Unpacking Community Participation in Research:
A Systematic Literature Review of Community-based
and Participatory Research in Alaska

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ABSTRACT. Although concepts of "community" and "participation" have been heavily critiqued in the social sciences, they remain uncritically applied across disciplines, leading to problems that undermine both research and practice. Nevertheless, these approaches are advocated for, especially in Indigenous contexts. To assess the use of these concepts, we conducted a systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska, USA, where social change has been rapid, having ramifications for social organization, and where participatory and community-based approaches are heavily advocated for by Alaska Native organizations. Conceptualizations of community and participation were extracted and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The majority of articles showed a lack of critical consideration around both terms, although this was especially the case in reporting around community. While this lack of critical consideration could lead to issues of local elite co-opting research, an alternative interpretation is that Western sociological literature surrounding community is not transferable to Indigenous contexts.

Key words: Alaska; community; participation; research politics; collaboration; systematic literature review; inequality; Indigeneity; sociology

RÉSUMÉ. Bien que les concepts de « communauté » et de « participation » soient vivement critiqués dans le domaine des sciences sociales, ils continuent d'être employés sans réserve dans les diverses disciplines, ce qui engendre des problèmes minant la recherche et la pratique. Néanmoins, ces approches sont préconisées, surtout dans les contextes autochtones. Afin d'évaluer l'utilisation de ces concepts, nous avons réalisé un dépouillement systématique de la documentation émanant de la recherche communautaire et de la recherche participative en Alaska, aux États-Unis, là où le changement social s'exerce rapidement, où il y a des répercussions sur l'organisation sociale, et où les approches participatives et communautaires sont fortement préconisées par les organisations autochtones de l'Alaska. Des conceptualisations de la communauté et de la participation ont été extraites et analysées, tant du point de vue quantitatif que qualitatif. Dans la majorité des articles, il y avait un manque critique de considération entourant ces deux termes, même si c'était encore plus le cas pour la communauté. Bien que ce manque de considération critique puisse engendrer des problèmes de recherche de cooptation avec l'élite locale, une autre interprétation veut que la documentation sociologique occidentale en matière de communauté ne soit pas transférable aux contextes autochtones.

Mots clés : Alaska; communauté; participation; politique de la recherche; collaboration; dépouillement systématique de la documentation; inégalité; indigénéité; sociologie

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INTRODUCTION

Community-based and participatory approaches, which claim to empower marginalized peoples, have increased in popularity across various disciplines, including medicine, psychology, and environmental science (Minkler et al., 2006; Le et al., 2011; Israel et al., 2017). However, the concepts of "community" and "participation" are heavily contested and critiqued within the social sciences (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Barrett, 2015)—a critique that is not always recognized across all disciplines using these concepts (Titz et al., 2018). For example, the idea that a community is a homogenous, benign, and identifiable entity is contested, as there are always internal power structures operating within groups of peoples (Brint, 2001). Meanwhile, participation in research has been critiqued as a means of increasing control over marginalized peoples under the guise of empowerment (Guta et al., 2013). As community-based and participatory approaches are concerned with action and social change (Wallerstein and Duran, 2006), the risks of uncritical notions of community and participation have the potential to reproduce underlying inequalities (Titz et al., 2018).

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Alaska, USA, represents an interesting example within which to evaluate how community and participation are used in research. With a substantial Indigenous population, community-based and participatory approaches are frequently promoted as the most appropriate (Balestrery, 2010). However, rapid socio-political changes, primarily as a result of the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act (ANSCA), have altered social organization with ramifications for how community and participation looks in Alaska (Ganapathy, 2011). Such a rapid transformation from collective to private interests (Fontaine, 2002; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2007; Irlbacher-Fox, 2010; Trainor et al., 2007) could result in more exclusionary tendencies within communities, as suggested by Barrett (2015). The move from collective to private interests, combined with the way that community-based and participatory approaches (when used together) involve community members and emphasize action emerging from research, render community-based and participatory research susceptible to being co-opted by more dominant groups within a community.

This paper presents a systematic literature review of participatory and community-based research in Alaska to examine how these terms are used. Of particular interest are considerations of who is included (and excluded), definitions of "community," consistency of participation of participants, and the nature of participation. We discuss these aspects within the context of the history of research in Alaska and in relation to contemporary debates in social science more broadly.

CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

From Extractive to Emancipatory Research

It is broadly recognized that the historical intersection of knowledge, research and imperialism "othered" Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge (Smith, 1994; McMillan and Yellowhorn, 2004). Despite this acknowledgement, contemporary research practice has continued to be harmful to Indigenous peoples, creating a (valid) distrust of researchers (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Glass and Kaufert, 2007; Ford et al., 2016). Emancipatory approaches, aligned with critical theory, constructivist-interpretivism, and feminism, recognize the political nature of research (Somerville and Perkins, 2003). They emphasize the subjective and partial nature of knowledge through questioning power relations between the researcher and the researched (Kral, 2014), while also recognizing that the production of knowledge is implicit in the reproduction of power dynamics (Rose, 1997; DeLyser and Karolczyk, 2010). For example, it is recognized that research is rooted in colonial and relational power structures (Louis, 2007; Smith, 2013), requiring consideration of positionality and reflexivity to reveal biases and assumptions in individual, institutional, and geopolitical terms (Nagar and Ali, 2003). In the context of colonized peoples, particularly Indigenous

peoples such as in Alaska, an additional necessity is the deconstruction of history and subsequent application of ideologies and social theory, as theories developed in Western contexts are not necessarily transferable to other contexts (hooks, 1992; Abolson and Willett, 2004).

Such emancipatory approaches have led to a participatory turn in research (Chambers, 1994; Fuller and Kitchin, 2004), whereby power is transferred during the research process through participation at each stage of the research and resultant social action (Louis, 2007). Involvement of the researched group in research development ensures that the researcher's (often Western) worldview does not dominate the research focus (Atleo, 2004). Similarly, in the analysis and evaluation of research, the involvement of the researched group allows for their interpretations to be included, potentially to the point that studies are re-orientated based on different worldviews (Anderson et al., 2012). It is this component of participation that is promoted as fundamentally transferring power to the researched and facilitates the breaking down of colonial institutional structures while preventing misinterpretation of local realities (Castleden et al., 2008).

Participatory research needs to be clear and transparent about who participated and in what way (Castleden et al., 2012). For instance, during project planning and development, who is consulted can define project direction. Notwithstanding that deciding who is included and who is excluded involves making a judgement about whose values matter (Estrella and Gaventa, 1998), researchers have a tendency to consult local leaders, who can recommend people based on various considerations, including political ones (Widdowson and Howard, 2008). Thus, as well as careful consideration of who to include and who to exclude, it is also important to remain reflexive about these decisions. Moreover, participatory research is subject to critiques that fundamentally undermine its goal to empower marginalized peoples. From a practical standpoint, its increased usage across disciplines leads to uncritical and tokenistic research, with participation as a box-ticking exercise (Dodman and Mitlin, 2013; Ford et al., 2016, 2018; Wilson et al., 2018). Additionally, despite the social justice orientation of these approaches, Leung et al. (2004) posited that the growing acceptance of participatory approaches within public health had more to do with accessing marginalized populations and obtaining better quality data, rather than empowerment.

