PEGGY WILCOX

Ethical Risk, Sovereignty, and Research Governance

Protecting Persons, Peoples, and Knowledge in Southeast Alaska Research

This document was submitted as a dissertation in October 2026 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Frederick S. Pardee Ph.D. in Policy Analysis at the RAND School of Public Policy. The faculty committee that supervised and approved the dissertation consisted of Gery W. Ryan Ryan Andrew Brown, and Diane Hirshberg.

Dissertation

For more information on this publication, visit **www.rand.org/t/RGSDA5478-1**.

About the RAND School of Public Policy

The RAND School of Public Policy has specialized in graduate-level policy education since its founding in 1970. The RAND School is home to the Frederick S. Pardee Ph.D. in Policy Analysis, which is the original public policy Ph.D. program in the United States and the only Ph.D. program based at an independent public policy research organization. To learn more about the RAND School of Public Policy, visit www.rand.edu.

Published in 2026 by the RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

RGSD-A5478-1

Abstract

This dissertation examines research ethics, Tribal sovereignty, and research governance in Southeast Alaska. It asks how institutional and Indigenous research ethics differ in the moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority they recognize; how those systems operate in Southeast Alaska research relationships; and what practical approaches strengthen the interface between them.

The study uses qualitative and comparative policy analysis, drawing on the Southeast Alaska legal and governance context, research ethics frameworks in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand, semi structured interviews with individuals experienced in Tribal research relationships and governance, and additional Tribal contacts to assess thematic saturation and regional coverage.

The findings show that institutional and Tribal ethical systems operate as complementary and coexisting systems that address different dimensions of the same research activity. Deliberate mutual recognition strengthens ethical risk governance when distinct responsibilities are preserved and Tribal priorities, knowledge, and governance can influence research decisions. The dissertation identifies what it calls the good neighbor principle: researchers make themselves known, ask for permissions, listen to local knowledge and concerns, maintain communication, and remain accountable to the relationships their research creates. The principle provides a practical means of bringing mutual recognition into the research relationship.

The dissertation concludes that ethical research governance depends not only on formal protections and approval processes but on relationships, decision space, accountability, and the ability of Tribal knowledge and governance to shape research. It offers practical recommendations for researchers, Tribal governments, Institutional Review Boards and universities, and funders.

Keywords: Tribal sovereignty; Indigenous research governance; ethical risk; Good Neighbor Principle; Southeast Alaska; Alaska Native Tribes; Tlingit and Haida; human subjects protection

Table of Contents

List of Figures vii
List of Tables viii
Acronyms and Abbreviations ix
Glossary of Key Terms x
Chapter 1: Introduction 1
1.1 Policy Problem: The K̲utí Project and a Research Ethics Tension 4
1.2 Problem Statement 6
1.3 Research Goals 8
1.4 Research Questions and Objectives 10
1.4.1 Research Question 1: Ethical Frameworks 10
1.4.2 Research Question 2: Governance in Practice 11
1.4.3 Research Question 3: Governance Interface and Applied Recommendations 12
1.4.4 Relationship Among the Research Questions 12
1.5 Significance and Policy Relevance 13
1.5.1 Conceptual Significance 13
1.5.2 Empirical Significance 14
1.5.3 Significance for Southeast Alaska 14
1.5.4 Comparative Contribution 15
1.5.5 Policy and Practical Relevance 15
1.6 Analytical Framework Overview 16
1.7 Scope and Boundaries of the Study 17
1.8 Organization of the Dissertation 18
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Comparative Research Ethics 20
2.1 Development of Modern Institutional Research Ethics 22
2.2 Indigenous Research Ethics, Relational Accountability, and Data Governance 27
2.3 Northern Canada: Place, Community, and Indigenous Governance 32
2.4 New Zealand: Māori Ethics, Relationships, and Data Governance 37
2.5 Synthesis: The Emergence of Four Analytic Concepts 38
2.6 Comparative Foundation for Southeast Alaska 42
2.7 Chapter Conclusion 43
Chapter 3: Tribal Sovereignty and Research Governance in Southeast Alaska 45
3.1 Alaska Native Sovereignty and the Distinctive Alaska Legal Context 46
3.1.1 Federal Recognition and the Government to Government Relationship 47
3.1.2 Inherent Tribal Sovereignty in Alaska 49
3.1.3 Alaska Attorney General Bruce Botelho and the State's Changing Tribal Relationship 49
3.2 ANCSA, Land Ownership, Jurisdiction, and Traditional Lands 51
3.2.1 The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 51
3.2.2 Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal Governments 53

3.2.3 Indian Country and Tribal Self Government after ANCSA....54
3.2.4 Land Ownership and Research Relationships....56
3.2.5 Traditional Lands and Cultural Relationships to Place....57
3.3 Institutional, Regulatory, and Governmental Research Pathways....58
3.3.1 Institutional Review and Human Subjects Protection....58
3.3.2 Federal Funding and Agency Requirements....59
3.3.3 Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Resource Considerations....59
3.4 Tribal Government and Research Governance....60
3.4.1 Tribal Research Governance in Practice....61
3.4.2 Individual Participation and Tribal Government Responsibilities....62
3.5 Synthesis: Research Governance in Southeast Alaska....63
Chapter 4: Research Design and Methods....66
4.1 Research Design and Overall Approach....66
4.2 Study Context and Case Selection....66
4.3 Comparative Framework and Document and Policy Analysis....67
4.4 Participant Selection and Recruitment....68
4.5 Semi Structured Interview Design....69
4.6 Interview Data Collection and Preparation....70
4.7 Interview Coding and Range Analysis....70
4.8 Integration of Evidence....72
4.9 Qualitative Rigor, Credibility, and Analytical Validation....73
4.10 Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity....74
4.11 Human Subjects and Data Protection....75
Chapter 5: Interview Findings: Parallel Ethical Systems and Research Governance in Southeast Alaska....76
5.1 Formal Approval Does Not Exhaust Ethical Responsibility....77
5.2 Land Access and Tribal Relationships to Place....78
5.3 Cultural Knowledge Is Governed Through Cultural and Collective Relationships....80
5.4 Data Governance Extends Ethical Responsibility Beyond Collection....81
5.5 Historical Experience Shapes Contemporary Trust....82
5.6 Practical and Institutional Constraints Shape Ethical Engagement....82
5.7 Direct Local Tribal Engagement....84
5.8 Ethical Research as a Relationship....85
5.9 Early Engagement Must Be Able to Shape the Research....86
5.10 Engagement Continues Across the Research Lifecycle....87
5.11 Reciprocity and Community Defined Benefit Shape Ethical Success....87
5.12 Synthesis....88
5.13 Chapter Conclusion....90
Chapter 6: Discussion: Parallel Ethical Systems and Ethical Risk Governance in Southeast Alaska....91
6.1 From Competing Authority to Complementary Ethical Systems....92
6.2 Understanding Ethical Risk Across Ethical Systems....93
6.3 Mutual Recognition Strengthens Ethical Risk Governance....95

6.4 Sovereignty Across the Four Analytic Concepts....97
6.5 The Good Neighbor Principle as Practical Ethical Risk Governance....99
6.6 Structural Conditions Shape Ethical Risk Governance....100
6.7 Answering the Research Questions....102
6.8 Parallel Developments in Indigenous Research Governance....104
6.9 Implications for Research Governance and Practice....106
6.9.1 Researchers and Research Teams....107
6.9.2 Tribal Governments....109
6.9.3 Institutional Review Boards and Universities....112
6.9.4 Funders....115
6.10 Chapter Conclusion....117
References....120
Legal Authorities....130

List of Figures

Figure 1. Major Land Ownership in Southeast Alaska.....3
Figure 2. Analytical Framework Overview.....17
Figure 3. Ethical Risk Relationship.....40
Figure 4. Recommendations for Researchers, Research Teams, and Tribal Governments 107
Figure 5. Institutional Recommendations for Ethical Research Governance.....111

List of Tables

Table 1. Research Goals at a Glance.....9

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
ANB	Alaska Native Brotherhood
ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
ANS	Alaska Native Sisterhood
CARE	Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
IARPC	Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
IRA	Indian Reorganization Act
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NSF	National Science Foundation
OCAP	Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession
OHRP	Office for Human Research Protections
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
SHARE	Sustain and build relationships, Humble accountability, Advance responsible environmental stewardship, Respect Indigenous knowledges, and Effective communication
TCPS 2	*Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*

Glossary of Key Terms

Accountability asymmetry A condition in which researchers and Tribal partners remain accountable to the continuing consequences of a research relationship, while external reviewers or institutional decision makers may influence that relationship without remaining part of those consequences.

at.óow A Tlingit concept referring to clan owned property and the rights and responsibilities associated with it, including particular stories, songs, names, crests, and other forms of cultural property.

Community defined benefit Research value identified by a Tribe or community according to its own priorities and circumstances. Benefits may include useful findings, improved data, training, employment, youth engagement, support for Tribal programs, accessible research products, or other outcomes identified through the research relationship.

Complementary ethical systems Institutional and Tribal ethical systems understood as culturally distinct, coexisting systems that address different dimensions of the same research activity. Their responsibilities intersect without becoming interchangeable or hierarchically ordered.

Cultural governance Decision making and responsibility concerning culturally held knowledge, resources, histories, practices, or other cultural goods through the clan, family, knowledge holder, cultural owner, or other relationship through which they are governed. Cultural governance is distinct from Tribal governmental authority.

Culturally governed knowledge Knowledge whose appropriate sharing, interpretation, recording, publication, or reuse is governed through cultural relationships and protocols rather than solely through individual possession or institutional control.

Data governance The processes and relationships governing the collection, control, storage, access, interpretation, sharing, dissemination, reuse, and future life of research information.

Decision space The practical ability for information arising through Tribal engagement or another ethical relationship to influence consequential aspects of research. Examples include questions, methods, budgets, data practices, interpretation, dissemination, and anticipated benefits.

Deliberate mutual recognition A research governance approach in which distinct ethical systems remain separate but purposefully recognize and inform one another, allowing the

moral units, ethical goods, and risks from each system to inform research decisions while preserving the responsibilities and decision making roles associated with each domain.

Ethical authority The recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying ethical risks, defining protections, or making decisions within a particular area of responsibility. Ethical authority follows the responsibility involved, with different people, governments, institutions, and cultural relationships holding decision making roles across different parts of research.

Ethical good A value, relationship, knowledge, interest, or form of wellbeing that research ethics seeks to protect or support. Examples include individual autonomy and welfare, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, collective wellbeing, reciprocity, and relationships to place.

Ethical legitimacy The condition in which research is understood as ethically appropriate across the people, relationships, interests, and governance processes it engages. Ethical legitimacy depends on recognizing the moral units, ethical goods, risks, and responsibilities implicated by the research and extends beyond satisfying a formal approval process.

Ethical risk The proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit.

Good Neighbor Principle The dissertation's synthesized finding that researchers make themselves known, ask for permissions, listen to and accept local knowledge and concerns, maintain communication, and remain accountable to the relationships their research creates. The principle gives deliberate mutual recognition practical form within research relationships.

Governance interface The space in which distinct research ethics systems, governance processes, and responsibilities enter the same research relationship and recognize or inform one another. The interface connects these distinct roles without merging their purposes or sources of authority.

Indigenous data sovereignty The principle that Indigenous peoples have collective rights and governance interests in data concerning their peoples, communities, lands, resources, cultures, and knowledge. It includes authority to shape how those data are collected, controlled, accessed, stored, interpreted, shared, reused, and carried into future applications in ways consistent with Indigenous self determination, priorities, and governance.

Kaupapa Māori research A Māori centered research approach grounded in Māori values, knowledge, and aspirations. It directs attention to who defines the research problem, whose knowledge shapes the inquiry, who participates in interpretation and governance, and who benefits from the research.

mana A Māori principle within Te Ara Tika concerning dignity, standing, authority, and power.

manaakitanga A Māori principle within Te Ara Tika concerning care, respect, and responsibility toward others.

Minimal risk The Common Rule classification for research in which the probability and magnitude of anticipated harm or discomfort are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Moral unit A person, collective, relationship, entity, or other subject recognized as ethically significant and capable of being affected by research. Moral units examined in this dissertation include individual participants, Tribes as political communities, clans, families, future generations, culturally governed knowledge, and relationships to culturally significant places.

Proportionate review and safeguards Institutional review or protective measures matched to the probability, magnitude, and type of anticipated human subjects risk. Proportionate review preserves protections warranted by participant risk without imposing additional requirements that exceed what the risk requires.

rangatiratanga A Māori concept commonly described through self determination, authority, or autonomy and carrying dimensions of leadership, collective control, status, and responsibility.

Reciprocity The expectation that research relationships involve meaningful exchange and return value to the people and communities whose participation, knowledge, lands, time, or relationships make the research possible.

Relational accountability Ethical responsibility arising through the relationships that research enters, depends upon, or creates. It includes responsibility for how those relationships are established and maintained, how knowledge is shared and represented, whether commitments are honored, what value is returned, and how research information is used over time.

Te Ara Tika A Māori research ethics framework organized around four principles: whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga, and mana. The framework brings relationships, appropriate conduct, care, dignity, standing, and authority into ethical consideration.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Māori text of the agreement commonly referred to in English as the Treaty of Waitangi. The Māori and English texts are not exact translations of one another, a distinction important to their interpretation.

tika A principle within Te Ara Tika concerning what is right or appropriate.

tikanga Derived from the Māori word tika, meaning "correct" or "right," combined with the nominal suffix -nga, which conveys the idea of a system or collection. As a whole, tikanga refers to the right way of doing things, encompassing customs, rules, methods, and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in Māori social and cultural contexts. (Moorfield n.d.).

Traditional lands Lands and waters to which Indigenous peoples and communities maintain enduring historical, cultural, subsistence, knowledge, stewardship, and relational connections regardless of contemporary legal ownership.

Tribal research governance The relationship based and formal processes through which a Tribal government establishes and manages its relationship with research within its authority. Governance may be expressed through direct communication with Tribal leadership or staff, established protocols, locally understood expectations, and continuing governmental relationships, as well as through formal Tribal actions, policies, agreements, research review processes, and data governance requirements. The form of governance reflects the Tribe, the project, and the circumstances; this dissertation does not propose a standardized Tribal research governance model.

Tribal sovereignty The inherent political and governmental authority of a Tribe as a continuing political community. This authority originates in the Tribe itself and predates federal recognition. Federal recognition affirms the Tribe’s governmental status and establishes a formal government to government relationship with the United States. In this dissertation, Tribal sovereignty includes the political relationship between a Tribe and its citizens and the Tribe’s authority to determine its own relationship with research. In Alaska, Tribal sovereignty is distinct from land ownership and does not depend on reservation land.

whakapapa A principle within Te Ara Tika concerning genealogy, relationships, and connectedness.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation examines nonmedical research ethics, ethical risk, Tribal sovereignty, and research governance in Southeast Alaska, with particular attention to research involving Tribal citizens, traditional lands, Indigenous knowledge, cultural resources, data, and collective interests. In this study, nonmedical research includes environmental and place based research, social and community research, cultural and historical inquiry, and other research that falls outside conventional human subjects review. Unless otherwise specified, this dissertation uses "institution" and "institutional" as shorthand for U.S. research institutions operating outside Tribal or Indigenous governance. Tribal governments and Indigenous organizations are institutions in their own right; this terminology distinguishes the institutional research ethics system examined here from Tribal and Indigenous governance systems.

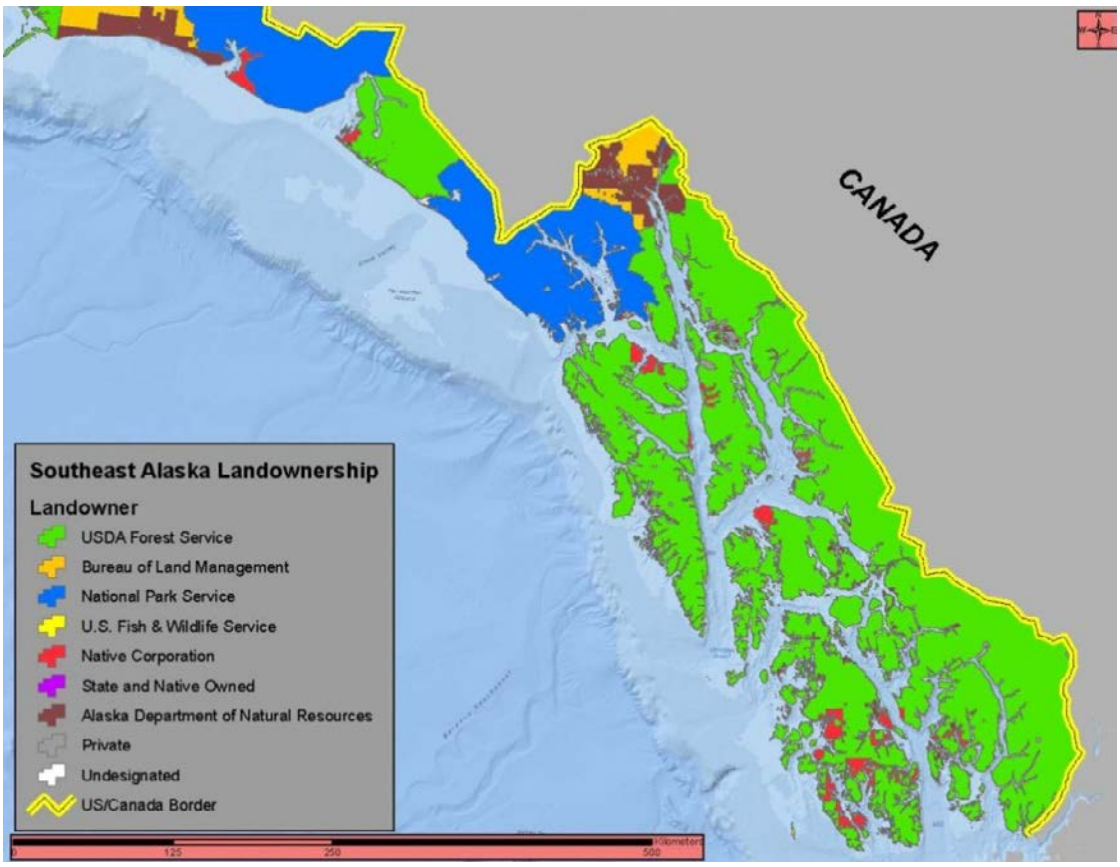
Modern U.S. research ethics oversight is built primarily around protection of individual human participants through Institutional Review Boards, informed consent, risk minimization, privacy, confidentiality, and related institutional protections (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46). The Common Rule defines "minimal risk" as research in which the probability and magnitude of anticipated harm or discomfort are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests (45 C.F.R. § 46.102(j)). IRBs evaluate whether risks to individual participants are minimized and whether remaining risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits and the importance of the knowledge expected from the research (45 C.F.R. § 46.111). Indigenous research governance frameworks recognize individual protections within a broader ethical field that includes collective and relational interests such as Tribal sovereignty, cultural continuity, community wellbeing, relationships to place, Indigenous knowledge, and authority over data and research outputs (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010; Wilson 2008; Carroll et al. 2020). The two systems bring different moral units, ethical goods, and dimensions of ethical risk into view.

The dissertation examines these differences through four interrelated analytic concepts: moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. Moral units identify who or what deserves ethical consideration. Ethical goods identify the values, relationships, knowledge, interests, or forms of wellbeing research ethics seeks to protect or promote. Ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit. Ethical authority asks who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role to identify those risks, define

appropriate protections, and make decisions concerning how research proceeds. Together, these concepts provide a common language for examining how different research ethics systems understand protection, responsibility, and authority without assuming that one system should replace another.

Southeast Alaska presents a particularly layered research environment because Tribal sovereignty, land ownership, governmental jurisdiction, cultural governance, and research access often reside with different actors (Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee 2014, 24; Fitzpatrick 2021, 13–15). Much of the land within traditional Tribal homelands is owned or managed by federal and state agencies, municipalities, Alaska Native corporations, and private landowners rather than Tribal governments. Tribal governments maintain political relationships with their citizens and continuing relationships to histories, cultural resources, subsistence practices, Indigenous knowledge, and traditional places across this landscape. A researcher may receive legal access to a site from one entity while conducting research that engages interests associated with another (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 2026, 7425). This distribution of ownership, access, jurisdiction, and governance makes Southeast Alaska an important setting for examining how research responsibilities to people, governments, knowledge, and place are recognized and addressed.

Figure 1. Major Land Ownership in Southeast Alaska



Source: Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee (2014, 24).

IRB approval, landowner permission, agency permits, institutional authorization, and individual informed consent each address particular legal or ethical dimensions of a research project. In Southeast Alaska, regulatory compliance and ethical legitimacy are related but distinct. Formal Tribal approval requirements depend on the laws, policies, agreements, or governance processes of the Tribe and the circumstances of the research; the cultural or ethical significance of traditional lands does not create a universal Tribal approval requirement. The central question is which relationships, interests, and governance processes a project engages and whether the research appropriately recognizes the people, governments, knowledge, relationships, and places affected by it.

The dissertation examines these questions through historical and comparative analysis of research ethics and governance in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand; analysis of Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty and the legal and governance context of Southeast Alaska; and qualitative interviews concerning research relationships, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, data governance, community engagement, and ethical responsibility. The comparison examines the underlying assumptions that shape what different systems recognize as deserving ethical

consideration, what they seek to protect or promote, what they define as ethical risk, and what sources of authority they recognize in research decisions. The Southeast Alaska analysis and interviews examine how these concepts and governance relationships operate in practice across research involving Tribal communities, traditional lands, knowledge, data, and relationships.

The dissertation asks what ethical research relationships in Southeast Alaska should look like when institutional protections, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, and responsibilities to people and place all matter at the same time. The study identifies practical ways to recognize these responsibilities and bring them into relationship while preserving the distinct roles of institutional review, Tribal government, individual participation, and cultural governance. It then considers how research actors support relationships that are respectful, accountable, useful, and responsive to the people and places that make the research possible.

1.1 Policy Problem: The K̲utí Project and a Research Ethics Tension

An experience within the K̲utí Project brought the policy problem examined in this dissertation into view. The K̲utí Project is a multidisciplinary research initiative funded by the National Science Foundation that works with Southeast Alaska communities to produce community informed geohazard knowledge. The project brings together atmospheric scientists, geoscientists, hydrologists, and social scientists in partnership with community leaders and Tribal environmental staff. The episode described below illustrates how the same research activity is understood differently depending on what an ethical system recognizes as being at risk, what it seeks to protect, and whose authority it recognizes (K̲utí Geohazards Project n.d.; Sitka Sound Science Center 2022).

During a review conducted near the midpoint of the grant, K̲utí Project researchers arranged for NSF reviewers to visit one of the partner communities to observe how the project worked with community and Tribal partners. In cooperation with the local Tribe, the visit included a community gathering at the Tribal community hall. Tribal knowledge holders spoke, a Tribal dance group performed, families attended together, local foods were shared, and researchers and community members discussed local natural hazards and areas of concern. Researchers shared information about natural hazards, while community members contributed local knowledge, observations, and concerns. Within the Project's established relationship with the Tribe, the gathering reflected locally appropriate forms of hospitality, participation, knowledge exchange, and community engagement.

Subsequent feedback from the NSF review raised concerns about aspects of the gathering. Reviewers questioned the informal and social setting, the absence of individual

written consent documentation for everyone present, the participation of children, and the combination of scientific discussion with a community social event (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.111, 46.116; 45 C.F.R. §§ 690.111, 690.116). These concerns arose even though the gathering had been organized in cooperation with the local Tribe and reflected practices understood within the Project as appropriate to the Tribal and community setting. The resulting discussion within the K̲utí Project brought into focus the relationship among institutional human subjects protections, community based research, collaborative knowledge exchange, and Tribal governance.

The episode raised a broader question than whether the gathering should have used individual written consent or more formal research procedures. Within institutional human subjects ethics, the presence of identifiable individuals, children, discussion related to research, and information exchanged in a group setting raises questions concerning individual consent, voluntariness, privacy, and the distinction between participation in a community event and participation in research. These concerns reflect a framework centered on the protection of individual research participants. Practices understood within the Tribal relationship as appropriate forms of community participation and natural hazard knowledge exchange were viewed through an institutional human subjects lens that emphasized risks associated with individual participation.

For the Project team, the gathering reflected ethical values and responsibilities understood through its established relationship with the Tribe, including respect for Tribal sovereignty, hospitality, family participation, relationship building, and locally appropriate knowledge exchange. The event took place through cooperation with the Tribal government, in a Tribal space, and within community norms encouraging people to participate as families rather than as isolated research subjects. The Project team understood the presence of food, children, and social interaction as important to meaningful community participation and believed substantially fewer community members would have participated if the gathering had required them to leave those practices behind. The Tribal dancing carried meaning within the community setting as a demonstration of respect and hospitality toward the visiting scientists and NSF representatives. Reviewers viewed aspects of the dancing and social character of the gathering as insufficiently scholarly or inappropriate to the research setting. The same practices that helped make the gathering respectful, accessible, and legitimate within the Tribal relationship, and supported a successful exchange of natural hazard knowledge, became the focus of concern when viewed through an institutional understanding of appropriate research conduct.

Viewed through the dissertation's four analytic concepts, the K̲utí experience shows how the same research activity is understood differently depending on what an ethical

framework brings into view. Across the two perspectives, moral units include individual participants, the Tribe, families, community relationships, and the broader research partnership. Ethical goods include individual autonomy, informed consent, privacy, and protection from harm alongside Tribal sovereignty, reciprocity, cultural continuity, hospitality, collective participation, and trust. Ethical risk is understood in relation to the moral units and ethical goods each framework recognizes and the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to them. The episode brings distinct roles in research governance into view as well: institutional review addresses human subjects protections, individuals decide whether to participate, and Tribal government represents the Tribe within its governmental relationship to the research.

The K̲utí experience gave rise to the question motivating this dissertation. The episode suggested a policy problem involving different ethical systems, overlapping responsibilities, and questions about how competing or hierarchically ordered forms of authority should be reconciled. The study examines how research governance systems recognize different people, interests, risks, and sources of authority when more than one ethical framework applies to the same research relationship, and what policy mechanisms might improve the interface among them. It leaves open the possibility that closer examination of the systems, their responsibilities, and the ethical risks each recognizes will point toward a different understanding of how they relate.

The experience establishes the practical stakes of the dissertation. Institutional protections and Tribal governance bring different moral units, ethical goods, dimensions of ethical risk, and responsibilities into the same research relationship. Examining what each system brings into view provides a basis for understanding how these responsibilities interact in practice and what policy mechanisms support recognition of their distinct roles. This experience provides the starting point for the broader policy problem examined in the dissertation.

1.2 Problem Statement

The central policy problem addressed by this dissertation is how research in Southeast Alaska recognizes and connects the distinct ethical and governance responsibilities that arise within the same research project. Institutional review, individual consent, land access, Tribal government, cultural governance, and data governance each address different dimensions of research and operate simultaneously. The policy challenge is to identify which relationships and responsibilities a project engages, what each process contributes, and what mechanisms allow these distinct responsibilities to recognize and inform one another within the broader research relationship.

The Ḵutí Project illustrates how human subjects oversight enters research whose primary subject is environmental. Much of the Project concerns precipitation, landslides, flooding, mapping, and other environmental information. Interviews, surveys, and other interactions with people enter human subjects oversight when they meet the Common Rule definitions of research and a human subject (45 C.F.R. § 46.102). Once those requirements apply, Institutional Review Boards evaluate protections for individual participants, including informed consent, minimization of risk, equitable selection, privacy, and confidentiality (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.111, 46.116; 45 C.F.R. pt. 690). The Common Rule defines minimal risk by comparing the probability and magnitude of anticipated harm or discomfort with those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests (45 C.F.R. § 46.102(j)). For NSF supported research, these protections are implemented through NSF's human subjects regulations.

Research involving Indigenous peoples, Tribal governments, or traditional lands can carry ethical consequences at individual, collective, cultural, and governmental levels. Across environmental, cultural, historical, and community research, these consequences include Tribal sovereignty, relationships to place, culturally governed knowledge, data, subsistence, community representation, and collective wellbeing. Some arise even when individual participants freely consent, while others emerge from research that falls outside the regulatory definition of human subjects research (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010; Wilson 2008; Carroll et al. 2020).

Different ethical systems recognize different moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority. Institutional human subjects ethics centers on individual participants and their informed participation, protection, and fair treatment. Tribal and Indigenous governance frameworks broaden the moral units under consideration to include Tribes, communities, and collective relationships, while bringing additional ethical goods into view, including Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, relationships to place, collective wellbeing, and governance of data (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010; Wilson 2008; Carroll et al. 2020). These broader moral units and ethical goods make collective, cultural, governmental, and relational forms of ethical risk visible within the same research relationship.

Tribal engagement operates alongside institutional review, regulatory requirements, land access, and individual consent, with each addressing different dimensions of the same research project. The policy question is how researchers and

institutions recognize when research engages Tribal governmental, cultural, data, or collective interests and create pathways for those concerns to inform research design, interpretation, dissemination, and future use of research information. These connections allow distinct governance responsibilities to operate within the same research relationship while preserving the role of each.

This dissertation examines the policy problem from two complementary directions. The comparative analysis examines research ethics and governance at the systems level in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand to identify how these systems recognize moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority, and how those concepts are expressed through governance mechanisms. Northern Canada and New Zealand provide examples of institutional research ethics operating alongside Indigenous governance, with some frameworks explicitly incorporating Indigenous ethical principles into institutional guidance. These comparisons broaden the range of governance mechanisms considered in the Southeast Alaska analysis and are assessed within Southeast Alaska's distinct legal and governance context.

The interview component draws on the experiences of people working within Southeast Alaska research relationships to examine how Tribal sovereignty, research relationships, governance of knowledge and data, reciprocity, and institutional conditions operate in practice. Participant accounts provide empirical evidence of how institutional and Tribal ethical systems operate within the same research relationships and how the responsibilities recognized within each system are understood and addressed.

The governance interface is the space in which these distinct systems and responsibilities enter the same research relationship. Effective research governance requires pathways for researchers and institutions to recognize Tribal governmental relationships, cultural governance, and data governance interests, identify the appropriate points of contact, and allow information arising through those relationships and processes to inform the research as it develops. This dissertation examines that interface to identify practical mechanisms for connecting distinct responsibilities while preserving the distinct roles and relationships of the people, governments, institutions, and cultural owners involved.

1.3 Research Goals

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how different research ethics systems understand protection, risk, and authority, how those systems operate within Southeast Alaska research relationships, and what practical approaches improve the governance interface among them. The study uses the concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority to compare institutional research ethics and Indigenous

research governance, and examines where they converge, where they differ, and how those patterns shape research practice.

The dissertation has three related goals.

First, the dissertation seeks to describe and compare research ethics frameworks using the four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. This analysis traces the development of U.S. institutional research ethics and examines Indigenous research ethics and governance through comparative examples from Northern Canada and New Zealand.

Second, the dissertation examines how these ethical frameworks operate within research relationships in Southeast Alaska. The analysis places the comparative framework within the Southeast Alaska context of Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty, enduring Tribal relationships to traditional lands across contemporary patterns of land ownership and management, institutional research oversight, and relationships to people, knowledge, and place. Qualitative interviews provide empirical evidence of how these responsibilities and governance processes are understood and experienced in practice.

Third, the dissertation seeks to translate the conceptual, comparative, legal, and empirical findings into practical approaches for improving the governance interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems. The study develops recommendations for researchers, Tribal governments, IRBs and universities, and funders that strengthen recognition and communication across distinct responsibilities while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, data governance, and relationships to place.

Table 1. Research Goals at a Glance

Research Goal	Primary Focus	Dissertation Contribution
Goal 1: Describe and compare research ethics frameworks	Uses moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority to compare institutional research ethics and Indigenous research governance in the United States, Northern Canada and New Zealand.	Establishes a common analytical framework for identifying where ethical systems converge, where they differ, and what each brings into ethical consideration
Goal 2: Examine research ethics and governance in Southeast Alaska	Examines how ethical frameworks operate within the distinctive context of Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty, enduring Tribal relationships to traditional land ownership and management, institutional research oversight, and Southeast Alaska research relationships.	Connects the comparative framework to the legal, governmental, cultural, and empirical realities of research in Southeast Alaska.

Research Goal	Primary Focus	Dissertation Contribution
Goal 3: Develop practical governance approaches	Synthesizes the conceptual, comparative, legal, and empirical findings to identify practical approaches for researchers, Tribal governments, IRBs and Universities, and funders	Develop policy and practice recommendations for improving recognition and communication across distinct responsibilities while preserving individual protections, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, data governance and relationships to place

These goals extend the questions raised through the K̲utí Project into a broader examination of research ethics and governance in Southeast Alaska. The study moves from comparing how ethical systems understand protection, risk, and authority, to examining how those systems operate within research relationships, and then to identifying practical approaches for improving the governance interface among them. Grounding the analysis in Southeast Alaska keeps the inquiry connected to the relationships, places, and governance conditions that gave rise to the research problem while allowing the findings to inform the K̲utí Project and cross cultural research practices more broadly.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

The dissertation is guided by three research questions that follow the same progression as the study's goals. The first asks what different research ethics systems recognize as requiring ethical consideration and protection and what sources of ethical authority they recognize. The second asks how these ethical systems and governance processes operate within research relationships in Southeast Alaska. The third asks what practical approaches can improve the governance interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems. The questions move the study from comparing ethical frameworks, to examining how they operate in practice, to identifying ways the governance interface among them can be improved.

