Indigenous Nationhood, Sovereignty and Linked Data: A Wikidata Case Study Examination of the Métis Nation.[1]

By Dr. Stacy Allison-Cassin

The discussion in this chapter is informed by the work I undertook on the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Indigenous Ontology (FNMIIO) as a member of the Joint Working Group on Subject Headings and Classification of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations Indigenous Matters Committee and through the National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance (NIKLA.) The FNMIIO is a project to create a vocabulary of respectful terminology to be used in cataloguing and knowledge organization in relation to Indigenous peoples. The initial focus of the project was on the names of First Nations, Métis, Inuit communities. Much of the work undertaken on collecting the names of First Nations and Inuit communities proceeded in a straightforward manner. We relied on listings of First Nations reserves, band council listings and Inuit hamlets and settlements. However, it was not possible to follow the same route to the documentation of Métis communities, even though the Métis are a recognized Aboriginal people within Canada. The Métis Nation has no reserve lands, or contemporary easily identifiable settlements or hamlets outside of a small number of formal settlements in Alberta and, because of this, the Métis communities could not be defined in the same way as other Indigenous groups

in the FNMIIO.[2] The ongoing challenges around conceptualizing the Métis People draw their complexity from trying to fit into colonial epistemological systems.

While discussions around Métis identity have received increased attention within legal and Indigenous studies in Canada, there has been little discussion in Library and Information Studies (LIS) literature, critical data studies, or within digital humanities and related literature of Métis people. The exclusion of Métis concerns from within LIS and other literature echoes wider political and cultural exclusions of the Métis people, the relatively recent recognition of Métis rights within Canada, and the recent rise of Métis studies.[3]

Situating and Self-Location

The challenges felt within this problem of "fit" echoes my own challenges with my own identity. As a white-passing person of Indigenous and Settler ancestry I have struggled with understanding my Indigenous identity my whole life. In a situation that is common amongst many people, my grandmother strongly prohibited any discussion of our background, and I grew up confused about how to understand this part of myself. The confusion I have and continue to feel is further complicated by growing up in Winnipeg, Manitoba—an area strongly connected to the birth of the Métis Nation, but with more recent kinship connections to the Georgian Bay "half breed" community in Ontario—a community that has been contested as belonging to the

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[2] Métis communities exist and there are lands that have been designated as homelands, but as will be discussed later in the chapter, these communities are historical, overlap with First Nations communities, and are challenging to define.

[3] Jennifer Adese and Chris Andersen, eds., *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies* (Vancouver ; UBC Press, 2021): Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt, eds., *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021).

Métis Nation.[4] Later in life, after talking to family, researching my background, and becoming a

Citizen of Métis Nation of Ontario, I have come to connect with my culture and kin more fully.

However, I also more fully understand the frictions and fractures within communities, the

struggles for recognition as well as the resiliency and the joys of connection. My involvement in

my own community, including within community governance, has led me to think more deeply

about what we mean when we say "community," the weakness of the standard conceptual

structures surrounding naming and Nations, and a frequent conflation of "community" with a

"land" or "ethnicity" that tends to be overly simplistic in most knowledge organization systems.

My inability to move forward in a way that felt appropriate within the FNMIIO is

connected to both my own self-location as a Citizen of the Métis Nation and as a researcher and

practitioner within metadata work. The need to figure out how to accomplish the practical work

of developing terminology in an ethical and responsible way formed the motivational basis for

the conceptual and practical explorations in this chapter. This chapter presents a critical analysis

and discussion of ethical tensions in the documentation of Indigenous identity firstly through a

discussion of concepts of identity, nationhood, and peoplehood, particularly in relation to the

Métis Nation, and secondly through a case study of the description of the Métis Nation within

the open, structured data knowledge base Wikidata. The scope of the discussion is centered

primarily in the country now known as Canada and is nation-specific; however, the larger ethical

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[4] Brandson, Ashley. "MNC Passes a Motion Declaring the Official Homeland of the Métis People." *APTN News*, November 30, 2018. https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/mnc-passes-a-motion-declaring-the-official-homeland-of-the-metis-people/.
; Métis Nation of Ontario, "MNO Sets the Record Straight about Its History within the Métis Nation and the Métis National Council," Métis Nation of Ontario, November 26, 2020, https://www.metisnation.org/thefacts/; Ward, Dennis. "Métis National Council Moving Forward Says MNO President." *APTN News*, March 22, 2022. https://www.aptnnews.ca/facetoface/metis-national-council-moving-forward-after-years-of-dysfunction-says-mno-president/.

issues can be related to other situations. Naming is vitally interconnected to nationhood—to liberation and self-determination—and implementations do not necessarily benefit Indigenous communities. Labels alone without locating such terms into a larger framework of Indigenous liberation do not do the necessary work to support such ambitions and community responsibilities.

Respectful and Ethical Practice in Relation to Indigenous Naming

A key challenge for anti-colonial and ethical naming within linked data systems and repositories is ensuring the expression of situatedness and context of appropriate respectful names. Exposing problematic issues of terminology and naming within library and other formal descriptive practices and vocabulary systems is not new: library practitioners such as Sandy Berman have been pointing to inaccurate and harmful subject headings for well over fifty years and researchers such as Adler, Turner and Olsen have made clear the history, power and problematic nature of description and vocabularies, especially in relation to systems of oppression, exclusion, and control.[5] Recent initiatives, such as OCLC's *Reimagine Descriptive Workflows* report, name racism and colonialism as historic and ongoing elements of descriptive practice, but it is an open question as to whether any evidence of real action toward reparations and systemic change within practice will result.[6] Those responsible for creating and supporting

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[5] Melissa Adler, *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017); Sanford Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* (McFarland & Company Incorporated, 1993); Hope A. Olson, *The Power to Name: Locating the Limits of Subject Representation in Libraries*. Kluwer Academic, 2002; Hannah Turner, *Cataloguing Culture: Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation* (Vancouver, BC ; UBC Press, 2020).

