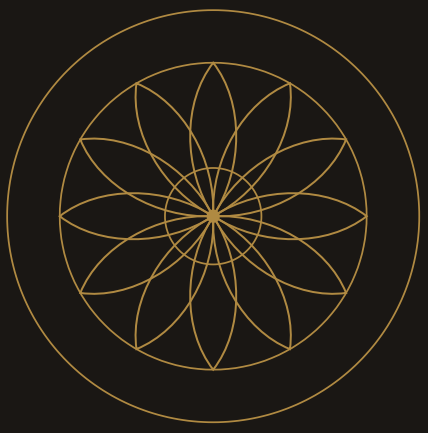


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions

Indigenous & folk family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions in *The Sacred Divide*. It has 27 sections, the same 27 used for every tradition, so that any section can be set beside the same section for another. Every fact is sourced.

Before each section, a short note says what the section is built to show, so you know what you are looking at before you read the detail.

After each section, a note headed *Why this matters to you* points at the part of the section most likely to touch an ordinary reader: a member, a donor, a parent, a voter, someone thinking about leaving, or someone outside forming an opinion. It usually ends with a question. The questions are not traps. They are the ones a careful reader would ask anyway.

The hard questions in section 23 are set out one at a time: the question, why it is asked, and an example already documented in this record.

Where a note states a fact, the fact comes from this record's own tables and cited sources or, in a few places, from a well-known research finding named in the text. Corrections are logged, with their dates, in the last section, *What changed on this page*.

Contents

01 At a glance 10

Disclosure scorecard

02 A day inside 12

03 The forefront 14

The unanswered question · The widest gap between word and record · One cost of leaving, beside its denial · The strongest objection, answered

04 What healthy looks like here 18

05 History 19

Timeline · Moments in the room

06 Branches & variants 25

07 Structure 26

Size and shape · Authority · The top of the chain · Who holds what

08 Law & state here 32

Who can compel an answer

09 Money 34

Where it comes from · Follow the money · Pipelines this tradition shares · Money in numbers

10 Genealogy 38

11 Reach 41
Information · Children · Bodies

12 The 30 techniques 46
All thirty at a glance · Stage 1 · Idealize · Stage 2 · Hook · Stage 3 · Devalue · Stage 4 · Confuse · Stage 5 · Isolate · Stage 6 · Extract · Stage 7 · Discard · Stage 8 · Replace

13 The loops 89

14 Say versus do 100
What they say, what the record shows · Accountability or theatre?

15 Cost & cover 103
What leaving costs · The ledger of exit · How the cost is denied

16 The ledger 106
Who benefits · Money out, leverage back · Who pays

17 Who gets hurt most 108
Where the weight lands · From The Children's Codex

18 The middle tiers 111

19 Documented cases 113
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada · The boarding-school count (United States, 2022–2024) · "Bringing Them Home" (Australia, 1997) · A papal apology (Canada, 2022) · Ceremony sold, three dead (United States, 2009–2011)

20 Precedent 117
It has been broken before · What would change this page

21 Voices from inside 119

22 Regional variants 120
Canada · United States · Australia

23 The questions 123
In closing

24 Leaving safely here 127

25 Where to get help 129

26 Sources 132
Further sources

27 What changed on this page 136

How to read this

Every religion in The Sacred Divide is laid out the same way, in the same 27 sections, so that any section can be compared across religions. This file examines institutions, offices, money and power. It does not judge anyone's faith or the truth of any belief.

EVIDENCE GRADES

Each of the 30 techniques carries a grade for how it is established in this tradition.

- **CODIFIED** Written policy, published rule, contractual requirement, or a procedure the institution has confirmed in its own documents. The strongest grade and the hardest to deny.
- **DOCUMENTED** Established by court judgment, government inquiry, regulatory action, or financial filing. Not the institution's own words, but a body with subpoena power.
- **TAUGHT** Repeated leadership instruction from platform, publication, or curriculum, without a formal rule. Deniable as emphasis rather than policy.
- **CULTURAL** Community enforcement the institution neither mandates nor prevents. Real in effect, unattributable by design — the highest-deniability grade. A volume graded mostly Cultural has not been cleared of anything: it means the page names no document that makes the institution responsible. Cultural does not mean minor, and it is not a finding of absence.

- CONTESTED Occurs in some parts of the tradition and is actively opposed in others. Generalizing this grade across a whole tradition is a misuse of it.
- REFORMED Documented historically and materially changed since — policy withdrawn, practice ended, or independent oversight accepted. Recorded because omitting it would be dishonest.
- UNGRADED Present in the source material without a grade assigned yet. Read as an unverified pattern claim, not as a finding.

RECEIPTS

Bracketed labels such as [OFFICIAL POLICY] name the kind of source a claim rests on.

- **Official policy.** The institution's own written rule: handbook, canon, policy letter, catechism, trust deed, temple recommend question. The strongest evidence available, because it cannot be attributed to a rogue individual.
- **Court record.** Judgments, convictions, filings, and testimony given under oath. Adversarially tested, which is more than most religious claims about themselves have been.
- **Government inquiry.** Royal commissions, grand juries, parliamentary and state investigations with subpoena power. Where these exist they are usually the best record of what an institution did rather than said.
- **Regulatory action.** Findings and penalties from bodies like the SEC or consumer-protection regulators. Narrow in scope, unusually precise in what they establish.
- **Financial record.** Filings, audited statements, tax returns, disclosed compensation, property transactions. Frequently the only place an institution tells the truth about its priorities.

- **Leadership statement.** Recorded sermons, conference addresses, published letters. The institution in its own voice, to its own people, on the record.
- **Independent investigation.** Reports commissioned by the institution but conducted externally. Weaker than a court and far stronger than a press release — and notable when the institution publishes them in full.
- **Academic source.** Peer-reviewed history, sociology, and demography. Best for context, structure, and scale; weaker for specific institutional conduct.
- **Former member testimony.** Firsthand accounts from people who were inside. Indispensable and interested at once — graded as testimony, never presented as documentary proof.
- **Pattern observed.** A recurring configuration with no single document behind it. Labeled as an observation rather than a finding, and the weakest claim type in this codex.

METHOD

- Separation of targets. This codex analyzes institutional control patterns, never the worth of believers or the truth of beliefs. Theology is out of scope; behavior, money, and power are in scope.
- Pattern over anecdote. A tactic is attributed to a tradition's high-control expressions only where the mechanism recurs — one bad congregation proves nothing; the same architecture in a hundred proves the architecture.
- Evidence weighting. Every factual claim carries a bracketed source-type label and should carry a grade (A–D). Claims marked SOURCE NEEDED or PATTERN OBSERVED are analysis, not established fact, and must not be published as fact.
- Steelman rule. Every tactic section presents the institution's strongest defense before countering it. If the defense cannot be stated in a form its adherents would recognize, the counter is not yet earned.

- Asymmetry honesty. Similar tactic does not mean identical severity. A shunning policy that costs your entire family is not the same as a community that cools toward doubters, and the codex must never flatten that difference.
- The mirror rule. Any framework this powerful can itself be misused — to smear traditions, flatter one's own, or manufacture grievance. The self-audit and language guardrails apply to this project as much as to any institution it examines.

CITATIONS

A small raised number in the text links to the matching item in this religion's Sources, near the end. Every source was checked, and the date of the last check is shown at the top.

01 At a glance

BEFORE YOU READ

The whole page on one screen: how big Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions is, who, if anyone, sits at the top, how that person is chosen and whether anyone can remove them, where the money comes from, and what leaving costs. The disclosure scorecard underneath asks six yes-or-no questions any charity or public company would be expected to answer. Every later section expands one of these rows.

SIZE	This page cites no count: the number depends on how Indigenous, folk and ancestral practice is defined, and many people practice alongside a world religion; syncretism (the blending of more than one tradition) is common. PATTERN OBSERVED
WHO'S IN CHARGE	Authority lives locally, with elders, societies, families and councils. By this codex's own rule, no private individual is named on this page.
CHOSEN BY	Community and kinship.
REMOVABLE BY	Community and kinship.

MONEY IN ONE LINE	Money comes from ceremony fees, healing payments, initiation costs and offerings. In the commercialized layer it comes from ayahuasca tourism (retreats built on a plant-based brew used in Amazonian traditions), retreat industries and appropriated ceremony sold at Western price points, and revenue frequently bypasses source communities. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	In some communities, where tradition, family, and ethnicity are one fabric, questioning practice can read as betraying identity itself; misfortune attribution ('the ancestors are angry') taxes refusal without any explicit threat. This page names no community. PATTERN OBSERVED
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	Protection from outsiders is owed and overdue. Who protects the insider from the elder?
EVIDENCE	None of the 30 techniques is sourced to a named document. The grades are Cultural 27 and Contested 3.
FAMILY	This volume belongs to the Indigenous and folk family.
LAST CHECKED	This page was last checked on 2026-10-03.

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
NOT ASSESSABLE	NOT ASSESSABLE	NOT ASSESSABLE	NOT ASSESSABLE	NOT ASSESSABLE	NOT ASSESSABLE

Y Yes — established from a public source · **P** Partial — true of some parts of the tradition, or true in some jurisdictions · **N** No — not established from any public source · **?** Not assessable — no institutional apex exists to assess

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

There is no single office at the top here. The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is "Community and kinship", and to who can remove its holder, "Community and kinship". That can protect people from a distant hierarchy. It can also mean there is no one to appeal to when the people closest to you are wrong. If that happened to you, who would you go to?

