

# Indigenous Data Matters: Finding Data for First Nations, Inuk and Metis Peoples in Canada

Alexandra Cooper, Queen's University  
Kevin Manuel, Toronto Metropolitan University

IASSIST 2023





# Land Acknowledgment

We recognize and acknowledge that the site of this conference stands on the Indigenous territory known as “Lenapehoking,” the traditional homelands of the Lenape, also called Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Indians. These are the people who, during the 1680s, negotiated with William Penn to facilitate the founding of the colony of Pennsylvania. Their descendants today include the Delaware Tribe and Delaware Nation of Oklahoma; the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, Ramapough Lenape, and Powhatan Renape of New Jersey; and the Munsee Delaware of Ontario.

[Look up information about the traditional lands you live on](#)

# About the presenters

Alexandra Cooper is the Data Service Coordinator at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, providing data and research data management support to researchers and students for about 20 years. She has a BA in Religion and Culture and Canadian History.



Kevin Manuel is the Data Librarian at [Toronto Metropolitan University](#) and provides support for data discovery and retrieval. He is part of the Geospatial, Map and Data Centre team in the Library.



They have both been part of a working group with Ontario Data Community to develop an open access finding guide so researchers can locate microdata on racialized and Indigenous populations in Canada.

# Overview



## Historical Context

- Colonization
- Residential schools
- Truth and Reconciliation

## Data on Racialized Populations Guide

### Finding the data

- Current Census and sovereignty
- Not all Indigenous filled out census
- FNIGC
- OCAP
- UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People
- CARE principles
- IASSIST Guide to Finding Data about Racism and Ethnic Bias

Due to the nature of some of the historical context, certain terminology and images may be problematic.

# Colonialism in context

- Colonialism is the political, economic, and social domination of one society
- The colonized are marginalized, disrupted, or eliminated by the colonizer
- Reinforces possession and ideologies of cultural superiority of the colonizer (Vivanco, 2015).



Traditional Indigenous Territories, KAIROS

# Colonialism in Canada context

- Pre-colonial indigenous population estimated up to 500,000
- 1500s European contact
- 1600s colonization by France and Britain
- 1759 New France became part of British North America
- 1867 Confederation of Canada

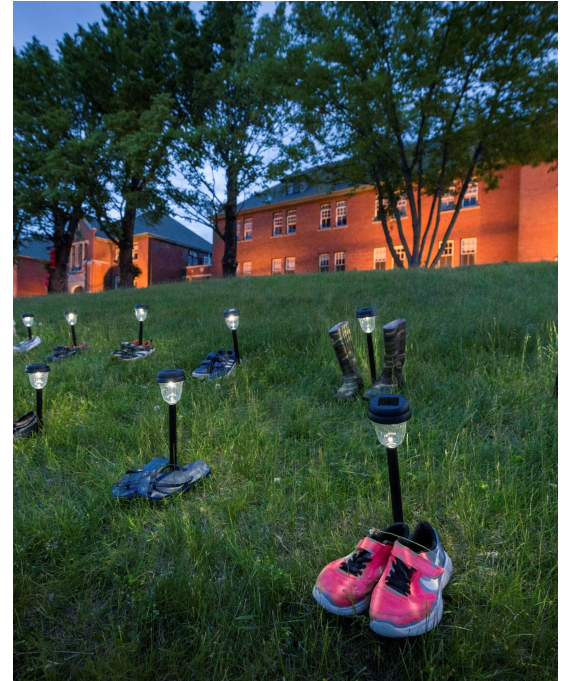


# Residential Schools

- Government-sponsored schools that were established to assimilate Indigenous children into the Euro-Canadian culture
- Run by various Christian Churches
- Established in the 1800s and operated until 1996
- Residential schools disrupted lives and communities, causing loss of language and cultural traditions among Indigenous peoples