1.4.1 Research Question 1: Ethical Frameworks

Research Question 1: How do institutional and Indigenous research ethics frameworks compare in the moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority they recognize in nonmedical research?

Objective 1: Describe and compare ethical frameworks.

The first objective is to describe and compare institutional and Indigenous approaches to research ethics and governance using the four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. Applying the same analytic concepts across the systems provides a common basis for examining who or what receives ethical consideration, what each system seeks to protect or support, how ethical risk is understood, and which people, governments, institutions, or cultural owners have recognized responsibilities or decision making roles in particular parts of the research.

The analysis traces the development of U.S. institutional research ethics and examines Northern Canada and New Zealand as comparative settings in which institutional protections operate alongside Indigenous ethical and governance frameworks, with some frameworks incorporating Indigenous ethical principles into institutional guidance. These comparisons bring individual and collective interests, sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, relationships to place, data governance, reciprocity, and continuing responsibility into the same analytical field while recognizing the distinct legal, political, and cultural settings in which they operate.

The comparison identifies areas of convergence and difference and examines what each ethical system brings into consideration. Indigenous research governance is treated as specific to particular peoples, governments, and places, reflecting variation across settings. The comparative analysis establishes the conceptual foundation for examining how these ethical systems and responsibilities operate within the Southeast Alaska research environment.

1.4.2 Research Question 2: Governance in Practice

Research Question 2: How are research ethics frameworks operationalized through governance mechanisms and research relationships in Southeast Alaska, and how do those processes shape ethical legitimacy and trust?

Objective 2: Examine governance mechanisms and research relationships in practice.

The second objective is to examine how ethical principles are expressed through research governance and relationships in practice. The analysis considers institutional review, individual participation, Tribal government, cultural governance, land access, data governance, and continuing research relationships as distinct processes through which responsibilities associated with a research project are addressed.

The Southeast Alaska analysis places these processes within a setting shaped by Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty, enduring Tribal relationships to traditional lands across contemporary patterns of land ownership and management, institutional research oversight, and culturally governed knowledge. The analysis examines how these

responsibilities operate within the same research environment and how researchers identify the people, governments, institutions, and cultural relationships connected to particular dimensions of a project.

Qualitative interviews provide empirical evidence of how these governance processes and research relationships operate in practice. Participant accounts describe how communication, trust, reciprocity, Tribal sovereignty, governance of knowledge and data, historical experience, and institutional conditions shape research relationships and decision making over time. The interview evidence provides a basis for examining how ethical legitimacy and trust develop within research relationships and how governance processes influence the conduct of research in Southeast Alaska.

1.4.3 Research Question 3: Governance Interface and Applied Recommendations

Research Question 3: What governance mechanisms and practical actions can improve the interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems in Southeast Alaska while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and distinct governance responsibilities?

Objective 3: Develop governance informed recommendations.

The third objective is to synthesize the conceptual, comparative, legal, and interview findings into practical recommendations for improving research governance in Southeast Alaska. The analysis examines how institutional and Tribal ethical systems recognize and inform one another when they address different dimensions of the same research relationship.

The analysis considers mechanisms that support direct Tribal engagement, recognition of existing Tribal governmental processes, protection of individual participants, governance of culturally held knowledge and data, reciprocity, and continuing communication across the research lifecycle. It examines how researchers, Tribal governments, IRBs and universities, and funders shape the conditions under which these responsibilities enter research design and practice.

The intended outcome is a governance interface that preserves strong individual human subjects protections while recognizing Tribal sovereignty and the existing governmental and cultural processes through which Tribes govern their relationships with research. The recommendations focus on practical actions that improve recognition, communication, resources, and decision space across the systems while preserving the distinct role of each.

1.4.4 Relationship Among the Research Questions

The three research questions form a sequential analytical structure.

RQ1 establishes the conceptual and comparative foundation by examining how institutional and Indigenous research ethics frameworks recognize moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority.

RQ2 carries that framework into Southeast Alaska and examines how ethical systems, governance processes, and research relationships operate in practice, including how ethical legitimacy and trust develop within those relationships.

RQ3 synthesizes the conceptual, comparative, legal, and empirical findings to identify governance mechanisms and practical actions that improve the interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and distinct governance responsibilities.

The research questions move from understanding the ethical systems, to examining how they operate within research relationships, to identifying practical approaches for improving policy and practice.

1.5 Significance and Policy Relevance

This dissertation contributes to research ethics scholarship and practice by examining how institutional and Indigenous ethical systems recognize and govern different dimensions of ethical risk within the same research environment. Institutional review, individual participation, Tribal government, cultural governance, land access, and data governance bring distinct responsibilities into the same research relationship. The study develops a common analytical framework for understanding those responsibilities, grounds that framework in Southeast Alaska research relationships, and identifies policy mechanisms that support recognition and interaction among them.

1.5.1 Conceptual Significance

The conceptual contribution of this dissertation is a common framework for examining research ethics across culturally distinct systems that begin from different understandings of who and what is ethically significant. The four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority allow institutional and Indigenous research ethics to be examined through the same questions while preserving the assumptions, values, and responsibilities of each system.

This framework directs attention beneath procedures and approval mechanisms to the ethical structure that gives those processes meaning. It examines who or what receives ethical consideration, which goods receive protection or support, how the proximity and magnitude of potential harm are understood, and which people, governments, institutions, or cultural owners have recognized responsibilities or decision making roles in particular parts of the research (National Commission 1979; Wilson 2008;

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010).

The framework provides a basis for understanding how distinct ethical systems can examine the same research activity through different moral units, ethical goods, and dimensions of ethical risk. It creates a common analytical language for examining those differences and the relationships among the systems while allowing each ethical framework to retain its own foundations, responsibilities, and forms of governance.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

The dissertation contributes empirical evidence through qualitative interviews concerning how research ethics, Tribal sovereignty, and ethical responsibility operate within Southeast Alaska research relationships. Interviews provide accounts of research involving Tribal governments, culturally governed knowledge, data, traditional lands, institutional processes, and continuing relationships between researchers and communities.

The empirical contribution connects concepts of ethical risk and research governance to the experience of people working within these relationships. Participant accounts show how governance processes are understood in practice, how trust and reciprocity develop through research conduct, and how institutional conditions shape the ability of researchers and Tribal governments to engage across the research lifecycle.

1.5.3 Significance for Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska provides a particularly informative setting for examining research ethics. Tribal sovereignty and continuing relationships to traditional lands operate across contemporary patterns of land ownership, management, and institutional jurisdiction. Tribal governments maintain political relationships with their citizens and continuing cultural relationships to community, knowledge, and place, while land access, institutional review, and other research responsibilities often operate through different entities (Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee 2014, 24; Fitzpatrick 2021; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 2026, 7425).

This setting makes the distribution of research governance responsibilities especially visible. Institutional review addresses human subjects protections, individuals govern their own participation, landowners and agencies govern access within their responsibilities, Tribal governments govern their relationships with research, and cultural owners guide the use of knowledge held through cultural relationships. Examining these processes in Southeast Alaska provides a grounded setting for understanding how distinct responsibilities operate within the same research project.

The regional focus gives the study direct practical value for research involving Tlingit and Haida Tribes while preserving the governmental standing and distinct processes of individual Tribes. The findings are intended to support research relationships in Southeast Alaska.

1.5.4 Comparative Contribution

The comparative analysis broadens the range of research governance arrangements considered in the dissertation. Northern Canada and New Zealand provide examples of institutional human subjects protections operating alongside Indigenous governance, collective interests, relationships to place, culturally governed knowledge, data governance, and relational responsibilities (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010).

Northern Canada illustrates research environments in which institutional ethics review, Indigenous governmental and community processes, territorial research licensing, land access, and Indigenous data governance address different dimensions of research. New Zealand provides an example in which Māori ethical principles are explicitly incorporated alongside established institutional principles within national ethical guidance. These comparisons expand the governance possibilities available for consideration.

The comparative contribution provides a basis for examining which mechanisms support recognition and communication among ethical systems. Alaska's Tribal, legal, and institutional context provides the basis for assessing how those lessons inform research governance in Southeast Alaska.

1.5.5 Policy and Practical Relevance

The policy contribution of this dissertation centers on the governance interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems: the pathways through which distinct ethical responsibilities recognize and inform one another while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and the roles of Tribal government, cultural governance, land access, and data governance.

The study identifies practical mechanisms through which research actors shape that interface. These mechanisms include direct Tribal engagement, communication across the research lifecycle, recognition of existing Tribal governmental processes, reciprocity, support for Tribal participation, and sufficient flexibility for information identified through engagement to influence research decisions.

This approach recognizes Tribal research governance as an expression of an existing sovereign government. Tribal governments can establish research expectations within their authority through their own governing processes, including laws, policies, resolutions, agreements, data governance requirements, and other mechanisms established through Tribal law and procedure. Participant accounts emphasize direct engagement with the local Tribe and recognition of the governmental and cultural processes already in place. The policy response centers on recognition of those existing systems and on creating pathways for Tribal governmental and cultural processes to inform research while remaining distinct from institutional review.

The practical contribution is a framework for research relationships that support strong individual protections, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, data governance, reciprocity, and continuing accountability. The dissertation uses its conceptual, comparative, legal, and empirical findings to identify policy and practice changes that strengthen the interface between complementary ethical systems across the research lifecycle.

1.6 Analytical Framework Overview

The analytical framework provides a common language for comparing institutional and Indigenous research ethics across culturally distinct systems. The four concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority direct attention to who or what is ethically implicated, what each system seeks to protect or support, how potential harm is understood, and who has recognized responsibility or a decision making role for the part of the research involved. Applying the same concepts across the literature, comparative cases, Southeast Alaska governance analysis, and interviews allows the dissertation to examine each system through a consistent set of questions while preserving its distinct ethical foundations and responsibilities.

The framework organizes the progression of the three research questions. RQ1 uses the four concepts to compare institutional and Indigenous research ethics frameworks. RQ2 examines how ethical systems, governance processes, and research relationships operate in Southeast Alaska and how ethical legitimacy and trust develop through those relationships. RQ3 brings the conceptual, comparative, legal, and empirical findings together to identify mechanisms and practical actions that improve the governance interface while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and distinct governance responsibilities. Figure 2 summarizes the analytical framework and its relationship to the research questions and objectives.

Figure 2. Analytical Framework Overview

Analytical Framework Overview

Analytic Element	Core Question	Where It Contributes
Core analytic concepts		
Moral units	Who or what is ethically implicated or capable of being harmed?	RQ1; informs RQ2
Ethical goods	What should research ethics protect or support?	RQ1; informs RQ2
Ethical risk	What potential harms threaten those moral units and ethical goods?	RQ1; informs RQ2
Ethical authority	Who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying risks, defining protections, or making decisions?	RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3
Application of the framework		
Comparative analysis	How do research ethics and governance systems in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand compare in the moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority they recognize?	RQ1 and RQ2; informs RQ3
Governance interface and practical recommendations	What mechanisms and practical actions improve the interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems while preserving individual human-subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and distinct governance responsibilities?	RQ3

The framework provides a common analytical language for comparing ethical systems and tracing how they operate in Southeast Alaska research relationships.

1.7 Scope and Boundaries of the Study

This dissertation focuses on nonmedical research involving Tlingit and Haida peoples, Tribal governments, traditional lands, Indigenous knowledge, cultural resources, data, and collective interests in Southeast Alaska. Nonmedical research includes environmental and place based research, social and community research, cultural and historical inquiry, and other research that falls outside conventional human subjects review. Institutional human subjects protections remain part of the analysis when research activities meet the regulatory definition of human subjects research.

The geographic focus is Southeast Alaska, and the Tribal and cultural focus is on Tlingit and Haida peoples and Tribes. The interview evidence, motivating case, legal and governance analysis, and conclusions are interpreted within these contexts. Individual Tribes maintain their own governments, histories, cultural protocols, research priorities, relationships to land, and governance processes. The study recognizes each Tribe as a distinct sovereign government and grounds its findings in the Southeast Alaska setting. The four analytic concepts show potential for transferability to other Tribal and cross cultural research settings: they provide a common framework for examining moral units,

ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority and allow the ethical relationships and governance structures of each setting to emerge on their own terms.

The K̲utí Geohazards Project provides the motivating case for the dissertation. Experiences within K̲utí made the policy problem visible and provide a practical setting for framing the inquiry. The broader analysis draws on comparative research ethics, the Southeast Alaska legal and governance environment, and qualitative interview evidence. The dissertation's conclusions emerge from the interaction of these evidence sources.

The study distinguishes continuing Tribal, cultural, and ethical relationships from contemporary land ownership, jurisdiction, and formal research requirements. Relationships to people, traditional lands, culture, knowledge, and resources remain ethically significant across contemporary patterns of ownership and management. The applicability and form of a Tribe's research requirements depend on its laws, policies, agreements, or governance processes and on the circumstances of the research (43 U.S.C. §§ 1601–1629h; Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government, 522 U.S. 520 (1998); John v. Baker, 982 P.2d 738 (Alaska 1999)). Within these boundaries, the study examines how institutional and Tribal ethical systems operate through distinct responsibilities involving Tribal sovereignty, institutional protections, cultural governance, land access, data governance, and individual participation within Southeast Alaska research relationships.

1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research problem through the K̲utí Geohazards Project, establishes the research goals and questions, presents the four analytic concepts, and defines the scope, significance, and policy relevance of the study.

Chapter 2 develops the literature and comparative foundation. It traces the development of institutional research ethics in the United States, examines Indigenous research ethics and data governance, and considers Northern Canada and New Zealand as comparative settings for understanding how institutional and Indigenous ethical systems recognize moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority.

Chapter 3 examines Tribal sovereignty in the research governance environment of Southeast Alaska. It considers the distinctive Alaska legal context, the relationship among Tribal sovereignty, land ownership and management, traditional lands, institutional research oversight, cultural governance, and the governmental processes through which Tribes engage with research.

Chapter 4 describes the research design and methods. It explains the comparative and policy analysis, participant selection and interviews, qualitative coding and range

analysis, integration of evidence, analytical validation, researcher positionality, and human subjects and data protections.

Chapter 5 presents the interview findings. It examines how institutional review, individual participation, Tribal government, land access, culturally governed knowledge, data governance, trust, reciprocity, and continuing research relationships operate in Southeast Alaska. The findings provide the empirical basis for understanding how institutional and Tribal ethical systems address different dimensions of ethical risk within the same research environment.

Chapter 6 interprets the findings in relation to the comparative, legal, and governance analyses. Through discussion of the findings, it develops the dissertation's account of complementary and coexisting institutional and Tribal ethical systems, examines how moral units and ethical goods shape ethical risk, and considers deliberate mutual recognition as a basis for broader ethical risk coverage. The chapter concludes with implications and practical recommendations for researchers and research teams, Tribal governments, IRBs and universities, and funders.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Comparative Research Ethics

This chapter develops the literature and comparative foundation for examining what different research ethics systems recognize as requiring ethical consideration, what interests receive protection or support, what forms of harm are recognized as ethical risk, and which people, governments, institutions, or cultural relationships carry recognized responsibilities or decision making roles in research. These dimensions correspond to the dissertation's four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority and provide the foundation for Research Question 1. The chapter first traces the development of modern human subjects research ethics and the institutional system that emerged in the United States, then examines Indigenous research ethics, relational accountability, and data governance. Northern Canada and New Zealand provide comparative settings for examining how institutional protections operate alongside Indigenous governance, community interests, relationships to place, knowledge, and data. The chapter concludes by synthesizing recurring questions across these literatures and showing how they give rise to the four analytic concepts before carrying those questions into the Southeast Alaska analysis.

The historical review begins with the postwar development of modern human subjects research ethics, particularly the Nuremberg Code of 1947 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.d.) and the Declaration of Helsinki, first adopted in 1964 (World Medical Association 2024), before turning to the development of the contemporary institutional research ethics system in the United States. The U.S. system did not emerge as a general framework for every ethical relationship created by research. It developed primarily through efforts to protect individual human participants from experimentation, deception, coercion, unequal power, and inadequate consent. The National Research Act of 1974 created the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, whose work produced the Belmont Report and helped shape the federal human subjects regulations later standardized through the Common Rule (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2026a).

Alongside this institutional history, Indigenous scholarship examines research ethics from the experience of peoples and communities whose relationships with research have been shaped by colonialism, extraction, external interpretation, and unequal control over knowledge. Indigenous research ethics brings relationships among people, communities, governments, knowledge, and place into ethical consideration and emphasizes concepts including relational accountability, reciprocity, collective interests, cultural protocol, sovereignty, and governance of knowledge and data (Smith 2012; Wilson

2008; Kovach 2009; Chilisa 2012; Harding et al. 2012). This literature broadens the ethical questions considered in the chapter by examining forms of protection, risk, and decision making that extend beyond the relationship between an institution and an individual research participant.

Northern Canada and New Zealand provide comparative settings in which institutional research ethics operates alongside Indigenous governance, community engagement, place based processes, and data governance. Northern Canada combines national research ethics policy with territorial licensing, Indigenous community engagement, First Nations data governance, and Inuit research governance (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies 2003; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). New Zealand combines conventional research ethics with Māori ethical principles, relationships grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, commonly referred to in English as the Treaty of Waitangi, and Māori data sovereignty (Hudson et al. 2010; Waitangi Tribunal n.d.). The Treaty has Māori and English texts that are not exact translations of one another, a distinction that remains important to its interpretation (Waitangi Tribunal n.d.). This dissertation uses Treaty of Waitangi after this initial reference except where the distinction between the Māori and English texts bears directly on the analysis. The value of these comparisons lies in the different governance mechanisms and ethical assumptions they make visible and in the questions they help carry into the Southeast Alaska analysis.

The chapter follows the development of these questions through the history and literature of research ethics. It begins with the postwar development of modern human subjects protections and the institutional framework that emerges in the United States, then examines Indigenous research ethics scholarship and the growing attention to relationships, collective interests, sovereignty, knowledge, and data. Northern Canada and New Zealand provide comparative settings in which these concerns are expressed through research governance as well as ethical scholarship. Each represents a different governmental and institutional response to the same broad question examined in this dissertation: how research involving Indigenous peoples is governed while recognizing individual protections alongside collective interests, Indigenous knowledge, relationships to place, and Indigenous sources of ethical authority. The differences among these settings make the comparison useful because similar ethical questions are addressed through different legal systems, governments, Indigenous political relationships, and research institutions. The chapter concludes by synthesizing the recurring questions identified across these literatures and showing how they lead to the four analytic concepts used in this dissertation: moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority.

These concepts then provide the foundation for examining the distinctive research governance environment of Southeast Alaska in Chapter 3.

2.1 Development of Modern Institutional Research Ethics

Modern human subjects research ethics developed in response to serious abuses of people participating in research. Nazi medical experimentation exposed through the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial involved prisoners subjected to experiments concerning extreme cold, high altitude, infectious disease, sterilization, and other interventions without voluntary consent and often with severe injury or death (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.d.). The Nuremberg Code of 1947 placed voluntary consent at the center of permissible human experimentation and emphasized scientific necessity, avoidance of unnecessary suffering, proportionality of risk, qualified investigators, and the participant's ability to end participation (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.d.). The World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki, first adopted in 1964, extended these principles into ethical guidance for physicians conducting medical research involving human participants (World Medical Association 2024).

The Nuremberg Code established an influential ethical standard but did not lead directly to a comprehensive U.S. system of research oversight. American research continued to rely heavily on professional self regulation, institutional practices, and investigator judgment. By the 1960s, published evidence showed that serious ethical problems occurred within universities, hospitals, and government research programs. Henry Beecher's 1966 article, "Ethics and Clinical Research," documented 22 examples of published studies in which research participants were exposed to significant risks without adequate disclosure or meaningful consent (Beecher 1966). His analysis demonstrated that ethical problems in human experimentation were present within established research institutions rather than confined to exceptional or disreputable settings.[1]

Several prominent cases reinforced concerns about consent, vulnerability, unequal power, and institutional oversight. The U.S. Public Health Service Study of Untreated Syphilis at Tuskegee, conducted from 1932 to 1972, was designed to observe the natural history of untreated syphilis among Black men. Researchers did not obtain informed consent and did not offer treatment even after penicillin became widely available; community members understood the study as a special government health care program

[1] Beecher's article presented 22 examples of published studies in which investigators exposed participants to serious risks without adequate disclosure or meaningful consent. The examples were drawn from respected research institutions, reinforcing his argument that ethical problems in human experimentation were not isolated exceptions but reflected a broader institutional problem (Beecher 1966; Rothman 1987).

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2024). The Willowbrook hepatitis studies exposed institutionalized children with intellectual disabilities to hepatitis, raising questions concerning vulnerability, parental permission, coercion, and meaningful refusal (DuBois 2020). At the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital in 1963, chronically ill patients were injected with live cancer cells without being informed of what was being administered (Lerner 2004). Research involving incarcerated people similarly demonstrated how dependency, restricted liberty, and unequal power affect meaningful consent and vulnerability to exploitation (Institute of Medicine 2007). These cases strengthened calls for independent institutional protections rather than reliance on investigator judgment alone.

Congress responded with the National Research Act of 1974, creating the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (National Research Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-348; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2026a). Congress charged the Commission with identifying the basic ethical principles that should govern biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects and developing guidance for applying those principles (National Research Act of 1974; National Commission 1979). The Commission's work culminated in the Belmont Report, which articulated the central ethical principles for research involving human participants: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (National Commission 1979).

Respect for persons recognizes individual autonomy and calls for additional protection when autonomy is diminished. Beneficence directs researchers to avoid or minimize harm while seeking potential benefit. Justice concerns the fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of research, including who is selected to participate and who stands to benefit from the knowledge produced (National Commission 1979). These principles helped shape the ethical architecture of institutional review, informed consent, risk assessment, and equitable participant selection within the U.S. human subjects protection system (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46).[2]

The Belmont Report provided an ethical foundation rather than a regulatory system. Federal agencies translated these principles into increasingly formal protections

[2]Belmont's principle of justice becomes important later in this dissertation when considering the timing and structure of research funding. Research involving Tribes can require substantial contributions of staff time, knowledge, review, and relationship building. Chapter 6 considers whether fair distribution of research burdens and benefits is better supported when funders provide time and resources for Tribal engagement while research questions, budgets, methods, and anticipated benefits remain open to influence.

during the following decades. HHS and the Food and Drug Administration revised their human subjects regulations in 1981, and in 1991 HHS and fourteen other federal departments and agencies adopted the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, commonly known as the Common Rule (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2026a; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46). The Common Rule established a shared federal framework for covered human subjects research and placed Institutional Review Boards at the center of institutional review and approval.

The Common Rule has continued to evolve as research methods, data practices, and institutional experience have changed. Federal agencies undertook a major revision beginning in 2017, with the 2018 Requirements becoming generally effective in January 2019 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2021, 2026b). The revisions retained the basic architecture of human subjects protection while making review more proportionate to the level and type of risk involved. Changes included expanded exemption categories, limited IRB review for some exempt research, reduced continuing review for some lower risk research, revised informed consent requirements, broad consent provisions for some secondary uses of identifiable information and biospecimens, and a single IRB requirement for many domestic cooperative studies (Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects 2017; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2026b).

The concept of minimal risk provides an important example of this risk proportionate structure. The Common Rule defines minimal risk as research in which "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort" are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests (45 C.F.R. § 46.102(j)). Minimal risk is a regulatory classification rather than a ceiling on the level of risk an IRB can approve. Research presenting more than minimal risk can receive approval when the IRB determines that the applicable criteria for participant protection are satisfied. Research involving no more than minimal risk may qualify for expedited review when it falls within authorized categories, illustrating how the regulatory system adjusts the intensity of institutional review to the anticipated level and type of risk (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.110, 46.111; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 1998).[3]

[3]The minimal risk standard provides a useful point of comparison with the K̲utí motivating case described in Chapter 1. Concerns raised during the NSF review centered on individual consent, participation by children, and the character of the community gathering. The relationship between those concerns, proportionate assessment of human subjects risk,

The defining purpose of IRB review is protection of the rights and welfare of human research participants. Within the analytical framework of this dissertation, this identifies the individual human subject as the principal moral unit of the U.S. institutional system. Section 46.111 directs IRBs to determine that risks to subjects are minimized, remaining risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits and the importance of the knowledge expected from the research, selection of subjects is equitable, informed consent is appropriately sought and documented, and adequate provisions exist for privacy, confidentiality, and additional safeguards where participants are vulnerable to coercion or undue influence (45 C.F.R. § 46.111).

The regulation defines the scope of IRB risk assessment with additional precision. When evaluating risks and benefits, the IRB considers risks and benefits that result from the research itself. The Common Rule specifically directs IRBs not to treat possible long range effects of applying the knowledge gained through research, including possible effects on public policy, as research risks within the IRB's assigned responsibility (45 C.F.R. § 46.111(a)(2)). This boundary is analytically important for the present study. A research finding can carry significant consequences for a Tribal government, community, resource relationship, or policy interest even when those consequences fall outside the risks to individual participants that the Common Rule directs an IRB to evaluate.

Belmont's three principles operate within this individual participant framework. Respect for persons is expressed through an individual's decision to participate, beneficence through the assessment and management of risks and benefits to participants, and justice through the fair distribution of research burdens and benefits (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. § 46.111). The resulting system provides strong protections for individual participants while establishing a defined ethical and regulatory field for institutional human subjects review.

The institutional setting of IRB review shapes how these protections operate. Federal human subjects regulation applies when particular regulatory, funding, or institutional conditions bring research within its scope, and institutions may voluntarily extend comparable protections beyond the minimum federal requirements (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2026b). Federal funders add their own compliance requirements. NSF, for example, requires covered human subjects research to maintain appropriate IRB approval or exemption status, with noncompliance carrying consequences for the award (National Science Foundation 2026). The institution oversees a participant protection system while

---

and the complementary role of Tribal governance is revisited in Chapter 6.

carrying regulatory, legal, financial, and reputational responsibilities associated with research compliance.

Scholarship on IRBs examines the effects of this institutional position. Gunsalus and colleagues describe “mission creep” when IRBs assume responsibilities beyond human subjects protection, while Whitney examines the extent to which institutional review can become intertwined with institutional risk management (Gunsalus et al. 2006; Whitney 2016). This literature informs the governance interface examined in this dissertation by distinguishing participant protection from other ethical and institutional responsibilities. Complementary governance processes provide pathways for ethical dimensions outside the IRB’s defined participant protection mandate.

The U.S. system has broadened its understanding of harm within the domain of human subjects protection. Federal regulations require additional safeguards when participants are vulnerable to coercion or undue influence and establish additional protections for specific populations, including pregnant women, fetuses and neonates, prisoners, and children (45 C.F.R. § 46.111(b); 45 C.F.R. pt. 46, subpts. B–D). Contemporary research ethics addresses informational risks involving privacy, confidentiality, identifiable information, biospecimens, and secondary use. The revised Common Rule reflects these developments through provisions concerning consent, identifiable private information, biospecimens, exemptions, and secondary research (Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects 2017; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46).

Cases involving Henrietta Lacks and the Havasupai Tribe illustrate how research materials and information can remain ethically consequential after their original collection. Cells taken from Henrietta Lacks during treatment for cervical cancer were used extensively in research without her knowledge or consent, while members of the Havasupai Tribe challenged secondary uses of DNA samples originally collected for diabetes research when those samples were later used for other studies (National Institutes of Health n.d.; Garrison 2013). These cases contributed to broader attention to consent, secondary use, identifiable materials, and the continuing ethical significance of research data and biospecimens.[4]

Contemporary U.S. research ethics has developed a detailed and adaptive system for protecting individual human subjects from coercion, unreasonable research risk, unfair selection, loss of privacy, and misuse of identifiable information. Its strength lies in this

[4] Cases involving Henrietta Lacks and the Havasupai Tribe illustrate different dimensions of this problem. Cells taken from Henrietta Lacks during treatment for cervical cancer in 1951 were cultured and used extensively in research without her knowledge or consent. Decades later, members of the Havasupai Tribe challenged secondary uses of DNA samples originally collected for diabetes research when the samples were subsequently used for other studies, including research concerning schizophrenia and migration (National Institutes of Health n.d.; Garrison 2013).

specialized focus. The Common Rule defines what constitutes a human subject, how risk to that subject is evaluated, the protections required for participation, and the scope of IRB responsibility (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.102, 46.111, 46.116). Research involving Indigenous peoples introduces additional moral units and ethical goods that include Tribal governments, collective interests, culturally governed knowledge, data, community representation, and relationships to place. Indigenous research ethics literature provides the next part of the comparative foundation by examining how those collective, governmental, cultural, and relational dimensions enter ethical research governance (Harding et al. 2012; Parker et al. 2019; Saunkeah et al. 2021).

2.2 Indigenous Research Ethics, Relational Accountability, and Data Governance

Indigenous research ethics literature begins from a history in which much research involving Indigenous peoples and communities was designed, controlled, interpreted, and disseminated through institutions external to those communities. Indigenous scholars describe research as one of the practices through which colonial institutions classified Indigenous peoples, extracted knowledge, interpreted cultures through external categories, and converted Indigenous knowledge into academic or governmental products (Smith 2012; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; Chilisa 2012). Linda Tuhiwai Smith places this history at the center of Decolonizing Methodologies, showing how research became entangled with imperial power and the production of knowledge about Indigenous peoples for outside institutions (Smith 2012). Shawn Wilson develops a relational account in which knowledge is produced through relationships and researchers remain accountable to those relationships (Wilson 2008). Margaret Kovach emphasizes Indigenous epistemologies, story, cultural protocol, and responsibilities associated with working within Indigenous knowledge systems (Kovach 2009). Bagele Chilisa situates these concerns within a broader Indigenous and postcolonial methodological framework that questions the assumption that Western research paradigms provide a universal basis for ethical inquiry (Chilisa 2012).

Relational accountability is a central concept across this literature. Research creates responsibilities through the relationships that make knowledge sharing possible, including how those relationships are established, whether cultural protocols are followed, how knowledge is interpreted, what value is returned, and how information is represented and used after collection (Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009). Ethical conduct extends across the research lifecycle through continuing accountability to the people, communities, knowledge, and relationships involved. Relational accountability broadens the ethical field beyond the interaction between an institution and an individual

participant by bringing collective relationships, knowledge, place, reciprocity, and continuing responsibility into ethical consideration.

American Indian and Alaska Native research ethics literature adds a governmental dimension to this relational framework. Federally recognized Tribes are governments with inherent powers of self government (Bureau of Indian Affairs n.d.; Harding et al. 2012). Harding and colleagues describe research consequences that arise at community and governmental levels and argue for Tribal participation across study design, data collection, interpretation, publication, intellectual property, and data sharing (Harding et al. 2012). Research on Tribal oversight similarly documents governmental and community based processes through which Tribes identify risks, benefits, and research expectations involving their citizens and communities (Around Him et al. 2019; Parker et al. 2019; Kuhn et al. 2024).[5]

Saunkeah and colleagues extend this discussion by distinguishing community harm from the accumulation of harms experienced by individual participants. Research can misrepresent a Tribe, stigmatize a community, make inappropriate claims about Tribal history or culture, or create consequences for collective interests even when individual participants receive appropriate human subjects protections (Saunkeah et al. 2021). This literature brings a broader range of moral units and ethical goods into view by recognizing the Tribe or community as ethically significant alongside the individual participant and by identifying sovereignty, collective wellbeing, accurate representation, cultural continuity, and control over knowledge as interests affected by research (Harding et al. 2012; Parker et al. 2019; Saunkeah et al. 2021).

Saunkeah et al. identify sovereignty and solidarity as concepts for extending research protections to Tribal communities. Sovereignty expresses Tribal self determination and provides a political and legal basis for Tribal participation in governing research that affects the Tribe. Solidarity reflects collective responsibility for community wellbeing, culture, and continued flourishing (Saunkeah et al. 2021). This formulation treats Tribal government as an existing source of governance within the research relationship. Tribal research governance arises through self government and the Tribe's responsibilities to its citizens and community rather than through an institutional designation created by a university or IRB. Related scholarship reaches similar conclusions

[5] Harding and colleagues illustrate this approach through a collaboration between Oregon State University and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The partners developed a material and data sharing agreement addressing ownership, storage, access, analysis, interpretation, publication, intellectual property, and continuing Tribal control over research materials and data. The example matters here because the authors developed the agreement for research involving both human health and natural resource concerns, demonstrating that Tribal research governance extends beyond conventional human subjects review (Harding et al. 2012).

through Tribal sovereignty, community governance, Indigenous ethics, and Tribal research oversight (Harding et al. 2012; Around Him et al. 2019; Parker et al. 2019).

