indigenous communities that have been marginalized throughout history.

Historical Oppression

Despite the extensive diversity within and between the 566 indigenous tribes in the United States alone (Indian Health Service, 2011) as well as the approximately 400 non-federally recognized tribes (United States Government Accountability Office, 2012), *indigenous peoples* share in common a history of colonization (Smith, 1999), albeit at differing times and in distinct ways. Through *colonialism,* one culture invades the other with the goal of land and resource expansion; presuming superiority over and imposing marginalization onto another group are concomitant activities in this process (Chenault, 2011).

Colonial tactics have resulted in widespread historical oppression and *historical losses* to indigenous communities (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). *Historical oppression includes the chronic, pervasive, and intergenerational experiences of oppression, which have been imposed and normalized into the lives of those who have been oppressed* (Burnette, in press). Select historical losses include those associated with extensive warfare, land loss, forced relocation, assimilation, boarding school attendance, and government attempts to destroy language, spirituality, and culture (King, Smith, & Gracey, 2009; Norton & Manson, 1996; Salois & Holkup, 2006). Research has found empirical support for some indigenous peoples perceiving historical loss resulting from colonial tactics and genocide (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). Specifically, perceived historical loss mediated the effects of discrimination on alcohol abuse among indigenous women (Whitbeck, Xiaoujin, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004). Although discrimination was positively associated with alcohol abuse, the significance of this relationship disappeared when historical loss was entered into the relationship (Whitbeck, Xiaoujinm, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004). In other words, the relationship between discrimination and alcohol abuse may be explained by the underlying mechanism of historical loss.

Not only is research linked to colonialism and the resultant historical losses, there is a history of exploitation and harm particular to research with indigenous communities (Burnette et al., 2011; Norton & Manson, 1996). For example, an Inupiat community in Barrow, Alaska faced a stigmatizing report after completing a survey of alcohol problems (Norton & Manson, 1996); this triggered controversy, and the Standard and Poor (S & P) rating dropped considerably, which decreased the community's ability to fund community projects; this understandably blocked the indigenous community's openness to future research.

Trust

Harmful experiences, such as, that of the Inupiat, have led to many indigenous communities to be distrustful and uncertain about research. *Trust* is a concept that is prominent in interactions in which there is uncertainty about the beneficence and intentions of another (Kollock, 1994; Oskarsson, Svensson, & Öberg, 2009). This uncertainty may arise because the reputation of the other party is unknown or there is a power differential between the interacting parties. Indeed, Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe (1998) reported that the risk of exploitation and opportunism were inherent in social interactions. In these situations, there

was no regulatory entity to ensure the trustworthiness of the other, resulting in an intrinsic risk of opportunism by the other party (Elahee, Kirby, & Nasif, 2002). A trust-building situation has been defined as one in which two entities realize that they might benefit from interaction if the other turns out to be trustworthy (Cook et al., 2005). According to Oskarsson et al. (2009), people act trustworthily out of the desire to continue relationships with other people, and thus act for their best interest.

An example of a situation in which trust is salient would be indigenous community members interacting with a researcher whom is conducting research on a sensitive issue. In the given situation, community members must trust the researcher to conduct credible and culturally sensitive research, act in of the best interests for community members, and follow-up and report results in a fashion that is relevant, constructive, and does not cause harm to the community. Interacting with the researcher might include exposing community members to the risk of exploitation if information was taken out of context or analyzed in culturally insensitive way. Furthermore, results might be reported in a way that stigmatizes the community (Burnette et al., 2011). Opportunism may also arise as the researcher might further her/his own career while providing no tangible benefits for the community.

Risk, Collective Orientation, & Reputation

Because the intentions of the other person(s) are unknown, there is inherent risk in trust development (Cook et al., 2005). For example, for trust to develop, one party must risk being rejected or exploited by the other party. Moreover, researchers have found that collective versus individual orientations may affect risk-taking behaviors during trust development (Cook et al., 2005; Yamagishi et al., 1998). According to Cook et al. (2005) and Yamagishi et al. (1998), individually-oriented Americans took more risks in trust-building situations then collectively-oriented Japanese, who preferred to remain in stable commitments where the reputation of the other party was known. Yamagishi et al. (1998) delineated that collectively-oriented individuals tended to place group interests over individual interests, whereas individually-oriented persons placed precedence in individual interests over group interests; however, just as researchers tend to fall on a continuum of social distance between being "insiders" versus "outsiders" (Chavez, 2008), individuals likely fall along a continuum between individual and collective orientations. Persons from indigenous communities might have more tendencies toward collective orientations, yet likely ascribe to both individual and collective tendencies to some extent. Because the multidimensional nature of people cannot be simplified into dichotomous groups and there is much intergroup and intragroup diversity among peoples, differing orientations are not meant be deterministic.

