

**Situating the Work: A Typology of Traditional Knowledge Literature**  
**Nicole Latulippe, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario**

The findings of this research address the second and third core FishWIKS research questions –

**2. Can varied IKSs be used to improve the effectiveness of fisheries governance at national, regional, and local scales in Canada and internationally?**

**3. Can various IKSs be used to inform and enhance an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in Canada and internationally, given the complexities of ecosystems and additional uncertainties posed by climate-induced changes?**

**A brief introduction on the specific issue being addressed**

This paper<sup>1</sup> provides signposts in the form of a typology useful for navigating this conceptual space. It classifies TK scholarship into four interpretive frameworks: ecological, critical, relational, and collaborative (Table 1). Categories are not fixed, mutually exclusive positions, but operate under differing sets of assumptions and towards particular ends. They perform particular work, with distinct implications. This underscores the need to situate one’s approach to TK.

**Why it was important to address this issue?**

There is a growing number and array of actors engaged in the field of traditional knowledge/Indigenous knowledge/systems (TK/IK/IKS). The result is a broad, messy, and contested body of literature.

**What are the key findings from the research?**

Addressing the first of the two FishWIKS core research questions,, critical and relational approaches tend to emphasize fundamental differences between knowledge systems, while ecological and collaborative approaches celebrate their similarities or at least the potential for symmetry. As per the second question,

an ecological approach would suggest that TK can correct the failure of western science-based knowledge systems to manage common resources, and through adaptive management, can facilitate a holistic, place-based ecosystem approach to resource governance.

Orientation	What is the relationship between western & Indigenous knowledge?	How can Indigenous knowledge or TK improve resource management?
Ecological	Indigenous knowledge complements post-positivist science	Through an adaptive or ecosystem-based management frameworks
Critical	Epistemic colonization renders Indigenous knowledge unintelligible	Through structural change and decolonization
Relational	When shared, distinct knowledge systems can be of mutual benefit	Through Indigenous governance models, including treaties
Collaborative	There is potential for knowledge co-production	Through empowered, collaborative processes at multiple scales

**Table 1. Four interpretative frameworks for TK scholarship**

Critical theory would suggest that discursive and material power imbalances marginalize and render TK wholly unintelligible, and that co-management models are empty in the absence of structural change and decolonization. A relational perspective tends to recognize and appreciate IK as a dynamic way of life

<sup>1</sup> LaTulippe, N. 2015. Situating the work: A typology of traditional knowledge literature. , *AlterNative*, 11(2): 118-131.

embedded in particular cosmological, socio-cultural, and place-based contexts that finds expression in systems of Indigenous governance and the nation-to-nation or treaty relationship. Finally, as a collaborative concept, increased interplay between Indigenous and state resource managers can encourage innovative processes at multiple levels that facilitate the exercise of inherent Indigenous rights. As a powerful tool, TK invites the co-production of knowledge at multiple levels, which, under the right conditions, can result in more effective resource governance.

**What are some of the main policy Implications arising from the findings (e.g. for the government, for indigenous nations (as a whole, or individually), for other relevant stakeholders, etc.)**

Results demonstrate the unique outcomes and policy implications that can flow from different sets of assumptions and values in this field. This speaks to the contingent nature of knowledge production regarding TK/IKS and raises important questions for research design and conduct given the implications for communities.

For example, what befalls the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples when their practices fail to meet the standards established through an instrumental valuation of TK/IKS in light of ecosystem-based management frameworks? What is overlooked when TK is reconciled to the state's duty to consult, or, as a technical fix, to prevailing resource extraction agendas? Is there room for co-governance and treaty relations in dominant TK discourses? And how are uneven relations of power reproduced through "co-management" and collaborative work on TK?

It is worth reiterating that the literature is neither static nor fixed in these discreet categories. Likewise, research projects rarely subscribe to pure ideological frames, as they are presented here. Projects often exhibit multiple perspectives and rationales; for instance, Fish-WIKS seeks to enhance ecosystem-based management, ease barriers to the full inclusion of Indigenous peoples in resource governance, and obtain mutually beneficial outcomes through the

interplay of diverse knowledge systems. A product of successive waves of interest in TK since the 1980s, overlap in the field of TK reflects the continued purchase of ecological and Western post-positivist perspectives in the performance of fundable research. Overlap also mirrors the varied interests and assumptions at play in partnership-based projects, the growing significance of critical, Indigenous relational, and collaborative scholarship, and a gap in the literature.



Given the broad and contested character of the literature, rather than assume, accept, and naturalize particular versions of "TK" or "IKS", researchers ought to name their approach (and its limits). The point is to be explicit about the assumptions, interests, and claims driving research and writing on TK. Research/ers ought to be unambiguous about what it does and does not endeavor to achieve. This helps to avoid the conflation of limited or apolitical TK/IKS work as *the* answer to Indigenous dispossession and exclusion, or ecosystem sustainability and resiliency, when, in fact, it could run counterproductive to those aims.

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