[6] Frick, Rachel L., and Merrilee Proffitt. "Reimagine Descriptive Workflows: A Community-Informed Agenda for Reparative and Inclusive Descriptive Practice." OCLC, June 6, 2022. https://www.oclc.org/research/publications/2022/reimagine-descriptive-workflows.html.

linked data ontologies, datastores, and systems have an obligation to ensure a move beyond "correct" terminology to fully align linked data practices with anti-colonial or justice-focused work.

Naming not only denotes belonging and identity in relation to community and kin, but also is connected to Indigenous peoples' political aspirations, self-determination, and liberation. However, deep historic and ongoing problems with the terminology used for Indigenous peoples, cultures, and territories are present within mainstream library and interrelated vocabulary systems.[7] The myriad problems extend from misnaming and colonial renaming to inappropriate placement within hierarchies, to using terminology inappropriate to the territory of their adoption. Turner has pointed to problematic issues of colonial misnaming as tangled up with colonial collecting practices, mundane bureaucracies, and a scientific practice wrapped up with universal and Western approaches to knowledge construction present in the founding of the Smithsonian.[8] For Indigenous people, the use of incorrect names is related to a lack of political recognition that is intimately tied to settler colonialism and ongoing moves toward erasure.

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[7] Alissa Cherry and Keshav Mukunda, "A Case Study in Indigenous Classification: Revisiting and Reviving the Brian Deer Scheme," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53, no. 5–6 (July 4, 2015): 548–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1008717; Ann M. Doyle, Kimberley Lawson, and Sarah Dupont, "Indigenization of Knowledge Organization at the Xwi7xwa Library," *Journal of Library and Information Studies* 13, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 107–34, https://doi.org/10.6182/jlis.2015.13(2).107; Sandra Littletree and Cheryl A. Metoyer, "Knowledge Organization from an Indigenous Perspective: The Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus of American Indian Terminology Project," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53, no. 5–6 (July 4, 2015): 640–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1010113; Heather Moulaison Sandy and Jenny Bossaller, "Providing Cognitively Just Subject Access to Indigenous Knowledge through Knowledge Organization Systems," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (April 3, 2017): 129–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2017.1281858.
[8] Turner, *Cataloguing culture: legacies of colonialism in museum documentation.*

Nuances of Indigenous Identity

Those working within knowledge organization systems, such as linked data repositories, must be aware of the layered realities of Indigenous identity categories, relationships, kinship connections, and categories. As stated above, ethical naming must include the encoding of appropriate contextual relationships. Furthermore, awareness of both contemporary and historical issues in identity are vital to ensuring both appropriate use of identity categories and related support for Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. In Canada, contemporary debates surrounding Indigenous identity have come to the fore with several cases of Indigenous identity fraud. Winona Wheeler, an Associate Professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, states Indigenous identity fraud "occurs when non-Indigenous people pose and represent themselves as Indigenous."[9] Indigenous identity fraud or "raceshifting" is self-indigenization practiced by settler individuals—typically for financial gain.[10] Recent and historic cases of fraud are prevalent enough to be a consideration of ethical practice.

Indigenous Identity, Erasure and Control

Those responsible for, or engaged with, the development or deployment of linked data projects with a relationship to Indigenous people must be aware that ethical and appropriate determination of identity is complex, but also deeply important. D'Arcy Vermette, in defining Métis identity, centers definitions of Métis identity in a legal framework, noting categories such

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[9] Winona Wheeler, "Indigenous Identity Fraud in the Academy," *Vox*, November 15, 2021, https://usaskfaculty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Indigenous-Identity-Fraud-in-the-Academy.pdf.

[10] Darryl Leroux, *Distorted Descent: White Claims to Indigenous Identity* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2019).

as "Indian" are used by the settler state to the advantage of colonial needs to control resource extraction and exert control over land.[11] While the increase in attention on Indigenous research, digital projects, collections, and other initiatives are positive, the flip side is that the rapid development of such activity has put pressure on systems not created for Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, such initiatives may be curated by those lacking in deep knowledge of Indigenous identity and Nationhood. Data structures should be attentive to the ways the nations, communities, and identity categories are structured, regulated, and how they are not. In their *Protocol for Working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples*, Lawford and Coburn suggest "Every individual has a right to self-identify based on culture, identity, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or other facet of their life. This right is adjoined with responsibility and accountability to all Indigenous Peoples and is relational, ethical, and contextual."[12] Furthermore, and vital to this conversation, "Existing paradigms, approaches, frameworks, legal definitions, etc. for confirming or validating identity are fraught with colonial underpinnings, racism, and discriminations. On their own, these approaches may be relationally unethical and contribute to race-shifting, secrecy, and the state's ongoing legal erasure of our Peoples."[13] Considering the relationship between colonization, nation-states, and the ongoing regulation of identity is vital to creating an ethical and just linked data environment for data related to Indigenous peoples.

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[11] D'Arcy Vermette, "Colonial Ideologies: The Denial of Métis Political Identity in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 131–55.

[12] Karen Lawford and Veldon Coburn, "Research, Ethnic Fraud, and the Academy: A Protocol for Working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples" (Yellowhead Institute, August 20, 2019), https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/08/20/research-ethnic-fraud-and-the-academy-a-protocol-for-working-with-indigenous-communities-and-peoples/.

[13] Karen Lawford and Veldon Coburn, "Research, Ethnic Fraud, and the Academy: A Protocol for Working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples" (Yellowhead Institute, August 20, 2019), https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/08/20/research-ethnic-fraud-and-the-academy-a-protocol-for-working-with-indigenous-communities-and-peoples/.