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

One ordinary day, told from inside. The person is a composite built from documented patterns, not a real individual. The point is to make the structure visible at human scale: phrases like "removal mechanism" or "giving record" are easy to read past, but a Tuesday organized around them is not.

Tanya · A Tuesday in berry season · A First Nation in northern Canada, and the town an hour south · a composite character, not a real person

Up at six, coffee, and she watches the light come over the water where her grandmother's grandmother's people watched it come over the water, and there is no sentence in English that gets this right so she has stopped trying.

She teaches language at the school. Eleven kids in her Tuesday group. Two of them have grandparents who were at the school in Fort Alexander and who do not speak the language because it was beaten out of them, and Tanya is teaching their grandchildren the words back. She would do this for free. She nearly does.

At ten she takes a call about the records. Fourth call this year. The archdiocese has responded to say the material is under review. It has been under review since 2019.

At noon she sees an ad on her phone: a wellness retreat, four hours south, non-Indigenous facilitator, $2,800 for four nights, using her nation's word for the ceremony in the headline. She screenshots it. She has a folder of these. The folder has forty-one screenshots in it.

In the afternoon a girl of about fifteen stays behind after class and doesn't say anything for a while, and then talks about her uncle, who is also a ceremonial helper, and who everyone respects, and who she doesn't want to be in the room with. Tanya listens. She knows exactly who. She knows there is no one to report to, because the nearest thing to a body is a circle of people who are all related to him, and because the last time someone raised something about a respected man it turned into a story about the person who raised it.

At night she sits on the step. She thinks: everything that nearly destroyed us came from outside, and that is the truest thing about my life. And then she thinks about a fifteen-year-old who cannot say a name out loud. And she understands that both of those are the same fight, that they have always been the same fight — protecting our children — and that almost nobody will let her say them in the same sentence.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Did any moment in that day feel familiar: a cost nobody questions, a door nobody can see how to open? The section of this page that explains that moment is the one to read first. If nothing felt familiar, ask whether that's because it isn't your life, or because the patterns have become normal to you.

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

The page's thesis in one place. First, the single question the documented record could not answer. Then the widest gap between what the institution says and what the record shows, one cost of leaving set beside how it is officially denied, and the strongest objection to this whole page, answered rather than dismissed.

> Much of the documented harm to Indigenous peoples in Canada, the United States and Australia was done from outside — bans, boarding schools, stolen children, potential unmarked graves. That fact frames this entire page and does not disappear from it. What follows tries to hold two truths that are usually kept apart: that the largest harm this page records came from colonizers and missionaries, and that a community can also be harmed from within, a claim this page raises as an allegation and for which it cites no case.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Protection from outsiders is owed and overdue. Who protects the insider from the elder?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
We have apologized and moved forward.	Records remain unreleased in documented cases, and settlement commitments have gone unmet.	GOVERNMENT REPORT

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Identity and kinship	Not documented on this page	Tradition, family, and ethnicity are one fabric; questioning practice can read as betraying the people who survived cultural genocide	“Culture isn't something you leave.”

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. Any criticism of these traditions continues a colonial project that nearly destroyed them.

What is true in it. The largest harm in this profile was inflicted from outside, by other religions' institutions, and is documented by national commissions; potential unmarked graves have been identified since 2021, most not yet excavated. That framing is not a preamble; it is the substance.

The answer. Sovereignty includes the authority to hold your own accountable. Protection from outsiders and protection from insiders need not be opposites. Some First Nations have built their own protocols for

research, for example the OCAP principles of ownership, control, access and possession [21]; this page cites no ceremony or safeguarding protocol, so it offers the idea as a direction, not as demonstrated. The codex names the bind rather than resolving it, because it is real.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *Protection from outsiders is owed and overdue. Who protects the insider from the elder?* If you can't, who could, and would asking them be welcome? How an institution reacts to a fair question often tells you more than the answer does.

04 What healthy looks like here

BEFORE YOU READ

What genuinely works in Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions, stated first and separately from any critique. That is a standing rule of this book: no tradition is reduced to its worst documented moments. Anything criticized later is measured against the best of what is described here.

> Indigenous, folk, and ancestral traditions are practiced worldwide (this page cites no count) — land-based, orally transmitted, kinship-woven lifeways that survived colonization, missionary suppression, and extraction.

- Healthy practice here has community-accountable eldership, nations setting their own protocols for ceremony and research, and revival movements that pair sovereignty with internal accountability, so that people are protected from outsiders and also from abuse by insiders.
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) is the international framework for cultural and religious self-determination [7].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

A bias check before the critique. People tend to read criticism of their own group as an attack and criticism of other groups as simply true. Social psychologists call this in-group bias; it shows up even when the groups are assigned at random (Tajfel's "minimal group" experiments, 1971). If you belong here, did this section feel fair? If you don't, did anything in it surprise you? The surprise is a rough measure of what you had assumed.

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated timeline and a few moments where the direction changed. No founding date exists here, so the timeline records what was done to these traditions and when. Dates matter because the bans, schools and removals each began in a particular year, under a particular law or policy.

No founding moment: these are the oldest continuous religious forms on earth. The relevant modern history is what was done to them — banned ceremonies, residential schools, stolen land — and the ongoing revival now navigating authenticity, authority, and commerce.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



Numbered markers match the timeline below; spacing is proportional to the years.

1 **DEEP TIME–PRESENT**

Continuous land-based traditions predating all other entries in this codex

There is no founding date; the relevant history is what was done to these traditions.

2 **1400S–1800S**

Colonial conquest and missionary activity

The cases of religious suppression as state policy that this page sources are in Canada, the United States and Australia (below); it cites no source for other regions. **PATTERN OBSERVED**

3 1830S–1996

Residential schools in Canada (from the 1830s; the last closed in 1996), federal boarding schools in the US (the Interior Department report covers 1819–1969), and missions and children's homes in Australia

Children removed from families to destroy language and ceremony. Canada's TRC (2015) documented the Canadian system; potential unmarked graves have been identified since 2021, most not yet excavated. GOVERNMENT REPORT · Canada's TRC 2015

4 1883–1978

In Canada, the Potlatch (a ceremonial gift-giving feast of Pacific Northwest Coast nations) was banned by the Indian Act from 1885 to 1951 [18], and the Sun Dance (a ceremony of several Plains nations) from 1895 [19]. In the US, the Interior Department's 1883 Code of Indian Offenses (the 'Religious Crimes Code'), which Congress never passed into law, banned ceremonies; NARF dates the ban to 1978, when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act passed [5]

Ceremony was illegal within living memory: by statute in Canada, by Interior Department rule in the US. OFFICIAL POLICY

5 1910–1970 / 1950S–1980S

Stolen Generations (Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families) and Sixties Scoop (Canada: Indigenous children removed from their families into child welfare and adoption) child removals

Family destruction as policy in Australia [4]; the Sixties Scoop is not separately sourced on this page, and it cites no source for forced sterilization, which is therefore not recorded here. GOVERNMENT REPORT · Bringing Them Home

6 1970S–1990S

Revival movements; land claims; repatriation laws (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, NAGPRA 1990)

Legal recognition begins; ancestral remains and objects returned.

7 1990S–2000S

'Plastic shaman' (an outsider who sells ceremony while claiming Indigenous authority) commercialization; Lakota declaration of war on exploiters (1993)

Indigenous nations formally object to the sale of their ceremonies.

OFFICIAL POLICY · Lakota Declaration

8 2007

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted

International framework for cultural and religious self-determination. OFFICIAL POLICY

9 2009

Three deaths at James Arthur Ray's 'sweat lodge' (a heated enclosure used for ceremony) in Sedona; conviction 2011

Three participants died at a sweat lodge an outsider ran for paying clients, and he was convicted of negligent homicide; whether it was appropriation is a characterization, not a court ruling. COURT RECORD

10 2015–PRESENT

Canada's TRC findings; ayahuasca and psychedelic tourism boom; internal accountability movements

Revival now navigates both external extraction and internal accountability. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Moments in the room

1883–1978 — BANS ON CEREMONY IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Canada banned the Potlatch (1885–1951) and the Sun Dance (from 1895) by law [18] [19]; the US Interior Department's 1883 Code of Indian Offenses banned ceremonies without an act of Congress, and NARF dates the ban to 1978 [5]. People were prosecuted under the Canadian ban and regalia was surrendered or confiscated.

Why it matters. This page inverts the codex's usual question. The apex here was imposed from outside, by statute in Canada and by administrative rule in the US, and its harms are the documented ones.

1996 AND 2015 — THE LAST SCHOOL CLOSES; THE COMMISSION REPORTS

Canada's last residential school closed in 1996. In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented the system and named it cultural genocide, recording at least 3,200 deaths of children who attended (the register records deaths, which include illness, not only abuse); the national memorial register, begun in 2019, added more than 1,100 verified names in 2025, and potential unmarked graves have been identified since 2021, most not yet excavated.

Why it matters. This is the most thoroughly documented case in this codex of religious institutions operating a state programme against children, and the only page where the codex's usual accountability question points outward at churches and governments rather than inward.

1993 AND AFTER — THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST EXPLOITERS OF LAKOTA SPIRITUALITY

Lakota leaders issued a formal declaration against non-Native sale of ceremony. This page cites no later reissue of it and no measure of its effect.