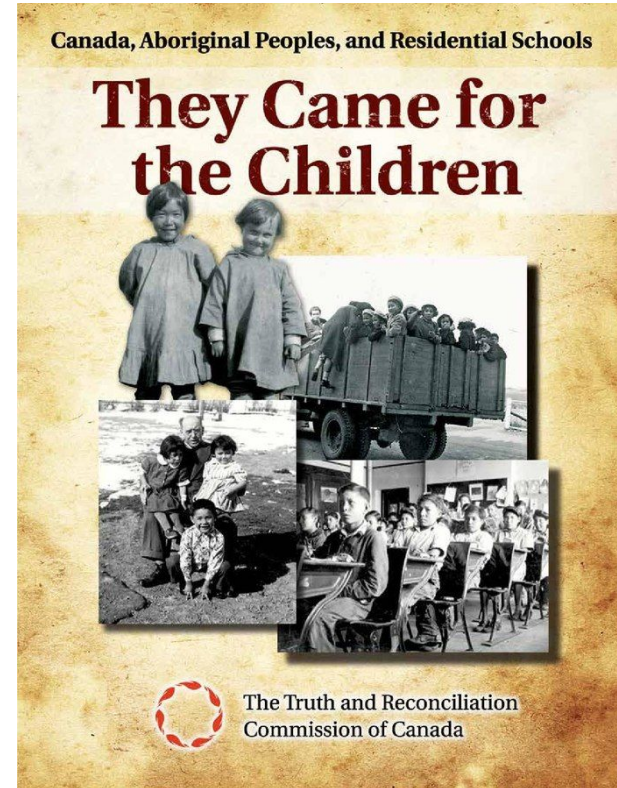
*It's unclear precisely how residential schools were enumerated over their long history.*

Statistics Canada



# Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- [TRC](#) ran between 2006 and 2015
- Cost - \$72 million
- Heard from 6,500 witnesses across Canada
- Held 7 national events to
  - Engage and educate Canadians about the history and legacy of the residential schools system
  - Share and honour the experiences of former students and their families
- Resulted in 94 Calls to Action meant to aid the healing process in two ways:
  - acknowledging the full, horrifying history of the residential schools system
  - creating systems to prevent these abuses from ever happening again in the future.

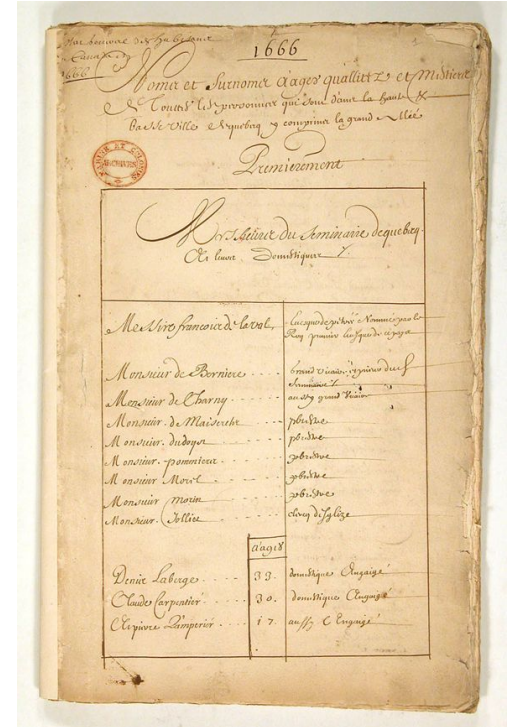






# History of the Census in Canada

- First Census was in 1665 in New France but Indigenous peoples were not included
- Then various Censuses based in different British North America colonies but what was collected varied by each Census and colony
- First Census of Canada was in 1871 and early Censuses asked about racial or ethnic origin and place of birth
- Conducted every 10 years until 1951
- Census of Population conducted every 5 years since 1951
- Most recent Census is 2021





# History of the Census in Canada

Throughout its history, the Census has continued to evolve and change reflecting Canada's political and social transformations. However, the Census can also be perceived as an instrument of colonialism by deliberately excluding, categorizing and diluting the existence of Indigenous and racialized peoples.

The legacy of colonialism has created mistrust between Indigenous communities and the various levels of government in Canada, especially at the federal level which administers its relations with Indigenous peoples through the Indian Act and other pieces of legislation.