From a postcolonial perspective, Willow (2015) critiqued that participating in mainstream processes within Western institutional structures did not lead to empowerment on Indigenous terms, but within asymmetrical colonial systems. This critique mirrors Nadasdy (2003), who suggested that as a prerequisite to participation, Indigenous peoples needed to agree to engage in these structures (and their rules) to become empowered. Contributing to Western (dominant) systems also creates tension as contributions perpetuate discourses and rules around the production of knowledge without addressing deep-rooted

inequalities and legitimate desires for difference (Willow, 2015). When applied in practice, these participatory approaches can become a means of increasing control of peoples (McNeeley, 2012; Egan and Place, 2013; Nielsen and Meilby, 2013; Gombay, 2014). Thus, building on Foucault (1988, 2003, 2008), participatory research can promote forms of governance that increase control and management of those most marginalized (Miller and Rose, 2008; Guta et al., 2013; Buggy and McNamara, 2016). In a First Nations context, Cargo et al. (2008) hypothesized that the democratic and equal participation ideals of participatory research conflict with self-determination in some Indigenous groups, where community direction and control are desired, but undermined through notions of participation.

Micropolitics of Collaboration

Participatory research inevitably requires extensive collaboration with various actors such as steering committees, co-researchers, and community-based organizations. Here we discuss the importance of considering the micropolitics of collaboration, which have ethical ramifications and influence data quality. For example, co-researchers, who are members of the researched group who work with researchers to conduct parts of the research (Guta et al., 2013), are frequently used in participatory research. While this participation increases co-researcher control of the research (Louis, 2007), it is important to consider the co-researcher's positionality and how this changes through their role (Greene et al., 2009). Placing responsibility on the co-researcher to move between researchers and the researched group can result in tokenism and inauthentic participation (Guta et al., 2013), while also placing the co-researcher in a vulnerable position (McCartan et al., 2012). Smith (2013) further critiques the assumption that co-researchers can speak on behalf of their community, as their lived experience can invalidate the lived experience of others. Similar arguments can be extended to steering committees and collaborators (Buggy and McNamara, 2016). Jewkes and Murcott (1998) also found that the same types of people ("volunteer sector elites") could dominate steering committees. We do not suggest that collaborations are inherently flawed, but rather that the power relations within them need to be acknowledged so as not to exacerbate inequalities (Peterson, 2010; Buggy and McNamara, 2016).

Community

Communities are often the level at which participatory approaches are used. However, communities are not homogenous entities but are host to internal power dynamics, interests, and divisions (Brint, 2001), which can result in social stratification and marginalization (Guijt and Shah, 1998; BurnSilver and Magdanz, 2019). As early as 1961, Coleman (1961) showed that consensus-generation within a community largely reflects the views of dominant groups, even where there is apparent community consensus. Rieder (1995) showed how such consensus could be a means of resistance to subordinate groups that threaten dominance of the elite. By working within existing power structures, outsiders may unknowingly reproduce underlying inequalities (Platteau, 2004; Lynam et al., 2007).

The above arguments are well-documented in sociology, anthropology, human geography, and development studies, but applied research (e.g., climate change, tourism, resource management, and public health) has often adopted the term uncritically, resulting in a number of opponents of the concept (e.g., Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Scheyvens, 2002; De Beer, 2013; Titz et al., 2018). For instance, Smith (1996:250) stated that, "of all the words in sociological discourse, community is the one that has most obviously come from wonderland, in that it can mean whatever you want." Some authors further argue that community is often used in place of a geographical entity, divorcing it from its socio-political context, including symbolic importance (e.g., Burkett, 2001; Lane and McDonald, 2005; Christens and Speer, 2006; Cohen, 2013; Westoby and Dowling, 2013; Buggy and McNamara, 2016). Kobayashi and de Leeuw (2010) and Mawani (2009) suggested that Indigenous peoples are incorrectly understood as a homogenous group, often only in relation to non-Indigenous researchers. More recently, Barrett (2015) argued that considering the impact of exogenous forces (e.g., colonialism and globalization) is just as important as considering community cohesiveness. For example, she highlighted that the rise of private interests, such as wealth, leads to exclusionary practices.

Given community complexity, it is important to consider who is excluded and who is included in community-based research (Eversole, 2003; Martin, 2012). As community-based projects seek to shift power to communities, having them take ownership of the project can lead to elite capture, whereby local elites reinforce vested interests to benefit those already most powerful (Adhikari and Goldey, 2010; Wong, 2010; Mansuri and Rao, 2012; Titz et al., 2018). Therefore, despite the goal of local ownership of projects, uncritical notions of community can increase inequality (Buggy and McNamara, 2016). Similarly, focusing on certain groups to understand an issue can privilege particular voices and discourses (e.g., BurnSilver et al., 2016; Hitomi and Loring, 2018; BurnSilver and Magdanz, 2019).

Looking to so-called communities to improve all manner of issues can be viewed as misleading and naïve, as the outcomes of participation and increased social bonds are exaggerated, particularly where deep-rooted inequalities and structures are part of the problem (Cass and Brennan, 2002; Mowbray, 2004; Wiseman, 2006; Inaba, 2013). Focusing on communities can place undue responsibility on local actors to address structural issues beyond their power, such as poor governance (Lavell, 1994; Gaillard and Mercer, 2013).

Despite differences between community-based and participatory approaches to research, these terms are frequently used synonymously (Washington, 2004). However, this usage can exacerbate inequalities if the critiques of community are not considered. For example, Israel et al. (2017:32) identified the recognition of the "community as a unit of identity" as a key principle of community-based participatory research (CBPR); although they highlight positive attributes of community, they do not consider internal power structures. Furthermore, they highlighted that CBPR seeks to strengthen a sense of community through collective engagement (Israel et al., 2005), which can be problematic given that apparent cohesiveness within communities can reflect the interests of dominant groups or be a means of excluding subordinate groups (Coleman, 1961; Rieder, 1995; Jewkes and Murcott, 1998; Brint, 2001). Therefore, there is evidence that research that is both community-based and participatory, such as CBPR, often lacks engagement with critical notions of community and has the potential for elite capture.