Why it matters. This is a case where authority in this tradition spoke in public, in its own name. The 'Who can compel an answer' part of this page's law section defers to it, because the communities' own repudiations are the authority that matters.

Sources for this section: 1 2 4 5 6 7 8 9 18 19

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find your own country on the timeline. The bans on ceremony and the removals of children each have start and end dates, and some ended within living memory. Which of them reached your family?

06 Branches & variants

BEFORE YOU READ

Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions is not one bloc. This section maps the main branches and variants, so that nothing documented about one community is read as true of all of them.

These are not branches. They are thousands of distinct nations, languages, and lineages, and treating them as one category is itself a colonial artifact. This codex acknowledges that while using the grouping for practical structure; the groupings below are only for navigation.

REGION	EXAMPLES	ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
North America	First Nations, Métis, Inuit; Native American and Alaska Native nations	The page's questions here are residential and boarding schools [1] [13] and the 1883 ban on ceremonies, which the 1978 Religious Freedom Act lifted [5].
Australia	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	The page's question here is forcible child removals, c. 1910–1970 [4].
Latin America	Andean and Amazonian traditions	The page's question here is ayahuasca tourism and its risks (see New Age).

Africa and elsewhere	Ancestral and folk religions	The page's questions here are witchcraft accusations against children [11] and FGM (female genital mutilation, also called female genital cutting), which is a social practice found in communities of several religions and none and is recorded here only where it is defended as tradition [10].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Indigenous / Folk / Ancestral Religions, you know one community. Most bad generalizations about a religion, and most unfair defenses of it, come from treating one branch as the whole. Which branch is the one you picture when you hear the name? Is that picture yours, or one you were given by news coverage or by the community itself?

07 Structure

BEFORE YOU READ

The organizational chart: how many people and institutions there are, where authority sits, whether any top office exists, and who holds what beneath it. The question to keep in mind is where a person would take a complaint, since no hierarchy sits above the community.

Size and shape

Adherents	This page cites no count: the number depends on how Indigenous, folk and ancestral practice is defined, and many people practice alongside a world religion. **PATTERN OBSERVED**
Regions	The traditions are practiced in Sub-Saharan Africa (traditional religions and Yoruba-derived diaspora traditions), the Americas (First Nations, Native American, Amazonian, Andean, Mesoamerican), Australia (Aboriginal), Pacific Islands, Siberia, Southeast Asia, the Arctic.
Trend	Many nations are seeing revival and language recovery, and at the same time face pressure from extraction industries, missionary activity, and commercial appropriation.
Participation	In many regions practitioners also follow a world religion such as Christianity, Islam or Buddhism; this page cites no figure. Where authority is local and kinship-based there is no hierarchy above the community, which cuts both ways. It varies between peoples.

Authority

- Authority rests with elders, healers, initiatory lineages (lines of teaching passed on through initiation) and kinship structures; it is informal, oral, and relational, legitimate in form, and hard to appeal when abused. **PATTERN OBSERVED**
- A second layer of authority is claimed by outsiders and plastic shamans, who claim Indigenous authority for commercial extraction;

this is a control pattern practiced against these traditions.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

The top of the chain

> No apex — and here, unlike everywhere else in this codex, naming one would repeat the original harm.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
Where authority actually lives	Authority lives locally, with elders, societies, families and councils. By this codex's own rule, no private individual is named on this page.	The community and its kinship networks choose who holds it.	The community and its kinship networks remove who holds it.
Where power concentrates anyway	In Canada the federal Indian Act sets who has Indian status and funds bands to administer registration [20]; this page names no council and makes no finding about how any council uses funds. Outside the communities, a non-Indigenous retreat economy sells ceremony back to the world.	In Canada, the Indian Act sets status [20]; market ownership sets the retreat economy.	Not recorded on this page for councils; the market decides the retreat economy.
The record	The residential-school findings stand as the documented result of an outside apex imposed on these traditions by force	—	—

THE TELL

Everywhere else this codex asks: who is at the top? Here the question inverts: who is at the door — and are they selling tickets?

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
Churches that operated residential and mission schools	External institution	The holders are named denominations under government contract.	They hold records and, in documented cases, unmet settlement commitments.	Your family's history is still held by the institution that took it.	GOVERNMENT REPORT · Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
Colonial and successor states	Government	The holders are national governments.	They hold the legacy of bans on ceremony: Canada's statutory bans on the Potlatch (1885–1951) and the Sun Dance (from 1895) [18] [19], and the US Interior Department's 1883 rules, which NARF dates to 1978 [5].	It decided whether your grandparents could pray legally.	OFFICIAL POLICY
Ayahuasca and retreat operators	Commercial	The holders are private operators, frequently non-Indigenous.	They hold very large revenues at Western price points, with source communities bypassed.	Your ceremony is sold to strangers and nothing returns to you.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

'Plastic shamans'	Appropriation	The holders are outsiders who sell ceremony, which Indigenous nations have formally denounced; one was convicted of negligent homicide after three deaths, and the court ruled on the deaths, not on appropriation.	They hold ceremony as a product.	Your tradition's name appears on someone else's invoice.	COURT RECORD / OFFICIAL POLICY · Lakota Declaration 1993
Extractive researchers and licensors	Academic and commercial	The holders are universities, publishers and corporations.	They hold knowledge published, patented, or licensed without consent or benefit-sharing.	What your community knows is owned by someone else.	ACADEMIC SOURCE
Ceremonial figures without community accountability	Internal authority	Ceremonial figures in some communities; the page names no person, people or nation.	They may hold access to ceremony where they are the only route, and where reporting would mean accusing kin.	Abuse by ceremonial leaders has been reported in some communities; this page cites no case, and the claim is an allegation, not a finding.	PATTERN OBSERVED

First Nations research protocols	Sovereign governance	The First Nations Information Governance Centre set out the OCAP principles (ownership, control, access and possession) for First Nations data [21].	They hold the principles by which First Nations assert control over research data about them.	They are this page's one named example that communities set their own terms; the page cites no ceremony or safeguarding protocol.	**OFFICIAL POLICY ·** OCAP

Sources for this section: [5] [20] [21]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page follows its own rule: no private individual is named, because authority here lives locally, with elders, societies, families and councils, chosen by community and kinship. That is real self-government, and much of it survived deliberate attempts to destroy it. The page's unanswered question is careful: protection from outsiders is owed and overdue, but who protects the insider from the elder? If you are a member of a nation, who would you go to if an elder harmed you?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

What states actually do. That includes how they fund, protect, regulate or enforce the tradition, and which outside body, if any, can compel an answer from it. For most readers, this is where the institution meets their own passport.

COUNTRY	WHAT THE LAW DOES	WHAT HAPPENED
Canada	Canada has the Indian Residential Schools Settlement and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission [1]. The Indian Act banned the Potlatch (1885–1951) [18] and the Sun Dance (from 1895) [19].	The TRC called the system "cultural genocide" and recorded at least 3,200 deaths (2015) [1 2]; the Pope apologized in 2022 [14]
United States	The 1883 Code of Indian Offenses, an Interior Department rule that Congress never passed into law, outlawed ceremonies [5]; the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) and NAGPRA (1990) reversed course [5 6]	The Interior Department confirmed at least 973 children died at federal boarding schools; it listed 417 such schools (2024) [13]
Australia	A national inquiry examined child removals [4].	*Bringing Them Home* was tabled in 1997 [4]
International	The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) [7]	It sets a standard and is not enforced by a court.

Appropriation	Ordinary criminal and consumer law applies [9].	A self-help teacher was convicted over three deaths at a sweat lodge he ran for paying clients (2011) [9]

Who can compel an answer

This entry refuses the general form of the question, because outside compulsion is the historical wound itself. For the sale of ceremony to outsiders, the available routes are consumer-protection law and the communities' own public repudiations, which are the authority that actually matters.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The largest harms on this page were done to these traditions by governments and churches. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission called the residential school system "cultural genocide" and recorded about 3,200 deaths. The U.S. Interior Department confirmed at least 973 children died at federal boarding schools. The U.S. Code of Indian Offenses outlawed ceremonies from 1883. If you are Canadian, American or Australian, your governments did this within living memory. What do you know about the school nearest to where you live?

09 Money

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the money comes from, how each flow is justified, how it can be used to control, and who benefits. Read it the way you would read any organization you give to: what is disclosed, what is not, and who decides.