Colonial Entanglements and Identity Categories

Littletree, Belarde-Lewis and Duarte document the "colonial entanglements" of knowledge organization, finding that colonialism is tied to statecraft and to the denial of "Indigenous peoples' existence, experiences, and rights to representation."[14] In their discussion of relationality and Indigenous knowledge organization practices, Littletree, Belarde-Lewis, and Duarte invoke Hobbes and Hegel to point to the intersections between law, citizen, and the state and conceptualization of citizens and Indigenous peoples within the North American context. Furthermore, the authors contextualize Hegel's connection between law, philosophy, ethics, and the connection to the "tree of knowledge" as part of the disciplining of knowledge within the settler state.[15] The connection between law and knowledge extends to the disciplining of categories of citizenship and identity within the settler state and an attentiveness to colonialism requires recognition of the role of nation states within the determination of identity and knowledge. These conceptualizations are deeply embedded within Western societal structures, going unnoticed by most settler citizens, but for Indigenous peoples, these structures are more visible and felt due to the regulation of Indigenous identity by the state. For example, the nation state of Canada provides, or doesn't provide, access to services and education depending on one's identity.

Grammond points to the fact that "For Indigenous peoples, identity issues are particularly fraught. This is so because their identity has often been defined by non-Indigenous settler

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[14] Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Duarte, "Centering Relationality: A Conceptual Model to Advance Indigenous Knowledge Organization Practices," *Knowledge* 47, no. 5 (2020): 410–26, https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2020-5-410: 411

[15] Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Duarte, "Centering Relationality: A Conceptual Model to Advance Indigenous Knowledge Organization Practices," *Knowledge* 47, no. 5 (2020): 410–26, https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2020-5-410: 411.

society, for purposes associated with the colonial project. Indeed, categories such as "Indian." "Indigenous," or "Aboriginal" did not exist before the Europeans came to the Americas."[16] Identity categorization is linked to legal concerns and to ensure vocabulary related to Indigenous identity is ethical, it cannot be divorced from the collective. Ethical naming asserts: "political projects cannot be divorced from identity. Whether we are talking about a country, a nation, or a smaller political entity, collective action assumes a definition of the collective that is acting."[17] However, as Grammond goes on to assert, the challenge of definitions of identity cannot be only legal and only be imposed by the outside: "legal definitions are typically framed in terms of binary either-or classifications, whereas identity is often a matter of degree or of multiple allegiances."[18] Thus, for Indigenous naming to be ethical, it cannot simply use a label to recognize the names peoples call themselves, but should understand, support, and advance, including through technological techniques, the political rights of Indigenous peoples.

Colonial legal regimes categorize Indigenous people for the purposes of control, and the experiences of colonization–both historical and present day–are different depending on one's situation and experiences. Just as universal categories and systems are problematic and at their heart unethical, so are systems which foreground pan-Indigeneity, document Indigenous identity on hardened, unmoving categories and labels, and refuse nuance and contextual depth. Montenegro points to the problems between universal systems of knowledge organization and

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[16] Grammond, "Métis Identity Captured by Law: Struggles over Use of the Category Métis in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021): 15.

[17] Grammond, "Métis Identity Captured by Law: Struggles over Use of the Category Métis in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*: 15-16.

[18] Grammond, "Métis Identity Captured by Law: Struggles over Use of the Category Métis in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021): 16.

Indigenous knowledge: "Indigenous collections are often managed using major national languages such as English, and according to western and universalist documentation and classification systems, ignoring and disavowing Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and local language ideologies. Furthermore, western classification and documentation practices typically assimilate living Indigenous cultures into existing schemes designed to treat collections as fragmented and static materials preserving "frozen" knowledge."[19] With roots of control of collections in colonial government bureaucracy there is an intimate and insidious link between the development of standards of control and efficiency and the methods by which Indigenous people continue to be treated within numerous cultural heritage collections.[20]

Terminology for the Representation of Self-determination & Rights

Terminology used within knowledge organization systems must be mindful of the political implications of word usage. Self-determination for Indigenous peoples remains under threat or non-existent in many jurisdictions within Canada. Those working and creating linked data must understand and work toward the deep connections between naming and political power. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) calls for the recognition of self-determination of Indigenous peoples in all areas of Indigenous experience.[21] For example, in his discussion of terminology in *Elements of Indigenous Style*,

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[19] María Montenegro, "Subverting the Universality of Metadata Standards: The TK Labels as a Tool to Promote Indigenous Data Sovereignty," *Journal of Documentation* 75, no. 4 (January 1, 2019): 731–49, https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-08-2018-0124: 734.

[20] María Montenegro, "Subverting the Universality of Metadata Standards: The TK Labels as a Tool to Promote Indigenous Data Sovereignty," *Journal of Documentation* 75, no. 4 (January 1, 2019): 731–49, https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-08-2018-0124: Turner, *Cataloguing culture: legacies of colonialism in museum documentation.*

[21] United Nations General Assembly, "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (United Nations, October 2, 2007).

Younging lists the term *band* as an inappropriate or offensive term in relation to Indigenous people.[22] He compares the definition of *band* to Oxford English Dictionary definitions for terms for *nation*, *people*, and *society*. The crux of his argument is the word *band* refers to a "confederation of persons" but without "political or national structure" or reference to territorial connections that is found with terms like *nation*, *people*, and *society*. Younging states that, while *band* is used by the government of Canada, it should not be used in general terms because it lacks a connection to concepts of nation, culture, and politics.[23] For those seeking to create linked data systems, consideration of the term "band" in relation to Indigenous nations should be approached with the knowledge of these issues. Younging further unpacks how terminology used in writing needs to uphold Indigenous sovereignty. The same practice must extend to selection and development of terminology within metadata and vocabulary work as a whole. Ethical practice means giving full consideration and knowledge of the impacts and situatedness of terminology and thoughtful ways it is leveraged and deployed.