Building relationships is one form of commitment formation that is essential to the development of trust, particularly among collectivist cultures (Elahee et al., 2002). Some researchers have found that collective societies tend to be relationship-oriented, relying on shared connections for trust development, such as mutual friendships (Burnette et al., 2011; Yuki, Maddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005). In contrast to individually-oriented people who rely on dispositional characteristics (professional credentials, intelligence etc.) as trust warranting signs, collectively-oriented people tend to rely upon contextual cues including: predictability, benevolent interactions, shared group membership, and social norms (Branzei, Vertinsky, & Camp II, 2007). Branzei et al. (2007) added that loyalty, empathy, and support are other important trust warranting qualities to collectively-oriented people. According to Branzei et al. (2007), the emergence of trust was accelerated when signs of trustworthiness were aligned with cultural expectations; however, mismatched signs could be considered rude and could prolong or inhibit trust development.

Because predictability was important to collectively-oriented individuals, such as some indigenous peoples, reputation may determine whether one takes a risk in trust development encounters. *Reputation* encompasses the qualities that are ascribed to people, which form the basis for predicting their future behavior (Kollock, 1994). Indeed, Kollock found reputation was crucial in uncertain situations. Buchan, Croson, and Dawes (2002) found that among collectively-oriented people, an informal threat of retaliation or loss of reputation could be enough to prompt reciprocation.

Power Asymmetry

Aforementioned tactics used in colonization, as well as a context of unequal power relationships between indigenous peoples and European Americans have inhibited trust development in research relationships (Burnette et al., 2011). Indeed, Foldy, Rivard, and Buckley (2009) described how ethnically diverse groups were often fraught with power differentials. Moreover, power differentials have been found to constrain trust development, and at extremes may prevent it altogether (Farrell, 2004). Therefore, the unequal power between dominant and marginalized groups might pose barriers to trust development.

According to Oskarsson et al. (2009), *power* is the cost people experience from withdrawing from a relationship; if people experience little cost from withdrawing (because of many alternative relationships, for example) they have high power; whereas, if people experience a high cost, they have low power. For example, if researchers were working on a pressing need for an indigenous community, and they withdrew from this research relationship, they may face little ramification. They may be readily able to find another community to work with. However, the indigenous community may be situated in a remote locale and have limited access to other researchers or resources for assistance. Because the researcher experiences a nominal cost from withdrawing their research relationship, the researchers might, in this context, have higher power than the indigenous community.

Farrell (2004) stated that some people are too powerful to be trusted to make credible commitments because there is no incentive to maintain commitments. Therefore, inequities in power might lead to inequities in trusting relationships. Farrell explained that trust was possible where power inequity was present as long as both parties valued continuation of the relationship, and therefore, acted in a trustworthy manner. Power asymmetries might also constrain trust development because the less powerful can misconstrue the worst possible intentions onto the more powerful party (Farrell, 2004). Thus, even if the more powerful party genuinely seeks to build a trustworthy relationship with the less powerful party, they might experience difficulty in building trust with the marginalized community. Farrell (2004) suggested that if the more powerful party genuinely desired cooperation, this party should voluntarily limit their power; this would demonstrate trustworthiness and reduce the risk of exploitation to the less powerful party.

Reciprocity and Benevolence

According to Salois and Holkup (2006), reciprocity was "a ubiquitous norm in Native American communities" (p. 510). Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson (2000) reported that reciprocal exchanges heightened trust and affective commitment. Not only was reciprocity an important value within many indigenous communities, researchers have found that reciprocal interactions resulted in higher trust, affective attachment, and commitment to partnerships (Molm et al., 2000). Furthermore, other researchers (Christopher et al., 2008; Mail, Conner, & Coner, 2006) recommended transparency, as well as open and constant communication for

work with indigenous communities, which have proven to foster reciprocity in social interactions (Buchan et al., 2002).