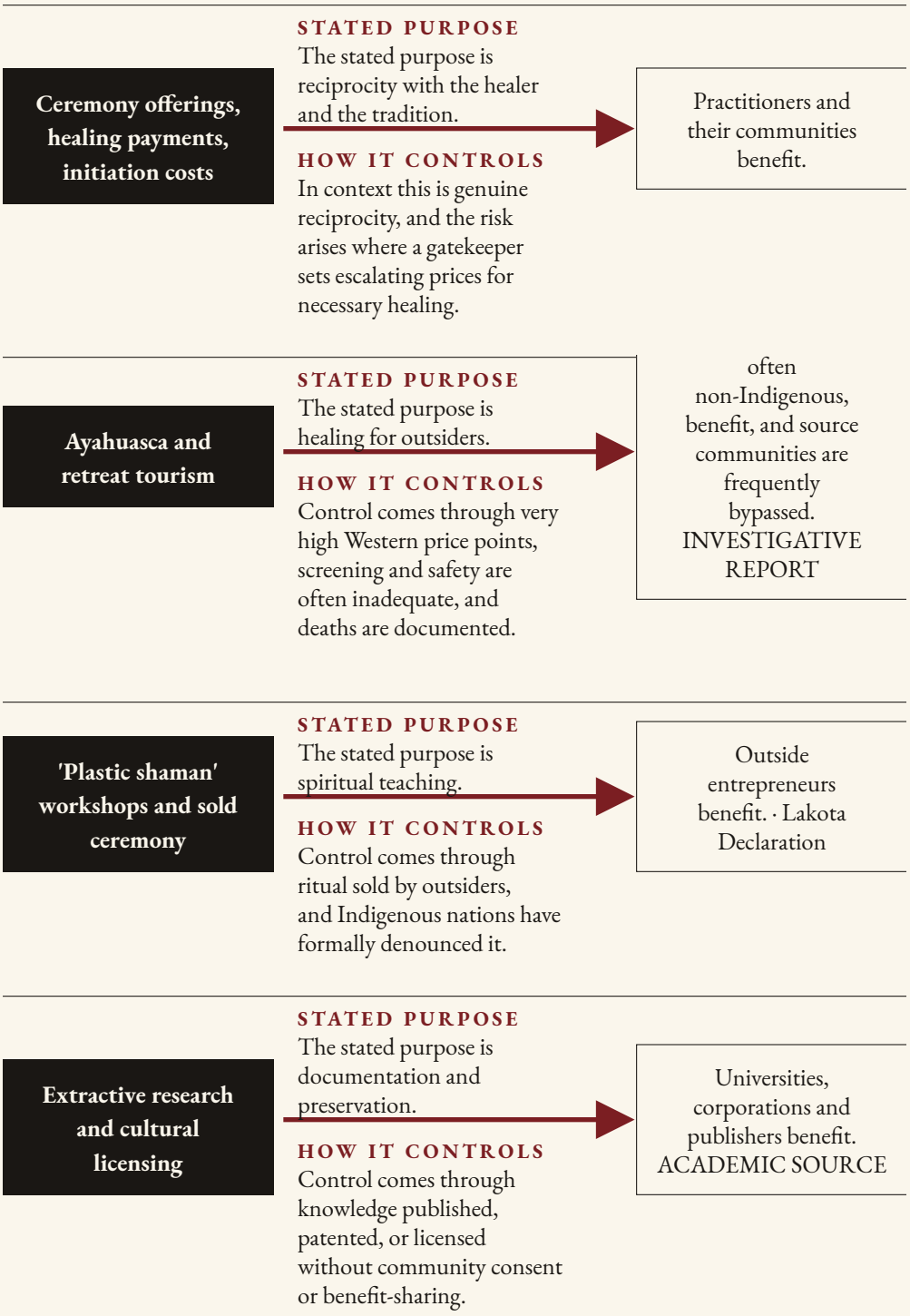
Where it comes from

- Money comes from ceremony fees, healing payments, initiation costs and offerings. In the commercialized layer it comes from ayahuasca tourism, retreat industries and appropriated ceremony sold at Western price points, and revenue frequently bypasses source communities.
  INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Ceremony offerings, healing payments, initiation costs	The stated purpose is reciprocity with the healer and the tradition.	In context this is genuine reciprocity, and the risk arises where a gatekeeper sets escalating prices for necessary healing.	Practitioners and their communities benefit.
Ayahuasca and retreat tourism	The stated purpose is healing for outsiders.	Control comes through very high Western price points, screening and safety are often inadequate, and deaths are documented.	Retreat operators, often non-Indigenous, benefit, and source communities are frequently bypassed. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
'Plastic shaman' workshops and sold ceremony	The stated purpose is spiritual teaching.	Control comes through ritual sold by outsiders, and Indigenous nations have formally denounced it.	Outside entrepreneurs benefit. OFFICIAL POLICY · Lakota Declaration
Extractive research and cultural licensing	The stated purpose is documentation and preservation.	Control comes through knowledge published, patented, or licensed without community consent or benefit-sharing.	Universities, corporations and publishers benefit. ACADEMIC SOURCE

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS



Not to scale. The table gives one figure, the German church tax of €6.75bn in 2025; the other flows are shown without amounts.

Pipelines this tradition shares

RETREAT AND CEREMONY TOURISM

Source. The money comes from Western participants seeking healing.

Path. The money passes from the operator, often not from the source community, to facilitators, and then to offshore or personal accounts.

Disclosed. Prices are disclosed.

Hidden. The safety record, training, and benefit-sharing are not disclosed.

Money in numbers

- **United States:** the government appropriated more than **$23.3 billion** (in 2023 dollars) between 1871 and 1969 for the boarding-school system and related assimilation policies [13].
- **Canada — the churches:** Catholic entities were released in 2015 from a $25 million fundraising pledge after raising under $4 million, and re-pledged $30 million in 2021 [3]; in 2022 the church said dioceses and orders had provided more than $50 million in cash and in-kind contributions [14].

- **Ceremony for sale:** Ayahuasca retreats and paid sweat lodges are sold to outsiders (see New Age) [9].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The money line has two parts. Inside communities there are ceremony fees, healing payments and offerings. Outside, there is ayahuasca tourism and appropriated ceremony sold at Western prices, "revenue frequently bypassing source communities."

If you have paid for a retreat built on an Indigenous practice, the questions section suggests asking which community authorized it, and then asking that community. Did any of your money reach it?

10 Genealogy

BEFORE YOU READ

Rules with a history. Each card asks the same three questions: what was this rule originally for, has that reason expired, and who benefits from the rule continuing anyway?

MISSIONARY AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING

Origin. Church-run residential and boarding schools: in Canada from the 1830s, in the US (the Interior Department report covers 1819–1969), and in Australia as missions and children's homes

— the last Canadian school closing in 1996, within living memory. GOVERNMENT REPORT · Canada's TRC

What it was for. Stated as civilizing and Christianizing; in practice, the explicit destruction of language, ceremony, and family.

Why that reason expired. This is the codex's clearest case of religion used as a weapon by outsiders. Deaths, abuse, and unmarked graves are documented by national commissions. It has not expired in effect: the trauma, the language loss, and the child-welfare overrepresentation are present-tense.

Who benefits now. Historically: colonial states and the churches contracted to run the schools. Now: the institutions that have still not fully disclosed records or paid what they promised. GOVERNMENT REPORT

CRIMINALIZATION OF CEREMONY

Origin. Potlatch and Sun Dance bans, the U.S. 'Religious Crimes Code'; American Indian Religious Freedom Act only passed in 1978. OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. Suppression of political and economic structures that colonial administration could not control.

Why that reason expired. Legally, yes. But the interruption is why so much transmission is broken and so much authority is now unverifiable — which is precisely the vulnerability that outside appropriators exploit.

Who benefits now. The appropriation economy, which fills a vacuum that suppression created.

UNACCOUNTABLE INDIVIDUAL AUTHORITY

Origin. Oral, kinship-based transmission in which the elder or healer is also relative, doctor, and community authority. PATTERN OBSERVED

What it was for. In an intact community, that concentration was checked by everyone knowing everyone — accountability was total precisely because the community was small and permanent.

Why that reason expired. Where colonization broke communities, dispersed families, and severed knowledge chains, the checks broke with them. What remains, in some communities, is authority without the community structure that used to regulate it — and abuse by a ceremonial figure, where it occurs, would be very hard to report when he is also your uncle and the only healer for a long distance. This page cites no case.

Who benefits now. Where such abuse occurs, the individuals responsible; this page cites no case. Naming the possibility is not colonial.

'PLASTIC SHAMAN' COMMERCIALIZATION

Origin. Expanded from the 1960s counterculture onward; Lakota elders issued a formal declaration against exploiters in 1993. OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. None stated. Indigenous nations have denounced the sale of their ceremonies [8].

Why that reason expired. Indigenous nations have denounced it in writing [8]. Outsiders have sold ceremony at Western prices — in one documented case, three participants died and the organizer was convicted of negligent homicide [9]; the court ruled on the deaths, not on appropriation. COURT RECORD

Who benefits now. Non-Indigenous entrepreneurs, retreat operators, and the wellness industry. Source communities generally see none of it.

Sources for this section: [5] [8] [9]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The expired-reason test works on any rule. Take one you follow or enforce, name what it was originally for, and ask whether that reason still exists. If it doesn't, and the rule survives anyway, the section's last question is the one that matters to you: who benefits from it continuing?

11 Reach

BEFORE YOU READ

How far the institution's authority extends into three private areas: what members may read and hear, how children are raised and schooled, and decisions about their own bodies.