Terminology and the Métis Nation

The Métis Nation presents a particular challenge in relation to categorization and documentation of nation, people, and society. Métis scholar Adam Gaudry states: "The use of the term Métis is complex and contentious and has different historical and contemporary meanings."[24] The implications of an important identity term like Métis in the context of Indigenous data and knowledge organization practice in Canada are cause for concern and

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[22] Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*, Indigenous Collection (Edmonton, Alberta: Brush Education, 2018): 53.

[23] Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*: 53.

[24] Adam Gaudry, "Métis," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, January 7, 2009), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis.

caution. While the Métis are not a new people in relation to the history of Canada, the means to define and demarcate and discipline Métis identity as understood through Canadian law, education, and culture are not as entrenched as those for First Nations and Inuit communities. This lack of widespread understanding and consciousness is a result of deliberate exclusion of the Métis. Recognition of the Métis as one of the three groups of Aboriginal peoples by the government of Canada is very recent, and recognition of Métis rights even more so. While this history and context is unique to the Métis, it demonstrates the vital need to understand context to support Indigenous self-determination within ethical practice and linked data. To understand this context requires a further examination of the history of Métis rights and the term usage.

Métis is a French term that means "mixed." It is important to note that while *métis* means mixed, the Métis Nation is not a people defined only as mixed race. While the bounds and definitions of the Métis Nation may be disputed and complex, there are common understandings of what is not the definition of Métis identity—and that is a definition which promulgates the connection between Métis and mixed descent. The 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People defines Métis: "Métis' means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation. Many Canadians have mixed Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal ancestry, but that does not make them Métis or even Aboriginal … What distinguishes Métis people from everyone else is that they associate themselves with a culture that is distinctly Métis."[25] On the term métis, Gaudry notes: "The term is used to describe communities of mixed European and Indigenous descent across Canada, and a specific community of people — defined as the Métis Nation —

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[25] Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" (Ottawa, Canada, October 4, 2016):

which originated largely in Western Canada and emerged as a political force in the 19th century, radiating outwards from the Red River Settlement."[26] The Métis Nation emerged through a process of ethnogenesis, a process whereby a group over time develops its own distinct, ethnic boundaries.[27] Frequently the usage of the capital "M" indicates the Métis Nation, while the usage of a lower case "m" indicates "any community of European-Indigenous ancestry."[28] However, this distinction is not common or well-known enough to depend on.

While Indigenous scholars and Métis experts may wish to use such nuances to keep boundaries of terminology firm, it is not a dependable means of distinction and, in the context of knowledge organization systems, such distinctions might be rendered invisible or unusable in any meaningful way. The use of the term "mixed" for the Métis people has had implications for problematic understandings of definitions of identity, problems that have been caught up in mainstream systems of documentation—including linked data repositories. It is vital to understand the Métis Nation as a distinct nation. The challenge of ethical deployment of linked data means pragmatism must be constantly evaluated against ethical frameworks to assist with aims in doing work that is just.

Métis scholar and lawyer Grammond makes it clear that "…Canadian law treats the Métis Nation quite differently from other Indigenous groups. The origins of that distinctiveness may be traced back to the nineteenth century."[29] As settlement moved westward, the system and

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[26] Adam Gaudry, "Métis," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, January 7, 2009), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis

[27] Adam Gaudry, "Métis," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

[28] Adam Gaudry, "Métis," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

[29] Grammond, "Métis Identity Captured by Law: Struggles over Use of the Category Métis in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021): 19.

treaties and later the formalized system of control of Indigenous people through the Indian Act was a means of asserting and controlling who was, and who was not, Indigenous.[30] Métis people were by and large, excluded from treaty processes and the Indian Act, though at the same time recognized as not white settlers. The Red River Resistance, the Battle of Batoche, and the execution of Métis leader and founder of Manitoba, Louis Riel by the Canadian government in 1885 for treason are examples of events that situated the Métis people as resistant to mainstream settler colonial society.[31] The lack of easy fit extends to a lack of easy terminology. Vermette notes the use of "Indian" is different in Canadian law at different times, making matters confused even in areas where it should seem to be clear. He uses natural resources extraction agreements (NRTAs) as an example of this. He finds in the 1930s the agreements do not include Métis people and yet, in the Daniels decision of 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada determined Métis people were included as part of a broader definition of "Indian." Vermette critiques the imprecise nature and "flexibility" of legal definitions of Métis as being "divested from reality" and the ways the "court has constructed Métisness will undermine Métis political aspirations and legal recognition in other areas of law (treaties)."[32] Using identity terms such as Métis within linked

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[30] The Indian Act became law in Canada in 1876. It is "is the primary law the federal government uses to administer Indian status, local First Nations governments and the management of reserve land. It also outlines governmental obligations to First Nations peoples." The Indian Act has been used to determine who has status and an "Indian" in Canada. Those with status are entitled to certain rights, however, the Act was also used as the basis for the Residential School System and until very recently women who married a non-Status man lost her Status. Its purpose was to assimilate and disappear First Nations people in Canada. Métis and Inuit people are not subject to the Indian Act and therefore do not have "Status." Zach Parrott, "Indian Act," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, February 7, 2006).

[31] There is not enough space within this chapter to relate the whole history of the Métis Nation. Many excellent sources exist, including Jean Teillet's *The North-West Is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Métis Nation* (Patrick Crean Editions, 2019).

[32] D'Arcy Vermette, "Colonial Ideologies: The Denial of Métis Political Identity in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021): 143.

data systems requires careful consideration of how such a term is derived, defined, and its relation to other terms.