Zhang and Han (2007) explained that *reciprocation wariness*, similar to distrust, included suspicion about the motives of others, which made one less likely to offer help, accept help, or contribute to social interactions. Reciprocation wariness was thought to inhibit the development of trust (Zhang & Han, 2007). Because of historical interactions of exploitation and harm between indigenous and nonindigenous people in the United States, reciprocation wariness among some indigenous people might be elevated. This wariness might result in significant costs to indigenous communities over time. Zhang and Han (2007) found that participants with low reciprocation wariness attained greater gains in social interactions. Hardin (1993) stated that distrust resulted in foregone opportunity, which, over time, was a disadvantage to opportunities that might have arisen from trusting others. Because of power differentials, marginalized groups might be subject to repeated experiences of opportunism or exploitation. In the case of indigenous communities, for example, high wariness might be a realistic and protective response to the tangible harm they have endured in previous research relations. The cost arises, however, when negative research experiences prevent authentic trust formation and foregone opportunities.

Social Distance

Finally, trust development has been found to differ based on social distance between parties. *Social distance* is the relative similarity or difference to others based on gender, social class, race, sexual identity, and education. Buchan et al. (2002) found that cooperation in social interactions lessened as social distance increased. Elahee et al. (2002) and Buchan et al. (2002) reported that people tended to distrust out-group members; collectively-oriented Japanese felt more secure in established relationships and distrusted outsiders more than Americans (Buchan et al., 2002). Because social cues were interpreted more readily and people could better anticipate the expectations of in-group members, within culture trust developed more rapidly than between-culture trust (Branzei et al., 2007). Intense group ties and collectivism promoted stability and security but reduced the likelihood of developing trust and forming relationships outside of one's group (Yamagishi et al., 1998); security was exchanged for opportunity. Furthermore, collectively-oriented people tended to have more closed groups, which made it harder to gain entrée but made reciprocity more important (Branzei et al., 2007; Buchan et al., 2002).

In summary, concepts including historical oppression, risk and reputation, power asymmetry, reciprocity and benevolence, and social distance impact trust development. Whether indigenous group members tend toward collective versus individual orientations might affect the ways in which each of these factors relate to trust development. The historical oppression many indigenous peoples have experienced throughout colonization and in research constrains trust development. Experiences of harm in research might lead indigenous peoples to experience significant risk when participating in research. Moreover, the historical power asymmetry between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and researchers might constrain trust development. Reciprocity and benevolence are important, not only for trust development, but in many indigenous communities more generally. Finally, the social distance between researchers and indigenous communities can impede trust development as members of a group tend to more readily trust in-group members.

Gaps in Research

Despite research on trust and trust development being conducted in sociology (Farrell, 2004), management (Williams, 2001), and economics (Zak & Knack, 2001), it has yet to be extended to other social science disciplines, including social work, which is relevant given its focus on marginalized and oppressed populations. Moreover, researchers who examined trust across cultures have primarily focused on Japanese and Americans rather than indigenous communities in the United States (Cook et al., 2005; Yamagishi et al., 1998). Although many issues in this article are relevant for indigenous communities internationally, because of feasibility, the scope of this article is limited to research with indigenous communities in the United States.

This article expands existing literature on indigenous communities by incorporating the theoretical research on trust into its inquiry, thereby connecting two distinct bodies of research. Specifically, this article identifies factors related to trust development in research relationships with indigenous peoples in the United States, which can be used to form authentic and balanced cross-cultural collaborations. Therefore, the overarching research question for this study is: What factors relate to trust development in research with indigenous communities?

Methods

Reflexivity

As a researcher beginning to conduct research with indigenous communities, the first author was particularly interested in the experiences of researchers already doing this work. Knowing the complexities of conducting research with indigenous communities, as well as the harm that indigenous communities had experienced from engaging in research, the first author wanted to thoroughly prepare for this work. As a non-indigenous researcher, questions about the appropriateness of doing this work as an outsider were salient, and this question is explored in greater detail in other research (Burnette et al., 2014). Furthermore, in reviewing the research on trust development, it seemed that trust was highly relevant in the uncertain context of research with indigenous communities, yet this research had not been applied to this substantive area. Existing research on trust could explain many complexities that emerge in research with indigenous communities. Therefore, with the guidance and mentorship of a senior faculty co-author who has had extensive experience in qualitative methods, the research questions for this article were explored.

Research Design

Qualitative description differs from purely phenomenological or critical inquiries by relying more heavily on low-inference description of the data, rather than highly interpretive descriptions (Carspecken, 1996; Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative description can be especially useful in working with vulnerable populations and to understand cultural nuances, because it describes a phenomenon with the voices of participants themselves rather than through the highly abstracted interpretation of researchers (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005). It thus, allows research to directly translate results into practical implications, such as how factors related to trust development enhance or impair forming cross-cultural partnerships.