The distinction between individual consent and Tribal or community governance makes these relationships especially clear. Individual informed consent addresses whether a person understands the research and voluntarily chooses to participate. Tribal governmental and community processes address collective and governmental interests tied to Tribal sovereignty, research relationships, use of Tribal programs or records, representation of the Tribe, data, knowledge, and other matters that extend beyond one participant (Harding et al. 2012; Fitzpatrick et al. 2016; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). A systematic review of Indigenous research consent practices found recurring use of both individual and community level processes, reflecting the distinct interests addressed by each (Fitzpatrick et al. 2016). A 2025 NIH intramural policy for covered research involving American Indian and Alaska Native persons similarly distinguishes individual autonomy from Tribal sovereignty and recognizes community based protections and group harm alongside individual human subjects protections (National Institutes of Health 2025).

Individual participation and Tribal governance remain distinct within the same research relationship. An individual decides whether to participate and what personal information to share. A Tribal government separately determines how the Tribe wishes to engage with research involving Tribal programs, records, data, governmental relationships, or other matters within Tribal governance (Harding et al. 2012; National Institutes of Health 2025). Research on Tribal oversight documents multiple forms through which this governance is exercised, including Tribal government review, research boards, Tribal colleges, policies, agreements, and Tribally based organizations (Around Him et al. 2019; Kuhn et al. 2024). Tribal governments can formalize research expectations through their own governmental processes, including laws, ordinances, policies, resolutions, agreements, and other actions authorized by Tribal law. Sitka Tribe of Alaska, for example, states that its Tribal Council exercises constitutional powers through motions, resolutions, or ordinances, while the Navajo Nation Human Research Code provides a code based research governance system (Sitka Tribe of Alaska 2026; Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board 2026). The literature does not point toward one standardized Tribal research review model. Tribes use different governmental mechanisms according to their own institutions, laws, priorities, and responsibilities.

Indigenous data sovereignty extends these governance questions across the life of research information. Scholarship in this field argues that data concerning Indigenous peoples, communities, lands, resources, cultures, and knowledge remain connected to

collective rights and self determination as information is stored, linked, interpreted, shared, reused, and incorporated into new research or decision making (Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Carroll et al. 2020). Research data remain ethically consequential after collection because subsequent uses can affect representation, collective interests, policy, cultural knowledge, and future generations (Carroll et al. 2020; National Institutes of Health 2022).

The First Nations principles of OCAP provide an influential example of Indigenous data governance. Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession developed as a First Nations framework for asserting governance over information concerning First Nations peoples, communities, lands, cultures, and institutions (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2014). Ownership describes the relationship of a First Nation to its cultural knowledge, data, and information. Control concerns decision making over research and information management. Access concerns the ability of First Nations to obtain and manage information about themselves. Possession provides physical or practical control that helps make those principles enforceable (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2014). OCAP is specifically a Canadian First Nations framework rather than a universal Indigenous standard. It is discussed within broader North American Indigenous data governance literature as an influential example of collective governance over information (Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Carroll et al. 2020). Its comparative significance lies in demonstrating that data governance can address collective political and cultural interests beyond individual privacy and confidentiality.

The expansion of open science and data sharing created a parallel institutional emphasis on accessibility and reuse. The FAIR Principles, published in 2016, call for research data to be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable and have become influential within scientific data management (Wilkinson et al. 2016). FAIR addresses important technical and stewardship questions concerning the ability of people and computational systems to locate, access, combine, and reuse data. Its focus remains primarily on the characteristics and usability of data rather than on collective rights, historical power, community benefit, or governance of information concerning Indigenous peoples (Wilkinson et al. 2016; Carroll et al. 2020).

The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance developed as a complement to FAIR. CARE emerged through an Indigenous led international process drawing on Indigenous data sovereignty work from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States (Carroll et al. 2020). Collective Benefit asks whether data practices create value for the Indigenous peoples represented by the information. Authority to Control recognizes Indigenous rights and interests in governing data concerning Indigenous peoples, lands, resources, knowledge, and identities. Responsibility emphasizes respectful relationships,

accountability, and support for Indigenous capacity. Ethics centers Indigenous rights and wellbeing throughout the data lifecycle, including future use and potential harm (Carroll et al. 2020). CARE complements the technical orientation of FAIR by bringing people, purpose, power, collective benefit, and governance into decisions about data.

CARE has influenced research and policy concerning Indigenous data in the United States. Federal guidance on responsible management and sharing of American Indian and Alaska Native participant data recognizes CARE alongside other Indigenous data governance approaches and emphasizes Tribal sovereignty in decisions concerning research information (National Institutes of Health 2022). CARE leaves implementation to Indigenous peoples and governments within their own legal, cultural, and institutional settings (Carroll et al. 2020). Data governance becomes part of the continuing research relationship because decisions concerning access, interpretation, publication, sharing, and reuse remain capable of affecting Indigenous peoples and communities after initial data collection ends.

The U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee's (IARPC) research framework expands the discussion from data governance into the broader conduct of research. IARPC's *Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic*, revised in 2018, offers guidance for responsible and ethical research across disciplines. In 2023, IARPC reframed the guidance principles through the acronym SHARE: Sustain and build relationships, Humble accountability, Advance responsible environmental stewardship, Respect Indigenous knowledges, and Effective communication (Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee 2018; Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee n.d.). The SHARE principles place relationships, accountability, Indigenous knowledge, communication, and environmental stewardship within the ethical conduct of Arctic research.

SHARE focuses on relationships between researchers and Indigenous Peoples. Researchers are directed to establish meaningful relationships with communities and their representatives, determine the desired level of collaboration through discussion with Tribal and community leaders, and establish shared understandings concerning data governance and ownership. The principles recognize that researchers and Arctic residents sometimes understand risks and benefits differently and encourage community participation in research design, planning, data collection, storage, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. They call for respect for Indigenous knowledge, local protocols, harvesting practices, cultural resources, and locally adopted research guidelines, with communication continuing throughout the research process and findings returned to communities in accessible formats (Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee 2018; Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee n.d.).

The progression from FAIR to CARE and SHARE illustrates a widening ethical field surrounding research information and practice. FAIR focuses on the accessibility and technical usability of research data. CARE brings collective benefit, authority, responsibility, and ethics into Indigenous data governance. SHARE extends ethical responsibility across the broader conduct of Arctic research through sustained relationships, accountability, Indigenous knowledge, communication, and stewardship. These frameworks address different dimensions of research rather than serving as substitutes for one another. Different people, governments, and cultural relationships carry responsibilities for different dimensions of the same research activity. This literature provides the Indigenous ethical and governance foundation for the four analytic concepts developed later in the chapter and for the comparative examination of how multiple ethical systems operate within the same research environment.

2.3 Northern Canada: Place, Community, and Indigenous Governance

Northern Canada provides a useful comparative setting because research ethics developed within broader changes in the relationships among Indigenous peoples, governments, land, and research. In Canada, Indigenous Peoples includes three distinct groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, each with distinct histories, cultures, and political and legal relationships; the term First Nations does not include Inuit or Métis (Library and Archives Canada 2025). These distinctions are especially important in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, where Indigenous governments and organizations operate within different treaty, land claim, self government, and territorial arrangements. During the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, modern treaties, comprehensive land claim agreements, self government arrangements, and broader processes of reconciliation expanded and formalized Indigenous roles in decisions concerning lands, resources, governance, and community priorities (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada 2023). Research governance developed within this changing political environment, making Indigenous governments and organizations increasingly visible as governing actors in decisions concerning research, knowledge, land, resources, and community interests.

This political transformation occurred against a longer history of research conducted largely on terms established by institutions outside the North. Researchers commonly entered northern communities from southern universities, government agencies, museums, and scientific institutions to collect specimens, environmental observations, stories, measurements, cultural knowledge, and other information, then returned south to analyze, archive, and publish the resulting knowledge. Research questions and methods were frequently established outside the communities being

studied, while local people had limited influence over interpretation, future use, or whether findings were returned in forms useful to the communities themselves (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies 2003; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). Northern research ethics developed in part as a response to the practical and relational consequences of this history and to growing recognition that research conducted in Indigenous homelands affects more than the relationship between a researcher and an individual participant. Research can implicate Indigenous governments, community priorities, land, wildlife, cultural knowledge, and relationships to place.[6]

A significant early response to these concerns came through the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, which first published its Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North in 1982 and later revised the principles as northern political and governance conditions changed. The guidance emphasized communication with communities, respect for local and Indigenous knowledge, consideration of community interests, return of research findings, and accountability to northern peoples and environments (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies 2003). Its importance lies in recognizing, well before these concerns were fully incorporated into national research ethics policy, that ethical research in the North involved responsibilities to communities and places as well as protections for individual research participants.

Canada established its first Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans in 1998, creating a common national ethics framework for research conducted under the auspices of institutions eligible for funding from the three federal research agencies. The TCPS standardized expectations for individual consent, assessment of risk, confidentiality, and institutional Research Ethics Board review across participating institutions (Medical Research Council of Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 1998). For northern and Indigenous research, the significance of the original TCPS was both what it accomplished and what remained less developed. It strengthened institutional protection of individual research participants, while questions involving Indigenous self determination, collective interests, community governance, Indigenous knowledge, and the political consequences of research continued to develop

[6] A frequently cited Canadian example, although outside the northern territories, involved members of the Nuu chah nulth First Nation in British Columbia who provided blood samples for research on rheumatic disease. The samples were subsequently used for genetic research beyond the purposes originally authorized, prompting strong objections from the community and eventually the return of the samples. TCPS 2 Chapter 9 uses the case to illustrate continuing Indigenous concerns regarding secondary use, community engagement, and control over research materials (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9).

through northern guidance, Indigenous governance processes, and later revisions to the TCPS.

The TCPS subsequently developed into the contemporary national framework for research involving humans conducted under the auspices of institutions eligible for funding from Canada's three federal research agencies, with Research Ethics Boards serving a role broadly comparable to Institutional Review Boards in the United States (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022). In Northern Canada, institutional ethics review is often only one part of the research governance process. Depending on the location, methods, and communities involved, researchers may need territorial research licensing, engagement with First Nations or Inuit governments and organizations, community support or approval, land or resource permissions, and agreements governing Indigenous knowledge or data (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Nunavut Research Institute 2026; Government of Yukon 2026; Government of the Northwest Territories 2024; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). These processes arise from different sources of authority and address different dimensions of the research relationship rather than functioning as substitutes for one another.

Chapter 9 of TCPS 2 is particularly important because it places individual and collective interests within the same ethical framework. It recognizes that community customs and codes of research practice may be written or oral and that ethical obligations may include kinship relationships and responsibilities extending across generations (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). Chapter 9 recognizes Indigenous knowledge systems and community authority in research design and ethical review (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). Individual consent remains essential where individuals participate as research subjects, while community engagement addresses interests that belong to the community, Nation, or collective relationship rather than to a single participant. The chapter describes itself as a step toward establishing an "ethical space for dialogue" on common interests and points of difference between researchers and Indigenous communities and states that it is not intended to override or replace ethical guidance offered by Indigenous peoples themselves (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering

Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9).

Canada's Indigenous research ethics framework sits within a broader national trajectory of constitutional recognition, treaty and self government relationships, and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action in 2015 aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing reconciliation, and Canada enacted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in 2021, requiring the federal government to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples toward consistency between Canadian law and the Declaration (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015; Canada 2021). These developments did not create Indigenous research governance, but they form part of a wider institutional environment in which Indigenous governments, rights, knowledge, and relationships with public institutions are explicitly recognized. The Alaska context follows a different legal and political history, developed in Chapter 3.

Northern Canada illustrates governance through place. Territorial research licensing in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut creates requirements that are distinct from institutional Research Ethics Board review. In Nunavut, researchers conducting health, social science, or natural and physical science research must obtain the appropriate scientific research licence and all other required authorizations before fieldwork begins. The Nunavut Research Institute may deny access to research facilities and support services until researchers document those approvals, and evidence of prior community consultation is part of the licensing process (Nunavut Research Institute 2026). In Yukon, anyone entering the territory for research purposes must obtain a Scientists and Explorers Act licence. Researchers must identify the Traditional Territory in which the work will occur and document communication with the First Nation connected to that Traditional Territory, while research on First Nation Settlement Land requires written confirmation of consultation and consent (Government of Yukon 2026). The Northwest Territories similarly requires at least one territorial research licence or permit, depending on project type, with additional Indigenous land access, federal, territorial, or other permissions required according to the location and methods of the research (Government of the Northwest Territories 2024). These systems demonstrate that research governance in Northern Canada can be triggered by place itself, requiring researchers to account for where research occurs and which governments, communities, and land based authorities are connected to that place. The United States has no comparable general place based research licensing system. U.S. research oversight instead becomes enforceable through particular triggers such as regulated human subjects research, federal funding,

institutional affiliation, land ownership or management, permitting requirements, Tribal law or policy, or other specific sources of authority.

Place based licensing does not constitute Indigenous consent or community approval. Its importance is that it creates an additional governance point where researchers must identify the location of the work, affected communities, governments and authorities connected to the place, and other required permissions. Depending on the project, territorial licensing may operate alongside First Nations or Inuit governance, land agreements, community processes, and institutional ethics review. These processes arise from different sources of authority and address different dimensions of the research relationship.

Data governance provides another example of how Northern Canadian research ethics extends beyond institutional human subjects review. The OCAP principles discussed in the previous section provide a First Nations framework for governing information through Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession, while Inuit research governance has developed through distinct institutions and priorities rather than through OCAP (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2014; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). The National Inuit Strategy on Research, released by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in 2018, calls for Inuit governance in research, greater alignment of research funding with Inuit priorities, Inuit access to and control over data and information, stronger research capacity, and research that produces greater benefit for Inuit communities (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). These approaches make data governance part of a broader question of self determination: who establishes research priorities, who participates in decisions about the research, who controls the resulting information, and whether the work serves the people and communities affected by it.

Northern Canada illustrates a research ethics environment in which protection and governance are distributed across several complementary processes. Research Ethics Board review under the national TCPS framework provides institutional protection for individual human participants, while TCPS 2 Chapter 9 brings Indigenous community interests, knowledge systems, customs, and governance relationships into the national ethical framework (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). Territorial licensing adds a place based form of governance that requires researchers to account for where research occurs and, in varying ways across Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, for the communities and authorities connected to those places (Nunavut Research Institute 2026; Government of Yukon 2026; Government of the Northwest Territories 2024). First Nations and Inuit governance add distinct approaches to community involvement, research priorities,

knowledge, and data, including OCAP and the National Inuit Strategy on Research (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2014; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). Northern Canada shows how individual protection, place, collective interests, Indigenous knowledge, data, and self determination can enter research governance through different but connected pathways. This makes the Canadian experience particularly valuable to the analytical framework of this dissertation: the people and collectives recognized as ethically significant become broader, the goods and harms considered by research ethics expand, and different sources of authority become visible through their distinct responsibilities.

2.4 New Zealand: Māori Ethics, Relationships, and Data Governance

New Zealand provides a second comparative setting in which institutional research ethics operates alongside Māori ethical principles and governance relationships shaped in part by the Treaty of Waitangi. The Māori and English texts of the Treaty are not exact translations, and differences between the texts remain important to its interpretation (Waitangi Tribunal n.d.). Māori ethical concepts likewise carry meanings that do not map completely onto English terminology. Rangatiratanga, for example, is commonly described through self determination, authority, or autonomy, while carrying dimensions of leadership, collective control, status, and responsibility (Waitangi Tribunal n.d.). This section uses concise English explanations where they preserve the meaning needed for the comparison.

Māori research ethics brings relationships, collective wellbeing, tikanga, self determination, and governance of Māori knowledge and data into ethical consideration (Hudson et al. 2010; Te Mana Raraunga 2018; National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019). Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics, developed through the Health Research Council of New Zealand, organizes this ethical framework around four principles: whakapapa, concerning genealogy, relationships, and connectedness; tika, concerning what is right or appropriate; manaakitanga, concerning care, respect, and responsibility toward others; and mana, concerning dignity, standing, authority, and power (Hudson et al. 2010). These principles direct attention to research relationships, appropriate conduct, responsibilities to people and communities, and the way power and decision making operate within research.

Te Ara Tika is especially important for this dissertation because its principles are placed alongside established institutional ethics principles within New Zealand's National Ethical Standards for Health and Disability Research and Quality Improvement. The standards place Māori ethical principles alongside principles including respect for people, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice and explicitly avoid establishing a hierarchy between the ethical traditions. They recognize that the traditions do not necessarily

address the same ethical ground and that consideration of both strengthens ethical discourse (National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019). This arrangement provides a formal institutional example of culturally distinct ethical systems contributing to the same research process while retaining their own ethical foundations.

Kaupapa Māori research provides a related Māori centered approach grounded in Māori values, knowledge, and aspirations. It directs attention to who defines the research problem, whose knowledge shapes the inquiry, who participates in interpretation and governance, and who benefits from the research (Smith 2012). These questions connect research design and conduct to relationships, collective interests, self determination, and the distribution of research benefits rather than limiting ethical consideration to individual participation.

Māori data sovereignty extends these responsibilities across the life of research information. Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, identifies Māori rights and interests in Māori data and emphasizes rangatiratanga, collective benefit, relationships, reciprocity, and guardianship in decisions concerning data (Te Mana Raraunga 2018). Storage, interpretation, access, sharing, reuse, and future applications remain ethically significant because data can continue to affect Māori communities and future generations after the original research interaction has ended. Māori data sovereignty places governance of information within the broader relationship between research, collective rights, and self determination.

New Zealand provides a particularly clear comparative example of institutional and Indigenous ethical principles being brought into the same formal research ethics environment without requiring one ethical tradition to replace the other. Institutional protections retain their role while Māori principles bring additional relationships, responsibilities, forms of wellbeing, and governance interests into ethical consideration (Hudson et al. 2010; National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019; Te Mana Raraunga 2018). For this dissertation, the significance lies in the structure of that relationship: culturally distinct ethical systems can remain identifiable while contributing different perspectives to research design, conduct, benefits, knowledge, data, and continuing responsibility.

2.5 Synthesis: The Emergence of Four Analytic Concepts

The literature reviewed across U.S. institutional research ethics, Indigenous research ethics scholarship, Northern Canada, and New Zealand repeatedly returns to four underlying questions. Who or what is ethically implicated by research? What interests, relationships, knowledge, or forms of wellbeing should research ethics protect or support? What potential harms threaten them? Who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying and addressing those risks within the part of the research

involved? The terms moral units and ethical goods are analytic terms developed for this dissertation from longstanding questions in moral philosophy. Moral units draw on questions of moral standing or moral considerability concerning who or what merits ethical consideration (Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2021). Ethical goods draw on value theory, or axiology, concerning what interests, relationships, values, knowledge, or forms of wellbeing are worth protecting or promoting (Schroeder 2025). These questions provide the conceptual foundation for the four analytic concepts used in this dissertation: moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority.

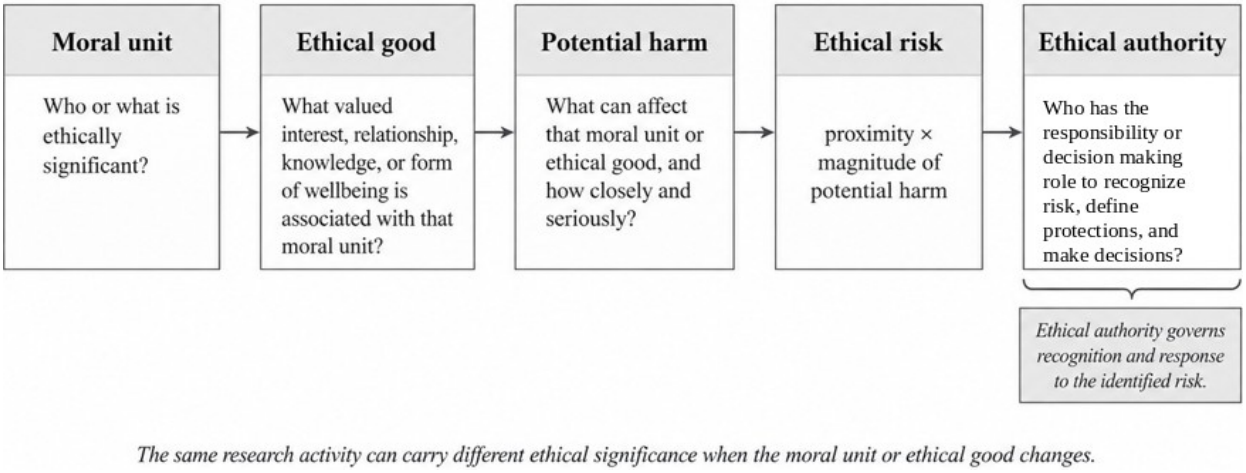
The first question concerns moral units: who or what is recognized as ethically significant and capable of being affected by research. U.S. human subjects protections developed principally around the individual research participant, whose autonomy, welfare, privacy, voluntary participation, and fair treatment are central concerns of Belmont and the Common Rule (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46). Indigenous research ethics scholarship retains the individual while bringing additional moral units into consideration, including Tribes and Indigenous governments, communities, families, collective relationships, future generations, culturally governed knowledge, and relationships to place (Wilson 2008; Harding et al. 2012; Saunkeah et al. 2021). Northern Canadian frameworks similarly recognize Indigenous communities, Nations, and collective relationships alongside individual participation, while Māori ethics places individuals within relationships involving whakapapa, broadly concerning genealogy, relationships, and connectedness, as well as communities, knowledge, and collective wellbeing (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Hudson et al. 2010).

The second question concerns ethical goods: the values, relationships, knowledge, interests, and forms of wellbeing that research ethics seeks to protect or support. The U.S. institutional framework gives strong expression to autonomy, voluntary participation, welfare, privacy, confidentiality, and justice (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46). Indigenous research ethics scholarship brings additional ethical goods into view, including Tribal sovereignty, self determination, reciprocity, relational accountability, cultural continuity, collective wellbeing, appropriate use of knowledge, data governance, and continuing responsibilities to communities and future generations (Smith 2012; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; Harding et al. 2012; Carroll et al. 2020; Saunkeah et al. 2021). Northern Canadian and Māori frameworks similarly emphasize relationships, community benefit, Indigenous knowledge, governance, care, dignity, and continuing responsibility (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies 2003; Hudson et al. 2010; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research

Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Te Mana Raraunga 2018).

The third question concerns ethical risk. In this dissertation, ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit. U.S. institutional research ethics assesses risks arising through participation in research, including physical, psychological, informational, privacy, and other harms to human subjects (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.102, 46.111). Indigenous research ethics scholarship identifies additional forms of potential harm, including erosion of Tribal sovereignty, extraction, cultural misrepresentation, stigmatization, inappropriate disclosure or use of knowledge, disruption of relationships, harm to collective wellbeing, and loss of control over data or future use (Harding et al. 2012; Saunkeah et al. 2021; Carroll et al. 2020). Northern Canadian and Māori frameworks bring community reputation, Indigenous knowledge, collective priorities, relationships to place, data, and future generations into the assessment of research consequences (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018; Hudson et al. 2010; Te Mana Raraunga 2018). The moral units and ethical goods recognized by an ethical system shape which potential harms enter its field of ethical risk.

Figure 3. Ethical Risk Relationship



The same research activity can carry different ethical significance when the moral unit or ethical good changes.

The fourth question concerns ethical authority: who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying risks, defining protections, or making decisions within a particular area of responsibility. Institutional human subjects protection assigns defined roles to Institutional Review Boards, institutions, regulatory agencies, researchers, and individual participants. Individuals retain control over their own voluntary participation, while IRBs carry institutional responsibility for human subjects protections within the scope of applicable regulation and policy (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.109, 46.111, 46.116). IRBs operate within institutions that carry regulatory, legal, financial, and reputational responsibilities associated with research, and scholarship has examined how

that institutional position can broaden review beyond the participant protection mandate (Gunsalus et al. 2006; Whitney 2016). Indigenous research ethics scholarship identifies additional governmental and cultural relationships, including Tribal and Indigenous governments, culturally appropriate knowledge holders, communities, and Indigenous governance over data and knowledge (Harding et al. 2012; Around Him et al. 2019; Saunkeah et al. 2021). Northern Canadian territorial licensing introduces governmental responsibilities connected to place, while TCPS 2 Chapter 9 recognizes Indigenous community governance and research protocols within national ethical guidance (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9).

The four concepts are analytically distinct and closely connected. Tribal sovereignty illustrates their relationship. A Tribe enters the analysis as a moral unit when research affects the political community, its citizens, institutions, representation, or collective interests. Sovereignty and self determination constitute ethical goods associated with that moral unit. Research that interferes with those goods creates ethical risk according to the proximity and magnitude of the potential harm. Tribal government provides the governmental relationship through which the Tribe identifies its interests, establishes research expectations, and determines how it wishes to engage (Harding et al. 2012; Saunkeah et al. 2021). The same underlying issue appears differently depending on whether the analysis asks who is ethically implicated, what should be protected or supported, what is placed at risk, or who has a decision making role within that part of the research.

The comparative evidence shows how these distinct ethical perspectives can occupy the same research environment without requiring a single hierarchy among them. TCPS 2 Chapter 9 describes an “ethical space for dialogue” in which Indigenous communities and researchers can bring different ethical perspectives into research while Indigenous ethical guidance retains its own standing (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). New Zealand’s National Ethical Standards similarly place Te Ara Tika principles alongside established institutional principles and recognize that the two ethical traditions address overlapping and different ethical ground (National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019). These examples show institutional and Indigenous ethical systems remaining identifiable while contributing to the same research process.

This comparative evidence clarifies how ethical authority operates within the analytical framework. Institutional review addresses human subjects protections. Individuals decide whether to participate. Indigenous and Tribal governments address

governmental and collective relationships with research. Cultural owners guide the use of knowledge held through cultural relationships. Landowners and governmental authorities govern access and regulated activities within their responsibilities, while data governance extends responsibility into the storage, use, sharing, and future life of research information. These roles can intersect within one project without becoming interchangeable.

Ethical legitimacy develops through recognition of the moral units, ethical goods, risks, and governance relationships implicated by the research. Formal approval establishes that a project has satisfied the requirements of a particular reviewing or governing process. The comparative literature shows that research often engages several such relationships at once. Early recognition allows information arising through those relationships to influence research questions, methods, data practices, interpretation, dissemination, anticipated benefits, and other consequential decisions while the project remains open to change (Harding et al. 2012; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). This creates a point of connection between ethical traditions: Belmont's principle of justice asks how research burdens and benefits are distributed, while Indigenous ethical frameworks give Indigenous governments and communities a role in identifying what benefit means within their own research relationships (National Commission 1979; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018).

The four analytic concepts provide a common language for examining the broader ethical field while preserving the distinct foundations and responsibilities of each system. Moral units identify who or what is ethically implicated; ethical goods identify what is valued and requires protection or support; ethical risk identifies the proximity and magnitude of potential harm; and ethical authority identifies who carries a recognized responsibility or decision making role in the part of the research involved. The next section carries this comparative framework into Southeast Alaska and identifies the questions it raises for a research environment shaped by Tribal sovereignty, institutional review, individual participation, land ownership and access, cultural governance, and data governance.

2.6 Comparative Foundation for Southeast Alaska

Northern Canada and New Zealand provide comparative evidence that institutional and Indigenous ethical systems can operate within the same research environment through

distinct but connected processes. Northern Canada demonstrates how institutional ethics review, Indigenous governance, territorial licensing, land access, and data governance can address different dimensions of research, while TCPS 2 Chapter 9 creates an "ethical space for dialogue" without replacing Indigenous ethical guidance (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9). New Zealand provides a different institutional arrangement in which Māori ethical principles stand alongside established research ethics principles within national guidance, allowing culturally distinct ethical perspectives to contribute to the same research process (Hudson et al. 2010; National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019).

These comparisons provide analytical possibilities rather than models for direct transfer to Southeast Alaska. Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty, contemporary land ownership and management, institutional research oversight, and enduring relationships to traditional lands developed through a different legal and political history. The comparative cases provide concrete examples of ethical and governance systems operating in parallel or coexistence while retaining distinct responsibilities. They help identify the questions to carry into Southeast Alaska: which moral units and ethical goods a research project engages, what forms of ethical risk arise, which people or governments carry recognized responsibilities or decision making roles in particular parts of the research, and what mechanisms allow distinct responsibilities to recognize and inform one another.

The four analytic concepts provide the common language for that transition. A Tribal government can enter the analysis through the Tribe as a moral unit, sovereignty and self determination as ethical goods, potential harm to those goods as ethical risk, and Tribal government as the governmental relationship through which the Tribe identifies its interests and determines how it wishes to engage. Institutional review, individual participation, land access, cultural governance, and data governance introduce other responsibilities associated with the same research project. Chapter 3 examines how these relationships operate within the distinctive legal, governmental, institutional, and cultural environment of Southeast Alaska.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

Modern research ethics developed through sustained efforts to protect people participating in research from coercion, exploitation, unreasonable risk, breaches of privacy, and abuses of institutional and professional power. In the United States, that history produced a detailed human subjects protection system centered on the individual participant, informed consent, assessment and proportional management of risk, privacy,

fair treatment, and institutional review. The Common Rule gives Institutional Review Boards a defined participant protection role while establishing boundaries around the risks and interests assigned to institutional human subjects review.

Indigenous research ethics scholarship expands the ethical field through additional moral units, ethical goods, and governance relationships. Tribal and Indigenous governments, communities, culturally governed knowledge, data, relationships to place, reciprocity, collective wellbeing, sovereignty, and continuing accountability enter ethical consideration alongside individual participation. Northern Canada and New Zealand provide concrete examples of institutional and Indigenous ethical systems operating within the same research environment through distinct and connected processes. Canada's "ethical space for dialogue" and New Zealand's placement of Māori ethical principles alongside established institutional principles demonstrate that culturally distinct ethical systems can contribute to the same research ethics process while retaining their own foundations and responsibilities.

Across the literature, four recurring questions provide the analytical framework for this dissertation: who or what is ethically implicated by research, what should research ethics protect or support, what potential harms threaten those moral units and ethical goods, and who carries a recognized responsibility or decision making role in the part of the research involved. These questions give rise to moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. The concepts allow individual, collective, governmental, cultural, and relational dimensions of research to be examined through a common framework while preserving their distinct relationships and responsibilities.

The comparative literature illustrates research environments in which institutional review, individual participation, Indigenous government, cultural governance, land and place based processes, and data governance address different dimensions of the same research activity. The significance of these arrangements lies in the broader ethical field they make available to research: distinct processes bring different moral units, ethical goods, potential harms, and responsibilities into consideration. Chapter 3 carries this framework into Southeast Alaska, where Tribal sovereignty, contemporary land ownership and management, institutional research oversight, culturally governed knowledge, data, individual participation, and enduring relationships to traditional lands operate within a distinctive legal and governmental context.

Chapter 3: Tribal Sovereignty and Research Governance in Southeast Alaska

Chapter 2 established a comparative foundation for examining research ethics in Southeast Alaska. Modern institutional research ethics in the United States developed strong protections centered on the individual human participant, while Indigenous research ethics scholarship and the Northern Canadian and New Zealand comparisons bring governments, communities, relationships, knowledge, data, and place more explicitly into ethical consideration. Across these bodies of literature, four recurring questions concern who or what is ethically significant and capable of being affected by research, what values, relationships, knowledge, interests, and forms of wellbeing research ethics seeks to protect or support, what potential harms threaten a moral unit or an ethical good associated with that moral unit, and who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying risks, defining protections, or making decisions within a particular area of responsibility. These questions give rise to the four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. Southeast Alaska provides a distinctive setting in which these concepts intersect with Alaska Native Tribal sovereignty, the land settlement structure created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), federal and state land management, institutional research oversight, and enduring Tlingit and Haida relationships to traditional lands, knowledge, and community.

The legal structure governing land and Tribal authority in Alaska differs fundamentally from the reservation based framework that developed across much of the contiguous United States. Alaska Native Tribes continued to govern their communities throughout the twentieth century even as federal and state institutions often denied, ignored, or contested their status as governments. Their standing as federally recognized Tribes was not formally clarified across Alaska until 1993, and the State of Alaska did not formally recognize federally recognized Tribes in state law until 2022. By that time, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) had already transformed the legal relationship between Alaska Native peoples and their lands. ANCSA extinguished aboriginal title and claims based on Native use and occupancy throughout Alaska, revoked nearly all existing reservations, and placed settlement lands in state chartered regional and village corporations. Congress deliberately rejected the reservation and federal trust land model that linked Tribal governments and territorial land bases used in the continental United States. The resulting corporate system placed ownership of settlement lands outside Tribal governments and left most Alaska Native Tribes without the reservation based territorial land structure through which governmental jurisdiction is

commonly exercised elsewhere in federal Indian law. Alaska Native Tribal governments persisted as political institutions and continued to exercise inherent authority even after federal law had extinguished aboriginal title and placed much of the land associated with their communities within a separate corporate ownership system. The resulting legal framework left most Alaska Native Tribes without the reservation based territorial jurisdiction common elsewhere in federal Indian law, while later court decisions confirmed that the absence of Indian country did not extinguish Tribal sovereignty itself.