Alaska

Alaska is the most northern and sparsely populated state in the USA, with a population of 731 000 (State of Alaska, 2019), of which 15% are Alaska Native (AN) or American Indian (AI) (State of Alaska, 2018). There are overall large disparities in health, education, and other social indicators, owing to the historical and contemporary marginalization of AN peoples. The forced removal of children to residential schools disrupted traditional education and family ties, which is evident today as intergenerational trauma (Thurman et al., 2004). Research with AN occurs in the context of "violent dispossession of property, homeland, culture, language and religion; and attempts at genocide through the use of biological agents" (Caldwell et al., 2005:4). The Alaska Federation for Natives and the Alaska Native Science Commission have developed guidelines that highlight the need for inclusion of Alaska Native co-researchers and for decision-making to be based on consensus (Balestrery, 2010). Reflecting these guidelines, participatory approaches have become important in research with AN peoples (Cochran et al., 2008; Rasmus, 2014).

While AN society was once stratified based on social and cultural factors, recent and rapid political changes have impacted social relations within AN communities, causing a shift toward what some scholars have referred to as capitalist class stratification (Mason, 2002). For example, with the passing of the ANSCA, Native land rights were replaced with Native-owned regional and village corporations (Keene, 2017). Settlement of land claims based on corporate structures, rather than non-profit tribal government resulted in social and political lives being shaped by modern industrial development (Shearer, 2012). While this shift has had a range of consequences throughout Alaska, (see Irlbacher-Fox, 2010; Ganapathy,

2011), it has also changed family relations, leadership, and decision-making, and caused increased inequalities within communities (Kuokkanen, 2011; Shearer, 2012). Some literature has documented how a small minority of AN in each village become wealthy corporate representatives, who prioritize economic development over other concerns (Fontaine, 2002; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2007; Irlbacher-Fox, 2010; Trainor et al., 2007). This rapid transformation from collective to private interests could result in more exclusionary tendencies in AN communities, as suggested by Barrett (2015). These exclusionary tendencies, combined with the way that community-based and participatory approaches (when used together) involve community members and emphasize action emerging from research, render community-based and participatory research susceptible to being co-opted by more dominant groups within a community. This result is not only because of the aforementioned challenges in deciphering community consensus, but also because dominant groups are more likely to engage in research, while marginalized groups can be excluded, which leads to harmful consequences (Marston et al., 2016). Thus, there is a need to evaluate how research that is both community-based and participatory operationalizes these concepts in practice. This need is especially pertinent in Alaska, where such research approaches are advocated for and where settler-colonialism and neoliberalism have driven changes in social organization.

METHODOLOGY

Approach

A systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska was conducted to assess the operationalization of these approaches in light of the aforementioned critiques. The work builds upon a growing literature examining participatory research in similar contexts (David-Chavez and Gavin, 2018; Flynn et al., 2018; Hitomi and Loring, 2018), with the difference here being our explicit focus on evaluating the concept of community. We limited the review to research in Alaska to ensure that the social and political context around research politics and regulation were kept consistent across all studies.

We used procedures found in Berrang-Ford et al. (2015) to identify relevant peer-reviewed literature, with searches conducted in ISI Web of Knowledge, Jstor, Scopus, PubMED, ASSIA, and Google Scholar. Synonyms for "participatory" were used to account for differences in disciplinary language (see Supplementary file: Search Matrix). The review did not focus on AN, as this would introduce bias into how community was defined, although we expected that the majority of our sample would consist of articles working with AN peoples. Test searches conducted to experiment with lexicon were aided by consultation with an academic librarian as well as by reading regionally

TABLE 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic literature review. Given that the mode of research that we were interested in assessing is relatively new, we decided not to limit the searches by date so as to track trends of usage over time (see Supplementary file for more information).

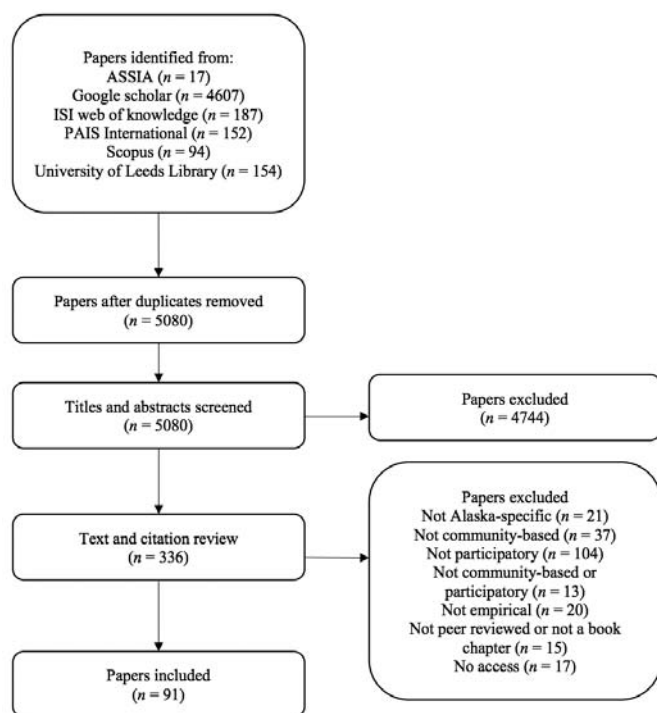| Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
In English	Not in English
'Participatory' or similar	Not 'participatory' or similar
'Community-based'	Not 'community-based' or similar
Study conducted about Alaska only	Study conducted outside of Alaska
	Study is a comparison of Alaska and a place outside of Alaska

FIG. 1. Article identification process.

TABLE 2. Key components of the survey used to extract qualitative data from articles.

Theme	Question
Community	Is a definition of community provided (yes/no)?
	What is the definition of community?
	Critical consideration around the concept of community
	Critical consideration of participants
	Consideration of who was excluded
Participation	Who participated?
	Participation in design (yes/no)?
	How did participants participate in design?
	Participation in data collection (yes/no)?
	How did participants participate in data collection?
	Participation in analysis
	How did participants participate in analysis?
	Participation in evaluation
	How did participants participate in evaluation?
	Participation in results dissemination
Consistency	Are the same participants engaged in each stage or are they different at each stage?
	How did participants participate in results dissemination?
Challenges	Are challenges reported (yes/no)?
	Description of challenges

Results from the survey were imported into Microsoft Excel to facilitate quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Content analysis was conducted to characterize how community and participation were operationalized (Haslam and McGarty, 2014). Responses to questions about community, participants, how participants engaged in the research, and challenges reported were coded, categorized, and sorted into themes. Challenges reported were included to elucidate tensions between theory and practice in community and participation, similar to Gaziulusoy et al. (2016). Such qualitative analysis is important as quantitative analysis alone is inappropriate for evaluating and decontextualizing qualitative and participatory research (Walsh and Downe, 2005).

Evaluation Rubric

Similar to Flynn et al. (2018), we created an evaluation rubric to assess the extent to which articles considered and incorporated the critical literature surrounding community and participation at each phase of the research (Supplementary file: Table S1). We note here that all scoring is dependent on the information provided by the authors and does not account for situations in which, for instance, research participants may have told researchers that they wanted them (the researchers) to have greater involvement (unless specifically highlighted within the article). Table 3 demonstrates the ranges for each level.