This qualitative descriptive study explored the experiences of 13 indigenous and non-indigenous researchers working with indigenous communities. Qualitative description is a method that enables the data to speak for itself and themes to emerge inductively (Neergaard,

Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2000; Sandelowski, 2000). The goal of qualitative description is not a thick description, like ethnographies, nor theory building, like grounded theory (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005), but rather, a comprehensive and detailed account of an experience in everyday language that participants and researchers would agree is accurate (Milne & Oberele, 2005; Sandelowski, 2000; Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova, & Harper, 2005). Sandelowski (1996) and Sullivan-Bolyai et al. (2005) have stated that this method enhanced the internal validity of studies because it sought answers to questions in participants' own words, and thus decreased competing explanations. Furthermore, because abstracted interpretation is limited, the straightforward suggestions of participants in qualitative description has been described as "a fine-tuned research design" resulting in knowledge that is translatable to real-world contexts, such trust-development in research relationships with indigenous communities (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005, p. 132).

Sandelowski (2000) explained that some qualitative descriptive studies might appropriately have influences from other methodologies. Data from this study was collected as part of a larger phenomenological study investigating the lived experiences of researchers working with indigenous communities (Burnette et al., 2011) During data collection, trust emerged as a highly relevant topic; thus, data were analyzed to explore this topic specifically.

Sample

Using maximum variation sampling, which has been suggested for qualitative descriptive studies (Neergaard et al., 2000; Sandelowski, 2000; Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005), Internet search terms including *research, mental health disparities, indigenous, Native American, American Indian, Aboriginal,* and *First Nations* revealed potential participants. These researchers had published on indigenous issues, which made them an ideal sample for this study: six were from social work, with others practicing in the disciplines of public health, nursing, counseling, psychology, health and human development, and political science. Participants tended to be highly invested in research with indigenous communities because of their own indigenous background or because their extensive years of experience and building partnerships with indigenous communities. Many researchers were involved in participatory and emancipatory research with indigenous communities and expressed deep respect for the communities with whom they worked (Burnette et al., 2011). Given their extensive experiences, they were aptly suited to provide insight on trust development with indigenous communities.

University IRB approval for this article was gained under the larger phenomenological study. Participants were recruited by obtaining their names from research publications related to indigenous research. Contact information was located on public university websites. Potential participants were emailed to determine their interest in study participation. To prevent coercion, researchers were sent the recruitment email only one time. If they did not reply to the initial email, they were not contacted again. Being researchers themselves, participants were well aware of ethical complexities, and they were provided letters of information with elements of consent and were free to stop participation at any time.

Although qualitative descriptive studies have a range of sample sizes, researchers have recommended *saturation,* or reaching redundancy in themes from the data (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). We reached saturation for this study after interviewing 11 participants and interviewed two more to be conservative. Therefore, 13 researchers participated in this study. Seven women and six men participated, as well as seven nonindigenous and six indigenous researchers from across the United States. Participants had between 15 and 37 years of research experience and ranged in age from 39 to 70.

Data Collection Procedures

The first author conducted six face-to-face and seven telephone interviews with participants depending on their location. Audio-recorded semi-structured interviews lasted an average of 47 minutes. Interview questions in qualitative descriptions are developed by focusing on poorly understood areas within a given context (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005). Following this guideline, the first author developed questions on trust development within the context of research with indigenous communities, which were approved by the second author. An example of a question from the open-ended semi-structured interview guide included: "If relevant, reflect on a time that trust has affected your research with Indigenous people?" The tentative language, "if relevant" was included to avoid bias by leading participants in a pre-determined way. Complete information about participants' experiences was collected by probing when necessary, creating an open and comfortable environment, and asking if participants had anything to add. Interview data were transcribed verbatim by the first author. During data analysis, we contacted all participants to do member checks, explaining that it would be inferred that content and coding were satisfactory to participants who did not respond to this invitation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative content analysis that is data-derived is recommended technique for qualitative descriptive studies (Milne & Oberele, 2005; Sandelowski, 2000; Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005). Data-derived qualitative content analysis generates codes from the data, rather than being pre-selected (Sandelowki, 2000). Hsieh and Shannon identified three forms of content analysis: conventional, directed (using pre-determined codes), or summative (using quantitative methods on qualitative data). For this study the *conventional approach*, an inductive method enabling codes to emerge directly from the data, was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Immersion in the data and examining themes without preconceived notions or categories are hallmarks of this approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Like qualitative description, qualitative content analysis adheres to the naturalistic paradigm (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis is used to reduce qualitative data into a manageable amount by identifying its core patterns and meanings (Patton, 2002) by systematically coding and identifying themes of data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Using the guidelines outlined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), the first author completed the following steps including

1. transcribed interviews verbatim, listened and read through transcriptions multiple times to understand them holistically,
2. reviewed data word by word, highlighted exact words, and made notes about initial impressions,
3. derived almost 300 initial codes, or *meaning units* (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004),
4. sorted initial codes into overarching categories, which were checked and validated by the second author,
5. completed member checks (seven participants responded to do member checks; no disagreements developed with overarching clusters. Four participants clarified or amended their interview responses), and
6. identified exemplars directly from the raw data to represent each cluster.