Despite the problems outlined by Vermette, legal definitions may provide vital aid in clarifying and fixing terms within a colonial system that requires textual documentation for validity. Grammond writes: "legal definitions of Indigenous identity may also serve as a tool of justice. They may ensure fairness in the allocation of resources aimed at compensating the wrongs of the past. They may help mainstream a group's distinctiveness. They may also contribute to the functioning of the political institutions of an Indigenous community or nation."[33] By extension, legal terms may also assist those in information organizations to understand terminology relating to Indigenous peoplehood and the connected expression of sovereignty. Métis peoples were not recognized as Aboriginal by the Government of Canada until the passing of Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act in 1982.[34] A further significant legal gain was the 2003 Canadian Supreme Court case R. v. Powley, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 207, 2003 SCC 43.[35] The case, which centered around harvesting rights in the Sault Ste. Marie area of Ontario clarified ambiguous language in Section 35 regarding Métis identity and rights. The resulting definition has been dubbed the "Powley test" and is widely used to determine a claim of Métis identity, which in part states one must: "self-identify as Métis, have an ancestral

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[33] Grammond, "Métis Identity Captured by Law: Struggles over Use of the Category Métis in Canadian Law," in *Bead by Bead - Constitutional Rights and Métis Community*, ed. Yvonne Boyer, Larry Chartrand, and Tony Belcourt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021): 17.

[34] The 1982 Canadian Constitution Act was a landmark moment in the history of the Canadian state as it marked full independence from the United Kingdom and allowed Canada to make changes to its constitution without requiring permission from the United Kingdom. Andrew McIntosh and Stephen Azzi, "Constitution Act, 1982," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, February 6, 2012), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/constitution-act-1982.

[35] Supreme Court of Canada, "Supreme Court of Canada - SCC Case Information - Search," January 1, 2001, https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/2076/index.do.

connection to a historic Métis community and be accepted by the modern Métis community."[36] Furthermore, it is vital to understand the legal implications and sets of rights related to Indigenous identity that are substantially different from other kinds of ethnicity or racialized terms often used as identity markers. Understanding and being mindful of the location and legal frameworks of Indigenous identities matters in relation to supporting Indigenous sovereignty and political aspirations within linked data systems. Where the vocabularies and terminologies we use sit in relation to such categories matters.

Métis Citizenship, Membership and Rights

In Canada there are several Métis organizations that have established Nation-to-Nation relationships with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada through the Canada-Métis National Accord signed in 2007.[37] The accord was signed by five provincial Métis affiliate organizations: the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Métis Nation of Ontario, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta, and Métis Nation of British Columbia. These provincial associations are located within the geographic territories considered to be connected to historic communities of the Métis Nation. Each association maintains a membership list and members (also known as Citizens) must meet criteria based on genealogical / kinship ties. Adese and Anderson find these associations "position the descendants of the Métis Nation as being represented" by the Métis National Council (p. 11) and its provincial affiliates.[38] Anderson and Adese acknowledge

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[36] Métis Nation of Ontario, "Establishing a Métis Right," Métis Nation of Ontario, accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.metisnation.org/registry/the-powley-case/establishing-a-metis-right-the-powley-test/.; Heather Conn, "Powley Case," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, December 3, 2018), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/powley-case.

[37] "Canada-Metis Nation Accord," Prime Minister of Canada, April 20, 2017, https://pm.gc.ca/en/canada-metis-nation-accord.

[38] Adese, Jennifer, and Chris Andersen. "Introduction: A New Era of Métis Studies Scholarship." In *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021.

representation by the MNC and the provincial bodies as being imperfect, however these entities, "born from the sustained effort of the Métis" should be acknowledged as having an ability to determine membership following the Powley test and other legal frameworks and engage in self-determination.[39] Members, also referred to as Citizens, must submit documentation of ancestry that must demonstrate a link to established kinship and lineage. While there are other groups claiming to be representatives of Métis people, typically in geographic areas east of Ontario, none have so far been successful in testing the rights of their members in court, and they are generally unrecognized by the associations listed here and by the provincial and national governments of Canada.[40] The complexities of ongoing work of establishing the Métis Nation for establishing citizenship, self-determination, and work such as writing constitutions are important because this context is typically absent in knowledge organization systems.

In cataloguing, metadata, linked data, and other descriptive work, there is a lack of connection between terms designating peoplehood and the advancement and upholding of principles and rights as expressed through these documents. While Indigenous data sovereignty is an area of concern and attention, the focus tends to be on Indigenous cultural expressions, Indigenous knowledge, and data related to Indigenous peoples such as health or genomic data. Digital collection and linked data work tends to be focused on considerations for respectful and responsible care and protocols for holding and accessing data and digital objects. However, this focus leaves out or is less concerned with some of the structural issues related to sovereignty and naming.

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[39] Adese, Jennifer, and Chris Andersen. "Introduction: A New Era of Métis Studies Scholarship." In *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021.

[40] Rhiannon Johnson, "Exploring Identity: Who Are the Métis and What Are Their Rights?," *CBC*, April 28, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/metis-identity-history-rights-explainer-1.5098585.

What is Wikidata?

Wikidata "is a free and open knowledge base that can be read and edited by both humans and machines" and is a free crowdsourced, multilingual, structured data repository.[41] Wikidata is a "sister project" to Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects such as Wikimedia Commons. While Wikipedia is supported by the not-for-profit Wikimedia Foundation, Wikidata is hosted and supported by Wikimedia Deutschland, an "arm's length" German branch of the Foundation. Wikidata was initially developed and launched in October 2012 as a means of supporting and connecting the thousands of Wikipedia articles in different languages and as a means of supporting some integration and deployment of structured data on Wikipedia.[42] Wikidata allows information well-supported by structured data, such as birth dates, to be updated in one place and have that data updated across Wikipedia pages. Unlike many linked data repositories, Wikidata is crowdsourced and with data structures determined through community consensus on an ongoing basis. According to a study comparing several major linked data repositories, Wikidata had the "the highest degree of schema completeness, population completeness and timeliness frequency" as well as "the most diverse in having labels in multiple languages"[43] However, Wikidata has grown well beyond its scope as an internally Wiki-focused tool to become a linked

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[41] "Wikidata," accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Main_Page.