Community

To assess critical consideration of "community," each article was scored based on whether it provided a definition for community (0 = none, 1 = partial, 2 = yes), consideration of who was excluded (0 = none, 1 = partial,

specific documents (following work by Pearce et al., 2009). Identifying search terms was an iterative process, with terms added throughout the process, before concluding the identification phase of the systematic literature review. A two-stage screening process aided in removing articles not relevant, beginning with screening of titles and abstracts with reference to inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1). The final procedure is demonstrated by Figure 1.

Analysis

A survey was created to systematically extract qualitative findings (Flynn et al., 2018). The survey was based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al., 2015), but modified to be specific to assessing community and participation, as is recommended in reviews of qualitative research (Walsh and Downe, 2005). The main components of this adapted framework are represented in Table 2.

TABLE 3. Classification for community, consistency of participation, nature of participation and overall scores.

	Very low	Low	Medium low	Medium high	High	Very high
Community	0 – 11	12 – 23	24 – 35	36 – 47	48 – 59	60 – 71
Consistency of participation	0 – 16	17 – 33	34 – 50	51 – 67	68 – 84	85 – 100
Nature of participation	0 – 7	8 – 15	16 – 23	24 – 31	25 – 32	33 – 48
Overall score	0 – 8	9 – 17	18 – 26	27 – 35	36 – 42	42 – 49

2 = yes), critical consideration of who was included (0 = none, 1 = partial, 2 = full), level of description of participants (0 = none/community, 1 = reports demographic information or uses terms such as "experts" or "consultants," 2 = reports role in community, 3 = reports role in community and participant's interest in the research). The purpose of this scoring was not to assign low scores to projects, which could replicate unequal power structures (e.g., through only including leaders), but to assess transparency, which would allow readers to make their own inferences, as is standard in qualitative research (Noble and Smith, 2015). Qualitative notes were also recorded to note the definition of community (if provided) and the nature of critical consideration of the concept.

Consistency of Participants

Drawing on work that stresses the importance of maintaining the consistency of who participates (e.g., Israel et al., 2010; Smajgl and Ward, 2015), articles were scored based on the consistency of who was involved. Each article was assigned a value of 0–3 (0 = participants at each stage were completely different, 1 = participants at each stage varied but a few were the same, 2 = participants were mostly the same but some were different, and 3 = participants at each stage where exactly the same). To ensure that the level of participation was accounted for, the level of consistency was multiplied by the number of phases that involved participants. If two studies both showed a high consistency of participants, the one with higher participation was scored more highly. Articles with participation in one or fewer of the research phases were disregarded from this phase of analysis.

Nature of Participation

To assess the nature of participation, David-Chavez and Gavin (2018)'s framework (Fig. 2) was applied to each phase of the research as follows: 0 = contractual/no participation, 1 = consultative, 2 = collaborative, 3 = collegial, and 4 = Indigenous. To aid in assigning codes at each stage, we used Naylor et al. (2002) as a guide. Each article was subsequently assigned a score out of 20 (number of phases multiplied by the highest possible score for each phase).

Overall Score

To calculate the overall score for each article, each score was converted into a percentage. We calculated the final

FIG. 2. Nature of participation. Source: David-Chavez and Gavin (2018).

score as the average across community, consistency, and nature of participation. Where consistency of participation could not be calculated (because of participation in two or fewer phases), the average between community and nature of participation was calculated only. The highest score was then divided by six to create six groups that characterized the criticality of community participation for each article.

RESULTS

Ninety-one papers met the inclusion criteria and were retained for full analysis (Supplementary file: Table S2). The majority of these were categorized under health sciences and environmental sciences (39% and 32%, respectively). Others were in education (e.g., Lipka, 1989; Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore, 1999) or in sociology (e.g., Picou, 2000; Caringi et al., 2013).

With regard to their consideration for both community and participation, 38% (n = 35) of the papers were categorized as low, 9% (n = 8) as very high, and 8% (n = 7) as high (Supplementary file: Fig. S2). As well as demonstrating high levels of participation throughout research, those that scored highly described who their participants were, how they came to be a part of the project, and the complexity of their positions within the community and the research. With respect to use of the term "community," 88 of the 91 articles did not provide a definition. The remaining three provided partial definitions, for instance by recognizing that although AN students are diverse, their shared of experience of navigating two worlds provides some sense of community (Lopez et al., 2012). Only 14 of the 91 articles critically considered who

participants were and how they came to be involved in the research. Critical consideration of participants was grouped into five themes: critique of demographic information, issues of representation, recognition of community heterogeneity, justification for inclusion of participant, and evidence of reflexivity (see Supplementary file: Table S3). While we did not initially seek to specifically assess articles that looked at AN communities, all but one article (Brown and Donovan, 2013) focused on AN communities. One article (Natcher, 2004:428) considered who was excluded in the research, acknowledging that through including hunters they "failed to account for the everyday use of female landscapes…, the social relations that shape that use…, and female perspectives on the use, value and cultural significance of taking part in subsistence activities." Three articles partially considered who was excluded. Caringi et al. (2013) stated that they utilized consultants to capture youth voices, rather than directly involving youth. Flint et al. (2011:207) stated that they could not engage all members of the community, "especially marginalized members, such as those who are housebound, disabled, or ostracized for various reasons." Rasmus (2014) noted that parents could have been included but were not due to subsistence and employment commitments.

In terms of consistency of participant composition throughout the research, 16 articles described participation in two or fewer phases and were discounted in the analysis of consistency of participation. Of the 70 articles retained for further analysis, the level of consistency of participation was low. Five articles had the same participants at each stage of research in which participants were involved.

Who Participated in the Research?

Figure 3 shows participant groups across all articles and across all phases of research. Elders were the group that most frequently participated in research, followed by tribal organizations (e.g., tribal governments). Other groups that participated frequently in projects included community leaders and staff, the community, youth, and steering committees. Of the 19 articles that involved steering committees, 13 did not describe who participants on the steering committee were. Thirteen articles also defined at least one participant as a co-researcher.