During the process of member checks, each participant received an individualized document with overarching themes, as well as subthemes with quotes to support each theme. For example, under the theme of *risk and reputation*, a participant received the following quote to support the sub-theme of reputation and why it was important in research:

> I think they [indigenous community members] trust me and they know me. Some people went to school with, uh high school. And so I've known some of these people a long time. You know, and I think they . . . respect me. Because, you know I went on and I got my—a degree; and they see that—I'm trying to help the community—so they're trying to help me.

The second author independently reviewed the first author's coding and interpretation after each step of the analysis process. After this review, co-authors discussed emergent themes and reached consensus in interpretation. This minimized researcher bias by providing the opportunity for peer-debriefing and for multiple perspectives to discuss the analysis and interpretation of the data. Likewise, another colleague, who was part of the overarching study, was available for peer-debriefing and was presented the meaning units, which were organized by themes for review.

Strategies for Establishing Scientific Rigor

Using Milne and Oberele's (2005) guidelines to enhance rigor in qualitative descriptive studies, we ensured authenticity, credibility, criticality, and integrity. *Authenticity,* relates to remaining true to the purpose of the research, whereas *credibility,* relates to the trustworthiness of results (Milne & Oberele, 2005). *Criticality,* or strategic decision-making throughout the research process, was crucial for study integrity (Milne & Oberele, 2005). Milne and Oberele (2005) provide tangible strategies to ensure authenticity and credibility. These strategies were applied to this research in the following ways:

- By using a semi-structured and flexible interview guide, we made sure participants were free to speak.
- We ensured participants' voices were heard by probing for depth and clarity.
- We ensured that participants' perceptions were precisely represented by conducting member checks and transcribing verbatim.
- We ensured that coding emerged from the data through the choice of conventional content analysis, an inductive analysis method.

In addition to the strategies already listed, we promoted authenticity by reflecting on potential bias and engaged peer review to ensure study integrity (Milne & Oberele, 2005). We minimized potential researcher effect on participants' statements by selecting participants who were experienced and established in their field; this gave them the confidence and authority to speak from their experience without being unduly influenced.

Results

Aforementioned qualitative content analysis unveiled numerous themes relevant to trust development. Indeed, trust was a salient overarching meta-theme that emerged among all the clusters. In other words, participants explicitly mentioned "trust" in all of the clusters. One nonindigenous researcher validated the centrality of trust to research relationships,

stating, "Trust, is— it's exactly the issue to . . . grapple with." The following themes, including *historical oppression, risk and reputation, power balancing across multiple levels, reciprocity and benevolence, and cross-cultural collaboration,* reflect the factors related to trust which were highlighted by researchers regarding their work with indigenous communities.

Historical Oppression

Researchers remarked upon the importance of the context of historical oppression, and how that related to work with indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples worldwide have diverse histories, but their histories are similar in that they have all endured colonization in varied forms and have experienced concomitant historical oppression from this colonization. Researchers validated the significant problems that have arisen from colonization and the need for research to help ameliorate these problems. As one nonindigenous researcher put it, "Colonizers have used the same strategy, not just in America." He explained three strategies that colonizing nations have used throughout the world, stating, "missionaries, merchants, and military." He went on to describe, "a history of dispossession and exploitation," explaining the numerous losses that resulted from widespread population loss, including, "the loss of culture, the loss of practices, loss of belief systems." He added, "There's a real direct relationship between cultural loss and social status, and social problems. So if you can prevent culture loss, than you can prevent social problems."

A different indigenous researcher described the link among experiencing historical losses, grief, and social problems. She explained, "Unless you deal with that grief, then it can manifest in symptoms of later substance abuse, intergenerational family violence—things like that." One nonindigenous researcher spoke about the disparities indigenous peoples experienced, such as, "post-traumatic stress disorder, to suicide rates, to alcohol and drug issues, to domestic violence." He added, "There is just so much work that needs to be done."