The separation of Tribal sovereignty, land ownership, territorial jurisdiction, and governmental recognition has direct consequences for research governance in Southeast Alaska. Permission from a Native corporation, federal agency, state agency, or other landowner establishes access to a particular site and the conditions governing use of that land. Institutional review addresses the protection of individual human participants and compliance with applicable human subjects requirements. Tribal governments bring sovereign responsibilities and governmental interests related to Tribal citizens, Tribal programs and records, representation of the Tribe, and the collection or use of information concerning the Tribe or its community. Cultural knowledge, places, resources, histories, and relationships introduce responsibilities grounded in Indigenous relationships to people, place, and knowledge. A single research project often engages several governance processes and sets of responsibilities at the same time, with each addressing a different dimension of the research. This chapter examines land and access governance, institutional review, Tribal government, individual participation, and cultural relationships separately before considering how they intersect within the research environment of Southeast Alaska.

3.1 Alaska Native Sovereignty and the Distinctive Alaska Legal Context

Alaska's legal context places Tribal government, federal recognition, land ownership, and territorial jurisdiction on separate legal tracks. Alaska Native communities governed themselves before the establishment of United States territorial government and continued to govern through the territorial and statehood periods. Federal recognition of Alaska Native Tribes developed unevenly, with comprehensive clarification of their federally recognized status arriving in 1993 and formal recognition by the State of Alaska following in 2022. By 1993, ANCSA had already extinguished aboriginal title, transferred settlement lands to Native corporations, and left most Tribal governments without the reservation land base commonly associated with Tribal jurisdiction elsewhere in the United States. Understanding Alaska Native sovereignty requires distinguishing the political and governmental relationship between Tribes and their citizens from the land ownership and territorial jurisdiction structures that developed around them. Generations

of sustaining Tribal government through shifting federal and state policies give contemporary Tribes a distinctive and historically grounded perspective on governmental power, ethical responsibility, and the institutional frameworks that govern research.

3.1.1 Federal Recognition and the Government to Government Relationship

Federal recognition in Southeast Alaska grew alongside Native political organization already established across the region. The Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB), founded in 1912, and the Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS), established in the 1920s, organized around civil rights, political participation, and protection of Native lands (Worl 1990, 153–55). Their advocacy helped secure the Tlingit and Haida Jurisdictional Act of 1935, which opened a federal legal pathway for Tlingit and Haida land claims, and supported extension of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) to Alaska in 1936 (Sealaska Heritage Institute n.d.). The land claims effort led to organization of the first Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska in 1938, while the Alaska IRA provided a separate pathway for local Native communities to formalize governments under federal law (Sealaska Heritage Institute n.d.; Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska n.d.). Southeast Alaska communities including Klawock, Kake, and Petersburg subsequently adopted constitutions under the IRA framework (U.S. Department of the Interior 1939, 1950a, 1950b). The regional Tlingit and Haida government and local Tribal governments emerged through related Native political movements while following distinct institutional paths.

The federal recognition of Alaska Native Tribes reached a decisive turning point in 1993. Fourteen years earlier, the Department of the Interior had published the first comprehensive federal list of recognized Tribal entities with government to government relationships and reserved the status of Alaska Native communities for later action (U.S. Department of the Interior 1979, 7235). When Ada Deer became Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs under President Clinton in 1993, Alaska Native Tribal status still awaited clear placement within federal recognition policy. In October of that year, Interior recognized 226 Alaska Native Tribes and affirmed that they possessed the same governmental status, immunities, and privileges as federally recognized Tribes in the contiguous United States through their government to government relationship with the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior 1993, 54364–66). The same federal list contained 318 Tribes in the contiguous United States and 226 Alaska Native Tribes, bringing the national total to 544 and increasing the number of federally recognized Tribes by more than 70 percent. Alaska Native Tribes immediately represented more than two fifths of all federally recognized Tribal governments in the country. The 1993 recognition placed Alaska Native Tribal governments clearly within the federal

government to government relationship and affirmed their standing as political governments within the federal system.

The 1993 recognition carried particular significance for this dissertation because the historic federal list omitted the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Congress corrected the omission through the Tlingit and Haida Status Clarification Act of 1994, reaffirming Tlingit & Haida as a federally recognized Tribe and preserving the separate government to government relationships between the United States and the other federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes (U.S. Congress 1994, §§ 202–204). Congress preserved the governmental standing of the local Tribes within the region and gave local Tribes precedence in federal contracts, compacts, and grants when their service populations overlapped with Tlingit & Haida (U.S. Congress 1994, §§ 204–205). Tlingit & Haida occupies a regional governmental role alongside local Tribal governments whose political relationships with the United States remain their own. Tlingit & Haida and the local Tribes remain distinct sovereign governments with their own constituencies, governmental responsibilities, and relationships with the United States. The regional and local Tribal governments of Southeast Alaska operate within an interconnected political landscape while retaining their distinct governmental standing.

The political debates surrounding Tribal recognition formed part of a longer history of contested relationships between Alaska Native communities and the State. The Molly Hootch litigation of the 1970s challenged an educational system that required many rural Native students to leave their home communities for secondary education while students elsewhere in Alaska attended school locally. The 1976 *Tobeluk v. Lind* settlement required the State to establish local secondary programs across 126 rural communities, placing community continuity and local education more firmly within Alaska's public education system (*Hootch v. Alaska State-Operated School System* 1975; *Tobeluk v. Lind* 1976). In 1991, Governor Walter Hickel revoked the previous administration's Tribal recognition policy and declared that the State opposed expansion of Tribal governmental powers and the creation of Indian country in Alaska (State of Alaska 1991). Following federal recognition in 1993, legislative debate connected Tribal status to Indian country, subsistence, fish and wildlife management, child welfare, and the reach of state jurisdiction (Alaska State Legislature 1995). The State's concurrent subsistence litigation in *Alaska v. Babbitt*, commonly known as the Katie John case, placed control of fish and wildlife resources within the same broader debate over federal, state, and Indigenous relationships to land and governance (*Alaska v. Babbitt* 1995). The political climate extended to language. Alaska voters adopted an official English initiative in 1998 that required English in government functions across a state home to twenty Indigenous languages; portions of the law were later held unconstitutional, and Alaska recognized all twenty Alaska Native languages as

official state languages in 2014 (Alaskans for a Common Language v. Kritz 2007; State of Alaska 2014). Formal state recognition of federally recognized Tribes followed in 2022. Across these decades, Alaska Native communities secured increasing recognition of local government, community continuity, language, and relationships to land and resources within institutions that had long been structured around state and federal systems.

3.1.2 Inherent Tribal Sovereignty in Alaska

The 1993 recognition provides a federal milestone within a much older history of Alaska Native self government. Inherent sovereignty arises from the continuing political existence of Tribes and predates federal recognition. Federal recognition places Tribal governments within a formal government to government relationship with the United States, while IRA constitutions, federal charters, and subsequent statutes provide legal forms through which self government is exercised. The U.S. Supreme Court describes Tribal powers as retained elements of a sovereignty originating in the Tribes themselves (*United States v. Wheeler* 1978, 322–23). Tribal governments continued to organize political life through citizenship, leadership, community institutions, and relationships among their members after ANCSA placed much of the Native land base in corporate ownership. The Alaska Supreme Court later gave this principle legal expression in *John v. Baker*, grounding core Tribal self government in the political relationship between a Tribe and its members and recognizing its exercise outside Indian country (*John v. Baker* 1999, 748–54).

Inherent sovereignty gives Tribal government a distinct place within research relationships in Southeast Alaska. Tribal governments represent political communities, maintain relationships with their citizens, administer programs and records, and carry responsibilities for community interests and continuity. Research involving Tribal citizens, programs, records, representation, or community knowledge engages the governmental relationship between a Tribe and its community. Land ownership and site access operate through the Native corporations, public agencies, and other entities that own or manage the physical research location. Alaska's research environment brings these governmental, community, and land relationships together within the same projects. Research governance involves relationships with Tribal governments arising from the political and community dimensions of the research alongside relationships associated with land access and institutional review.

3.1.3 Alaska Attorney General Bruce Botelho and the State's Changing Tribal Relationship

The change in Alaska's relationship with Tribal governments is particularly visible in the work of Alaska Attorney General Bruce Botelho. Appointed by Governor Walter Hickel in 1994 and retained by Governor Tony Knowles later that year, Botelho served across a

significant change in state Tribal policy (Alaska Department of Law n.d.). Hickel had declared the State's opposition to expanded Tribal governmental powers and the creation of Indian country in Alaska. Following the federal recognition of Alaska Native Tribes in 1993, the Knowles administration reconsidered the State's treatment of Tribal governments. Writing as Alaska Attorney General in January 1996, Botelho described the federal recognition list as a "significant step intended to remove any ambiguity" regarding the Tribal status of Alaska Native communities (Botelho 1996a, 3). His April opinion stated the legal point even more directly: federally recognized Tribes are "political entities," and the State had historically interacted with Native village councils primarily as contractors delivering public services, not as governments (Botelho 1996b, 2).

Botelho's opinions capture Alaska at a moment when federal recognition required the State to reconsider long established assumptions about its relationship with Tribal governments. Earlier Alaska court decisions had questioned the sovereign Tribal status of many Alaska Native villages, giving the federal recognition actions of the early 1990s particular significance for state law and policy. His January analysis traced the 1993 federal list, the 1994 Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act, and contemporary federal court decisions and concluded that federal action had resolved the Tribal status question for the listed Alaska Native governments (Botelho 1996a, 3–6). The State treated Indian country and territorial jurisdiction as separate legal questions while accepting the federally recognized political status of Alaska Native Tribes. Botelho's analysis provides an unusually clear contemporary record of the State distinguishing federally recognized Tribal governmental status from the separate legal questions of Indian country, territorial jurisdiction, and land ownership.

By 2000, the legal position Botelho articulated in 1996 had become executive policy. Administrative Order 186, issued by Governor Tony Knowles while Botelho remained Alaska Attorney General, recognized that Tribes existed in Alaska before both the United States and the State of Alaska, acknowledged their inherent sovereignty, and committed the State to work with Alaska's sovereign Tribes on a government to government basis (State of Alaska 2000). The order expressly revoked Governor Hickel's Administrative Order 125 and grounded state and Tribal relations in mutual respect, Tribal self government, and the principle that effective solutions to local problems are conceived locally (State of Alaska 2000). More than two decades later, the Alaska Legislature placed Tribal recognition into statute. House Bill 123 recognized that the history of Tribes in Alaska predates both the United States and the territorial claims of the United States and Imperial Russia and described the legislation as a recognition of Tribes' "unique role in the state's past, present, and future" (State of Alaska 2022, sec. 1). Codified at Alaska Statutes section 01.15.100, the law formally recognizes every federally recognized Tribe in Alaska

and affirms the existing government to government relationship between those Tribes and the United States (State of Alaska 2022, sec. 2). Botelho's opinions, Administrative Order 186, and the 2022 statute trace Alaska's growing formal recognition of Tribal governments as enduring political institutions and governmental partners.

Federal recognition in 1993, Botelho's 1996 opinions, Administrative Order 186 in 2000, and statutory recognition in 2022 mark changes in how federal and state governments formally related to Alaska Native Tribes. Alaska Native Tribes themselves predate every one of these milestones, Alaska statehood, the United States, and the territorial claims of Imperial Russia (State of Alaska 2022, sec. 1). Their political communities and systems of self government provide a line of continuity from the period before colonization to contemporary government to government relationships. Research in Southeast Alaska enters this governmental landscape, where local Tribes and Tlingit & Haida participate as enduring political institutions with their own constituencies, histories, responsibilities, and relationships. Alaska Tribal sovereignty is grounded in political communities and governmental relationships that extend beyond reservation land. Land ownership in Southeast Alaska follows a different legal history. ANCSA placed much of the Native land base into corporate ownership and reshaped the territorial context in which Tribal governments operate. Section 3.2 turns to that land history and its implications for ownership, jurisdiction, traditional lands, and research relationships.

3.2 ANCSA, Land Ownership, Jurisdiction, and Traditional Lands

ANCSA fundamentally changed Native land ownership in Alaska by extinguishing aboriginal title and transferring approximately 44 million acres to state chartered Native corporations (U.S. Congress 1971, §§ 2, 4). In Southeast Alaska, Native corporation lands, federal and state lands, municipal and private property, Tribal communities, and traditional territories share the same geography. Legal title shapes access, land use, and territorial jurisdiction, while Tribal governments continue to represent their citizens, maintain relationships with traditional lands, protect cultural resources and knowledge, and participate in decisions affecting their communities. Research in Southeast Alaska enters this landscape through relationships with landowners, Tribal governments, communities, cultural knowledge, and traditional places. The sections that follow examine how ANCSA, Indian country, jurisdiction, and continuing relationships to traditional lands shape those interactions.

3.2.1 The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Congress enacted ANCSA amid intense pressure to resolve Alaska Native aboriginal land claims following the 1968 discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope.

Development of the oil fields required an 800 mile pipeline connecting the Arctic to the ice free port at Valdez, and unresolved Native land claims stood in the path of securing the transportation corridor. The Alaska Statehood Act, under which Alaska entered the Union in 1959, entitled the new State of Alaska to select and receive more than 104 million acres of federal land to support its development. Many State selections overlapped lands claimed and used by Alaska Native communities. By 1966 the federal government had halted additional land dispositions, including conveyance of State selections and federal oil and gas leases, pending congressional settlement of Native land claims (Sansonetti 1993, 72–73; Bureau of Land Management n.d.). Settlement of aboriginal title through ANCSA allowed the State of Alaska's land selection program and North Slope development to move forward. ANCSA settled the Native claims through a corporate land model. Congress explicitly called for a settlement completed "without creating a reservation system or lengthy wardship or trusteeship" and expressly declared that "all aboriginal titles, if any, and claims of aboriginal title" based on Native use and occupancy were extinguished, including claims associated with submerged lands and aboriginal hunting and fishing rights (U.S. Congress 1971, §§ 2, 4). In exchange, ANCSA provided $962.5 million[7] and nearly 44 million acres of land. The Act distributed both monetary and land settlements through the corporate structure it created, placing settlement land title and assets in state chartered Native corporations.

ANCSA defined eligibility for settlement benefits through its own statutory categories. For purposes of the Act, "Native" generally referred to a United States citizen with at least one quarter Alaska Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut ancestry, with an alternative based on community recognition when minimum blood quantum was not documented. A "Native village" generally included a listed or qualifying community with at least 25 Natives as of the 1970 census (U.S. Congress 1971, § 3). Eligible villages were required to organize corporations under Alaska state law to receive settlement lands and benefits. Village corporations generally received the surface estate of selected lands, while regional corporations received substantial landholdings of their own and the subsurface estate beneath most village corporation lands. In Southeast Alaska, Sealaska Corporation became the regional corporation, accompanied by village corporations established in communities designated under ANCSA.

Southeast Alaska received different treatment from much of the state because an earlier Tlingit and Haida claims settlement had already provided monetary compensation

[7] The $962.5 million monetary settlement equals approximately $7.9 billion in July 2026 dollars, using the CPI-U for the U.S. city average, all items, not seasonally adjusted: 40.5 for the 1971 annual average and 333.918 for July 2026 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2026a, 2026b).

for part of the region's aboriginal land claims. Section 16 of ANCSA identified ten Southeast Alaska communities for village corporation land entitlements. Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee, and Wrangell were not included. Alaska Natives enrolled from these communities became at large shareholders of Sealaska without receiving local ANCSA corporation land entitlements. The federally recognized Tribes associated with these communities continued as political governments even though ANCSA created no corresponding local corporate landholding for them. Later federal review found no clear explanation in ANCSA or its legislative history for why the five communities were omitted (U.S. Department of the Interior 2023). The omission remains an active issue more than fifty years later. H.R. 41, reintroduced in 2025, passed the U.S. House in June 2026 and would establish corporations and land entitlements for the five communities (U.S. Congress, House 2026). The resulting pattern of corporate ownership reflects ANCSA settlement land distribution and exists alongside Tribal communities and Indigenous relationships to place. Native corporations and Tribal governments coexist throughout Southeast Alaska as institutions created for different purposes and grounded in different relationships to land, citizens, shareholders, and community.

3.2.2 Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal Governments

In many Southeast Alaska communities, a Tribal government, a village ANCSA corporation, and a municipal government coexist within the same small community and often represent overlapping groups of the same people. Tribal citizens are frequently village corporation shareholders and municipal residents, and many hold shares in Sealaska as the regional ANCSA corporation. Each institution serves a different purpose. Tribal governments represent political communities of Tribal citizens and carry governmental, cultural, and community responsibilities arising from inherent sovereignty. Village ANCSA corporations hold and manage local corporate lands and assets for their shareholders, while Sealaska holds regional lands, subsurface interests, and other corporate assets for its shareholders. Cities operate as political subdivisions of the State of Alaska, provide local public services, and receive state operating and community assistance through Alaska's municipal government system (State of Alaska 1956, art. X). A village with only a few hundred residents often contains two governments and a village corporation, with many of the same people participating in each as Tribal citizens, shareholders, municipal residents, elected officials, employees, and community members.

Kake provides a clear Southeast Alaska example of these overlapping institutions within a single small community. The Organized Village of Kake is a federally recognized Tribal government whose responsibilities include social services, education, natural resources, cultural preservation, subsistence, and relationships with its Tribal citizens

(Organized Village of Kake n.d.). Kake Tribal Corporation is the local village ANCSA corporation, holding and managing corporate lands and pursuing economic benefits for its shareholders, who participate in Sealaska as the regional ANCSA corporation (Kake Tribal Corporation n.d.; Sealaska n.d.a). The City of Kake operates as the municipal government, providing public services and infrastructure for residents of the community (City of Kake n.d.). The Organized Village of Kake itself describes the Tribe, City, and corporation as playing "different parts in helping to take care of our community" (Organized Village of Kake n.d.). Kake residents move among these institutions as Tribal citizens, corporation shareholders, municipal residents, elected leaders, employees, and community members. The three institutions serve many of the same people while carrying different responsibilities for government, land and corporate assets, public services, culture, and community life.

The coexistence of Tribal governments, village ANCSA corporations, and municipal governments gives Southeast Alaska communities an institutional structure in which legal title to land and Tribal governmental relationships with citizens and communities often reside in different entities. Village corporations hold legal title to much of the Native land conveyed through ANCSA, while Tribal governments continue their political relationships with Tribal citizens and communities across the same geographic setting. The overlap becomes especially important when questions of land ownership, Indian country, and Tribal self government are considered together. *Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* and *John v. Baker* provide the clearest legal explanation of how those relationships operate in post ANCSA Alaska.

3.2.3 Indian Country and Tribal Self Government after ANCSA

Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government brought the territorial consequences of ANCSA before the U.S. Supreme Court. Before ANCSA, approximately 1.8 million acres surrounding Venetie and Arctic Village had been held as the Venetie Reservation. ANCSA revoked the reservation, and the associated Native corporations received the former reservation lands in fee. The corporations later transferred title to the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. When the Tribe imposed a tax on a contractor constructing a school on Tribal land, the dispute turned on whether the former reservation remained Indian country for purposes of territorial jurisdiction (*Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* 1998, 523–27).

The Supreme Court held that the land did not qualify as Indian country because ANCSA had removed the federal set aside and federal superintendence required for a dependent Indian community under federal law (*Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* 1998, 527–34). The Tribe itself owned the land at the time of the case. The

Court treated property ownership and Indian country status as separate legal questions, with Indian country status providing the territorial basis for the taxation power at issue. Venetie placed ownership, Indian country, and territorial jurisdiction on separate legal tracks within the post ANCSA landscape.

Federal land into trust policy introduced another legal pathway after Venetie. In 2014, the Department of the Interior amended 25 C.F.R. part 151 by removing the provision that generally excluded Alaska lands from the discretionary trust acquisition process. The change opened a parcel specific application pathway for eligible Alaska Native Tribes. A trust acquisition places title with the United States in trust for the benefit of the Tribe, providing federal protection for the land and, depending on the parcel and applicable law, supporting governmental authority associated with trust land and Indian country (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs 2014; 25 C.F.R. pt. 151). The 2014 change reinforced the distinction among fee ownership, trust status, Indian country, and Tribal governmental sovereignty.

Interior's legal interpretation changed again in 2026. Solicitor Opinion M-37087 withdrew the 2022 opinion affirming the Secretary's Alaska land into trust authority and reinstated M-37064 as binding Department policy (U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor 2026). In August 2026, the Ninth Circuit noted that Interior was operating under a recommendation not to accept land into trust applications in Alaska and remanded litigation involving a Juneau parcel without deciding the underlying statutory authority (State of Alaska v. Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska 2026). As of September 2026, the 2014 regulatory change remains an important part of the legal history, and current Interior policy again directs the Department away from accepting Alaska applications. The shifting federal position makes the legal distinctions among ownership, trust status, Indian country, and Tribal sovereignty especially important.

The Alaska Supreme Court addressed Tribal self government from another direction the following year in *John v. Baker*. The case arose from a child custody dispute between Tribal members heard by the Northway Village Tribal Court. The court recognized Alaska Native Tribes as political communities possessing "inherent, non-territorial sovereignty" over core matters of internal self government and grounded that sovereignty in the relationship between the Tribe and its members (*John v. Baker* 1999, 748–56). The decision gave legal expression to a central feature of the Alaska setting: ANCSA altered the territorial land base, while core Tribal self government continued through the political relationship between a Tribe and its citizens.

For Alaska Native Tribes, sovereignty is first a relationship of government within a political community. Tribal governments determine citizenship, select leaders, organize

governmental institutions, govern internal relations, administer Tribal programs and records, resolve matters within their governmental competence, and represent their citizens in relationships with other governments. These functions arise from the continuing political relationship between the Tribe and its citizens independent of ownership of a particular parcel of land. Tribal governments carry important responsibilities for cultural programs, resources, and community interests, while cultural knowledge and responsibilities extend through clans, families, knowledge holders, and other Indigenous relationships. Territorial jurisdiction adds another dimension of governmental power when the legal status of land supports it. Baker establishes that the core governmental relationship itself continues outside Indian country.

Venetie and Baker address different dimensions of the same post ANCSA landscape. Venetie explains how land status shapes territorial jurisdiction, while Baker explains how Tribal self government continues through the political relationship between a Tribe and its citizens. Alaska Native Tribes remain sovereign governments because they remain political communities with citizens, governing institutions, and responsibilities of self government. Land ownership establishes property rights, and Indian country status provides a territorial basis for additional governmental powers. Alaska's legal structure places political community, property ownership, and territorial jurisdiction on related but distinct legal tracks. For research, these distinct legal tracks intersect with land access, Tribal government, cultural relationships, and community interests within the same project.

3.2.4 Land Ownership and Research Relationships

The legal separation of land ownership and Tribal government shapes how research proceeds in Southeast Alaska. ANCSA corporation lands are private property, and access beyond established public easements requires permission from the corporation that owns the land (Alaska Department of Fish and Game n.d.). Landowner permission establishes legal access to the property and the conditions governing its use. A research project involving Tribal citizens, Tribal programs or records, representation of the Tribe, or other governmental interests engages a relationship with the local Tribal government. Research involving culturally governed knowledge or resources engages clans, families, knowledge holders, or other cultural owners whose responsibilities derive from their relationships to the knowledge, place, history, or cultural resource involved. The landowner, Tribal government, and cultural owners enter the research relationship through distinct roles.

Research on ANCSA corporation, federal, state, municipal, or private land engages corresponding land access requirements. The landowner or managing agency establishes access and conditions governing use of the research site. Tribal governments engage

through relationships to citizens, communities, programs, cultural resources, and matters affecting Tribal interests. Federal policy similarly distinguishes consultation with Alaska Native corporations concerning corporation lands and resources from the government to government relationship maintained with federally recognized Tribes (U.S. Department of the Interior 2012). Institutional review addresses the protection of individual human participants when research involves people. A single project often engages several governance processes because land access, Tribal government, and human subjects protection each address a particular dimension of the research.

Traditional lands add another relationship to place beyond contemporary legal title. Tlingit and Haida communities maintain histories, cultural practices, knowledge, subsistence relationships, and responsibilities connected to lands and waters now divided among Native corporations, public agencies, municipalities, and private owners. Section 3.2.5 examines how continuing relationships to traditional lands shape the research context across contemporary patterns of property ownership.

3.2.5 Traditional Lands and Cultural Relationships to Place

Traditional lands in Southeast Alaska are grounded in enduring connections among people, place, history, knowledge, subsistence, and community. Tlingit and Haida connections to land and water long predate contemporary systems of property ownership and continue across lands now held by Native corporations, public agencies, municipalities, and private owners. In *Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States*, the U.S. Court of Claims documented an extensive system of land and water use organized through clans and local communities. The court described well defined clan territories encompassing fishing streams, coastal waters and shores, hunting grounds, berrying areas, sealing rocks, village sites, and routes into the interior. Tlingit and Haida law and custom governed access, use, and transfer within these territories (*Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States* 1959, 177 F. Supp. 452). The Court of Claims later summarized its finding that Tlingit and Haida people had established aboriginal title through exclusive use and occupancy of Southeast Alaska “from time immemorial” (*Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States* 1968, 781). ANCSA subsequently extinguished aboriginal title as a federal legal interest. The histories, knowledge, cultural practices, subsistence relationships, and responsibilities connecting Tlingit and Haida communities to these lands and waters continued across the ownership system created by ANCSA.

Contemporary Tlingit and Haida connections to traditional lands remain expressed through subsistence, stewardship, cultural practice, language, community history, and knowledge tied to particular places. Tribal governments support cultural resources, subsistence, environmental stewardship, and community interests associated with

traditional lands and waters. Clans, families, and knowledge holders maintain responsibilities connected to particular places, histories, names, resources, and forms of knowledge. Contemporary property ownership operates alongside these continuing practices. Sealaska, for example, describes stewardship of Southeast Alaska lands and waters as integral to the heritage and culture of present and future generations and actively incorporates hunting, fishing, natural harvesting, and cultural uses into contemporary management of its corporate lands (Sealaska 2021; Sealaska n.d.b). Sealaska's policies provide a contemporary example of corporate ownership supporting longstanding cultural and subsistence relationships to place. Traditional lands remain part of the social, cultural, and ecological relationships connecting people, land, water, community, and future generations.

3.3 Institutional, Regulatory, and Governmental Research Pathways

Research in Southeast Alaska moves through institutional, regulatory, land management, and governmental processes shaped by the people, places, resources, and knowledge involved in a project. Research involving human participants and subject to institutional human subjects requirements enters institutional review and informed consent processes. Federal funding subjects a research project to the requirements of the sponsoring agency and the conditions attached to the award, including expectations for project administration, reporting, data management, and compliance. Field activities engage land access, permitting, and resource management requirements associated with the research location and activities. Research involving Indigenous Knowledge engages responsibilities concerning cultural ownership, permission, appropriate use, protection, and continuing relationships with the people and cultural owners connected to that knowledge. Each pathway addresses a particular dimension of the research and connects the project with the people or institutions responsible for that dimension.

3.3.1 Institutional Review and Human Subjects Protection

Institutional review provides the primary formal process for protecting individual participants in covered human subjects research. As described in Chapter 2, modern institutional research ethics places particular emphasis on the protection of individual human participants. Under the Common Rule, research involving living individuals enters human subjects review when investigators obtain information through interaction or intervention or obtain identifiable private information (45 C.F.R. § 46.102). IRBs evaluate risks to participants, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality and establish the conditions governing recruitment, consent, data collection, and management of identifiable information.

3.3.2 Federal Funding and Agency Requirements

Federal involvement adds requirements associated with the agency, funding program, land, or resources connected to the research. Federal grants and agreements establish conditions for project administration, reporting, data management, and compliance. Federal land management is especially important in Southeast Alaska, where the U.S. Forest Service manages approximately 16.7 million acres through the Tongass National Forest, encompassing about 80 percent of the region (U.S. Forest Service 2025). Research on Tongass lands is subject to Forest Service requirements associated with the project's location and activities. The prominence of federal land in Southeast Alaska makes agency requirements a common part of the institutional setting in which field research occurs.

3.3.3 Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Resource Considerations

Research involving Indigenous Knowledge requires attention to who holds or owns the knowledge, how it is appropriately shared, and what responsibilities accompany its use. Knowledge about places, resources, histories, names, practices, and community experience is often held through culturally defined relationships among individuals, families, clans, communities, and generations. In Tlingit culture, clan ownership extends to particular stories, songs, names, crests, and other forms of cultural property described as at.óow, a term for clan owned property and associated rights and responsibilities (Dauenhauer 1975; Sealaska Heritage Institute 2015). A knowledge holder entrusted to share a clan story does so within continuing clan ownership of the story. Recording, publication, attribution, circulation, and reuse of that knowledge involve the ownership, relationships, and cultural protocols associated with it. Researchers are responsible for determining who owns or governs culturally held knowledge before using it. When ownership is not already known, the researcher should ask the Tribe involved, knowledgeable Tribal citizens, Elders, or knowledge holders to help identify the clan, family, or other cultural owner and the protocol through which permission is established. Once the cultural owner is identified, the researcher follows that owner's protocols to determine who is authorized to grant permission for the proposed use. Culturally legitimate permission follows the clan, family, or other customary relationship governing the knowledge. The authorized person or process is determined within that relationship. For Tlingit clan property, one form of permission is a temporary use right granted by the owning clan for a specific purpose, with continued recognition of clan ownership and limits on subsequent transfer or reuse (Sealaska Heritage Institute 2015). Individual consent from the person sharing the knowledge addresses participation in the research, while permission from the cultural owner addresses the rights and responsibilities attached to the knowledge itself.

Tlingit and Haida knowledge is deeply connected to their lands, waters, communities, and histories. Place names preserve accounts of events, use, ownership, travel, and relationships that extend across generations. Knowledge of harvesting areas, cultural sites, waterways, clan histories, and subsistence practices carries meaning through the histories and relationships embedded in those places. Researchers who record, map, interpret, or publish this knowledge enter a living cultural context and collect information embedded within that context. The meaning and appropriate use of the knowledge depend on who holds it, the place involved, the relationships represented by it, and the responsibilities carried through those relationships. Cultural resources encompass places and landscapes whose significance is carried through names, stories, harvesting practices, clan histories, and continuing relationships that connect contemporary communities with earlier generations and responsibilities extending into the future.

Researchers working with Indigenous Knowledge carry these responsibilities through the life of the project. Once the ownership and permissions are established, decisions about interpretation, representation, storage, publication, return of research products, and subsequent use remain connected to the cultural relationships governing the knowledge. Tribal governments provide an important point of engagement for community and governmental interests, records, programs, and representation, while clans, families, knowledge holders, and other cultural owners determine appropriate use of knowledge governed through their own cultural relationships and protocols. Responsible research follows these distinct processes across the project, with subsequent uses remaining subject to the ownership, permissions, and protocols governing the knowledge.

3.4 Tribal Government and Research Governance

Researchers working with Tribal citizens, communities, programs, knowledge, or traditional lands enter places and relationships connected to sovereign Tribal governments. In Southeast Alaska, local village Tribes and Tlingit & Haida are federally recognized sovereign governments, each with its own citizens, government, history, and relationships to the communities and places involved in research. Respectful research practice begins with communication with the Tribal government involved to learn how the Tribe expects research involving its citizens, community, governmental interests, or traditional lands to proceed. Researcher engagement with a Tribe resembles the respect extended when entering another sovereign nation: contact the government, learn the local expectations, and proceed as a respectful guest and good neighbor.

The Tribal government provides a governmental point of connection between the researcher and the sovereign political community involved in the research. Depending on the Tribe and the project, that relationship takes forms such as formal review or approval, council action, resolutions or ordinances, memoranda of agreement (MOAs) or memoranda of understanding (MOUs), established research policies, communication with Tribal staff or leadership, or another process defined by the Tribe. Tribal governments help researchers understand local expectations, identify appropriate governmental and cultural contacts, recognize potentially sensitive subjects, and establish relationships before research begins. Tribal governments often hold governmental records, program information, local histories, and community context beyond institutional, published, or public sources and assist researchers in identifying additional clan, family, cultural owner, or knowledge holder relationships when those are implicated. Engagement with the Tribe strengthens the research by allowing Tribal priorities, local knowledge, experience, and concerns to enter the project through a direct governmental relationship. Respect for Tribal sovereignty means recognizing each Tribe as a government and allowing that government to determine its own relationship to the research. Tlingit & Haida and the local Tribal governments of Southeast Alaska each retain their own sovereign governmental standing; each speaks and acts for its own political community. Researchers engage each government according to its relationship to the citizens, community, programs, data, places, or other governmental interests involved in the project.

3.4.1 Tribal Research Governance in Practice

Tribal research governance becomes concrete when a project asks something of the Tribe. Researchers seek access to Tribal records or programs, use Tribal data, involve Tribal staff, identify the Tribe in publications, request assistance reaching community members, or invite the Tribe to participate as a research partner. Tribal governments establish how their own programs, records, staff, data, name, and institutional participation are used. Depending on the Tribe and the project, the path includes direct work with program staff or administrators, council action, a resolution, a written agreement, or a formal research policy. Beginning with the Tribe allows researchers to follow the processes that the Tribe uses and brings local information and context into the research.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska illustrates a formalized approach to research governance. The Tribe maintains a Research Policy and Research Misconduct Policy and operates the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Environmental Research Laboratory, which conducts environmental monitoring and research focused on traditional marine foods, harmful algal blooms, shellfish toxins, and ocean conditions (Sitka Tribe of Alaska n.d.a, n.d.b). The Tribe works with universities and other research partners, maintains long term environmental data,

and draws on contributions from Tribal citizens. Sitka illustrates substantial Tribal research capacity supported by staff, policy, scientific infrastructure, and partnerships.