[42] "Wikidata," accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Main_Page.

[43] Timothy Kanke, "Knowledge Curation Work in Wikidata WikiProject Discussions," *Library Hi Tech* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 64–79, https://doi.org/10.1108/LHT-04-2019-0087.

data hub interlinking content from many data stores because the platform allows for the addition of URIs. As of this writing Wikidata contains 98,617,349 data items.[44]

Because Wikidata's structured data allows for both easy integration into other repositories and the strength of its ability to support URIs, Wikidata is increasingly becoming part of library linked data workflows for numerous projects. Such projects include the LD4L's support and development of the Wikidata Affinity group, and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Wikidata pilot program. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) white paper working group, of which I was a member, made numerous recommendations for the integration of Wikidata into library workflows, including recommending the use of library authority data: "These data are the most readily usable and linkable as linked data on the open web. Implementing authority data in the form of uniform resource identifiers (URIs) connected to collections is a powerful way to link to related collections through Wikidata, as well as opening the possibility of enriching library bibliographic systems with external data sources."[45] One of the main library applications for Wikidata is as a linking hub for library authority data. The platform's ease of use and ontological flexibility give it an advantage over other linked data tools, making it a low-barrier tool for linked data work, potentially opening opportunities for lower resourced organizations to participate in linked data initiatives.[46] Many projects and researchers, including myself, felt Wikidata would hold great opportunity for handling metadata in a more equitable way. However, while Wikidata may yet provide opportunities to create and

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[44] "Wikidata:Statistics - Wikidata," accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Statistics.

[45] ARL Task Force on Wikimedia and Linked Open, "ARL White Paper on Wikidata: Opportunities and Recommendations," Report (Association of Research Libraries, April 18, 2019): 11.

[46] Stacy Allison-Cassin and Dan Scott, "Wikidata: A Platform for Your Library's Linked Open Data," *The Code4Lib Journal*, no. 40 (May 4, 2018), https://journal.code4lib.org/articles/13424.

engage in linked data work that supports the aspirations of Indigenous peoples, it currently does not.

Wikidata and Indigenous Peoples

Wikidata's deep structural and ontological ties to Wikipedia cause problems with the ways Indigenous knowledge, peoples, localities, and relations are encoded within the platform. Wikipedia is an encyclopedia where individuals are helping to create "a world in which everyone can freely share in the sum of all knowledge."[47] The Wikipedia mission statement and the puzzle globe icon points to a presumption that with encyclopedic impulse, all the world can and should be documented and made available—the globe of knowledge must be filled in.[48] Within the aims of the Wikipedia project, no knowledge in the world is to be kept secret or excluded from the sum. Many of the members of the Wikipedia community are focused on "filling in" missing areas, as well as "collecting" knowledge rather in the way of 18th century encyclopedists, and this attitude and framework has been transferred to the structure and community culture of Wikidata. This universalist and universalizing approach to knowledge is at odds with ethical practice that recognizes not all knowledge is available for the taking.

Systematically subduing and documenting the world's knowledge, even when done in the pursuit of equity, cannot be separated from colonialism. The community ethos of Wikipedia, and

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[47] "Wikimedia Foundation," Wikimedia Foundation, accessed June 18, 2022, https://wikimediafoundation.org/.
[48] "Wikipedia Logo," in *Wikipedia*, June 13, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia_logo&oldid=1092861848.

by extension Wikidata, tends toward the "gathering of all knowledge."[49] This same push toward completion and openness and "collection," while less obvious in Wikidata, still imbues projects where the focus is on "gaps" and "data donations" rather than examinations of data structures themselves for inequities or unethical practice. Kimberly Christen critiques the information freedom movement for its lack of nuance and recognition of the need for care and sensitivity in relation to Indigenous knowledge.[50] The crowdsourced nature of the project means Wikidata lacks rigorous monitoring and rules around what can be added, aside from ambiguous conditions of notability. A major issue in relation to Indigenous data is there are no protocols in place to either recognize Indigenous sovereignty over data or to ensure materials that are legal to share under colonial concepts of copyright, for example public domain, are ethical. Hopefully this is something that can be developed in the future.

Land, Territory, and Nation

In the case of Indigenous communities and peoples, the use of Wikipedia articles as the basis for the generation of Wikidata items has meant a conflation between land as territory, nation, and a people. For example, the "Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation" Wikipedia article describes the history and culture of the Misi-zaagiwininiwag, prominent members, the history of movement, Land Title and as well as the geographic boundaries of the present-day reserve. However, at the time of writing this chapter, the Wikidata item Q6878995 linked to the article only contains statements regarding geography and is only an instance of an "Indian

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[49] Roy Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 1 (2006): 117–46, https://doi.org/10.2307/4486062.

[50] Kimberly Christen, "Does Information Really Want to Be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness," 2012, https://research.libraries.wsu.edu:8443/xmlui/handle/2376/5705.

reservation of Canada." There are no other items in Wikidata for the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The issue may in large part be due to the automated creation of Wikidata items from Wikipedia articles and an inability of the process to appropriately map data items. For example, the movement between land and peoples is not an issue for the narrative text, but because only one Wikidata item is generated through a bot process, the contextual richness and nuance of the original Wikipedia article is lost. The automated generation of Wikidata items is not problematic for items such as the majority of biographies, numerous articles on Indigenous communities present conceptual and political challenges that are not addressed or acknowledge within this process.