Not only had exploitation occurred in colonization, it also occurred in research relationships. One researcher described the exploitation she experienced as an indigenous community member, stating, "It was harmful when the statistics came out in regard to tribal youth on our reservation. It was just so biased." It was clear to see how similar experiences may compromise future trust development with indigenous community members.

Risk and Reputation

The historical context of exploitation resulted in a perceived risk for an indigenous person who engaged with an outside researcher. Indeed, an indigenous researcher commented on how it could be a great risk for indigenous persons to bring in an outsider for research; the trustworthiness of this outside person could have substantial ramifications for all involved. This researcher spoke about introducing an outsider into her community: "Because you're [an outside researcher] coming to the reservation, I'm with you—I'm giving you credibility." This could lead to what she called, "credibility stress," explaining, "If you [the outside researcher] do something wrong, they [the indigenous peoples] are not gonna look at you. They're gonna say, 'Look at that woman, who brought those folks in here, and they're exploiting us.'" A nonindigenous researcher expanded on how this phenomenon was explained to her by an indigenous colleague: "It is my [the indigenous insider's] credibility. It's credibility on my family . . . for my children, my grandchildren, my . . . great grandchildren. . . . If I bring in someone who is not trustworthy—it is a mark on me."

Knowing someone's reputation reduced the uncertainty and risk inherent encounters between researchers and indigenous communities. An indigenous researcher explained the significant amount of time it took to build a positive reputation for conducting beneficial research. She explained how she, as stated, "let [the indigenous community] check me out, see what my skills were, see what I could do. . . . After a couple of years, I was approached to help." A nonindigenous researcher explained, "It's word of mouth in terms of who does good research, who does honest research," adding, "Reputation is critical." A nonindigenous researcher remarked, "We've been able to develop a good reputation . . . it's so important to hook up with the right people in the community because they're going to provide in roads to the community."

Power Balancing Across Multiple Levels

Working with indigenous communities often meant power balancing across multiple levels, including interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels. For instance, one way of reducing uncertainty was for researchers to voluntarily constrain their power differential. An indigenous researcher thought that nonindigenous members needed to be "willing to put themselves in a vulnerable position." Nonindigenous researchers elaborated on being willing to take a supportive role when doing research with indigenous communities.

One nonindigenous researcher remarked on the importance of exhibiting cultural humility when she said, "We look for the power differentials and try to dismantle them." Researchers spoke about purposeful actions they took to limit their power and reduce the risk of exploitation of indigenous communities. One nonindigenous researcher remarked, "I don't need to be in charge," and noted how it was important to "learn to take a backseat." An indigenous researcher added, "if people. . . treat them [indigenous person] as equals, to do . . . a memorandum of agreement so that there's mutuality . . . That's a big factor." This memorandum established important factors for the research study, such as who owns data and designating a cultural reader to review work before being published.

Power balancing at the organizational level was also an important consideration. Although individual researchers related strategies to shift power differentials between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples, this was not always true for research institutions. One indigenous researcher expressed the inequity of typical research dynamics: "The University . . . gets all the money, and the people [they] are researching are living in abject poverty." She added, "Tribal colleges can begin applying for researcher dollars, because there's beginning to be more and more people who . . . are qualified to do those things." Researchers also emphasized conducting research from a tribal perspective to aid in trust-building and to make it culturally sensitive and, therefore, culturally relevant. When something is done from a tribal perspective, an indigenous researcher remarked, "People will come. You will get your hundred percent attendance. But when there are programs being imposed . . . by the federal government, people are distrustful."

Not only could researchers limit their own power and organizational power to balance asymmetries, another indigenous researcher remarked on the important roles for nonindigenous people to increase power and advocate for the rights of indigenous people at a societal level, stating, "Because it's not just a few Natives that, you know can be written off . . . It is people that are more a part of mainstream society, people that are likely to be viewed as constituents and voters. And people that, um, that people in power are more used to listening to." This researcher added,

> We're never going to have huge numbers. . . . But if you have non-Native
> people saying this is a concern anyway, you can't just do business as usual . . .

in that respect, non-Native voices are often heard more than Native voices. . . .
Whether we're talking research, or policy, or education, or whatever the area
is . . . when informed, non-Native people can say, "Hey these are real issues
we can't ignore," then, people in power—the government funders, university
administrators--will begin to take notice.