Other Tribal governments work within far more limited capacity. Many small Alaska Native communities rely on only a few staff to carry a broad range of governmental functions and community services, and staff time is often consumed by immediate needs involving health, safety, infrastructure, housing, food security, grants, and basic program delivery (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium 2024). Interest in research often coexists with very little capacity to assist an outside researcher. A request to review a proposal, locate participants, attend meetings, or help design a study competes with the daily work of making sure essential community needs are met. Limited participation in a research project often reflects the practical limits of an under resourced government even when the Tribe wants to know what research is occurring in its community or traditional lands.

Researchers should budget for the time and expertise they request from Tribal staff, leaders, Elders, and knowledge holders. Research budgets should account for Tribal staff time or formal participation when a project requires it, reimburse project related costs, and provide appropriate honoraria for Elders, knowledge holders, and other community contributors. Compensation recognizes the time and expertise contributed to the research. Tribal approval and individual participation remain independent decisions. Researchers carry the responsibility for initiating contact, providing clear and concise information, allowing sufficient time for Tribal consideration, and asking what level of involvement the Tribe wants. For some projects, the Tribe wants active collaboration; for others, keeping the Tribal government informed and maintaining a clear avenue for questions, concerns, and local information provides the appropriate level of engagement.

Formal research policies represent one way Tribal governments organize research. Councils, committees, administrators, program staff, resolutions, agreements, and project specific processes provide other pathways. The form reflects the government, project, and community involved, producing a range of Tribal research review approaches. Direct engagement allows researchers to learn how each Tribe wants to work with the project. Engaging the Tribe involved directly recognizes it as a sovereign government in its own right.

3.4.2 Individual Participation and Tribal Government Responsibilities

Individual consent and Tribal governance operate in parallel within the same research project. Individual consent governs a person’s decision to participate, what personal information they share, and the agreed terms for its use. Tribal governance addresses the relationship between the research and a sovereign political community, including governmental interests involving Tribal citizens, programs, records, representation, data,

and other matters within the Tribe's responsibilities. The two processes address different moral units and ethical goods and bring different dimensions of ethical risk into consideration. Individual participants remain moral units whose autonomy, welfare, privacy, and voluntary participation require protection. The Tribe enters the ethical field as a sovereign political community with governmental responsibilities for its citizens and collective interests, including concerns about how individual Tribal citizens are treated, represented, or affected by research. Tribal governmental concern for its citizens operates alongside each individual's authority to decide whether to participate. Each process brings the people, interests, risks, and decision making responsibilities associated with its role into the research.

Parallel individual and Tribal processes become especially important when information contributed by individuals is used to describe or interpret a wider Tribal community. A participant speaks from personal experience and controls their own participation. Research that describes or draws conclusions about the Tribe, its community, or matters of collective significance requires engagement with the Tribal government. Knowledge governed through clans, families, or other cultural relationships brings an additional set of protocols into the same project. Individual, Tribal, and cultural processes each address the people or interests directly connected to the research.

A research project concerning a culturally significant place illustrates how these processes operate in parallel. Tribal citizens who participate in the study make their own decisions about participation and personal information. The Tribal government addresses the project's governmental relationship with the Tribe, provides local and historical context, and communicates matters the researcher should understand about the place and its significance. Clan, family, or other cultural owners establish permissions and protocols governing culturally owned knowledge associated with the site. Landowners establish access where fieldwork occurs on property they own or manage, and applicable governmental agencies govern regulated activities within their responsibilities. Institutional review addresses protections associated with individual human participation. Each process brings different moral units, ethical goods, potential harms, and decision making responsibilities into consideration within the same research project. The processes operate through distinct relationships while collectively broadening the ethical field addressed by the research.

3.5 Synthesis: Research Governance in Southeast Alaska

Research governance in Southeast Alaska reflects the distinctive history of Tribal government, Native land settlement, cultural relationships, and institutional research ethics. Alaska Native Tribes predate federal recognition, Alaska statehood, and the

territorial claims that preceded the United States. Their continuing political communities provide the foundation for contemporary Tribal government, while federal recognition acknowledges their governmental status and government to government relationship with the United States. ANCSA transformed contemporary legal ownership of Native lands by conveying settlement lands to regional and village corporations (43 U.S.C. §§ 1606–1607). Today, only one of Alaska's 229 federally recognized Tribes has a federal Indian reservation, leaving 228 of 229 Alaska Native Tribes without reservation based territorial jurisdiction (Bureau of Indian Affairs n.d.a, n.d.b). Tribal sovereignty continued through the political relationships between Tribes and their citizens, while Tribal communities, cultural relationships, and enduring relationships to traditional lands remained present across a landscape divided among corporate, federal, state, municipal, and private ownership (*Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* 1998; *John v. Baker* 1999).

Research in Southeast Alaska brings several distinct forms of governance and responsibility into the same environment. Alaska Native corporations and other landowners establish access to property they own or manage. Government agencies administer permits and regulated activities within their responsibilities. Institutional review addresses protections associated with individual human participation, and individuals decide whether and how they participate. Tribal governments address the governmental relationship between research and sovereign political communities, including interests involving Tribal citizens, programs, records, representation, data, and other matters within Tribal responsibilities. Clans, families, knowledge holders, and other cultural owners establish permissions and protocols governing culturally held knowledge and resources. These processes operate through distinct relationships and address different dimensions of the same research project. Interaction among these processes can create opportunities for researchers and Tribes to co construct research questions, methods, interpretation, and application.

The four analytic concepts clarify how these relationships enter ethical consideration. Moral units identify who or what is ethically significant and capable of being affected by research. In Southeast Alaska, those moral units include individual participants, Tribes as sovereign political communities, clans, families, future generations, culturally governed knowledge, and relationships to culturally significant places. Ethical goods identify the values, relationships, knowledge, interests, and forms of wellbeing that research ethics seeks to protect or support. These include individual autonomy and welfare, Tribal sovereignty and self determination, culturally governed knowledge, accurate representation, collective wellbeing, relationships to place, data governance, cultural continuity, and continuing relationships across generations. Ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good

associated with that moral unit. In Southeast Alaska research, ethical risk arises through potential harm to individual participants, misrepresentation of a Tribe or community, erosion of sovereignty, inappropriate use or disclosure of culturally governed knowledge, disruption of relationships, loss of control over data or future uses, or effects on culturally significant places and resources.

Ethical authority identifies who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying risks, defining protections, or making decisions within a particular area of responsibility. Individual participants determine whether they participate and what personal information they share. Institutional review carries responsibility for human subjects protections within its institutional and regulatory mandate. Tribal governments act through their governmental relationships with their citizens and political communities. Cultural owners determine appropriate uses of knowledge governed through clan, family, or other cultural relationships. Landowners determine access to property, and governmental agencies administer regulated activities within their legal responsibilities. Data governance involves additional individual, Tribal, cultural, institutional, and contractual relationships depending on the information and circumstances involved. These roles intersect within one project while retaining their distinct foundations and responsibilities.

The Southeast Alaska research environment requires researchers to recognize which relationships a project engages and to work through the processes associated with them. Institutional approval, individual consent, Tribal engagement, cultural permission, land access, agency authorization, and data governance address different dimensions of research. Direct communication with Tribal governments provides a practical starting point when research involves Tribal citizens, governmental interests, traditional lands, or other relationships with a Tribe. Culturally governed knowledge requires additional inquiry when the appropriate clan, family, knowledge holder, or other cultural owner is not already known. Recognizing these distinctions allows the people, governments, institutions, and cultural relationships connected to the research to inform their parts of the project.

Chapter 3 establishes the legal and governance setting in which the empirical study is situated. Chapter 4 describes the research design and methods used to examine these relationships, and Chapter 5 presents participant accounts of how institutional review, individual participation, Tribal government, land access, cultural governance, data governance, trust, reciprocity, and continuing research relationships operate in practice. Those findings provide the empirical basis for evaluating how the distinct responsibilities identified in this chapter function within Southeast Alaska research relationships.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methods

4.1 Research Design and Overall Approach

This dissertation uses an exploratory qualitative and comparative policy analysis design to examine research ethics, Tribal sovereignty, and ethical responsibility in Southeast Alaska. The K̲utí Geohazards Project serves as the motivating case. Experiences within K̲utí made visible practical questions about how institutional research requirements, Tribal government, research relationships, and ethical responsibility operate within the same research environment and provided the starting point for the broader inquiry.

The study draws on three primary forms of evidence: analysis of the Southeast Alaska legal and governance context, comparative examination of institutional and Indigenous research ethics frameworks in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand, and semi structured interviews with individuals experienced in Tribal research relationships and governance. These evidence sources are examined through the study's four analytic concepts of moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority. The four concepts provide a common framework for examining who or what receives ethical consideration, what values and relationships research ethics seeks to protect, what forms of harm or ethical risk become visible, and who has the recognized responsibility or decision making role for identifying risks, defining protections, or making decisions within a particular area of responsibility. The analysis allows patterns of convergence, difference, responsibility, and relationship among the examined ethical and governance processes to emerge.

4.2 Study Context and Case Selection

Southeast Alaska provides the geographic and governance context for this study. The study focuses on Tlingit and Haida peoples and Tribal governments across a region that includes 20 federally recognized Tribal governments (Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska 2025). Research in Southeast Alaska occurs within a governance environment that includes Tribal governments, federal and state agencies, municipalities, Alaska Native corporations, universities, regional organizations, private landowners, and other institutions. These actors hold distinct responsibilities and relationships to particular dimensions of the same research activity.

Southeast Alaska was selected as the study setting because the research problem emerged through the K̲utí Geohazards Project and the research governance relationships surrounding that work. Within the region, Tribal sovereignty, land ownership, governmental jurisdiction, cultural governance, research access, and institutional

oversight operate through distinct legal, governmental, cultural, and institutional processes. Landowners and managing agencies generally authorize physical access to research sites, while Tribal governments maintain governmental relationships with their citizens and exercise responsibilities connected to community wellbeing, traditional lands, culturally governed knowledge, and research involving their communities. Chapter 3 examines this legal and governance context in detail. Within this setting, the study examines institutional, governmental, cultural, relationship based, and place based dimensions of research ethics.

The K̲utí Geohazards Project acts as the motivating and originating case for the dissertation. Experiences within the project raised practical questions about institutional research requirements, Tribal sovereignty, research relationships, traditional lands, and ethical responsibility. Those questions, along with tensions made visible where institutional and Tribal approaches to research governance met in practice, provided the starting point for the broader inquiry.

The dissertation extends beyond the originating circumstances through analysis of the Southeast Alaska legal and governance environment, comparative research ethics frameworks, and interviews with participants whose experience includes K̲utí as well as other illustrative research and Tribal governance contexts. The combined evidence allows the study to examine which patterns extend beyond the motivating case, where experiences differ across research relationships and Tribal contexts, and what those similarities and differences reveal about research ethics and governance in Southeast Alaska.

4.3 Comparative Framework and Document and Policy Analysis

The comparative component examines research ethics and governance frameworks in the United States, Northern Canada, and New Zealand. The United States provides the institutional setting for research in Southeast Alaska, including federal human subjects protections, Institutional Review Board processes, university requirements, and related research oversight. Northern Canada and New Zealand were selected because each provides established examples of institutional research ethics operating alongside and, in some instances, incorporating Indigenous ethical principles and governance roles, community engagement, cultural and collective protections, and data governance. The Canadian and New Zealand frameworks serve as comparative precedents whose governance mechanisms are considered in relation to Southeast Alaska.

The comparative document and policy analysis presented in Chapter 2 draws on laws and regulations, institutional research ethics policies, Indigenous research ethics and data governance frameworks, government and university guidance, research protocols

and agreements where available, and scholarly literature addressing the development and application of these systems. The Alaska analysis presented in Chapter 3 draws on statutes, court decisions, administrative materials, Tribal governmental sources, and other legal and policy materials needed to interpret the regional governance environment.

Documents were selected based on their direct connection to the dissertation research questions and analytic concepts. Priority was given to primary and authoritative sources that define ethical responsibilities, identify people or groups receiving protection, establish or recognize sources of research authority, or describe mechanisms through which Indigenous peoples, communities, or governments participate in research governance. Secondary scholarship provided historical context, interpretation, and evidence concerning the development and implementation of particular frameworks.

The same four analytic concepts structured the document review. The analysis considered who or what each framework recognizes as receiving ethical consideration; what values, relationships, knowledge, or interests it seeks to protect; what forms of harm or ethical risk it recognizes; and what sources of authority it recognizes in identifying risks, defining protections, or making research decisions. The analysis then examined how these principles are expressed through governance mechanisms such as individual consent, institutional review, Tribal or community engagement, research agreements, data governance, and continuing oversight.

Each setting was interpreted within its own legal, political, cultural, and institutional context while the analysis identified areas of convergence and difference. Particular attention was given to individual and collective protections, Indigenous governmental and cultural roles, and governance of knowledge and data. The analysis examined responsibilities extending through interpretation, dissemination, future data use, and ongoing research relationships.

The comparative analysis informs the interpretation of the Southeast Alaska interview findings and the development of the recommendations presented later in the dissertation. Comparative mechanisms provide precedents for considering possible governance approaches, while the Southeast Alaska evidence determines their local applicability and the adaptations required by the region’s legal, governmental, cultural, and institutional context.

4.4 Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participants were selected through purposive sampling supplemented by snowball sampling. The study sought individuals with direct experience in Tribal research relationships, research governance, or ethical issues arising in research involving Tribes in Southeast Alaska. Initial recruitment focused on individuals associated with the K̲utí

project. Snowball referrals expanded recruitment beyond the immediate Ḵutí network to individuals with additional professional, governmental, community, and research experience.

Potential participants were initially informed about the study through Ḵutí monthly meetings and subsequently received formal email invitations to participate in a Microsoft Teams interview. Referrals from participants and professional contacts identified additional individuals whose experience could contribute to the research questions.

Thirteen individuals participated in the semi structured interviews. Participants included Tribal contractors, consultants, employees, and others whose professional and community experience encompassed research relationships involving Tribes across Southeast Alaska. For purposes of the study, their statements were analyzed as individual participant perspectives. Across the interviews, participants consistently emphasized that each Tribal government speaks for itself.

Following the formal interviews, eight additional telephone contacts with Southeast Alaska Tribal contacts were used to assess thematic saturation and regional coverage. These conversations provided a check on whether the principal themes identified through the interviews reflected concerns encountered more broadly across the region. The 13 formal interviews alone comprised the coded interview dataset and source of quoted interview evidence.

Across the formal interviews and follow up saturation confirmation, participants and Tribal contacts brought professional, governmental, community, or research experience connected to at least 16 of the 20 federally recognized Tribal governments in Southeast Alaska (Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska 2025). This breadth broadened regional coverage across differing Tribal and research contexts while preserving the distinction between individual participant experience and the governmental perspective of any particular Tribe.

4.5 Semi Structured Interview Design

A semi structured interview approach was used to provide consistency across participants while allowing flexibility to explore individual experience, expertise, and context. The interview framework was developed from the research questions, analytic framework, literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and prior field experience.

The researcher used an interview grid organized around major areas of inquiry while allowing the sequence and emphasis of questions to respond to each participant's experience. Areas of inquiry included research relationships, ethical responsibility, Tribal sovereignty and governance, cultural knowledge, data governance, institutional and Tribal review processes, trust, practical barriers to ethical engagement, and potential

approaches for improving research governance. Follow up questions and probes explored issues closely connected to each participant's experience and themes that emerged during the conversation.

The interview framework was refined before formal data collection to improve clarity, alignment with the research questions, sequencing, and cultural appropriateness. The resulting structure supported comparison across interviews while allowing participants to introduce perspectives and experiences beyond those anticipated in the interview framework. The interview framework and associated recruitment, consent, and recording procedures were reviewed and approved through the RAND Human Subjects Protection Committee process before formal data collection began.

4.6 Interview Data Collection and Preparation

Interviews were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams during July 2026 and ranged from approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes in length. The remote format provided a consistent means of participation for individuals across geographically dispersed communities and professional settings in Southeast Alaska. Interviews were recorded with participant consent.

Microsoft Teams generated an initial transcript for each interview. The researcher reviewed each transcript against the corresponding recording and corrected transcription errors before analysis. Observational notes recorded during or immediately following interviews supplemented the transcripts by documenting contextual information, emerging ideas, and variation among participant perspectives.

Following transcript review, the interview materials were prepared for qualitative analysis. Participant codes and metadata needed to support comparison across interviews were retained within the analytic dataset. Confidentiality and deidentification procedures are described in Section 4.11. Transcripts and observational notes formed the primary interview materials used in the coding and range analysis described in Section 4.7.

4.7 Interview Coding and Range Analysis

A structured qualitative codebook was used to support systematic analysis of the interview data while preserving the exploratory character of the study. The codebook organized recurring material into six broad thematic domains and 37 operational subcodes. Each subcode included a definition, inclusion and exclusion criteria, links to the research questions and analytic concepts, an illustrative example, and a range lens identifying the forms of variation to examine across participants.

Initial coding categories were developed deductively from the research questions, analytic concepts, and structure of the semi structured interview guide. The broad

domains included research relationships, ethics, and community engagement; Tribal sovereignty, governance, and authority; protection and stewardship of cultural knowledge, language, and sites; historical and ongoing distrust and risks; community capacity, burden, and resource constraints; and intergenerational engagement and identity. Inductive coding was then used to develop and refine more specific themes and distinctions as they emerged across participant accounts. For example, ethical authority provided an initial analytic concept, while distinctions among Tribal governmental authority, clan or cultural authority, individual consent, land management authority, and data governance became more clearly differentiated through the interviews. Codes were refined iteratively, and previously reviewed material was reconsidered when emerging distinctions warranted more specific coding.

The interview analysis followed an exploratory analytic logic. The research questions and four analytic concepts provided deductive orientation by identifying what kinds of questions to ask of the data, while the interviews determined the substantive patterns that emerged. The analysis remained open to convergence, qualification, variation, and disagreement among participant perspectives and to findings that complicated the study's initial conceptual framing.

Analysis occurred at two related levels. At the excerpt level, coded material retained the participant and transcript location, primary and secondary thematic codes, research stage or referenced source of authority where applicable, position, strength, scope, analytic notes, and counter case indicators. Multiple excerpts associated with the same participant and code were then consolidated into a participant by code assessment representing that participant's overall position. Consolidating excerpts at the participant by code level ensured that each participant contributed one overall position per code, regardless of how much they discussed the topic.

Range analysis examined variation in participant position, strength, scope, conditions, and counter cases. Positions were characterized as strongly affirming, affirming, conditional or qualified, mixed or ambivalent, or counter or limiting. Statement strength ranged from a brief mention to elaborated or emphatic treatment, while scope distinguished project specific, Tribe specific, community specific, regional, and general claims. The analysis considered how many independent participants expressed a position, how strongly they expressed it, the contexts in which it applied, and where qualifications or counter cases limited the apparent pattern.

This approach distinguished thematic salience from the breadth of participant support and provided a basis for calibrating the language used in reporting findings. For example, participants repeatedly supported direct contact with the local Tribe when Tribal citizens, traditional lands, cultural resources, knowledge, or collective interests were

implicated, while describing different entry points, levels of formality, and processes following initial contact. The evidence supported a recurring principle of direct Tribal engagement while preserving variation in how that engagement operates across Tribal, project, and research contexts. Findings described as recurring or consistent were assessed against their distribution across participants, while conditional, role specific, Tribe specific, and counter positions were retained as part of the reported range.

4.8 Integration of Evidence

Each evidence source served a distinct analytic purpose, and the three evidence streams were integrated during interpretation. Interview findings provided the primary empirical evidence concerning how research ethics, ethical risk, governance, and research relationships are understood and experienced in Southeast Alaska. Comparative research ethics frameworks provided precedents for how related questions of individual and collective protection, Indigenous governance, data governance, and continuing ethical responsibility are addressed in other settings. The Southeast Alaska legal and governance analysis established the regional context for interpreting the interview findings and assessing comparative mechanisms.

The four analytic concepts provided a common set of questions across the evidence streams. Interview findings, comparative frameworks, and the Southeast Alaska legal and governance context were examined in relation to who or what receives ethical consideration, what interests and relationships are protected, what forms of ethical risk arise, and who carries a recognized responsibility or decision making role in the part of the research involved. For example, an interview finding concerning governance of culturally governed knowledge could be examined in relation to institutional protections for individual participants, comparative Indigenous research governance mechanisms, and the governmental and cultural relationships present in Southeast Alaska. This approach allowed each source of evidence to contribute its particular form of knowledge to the broader analysis without assuming that any one source of evidence provides a complete account.

Integration of the evidence guided the development of recommendations. Interview findings identified practical experiences, concerns, and expectations within Southeast Alaska research relationships. Comparative analysis supplied precedents for mechanisms addressing similar ethical and governance questions, and the Southeast Alaska legal and governance analysis provided the basis for assessing their local applicability and needed adaptation. Recommendations developed through a consistent sequence: Southeast Alaska empirical finding, comparative precedent, and assessment within the regional legal and governance context.

4.9 Qualitative Rigor, Credibility, and Analytical Validation

Several procedures strengthened the credibility, transparency, and consistency of the qualitative analysis. Each Microsoft Teams transcript was reviewed against the original recording and corrected by the researcher before analysis. Identifying information was removed or generalized as appropriate, while participant codes and selected metadata were retained within the analytic materials to support comparison across participants and contexts. Observational notes recorded during or immediately after interviews provided additional contextual information for interpreting the transcripts.

Coding proceeded iteratively through the deductive and inductive processes. As new distinctions emerged, previously reviewed material was reconsidered and codes were refined when the developing analysis supported greater specificity. Analytic notes, excerpt metadata, participant by code assessments, and range categories created a documented path from the original interview material to the interpretations presented in the findings. This process allowed coding decisions and emerging interpretations to be revisited as the analysis developed.

Manual thematic ordering provided a second, complementary path for examining relationships within the interview data. Deidentified excerpts were printed as individual pieces while retaining the metadata needed for analysis. The researcher grouped, separated, and reordered the excerpts to examine thematic relationships, distinctions among related concepts, variation among participant perspectives, and patterns across metadata categories. The resulting organization and synthesis were recorded in the electronic analytic files, after which the temporary printed excerpts were destroyed. Moving repeatedly between individual excerpts, broader thematic categories, and participant patterns provided an additional check on interpretations developed through the coded dataset.

Range analysis provided analytical validation by distinguishing thematic salience from the breadth of participant support. Qualifying statements, mixed perspectives, and counter or limiting cases remained part of the analysis when they differed from a recurring pattern. Claims were calibrated to the distribution, strength, scope, conditions, and context of participant positions, with coded excerpt counts used as a measure of thematic salience.

The eight follow up Tribal contacts described previously provided an additional check on thematic saturation and regional coverage after the formal interviews. These contacts were used to assess whether the principal themes identified in the interview analysis were encountered more broadly across Southeast Alaska Tribal contexts. Their role in the analysis was saturation and regional coverage; the formal interview sample remained N = 13.

Analytical validation occurred through integration of the three evidence streams. Interview findings were considered alongside the comparative research ethics analysis and the Southeast Alaska legal and governance context. Agreement among these sources strengthened interpretations where they addressed the same ethical or governance questions, while differences among the sources remained visible in the analysis.

Select interview participants were provided the findings analysis chapter for review after the principal themes and interpretations had been developed. Feedback strongly affirmed the findings and their interpretation as consistent with the experiences described in the interviews. This review provided an additional check on whether the analysis accurately reflected the research relationships and governance issues described in the interviews.

These procedures created a traceable analytic process from interview recording and transcript verification through coding, thematic organization, participant range assessment, saturation confirmation, participant review, and integration with comparative and legal evidence. The resulting findings preserve recurring patterns, qualifications, contextual variation, and counter cases within the participant accounts.

4.10 Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

I am a multigenerational Alaskan, born and raised in the state, but I am not Alaska Native. My family history places me on the settler side of Alaska's colonial history. That distinction matters in a study concerned with Tribal sovereignty, Indigenous governance, and research relationships.

I am part of the K̲utí Geohazards Project research team, and my experience with K̲utí helped generate the policy and research ethics questions that motivate this dissertation.

My background includes anthropology, public administration, policy analysis, and risk. My career has ranged from remote Alaska, including guiding in places where bears and long distances from assistance make risk immediate, to work in and around the Alaska Legislature and, most recently, policy analysis at the RAND Corporation. These settings have taught me that neither bears nor bureaucracies are especially impressed by plans that ignore local conditions and that risk is everywhere.

That background shaped my initial framing of the research problem. I first saw it much as a policy analyst might: as a question of competing systems and which rules should prevail. That instinct reflected a Western preference for definitive, hierarchical authority. The interviews changed my thinking, showing me that the systems did not need to be ranked to make sense of how research governance actually works.

As a lifelong Alaskan, I have watched Alaska Native corporations mature, federal recognition of Alaska Tribes become clearer, and, somewhat late to the party, the State of Alaska formally recognize Tribes (U.S. Department of the Interior 1993; State of Alaska 2022). These were hard fought changes. I view Tribal sovereignty as one of the most positive forces shaping Alaska's future. That is part of my positionality; the findings themselves rest on the evidence.

4.11 Human Subjects and Data Protection

The interview component was approved by the RAND Human Subjects Protection Committee before formal recruitment and data collection began. Participants received information about the study and their rights before each interview. Participation proceeded after verbal consent, with separate verbal permission for recording. Participants could decline to answer questions or end participation at any time.

Interview recordings, transcripts, observational notes, coded excerpts, and analytic files were maintained on password protected or institutionally approved secure systems. Participants were assigned codes, direct identifiers were removed from analytic materials, and contextual details were generalized when necessary to reduce the possibility of deductive identification. Files linking participant identities with participant codes were maintained separately from the primary analytic materials and were accessible only to the researcher.

Temporary printed excerpts used during manual thematic ordering were deidentified and destroyed after the resulting organization was recorded electronically. Personally identifiable information, including recordings and identity linkage files, will be permanently destroyed once degree conferral is confirmed. Deidentified analytic materials will be retained only as needed to document the dissertation findings and satisfy applicable research record requirements.

Direct quotations used in the dissertation are deidentified. Each quotation and its context were reviewed for deductive disclosure and culturally sensitive information before inclusion. The handling and reporting of research information reflected the Indigenous data governance considerations examined in Chapter 2, including attention to collective interests, culturally governed knowledge, and responsibilities associated with the use and dissemination of research information.

Chapter 5: Interview Findings: Parallel Ethical Systems and Research Governance in Southeast Alaska

This chapter presents findings from the semi structured interviews conducted for this study. Thirteen individuals participated, including Tribal contractors, consultants, employees, and others with professional and community experience in research involving Tribes across Southeast Alaska. Participants spoke from their own professional and community experience. Chapter 4 describes participant recruitment and the distinction between individual participant perspectives and Tribal governmental positions. It documents the additional outreach used to assess thematic saturation and regional coverage and the breadth of Tribal contexts connected to the study. Unless otherwise indicated, language in quotation marks reflects the words of interview participants. Quotations are deidentified in accordance with Section 4.11.

The interviews provide empirical support for and add depth to patterns identified in the preceding chapters. The literature review in Chapter 2 shows that a holistic understanding of research ethics includes both the individual participant and the collective, bringing Tribal communities, culturally governed knowledge, data, relationships to place, reciprocity, and continuing accountability into ethical consideration. Chapter 3, Tribal Sovereignty and Research Governance in Southeast Alaska, places those concerns within a region where Tribal governments remain sovereign across lands they often do not own and where individual consent, Tribal government, cultural protocols, land access, and institutional review address different parts of the same research project. Interview participants show how these parallel processes operate in practice: where they reinforce one another, where connections between them break down, how communication affects the research, and what helps Tribes and researchers produce work that is respectful, useful, and ethically sound. Across the interviews, the ethical question shifts from whether a project has obtained the applicable approvals to whether the research process appropriately recognizes and protects the people, places, knowledge, and relationships it affects.

The findings develop through three related movements. Institutional review, individual consent, landowner permission, Tribal governance, and other processes address distinct dimensions of the research. Sections 5.1 through 5.4 examine how IRB approval, individual consent, landowner permission, agency authorization, and other formal research processes address particular ethical concerns alongside Tribal, collective, cultural, place based, and data related processes. Sections 5.5 through 5.7 examine how historical experience shapes present day trust, how time, resources, and institutional constraints affect engagement, and why direct contact with the local Tribe remains

important. Sections 5.8 through 5.11 examine ethical research shaped through continuing interaction among the people, governments, communities, cultural owners, and researchers connected to the project. Direct communication brings local knowledge and context into the research, early engagement leaves room for Tribal input to influence the work, continuing contact keeps the project responsive as it develops, and reciprocity and community defined benefit help ensure that research produces value for the communities that make it possible.

5.1 Formal Approval Does Not Exhaust Ethical Responsibility

IRB review and other formal research protections are valuable tools for addressing specific forms of risk, especially risks to individual participants. A researcher calls IRB review "a tool in my toolbox," valuing a third party that asks, "am I missing something … could it cause harm in this community?" When research involves a Tribe, the ethical focus includes the collective: the Tribe itself, culturally governed knowledge, collective impacts, representation, sovereignty, and responsibilities that continue over time. IRB responsibilities focus on particular forms of human subjects protection. A second interview puts the boundary plainly: "IRB doesn't just automatically protect the tribe," pointing specifically to "intellectual property and sovereignty" and to differences in how the university and the Tribe define protections. Institutional review and Tribal engagement work alongside one another, with each addressing different parts of ethical research.

The collective comes into view most clearly in descriptions of harm: "It's the knowledge bearers. But it's also the community. Our main thing is protecting our indigenous knowledge and passing it on so it can continue." The same account connects those protections to Tribal sovereignty and data sovereignty. The question "How can it affect us as a community?" captures the broader concern. Individual consent addresses the participant's own decision to participate, while research consequences can extend to the Tribe, the community, and knowledge carried across generations.

Research projects that appear, at first glance, unrelated to Tribal interests can still raise ethical questions. Work focused on moss or physical landscape processes prompted the question of whether researchers had considered "this community and the impact of any of these research questions." The same interview described researchers who assumed that because they studied a particular species, "my species doesn't matter to the tribe, it doesn't make sense for me to bother them," and saw no reason to contact the Tribe. The Tribal significance of a study depends on more than its scientific subject. Participants described research involving species, plants, geology, and physical landscapes as potentially intersecting with traditional harvest areas, culturally important places, Tribal

priorities, or land and resource decisions. Researchers do not always recognize those connections before beginning the work. Direct contact allows the Tribe to decide whether the research affects its interests and what role, if any, it wants to have.

A study about copper and lead ammunition illustrates broader ethical risk. Before participating, the interviewee wanted to know, "What is this going to be used for? Who's funding you? Who's getting this research and what are they going to do with it?" His concern centered on the possibility that the findings could contribute to restrictions on lead ammunition, making hunting more expensive and less accessible to people in his community. As he explained, "Physically, is it going to harm me? No. Emotionally, no. But can it restrict me? Yeah." A restriction affecting his ability to hunt would affect other hunters and the families and community members who depend on that harvest. The example shows ethical risk operating at both the individual and collective levels: the participant faces little direct harm from taking part in the research, while the findings themselves could affect access, practices, and community life.

5.2 Land Access and Tribal Relationships to Place

Traditional lands illustrate how different decisions apply to different parts of a research project: a federal or state agency may issue a permit, a landowner may authorize physical entry, a municipality may allow use of facilities, and an Alaska Native corporation may permit research on corporation owned property. One example was a standing "communication protocol between the tribes and the [government land owner]" under which Tribal representatives could visit a site with a monitor when something was discovered, creating "real oversight and sharing of information." These decisions establish whether and how researchers can access or use a place. Contact with the Tribe addresses a different question: how the research relates to the Tribe, its citizens, and its continuing relationship with that place.

Traditional Tribal lands are often owned or managed by federal and state agencies, Alaska Native corporations, municipalities, and private landowners. Tribal relationships to these homelands continue alongside this patchwork of land ownership and management. As one interviewee explained, "We can say: 'We don't think mining in this area of our traditional lands is OK.' Granted, we don't own that land. But these are our traditional homelands. So we have that voice." The interviewee described that voice as operating through public comments and other opportunities for the Tribe to speak to decisions about how its traditional homelands are used. The account shows that ownership and Tribal involvement are separate questions: another entity may own or manage the land, while the Tribe continues to speak for its interests and relationships connected to that place.