# Indigenous Peoples of Canada

- Nearly 5% of the Canadian population identifies as Indigenous
- Terminology has changed
  - Up to 1981 - Native Indian
  - 1986-2016 - Aboriginal
  - 2021 - Indigenous
- Some Indigenous communities do not participate in the Census as enumeration is not permitted
  - These communities collect their own data

**Statistics on Indigenous peoples**



STATISTICS ON  
**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**Note**  
The term 'Aboriginal' or 'Indigenous' used on the Statistics Canada website refers to individuals identifying themselves as 'First Nations people, Métis or Inuit'.

Follow: [f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [d](#) [t](#) [v](#) [s](#)  
Sign up to [My StatCan](#) to get updates in real-time.

**Key indicators**

Canada

<b>Aboriginal population, 2016</b> (2016 Census of Population)	1,673,785 42.5 ↑ (period-to-period change)
<b>First Nations single identity</b> (2016 Census of Population)	977,230 39.3 ↑ (period-to-period change)
<b>Métis single identity</b> (2016 Census of Population)	587,545 51.2 ↑ (period-to-period change)
<b>Inuit single identity</b> (2016 Census of Population)	65,025 29.1 ↑ (period-to-period change)

**Features**



Inuit participation in the wage and land-based economies in Inuit Nunangat

Item 3 of 4 Pause

**Find data on**

-  **Crime and victimization**  
Includes information on adult criminal courts, corrections, crime
-  **Demographic characteristics and Indigenous groups**  
Includes demographic, social and
-  **Education, learning and skills**  
Education and skills related to the Indigenous population in Canada.

## Data on Racialized and Indigenous Populations in Canada

[FEATURED COLLECTIONS > DATA ON RACIALIZED AND IND...](#)

[About this guide](#)

[Terminology](#)

[Suggested Data Sources](#)

[Census of Canada Resources](#)

[Guide on Ethnic, Racial, and Indigenous variables in the Census of Canada, 1870-2021](#)

[Census of Canada: Comparison of Indigenous and Race-Based Variables since the 1870s](#)

[Who is counted? Ethno-racial and indigenous identities in the Census of Canada, 1871-2021.](#)

[Tips on how to search for and access data](#)

[About Us](#)

### About this guide

This guide consists of a curated list of datasets that include ethnicity and race variables which can be used to facilitate anti-racism research in Canada. Although not comprehensive, the intention is to provide a starting point for researchers investigating topics about anti-racism and the impact of racism.

### Terminology

Due to the nature of some of the data sources in this guide, terminology may include language that is problematic and/or offensive to researchers. Certain vocabulary used to refer to racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups is specific to the time period when the data were collected.

Language

[Français](#)

In This Guide

### About this guide

Data on Indigenous peoples  
Sociological and education sources  
Policing and criminology sources  
Provincial, regional and municipal sources  
Other national sources  
Federal government sources

Search

Submit



# Racialized Data Guide

[Data on Racialized Populations Guide, Scholars Portal, Ontario Council of University Libraries](#)

In 2020 and 2021 four library data professionals from different Ontario Universities worked together to create a data guide about racialized and Indigenous peoples, in part as an action of Truth and Reconciliation