Nature of Participation

Although no article demonstrated Indigenous nature of participation, collegial levels of participation (i.e., where community members had primary authority over the process) were highest in research design (Fig. 4). These articles typically responded to research needs identified and requested by the community (e.g., Burger et al., 2009) or collaborated with pre-existing entities working towards the same goal (e.g., Rasmus et al., 2014). Collegial nature of participation was lower in research implementation. Such articles generally demonstrated how
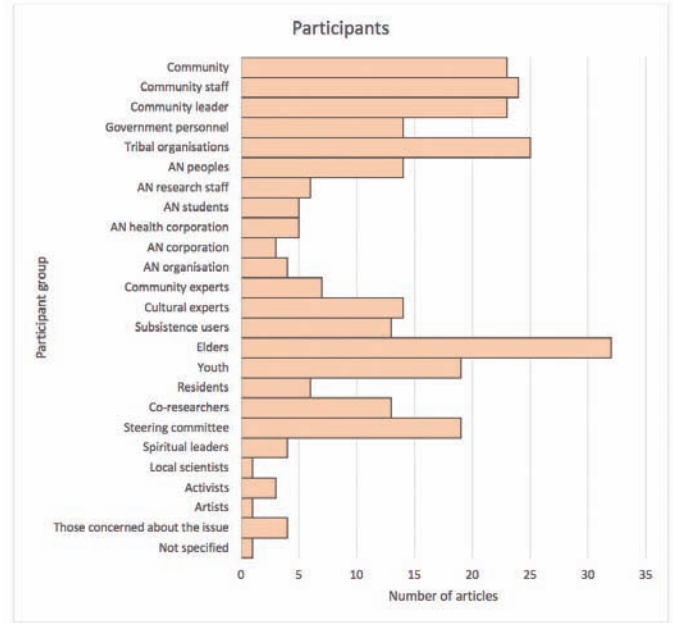

FIG. 3. Participation of groups across articles. Note that studies used multiple groups.
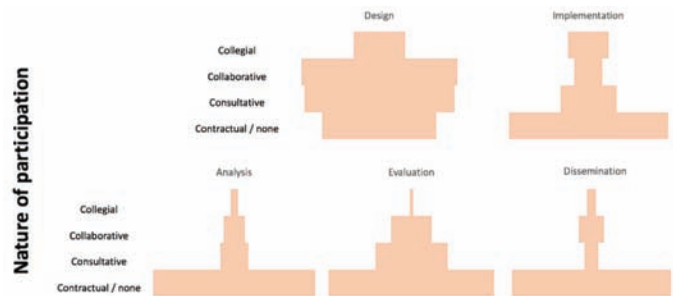

FIG. 4. Nature of participation identified across articles for each research stage. Note that no article achieved "Indigenous" nature of participation.

research implementation was conducted by participants in a way that led to benefits beyond just generating data. For example, cultural consultants in Caringi et al. (2013) conducted healing ceremonies while also collecting data. Three articles (Mohatt et al., 2008; Lopez et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2013) demonstrated a collegial nature in data analysis, with co-analysis workshops being held with their AN student participants. Only Berardi and Donnelly (1999) met the criteria for collegial participation in evaluation by conducting constant evaluations throughout the project to decide whether it should continue. Two articles demonstrated a collegial nature of dissemination, for instance through participants providing health education to the wider community, with decision-making power over what resources to use (Lardon et al., 2010).

Challenges in Community-based and Participatory Research

Table 4 highlights the results from coding of challenges identified in the articles. Five overarching themes were

TABLE 4. Challenges identified in articles, grouped by categories and themes.

Theme	Category	Number of articles	Example
Institutional constraints	Tensions between institutions and CBPR principles	11	"[Participant] was drawing critical attention to how university research and funding processes work—and really saying this may not always be best for the participating communities" (Gonzalez and Trickett, 2014:121)
	Funding	17	Lack of control over how to spend budget (Cusack-McVeigh, 2016)
	Publishing	3	Reviewers wanted more extensive quotes to be used (Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore, 1999)
	Lack of understanding of qualitative and participatory methods	4	Funding panels are often made up of positivistic/quantitative paradigms-orientated researchers so the team was advised to include quantitative methods, which set back the team as AN members became concerned that researchers would co-opt the goals of the community (Mohatt et al., 2004)
Collaboration	Disagreements within the collaboration	5	Some items were removed from research due to disagreements (Gonzalez and Trickett, 2014)
Community-level challenges	Cultural acceptability	8	Experience of trauma was dropped from the model due to cultural unacceptability. This meant research questions were determined by cultural acceptability (Allen et al., 2014)
	Distrust of research	5	An Elder discontinued interview and withdrew from the study because they believed that researcher was visiting her to remove her from her family (Lewis, 2014)
	Working around participant schedules	9	Difficulty interviewing those who were employed or engaged in subsistence (Ebbesson et al., 2006; Cueva et al., 2019)
	Lack of engagement	8	Research fatigue (Boyer et al., 2007); key stakeholders not interested (Brown and Donovan, 2013)
Positionality	Positionality	4	Researcher felt uncomfortable representing Yup'ik views as a non-Native (Fienup-Riordan, 1999)
	Inaccessible language	4	Use of jargon created a sense of a hierarchical power differential that makes communities uncomfortable (Mohatt et al., 2004)
Logistics	Logistics	13	Time and multiple visits required to build trust (Eisner et al., 2012; Flint et al., 2011)

identified: institutional constraints, collaboration, community-level challenges, positionality, and logistics.

DISCUSSION

We conducted a systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska to examine how such research is operationalized. While all articles emphasized the importance of local level engagement in research, there were significant differences in the degree of reporting of both "community" and "participation," thus obfuscating the political nature of these two concepts. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that insights derived from this review are subject to the degree of detail and transparency in reporting; we recognize that articles do not report the full details of the research process. This reliance on the way in which the research process is reported, then, must be regarded as an indicator or proxy of the state of community-based and participatory research in Alaska. For example, different disciplines have different standards over what constitutes good research practice, which is important given the interdisciplinary nature of this review. Participatory approaches and community-based work have their roots in empowerment, feminist, and critical studies, yet styles of reporting (e.g., stating

positionality, practicing reflexivity, and thick description) are not standard across disciplines. Similarly, it is not standard practice to report fully on the research process in all disciplines, which was reflected in some articles that clearly had required extensive community engagement, but did not provide details, which resulted in them attaining lower scores (e.g., Sakakibara, 2010). Nevertheless, our findings suggest that reporting the research process with greater transparency demonstrates that participation is not tokenistic and further allows for the complexity of both community and participation to be considered.

Community

There were overall few definitions or considerations for what a community was, although Picou (2000) highlighted the Native Village of Eyak as a symbolic community that is dispersed within and around the town of Cordova. Both Hiratsuka et al. (2012) and Sharma et al. (2013) did not identify their community under study as place-based, but rather as AN/AI peoples across Alaska who, although diverse, hold some unique, shared characteristics. Nevertheless, no article fully provided a definition for community, and many used the term interchangeably with geographical entities or cultural groups. While research with AN/AI occurs in the context of the history of invasion,

thus providing some basis for this being a community in and of itself (based on shared history) (Waterworth et al., 2014), this definition of community does not account for the heterogeneity of AN/AI or social change that has occurred more recently (e.g., Ganapathy, 2011).