Information

- Sacred knowledge is legitimately restricted by initiation and kinship — this is genuine intellectual sovereignty, not information control, and the codex distinguishes them.
- The control risk is that the same secrecy can shield a specific abusive elder from community accountability. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Outsider extraction is the larger documented problem: researchers, tourists, and self-appointed shamans publishing and selling restricted knowledge without consent. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- 'You'll dishonor the ancestors' can suppress internal questioning — an outsourcing of authority to people who cannot be consulted. PATTERN OBSERVED

Children

- Initiation and coming-of-age rites are typically communal and consensual within tradition; the practice at issue is where they are conducted without the young person's real ability to decline. VARIES BY COMMUNITY
- The overwhelming documented harm to Indigenous children in this profile was inflicted by outside religious institutions: residential and mission schools, with confirmed deaths and unmarked graves. GOVERNMENT REPORT

- Female genital mutilation is a social practice found in communities of several religions and none, and WHO states that no religious scripts prescribe it [10]. It is recorded here only where it is defended as tradition, and it is a documented harm to girls regardless of framing. **GOVERNMENT REPORT** · WHO

- Child witchcraft accusations in parts of West and Central Africa have led to abandonment and violence. UNICEF describes the causes as cultural, social, economic and political [11]; this page does not rank the role of traditional belief against that of deliverance ministries (churches that perform rites to expel spirits believed to cause illness or misfortune). **GOVERNMENT REPORT**

Bodies

- Many traditions were and are matrilineal, with women holding ceremonial and political authority — the colonial imposition of patriarchy is itself a documented harm. **ACADEMIC SOURCE**

- Two-spirit (a term some Native people use for gender-diverse roles) and third-gender roles were recognized in numerous nations and were specifically targeted by missionaries. **ACADEMIC SOURCE**

- Some observers describe elder authority over women's choices, arranged or early marriage and menstrual restriction as control patterns in some communities. This page names no people and cites no source for them, so they are recorded as unverified; arranged marriage and menstrual observance are not by themselves coercion. **VARIES BY COMMUNITY**

- Abuse by ceremonial leaders has been reported in some communities; this page cites no case, and the claim is an allegation, not a finding.

Where a leader is also kin, healer and community authority, reporting would be structurally hard. **PATTERN OBSERVED**

- The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls found that violence against Indigenous women and girls has colonial and patriarchal roots and amounts to genocide [12]. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**

Sources for this section: [10] [11] [12]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a parent, this is the section about your children: what they may read, what they are taught about their bodies, and who else has a say in their schooling. Ask what your child would need to do at sixteen to hear the strongest case against what they were taught. Would they be allowed? Would they know it existed?

The control risk is that the same secrecy can shield a specific abusive elder from community accountability.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

27	3
CULTURAL	CONTESTED

STAGE 1 Idealize	1 Love Bombing CULTURAL	2 Weaponized Generosity CONTESTED					
STAGE 2 Hook	3 Future Faking CONTESTED	4 Hoovering CONTESTED					
STAGE 3 Devalue	5 Devaluation CULTURAL	6 Gaslighting CULTURAL	7 Double Bind CULTURAL				
STAGE 4 Confuse	8 Intermittent Reinforcement CULTURAL	9 Moving the Goalposts CULTURAL	10 Strategic Ambiguity CULTURAL	11 Projection CULTURAL			
	12 DARVO CULTURAL	13 Normalization / Desensitization CULTURAL					
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation CULTURAL	15 Triangulation CULTURAL					

STAGE 6 Extract	**16** Flying Monkeys CULTURAL	**17** Smear Campaign CULTURAL	**18** Silent Treatment / Stonewalling CULTURAL	**19** Manufactured Consent CULTURAL
	20 Trauma Bonding CULTURAL	**21** Learned Helplessness CULTURAL	**22** Benevolent Control CULTURAL	**23** Infantilization CULTURAL
	24 Identity Erosion CULTURAL	**25** Spiritual Bypassing CULTURAL	**26** Financial Control CULTURAL	
STAGE 7 Discard	**27** Manufactured Crisis CULTURAL	**28** Discard CULTURAL		
STAGE 8 Replace	**29** Replacement CULTURAL	**30** Plausible Deniability CULTURAL		

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle.

BEFORE YOU READ

A fixed checklist of thirty influence and control patterns from research on coercive control and social psychology, applied here to institutions rather than to individual people. Every entry carries an evidence grade. The grade matters more than the name of the technique: Codified or Documented means there is a paper trail; Contested means the claim is disputed.

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle. Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition. For this volume the thirty entries are a framework applied to Indigenous, folk and ancestral traditions as a group. They describe patterns that may occur in some communities, not findings about any named people; the page names no nation or organization for them and cites no source for the internal patterns, which is why most are graded Cultural. "Elders, shamans, healers" is a generic list of roles, not a claim about any one people.

Stage 1 · Idealize

You arrive with a need and are met with more warmth than you have had in years.

The offer comes through ceremony, ancestry, land, songs, elders, and the promise of recovering what colonization took. It touches identity at a level deeper than belief — blood, soil, memory, survival.

What it asks of you: What you were offered was not a doctrine. It was your own inheritance, which is why refusing any part of it feels like refusing yourself.

1 · Love Bombing

Overwhelming affection on arrival to create emotional dependency before terms are revealed.

How it shows here

- People may be drawn through ceremony, ancestry, land, elders, songs, healing rituals, initiation, and the promise of returning to what colonization or modernity stole.
- The emotional hook is powerful because it touches identity deeper than belief: blood, soil, memory, tribe, ancestors, survival.

- Love becomes coercive when elders, shamans, family systems, or communal authorities use ancestry to demand obedience, silence abuse, enforce gender roles, or punish departure as betrayal of the people.

The strongest defense. These traditions were oppressed; criticizing them repeats colonial disrespect.

The counter. Oppression by outsiders does not make internal control sacred. A wounded tradition can still wound people. Respecting survival does not require pretending every elder is safe, every ritual is harmless, or every demand made in the name of ancestors is love.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The welcome through ceremony, ancestry and elders is communal practice that offers the reader's own inheritance; the coercive use described in the third bullet is a pattern, and the page ties it to no documented case.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Indigenous, folk, and ancestral traditions may offer ceremony, healing, elder guidance, songs, land connection, initiation, family belonging, and recovery of identity after displacement or colonization.
- The generosity can be profound because it restores what modernity, migration, or historical violence severed: ancestry, place, ritual, memory, and communal meaning.

- But that same restoration can become leverage when elders, shamans, family authorities, or community leaders demand obedience, secrecy, money, sexual access, silence, or loyalty in the name of tradition.
- Outsiders or reconnecting descendants may receive belonging, but later be told that questioning a leader, ritual, payment, or abuse is disrespecting the ancestors.

The strongest defense. These traditions were oppressed and exploited. Criticizing them risks repeating colonial harm.

The counter. Oppression by outsiders does not make internal coercion sacred. A tradition can deserve protection from erasure and still require accountability. If generosity restores identity but then uses that identity to demand silence, the ancestors have been turned into debt collectors.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CONTESTED The help and generosity are reciprocity within tradition, so whether they become leverage is disputed; the extraction the page documents is by outside commercial operators, not by elders or healers.

Stage 2 · Hook

You are given a future that cannot be verified, and a rope for whenever you drift toward the door.

The promise is restoration of what was taken, connection to land and ancestors, and healing across generations, and unlike almost everything else in this codex it is substantially real. Recovery comes through a ceremony, a funeral, an appeal to what your grandparents survived to give you.

What it asks of you: What you were offered is your own inheritance, which is why refusing any part of it feels like refusing yourself.

3 · Future Faking

Promising a future that keeps you invested but never has to arrive.

How it shows here

- Indigenous, folk, and ancestral systems can future-fake through ancestral blessing, restored identity, healing of bloodlines, land reconnection, initiation, protection, fertility, communal restoration, and return to original ways.

- The promise is emotionally profound: what was stolen can be recovered; what was broken in the lineage can be healed; the ancestors are waiting; the old ways will make you whole.
- Elders, shamans, healers, or family authorities may claim access to future blessing or protection through ceremony, offerings, secrecy, obedience, and initiation.
- For reconnecting people, the future promise can become identity salvation: if you submit to this path, you will finally belong; if you question it, you are betraying your ancestors.
- Some folk systems tie misfortune to ritual neglect: sickness, infertility, bad luck, family conflict, or spiritual attack may be explained as failure to honor the spirits properly.
- The promised future may be cultural survival. That is powerful. It can also be used to make individuals carry obligations they did not consent to.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions were attacked, colonized, and erased. Their restoration is healing, not manipulation.

The counter. Restoration is not automatically freedom. A tradition can be wounded by history and still wound its own people. If ancestors are used to demand silence, money, obedience, secrecy, or submission to unsafe leaders, then the future of the lineage has been turned into a weapon against the living.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CONTESTED The promise of restoration is substantially real, so the claim that it is used to hold people is disputed; the page describes the gatekeeper risk as a possibility and records no case.

4 · Hoovering

Pulling someone back after they've started to leave, through guilt, love, or fear.

How it shows here

- Someone leaving ancestral, folk, or Indigenous religious practice may be pulled back through elders, family, initiation obligations, ancestral fear, land connection, or claims of spiritual protection.
- The pressure may sound like: "Your ancestors are calling you," "You owe the spirits," "Do not abandon the old ways," "Bad things happen when people neglect the rites."
- Reconnecting people may be especially vulnerable because the tradition offers identity repair. Leaving can be framed as betraying ancestors, culture, colonized memory, or the community's survival.
- If the person questions a healer, elder, shaman, or ritual authority, they may be told they are disrespectful, colonized, spiritually dangerous, or cut off from protection.
- Ceremony, songs, kinship, and land can be used to reattach the person before abuse, exploitation, or coercion is addressed.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions were suppressed and deserve protection, continuity, and respect.

The counter. Respect does not require surrendering discernment. A tradition can be historically wounded and still produce internal control. If ancestors are used to drag the living back into unsafe authority, then memory has become a chain.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CONTESTED Pressure to return through elders, family and ancestral obligation is described as something that may happen; the page records no case, and the claim is disputed.

Stage 3 · Devalue

You are taught that you are broken, that your perception is unreliable, and that both exits from the trap lead back inside.