Reciprocity and Benevolence

Historical loss resulted in added complexities in working with indigenous
communities, and researchers commented on ways to appropriately engage in research with
indigenous communities. Demonstrating reciprocity and benevolence were two such ways.
Study participants repeatedly highlighted the importance of reciprocity in research relations
with indigenous communities stating, "I needed to have something to give back -- something
concrete."   Given a history where many indigenous communities experienced having
information "taken from them" with little benefit, researchers commented on the importance
of, "the strong value of reciprocity . . . to always offer something concrete, tangible--that the
community can have as well as collecting the data." In this case, after discussion with the
indigenous community, whom suggested the researchers conducted a training workshop for
the indigenous community, the researchers provided this workshop. Another nonindigenous
researcher validated this as a way of "giving back to the community."

Analogous to the trust literature (Branzei et al., 2007), researchers commented how
demonstrating benevolence was essential to trust-building. They spoke about the importance
of respect for people, a sense of goodwill, genuineness, and authenticity in trust-building with
indigenous peoples. As one nonindigenous researcher put it, "It takes a certain personality to
work well with others." Another nonindigenous added, "You know, so much of it is about
your intent."   Still, another researcher emphasized, "[a] willingness to talk things out."

One way researchers demonstrated benevolence was to be transparent and commit
long-term to working with specific indigenous communities. Participants identified
transparency and commitment as integral components of reciprocity and benevolence. A
nonindigenous researcher remarked, "We were completely transparent. You [the indigenous
peoples] tell us what the issue is, and let's work together on it." He added, "I think the reason
why we've made progress so quickly . . . [is] we went down and said, 'We don't know what
the issue is . . . so, we're here to listen to you'." An indigenous researcher described a helpful
institution, stating, "The whole premise of the center is that it's collaborative and
empowerment and information sharing and transparency." Other researchers mentioned the
importance of a long-term commitment to indigenous communities. One indigenous
researcher commented, "Research for indigenous people like myself isn't short term."

Cross-Cultural Collaboration

The benefits of cross-cultural collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous
researchers were highlighted in working with indigenous communities. These collaborations
might lessen the social distance between researchers and indigenous communities because
indigenous researchers could educate non-indigenous researchers about proper tribal protocol
and understanding. Likewise, indigenous researchers might benefit from the alternative
perspective and complementary skills of non-indigenous researchers.

Indeed, indigenous and nonindigenous researchers highlighted collaboration that was
mutually beneficial and complementary. One nonindigenous researcher mentioned, "We have
a mutual understanding—mutual respect." As an indigenous researcher added, "I couldn't do
the work that I do . . . if I didn't have nonmembers . . . working with me."   Another

indigenous researcher described the complementary roles indigenous and nonindigenous researchers could have for each other, stating, "There were things [nonindigenous researchers] didn't catch, and they couldn't catch, because they didn't know what was going on. . . . I was kind of, like, helping them out, and they were helping me out too." He added, "There were questions I wouldn't be asking . . . questions that I have never thought about."

Despite it being advantageous to have cross-cultural collaboration, this researcher was criticized by some peers for collaborating with nonindigenous members. Another indigenous researcher commented on "the anti-Caucasian sentiment." This researcher though this attitude was a barrier to knowledge and cultural development. The anti-Caucasian sentiment stemmed from the view that solely indigenous researchers should do research with indigenous peoples. For example, Swisher (1996) proposed that if nonindigenous peoples believe in the empowerment of indigenous peoples, "they must now demonstrate this belief by stepping aside" (p. 85).

Discussion

Because trust was present in each major cluster, it seemed that activities between researchers and indigenous communities were on a continuum between trust-building and trust breaking. For example, exhibiting transparency and beneficence fostered trust development, whereas conducting researcher-driven work without the input of tribe impaired trust development. Trust development was contingent upon researchers' offsetting challenges posed by historical oppression and exploitation and providing evidence about their trustworthiness. For example, the effect of exploitation in history and research itself had compromised the baseline trust that many indigenous peoples had for researchers. Power balancing, reciprocity, transparency, commitment, cross cultural collaboration, and benevolent interactions aided in building researchers' positive reputation and concomitant trust development.

Trust research and findings from this article mutually informed each other. Parallel to existing research (Smith, 1999), participants emphasized how the history of colonization was linked to both social problems among indigenous communities as well as thwarted research relationships (Sobeck et al., 2003; Weaver, 1997). As Yuki et al. (2005) reported, collectively-oriented societies tend to be relationship oriented, relying on mutual connections with people (Yuki et al., 2005). Study participants also highlighted the importance of reciprocity (Molm et al., 2000) and benevolence (Branzei et al., 2007) to trust-building in research relationships. As previous research emphasized (Christopher et al., 2008; Mail et al., 2006), participants identified transparency and commitment as important factors for reciprocity and trust development with indigenous communities. Reputation was found to be critical to trust development in both existing research and the results of this study (Kollock, 1994).