Divides across gender were noted by several articles, which ranged from reporting participant demographics and being critical of the lack of representation of women (Brown and Donovan, 2013) to adjusting data collection (e.g., composition of focus groups) by gender and circumstance to allow for differences to emerge from the data (Sharma et al., 2013). Given evidence of increased gender inequality within AN communities (Shearer, 2012), it is important that this inequality be considered. Issues of gender arose not only in framing of the community under study, but also at later stages of the research. For instance, Ford et al. (2012) noted that different approaches (e.g., varying group size) were needed when working collaboratively with men and women and changed their methods accordingly. Furthermore, Natcher (2004) acknowledged that by involving only male hunters, resultant maps created did not include how women value subsistence resources, nor how women use the landscape.

Gender is only one of many axes across which power operates (Brint, 2001); those pertaining to social status (including how this has changed) were only acknowledged by Lipka (1989). Interestingly, this is also the oldest article in the sample, indicating that no community-based or participatory research in Alaska has explicitly discussed intra-community power structures since 1989. Even when considering elements of the review that did not concern "community" specifically, only one article (Flint et al., 2011) mentioned marginalized peoples, but only in the context of being unable to access these groups. The article did not define who these groups were, why they were marginalized, or how their marginalization influenced (or could be influenced by) results. There is clearly an absence of critical consideration of community, particularly in relation to power structures. This absence suggests that community-based and participatory research appears to work within existing power structures in Alaska, potentially reproducing underlying inequalities. While we only assessed projects carried out in academic settings, these findings are in line with findings from other studies in Alaska that evaluate decisions and actions made by various agencies (e.g., Spaeder, 2005; Jacobs and Brooks, 2011; Walsey and Brewer, 2018).

The low consideration for community heterogeneity can be interpreted differently, however, when considering the complexity of researching in Alaska Native contexts (Balestrery, 2010). It is possible that highlighting divides within a community could undermine self-determination, particularly when outside researchers are involved, and when a part of self-determination involves how Indigenous peoples choose to represent themselves to outsiders (Abolson and Willett, 2004). In line with participatory principles, a high proportion of articles went through community review, so those consulted may not have wanted aspects about their community to be made public, particularly given historically harmful research. This community review is in line with Alaska Federation of Natives and Alaska Native Science Commission's sovereign scientific research guidelines, which state that AN should be collaborative partners and that decision-making should be founded on consensus (Balestrery, 2010). Cleaver (1999:605) describes the phenomenon where researchers and practitioners uncritically assume that communities always know best as "dangerous," in that the fear by researchers and practitioners in critiquing local practices leads to too much emphasis on local power structures, encouraging elite capture. Thus, there appears to be tension between reporting about communities to the critical level called for in academia and the guidelines established for research with Indigenous peoples. It is noteworthy that many of the critiques surrounding the concept of community were derived from Western sociological framings; thus, this review represents a Western sociological critique of community. The appropriateness of applying Western constructs of community to AN peoples, as highlighted by Coombes et al. (2012) and Smith (2007), can be questioned. While Coombes et al. (2012) and Smith (2007) acknowledged that discourse around community can protect the economic interests of elites, they also warned against always viewing communities as regressive, particularly when outsiders are using the term in ways that mask the dynamism and fluidity of social groups. For example, some Indigenous scholars (e.g., Coombes et al., 2012) call for research into how communities motivate resistance to neoliberalism and thereby address the importance of exogenous forces on communities, as recently proposed in Western sociological literature (Barrett, 2015). It is neither the purpose nor the place of this paper to make recommendations surrounding AN community structure. Nevertheless, we question the applicability of Western sociological literature around community, as this has not been developed in a colonized context (hooks, 1992; Abolson and Willett, 2004; Go, 2013). We encourage researchers working with communities to consider how they conceptualize communities in their work, looking towards Indigenous scholars (if possible, from the communities they work with), and what the possible implications of their concept of community are prior to conducting research.

Participation

Qualitative research, particularly with hard to reach populations, relies on purposive sampling in which participants are selected based on their ability to speak on behalf of groups (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). While purposive sampling was widespread throughout the review, as demonstrated by reliance on cultural and community consultants, few papers acknowledged the potentially culturally inappropriate nature of this sampling in Alaska

(Jacobs and Brooks, 2011). When considering participants in community-based research, researchers are essentially concerned with selecting who is speaking on behalf of a community. For example, reliance on leaders can result in the interests of elite being addressed, potentially marginalizing those not considered to be the local elite. Notwithstanding that researchers often ask leaders to identify experts (e.g., Henderson et al., 2017), there are issues when using cultural and community consultants, as expertise is defined based on deeply seated assumptions about the validity of different types of knowledge (Nader, 1996; Yeh, 2016; Hitomi and Loring, 2018). Thus, using "consultants" (e.g., Caringi et al., 2013; Gonzalez and Trickett, 2014) or "experts" (e.g., Allen et al., 2009; Lewis, 2014; Wilson, 2014), without detailing how these were chosen can be problematic. Also consistent with critiques by Hitomi and Loring (2018), Elders were the group most frequently included in articles. Although there is no doubt that this group offers important perspectives, overreliance on Elders can serve to marginalize some voices. Although Hitomi and Loring (2018) were concerned with environmental research, we found that Elders are also disproportionately consulted across other disciplines, such as health (Allen et al., 2018), education (Hugo et al., 2013), and sociology (Gram-Hanssen, 2018). Several papers did, however, justify why their participants were best positioned to participate (e.g., Rivkin et al., 2013; Cueva et al., 2019). Legaspi and Orr (2007) specifically highlighted that cultural consultants do not speak for the entire community.

Nature of Participation

It is pertinent to note that across each stage, articles that transparently exemplified how their practice led to increased participant control over the research scored more highly. For example, Mohatt et al. (2004) demonstrated how decision-making by consensus led to a change in focus from substance abuse to sobriety, while Gonzalez and Trickett (2014) described continuous disagreement within their collaboration surrounding whether questions of trauma should be included. Decisions around the research topic are power-laden and often reflect the worldview of researchers (Atleo, 2004), yet Mohatt et al. (2004) and Gonzalez and Trickett (2014) showed how involving participants in research design can result in their worldview being reflected. These two articles contrast with numerous articles that used vague descriptions of engagement, such as providing guidance (e.g., Patten et al., 2018). Transparency in reporting of participatory research should be welcomed, as it can provide a way to demonstrate that participation is not tokenistic. This assurance that participation is not tokenistic is important in an Alaskan context, as Jacobs and Brooks (2011) and Shearer (2007) have both critiqued how Alaska Native representatives are often asked to attend meetings and concur with agency decisions.