Furthermore, there is currently no way to encode traditional territory, treaty, or other Indigenous-specific properties and data structures. For example, I currently reside in Oakville, Ontario, but there are not appropriate statements that allow for stating Oakville is the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, nor any properties that allow for the encoding of traditional territory or that Oakville is within the lands of the Dish With One Spoon territory.[51] The conflation of communities and land in this way is perhaps not intended, but it is nonetheless not ethical. As of the writing of this chapter the Wikidata item generated for the Wikipedia articles on the Dish With One Spoon covenant, item Q3904875, has an English label stating it is a "law used by Indigenous people" but has no "instance of" or value making it of limited use as a data point. The lack of connection between what is considered to be an important law or convent covering a highly populated area within Canada, and further a convenient cited in

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[51] Town of Oakville. "Indigenous Culture and Community." Town of Oakville. Accessed July 17, 2022. https://www.oakville.ca/culturerec/indigenous-community.html.; I also wish to acknowledge students in the Fall 2021 class of INF1321 at the University of Toronto for pointing to the lack of support within Wikidata for expressing information linking geographic locations, treaties, and traditional territories.

many institutional and municipal land acknowledgements and cities, towns, and organizations, highlights a lack of attention to the recognition of Indigenous rights, protocols, and land. This one example is representative of an issue relating to the ways many First Nations communities are documented in Wikidata. The automatic generation of entities from Wikipedia articles, and lack of attention to treaty and territory recognition is something that bears further examination to ensure more ethical practice within Wikidata and libraries, archives, or other organizations using Wikidata as a linking hub need to be mindful of such problematic structures.

Wikidata, URIs, and Ethics

Ethical practice in linked data systems must also consider the use of identifiers and the appropriateness of "same as" relationships when linking entities. Universal Resource Identifiers (URIs) are the backbone of semantic systems as they identify a unique resource or entity, create meaningful relationships, and are one of Tim Berners-Lee's four general guidelines for linked data.[52] External identifiers are defined as "strings that represent identifiers used in external systems (databases, authority control files, online encyclopedias, etc.) and they will display as external links in Wikidata items if a formatter URL (P1630) is defined." External identifiers are listed as being useful to Wikidata in several ways: "Data quality: cross-checking statements with other, academic sources; Identifying missing notable items; Popularise and motivate the use of Wikidata; Supporting sister projects: for example, providing references, further information links, etc., for Wikipedia."[53] Many in cultural heritage institutions, and libraries more

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[52] Tim Berners-Lee, "Linked Data - Design Issues," July 27, 2006, https://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/LinkedData.html.

[53] Wikidata, "Wikidata:External Identifiers - Wikidata," accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:External_identifiers.

specifically, see the ability to create meaningful links between repositories as one of the biggest

opportunities for the use of Wikidata for linked data work.[54] However, while the idea of

Wikidata as a linking hub is attractive, care must be taken to ensure the encoding of URIs is

ensuring appropriate relationships within the data.

For example, the Wikidata item for Métis people contains a URI for the Library of

Congress Subject Heading for Métis people. The Library of Congress authority record for this

heading states: "Here are entered works on Canadians of mixed European and Indian descent."[55]

Clearly, returning to definitions in the first section of this chapter, this heading is at best lacking

in nuance, and at worst is harmful. As discussed above, members of the Métis Nation are not

simply people of "mixed" ancestry and it is therefore inappropriate to encode "same as"

relationships using identifiers with faulty or problematic definitions and usage in the Wikidata

item for Métis people. While there is currently some legal flexibility around the usage of the

term, the Library of Congress definition is not in keeping with the political or ethical concerns of

the Métis Nation. The notes in the authority file indicate the source of this definition comes from

a phone call to "Indian Affairs" in 1988 where the cataloguer was told "Mixed bloods is still

common terminology, but also means mixed descent among Indian groups. Metis is being used."

Wikipedia is cited as a source in 2009, which does not lend great credibility to the accuracy of

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[54] ARL Task Force on Wikimedia and Linked Open, "ARL White Paper on Wikidata: Opportunities and Recommendations," Report (Association of Research Libraries, April 18, 2019); Effie Kapsalis, "Wikidata: Recruiting the Crowd to Power Access to Digital Archives," *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 134–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2019.1559520.

[55] Library of Congress, "Métis," MARC Display (Library of Congress Authorities), accessed June 18, 2022, https://authorities.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?AuthRecID=4820197&v1=1&HC=4&SEQ=20220618220213&PID=ktlbzVchXMhcumNd6OaBEmSrZ.

the subject heading. Ensuring links are accurate in terms of scope and definitions are important given the ways Wikidata is being integrated or consumed by other systems.

Projects and initiatives focused on creating linked data concerning Indigenous peoples, including identity, communities, and localities, should involve Indigenous people. Many of the other URIs present link to equally problematic URIs. While it is easy to point to quality issues related to the crowd-sourced nature of Wikidata, this is not a satisfactory answer. When organizations or individuals take on Wikidata work in relation to Indigenous peoples, there needs to be great attention paid to the accurate use of URIs and the "same as" relationship within Wikidata. The same attention is required in other linked data projects seeking to link disparate linked data stores such as the numerous projects that have come out of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Wikidata Pilot Project, or the LINCS Project.[56]

Ethnicity Versus Nationhood

The challenges of documenting Indigenous people within Wikidata are the kinds of properties available and the lack of modelling and definitions across multiple languages in relation to the meaning of race, ethnicity, ancestry, nationhood and community belonging. Another example of a problematic data structure is the Wikidata property for ethnicity. The property "ethnic group" is a known issue amongst some members of the Wikidata community. "Ethnic group," property P172, is a property that, unlike most ot the properties on Wikidata, has a constraint. A constraint means there are encoded limitations on how it can be applied to items

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[56] This author is a research theme lead on the LINCS project. The aim of the project is to use linked data to connect cultural data from researchers as well as cultural data organizations. "LINCS – Linked Infrastructure for Networked Cultural Scholarship." Accessed July 17, 2022. https://lincsproject.ca/.