You are told you are not traditional enough, not fluent enough, too urban, too assimilated, too white-acting. Authenticity becomes a hierarchy and someone always ranks above you.

What it asks of you: Colonization made authenticity scarce, and then people started charging admission to it.

5 · Devaluation

Reducing your sense of worth so you become dependent on the institution for identity.

How it shows here

- Indigenous, folk, and ancestral systems can devalue through lineage obligation, ancestral fear, elder authority, ritual purity, initiation hierarchy, and belonging anxiety.
- A person may be told they are disconnected, colonized, spiritually unprotected, disrespectful, cursed, polluted, or betraying the ancestors if they question or leave.
- Reconnecting people are especially vulnerable because they may already feel identity loss. The system can offer belonging while also telling them they are incomplete without ceremony, elders, bloodline repair, or ritual approval.
- Family or ritual authorities may use misfortune as proof: sickness, bad luck, dreams, infertility, conflict, or anxiety become signs that the ancestors or spirits are displeased.
- The individual self is reduced beneath the dead, the land, the lineage, the spirits, or the elder.

The strongest defense. These traditions were colonized and suppressed, so restoration of ancestral identity is healing.

The counter. Restoration becomes devaluation when it tells the living they are spiritually defective without submission to unsafe authority. A tradition can deserve protection from erasure and still require protection for the people inside it. The ancestors should not be used to make the living feel small.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The belief that a person who questions or leaves is unprotected, disconnected or in debt to the ancestors is enforced socially through kinship, with no written rule and no documented case behind it.

6 · Gaslighting

Making you doubt your own experience so you trust the institution's interpretation instead.

How it shows here

- A person questions an elder, healer, shaman, ritual authority, or family tradition, and is told they are disrespecting the ancestors.
- Misfortune may be interpreted as proof that spirits are displeased.
- Someone who leaves may be told they are colonized, disconnected, cursed, unprotected, or betraying the old ways.
- Reconnecting people may doubt themselves because they already fear being inauthentic or rootless.
- Abuse can be hidden behind sacred secrecy, initiation hierarchy, or claims that outsiders cannot understand.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions were violently suppressed and deserve respect, protection, and continuity.

The counter. Respect does not require surrendering reality. A tradition can be oppressed by outsiders and still be abusive inside. If ancestors are used to make people distrust their own fear, pain, or moral alarm, then the dead have been turned into a weapon against the living.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Telling a person who questions an elder that they are disrespecting the ancestors is a pattern of social enforcement described in communities; no document records it.

7 · Double Bind

A trap where both options lead to compliance. No exit serves you.

How it shows here

- Reconnecting descendants are told the tradition is their birthright — and that questioning an elder's demands proves colonization has claimed their mind. Their heritage is inside; their judgment must wait outside.
- Sacred knowledge requires secrecy — so harm that occurs inside ceremony cannot be named without profaning the ceremony. The protection of the sacred and the protection of the abuser share one lock.
- Refusing an initiation, payment, or match is free — and misfortune afterward will be read aloud as the ancestors' answer.

The strongest defense. Secrecy and elder authority protected these traditions from extermination; outside frameworks were the weapon.

The counter. Both things are true: the wall was necessary, and some now use it as a hiding place. Honoring survival does not require pretending the wall has no shadows. Accountability to one's own people is not colonization — it is what the ancestors' trust was for.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The bind arises because protecting sacred knowledge and exposing harm inside ceremony can conflict; the page records it as a structural pattern, not as a policy or a documented case.

Stage 4 · Confuse

The rewards become unpredictable, the standard keeps moving, the answers stop meaning anything, and the accusation gets turned around.

Raise harm and you are betraying the people, doing the colonizer's work, airing what outsiders will weaponize. The genuine history of external attack is used to bury an internal one.

What it asks of you: This is the hardest bind in the codex, and it is real. But a rule that makes your community's harm unspeakable protects the person who did it — not your nation.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Where divination is practiced, readings can pay out intermittently — some land, most are ambiguous — and landing readings can become the practitioner's reputation while ambiguous ones become the client's unreadiness.
- Ancestral favor is metered through the interpreter: good fortune confirms the offerings worked; misfortune means more is required. The ancestors, notably, invoice only through the living.
- An elder's or healer's regard — protection, inclusion, initiation timing — arrives unpredictably, teaching the reconnecting seeker that standing is weather made by someone else.

The strongest defense. Spirit and ancestors genuinely move in their own time; no honest tradition claims to command them.

The counter. Then no honest intermediary should collect as though he does. The unschedulable becomes a schedule at the moment one human controls its interpretation, its price, and its consequences for the person waiting.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Divination and ancestral favor pay out unpredictably by their nature; the page describes this as how the practice works, with no documented case of its use for control.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

The standard of success keeps shifting so you can never arrive.

How it shows here

- A reconnecting person begins with ceremony or family practice. Then they must accept elder authority, secrecy, offerings, initiation, ancestral obligations, ritual payments, and silence around concerns.
- If they honor ancestors but question a healer, the goalpost moves: real respect requires obedience, not just reverence.
- Misfortune can reset the standard: if illness or conflict occurs, they are told they neglected a ritual, offended spirits, or failed the ancestors.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions require respect, continuity, and elder guidance.

The counter. Respect becomes moving the goalposts when every act of reverence only creates another obligation controlled by living authorities. Ancestors should not be used to keep the living in permanent spiritual debt.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The escalating demands described, from reverence to obedience to payment, are a pattern the page observes in communities, with no document or case behind them.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

Language that sounds profound but means nothing specific — functioning as a shutdown to real questions.

How it shows here

- "Respecting ancestors" can mean remembrance, ritual participation, secrecy, obedience to elders, payments, initiation, or silence.
- Sacred secrecy protects vulnerable traditions in some cases, but can also hide abuse, exploitation, or coercive authority.
- "Colonized thinking" may describe real disconnection, but can also be used to discredit anyone who questions a leader.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions need secrecy and protection because they were exploited and suppressed.

The counter. Protection becomes strategic ambiguity when secrecy shields living authorities from accountability. A tradition can deserve protection from outsiders while still needing clarity for insiders who are being harmed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The ambiguity of terms such as 'respecting ancestors' and 'colonized thinking' is a pattern of speech the page observes; no text fixes their meaning.

11 · Projection

Accusing the outside world of the exact thing the institution practices.

How it shows here

- Elders, shamans, healers, or ritual authorities may accuse dissenters of disrespecting ancestors while using ancestor language to protect their own authority.
- A person who questions payment, secrecy, initiation, sexual boundaries, or ritual harm may be called colonized, disconnected, cursed, or spiritually dangerous.
- Misfortune may be blamed on the person's failure to honor spirits, projecting uncertainty, illness, or family conflict onto ritual failure.
- Internal critics may be accused of attacking the tradition when they are naming abuse inside the tradition.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions have been exploited and deserve protection from disrespect and colonial distortion.

The counter. Protection from outside exploitation must not become protection from internal accountability. If every internal critic is labeled disrespectful or colonized, the tradition is projecting its vulnerability onto the people asking not to be harmed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Answering dissent with accusations of disrespect or colonization is a pattern the page describes; it records no case.

12 · DARVO

Deny the wrongdoing. Attack the person who raised it. Reverse victim and offender.

How it shows here

- A person reports abuse, exploitation, sexual coercion, financial pressure, ritual harm, or elder misconduct. The response may deny it or say outsiders cannot understand sacred ways.
- Then the critic is attacked as disrespectful, colonized, disconnected, cursed, spiritually dangerous, or betraying the ancestors.
- The elder, healer, shaman, or tradition becomes the victim of disrespect; the harmed person becomes the threat to cultural survival.
- Sacred secrecy can be used to prevent investigation.
- Reconnecting people may be especially vulnerable because they fear being accused of betraying identity, ancestors, or decolonization.

The strongest defense. These traditions have been exploited, mocked, and violently suppressed; they deserve protection.

The counter. Protection from colonial harm must not become protection for internal abuse. If the language of ancestry is used to silence the living, then survival has become reversal: the harmed are accused of harming the tradition by telling the truth.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The sequence of denial, attack on the critic and reversal is a pattern the page describes; it records no case in which a report of abuse was answered this way.

13 · Normalization / Desensitization

Practices that would seem extreme to an outsider feel normal to insiders because they were installed before critical evaluation developed.

How it shows here

- Reconnecting people may be normalized into elder authority, ritual secrecy, offerings, initiation, spirit fear, ancestral obligation, and silence around internal problems.
- Misfortune may be repeatedly interpreted as ancestral displeasure, spirit attack, curse, ritual neglect, or lack of protection until fear becomes ordinary.
- Secrecy can desensitize people to lack of accountability: outsiders cannot know, initiates cannot speak, younger members cannot question.
- Abuse or exploitation by healers, shamans, elders, or ritual authorities may be normalized as tradition, testing, spiritual cleansing, ancestral demand, or necessary initiation.
- The living person becomes trained to treat the dead, the spirits, the elders, and the lineage as reasons to stop trusting their own alarm.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions need secrecy, continuity, and elder authority because they were suppressed and exploited.

The counter. Survival does not make every internal practice safe. If people are trained to accept fear, secrecy, payment, silence, or submission because ancestors are invoked, then restoration has become desensitization.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The residential and mission school systems documented by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission were harm inflicted from outside the tradition; the internal normalization described in the bullets is a pattern for which the page cites no document or case.