Oral knowledge carries information about places that does not appear in maps, written records, or other forms of documentation used by outside institutions. One interviewee recalled being asked to prove that an area held cultural significance: “How do you know? Prove it. Well, I can’t, we’re an oral culture.” When cultural knowledge is carried through people and oral traditions, understanding the significance of a place requires conversation with those who hold and transmit that knowledge. Talking with the Tribe gives researchers a way to learn whether a place carries cultural meaning that formal records do not capture and, when needed, to identify the people who hold the knowledge connected to that place.

Communication with the Tribe is a matter of ordinary respect. Research in a community was compared to entering someone else’s neighborhood: “I wouldn’t go to your house or your neighborhood and just start investigating lawn care randomly. I’d call ahead.” A field visit offered the same principle. The researcher planned to notify the Tribe by saying, “I’m coming,” because his work at the site was already expected, but a colleague reminded him, “you need to actually ask permission.” These accounts make plain what this dissertation calls the good neighbor principle: a practical expectation that researchers make themselves known, ask for permissions, and engage respectfully with the Tribal government connected to the people and places involved in the research. The principle is a point of convergence between the parallel ethical systems governing research: both value respect but put it into practice differently.

GOOD NEIGHBOR PRINCIPLE

Researchers make themselves known, ask for permissions, listen to and accept local knowledge and concerns, maintain communication, and remain accountable to the relationships their research creates. The principle gives deliberate mutual recognition practical form within research relationships.

Participants described respect for a Tribe through communication, recognition of Tribal government, and asking before proceeding when research involves its citizens or homelands. Access to a place permits the researcher to enter; respectful engagement gives the Tribe the opportunity to understand the work, share information and context, raise concerns, and identify ways the research can better reflect the people and place connected to the work.

5.3 Cultural Knowledge Is Governed Through Cultural and Collective Relationships

Stories, language, historical information, place names, and other forms of Indigenous knowledge are often held and governed through clan, cultural, or community relationships. An individual who possesses or communicates cultural knowledge is one person within a broader set of relationships and responsibilities governing how that knowledge is shared and used.

Historical stories, one interviewee explained, "are owned by clans. They're clan owned. Several clans together may make up one full story." This matters because a person who knows or shares part of a story may not hold the right to authorize every use of it, and other clans may hold other parts of the same account. He made that responsibility personal: "There are parts of stories I don't know because it's not my clan," and if asked about knowledge that was not his to share, "I wouldn't tell them. It's not mine to tell." A researcher seeking that knowledge, he explained, "would have a whole section to go through, basically clan leaders." Participants placed questions about who has the right to share or authorize use of cultural knowledge before the information is collected, especially when researchers do not know if the knowledge is collectively held, restricted, clan owned, ceremonial, seasonal, or governed through other cultural protocols. Direct consultation with the Tribe provides a starting point for identifying additional cultural permissions and the people or groups who hold them.

Participants placed cultural permissions at the beginning of the research relationship, before knowledge enters the research record. "Those permissions, in an ideal world, would be pre thought and anticipated and acknowledged at the very beginning of the interaction." Hearing or recording cultural knowledge does not automatically make it available for publication or other use. An outside researcher described returning to the person who shared the information, asking "who else should I verify with?" and, where possible, "getting permission from the clans themselves." Researchers need to understand what permission covers and return to the people who hold the knowledge when a proposed use goes beyond what was originally shared or agreed to.

The ethical question extends beyond whether a participant willingly disclosed information. Researchers must consider who has the right to share the knowledge, who else holds responsibilities for it, and whether the proposed use goes beyond what was entrusted to the researcher. As one outside researcher summarized, "These are never really fully our stories to tell as outside researchers." Cultural knowledge does not become available for reuse because it has been spoken. Responsible use depends on recognizing the relationships and permissions through which the knowledge is held, shared, and carried forward.

5.4 Data Governance Extends Ethical Responsibility Beyond Collection

Participants described data governance as extending across the research lifecycle, from initial contact and research questions through information collection, data storage, interpretation, dissemination, and future use. Tribal involvement can include approving, refusing, redirecting, delaying, monitoring, or placing conditions on particular aspects of research. Data governance forms part of the continuing ethical relationship through which research is conducted and carries responsibilities that begin before information is collected and continue after collection ends.

Participants did not treat collection of research data as automatically transferring unrestricted ownership or control to the researcher or institution that collects them. “Yes, we will have control of the data and share it with you,” one account explains. Another emphasizes that “data sovereignty is really important” and describes having “final say, or at least being involved in editing the papers” as valuable. Interviews raised questions about where data are stored, who has access, whether information is reused for other purposes, how sensitive geographic information is represented, who interprets findings, whether Tribal review occurs before publication, and what happens to the data after the project ends. These decisions keep ethical responsibility active as research data are stored, interpreted, shared, reused, and carried forward.

Institutional data requirements shape agreements with Tribal partners. As one researcher put it, “the university was actually the problem. There was a lot of data ownership that the university wanted.” Researchers work within university requirements they do not always control while making commitments about data to Tribal partners. Rules governing data ownership, retention, intellectual property, open access, and publication shape what researchers are able to promise and how agreements with Tribal partners are structured and carried out.

Publication creates ethical risks. Information that appears scientifically useful can reveal culturally sensitive information or knowledge that participants or Tribal authorities did not expect to become permanently public. The practical consequence is clear: “if it’s a generational harvest site, don’t publish that in the paper.” Decisions about dissemination are part of data governance throughout the research process, including its final stages. Information remains ethically consequential after collection because publication, archiving, secondary use, or increased accessibility can change who encounters it and what can be done with it.

Each Tribe determines the involvement it seeks in decisions about data and the conditions it considers appropriate for their collection, use, storage, and dissemination. Institutional requirements shape what researchers are able to offer, while the Tribe identifies what arrangements fit the project, the information involved, and its own

governance processes. The responsibilities attached to research data continue as the information is stored, interpreted, shared, reused, and carried forward.

5.5 Historical Experience Shapes Contemporary Trust

Trust develops through conduct. Professional credentials, institutional approval, and good intentions do not establish it. Communication, transparency, responsiveness, consistency, and demonstrated respect for Tribal priorities repeatedly emerge as components of that process. Procedural effort can still fall short of understanding: “People think they’re doing their due diligence but sometimes they’re just not understanding where the tribes are coming from and what they mean.” Clarity of purpose is equally important: “Transparency of intent is everything.” Even seemingly simple questions can create harm when people do not know why information is being collected or how it will be used.

Trust, sovereignty, knowledge governance, and continuing accountability are rooted in historical experience. Participants described a longer history of outside institutions making decisions about Native people, lands, knowledge, and political status, as well as research that extracted information, misrepresented communities, circulated cultural knowledge without permission, or produced harmful consequences. One interviewee described it as “all a historical perspective that taints a negative perception.” Another connected concerns about research to the broader history of assimilation and institutional intervention in Alaska Native life, concluding, “Know your history. It’s important.” Caution, skepticism, or refusal can reflect experience with institutions whose actions continue to affect Tribes, families, and communities long after the original interaction ends.

New research projects enter relationships shaped by accumulated historical experience with outside institutions and researchers. Participants evaluate new projects in light of both what the researcher proposes and how outside institutions have acted in the past. IRB approval and other institutional requirements establish important protections for a research project. Trust develops through communication, transparency, responsiveness, accountability, and conduct that respects Tribal priorities, knowledge, sovereignty, and relationships over time.

5.6 Practical and Institutional Constraints Shape Ethical Engagement

Tribal governments are often asked to engage with research while directing limited staff and resources toward the immediate needs of their Tribal citizens. The pressure is visible in a description of Tribal entities as “busy making sure people have enough food, reasonable healthcare, and adequate housing” and sometimes “not particularly interested in hosting research.” Capacity is described directly: “Capacity is a constant struggle for

Southeast tribes, most of us are pretty small. My department is me and two people, and that's pretty typical." These limits on research engagement reflect governmental responsibilities competing for staff time and attention. Research review involves meetings, cultural consultation, document management, technical understanding, legal review, negotiation, monitoring, and follow up alongside the Tribe's existing responsibilities to its citizens.

Research consultation places substantial administrative and financial demands on Tribal governments when outside researchers expect staff to explain local protocols, review proposals, attend meetings, negotiate agreements, provide cultural or technical guidance, or correct researcher misunderstandings without compensation. The tension is concise: "tribes want to be consulted. They don't necessarily have the resources for the consultation." Repeated demands contribute to research fatigue, described as "a lot of fatigue of 'why are we doing this, is this really necessary?'" Participants emphasized that researchers should anticipate the costs of meaningful Tribal engagement, including Tribal staff time, honoraria, travel, monitoring, and legal or technical review where appropriate. Meaningful consultation requires researchers to account for the time, expertise, and resources Tribal governments contribute to the research process.

Researchers face a different set of practical constraints. Points of contact are sometimes difficult to identify, Tribal processes vary, and an approach appropriate in one community may be inappropriate in another. Even where a process exists, "it can be hard to track," and "one template doesn't fit every single tribe." Projects involving several Tribes may require different relationships, agreements, presentations, review pathways, data governance provisions, and engagement costs. This complexity reflects the distinct governance processes and expectations each Tribal government establishes for research involving its citizens, lands, knowledge, or interests.

Some of the most consequential constraints arise from the way research is designed and funded before meaningful Tribal engagement is possible. Researchers are often required to define research questions, methods, schedules, budgets, and deliverables in grant applications before resources are available to build relationships or involve Tribal partners in shaping those decisions. The contrast is captured in research built around "questions that really matter to this community" versus questions researchers have "framed to fit your next funding source." Early communication with the Tribe while a grant application is still being developed gives Tribal input an opportunity to shape the questions, methods, budget, and forms of engagement built into the proposal. By the time funding is awarded, major elements of the project may already be fixed, leaving less flexibility for Tribal input to influence the work. University requirements concerning data ownership, retention, intellectual property, publication, authorship, and

open access create additional constraints on what researchers are able to negotiate or promise, and those requirements vary across institutions. Participants described a structural mismatch between expectations for early Tribal engagement and research systems that often require consequential decisions before the time and resources for that engagement are available.

One outside researcher illustrated what meaningful early engagement can require, describing "individual conversations with all of those parties before we got anything started." That level of engagement depends on the effort of researchers, the time and resources available to Tribal governments, and the institutional conditions surrounding the project. Researchers remain responsible for making contact, planning for engagement, and anticipating its costs. Universities, funders, agencies, and other institutions shape the time, resources, and flexibility available to support that work. The practical conditions surrounding research are part of its ethical design: meaningful Tribal engagement requires sufficient time and resources for Tribal governments to participate and enough flexibility for researchers to respond to what they learn before consequential decisions are fixed.

5.7 Direct Local Tribal Engagement

Participants consistently directed researchers to the local Tribe when research involves its citizens, traditional lands, knowledge, or other Tribal interests. "I would say definitely the tribe, any tribe, would say 'talk to us first.' Not Sealaska Heritage or UAS." Regional organizations can provide "broad stroke education," while research ultimately "needs to come down to touching base with the tribe itself, because each village tribe is distinctly different from the regional organization." A representative of a regional Tribal organization states the boundary plainly: "We don't speak on behalf of other communities." Regional organizations can provide education, research support, regional and cultural context, coordination, and assistance identifying appropriate contacts. That support can help researchers approach local conversations better informed, while each Tribe speaks for itself and determines if and how it wishes to engage.

A sovereignty analogy makes the governmental point explicit: "It's sovereign. Just imagine every sovereign Native nation as Israel. How would you communicate your asks and your wants with a foreign nation? Because that's what it is, a sovereign." The same interview makes the practical implication equally clear: "Your way is not the way. We are not an agency. In order to deal with us, you need to do these things." Each Tribe is a distinct government with its own governance processes, priorities, capacities, cultural protocols, and relationships to people and place. Tribe specific engagement reflects that governmental standing. Regional organizations can help researchers reach and prepare to

engage the appropriate Tribe; the Tribe itself determines how it wishes to engage with the research.

5.8 Ethical Research as a Relationship

Two interview statements capture how participants described ethical research: “Please call me, let’s chat, let’s talk about this,” and “I do tend to move at the speed of trust.” Communication, trust, reciprocity, accountability, Tribal authority, cultural responsibility, data governance, and community benefit operate as interconnected parts of an ongoing relationship between researchers and the people and places affected by their work. Ethical responsibility develops through that relationship across the research lifecycle.

Direct contact with the local Tribe is the practical starting point when research involves Tribal interests. This applies to research involving Tribal citizens, traditional lands, cultural resources, subsistence areas, Indigenous knowledge, data, and other collective interests, including projects that already have IRB review, agency authorization, landowner permission, university approval, or another formal authorization. An outside researcher working with the Sitka Tribe explained that “it’s really location-specific” and “it’s going to be different for each project,” adding, “I have no business saying how to work with the Yakutat Tribe, for instance.” Contacting the Tribe helps researchers understand how the project relates to Tribal interests, learn local protocols and concerns, and identify the people or processes connected to the research. The Tribe determines if and how it wishes to engage.

Direct Tribal contact creates an opportunity to exchange information and understand the research from the Tribe’s perspective. Participants described Tribes as providing cultural or historical context, identifying risks or sensitivities the researcher has not recognized, suggesting questions that reflect Tribal priorities, connecting researchers with appropriate cultural or governmental contacts, or determining that no additional process is needed. The value of consultation is put plainly: “if the researcher would take the time, the tribe can probably provide important information, and it’s the researcher’s loss if they don’t have the respect to consult.” Direct contact reflects ordinary respect and good neighbor conduct. Researchers entering another people’s cultural, historical, or governmental space make themselves known, explain what they intend to do, listen to what the Tribe considers important, and allow that exchange to inform how the work proceeds.

What follows from initial Tribal contact depends on the Tribe, the project, and the interests involved. Tribal and institutional expectations operate together within the same research relationship. “We have our own side conversations about appropriate behavior, and then we talk about how UAF would see that or another IRB would see that, and we

find methods that fit all of them." The Tribal research process gives the Tribe an opportunity to identify what the research means locally and what involvement, guidance, permissions, or protections fit the project. Researchers then carry those expectations alongside applicable institutional, regulatory, land access, and individual consent requirements as the work proceeds.

5.9 Early Engagement Must Be Able to Shape the Research

Timing is central to meaningful Tribal engagement because early contact leaves room for Tribal input to shape the research. Once research questions, methods, funding commitments, or other consequential decisions are fixed, the Tribe has less opportunity to influence the work. The consequences of delayed engagement appear in the warning that researchers need to be reached "before it's too late, before they're publishing harvest location data or other things the community or the tribe would not want shared." Early engagement brings Tribal priorities, concerns, and knowledge into the project during a period when meaningful decisions about the research are still being made.

Communication should begin "early and often," with researchers and Tribes developing questions together. One account describes an approach in which "Western science worked with the tribes in a cohesive way, they come up with the question together." A practical test follows: "How did you use the feedback from the tribe?" Meaningful Tribal participation allows that feedback to shape research questions, methods, protections, information collection, interpretation, or dissemination.

Participants described meaningful early engagement as changing who has practical influence over consequential parts of the project. Meaningful engagement redistributes decision making power over the parts of the research that implicate Tribal interests. Consultation after questions, methods, budgets, data practices, anticipated benefits, or dissemination plans are fixed primarily informs decisions already controlled by the research team. Meaningful early engagement creates decision space in which Tribal priorities, knowledge, and governance can change the research itself. Within that space, researchers and Tribes can co construct research questions, methods, interpretation, and application in forms suited to the project and the relationship.

Institutional and funding processes shape how early Tribal engagement occurs. Researchers are often asked to define questions, methods, budgets, schedules, and deliverables before funding is awarded, sometimes before they have the time or resources to develop relationships with Tribal governments. Contact during project and grant development brings Tribal priorities and feedback into the process before those decisions are fixed. Meaningful early engagement occurs while the research still has enough flexibility for what the Tribe says to shape the work. Funding structures shape

whether meaningful decision space exists. When time and resources for Tribal participation are available during project development, Tribal priorities and feedback have greater opportunity to influence research questions, methods, budgets, Tribal participation, community defined benefits, data practices, and dissemination before major commitments are fixed. The timing and structure of funding shape the distribution of decision making power within the research relationship as well as the practical ability to engage early.

5.10 Engagement Continues Across the Research Lifecycle

Tribal engagement continues across the research lifecycle. An outside researcher characterizes successful engagement as "working over time on how to approach the tribe, then working with them in continuum" and emphasizes the importance of researchers "following through with what they say they're going to do. It's a long game." Research projects evolve as personnel, methods, partnerships, geographic scope, data use, interpretation, publication plans, and funding arrangements change. Continued communication gives Tribes opportunities to contribute knowledge, context, and observations as the research develops and allows researchers and Tribes to address new information or concerns as they arise. This ongoing contact reflects an ordinary expectation of respectful conduct: keeping in touch, sharing what is changing, listening, and acting as a good neighbor throughout the relationship.

Continued communication keeps Tribal governments connected to findings and decisions that develop during the research. Research involving herring and Gray whales illustrates why: "please tell us if you find that herring eggs are sustaining Gray whale populations, because there's power in knowing that before it just becomes policy." The same account describes "ongoing communication" as supporting both the ecosystem and the Tribe's cultural connection to the resource. The example connects Tribal engagement to Tribal sovereignty because research findings can enter policy processes that affect Tribal interests, resource access, and cultural relationships. Continued communication allows the Tribe to understand those implications, contribute knowledge and context, and remain involved as the research moves from data collection toward interpretation, application, and policy.

5.11 Reciprocity and Community Defined Benefit Shape Ethical Success

Across the interviews, ethical success is connected to reciprocity and benefit to the communities involved in research. Successful partnerships involve understanding "what they can bring to the table, and understanding what we can bring, a little bit of give and

take." The Tlingit and Haida values expressed in the interviews connect ethical research to what the relationship contributes to the Tribe as well as how the research is conducted.

The Tribe has a meaningful role in defining what benefits are useful and aligned with its priorities. The decision turns on a direct question: "How is this going to benefit my community? That's what my decision is based on, the long term effects and how this is going to benefit my people or our community." Potential benefits include useful findings, training, employment, educational opportunities, support for Tribal programs, protection of cultural resources, accessible community reports, and the return of data in forms the Tribe can use. Researchers, universities, and funders may enter a project with their own ideas about what constitutes benefit. Direct engagement allows the Tribe to identify what value the research could provide within its own priorities and circumstances.

Participants described community benefit as extending beyond the immediate products of a research project. Youth involvement offers one example: "Just learning that you can be paid to be curious, that's an important message to bring to high school students." The example shows value through learning, participation, experience, and opportunities that remain in the community after the project itself ends. The form that benefit takes depends on the Tribe, the research, and the circumstances.

Reciprocity shapes ethical success across the research relationship. Research that draws on Tribal people, lands, knowledge, resources, time, or relationships carries a responsibility to return value to the communities that make the work possible. The Tribe has a meaningful role in determining what that value looks like. Ethical success includes a research relationship that is reciprocal, accountable, and worthwhile from the Tribe's perspective.

5.12 Synthesis

The findings describe ethical responsibility as distributed across several processes within the same research project. IRB review addresses institutional human subjects protections, individual consent governs personal participation, landowners and agencies establish access and applicable permissions, Tribal governments address governmental interests involving the Tribe, its citizens, communities, and traditional lands, cultural protocols guide culturally governed knowledge, and data governance addresses decisions about the ownership, control, use, and future of research information. Each process addresses a particular part of the research. Ethical research connects these parallel responsibilities to the people, places, knowledge, and relationships affected by the work.

The four analytic concepts used in this study help explain how these responsibilities fit together. When both Tribal and institutional systems are honored, the moral units brought into ethical consideration include individual participants as well as Tribes, clans,

families, communities, future generations, and relationships to culturally important places and resources. Ethical goods include individual welfare and autonomy, Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, community integrity, trust, continuity, reciprocity, and relationships to place. Ethical risk arises when research affects any of these interests through its questions, methods, representation, collection or use of knowledge, publication, data practices, or influence on policy and resource decisions. Ethical authority follows the responsibility involved: individuals decide about their own participation; Tribal governments speak through their governmental relationships with their citizens, communities, and traditional lands; cultural owners guide the use of culturally governed knowledge; landowners and agencies govern access within their responsibilities; and research institutions apply human subjects and other institutional requirements.

The interviews show that ethical engagement is shaped by how researchers conduct themselves, the historical context of the relationship, the time and resources available to Tribal governments, and the flexibility researchers have to respond to what they learn. Trust develops through communication, transparency, responsiveness, consistency, follow through, and demonstrated respect for Tribal priorities. Historical experience shapes how researchers and institutions are understood, while meaningful communication requires time and attention from both researchers and Tribal governments. Early engagement brings Tribal knowledge, priorities, and concerns into the research during a period when meaningful decisions are still being made. Continued communication keeps the research responsive as projects, findings, data uses, and policy implications develop. Reciprocity and community defined benefit connect ethical success to what the research contributes to the communities that make the work possible. Universities, funders, and agencies shape whether researchers have the time, resources, and flexibility to engage in these ways.

Direct contact with the local Tribe recurs across the interviews as the practical starting point. Researchers do not need to know in advance what level of involvement a Tribe will want or what process it will use. The Tribe identifies the appropriate path, the people or processes connected to the research, and the level of engagement it wants. Contact allows the Tribe to understand the proposed work, provide information and context, suggest questions or priorities, and determine if and how it wishes to engage. Regional Tribal organizations and other regional institutions provide useful orientation, general cultural and regional knowledge, research support, and assistance identifying appropriate contacts. Each local Tribe speaks for itself and determines its own relationship to the research.

Ethical success emerges when complementary and parallel Tribal and institutional ethical systems align their protections, relationships, responsibilities, and processes within

the same research project. Tribal governance, cultural protocols, data governance, institutional review, individual consent, and land access remain distinct while operating alongside one another. Communication connects the two systems across the research lifecycle, allowing researchers and Tribes to respond to new information, changing circumstances, and the consequences of the work as they develop. The findings describe ethical research in Southeast Alaska as accountable to the people, places, knowledge, and relationships that make the research possible and that continue to be affected by what the research produces.

5.13 Chapter Conclusion

The findings show ethical research in Southeast Alaska operating through complementary Tribal and institutional ethical systems that address different parts of the same research project. Institutional review, individual consent, land access, Tribal governance, cultural protocols, and data governance each protect particular people, interests, relationships, or responsibilities. Direct engagement with the local Tribe connects these processes to the people, places, knowledge, and relationships affected by the work. That engagement begins early enough for Tribal priorities and knowledge to shape meaningful decisions, continues as the research develops, and allows the Tribe to determine if and how it wishes to participate. Trust, reciprocity, community defined benefit, and continuing communication make the research relationship itself part of ethical practice.

The interviews give empirical form to the four analytic concepts that guide this study. Moral units extend from individual participants to Tribes, clans, families, communities, future generations, and relationships to culturally important places and resources. Ethical goods include individual welfare and autonomy alongside Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, community integrity, trust, continuity, reciprocity, and relationships to place. Ethical risks arise across these individual, collective, cultural, governmental, and place based dimensions, while ethical authority operates through the people and institutions responsible for particular parts of the research. Chapter 6 draws these findings into conversation with the broader literature and interprets them in relation to the comparative, legal, and governance analyses, considering their implications for research governance, institutional practice, and the design of ethical research in Southeast Alaska.

Chapter 6: Discussion: Parallel Ethical Systems and Ethical Risk Governance in Southeast Alaska

The practical question that motivated this dissertation emerged from an experience within the Ḵutí Project. A community gathering organized through an established relationship with the local Tribe was understood within that relationship as an appropriate setting for hospitality, family participation, knowledge exchange, and discussion of local hazards. The same gathering raised concerns during an NSF review about individual consent, voluntariness, privacy, participation by children, and the relationship between a community event and research. The episode brought different cultural understandings of ethical risk into view and initially appeared to present a tension between institutional and Tribal understandings of ethical research. The experience shaped this study's examination of how different ethical systems recognize moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and ethical authority, and how cross cultural differences in these concepts shape what each system identifies as ethically significant. The literature, Southeast Alaska governance analysis, and interviews reveal a more useful interpretation of the Ḵutí experience. Institutional and Tribal ethical systems emerge as complementary and coexisting frameworks that bring different people, interests, relationships, and responsibilities into ethical consideration. More comprehensive ethical practice develops through deliberate mutual recognition between these systems while the distinct responsibilities carried within each remain intact.

The literature provides the broader context for understanding these culturally distinct perspectives on ethical risk. Modern institutional research ethics developed strong protections for individual participants through informed consent, risk assessment, privacy, justice, and independent institutional review (National Commission 1979; 45 C.F.R. pt. 46). Indigenous research ethics scholarship brings additional moral units and ethical goods into view, including communities, governments, Indigenous knowledge, data, collective wellbeing, reciprocity, self determination, sovereignty, and relationships to place (Smith 2012; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; Harding et al. 2012; Saunkeah et al. 2021). Northern Canada and New Zealand provide comparative examples of institutional and Indigenous ethical systems operating in parallel within the same research environment. Institutional protections remain focused on individual research participants while Indigenous ethical frameworks bring collective, political, cultural, intergenerational, and place based relationships into ethical consideration. The range of ethical concerns expands as these perspectives operate alongside one another, making a broader range of moral units, ethical goods, responsibilities, and potential harms visible within research governance.

The Southeast Alaska interviews show how this parallel structure operates in practice. Institutional review, individual consent, Tribal government, land access, cultural protocols, and data governance emerge as distinct processes addressing different dimensions of the same research activity. Institutional review addresses risks and protections associated with individual participation. Tribal governments identify interests and risks connected to the Tribe, its citizens, community, sovereignty, and governmental relationships. Cultural relationships guide the appropriate use of knowledge held through clans, families, and other cultural owners. Land access and data governance bring additional relationships and responsibilities into consideration. The interviews support an interpretation of complementary ethical systems whose processes remain distinct while operating within the same research environment. More comprehensive ethical coverage develops through purposeful interaction among these processes, with each contributing the knowledge, protections, and responsibilities associated with its role.

The four analytic concepts explain why this interaction matters. Moral units identify who or what an ethical system recognizes as ethically significant; ethical goods identify the interests, relationships, and forms of wellbeing connected to those moral units; ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to those goods; and ethical authority concerns the people, governments, institutions, and cultural relationships with appropriate roles in recognizing and responding to particular dimensions of risk. Differences in the moral units and ethical goods recognized across institutional and Tribal systems produce differences in the ethical risks each system brings into view. Deliberate mutual recognition allows those perspectives to enter the same research process without merging the systems or hierarchically ordering their importance. The result is broader ethical risk coverage grounded in the complementary contributions of culturally distinct ethical systems.

6.1 From Competing Authority to Complementary Ethical Systems

The initial framing of this study gave considerable attention to ethical authority because institutional and Indigenous research ethics recognize different roles and responsibilities in research governance. That framing created an expectation that the central problem involved competing claims over who governs or approves research. The comparative literature points toward a different interpretation. Northern Canadian research governance distributes responsibility across institutional ethics review, Indigenous community and governmental processes, territorial research licensing, land access, and Indigenous data governance, with each process addressing a particular dimension of the research (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of

Canada 2022; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). New Zealand provides an especially clear example through national ethical guidance that places Māori ethical principles alongside established institutional principles without hierarchically ordering the two traditions (Hudson et al. 2010; National Ethics Advisory Committee 2019). These examples show distinct ethical systems operating within the same research environment while retaining different responsibilities and forms of protection.

The Southeast Alaska interviews show a similar pattern in practice. Responsibility and ethical risk are located within particular relationships and parts of the research. An IRB evaluates risks and protections for individual human participants. An individual decides whether to participate. A Tribal government identifies risks to the Tribe, its citizens, community, sovereignty, and other collective interests and determines how it wishes to relate to the research. Clans, families, and other cultural owners guide the use of knowledge carried through those relationships. Land access and data governance bring additional responsibilities connected to place, information, and future use. These processes coexist within the same research activity, each addressing an ethical dimension associated with particular people, governments, relationships, or goods.

The significance of this parallel structure lies in what each process makes visible. Institutional review gives strong visibility to risks affecting individual participants. Tribal governance brings risks to sovereignty and collective interests into view. Cultural relationships make risks to culturally governed knowledge and the responsibilities of cultural owners visible. Land and data governance extend ethical attention to access, place, storage, interpretation, sharing, and future use. The systems remain culturally distinct, but their perspectives are complementary. Deliberate recognition among the people and processes involved allows a broader range of ethical risk to enter the research relationship without merging their roles or placing one system above the other. This shift from expected competition to complementary ethical systems provides the foundation for examining how moral units and ethical goods shape the recognition of ethical risk.

6.2 Understanding Ethical Risk Across Ethical Systems

Across the two culturally distinct ethical systems, the same research activity can implicate overlapping moral units and ethical goods while bringing additional collective, cultural, and relationship based interests into view. Ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit, making risk assessment dependent on who or what the system understands as ethically significant, what valued interests or relationships are connected to that moral unit, and the nature and significance of the potential harm. As the moral units, ethical

goods, or potential harms brought into view change, the ethical risk associated with the same research activity can be understood differently.

Institutional and Tribal ethical systems configure the relationship among moral units, ethical goods, and potential harm differently. Within institutional human subjects ethics, the individual participant anchors both the principal moral unit and many of the ethical goods protected by the system, including autonomy, voluntary participation, welfare, privacy, confidentiality, and fair treatment (National Commission 1979). Tribal and Indigenous ethical frameworks retain the individual while bringing additional moral units and ethical goods into consideration, including Tribes, communities, cultural relationships, future generations, sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, collective wellbeing, and relationships to place (Wilson 2008; Harding et al. 2012; Saunkeah et al. 2021). When both systems are brought into view, ethical risk is assessed across a broader range of relationships and potential harms, including their proximity to and magnitude for the moral units and ethical goods involved.

The Common Rule establishes an important boundary around institutional assessment of ethical risk. In evaluating risks and benefits, an IRB considers those that result from the research itself and is specifically directed not to consider possible long range effects of applying the knowledge gained through the research, including possible effects on public policy, as research risks within its assigned responsibility (45 C.F.R. § 46.111(a)(2)). A research finding can have substantial consequences for a Tribal government, community, resource relationship, or policy interest even when those consequences fall outside the risks the Common Rule directs an IRB to evaluate. Tribal governance and other complementary ethical processes provide a means for those consequences to enter consideration alongside institutional human subjects protections.

The relationship among moral units and ethical goods helps explain why the same research activity can be assessed as carrying different levels of ethical risk across the two systems. A project may present little risk to an individual participant's autonomy, privacy, or welfare while creating substantial potential harm to a collective ethical good such as Tribal sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, community representation, intergenerational knowledge integrity, or a relationship to place. The proximity and magnitude of the potential harm are being assessed in relation to different ethical goods and, at times, different moral units. Cross cultural differences in risk assessment reflect differences in what each ethical system recognizes as capable of being harmed and what it understands as ethically important to protect.

The Common Rule's minimal risk standard adds another important dimension to the dissertation's motivating tension and the Ḵutí experience. Minimal risk compares the probability and magnitude of anticipated harm or discomfort with those ordinarily

encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests (45 C.F.R. § 46.102(j)). The Ḵutí gathering involved ordinary forms of community interaction, including hospitality, family participation, conversation, and knowledge exchange. Viewed through this framework of proportionality, the institutional response raises two questions: what individual protections the level of risk required and whether the proposed protections were proportionate to that risk. More formal participation requirements could have reduced participation, disrupted customary family and community interaction, and introduced psychological discomfort by making an ordinary community gathering feel more regulated or scrutinized. In this setting, additional protections had the potential to create new individual risks while undermining Tribal practices intended to support respectful, culturally appropriate participation and cross cultural knowledge sharing. The Ḵutí experience illustrates why proportionality matters: safeguards should respond to the probability and magnitude of the risk they are intended to reduce while remaining attentive to harms the safeguards themselves can introduce.[8]

Cross cultural understanding of ethical risk requires understanding what each system recognizes as ethically significant. Researchers, institutions, and Tribal governments may encounter the same activity while identifying different moral units, ethical goods, potential harms, and levels of risk. Bringing those perspectives together does more than add another review of the same risk; it expands what is recognized as risk in the first place. Mutual recognition among the systems becomes important. No actor working entirely within one ethical framework can assume that its own assessment captures every ethical good or potential harm implicated by the research under both systems. Deliberate engagement across the systems creates a broader understanding of the ethical risk landscape and a stronger basis for deciding how those risks should be addressed.

6.3 Mutual Recognition Strengthens Ethical Risk Governance

Parallel ethical systems provide broader ethical risk coverage. The governance implication is the need for deliberate mutual recognition among the actors working within those systems. Researchers, institutions, Tribal governments, cultural owners, and other participants in the research relationship bring knowledge shaped by their respective roles,

[8]The minimal risk comparison is an analytical assessment of proportionality, not a claim that NSF or an IRB issued a formal minimal risk determination for the Ḵutí gathering. The Common Rule defines minimal risk at 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(j) and requires IRBs to determine that risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits and the importance of the knowledge expected to result. 45 C.F.R. § 46.111(a)(1)–(2).

responsibilities, and ethical perspectives. Communication across those relationships allows concerns visible within one system to enter the broader assessment of the research and gives the people positioned to understand those concerns an opportunity to explain their significance. Mutual recognition is not merely informational. It has a decision making dimension: ethical information entering through one system must reach decisions that remain open to change if that information is to shape the research.