and applications that do not follow the rules as set out by the constraint are flagged with a "violation" tag. As of this writing, the description in English for this property states: "subject's ethnicity (consensus is that a VERY high standard of proof is needed for this field to be used. In general this means 1) the subject claims it themselves, or 2) it is widely agreed on by scholars, or 3) is fictional and portrayed as such)"[57] "Ethnic group" isn't defined beyond the description of usage. While there is a link to WikiProject Ethnic Group, that group defines ethnicity in connection to a longer article in Wikipedia where: "An ethnic group or ethnicity is a grouping of people who identify with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups. Those attributes can include common sets of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, culture, nation, religion, or social treatment within their residing area. Ethnicity is sometimes used interchangeably with the term nation, particularly in cases of ethnic nationalism, and is separate from the related concept of races."[58] Note that within this definition there is a wide set of attributes bundled under the concept of ethnic group and the conflation of ethnic group with nation. Indigenous sovereignty and peoplehood are not adequately captured in concepts related to ethnicity. For example, one may be Irish Canadian and feel oneself to be part of a particular ethnic group and even nationality, but this is not the same conceptually as being a member of the Métis Nation within Canada. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* makes the connection between Indigenous identity and nationhood clear, while also dissuading connections between such identities and racial categories, stating: "The term Aboriginal peoples refers to organic political and cultural entities that stem historically from the original peoples of North America, rather than collections of individuals united by so-called

[57] Wikidata, "Ethnic Group," accessed June 18, 2022, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P172.
[58] "Wikipedia:WikiProject Ethnic Groups," in *Wikipedia*, September 6, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_Ethnic_groups&oldid=1042644386.

'racial' characteristics."[59] Therefore, using properties such as ethnicity for Indigenous nations and tribal groups is not appropriate or ethical.

Adese and Anderson see concepts of Métis identity rooted in racialized discourse as being problematic with the potential to create claims based on historical narratives and understandings.[60] Such claims, bolstered by academic writing, the formation of organizations, and even court cases, are seen as false and potentially harmful to the Métis. In the context of Wikidata, the use of the property of "ethnicity" for Métis people is problematic and unethical. For example, the Wikidata item for the author Maria Campbell, Q1895752, as of this writing has the statement "Ethnic identity" with the value "Métis."[61] Ethnicity items, such as Métis, lack a nuanced and developed connection to a shared sense of nationhood or peoplehood, self-determination, territory, and kinship connections that are necessary in the context of Indigenous identity. Hancock states "For Indigenous peoples recognition of personhood requires a profound challenge to the ideology of the nation state, and must recognize Indigenous relationships (including relationships to land), belonging, citizenship, community, and territory."[62]

Wikidata References, or Lack of References

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[59] Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" (Ottawa, Canada, October 4, 2016): iii.

[60] Jennifer Adese and Chris Andersen, eds., *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies* (Vancouver ; UBC Press, 2021).

[61] Wikidata. "Maria Campbell." Accessed July 17, 2022. https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q1895752.

[62] Robert l.A. Hancock, "The Power of Peoplehood: Reimagining Metis Relationships, Research, and Responsibilities," in *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies*, ed. Jennifer Adese and Chris Andersen (Vancover: UBC Press, 2021); A sense of the ways of considering kinship connections and connections to land and the considerations of issues such as scrip and treaties the following discussion featuring Maria Campbell and Tony Belcourt is illuminating: Toronto Metropolitan University. *Metis Identity Webinar 1*. Métis Identity, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxyJ0b97TIE.

The inclusion of references, or data sources, is an excellent practice within Wikidata. References strengthen linked data by ensuring that the provenance of a data point is clear and can be verified. References also ensure a Wikidata user can decide on the veracity of a data point. However, data can be added to Wikidata without references. Furthermore, and problematically, references must be in the form of formal textual documents from notable sources, an issue that penalizes those from communities with oral traditions or alternate forms of community documentation. In the case of Indigenous identity, the instruction on the use of the property for ethnic group privileges self-identification. While self-identification is important, in the case of application of Indigenous identity categories, more nuances may be required. Naming connected to identity is an issue of authority and sovereignty of the community and nation in question.

Conclusion

It is unclear as to how ethical work related to Indigenous nationhood can be undertaken within Wikidata. At this time it is not possible to wholly recommend Wikidata as a truly ethical and just space for linked data work in connection to the Métis Nation, and likely other Nations as well. However, an organized project to consider how to ensure the expression of Indigenous identity in Wikidata is part of Indigenous Nation's self-determination and sovereignty. Ethical use and deployment of Indigenous identity categories and names within linked data projects must include structures that allow for the full expression and documentation of the complexity of expressions of Nationhood and Peoplehood. The inclusion of Indigenous-related initiatives within linked data work must acknowledge and advance the political aims of the Nations they represent.

It is vital that those working on linked data projects understand the connection between naming of Indigenous people and issues such as self-determination. It is not enough to ensure a label is correct: the data model, the connections within the repository and the links to external repositories must be appropriate and ethical. This may mean that some data connections are "lost" in the case of not connecting to data stores with heavily colonial or problematic naming, and it may mean creating data models that do not align with data structures used for other people.

For those working either within platforms such as Wikidata, or on other linked data repositories, it is imperative that expressing Indigenous identities relates to understanding the multidimensionality of such identification and what the purpose of such data is. Questions to be asked include: Is your project advancing the political aims of Indigenous peoples? Do you appropriately and fully understand the implications of the work you are doing? Inclusion of Indigenous materials or identities or persons does not necessarily or automatically benefit Indigenous people. Linked data holds within its technological possibilities the potential to support the collective aspirations of Indigenous Nations. Métis scholar Chris Andersen has stated "nations – at least in their modern sense - are not things but political projects produced through the collective efforts of…claims makers."[63] Nation building is a collective effort and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can work together to uphold Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

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