Overall, research design had the most participation compared with other phases, which suggests that, broadly, projects were grounded in local concerns and relevant to the community. This result is supported by the fact that articles that demonstrated relevance of the research to the studied community generally scored highly for participation in research design. This relevance was particularly the case where communities had approached the researchers with an issue (e.g., Burger et al., 2009), where researchers were directed by community members to work with a preexisting committee addressing a predetermined area of concern (e.g., Rasmus et al., 2014), and where there was extensive description of how research was adapted to local concerns and contexts (e.g., Burger et al., 2009). Articles about research in which community-based organizations, leaders, steering committees, and other groups were able to select participants scored highly (e.g., Henderson et al., 2017). Additionally, articles in which organizations were able to choose their level of involvement, as well as of participating groups (e.g., Lewis et al., 2014) scored highly, as this ability to choose demonstrated that potential collaborators could engage in research on their own terms in ways that did not impede their ongoing activities. However, if participation of collaborators is done without consideration of who collaborators are this approach can be problematic, despite such extensive inclusion of collaborators being regarded as best practice in participatory research. These findings indicate a further tension between critical consideration of community and participation in research, suggesting that the tenets of participatory research may be in conflict with agendas of self-determination (Cargo et al., 2008).

When implementing research, the highest scoring articles for participation gave space for participants to engage in culturally relevant practices that provided some benefit to participants beyond the aims of the research. For example, in Caringi et al. (2013), cultural consultants conducted healing ceremonies and reported back successes to researchers. This approach is especially interesting, as it implies that participants could evaluate what determined success on their own terms (Anderson et al., 2012). However, the approach was also directly critiqued by other articles evaluated. For instance, Lopez et al. (2012) highlighted that AN students perceived such practices as a means by which White researchers were trying to make their methods appear more "Native." Thus, the ways in which such practices are implemented in research warrants careful consideration of individual and collective positionality.

Participation in analysis was low across papers, possibly owing to the complexity of qualitative data analysis, with time and funds needed to train and pay those that analyze data, which was identified as an obstacle to inclusion by Burger et al. (2009). It is thus no surprise that studies engaged in co-analysis worked with those for whom such training would be useful in the future, such as university students (Lopez et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2013). Participant analysis is important, however, as it allows participants to interpret data based on their own worldviews, as well as confronting, modifying, and honing researchers' interpretations (Smith, 1994). The purpose of assessing the

level and nature of participation in evaluation was intended to ascertain whether and how participants interpret research in ways that do not fall neatly into formal data analysis techniques (e.g., coding). Although more articles demonstrated collaborative participation in evaluation, only Berardi and Donnelly (1999) engaged in collegial review, which was continuous and gave the community the power to terminate the study. Thus, in terms of both formal analysis and less formal involvement in interpretation of findings, there continues to be a significant power imbalance. This imbalance is particularly concerning given the high number of articles engaging co-researchers, as co-researchers in particular should be (at the very least) engaged in reflexive dialogue during the analysis and evaluation phases (Finlay, 2002). The low involvement of participants reported in both analysis and evaluation suggests that this has not been the case in Alaskan community-based and participatory research.

Micropolitics of Participation

A fundamental component of qualitative research, in which participatory approaches have their roots, is the recognition that the researcher is a research instrument (Mantzoukas, 2005). As meanings are negotiated between the researcher and the researched in participatory approaches, different researchers will reveal different stories, will elicit different responses from participants, will ask different questions, and will interpret data differently (Finlay, 2002). Additionally, participatory approaches are concerned with power, which questions not only the privileged position of researchers, but also the micropolitics of collaboration (Ferreyra, 2006). While the authors of only 11% of the reviewed articles considered their positionality in the research (see Supplementary file: Table S4 and Fig. S2), there is also uncritical involvement of collaborators, such as co-researchers, steering committees, and community-based organizations.

The highest scoring articles defined who co-researchers were and how they came to be involved in the research. For example, Lopez et al. (2012) described how a focus group was initially conducted to explain research, with interested students subsequently volunteering to join the team. Similarly, Wexler (2006) described co-researchers as those who were willing to contend with the paradox of familiarity. In this way, both articles demonstrated the willingness of participants to be involved. Wexler (2006) additionally considered the complex identity of co-researchers, thus addressing some of the concerns of Greene et al. (2009) about the lack of nuance in reporting about co-researchers. Nevertheless, the majority of articles did not reveal this level of detail about their collaborators. This omission is concerning, as the use of co-researchers has been widely critiqued in the participatory literature, for instance, through recognition of shifting identities and elevated positions as participants become co-researchers (Peterson, 2010). Furthermore, through engaging some

participants more collaboratively in research, those participants are potentially made more vulnerable (McCartan et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2010). Other articles identified their co-researchers as Indigenous, but did not elaborate on whether they were from the same community (e.g., Mohatt et al., 2004; Weinronk et al., 2018), while others made explicit that their co-researchers were not from the community. In these instances, it is pertinent to consider the positionality of the co-researchers in relation to participants, which was not evident here. For example, Brewer et al. (2018) stated that because one of the authors was American Indian, there was no separation between the researcher and researched. This statement harks back to critiques made by Smith (2013) about Indigenous researchers being considered de facto the same as Indigenous participants. However, this sentiment was not the case across all articles that included AN or AI on the research team, as demonstrated by Carpluk and Leonard (2016), who acknowledged the separate status of AN students and researchers, due to their affiliation with universities. A more transparent account of the commonalities and differences between co-researchers and the community (including how these may have changed as a community member becomes a co-researcher) would elucidate and refine the co-researcher's role more clearly and allow for further consideration of diversity of experiences and viewpoints within and between certain groups (Kobayashi, 1994; Chouinard, 2000; Valentine, 2003).

Similarly, although steering committees are advocated for when non-Indigenous peoples research in Indigenous contexts (Louis, 2007), there is nevertheless a need to consider how the composition of the steering group may influence research. Some projects gave extensive description of those on their steering committees. A notable example is Allen et al. (2006) who, similar to other articles engaged in the People Awakening Coordinating Council (PACC) but, unlike other articles, described who made up PACC, including members' roles in grassroots sobriety movements. Mohatt et al. (2008) also used PACC, yet recognized the heterogeneity between representatives of cultural groups on PACC. Other articles demonstrated transparency in how steering committees were created; for example, by indicating that composition of steering committees was decided by local leadership (Henderson et al., 2017). Although the selection of steering committee members by local leaders potentially causes problems in terms of elite capture, the transparency with which the selection is reported at the very least make it known, as is required in qualitative research (Noble and Smith, 2015). Pertinent to aforementioned critiques of communities is whether it is the same people on steering committees. While unclear from the review, the statement by Rivkin et al. (2013) that all participants knew each other as they had previously worked together suggests that there could be volunteer sector elites, or at least the same few people who represent community issues. T Jacobs and Brooks

(2011) and Spaeder (2005) highlighted similar issues in co-management of natural resources in Alaska. Our review suggests that there could be issues of volunteer sector elites beyond co-management, possibly in healthcare research (Rivkin et al., 2013), which could be problematic as volunteer sector elites have been shown to increase health disparities (Peterson, 2010).