The relationship between the systems is complementary rather than hierarchical. Institutional and Tribal ethical systems arise from culturally distinct understandings of who and what requires ethical consideration and which interests, relationships, and forms of wellbeing require protection. Each gives particular ethical goods greater visibility and develops processes suited to protecting them. Their importance lies in the ethical responsibilities each carries within the research relationship, not in establishing which system is more authoritative or more important. Mutual recognition allows those culturally distinct understandings of protection to contribute to a broader assessment of ethical risk.

TCPS 2 Chapter 9 offers a useful comparative expression of this relationship by describing an “ethical space for dialogue” in which researchers and Indigenous communities can bring distinct ethical perspectives into the same research process while Indigenous ethical guidance retains its own standing (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2022, chap. 9).

When either ethical system operates without recognition of the other, portions of the ethical risk landscape remain outside the research process. Institutional protections alone leave risks to Tribal sovereignty, collective interests, culturally governed knowledge, community representation, intergenerational relationships, or relationships to place insufficiently recognized. Tribal and collective ethical concerns do not replace protections for individual autonomy, privacy, welfare, and voluntary participation. Honoring both systems brings these ethical goods and the moral units connected to them into the same range of consideration, reducing the likelihood that significant potential harm remains unrecognized simply because it falls outside the ethical scope of one system.

Mutual recognition is especially important during the period when research decisions remain open to change. Ethical risks identified through Tribal engagement inform research questions, methods, data practices, interpretation, dissemination, and other project decisions before commitments become difficult to revise. Institutional protections continue to address individual participants while Tribal, cultural, and other relationships contribute knowledge of risks associated with the ethical goods they recognize. Interaction among the systems creates a more informed basis for evaluating

the proximity and magnitude of potential harm across the interests implicated by the research.

The systems retain distinct purposes with intersecting responsibilities within the research relationship. Institutional review, individual participation, Tribal governance, cultural relationships, and data governance each contribute from the position appropriate to their role. Deliberate mutual recognition allows those contributions to inform one another, providing broader ethical risk coverage and strengthening the research process's ability to recognize, evaluate, and manage risk across the moral units and ethical goods involved.

CORE FINDING

Institutional and Tribal ethical systems operate as complementary and coexisting systems that address different dimensions of the same research activity. Deliberate mutual recognition broadens ethical risk coverage while preserving the distinct responsibilities carried within each relationship.

6.4 Sovereignty Across the Four Analytic Concepts

The importance of mutual recognition becomes especially clear when the ethical good at risk is Tribal sovereignty. Sovereignty demonstrates how the four analytic concepts work together within the Tribal ethical system and why recognition across systems broadens the perception of ethical risk and strengthens its governance. The Tribe enters consideration as a moral unit: a continuing political community with citizens, institutions, histories, relationships, and collective interests. Its sovereignty carries ethical significance for that community, potential harm to sovereignty constitutes ethical risk, and Tribal government provides the leadership relationship that identifies those risks and interests and determines how the Tribe wishes to respond. Following sovereignty across the four concepts shows how an ethical interest that receives limited attention within one system becomes clearly legible within another and enters the broader research relationship through mutual recognition.

The ethical significance of sovereignty rests in the Tribe's status as a political community with the standing to conduct its own relationships with other governments, institutions, and researchers. Interview participants describe this relationship in terms comparable to approaching another sovereign nation: researchers make contact with the government, explain what they seek to do, learn the expectations that apply to the relationship, and allow that government to determine its own response. Self determination, political continuity, representation, and control over the Tribe's relationships with outside institutions form part of the ethical good of sovereignty. Research risk arises when the conduct or products of research interfere with those relationships or diminish the Tribe's ability to speak and act for itself.

Tribal sovereignty includes authority over the Tribe's own research relationship. A Tribe may decline participation, establish conditions for its governmental involvement, withdraw cooperation, or decide that it will not work with a researcher or institution in the future. These choices govern the Tribe's participation and continuing research relationship, while authority over activity outside Tribal jurisdiction follows the law and circumstances governing that activity.

A single research activity shows why sovereignty cannot be considered in isolation from the other moral units involved. Consider a researcher interviewing a Tribal citizen about the history and cultural meaning of a place. The individual participant is one moral unit and retains control over personal participation and disclosure. The Tribe is another moral unit when the research represents the political community, implicates sovereign interests, or draws conclusions about the Tribe. If the participant shares a story or knowledge held through a clan, the clan or other cultural owner introduces another moral unit with ethical goods connected to ownership, appropriate transmission, and use of that knowledge. The same conversation engages several ethical relationships at once, and the potential harm associated with each depends on the moral unit and ethical good involved.

This example clarifies why the parallel systems strengthen ethical risk governance. Institutional human subjects protections address the individual participant and the ethical goods connected to personal participation. Tribal engagement addresses the sovereign political relationship and the interests carried by the Tribe as a government and community. Cultural protocols address knowledge held through clan, family, or other culturally defined relationships. None of these relationships becomes a substitute for the others. Their interaction makes the ethical structure of the research more legible by identifying who or what is implicated, which ethical goods are at stake, and where the proximity and magnitude of potential harm should be assessed.

The consequences become clearer when one of these relationships is absent from consideration. Protecting the individual participant does not by itself address potential harm to Tribal sovereignty or to knowledge held by a clan. Engaging the Tribal government does not transfer ownership of clan knowledge to the Tribe or resolve the individual participant's decision about participation. Ethical risk is more completely understood when each moral unit and the ethical goods connected to it are identified within the system that recognizes them. Mutual recognition across institutional, Tribal, and cultural relationships allows those distinct forms of risk to enter the same research process and provides broader ethical coverage without collapsing the people, governments, or cultural owners involved into a single source of protection.

6.5 The Good Neighbor Principle as Practical Ethical Risk Governance

The interviews repeatedly return to a pattern of conduct that this dissertation calls the good neighbor principle. The principle suggests a practical response to the limits of any single ethical perspective: researchers begin by entering the relationship as good neighbors. Contacting the local Tribe, explaining the proposed work, asking rather than assuming permissions, listening to local knowledge and concerns, and maintaining communication give researchers access to ethical information that is not necessarily visible from within institutional review or from the research design itself. These practices create the conditions for moral units, ethical goods, and potential harms recognized within the Tribal ethical system to enter the broader understanding of research risk.

Tribal sovereignty gives these relationships practical accountability. Tribal governments retain control over their own governmental participation and continuing research relationships: they can decline, condition, or withdraw participation and choose whether to work with a researcher or institution again. In small and geographically dispersed communities, professional, governmental, and personal relationships often continue across projects. A researcher's follow through becomes part of the reputation carried into later work. Relational accountability operates through sovereignty, continuing relationships, community memory, and formal governance processes as well as communication.

This continuing relationship creates an accountability asymmetry. Researchers and Tribal partners who remain in the relationship experience the consequences of commitments, misunderstandings, and repair over time. External reviewers or institutional decision makers may influence those relationships without remaining part of them. The K̲utí case illustrates this dynamic: review expectations shaped a Tribal research relationship that the Project team and Tribal partners continued after the review ended. Those who remain in the relationship are positioned to observe how decisions affect the moral units and ethical goods connected to that relationship over time. Requirements imposed from outside the relationship can alter the proximity or magnitude of potential harm to ethical goods such as trust, Tribal sovereignty, reciprocity, and continuity of the research relationship. Relational accountability gives these consequences practical force through the actors who continue to live and work with them.

This function of communication is especially important because researchers often do not know in advance which Tribal interests a project implicates. A study focused on a species, landscape, historical event, community issue, or dataset may intersect with culturally important places, subsistence relationships, Tribal priorities, collectively held knowledge, or policy concerns that are not apparent from published records or the researcher's disciplinary perspective. Direct engagement gives the Tribe an opportunity to

identify those connections, explain their ethical significance, and describe what value or benefit the research could provide from the Tribe's perspective. The researcher gains a more complete understanding of both what the work affects and what the relationship should contribute before assessing the proximity and magnitude of potential harm.

The good neighbor principle gives mutual recognition a concrete form. Respect for individual autonomy within institutional ethics is expressed through informed consent and voluntary participation. Respect within the Tribal research relationship includes recognizing the Tribe as a sovereign political community, making the research known, asking how the Tribe wishes to engage, and allowing local knowledge to influence the work. The shared ethical value of respect takes different forms; it operates in relation to different moral units and ethical goods. Researchers honor both systems by following the protections appropriate to each relationship.

Good neighbor conduct continues after initial contact because ethical risk changes as research develops. New findings, interpretations, data uses, publication decisions, and policy implications alter the proximity or magnitude of potential harm to ethical goods identified earlier in the relationship. Continuing communication allows researchers and Tribes to recognize those changes together and respond while the decision space remains open. Trust develops through the same process as researchers demonstrate transparency, responsiveness, consistency, and follow through over time.

The simplicity of the good neighbor principle is part of its value. Ethical risk governance does not begin with researchers knowing every cultural rule, predicting every Tribal concern, or determining the appropriate level of Tribal involvement from outside the relationship. It begins with purposeful contact and communication that allow the people and governments connected to the research to identify what is ethically significant from within their own system. The good neighbor principle provides the practical bridge between culturally distinct understandings of ethical risk, turning mutual recognition from an abstract governance principle into an ongoing research practice.

6.6 Structural Conditions Shape Ethical Risk Governance

Mutual recognition becomes effective ethical risk governance when research actors have the resources and flexibility to respond to what the relationship reveals. Structural conditions matter because identifying a moral unit, ethical good, or potential harm has limited practical value if the people involved lack the time, resources, or decision space needed to act on that information.

Tribal governments contribute knowledge that researchers often need to understand the ethical risk landscape, yet that contribution requires staff time, governmental attention, cultural and technical expertise, meetings, document review,

data discussions, and continuing communication. The same resources support the Tribe's responsibilities to its citizens and community. Tribal participation gives the Tribe an opportunity to have its interests, priorities, knowledge, and desired benefits reflected in the research itself. Ethical risk governance weakens when research depends on Tribal knowledge while shifting the cost of producing that knowledge to the Tribe. Research budgets that support Tribal staff participation, honoraria, travel, technical review, cultural consultation, monitoring, and other project related contributions give Tribal governments greater practical ability to identify and address ethical risk and to shape research in ways that reflect the ethical goods they seek to protect or advance.

This structural problem creates a point of connection with Belmont's principle of justice, which asks how the burdens and benefits of research are distributed (National Commission 1979). Tribal governments often bear research burdens through staff time, governmental attention, cultural and technical expertise, review, monitoring, and continuing communication. Justice also draws attention to whether the communities contributing to research share in its benefits. Early interaction with the Tribe gives the Tribe an opportunity to identify research questions, project activities, products, training, data, or other aspects of the work that would provide value to the community. That opportunity is most meaningful while research questions, methods, budgets, and anticipated benefits remain open to influence. Funding and institutional structures that support Tribal participation during this period help distribute the costs of engagement more fairly and allow community defined benefit to become part of the research design.

Researchers work within institutional structures that shape their ability to respond. Universities and funders establish requirements concerning project design, data ownership, intellectual property, publication, open access, budgets, timelines, deliverables, and allowable costs. These requirements define much of the decision space available when Tribal engagement identifies a risk or suggests a change. Early Tribal contact has greater ethical value when researchers retain enough flexibility to revise questions, methods, budgets, data practices, or other important parts of the project in response to what they learn.

Ethical risk governance depends on the research environment as well as the people working within it. Researchers initiate relationships and respond to what they learn; Tribal governments contribute knowledge of ethical goods and risks recognized within their own system; universities, funders, and agencies shape the resources and flexibility available for that exchange to influence the work. Compensating Tribal contributions and preserving meaningful decision space allow mutual recognition to affect research practice, turning broader ethical risk recognition into action.

DECISION SPACE

Tribal engagement has practical ethical force when research questions, methods, budgets, data practices, interpretation, dissemination, and anticipated benefits remain open to influence. Time, resources, and institutional flexibility determine whether recognized ethical risk can change the research.

6.7 Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do institutional and Indigenous research ethics frameworks compare in the moral units, ethical goods, ethical risk, and sources of ethical authority they recognize in nonmedical research?

Institutional and Tribal ethical systems recognize overlapping but differently configured sets of ethical concerns. Institutional human subjects ethics places the individual participant at the center of ethical protection and gives particular attention to autonomy, voluntariness, welfare, privacy, confidentiality, and fair treatment. Tribal and Indigenous ethical systems retain concern for the individual and bring additional moral units and ethical goods into view, including Tribes, communities, clans, families, cultural owners, future generations, sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, collective wellbeing, reciprocity, and relationships to place. These differences shape the ethical risks each system recognizes.

Ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit. Across the two systems, different actors and relationships recognize and respond to ethical risk within distinct dimensions of research. Individuals govern their own participation; Institutional Review Boards govern institutional human subjects protections; Tribal governments determine their governmental relationship to research and address risks to Tribal interests; cultural owners guide the use of knowledge held through their relationships; landowners and agencies govern access and permitting within their responsibilities; and data governance addresses responsibilities associated with the collection, control, storage, sharing, and future use of research information. The central difference between the systems lies in who and what each recognizes as ethically significant, the goods each protects, the risks each identifies, and the relationships through which those risks are addressed.

Research Question 2: How are research ethics frameworks operationalized through governance mechanisms and research relationships in Southeast Alaska, and how do those processes shape ethical legitimacy and trust?

Research ethics involving the Tribes in Southeast Alaska is operationalized through parallel and complementary processes that address different dimensions of the same research activity. Each ethical system effectively addresses concerns central to its own responsibilities. Institutional review provides strong protections for individual human participants through the responsibilities assigned to the IRB. Tribal governments examine research through a distinct ethical lens and address interests connected to the Tribe, its citizens, sovereignty, community, knowledge, and other collective concerns. Institutional review, individual consent, Tribal government, land access, cultural protocols, and data governance operate alongside one another, with each carrying responsibilities connected to particular people, interests, relationships, or ethical goods. Ethical legitimacy strengthens when the research process recognizes these distinct roles and allows the concerns visible within each ethical system to enter the research relationship.

Direct engagement with the local Tribe provides the practical connection between systems, giving researchers access to Tribal perspectives on the interests, cultural relationships, ethical goods, and potential harms implicated by the work. Trust develops through researcher transparency, respectful contact, responsiveness, consistency, follow through, reciprocity, and continuing communication. Early engagement gives Tribal knowledge and concerns an opportunity to influence meaningful decisions while the project remains open to change; continuing engagement keeps the relationship responsive as findings, interpretations, data uses, and policy implications develop. Ethical legitimacy and trust develop through active research relationships in which appropriate governance processes are respected and the people and institutions involved demonstrate the quality of conduct necessary to sustain those relationships.

Research Question 3: What governance mechanisms and practical actions can improve the interface between institutional and Tribal ethical systems in Southeast Alaska while preserving individual human subjects protections, Tribal sovereignty, and distinct governance responsibilities?

The optimal governance response is deliberate mutual recognition among complementary ethical systems. Purposeful relationships allow ethical information recognized within each system to influence the research while the appropriate actors retain their distinct roles.

Researchers provide the primary connection by contacting the local Tribe early, approaching the Tribe as a sovereign government, asking how it wishes to engage, allowing what they learn to influence the research, maintaining communication, and seeking to conduct research that provides value to the Tribe as defined through the relationship. Tribal governments determine their preferred level of involvement. They communicate the interests, risks, priorities, and benefits they consider important.

Institutional Review Boards preserve strong individual human subjects protections; universities provide complementary pathways, administrative support, training, and flexibility for Tribal relationships and ethical concerns outside conventional human subjects review. Funders strengthen this interface through support for early engagement, compensation for Tribal participation, recognition of reciprocity as part of ethical research design, and flexibility for projects to change in response to what researchers learn. These actions broaden ethical risk coverage and preserve the distinct protections, responsibilities, and governance relationships of both systems.

6.8 Parallel Developments in Indigenous Research Governance

The findings of this dissertation emerged from a Southeast Alaska and Tlingit and Haida context. Similar ideas are increasingly visible in Indigenous and Arctic research literature. The five sources discussed below illustrate broader recognition of a shift toward research governance that begins before priorities and methods are fixed and continues through interpretation, dissemination, and return of findings.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council's *Ethical and Equitable Engagement Synthesis Report* provides an Indigenous developed model of research engagement across Inuit Nunaat, the Inuit homelands spanning Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2021, 3, 10). The report calls for Inuit communities, governments, and organizations representing Inuit interests to participate from the beginning of projects that affect Inuit homelands or draw on Indigenous knowledge. This includes setting priorities and shaping project design (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2021, 28–29). It recognizes Inuit authority to set conditions for participation and establishes expectations for compensation for Indigenous expertise and for Inuit access to, ownership of, and control over information connected to Inuit knowledge and homelands (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2021, 28–29, 34). The report sets out circumpolar principles and explicitly describes them as complementary to protocols developed at local, regional, and national levels (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2021, 8, 10).

IARPC's SHARE principles provide a U.S. federal interagency example of the broader shift toward Arctic research governance grounded in continuing relationships and meaningful Indigenous participation. Developed separately from the ICC framework, SHARE emphasizes sustained relationships, accountability, respect for Indigenous knowledges, communication, and responsible environmental stewardship and directs researchers to discuss desired levels of collaboration, differences in perceptions of risk and benefit, data governance, local protocols, and participation across the research lifecycle (Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee 2018; Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee n.d.). Its significance lies in the incorporation of these expectations into

U.S. federal Arctic research guidance, supporting practices that allow Indigenous knowledge, priorities, and concerns to influence research decisions. SHARE provides a federal interagency precedent for continuing relationships and communication as part of responsible research conduct.

David-Chavez and Gavin (2018) provide empirical evidence on Indigenous participation in climate research. Their global review found that 87 percent of studies using Indigenous knowledge followed an extractive model, with communities holding little participation or decision making authority (David-Chavez and Gavin 2018, 7). Studies initiated with or by Indigenous communities had higher levels of participation throughout the research process than studies initiated solely by outside researchers (David-Chavez and Gavin 2018, 9). These studies were more likely to produce outcomes useful to participating communities, such as adaptation plans, educational materials, and maps (David-Chavez and Gavin 2018, 11, 14). Their findings link early Indigenous participation with greater involvement in research decisions and stronger measures of responsible community engagement.

Ellam Yua et al. (2022) present a framework for coproduction of knowledge that brings Indigenous knowledge systems and science into an equity based research relationship. The framework calls for Indigenous leadership in defining research problems and questions, agreement on methods and analysis, and shared decisions about access to and control over information. Indigenous knowledge and science remain distinct knowledge systems throughout the process, offering a practical framework for separate systems to work together without either being absorbed by or ranked against the other.

Doering et al. (2022) focus on how funding agencies and research institutions shape collaboration with Indigenous communities, organizations, and research partners in the Arctic. They describe academic calendars and conventional funding guidelines as poorly matched to the time, flexibility, and research practices needed for meaningful collaboration and call for Indigenous participation from the planning of funding programs through completion of research projects (Doering et al. 2022, 1–2). Their recommendations include funding for relationship building and collaborative project development before proposals are completed, followed by resources for Indigenous participation, expertise, analysis, and communication throughout the research process (Doering et al. 2022, 5–10). These recommendations place part of the responsibility for equitable engagement on granting and grant managing institutions, which determine when resources become available and which project decisions remain open to Indigenous participation.

The five sources above closely parallel several findings from this dissertation and situate the Southeast Alaska findings within a broader development in Indigenous

research governance. The ICC report reflects the finding that Indigenous governments and communities define the terms of engagement for research involving their citizens, knowledge, lands, and interests, and that broader principles are expressed through community specific protocols. SHARE shows that sustained relationships, communication, respect for Indigenous knowledge, and attention to differing understandings of risk and benefit have entered U.S. federal Arctic research guidance. David-Chavez and Gavin support the finding that engagement is most consequential when it begins before major research decisions are fixed and continues through the project. Ellam Yua et al. provide a framework in which distinct knowledge systems remain intact and interact through an equitable relationship, closely paralleling this dissertation's finding that institutional and Indigenous ethical systems can coexist without being combined or ranked. Doering et al. reinforce the finding that early engagement depends partly on universities and funders providing time and resources before proposals and research designs are finalized.

6.9 Implications for Research Governance and Practice

The analysis points toward strengthening the connections among the ethical systems and research actors shaping work in Southeast Alaska. The practical task is to operationalize mutual recognition so ethical risks identified within one system enter the broader research relationship and receive an appropriate response. Researchers, Tribal governments, funders, and cultural owners each contribute knowledge, protections, resources, or governance connected to particular moral units and ethical goods. Effective research ethics governance supports those distinct roles, creates clear pathways for communication among them, and preserves enough flexibility for what is learned through those relationships to influence the research. The goal is broader ethical risk coverage through purposeful interaction among complementary systems.

The recommendations that follow focus on actors whose decisions control a distinct point in that interaction. Researchers initiate and maintain research relationships; Tribal governments identify and govern the Tribe's relationship to the work; Institutional Review Boards govern institutional human subjects review while universities shape the surrounding administrative and research environment; and funders determine when resources and flexibility become available. These categories describe functions within research rather than fixed types of organizations. An organization conducting a study may function as the researcher, while the same or another organization may serve an institutional or supporting role in a different project.

Each subsection begins by identifying a predictable point at which the actor's ordinary role can leave part of the ethical risk landscape unrecognized or prevent an identified risk from receiving an effective response. The recommendations address that

point by strengthening communication, mutual recognition, resources, or decision making flexibility across the complementary ethical systems.

Figure 4. Recommendations for Researchers, Research Teams, and Tribal Governments



6.9.1 Researchers and Research Teams

Researchers occupy the central connecting position between the ethical systems because they initiate the research activity and carry information among the institutions, governments, communities, and people involved. Their predictable point of failure is assuming that institutional approval, individual consent, disciplinary expertise, or familiarity with the region provides enough information to understand the full ethical risk landscape. That assumption leaves moral units and ethical goods recognized within the Tribal system outside the researcher's assessment until a problem becomes visible through conflict, objection, or harm.

Recommended actions include:

- Approach the Tribe as a sovereign government. Tribal engagement is more than stakeholder or community outreach. Best practice treats the Tribe as a distinct government with its own citizens, leadership, processes, priorities, and right to determine its relationship with the research. Researchers enter that relationship by identifying the appropriate governmental contact, presenting the proposed work

clearly, respecting Tribal processes and timelines, and allowing the Tribe to determine how it wishes to proceed.

- Build trust through conduct rather than credentials. Academic affiliation, professional expertise, funding, and institutional approval do not establish trust on their own. Trust develops through transparency about the purpose and use of the research, responsiveness to Tribal concerns, consistency in communication, follow through on commitments, and demonstrated respect for Tribal priorities and timelines. Researchers strengthen the relationship by showing through their actions that the Tribe's interests and contributions matter throughout the project.
- Contact the local Tribe early and often. Optimally, initial communication occurs while research questions, methods, budgets, data practices, and dissemination plans remain open to change, with communication continuing as the project develops. When the correct contact protocol is unclear, call the Tribe and ask for the Tribal Administrator or seek a referral from a known contact. A single unanswered email does not constitute meaningful contact. Some Southeast Alaska Tribes operate in remote communities where electronic communication is not always a reliable way to begin or sustain contact.
- Provide enough information for meaningful Tribal engagement. A useful initial contact explains the research questions, the proposed work, approximately when and where fieldwork will occur, what the researcher currently understands the project to involve, and what the researcher expects to ask of the Tribe. Ask how the Tribe wishes to engage and whether there are benefits the Tribe would like to see from the research. Examples include, but are not limited to, updating data held by the Tribe, engaging youth, or developing knowledge on questions of particular interest to the Tribe.
- Ask the Tribe to define the relationship it wants. Ask and be prepared to respond to the Tribe's wishes concerning the level of involvement it prefers, how often communication is useful, who the appropriate point of contact is, and what continuing involvement it wants as the research develops.
- Allow Tribal knowledge to change the research. Best practice gives Tribal priorities, questions, knowledge, concerns, and desired benefits a meaningful opportunity to influence the project. The Tribe determines which interests or ethical risks warrant attention. Honor that determination.
- Budget for the relationship. Create a budget that accounts for Tribal staff time, honoraria, travel, consultation, monitoring, technical or legal review, and other contributions required by the project.
- Identify additional cultural relationships when they are implicated. Tribal engagement addresses the relationship with the sovereign political community, while clan, family,

or other cultural relationships govern knowledge held within those domains. Ask the Tribe for explicit guidance in identifying appropriate cultural owners or knowledge holders rather than assuming Tribal contact or individual consent establishes permission to record, use, interpret, publish, or reuse culturally governed knowledge.

- Consider a community liaison when the project warrants one. With the Tribe's agreement, budgeting for a Tribal citizen or another locally appropriate person to serve as a community connector or liaison strengthens communication, helps the research team understand local context, and maintains the relationship across the life of the project.

6.9.2 Tribal Governments

Tribal governments bring their own sovereign interests, priorities, knowledge, desired benefits, and understanding of ethical risk into the research relationship and determine if and how they wish to engage. The practical challenge for a Tribe is often managing outside research interest within limited staff time and competing responsibilities to its citizens and community. A Tribe may want greater awareness of research involving its people or interests, or greater opportunity to influence that work, while lacking the resources to maintain a formal research review process or respond extensively to every inquiry. Research may also implicate clan, family, or other cultural relationships whose responsibilities remain distinct from Tribal government. The recommendations below offer practical tools a Tribe can use, if it chooses, to make its preferred research relationship easier to communicate and manage while preserving its own processes, priorities, and control over the level of involvement it prefers.

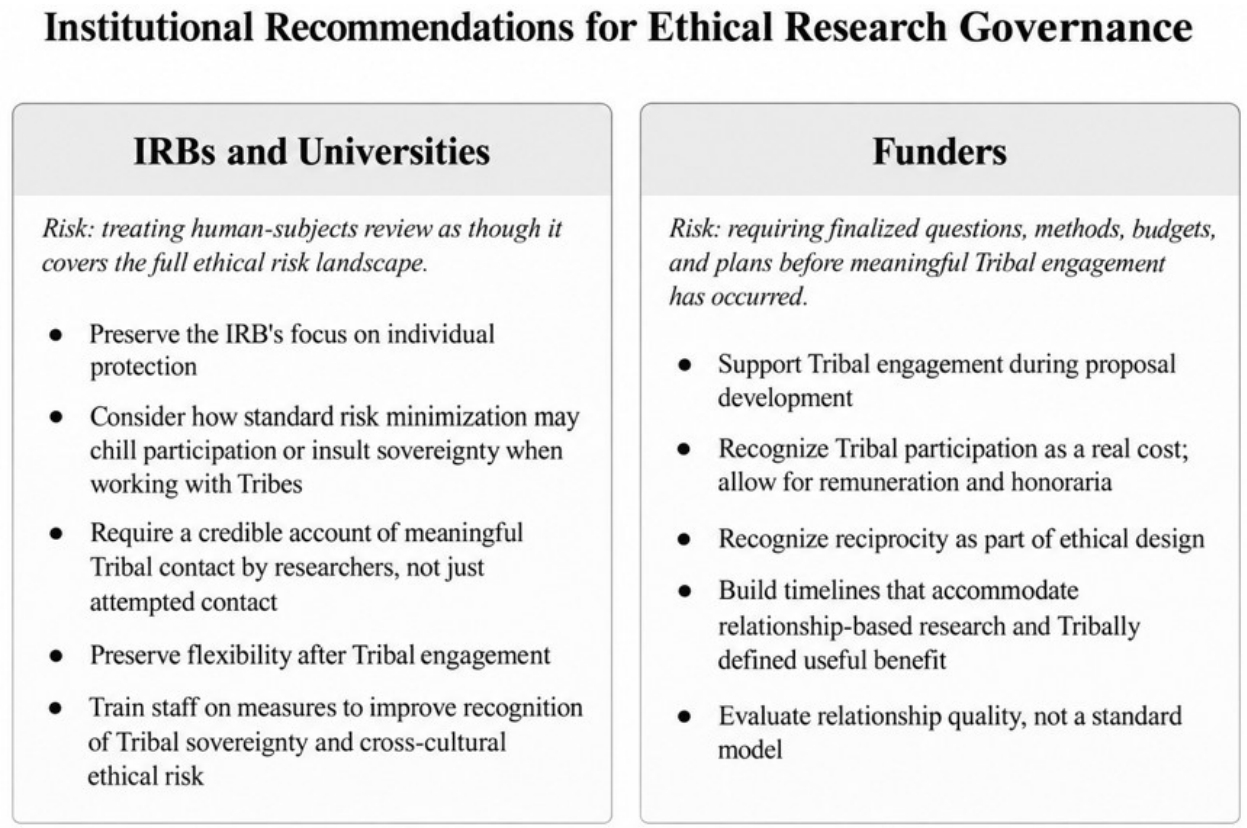
Recommended actions include:

- Make the preferred research contact visible. Where useful to the Tribe, identify a clear starting point for research inquiries on the Tribal website or another public communication channel. This might be the Tribal Administrator, an environmental or cultural program, or another designated contact. A simple statement such as "For proposed research involving the Tribe or community, contact the Tribal Administrator" gives researchers a clear entry point while leaving every subsequent decision with the Tribe.
- Identify the information useful for an initial review. A concise list of requested information helps the Tribe understand a proposed project without requiring extensive staff time at the outset. Useful information includes the research questions, proposed activities, approximate timing and location, funding status, anticipated requests of the Tribe, expected data collection and management, and the researcher's current understanding of how the Tribe or community is connected to the work.

- Choose a level of involvement proportionate to the project and Tribal priorities. The Tribe determines what relationship fits the research. The preferred level might involve notification with no additional participation; periodic information or provision of local context; participation in research design; an MOU, MOA, or other agreement; conditions governing data; review of findings; or an active research partnership. The process might involve an administrator, council, committee, program office, resolution, agreement, or scheduled updates determined by the Tribe. The form of governance reflects the project and the level of involvement the Tribe prefers.
- Communicate Tribal priorities, ethical concerns, and desired benefits. If the Tribe chooses to engage, identify what the Tribe would like the research to protect, address, contribute, or produce. This includes concerns about ethical risk as well as opportunities for useful findings, improved Tribal data, youth involvement, training, accessible research products, or research questions important to the Tribe. Stating these interests early gives the Tribe greater opportunity to influence the project.
- Identify and communicate the Tribe's cost of participation. Consider the staff time, administrative work, technical review, meetings, travel, cultural consultation, data management, monitoring, and other resources the research will require from the Tribe. Where substantial involvement is anticipated, financial remuneration is appropriate to discuss directly with the research team. Projects requiring sustained Tribal participation warrant consideration of dedicated funded staff time rather than absorbing the additional work within existing Tribal operations. Identifying these costs during project and grant development gives researchers and funders an opportunity to include them in the research budget.
- Direct researchers toward additional cultural relationships where appropriate. Where proposed research involves culturally governed knowledge and the Tribe considers another cultural relationship relevant, identify or help the researcher locate the appropriate clan, family, Elder, knowledge holder, or other cultural owner. This guidance helps an unfamiliar researcher understand when the Tribal governmental relationship and the relationship governing particular knowledge follow different paths.
- Establish the communication pattern the Tribe prefers. Identify and communicate the appropriate contact person, preferred method of communication, useful frequency of updates, and the types of changes, findings, data decisions, or emerging issues the Tribe wants brought back for discussion. This allows continuing contact to follow Tribal preferred channels, timelines, and priorities rather than a communication schedule established solely by the researcher.

- Offer cross cultural guidance when the Tribe finds it useful. A researcher entering a Tribal research relationship for the first time might not understand communication practices, relationship expectations, or approaches to knowledge sharing that are familiar within the community. If the Tribe has the interest and resources, explaining preferred practices gives the researcher an opportunity to learn and prevents avoidable misunderstandings. Responsibility for learning remains with the researcher, and the Tribe determines how much education or guidance it wishes to provide.
- Use trusted outside support to reduce Tribal burden. When useful, organizations, consultants, or other partners trusted by the Tribe provide technical assistance, administrative support, proposal review, interpretation of technical material, or assistance evaluating data and agreement provisions. Outside support supplements the Tribe's own assessment of the research while reducing demands on Tribal staff. Decisions about the Tribe's interests, involvement, and relationship with the research remain with the Tribe.

Figure 5. Institutional Recommendations for Ethical Research Governance



6.9.3 Institutional Review Boards and Universities

Institutional Review Boards and universities shape different but connected parts of the research ethics environment. IRBs govern institutional human subjects review and provide protections for individual research participants through attention to informed consent, individual risk, privacy, confidentiality, voluntariness, and related protections. Universities create the surrounding administrative, legal, contractual, training, and research support environment in which investigators design and conduct their work. The predictable point of failure occurs when human subjects review is treated as though it represents the full ethical risk landscape implicated by a project. Tribal sovereignty, cultural relationships, Indigenous knowledge, data governance, traditional lands, and other collective ethical goods require relationships and processes beyond individual human subjects review. IRBs and universities are positioned to preserve strong individual protections while creating complementary pathways through which these additional dimensions of ethical risk enter the research process. The Common Rule's own risk proportionate structure provides a useful model for preserving strong participant protections while matching institutional intervention to the probability, magnitude, and type of risk involved.