Stage 5 · Isolate

Your world narrows until every voice you hear is inside the system, and everything you came for now runs through a middleman.

Tradition, family, ethnicity, and community are one fabric. In dispersed communities, a single elder or healer may be the only access point to any of it.

What it asks of you: When one person is your culture's only door, that person holds a great deal of power over you.

14 · Isolation

Shrinking your world until the only voices you hear are inside the system.

How it shows here

- Indigenous, folk, and ancestral systems can isolate through elders, initiations, secrecy, ritual obligations, family lineage, land connection, spirit fear, and claims that outsiders cannot understand.
- Reconnecting people may be told that mainstream society, therapy, modernity, or outside criticism is colonized and therefore spiritually unsafe.
- Elders or healers may discourage outside scrutiny by saying rituals are secret, sacred, ancestral, or not for outsiders.
- A person who questions authority may be accused of betraying ancestors, disrespecting elders, being disconnected, colonized, cursed, or spiritually unprotected.
- Family and land can become emotional barriers to exit: leaving the practice feels like leaving the people, the dead, the place, and the restoration of what was stolen.

The strongest defense. These traditions were violently suppressed and require secrecy, elders, and continuity to survive.

The counter. Secrecy can protect sacred knowledge, but it can also protect abuse. If a living person cannot ask for help, name harm, or consult outsiders without being accused of betraying ancestors, then the tradition has turned survival into containment.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The bans on ceremony were imposed by outside governments; the internal isolation described in the bullets is a pattern for which the page cites no document or case.

15 · Triangulation

Inserting intermediaries between you and the thing you came for, so the institution is always in the middle.

How it shows here

- Indigenous, folk, and ancestral traditions can triangulate through elders, ancestors, spirits, land, clan, family, initiation, healers, shamans, ritual obligations, and community survival.
- A person questioning a ritual authority may be told, "The ancestors are watching," "The spirits chose this," "The elder knows," "You are disconnected."
- Reconnecting people may be triangulated through identity hunger: if they do not submit to a particular elder or practice, they are accused of being colonized, inauthentic, or betraying the old ways.
- Misfortune becomes a third party: illness, dreams, infertility, conflict, bad luck, or anxiety may be interpreted as proof that spirits are displeased.
- Sacred secrecy can triangulate against accountability: outsiders cannot know, younger members cannot question, initiates cannot speak.
- The community's history of colonization may be used to silence internal critique: the person naming harm is accused of helping the forces that tried to destroy the tradition.

- Family and land become pressure points: leaving is framed as abandoning people, place, ancestors, and survival.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions have been violently disrupted and require elders, secrecy, and continuity to survive.

The counter. Continuity becomes triangulation when ancestors, spirits, elders, land, secrecy, and colonial trauma are all used to overpower the living person's consent. A tradition can deserve protection from erasure while still needing protection against abuse inside it.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The bans on ceremony imposed by outside governments isolated communities from their own practice; the intermediaries described in the bullets (elders, spirits, secrecy) are a pattern for which the page cites no document or case.

Stage 6 · Extract

Now the harvest: your labor, your money, your identity, your silence, your children's schooling, your capacity to trust yourself.

Where control appears internally, ceremony fees and initiation costs are set by a gatekeeper who may be your only access to your own culture. Externally, and on a far larger scale, the extraction takes the form of retreat tourism at Western prices with source communities bypassed, appropriated ceremony sold by untrained outsiders, and knowledge published or patented without consent.

What it asks of you: Follow the money from a retreat run on your practices all the way to the account. It usually stops well short of your nation.

16 · Flying Monkeys

The community enforces the institution's norms without being asked — mobilized by culture, not memos.

How it shows here

- A person questioning an elder, healer, shaman, family ritual, or ancestral obligation may be pressured by relatives, initiates, community elders, ritual assistants, or spiritual peers.
- The message may be: "The ancestors are watching," "You are disrespectful," "You are colonized," "You will lose protection," "The spirits are displeased."
- Reconnecting people may be especially vulnerable because community members can use identity hunger as leverage.
- Secrecy makes flying monkeys more powerful: outsiders cannot verify, initiates cannot speak, and the person is isolated inside sacred obligation.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions require elders, secrecy, and community continuity because they were suppressed.

The counter. Continuity becomes FLYING MONKEY behavior when community members use ancestors, spirits, land, and identity to pressure silence. A tradition can deserve survival without turning its people into enforcement agents.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the community enforcement described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

17 · Smear Campaign

Rewriting your character after departure to protect the institution from the implications of your leaving.

How it shows here

- A person who questions elders, healers, shamans, payments, rituals, secrecy, or abuse may be labeled colonized, disrespectful, disconnected, cursed, spiritually dangerous, inauthentic, or betraying ancestors.
- Reconnecting people may be smeared as not "real" enough if they do not submit to a particular authority.
- Internal critics may be accused of helping colonial forces, outsiders, or enemies of the tradition.
- Misfortune may be used to confirm the smear: "See, the spirits are displeased with them."

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions have been exploited and need protection from disrespect.

The counter. Protection becomes smear when it destroys people who ask for accountability. A tradition can be defended from outsiders without branding internal victims as traitors to the ancestors.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Churches that operated residential schools have in documented cases withheld records and settlement funding, which is harm by outside institutions; the smearing of internal critics described in the bullets is a pattern for which the page records no case.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

Refusing to engage with legitimate questions in order to maintain control.

How it shows here

- A person questions an elder, healer, shaman, ritual demand, payment, secrecy, or abuse and is told outsiders cannot understand.
- The issue is buried under ancestor language, spirit warnings, initiation secrecy, or accusations of disrespect.
- Reconnecting people may fear that asking direct questions proves they are colonized or inauthentic.
- Silence is framed as sacred: do not reveal, do not question, do not challenge elders, do not expose the tradition.

The strongest defense. These traditions need secrecy and elder authority because they were exploited and suppressed.

The counter. Secrecy can protect sacred knowledge, but it can also protect predators. If a living person cannot ask for clarity without being accused of betraying ancestors, the silence is not sacred. It is dangerous.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the stonewalling described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

19 · Manufactured Consent

Creating the appearance of choice when the conditions of choice were shaped before you could evaluate them.

How it shows here

- A reconnecting person "chooses" initiation, offerings, secrecy, elder obedience, or ritual obligations after being told the ancestors are calling.
- Consent is shaped by fear of being colonized, inauthentic, cursed, unprotected, or disconnected.
- Ritual secrecy may prevent people from understanding what they are agreeing to until after they are already inside.
- A person "chooses" silence about harm because speaking would betray ancestors, spirits, land, or community survival.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions require trust, secrecy, and elder guidance because they were exploited.

The counter. Trust is not consent when people cannot know what they are entering, cannot question elders, and cannot leave without spiritual fear. Ancestors should not be used to manufacture agreement from the living.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the manufactured consent described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- A person is told they are disconnected, cursed, unprotected, colonized, or neglecting ancestors — then relief comes through ceremony, offerings, elder approval, initiation, or secrecy.
- Reconnecting people may feel identity hunger, then intense belonging when accepted by elders or ritual community.
- Fear of spirits, ancestors, curses, or ritual neglect creates distress; compliance relieves it.
- Abuse by a healer or elder may be reframed as testing, cleansing, or ancestral demand.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions can restore identity, healing, and continuity after historical rupture.

The counter. Restoration becomes TRAUMA BONDING when fear of disconnection is used to secure obedience. If ancestors are invoked to create dread and ritual authority is offered as relief, the living are being bonded through sacred fear.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the trauma bonding described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

21 · Learned Helplessness

Teaching you that your own judgment is unreliable until you stop trusting it entirely.

How it shows here

- A person questions an elder, ritual, payment, initiation, or secrecy and is told they are disrespectful, colonized, cursed, or disconnected.
- Misfortune is interpreted as proof they failed the spirits or ancestors.
- They cannot verify claims, cannot ask outsiders, and cannot challenge elders without identity shame.
- Eventually they comply because resistance feels spiritually dangerous.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions need trust, secrecy, and respect for elders.

The counter. Respect becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when questioning is treated as betrayal. If the person cannot ask, leave, or refuse without fearing ancestors, spirits, or identity loss, the tradition has made agency unsafe.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the learned helplessness described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

22 · Benevolent Control

Control wrapped in the language of care, so that resisting the control feels like rejecting the love.

How it shows here

- Elders, healers, shamans, or ritual authorities may control through ancestry, spirits, secrecy, initiation, offerings, and protection language.
- A person is told obedience keeps them connected, protected, authentic, and respectful.
- Questioning may be framed as colonized thinking or disrespect for the ancestors.
- Ritual secrecy can hide control while presenting itself as sacred protection.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions require trust, respect, secrecy, and continuity because they were suppressed.

The counter. Protection becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when it makes questioning unsafe. If ancestors, spirits, and elders are invoked to prevent consent, clarity, or exit, care for tradition has become control over the living.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the benevolent control described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

23 · Infantilization

Positioning the adult believer as permanently childlike and dependent on institutional authority.

How it shows here

- Elders, healers, shamans, or ritual authorities may treat younger or reconnecting people as too ignorant to question.
- Initiation secrecy can keep adults dependent on those who know the hidden rules.
- Reconnecting people may be told they are colonized, disconnected, or inauthentic unless they submit.
- Ancestors and spirits may be invoked to override adult judgment.

The strongest defense. Elder authority and initiation preserve traditions that were violently disrupted.