Alexandra Cooper - Queen's University

Moira Davidson - Lakehead University

Kevin Manuel - Toronto Metropolitan University

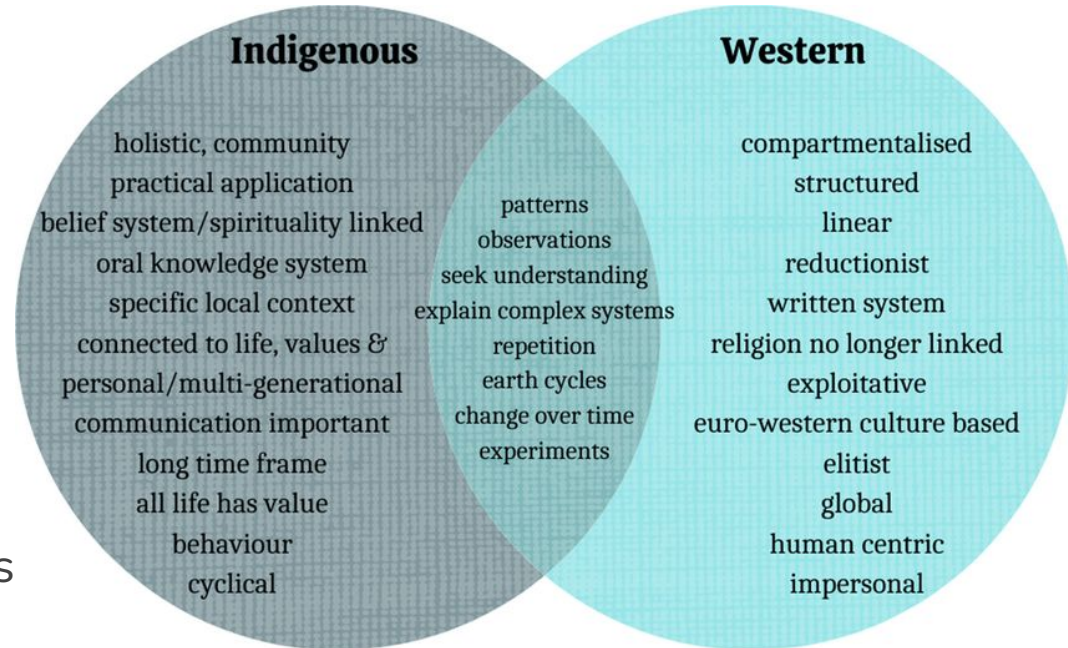
Rosa Orlandini - York University

# Reflections

Inevitably our perspectives come from a Western viewpoint.

Our education and professions are based within colonial institutions.

Nevertheless, it is essential to take time to reflect on this and understand there are other worldviews on how information is collected and shared.



Source: [ResearchGate](#)



# **Data Sources from Indigenous Peoples**







# First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)

- An independent, apolitical, technical non-profit organization
- Wide range of work including research, training, capacity building, knowledge translation
- First Nations principles of OCAP®
- 1996 - Assembly of First Nations for National Steering Committee
  - Goal - create a new national First Nations health survey in response to the Federal Government's 1994 decision to exclude First Nations people living on-reserve from three major longitudinal surveys
- 2010 - incorporated non-profit

<https://fnigc.ca/dataonline/>





# FNIGC Surveys

Surveys conducted on-reserve and in Northern First Nations communities:

- First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS)
- First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES)
- First Nations Labour and Employment Development (FNLED)
- First Nations Community Survey (FNCS) (conducted in collaboration with regional partners)



# First Nations Principles of OCAP



Ownership

Control

Access

Possession

Assert that First Nations have control over data collection processes, and that they own and control how this information can be used.

Video -

<https://youtu.be/y32aUFVfCM0>



# OCAP Principles

## Ownership

- Relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge, data, and information;
- Community or group owns information collectively in the same way that an individual owns his or her personal information.

## Control

- Affirms control of all research and information management processes that impact First Nations, their communities, and representative bodies;
- Includes all stages of a research project from start to finish;
- Extends to the control of resources, review processes, the planning process, management of the information, etc.

## Access

- First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where it is held;
- First Nations' communities and organizations manage and make decisions regarding access and archiving of their collective information.

## Possession

- Physical control of data (stewardship)
- Mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected.



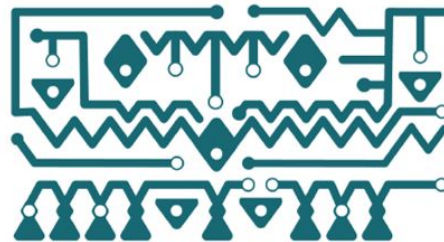
# UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

- [Declaration](#) adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007
- Emphasizes the  
*“rights of indigenous peoples to live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their self-determined development, in keeping with their own needs and aspirations.”*
- Canada was a latecomer in supporting the Declaration
  - 2021 - [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) comes into force
  - 2016 - [announces full support of declaration](#)
  - 2010 - [announced support of declaration](#)