Overall, there was little discussion of the micropolitics involved in collaboration, which could understandably be born of the desire to protect collaborators and the collaboration, particularly where research is ongoing. Nevertheless, all participatory and collaborative research requires researchers to enter a community at some level, or via a particular person, which is inherently a political process (Smith et al., 2010). Thus, while collaboration is fundamental to participatory and community-based research, the micropolitics of collaboration need to be considered more critically (Mauthner and Doucet, 2008). One way in which this is done in qualitative research is by ensuring there is transparency in collaboration, from research development through to reporting research (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Mauthner and Doucet, 2008). Thick description of this process can also be a means of enhancing validity of collaborative approaches, which was only done by Caringi et al. (2013).

Critiques of Community-based and Participatory Approaches

Institutional constraints were frequently mentioned in studies in various contexts. Some concerned how activities important for trust-building would not be funded, while others highlighted direct conflicts between institutional procedures and participatory principles. For example, Boyer et al. (2007) highlighted conflict between how participatory research should be reported back to participants (i.e., results should be reported to those who participated), versus how the National Bioethics Advisory Commission recommends findings should be reported (i.e., only once findings are scientifically valid, and findings have significant implications for subject health and a course of action/treatment is available and appropriate medical advice or referral is provided). This discrepancy exemplifies how adhering to institutional structures can promote extractive research, cause harm, and foster distrust between researchers and participants, consistent with previous studies that highlight the incompatibility of participatory research with institutional requirements (Ferreyra, 2006).

Nadasdy (2003) and Vaudry (2016) posited that where power is not fully devolved, state power is strengthened, possibly under the guise of decentralization and empowerment. Recent sudden shifts in the political and economic climate in Alaska, for example, have resulted in deep budget cuts to Alaskan universities (Rosen, 2019), where the majority of articles were completed (Supplementary file: Fig. S3). Thus, even where projects are completed to high standards, their placement within a politically dominant settler society renders them vulnerable to action by those at higher levels, which ultimately can lead to cessation of projects. Community-based and participatory research in these contexts could be considered neoliberal progressive spaces (Bargh and Otter, 2009), whereby research has accountability to people (community and participants), but also to institutions.

At the local level, cultural acceptability, distrust, and lack of engagement were frequently mentioned as challenges. Lack of engagement was linked to research and meeting fatigue (Boyer et al., 2005, 2007), consistent with previous research within Alaska (Spaeder, 2005; Jacobs and Brooks, 2011) and elsewhere (Mandel, 2003; Clark, 2008). In these contexts, participation in research could be a burden to the community, and raise questions about the appropriateness of extensive participation in research, as well as the appropriateness of the research topic. Interestingly, in their article on substance abuse and suicide, Rasmus (2014) attributed dwindling participation to the community no longer being in crisis, which is, of course, a positive outcome, yet it appears to conflict with academic expectations to complete projects beyond resolving locally defined problems.

Several articles alluded to power structures in research that hampered collaboration. For example, Mohatt et al. (2004) highlighted how the use of jargon alienated participants by creating a sense of hierarchical power. AN peoples are often expected to travel to meetings to defend local realities to non-Indigenous peoples, while acting in culturally appropriate ways and, at the same time, making their knowledge palatable for Western institutions (e.g., Spaeder, 2005; Walsey and Brewer, 2018). It was difficult for us not to be critical of articles that had hosted events in Western institutions in population centres, where AN participants were expected to voice their perspectives. For instance, Driscoll et al. (2016) hosted a colloquium at the University of Alaska Anchorage for community leaders from various Alaskan villages. Although the location of the colloquium was not critiqued by the authors, there are questions about the cultural acceptability of formal meetings in Western population centres, particularly given that a key critique of participatory approaches is that, to become empowered, Indigenous peoples must agree to Western norms, such as meetings (Jacobs and Brooks, 2011). Other articles that engaged multiple communities may have overcome this issue through hosting their meetings in regional hubs that were primarily Alaska Native, such as Nome (Ebbesson et al., 2006) and Utqiaġvik (Sigman et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Systematic reviews of qualitative research are contested, yet they can open up space for new insights and understandings to emerge (Walsh and Downe, 2005). This review has done so by examining usage of the terms

"participation" and "community" in research across disciplines in Alaska, systematically identifying and assessing how research operationalizes these concepts. Our findings show that there is an overall lack of consideration of the heterogeneity of communities, with little consideration of intra-community power structures that can marginalize some and privilege others. Given recent social change in Alaska, not considering these power structures potentially leads to the replication of unequal power relations in research outcomes, particularly with the drive for community-based and participatory research to produce tangible outcomes that empower participants.

There was more consideration around participation, with more transparency around how participants participated than around who participants were. In line with best practices in participatory research, co-researchers, steering committees, and tribal governments were extensively involved in the research process. However, these were largely considered uncritically, potentially leading to elite capture or placing co-researchers in vulnerable positions. Nevertheless, the use of co-researchers, community-based organizations, and steering committees is encouraged in Alaska when working with AN peoples.

Despite AN institutions advocating for community-based and participatory approaches, both "participation" and "community' are Western constructs. What is interesting is that for critical consideration of community, which includes consideration of internal power structures, who participated (and their potential interests), who was excluded, and transparency around these can be in conflict with elements of participatory research on Indigenous terms. For example, review of a study by a steering committee, who could represent the local elite, may result in some elements being omitted that may be sensitive or cast the community in a negative light. Given that participatory approaches are supported by Indigenous institutions (Peterson, 2010), this review raises questions about constructs of community in Indigenous contexts. We question the applicability of "community" as a Western sociological construct transferred to a colonized context. Although this review problematizes the concepts of "community" and "participation," it also raises questions about the appropriateness of Western sociological constructs in AN contexts.

Despite problematizing community-based and participatory research, we have provided few alternatives. In part, this is intentional, as we recognize that this sort of research requires flexibility. Nevertheless, we conclude that in terms of reporting community-based and participatory research, authors could utilize a number of key considerations to avoid their research being tokenistic or uncritical:

1. Describing positionality of researcher(s) and how this may influence the research. If a team of researchers is collaborating, both individual and collective positionality should be considered.

2. Describing how researchers approach the concept of community, including some description of who was included and also who was excluded, and how this then relates to the researcher's conceptualization of community. This description could include an explicit statement of how participants were chosen and the implications of the choices of participants. For instance, if researchers chose participants based on their level of expertise in a certain area, researchers could reflect on what they deem expertise to be and what assumptions were made in their choices. In terms of those who are excluded from the research (intentionally or otherwise), authors could give more attention to how the lack of those voices has influenced the research.

3. Using thick description of the collaborative process and of the nature of participation, which could include description of the background of collaborators and how they came to be involved in the research, the specific goals of collaborators (and how they aligned or differed from those of the researchers), challenges that arose (and their solutions), and any preexisting relationships between researchers and collaborators or between collaborators. Specifically, where co-researchers are involved, researchers should reflect on the identity of the co-researcher, how this identity changes through the research process, and how these changes then influence research.

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