Recommended actions include:

- Preserve the IRB's focus on individual human subjects protection. Institutional review is most effective when it retains clear responsibility for informed consent, individual risk, privacy, confidentiality, voluntariness, and other protections associated with research participation. Tribal ethical governance is better supported through complementary processes than by expanding the IRB into a substitute Tribal review body.
- Apply human subjects protections proportionately to participant risk. The Common Rule already differentiates institutional review according to the level and type of risk involved, including through the minimal risk standard and differentiated review requirements (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.102(j), 46.110, 46.111). IRBs should preserve all protections warranted by the probability and magnitude of anticipated harm while avoiding additional requirements that exceed what the participant risk requires. The K̲utí experience illustrates why this matters. Protections intended to reduce a low level of individual risk can themselves alter culturally appropriate participation, discourage involvement, or introduce discomfort. Proportionate review protects participants while remaining attentive to the risks created by the protective intervention itself.
- Distinguish regulatory requirements from institutional habit. Repeated local interpretations can harden into routine institutional practice and acquire the appearance of regulatory necessity even when the governing text allows greater flexibility. IRB chairs, reviewers, administrators, and university leaders should

periodically return to the governing standard and distinguish requirements in regulation from institutional policy and accumulated interpretive habit. That review should assess whether local practices remain proportionate to participant risk and consistent with the Common Rule's differentiated review structure (45 C.F.R. §§ 46.102(j), 46.110, 46.111). The Common Rule already provides a risk proportionate structure; institutional interpretation determines how that structure operates in practice.

- Create an institutional pathway for meaningful Tribal contact when Tribal interests are implicated. For research involving Tribal citizens collectively, Tribal programs or records, Tribal data, Indigenous knowledge or cultural resources, representation of a Tribe or community, traditional lands, or other identifiable Tribal interests, university research procedures should provide a clear pathway requiring meaningful contact with the local Tribe. That contact should provide enough information for the Tribe to understand the proposed work and a genuine opportunity to determine if and how it wishes to engage. This pathway complements human subjects review rather than expanding the IRB into a Tribal review body, and it remains applicable when research implicates Tribal interests without falling within IRB jurisdiction.
- Require a credible researcher account of meaningful Tribal contact. The researcher provides an account of the Tribal contact that occurred, including who was contacted, how communication occurred, what information was shared, and what level of involvement the Tribe indicated it wanted. Oral conversations and meetings are valid forms of engagement. Responsibility for documenting those interactions belongs to the researcher. Requiring the Tribe to produce letters, emails, resolutions, or other documentation shifts the administrative burden of the researcher's institutional process onto the Tribal government.
- Distinguish meaningful contact from attempted contact. A single unanswered email does not demonstrate that the Tribal ethical relationship was meaningfully opened. The institutional process evaluates the researcher's account for evidence of substantive communication and a genuine opportunity for the Tribe to respond. If there is a specific reason to question whether meaningful contact occurred, direct confirmation with the Tribal Administrator or another contact identified by the Tribe provides a more appropriate source of clarification than generalized assumptions about Tribal engagement or a requirement that the Tribe produce additional paperwork.
- Do not treat Indigenous representation on the review panel as a substitute for local Tribal engagement. An Indigenous reviewer provides valuable ethical and cultural perspective but does not represent another sovereign Tribe or determine that Tribe's

research expectations. Indigenous Nations differ substantially from one another, and meaningful differences also exist among Tribes within Southeast Alaska. A reviewer from another Indigenous Nation does not possess the local governmental, cultural, and relationship based knowledge needed to speak for a particular Tlingit or Haida Tribe. Indigenous panel expertise strengthens institutional review by helping reviewers identify questions that warrant attention; direct engagement with the local Tribe provides the appropriate source for understanding that Tribe's relationship to the research.

- Build cross cultural ethical risk questions into researcher guidance and protocol development. IRB materials, university research guidance, and protocol development processes can prompt researchers to consider which moral units and ethical goods their work implicates and whether Tribal citizens, communities, Indigenous knowledge, Tribal data or records, traditional lands, culturally significant places, or Tribal representation are involved. These questions help researchers identify where institutional human subjects review represents only one portion of the ethical risk landscape and where direct Tribal engagement provides additional information necessary to understand the project.
- Provide administrative and legal support for Tribal research relationships. When the Tribe and researcher determine that an agreement or additional protection is appropriate, universities provide practical support for MOUs, MOAs, data governance agreements, compensation arrangements, intellectual property questions, publication agreements, and other commitments developed through the relationship. University support gives researchers workable mechanisms for responding to ethical risks and Tribal expectations identified through engagement.
- Preserve flexibility for research to change after Tribal engagement. University procedures are most effective when researchers retain enough flexibility to revise methods, data arrangements, timelines, dissemination plans, compensation, or other project elements in response to information identified through Tribal engagement. Mutual recognition has practical value when information entering through the Tribal ethical system is allowed to influence meaningful research decisions.
- Use proportionate amendment review for changes arising through Tribal engagement. Research relationships often develop iteratively, and conversations with Tribal governments may produce minor refinements to survey items, recruitment strategies, research questions, instruments, methods, or data collection practices. When a proposed change qualifies as a minor modification to previously approved research, institutions should use the expedited review pathway available under 45 C.F.R. § 46.110(b)(2) instead of defaulting to convened review. OHRP recommends that

institutions maintain written policies identifying minor changes eligible for expedited review (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections 2003, 2011). This approach preserves oversight and expresses institutional trust through review matched to the nature of the change.

- Train researchers, reviewers, and administrators to understand Tribal sovereignty and cross cultural ethical risk. Tribal governments are sovereign political communities, not stakeholder groups within an institutional project. Training on Tribal sovereignty, local Tribal government, cultural ownership, the distinction between individual consent and Tribal engagement, and culturally distinct understandings of ethical risk gives institutional actors a stronger foundation for working within complementary ethical systems.

6.9.4 Funders

Funders shape ethical risk governance before research begins by determining when resources become available, what information proposals must contain, which costs are allowable, and how closely funded work must follow the original design. Their predictable point of failure occurs when researchers are required to finalize questions, methods, budgets, partnerships, data plans, anticipated benefits, and deliverables before meaningful Tribal engagement has occurred. Ethical risks, Tribal priorities, and desired benefits identified later in the relationship then enter a project with less flexibility to influence the work. Funding and payment rules sometimes restrict compensation for people or organizations outside the institution sponsoring the research, creating another barrier when meaningful Tribal participation involves paid staff time, honoraria, consultation, or other compensated contributions. These structures affect both the burdens Tribes bear through participation in research and their opportunity to help define the benefits the research returns. Funding structures that support engagement during project development, permit appropriate compensation, and preserve responsiveness after award give Tribal input greater opportunity to shape the research while meaningful decisions remain open.

Recommended actions include:

- Support Tribal engagement during proposal development. Optimally, researchers have resources to contact and confer with the local Tribe while research questions, methods, timelines, data plans, and budgets are still being developed. Planning funds, preproposal awards, or allowable proposal development costs provide practical support for this work before the larger research award is made.
- Recognize Tribal participation as a legitimate research cost. Funding guidance and allowable cost structures need to accommodate Tribal staff time, honoraria, travel,

consultation, technical or legal review, data management, monitoring, community liaison roles, and other contributions requested by the project. These costs represent labor and expertise required by the research beyond ancillary outreach expenses. Funding programs need to remove unnecessary restrictions that prevent researchers from compensating Tribal governments, staff, knowledge holders, community members, or other contributors for legitimate project related work.

- Recognize reciprocity and community defined benefit as part of ethical research design. Reciprocity, exchange, and returning value are important components of many Tribal research relationships. Funding policies should provide enough flexibility for the Tribe to identify what forms of benefit are useful within its own priorities and circumstances. Early engagement allows those benefits to influence research questions, project activities, budgets, products, training, data return, youth involvement, or other aspects of the work while the project is still being developed. Funding structures should accommodate these forms of value as legitimate parts of research design rather than peripheral activities added after the substantive project has already been defined.
- Ask how Tribal engagement influenced the proposal. Where proposed research implicates identifiable Tribal interests, proposal review benefits from a researcher account of Tribal contact, what the researcher learned, and how that information influenced the research design, budget, data practices, expected benefits, or planned relationship. The applicant bears the documentation burden; the Tribe does not need to perform additional work to produce material for the funder.
- Select reviewers with sufficient contextual knowledge and cultural competence related to the Tribe or Tribes involved in the research. External review remains valuable, and reviewers need not be local. Reviewers should understand the research environment, Tribal sovereignty, Indigenous research governance, and the relationships involved well enough to distinguish culturally appropriate research practice from a genuine ethical or methodological concern. Indigenous experience alone does not establish cultural competence for another Indigenous Nation. Funders should ask reviewers, evaluators, and site visitors to consider how their recommendations affect established Tribal relationships, community priorities, and research practices that continue after the review ends. Contextual competence reduces the risk that external review disrupts productive Tribal research relationships the reviewer will not remain part of.
- Do not treat a letter of support as a proxy for meaningful engagement. A Tribal letter documents support when the Tribe chooses to provide one, but the existence of a letter does not by itself demonstrate that the Tribe had a meaningful opportunity to identify ethical risk, shape the research, or define the relationship it wants. Support

may be communicated entirely through oral conversation or agreement without producing a formal written document. Evaluation is stronger when it considers the substance and timing of engagement rather than the presence or absence of a particular document.

- Preserve flexibility after Tribal engagement. Award structures need room for reasonable changes to research questions, methods, budgets, timelines, staffing, data arrangements, dissemination, or other project elements. Tribal engagement sometimes identifies ethical risks, priorities, or desired benefits that warrant changes to the funded work. Responsiveness to newly understood ethical information represents stronger research governance rather than failure to adhere rigidly to the original proposal.
- Build timelines that support relationship based research. Meaningful communication, Tribal review, cultural consultation, agreements, and relationship building require time. Funding schedules that recognize these activities as part of the research process reduce pressure to move forward before the ethical relationships surrounding the work are sufficiently understood.
- Allow Tribes to define useful benefit. Funding structures work best when researchers have enough flexibility to incorporate benefits identified by the Tribe, including, but not limited to, useful data, locally relevant research questions, youth engagement, training, community accessible products, or other priorities emerging through the relationship. The value of the research to the Tribe is best established through engagement rather than assumed in advance by the researcher or funder.
- Evaluate the quality of the relationship rather than requiring a standardized model of participation. Meaningful Tribal involvement takes different forms across Tribes and projects. One Tribe might seek an active research partnership while another prefers periodic communication or limited involvement. Funding review is most consistent with Tribal sovereignty when it assesses whether the relationship is meaningful and appropriately supported without prescribing a uniform form of Tribal participation.

6.10 Chapter Conclusion

This study began with a practical question about how institutional and Indigenous research ethics relate when they bring different understandings of responsibility, protection, and appropriate research conduct to the same project. The analysis ultimately reveals complementary, coexisting ethical systems that bring different dimensions of ethical risk into view. Institutional and Tribal ethical systems arise from culturally distinct understandings of who and what requires ethical consideration, which goods and relationships require protection, and what forms of harm constitute ethical risk. Their

differences are consequential; each system makes particular portions of the ethical risk landscape visible.

This finding deepens the concept of ethical risk itself. Ethical risk reflects the proximity and magnitude of potential harm to a moral unit or to an ethical good associated with that moral unit. Institutional human subjects ethics brings strong attention to individual participants and ethical goods such as autonomy, welfare, privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Tribal and Indigenous ethical systems bring additional moral units and ethical goods into view, including Tribes, communities, cultural owners, future generations, sovereignty, culturally governed knowledge, collective wellbeing, and relationships to place. The same research activity carries different ethical significance depending on which moral units, ethical goods, and potential harms are visible within the system assessing it.

The implication for research ethics governance is deliberate mutual recognition. Broader ethical risk coverage depends on ethical information moving across the relationships involved in the research. No participant in the research relationship can assume that the perspective available from within one ethical system reveals every moral unit, ethical good, or potential harm recognized within another. Broader ethical risk coverage does not require merging institutional and Tribal ethical systems into a single framework or hierarchically placing one above the other. It requires relationships through which the ethical information visible within each system enters the research process while the people, governments, institutions, and cultural owners connected to particular ethical goods retain their appropriate roles. Institutional review protects individual participants. Tribal governments determine their own relationship to research and identify risks to Tribal interests, sovereignty, citizens, and community. Cultural owners guide the use of knowledge carried through clan, family, and other culturally governed relationships. Data governance extends responsibility into the future use of research information. Purposeful interaction among these relationships produces a more complete understanding of what the research places at risk.

Tribal sovereignty demonstrates why this broader range of ethical concerns matters. When the Tribe is recognized as a moral unit and sovereignty as an ethical good, research activities that appear ethically limited from an individual human subjects perspective acquire additional significance. Representation of the Tribe, use of Tribal knowledge or data, research conducted in relation to traditional lands, and decisions affecting the Tribe’s relationship with outside institutions all carry potential consequences for self determination and collective interests. Recognition of those risks does not diminish individual protections. It reveals an additional ethical relationship that requires attention within the research process.

The practical bridge between these systems is comparatively simple: contact the Tribe, explain the proposed work, ask how the Tribe wishes to engage and what it considers important about the research, listen to what the Tribe identifies as important, allow that knowledge to influence the research, maintain communication as the work develops, and return value through a reciprocal relationship. These good neighbor practices are more than expressions of respect. They allow researchers to learn about moral units, ethical goods, relationships, and potential harms that may not be visible from outside the Tribal ethical system. The quality of ethical risk assessment depends in part on the relationships through which ethical information becomes known.

Relational accountability adds a temporal dimension to this governance structure. Actors who remain connected to the people, governments, ethical goods, and research relationships affected by their decisions are positioned to observe consequences, repair misunderstandings, and carry the reputation of the work into future relationships. This proximity to consequences gives continuing relationships practical force within ethical risk governance.

Relationships are insufficient when research structures leave little room to respond. Researchers need time and flexibility to change projects; Tribal governments need resources to participate without absorbing the costs of outside research; Institutional Review Boards and universities need pathways that recognize the limits of human subjects review without attempting to replace Tribal governance; and funders need policies, budgets, and timelines that support meaningful engagement, reciprocity, compensation, and changes arising from what researchers learn. Ethical risk governance becomes stronger when the structures surrounding research allow mutual recognition to influence meaningful decisions.

The broader lesson extends beyond any particular procedure or governance mechanism. Ethical research across culturally distinct systems depends on recognizing that no single framework necessarily identifies or protects every moral unit, ethical good, or potential harm implicated by a project. In Southeast Alaska, institutional and Tribal ethical systems provide complementary perspectives that together support a more comprehensive understanding of ethical risk precisely because they do not understand the relevant ethical concerns in identical ways. Preserving those differences while creating purposeful relationships among them expands what research ethics is able to see, strengthens its ability to respond, and offers a foundation for research relationships that protect people, sovereignty, knowledge, place, and the relationships connecting them.

References

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. n.d. “Private Lands.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=access.private.

Alaska Department of Law. n.d. “Attorneys General of Alaska.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.law.alaska.gov/department/ag_past.html.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. 2024. *The Unmet Needs of Environmentally Threatened Alaska Native Villages: Assessment and Recommendations*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. https://www.anthc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Unmet_Needs_Report_22JAN24.pdf.

Alaska State Legislature. 1995. “Joint House and Senate Judiciary Committee.” December 4, 1995. https://www.akleg.gov/basis/Meeting/Detail?Meeting=SJUD+1995-12-04+10%3A00%3A00.

Around Him, Deana, Temana Andalcio Aguilar, Anita Frederick, Heather Larsen, Michaela Seiber, and Jyoti Angal. 2019. “Tribal IRBs: A Framework for Understanding Research Oversight in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities.” American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research 26 (2): 71–95. https://doi.org/10.5820/aian.2602.2019.71.

Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies. 2003. Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies.

Beecher, Henry K. 1966. “Ethics and Clinical Research.” New England Journal of Medicine 274 (24): 1354–60. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM196606162742405.

Botelho, Bruce M. 1996a. “Tribal Status Issues.” 1996 Op. Alaska Att’y Gen. No. 1, January 11. https://law.alaska.gov/pdf/opinions/opinions_1996/96-001_663960521.pdf.

Botelho, Bruce M. 1996b. “Tribal Sovereignty Questions.” 1996 Op. Alaska Att’y Gen. No. 2, April 18. https://law.alaska.gov/pdf/opinions/opinions_1996/96-013_663960521.pdf.

Bureau of Indian Affairs. n.d. “Frequently Asked Questions.” Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions.

Bureau of Indian Affairs. n.d.a. “Alaska Region.” Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.bia.gov/regional-office/alaska-region.

Bureau of Indian Affairs. n.d.b. “Tribes Served by the Alaska Region.” Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska/tribes-served.

Bureau of Land Management. n.d. “State Entitlements.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/regional-information/alaska/land_transfer/state-entitlements.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. 2022. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, TCPS 2 (2022). Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Carroll, Stephanie Russo, Ibrahim Garba, Oscar L. Figueroa Rodríguez, Jarita Holbrook, Raymond Lovett, Simeon Materechera, Mark Parsons, et al. 2020. “The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.” Data Science Journal 19: 43. https://doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2020-043.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. “The Untreated Syphilis Study at Tuskegee Timeline.” September 4, 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/about/timeline.html.

Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. 2025. “Tlingit & Haida Opposes USDA Decision to Rollback Roadless Rule Protections for the Tongass.” July 1, 2025. https://tlingitandhaida.gov/news/roadlessrulerollbackopposition/.

Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. n.d. “History.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://tlingitandhaida.gov/about-us/history/.

Chilisa, Bagele. 2012. Indigenous Research Methodologies. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

City of Kake. n.d. “City of Kake.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.cityofkake.org/.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. 2023. “Modern Treaties.” Government of Canada.

Dauenhauer, Richard Leonard. 1975. *Text and Context of Tlingit Oral Tradition*. PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison.

David-Chavez, Dominique M., and Michael C. Gavin. 2018. “A Global Assessment of Indigenous Community Engagement in Climate Research.” *Environmental Research Letters* 13 (12): 123005. https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aaf300.

Doering, Nina Nikola, Stephan Dudeck, Shelly Elverum, Charleen Fisher, Jan Erik Henriksen, Thora Martina Herrmann, Britt Kramvig, et al. 2022. “Improving the Relationships between Indigenous Rights Holders and Researchers in the Arctic: An

Invitation for Change in Funding and Collaboration." *Environmental Research Letters* 17 (6): 065014. https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac72b5.

DuBois, James M. 2020. "Hepatitis Studies at the Willowbrook State School for Children." Bioethics Research Center.

Ellam Yua, Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Raychelle Aluaq Daniel, and Carolina Behe. 2022. "A Framework for Co-production of Knowledge in the Context of Arctic Research." *Ecology and Society* 27 (1): 34. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12960-270134.

First Nations Information Governance Centre. 2014. Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™): The Path to First Nations Information Governance. Ottawa: First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Fitzpatrick, Emily F. M., Alexandra L. C. Martiniuk, Heather D'Antoine, June Oscar, Maureen Carter, and Elizabeth J. Elliott. 2016. "Seeking Consent for Research with Indigenous Communities: A Systematic Review." BMC Medical Ethics 17: 65. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-016-0139-8.

Fitzpatrick, Tana. 2021. *Tribal Land and Ownership Statuses: Overview and Selected Issues for Congress*. CRS Report R46647. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 21, 2021.

Garrison, Nanibaa' A. 2013. "Genomic Justice for Native Americans: Impact of the Havasupai Case on Genetic Research." Science, Technology, & Human Values 38 (2): 201–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243912470009.

Government of the Northwest Territories. 2024. Doing Research in the Northwest Territories: A Guide for Researchers. Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Government of Yukon. 2026. "Apply for a Scientists and Explorers Act Licence." Yukon.ca. https://yukon.ca/en/science-and-natural-resources/research-and-monitoring/apply-scientists-and-explorers-act-licence.

Gunsalus, C. K., Edward M. Bruner, Nicholas C. Burbules, Leon Dash, Matthew Finkin, Joseph P. Goldberg, William T. Greenough, Gregory A. Miller, and Michael G. Pratt. 2006. "Mission Creep in the IRB World." Science 312 (5779): 1441. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1121479.

Harding, Anna, Barbara Harper, Dave Stone, Catherine O'Neill, Patricia Berger, Stuart Harris, and Jamie Donatuto. 2012. "Conducting Research with Tribal Communities: Sovereignty, Ethics, and Data Sharing Issues." Environmental Health Perspectives 120 (1): 6–10. https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1103904.

Hudson, Maui, Moe Milne, Paul Reynolds, Khyla Russell, and Barry Smith. 2010. Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A Framework for Researchers and Ethics Committee Members. Auckland: Health Research Council of New Zealand on behalf of the Pūtaiora Writing Group.

Institute of Medicine. 2007. Ethical Considerations for Research Involving Prisoners. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. 2018. *Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic*. Washington, DC: Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/uploads/cms/documents/principles_for_conducting_research_in_the_arctic_final_2018.pdf.

Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. n.d. "SHARE Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic." IARPC Collaborations. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/principles.html.

Inuit Circumpolar Council. 2021. *Ethical and Equitable Engagement Synthesis Report: A Collection of Inuit Rules, Guidelines, Protocols, and Values for the Engagement of Inuit Communities and Indigenous Knowledge from Across Inuit Nunaat*. Synthesis Report. International. https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/wp-content/uploads/ICC-EEE-Synthesis-report-WEB.pdf.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. 2018. National Inuit Strategy on Research. Ottawa: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Jaworska, Agnieszka, and Julie Tannenbaum. 2021. "The Grounds of Moral Status." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Substantive revision March 3, 2021. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/grounds-moral-status/.

Kake Tribal Corporation. n.d. "About KTC." Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.kaketribalcorporation.com/about-ktc/.

Kovach, Margaret. 2009. Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Kuhn, Nicole S., Ethan J. Kuhn, Michael (daniseten) Vendiola, and Clarita Lefthand Begay. 2024. "Indigenous Research Ethics and Tribal Research Review Boards in the United States: Examining Online Presence and Themes across Online Documentation." Research Ethics 20 (3). https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161241240030.

Kukutai, Tahu, and John Taylor, eds. 2016. Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Toward an Agenda. Canberra: ANU Press.

Ḵutí Geohazards Project. n.d. “The Ḵutí Geohazards Project: Community-Led Geohazard Risk Reduction in Southeast Alaska.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.kutiproject.org/home.

Lerner, Barron H. 2004. “Sins of Omission: Cancer Research without Informed Consent.” New England Journal of Medicine 351 (7): 628–30. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp048108.

Library and Archives Canada. 2025. “Indigenous Peoples and Communities.” Government of Canada.

Medical Research Council of Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. 1998. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Ottawa: Medical Research Council of Canada.

Moorfield, John C. n.d. “tikanga.” *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=tikanga.

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. 1979. The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

National Ethics Advisory Committee. 2019. National Ethical Standards for Health and Disability Research and Quality Improvement. Wellington: Ministry of Health, New Zealand.

National Institutes of Health. 2022. “Supplemental Information to the NIH Policy for Data Management and Sharing: Responsible Management and Sharing of American Indian/Alaska Native Participant Data.” NOT-OD-22-214. September 21, 2022. https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-22-214.html.

National Institutes of Health. 2025. “3014-405: Research Involving American Indian/Alaska Native Persons, Their Data and Biological Materials.” NIH Policy Manual. July 9, 2025. https://policymanual.nih.gov/3014-405.

National Institutes of Health. n.d. “The NIH-Lacks Family Agreement.” Accessed September 14, 2026. https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/sharing-policies/dms/privacy/nih-lacks-family-agreement.

National Science Foundation. 2026. Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide. NSF 26-1. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation.

Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board. 2026. “Navajo Nation Human Research Code.” Navajo Department of Health.

Nunavut Research Institute. 2026. “How to Apply for Your Nunavut Scientific Research License.” https://www.nri.nu.ca/research-licencing-applications.

Organized Village of Kake. n.d. “Organized Village of Kake.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://kake-nsn.gov/.

Parker, Myra, Cynthia Pearson, Caitlin Donald, and Celia B. Fisher. 2019. “Beyond the Belmont Principles: A Community Based Approach to Developing an Indigenous Ethics Model and Curriculum for Training Health Researchers Working with American Indian and Alaska Native Communities.” American Journal of Community Psychology 64 (1–2): 9–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12360.

Rothman, David J. 1987. “Ethics and Human Experimentation: Henry Beecher Revisited.” New England Journal of Medicine 317 (19): 1195–99. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM198711053171906.

Sansonetti, Thomas L. 1993. *Governmental Jurisdiction of Alaska Native Villages Over Land and Nonmembers*. Solicitor’s Opinion M-36975. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, January 11. https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/m-36975.pdf.

Saunkeah, Bobby, Julie A. Beans, Michael T. Peercy, Vanessa Y. Hiratsuka, and Paul Spicer. 2021. “Extending Research Protections to Tribal Communities.” American Journal of Bioethics 21 (10): 5–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2020.1865477.

Schroeder, Mark. 2025. “Value Theory.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Substantive revision July 14, 2025. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/value-theory/.

Sealaska Heritage Institute. 2015. “Protection of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Clan Crests and Intellectual Property and the Sale of Art and Use of Clan Property.” August 24, 2015. https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Creation-Use-and-Sale-of-NWC-Art-Performing-Arts-Aug-10-2015-Revised.pdf.

Sealaska Heritage Institute. n.d. *Indian Rights Movement*. Grade 7 Social Studies, Unit 7. Accessed September 6, 2026. https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SHI-Alaska-Education-Social-Studies-Grade-7-Unit-7_Indian-Rights-Movement.pdf.

Sealaska. 2021. “Sealaska Transitioning Out of Logging Operations.” January 11, 2021. https://www.sealaska.com/stories/sealaska-transitioning-out-of-logging-operations/.

Sealaska. n.d.a. “Culture.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.sealaska.com/culture/.

Sealaska. n.d.b. “Our Lands.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://www.sealaska.com/our-lands/.

Sitka Sound Science Center. 2022. “Project KUTÍ – Expanding Natural Hazard Monitoring and Warning Systems in SE Alaskan Communities.” February 14, 2022. https://sitkascience.org/project-kuti-expanding-natural-hazard-monitoring-and-warning-systems-in-se-alaskan-tribal-communities/.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska. 2026. “Tribal Law and Policies.” Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska. n.d.a. “Tribal Law.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://sitkatribe.org/our-government/law-and-policy/.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska. n.d.b. “Sitka Tribe of Alaska Environmental Research Lab.” Accessed September 6, 2026. https://sitkatribe.org/our-services/resource-protection-programs/sta-environmental-research-lab/.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books.

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee. 2014. *Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Strategic Action Plan 2014–2016*. Final Version 1.0, July 9, 2014. https://www.seakfhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/SEAKFHPstrategicactionplan2014_2016_final_July-09_14.pdf.

State of Alaska. 1956. *Constitution of the State of Alaska*. Article X. https://ltgov.alaska.gov/information/alaskas-constitution/.

State of Alaska. 1991. Administrative Order No. 125. August 16, 1991. https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-125/.

State of Alaska. 2000. Administrative Order No. 186. September 29, 2000. https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-186/.

State of Alaska. 2014. *Official Languages of the State*. Chapter 116, SLA 2014, CSHB 216(STA). https://www.akleg.gov/pdf/billfiles/SLAs/sl14pdfs/CH116.pdf.

State of Alaska. 2022. *State Recognition of Tribes*. Chapter 42, SLA 2022, HB 123. https://www.akleg.gov/pdf/billfiles/SLAs/sl22pdfs/CH042.pdf.

Te Mana Raraunga. 2018. Principles of Māori Data Sovereignty. Brief no. 1. October 2018.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2026a. “Consumer Price Index—July 2026 Results.” August 12, 2026. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.htm.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2026b. Historical Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average, All Items. July 2026. https://www.bls.gov/cpi/tables/supplemental-files/historical-cpi-u-202607.xlsx.

U.S. Congress. 1971. *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*. Pub. L. No. 92-203, 85 Stat. 688.

U.S. Congress. 1994. *Tlingit and Haida Status Clarification Act*. Pub. L. No. 103-454, title II, 108 Stat. 4791. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-108/pdf/STATUTE-108-Pg4791.pdf.

U.S. Congress. House. 2026. *Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act*. H.R. 41, 119th Cong., 2nd sess. Engrossed in House June 2, 2026. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BILLS-119hr41eh.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 2026. “Tongass National Forest; Alaska; Land Management Plan Revision.” *Federal Register* 91: 7424–29. February 18, 2026. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-02-18/pdf/FR-2026-02-18.pdf.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 1998. “Categories of Research That May Be Reviewed by the Institutional Review Board through an Expedited Review Procedure.” Federal Register 63 (216): 60364–67.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 2003. “Expedited Review Procedures Guidance.” August 11, 2003. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/guidance-on-expedited-review-procedures/index.html.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 2011. “Written IRB Procedures: OHRP Guidance.” https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/guidance-on-written-irb-procedures-2011/index.html.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 2021. “Revision of the Common Rule.” Last reviewed March 8, 2021. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/revision-of-the-common-rule/index.html.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 2026a. “Related Historical Human Research Protections Documents.” https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/access-other-reports-by-the-national-commission/index.html.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. 2026b. “Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (Common Rule).” https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/common-rule/index.html.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. 2014. “Land Acquisitions in the State of Alaska.” Federal Register 79: 76888. December 23, 2014.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor. 2026. “Permanent Withdrawal of Solicitor Opinion M-37076 and Reinstatement of Solicitor Opinion M-37064.” Solicitor Opinion M-37087, February 24, 2026. https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-02/m37087-permanent-withdrawl-m37076-and-reinstatement-m37064-02242026.pdf.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 1939. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Klawock Cooperative Association, Alaska*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 1950a. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Organized Village of Kake, Alaska*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 1950b. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Petersburg Indian Association, Alaska*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 1979. “Indian Tribal Entities That Have a Government-to-Government Relationship with the United States.” Federal Register 44: 7235.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 1993. “Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.” Federal Register 58: 54364–66.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 2012. “Interior Announces Consultation Policy for Alaska Native Corporations.” August 10, 2012. https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Interior-Announces-Consultation-Policy-for-Alaska-Native-Corporations.

U.S. Department of the Interior. 2023. “H.R. 4748—*Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act*.” Statement for the Record, Bureau of Land Management, December 5, 2023. https://www.doi.gov/node/56746.

U.S. Forest Service. 2025. *Tongass National Forest Assessment Report*. October 2025. https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/publication/Tongass%20National%20Forest%20Assessment%20Report%20October%202025%201%20%281%29_2.pdf.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. n.d. “The Nuremberg Code.” Holocaust Encyclopedia.

Waitangi Tribunal. n.d. “About the Treaty.” Waitangi Tribunal. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/about/the-treaty/about-the-treaty.

Whitney, Simon N. 2016. “Institutional Review Boards: A Flawed System of Risk Management.” Research Ethics 12 (4): 182–200. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016116649993.

Wilkinson, Mark D., Michel Dumontier, IJsbrand Jan Aalbersberg, Gabrielle Appleton, Myles Axton, Arie Baak, Niklas Blomberg, et al. 2016. “The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship.” Scientific Data 3: 160018. https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18.

Wilson, Shawn. 2008. Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods. Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Worl, Rosita. 1990. “History of Southeastern Alaska Since 1867.” In *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7, Northwest Coast, edited by Wayne Suttles, 149–158. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

World Medical Association. 2024. “WMA Declaration of Helsinki: Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants.” Adopted by the 75th WMA General Assembly, Helsinki, October 2024.

Legal Authorities

25 C.F.R. pt. 151, Land Acquisitions.

45 C.F.R. pt. 46, Protection of Human Subjects.

45 C.F.R. pt. 690, Protection of Human Subjects.

Alaska v. Babbitt. 72 F.3d 698 (9th Cir. 1995).

Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. 522 U.S. 520 (1998).

Alaskans for a Common Language, Inc. v. Kritz. 170 P.3d 183 (Alaska 2007).

Canada. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, S.C. 2021, c. 14.

Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 82 Fed. Reg. 7149 (January 19, 2017).

Hootch v. Alaska State-Operated School System. 536 P.2d 793 (Alaska 1975).

John v. Baker. 982 P.2d 738 (Alaska 1999).

National Research Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-348, 88 Stat. 342.

State of Alaska v. Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Nos. 24-5280, 24-5285 (9th Cir. Aug. 24, 2026) (memorandum disposition).

Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States. 177 F. Supp. 452 (Ct. Cl. 1959).

Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States. 389 F.2d 778 (Ct. Cl. 1968).

Tobeluk v. Lind. 1976. Agreement of Settlement, No. 72-2450, Alaska Superior Court, Third Judicial District.

United States Code. 43 U.S.C. §§ 1601–1629h.

United States v. Wheeler. 435 U.S. 313 (1978).