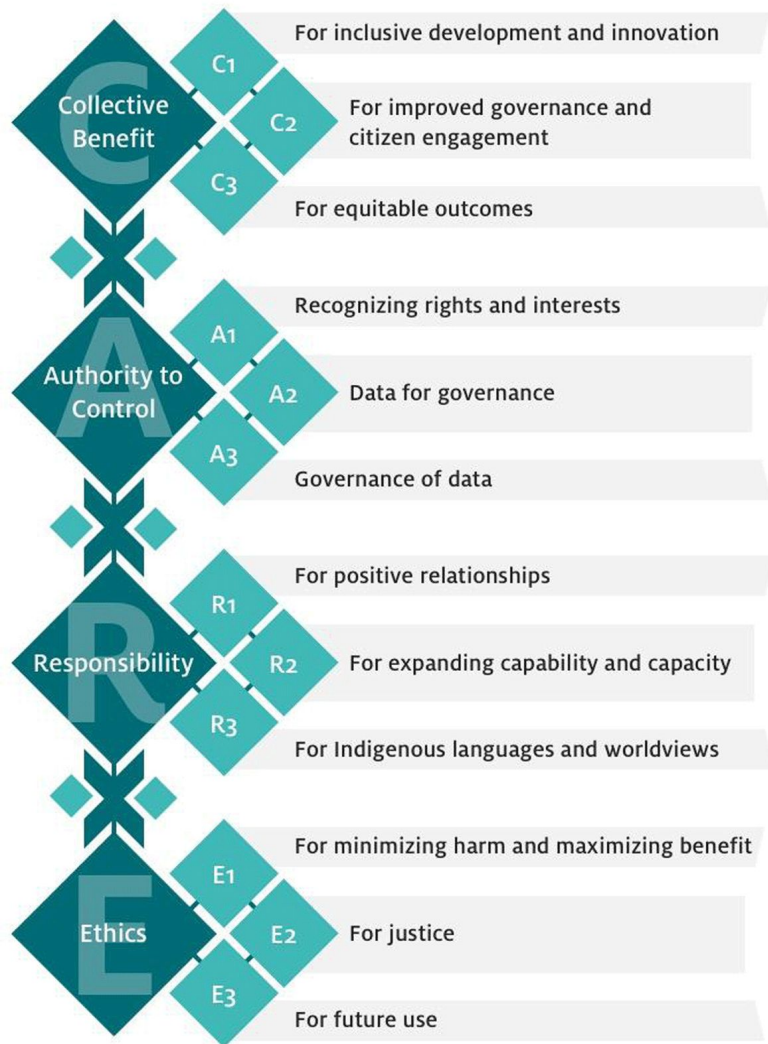


# CARE Principles

- Developed by the [Global Indigenous Data Alliance](#) (GIDA)
- Drawn on
  - [First Nations Principles of OCAP](#)® - Ownership, Control, Access and Possession;
  - Indigenous Data Sovereignty networks in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and the United States
- Reflect the crucial role of data in advancing innovation, governance and self-determination among Indigenous Peoples
- Created to complement the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)



**CARE Principles  
for Indigenous  
Data Governance**



# CARE Principles

## Collective Benefit

- Data ecosystems designed and function so Indigenous Peoples derive benefit from data.

## Authority to Control

- Indigenous Peoples rights, interests, and authority to control their data must be respected.

## Responsibility

- Show how data are used to support Indigenous Peoples self-determination and collective benefit

## Ethics

- Primary concern in research data lifecycle and data ecosystem is the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples.

[Overview of the CARE Principles](#)

[CO-DATA The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#)



# IASSIST Anti-Racism Resources

[IASSIST Anti-Racism Resources](#)

[Guide to Finding Data about Racism and Ethnic Bias](#)

Alex and Kevin both contributed to the creation of the guide along with other IASSIST volunteers (Panel C2 on Thursday)

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  - Examples
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  - Search organization and think tank index and directories
  - Search with think tank search engines and reviews
  - Examples of projects and programs from educational institutions and organizations
  - Examples of Google Search for online projects from organizations and academia



# Supporting Research with Indigenous Data

Consider historical context

How have variable names changed over time

Sovereignty and ownership of Indigenous Data

Emphasis on the critical thinking, not just listing/finding sources

Encourage hiring of Indigenous library staff and scholars





**Thanks for attending!**

**Questions/Discussion**

IASSIST Quarterly Dec 2022: [Who is counted? Ethno-racial and indigenous identities in the Census of Canada, 1871-2021](#)