Participants validated the significant amount of risk and uncertainty for indigenous community members whom engaged in research with outsiders. Indigenous researchers faced considerable personal and familial ramifications when they brought in an outsider to do research. As suggested by Farrell (2004), many researchers voluntarily constrained their power and potential to exploit by taking a backseat and agreeing to a memorandum of understanding. Participants went a step further than was identified in the trust research by highlighting the importance of not only constraining their own power, but also advocating for the increased power of indigenous peoples. This was a strategy that researchers could use their increased power in a constructive way for indigenous communities.

According to Buchan et al. (2002), trust-building took longer with collectively-oriented people. This was consistent with findings from this research. This additional time it

took to build trust might be related to potentially higher reciprocation wariness among indigenous peoples from negative research experiences or from misaligned trust-warranting signs communicated by researchers, which has been found to prolong trust development (Branzei et al., 2007). Likewise, Elahee et al. (2002) highlighted communication that involved more face to face encounters (versus distant communication methods) fostered trust development. This direct communication style may be more effective but may also take longer than writing emails, for instance.

Researchers did many things to develop trust and balance power relations with indigenous communities. These strategies included: preparing memoranda of understanding, being transparent about intentions and resources, building trust through a positive reputation, listening to indigenous communities, and fostering self-determination to solve problems. Certain qualities of researchers aided in collaboration, including authenticity, intent, cultural humility, and exhibiting reciprocity. Similarly, researchers in the field (Christopher et al., 2008; Weaver, 1997) have commented on power imbalances between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples; they have suggested for researchers to demonstrate a positive intent, a long-term commitment, and facilitate self-determination among indigenous communities.

Researchers reported that institutional fairness mattered in trust development (Buchan et al., 2002; Oskarsson et al., 2009). Zak and Knack (2001) found that cheating was more likely when social distance was greater, when formal institutions were weaker, and when there were ineffective social sanctions for cheating. Because many researchers and indigenous community members may differ in terms of social class, educational level, or ethnic background, the social distance between them may be significant. This social distance and the inherent risk that indigenous community members experience by engaging in research indicate that there may be good reasons to develop cross-cultural collaborations as well as institutions to monitor research relationships with indigenous communities. Although IRB boards monitor research projects in general, individualized institutions that can focus on risk reduction and collaboration between indigenous communities and researchers might foster trustworthiness by all parties.

Strengths

The parallels between findings in this article and existing trust research indicate that conducting research with indigenous communities is a particularly fruitful topic for the examination of trust. Trust development is likely relevant in the formation of any partnership where there tends to be unequal power relations; therefore it is likely salient when engaging with marginalized populations other than indigenous people. Participants in this study naturally and unknowingly employed many of strategies to build trust with indigenous communities. Trust-related concepts are context specific, and must be evaluated as such. By analyzing the trust literature in the context of research with indigenous communities, we discovered that many research strategies were on a continuum between trust-building and trust breaking.

Limitations

Many concepts, such as, risk and vulnerability, reciprocity, transparency, exploitation, and the importance of reputation and relationships were prominent both in the results of this article and in the broader trust literature. Likewise, people are complex and multidimensional beings with connections based, not only on ethnic background, but based on sexual identity, gender, class, and religious and political views; therefore, people were grouped as either "indigenous" or "non-indigenous" for the purpose of this article, realizing that categories are

fluid and complex with people simultaneously embodying multiple identities. An additional limitation was that although researchers participated from a variety of disciplines and geographic regions, they were limited to the contiguous and noncontiguous United States. Research realities in other geographic regions may vary. Because this is a qualitative study, results are not generalizable, although they might be transferrable to other contexts. For instance, the trust development factors that emerged in this research are likely relevant in trust development with other historically marginalized groups and may possibly be useful for importing into those contexts.

Implications & Future Research

Although the research experiences of researchers are important to understand, the research experiences of indigenous community members are essential to also understand. Future research investigating their experiences would be a worthwhile inquiry. From this literature, practical implications, such as forming relations with indigenous community members to develop common relational networks and being transparent, might hasten trust development. Emphasizing personal characteristics, such as education or status, in contrast, might inhibit trust development. Many other strategies to develop trust are contained within this article and are a promising area for future research.

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