The counter. Elder guidance becomes INFANTILIZATION when it denies adult consent. If a person cannot ask, refuse, or leave without being treated as spiritually childish or culturally defective, tradition has become paternal control.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the infantilization described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

24 · Identity Erosion

Gradually replacing your identity with a role the institution provides, until you can't separate who you are from where you belong.

How it shows here

- Reconnecting people may have identity rebuilt around ancestors, land, bloodline, spirits, elders, initiation, secrecy, and ritual obligation.
- The hunger to belong can make the person vulnerable to being told who they are by authorities.
- Questioning may be framed as colonized thinking, betrayal, disconnection, or disrespect.
- Personal identity becomes fused with ancestral expectation.
- The living self may disappear beneath the dead, the lineage, the land, or the elder.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions can restore identity after colonization, displacement, and rupture.

The counter. Restoration becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the recovered identity is controlled by others. If becoming whole requires surrendering your boundaries, questions, and consent to elders or spirits, the identity has not been restored. It has been reassigned.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the identity erosion described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

Using spiritual language to avoid engaging with real pain, real questions, and real accountability.

How it shows here

- Abuse by elders or healers may be bypassed as initiation, testing, cleansing, ancestral demand, or sacred secrecy.
- Fear is bypassed as spirit warning.
- Questioning is bypassed as colonized thinking or disrespect.
- Harm is hidden to protect tradition from outsiders.
- The living person's pain is subordinated to ancestors, land, spirits, and survival.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions deserve protection after suppression and exploitation.

The counter. Protection becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it avoids internal harm. If the ancestors are invoked to silence the living, tradition has bypassed its own moral responsibility.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The the external extraction (retreat tourism, appropriated ceremony and unconsented research, formally denounced by Indigenous nations) is recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm, but the spiritual bypassing described in the bullets is a pattern within communities for which the page records no case or document.

26 · Financial Control

Extracting money through spiritual obligation while offering no transparency about where it goes.

How it shows here

- Financial control may appear through offerings, initiation fees, healer payments, ritual materials, travel, secrecy obligations, ceremony costs, and elder support.
- Reconnecting people may feel pressured to pay because they fear disrespecting ancestors, spirits, elders, or the tradition.
- Misfortune may be interpreted as requiring another ritual, offering, cleansing, or payment.
- Secrecy can make costs unclear until the person is already emotionally committed.

The strongest defense. Ceremonies, elders, healers, and sacred traditions deserve support, especially after historical exploitation.

The counter. Support becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when spiritual fear drives payment. If the living must pay to stay protected, authentic, or connected to ancestors, money has become a toll booth between the person and belonging.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Retreat tourism and appropriated ceremony sold at Western prices, with source communities bypassed, are recorded elsewhere on this page as an outside harm; the offerings, initiation fees and healer payments described in the bullets are not documented on this page as coercive.

Stage 7 · Discard

You become expensive — too many questions, too much independence — and the urgency ramps up until you are removed.

What is at stake is community standing, ceremonial access, and family relationships, in small communities where there is no alternative and no anonymity.

What it asks of you: There is nowhere else to go. That is not the tradition's fault; it is the reason the stakes are so high.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Manufactured crisis may appear through warnings of angry ancestors, spirit attack, curses, broken taboos, failed rituals, land displeasure, or loss of protection.
- Reconnecting people may be told they must act quickly to repair lineage, accept initiation, pay for ceremony, or obey elders.
- Misfortune can be interpreted as proof of spiritual emergency.
- Fear of being colonized, disconnected, or inauthentic may be intensified to secure compliance.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions often take spiritual protection, ritual repair, and lineage seriously.

The counter. Protection becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when fear is used to rush consent. If ancestors or spirits are invoked to create panic around obedience, the dead have been recruited into control over the living.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Warnings of angry ancestors, spirit attack or broken taboos belong to the belief system itself; the page records no case in which they were used to force a decision.

28 · Discard

Removing members who become too costly — too many questions, too much independence, too visible a contradiction.

How it shows here

- A person who questions elders, ceremonies, payments, secrecy, or abuse may be labeled disrespectful, colonized, disconnected, cursed, or spiritually dangerous.
- Reconnecting people may lose fragile belonging if they refuse initiation or elder authority.
- Family or community may treat departure as betrayal of ancestors, land, spirits, or survival.
- Discard may be ritualized through exclusion from ceremonies, kinship, protection, or identity.
- The person is cut off from the very belonging they came seeking.

The strongest defense. Ancestral traditions must protect sacred continuity from disrespect and exploitation.

The counter. Protection becomes DISCARD when it expels people who ask for safety. If a tradition can only survive by cutting off those who question harm, then survival has been placed above the living.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Exclusion from ceremony, kinship and standing happens informally in small communities, with no hierarchy and therefore no appeal; the page records no case.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority is attributed to the ancestors and to tradition.

In small communities nobody replaces you; the absence is simply felt. And the authority is the ancestors — who cannot be consulted, and in whose name a living person is currently speaking.

What it asks of you: Your ancestors' survival belongs to you. It does not confer authority over you on any specific living person.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A reconnecting person who questions elders may be replaced by another seeker more hungry for belonging.
- A ritual assistant, initiate, or donor who leaves is replaced by someone more compliant.
- The critic is labeled disrespectful or colonized; the newcomer is praised as sincere.

- The tradition's survival narrative can make individual replacement feel justified.
- Belonging becomes conditional on remaining usable to the elder, ritual system, or community story.

The strongest defense. Traditions must continue with those who respect and preserve them.

The counter. Continuity becomes REPLACEMENT when harmed people are swapped out for more compliant ones. If a tradition responds to critique by recruiting someone easier to control, it is not preserving wisdom. It is preserving hierarchy.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The replacement of a critic by a more compliant seeker is a pattern the page describes; no case or document records it.

30 · Plausible Deniability

No one is ever responsible, because the authority is attributed to the ancestors, the spirits and tradition, none of which is available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- Elders or healers may say initiation, payment, secrecy, or obedience is voluntary, while refusal is framed as disrespecting ancestors or losing protection.
- Abuse can be hidden behind sacred secrecy: outsiders cannot understand, insiders cannot speak.
- Reconnecting people may be told they are colonized or inauthentic if they question authority.

- Misfortune can be interpreted as spiritual consequence without any direct threat being made.
- The tradition may deny institutional coercion because authority is informal, oral, familial, or ritual-based.

The strongest defense. Sacred traditions require secrecy because they were exploited. Elders protect knowledge. Outsiders cannot judge what they do not understand.

The counter. Secrecy becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when it protects unsafe authority. Elder guidance is not above consent. Protection from outsiders must not become protection from accountability to insiders.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority is attributed to ancestors who cannot be consulted, in an oral tradition with no written text against which a living claimant can be checked; the page treats this as how the tradition is structured, not as a documented case.

Sources for this section: [5]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Count grades, not names. A long list of Contested entries says something very different from a short list of Codified ones. A bias to watch for in yourself: people rate the same pressure as "normal" when their own group applies it and as "manipulation" when another group does. Before you judge an entry, try imagining it applied by a group you distrust. Does it look different?

13

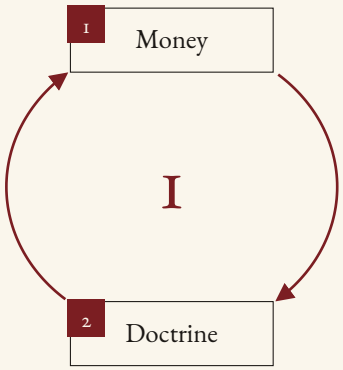
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

How the techniques connect into cycles. A single practice can look harmless on its own. The loops show how one step feeds the next, so that, for example, a newcomer's welcome turns into an obligation.

> The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first. Several loops describe harm done from outside these traditions, and the rest describe patterns that may appear inside some communities. The loops are analysis built from findings recorded elsewhere on this page PATTERN OBSERVED; each step names the section where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Where internal control appears, a gatekeeper prices access to culture that is the person's own inheritance.

How it runs.

1. Ceremony, healing and initiation are the route back to a person's own inheritance, and in dispersed communities one elder or healer may be the only way in (sections 5 and 10).
2. Ceremony fees, healing payments, initiation costs and offerings are given in reciprocity; the risk arises where a gatekeeper sets escalating prices for

necessary healing (section 9).

3. Misfortune can then be read as ritual neglect that requires another offering, cleansing or payment (section 12, techniques 26 and 27).
4. The payments sustain the healer and the gatekeeper's standing, and authority over correct practice stays informal and oral, with no hierarchy above the community (section 7).
5. The same authority sets the next price and names the next obligation, and the cycle repeats.

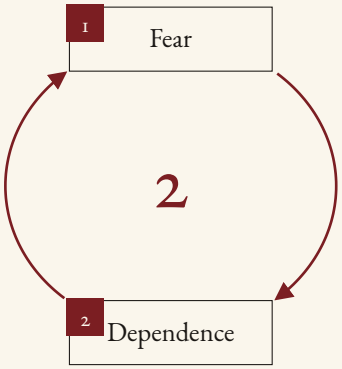
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 27 · Manufactured Crisis, 3 · Future Faking, 9 · Moving the Goalposts.

Why it closes. The person who sets the price also interprets the misfortune, and no written rule or outside body checks either (sections 7 and 15). A person cannot reach the ceremony without the gatekeeper, and cannot test the interpretation against a text.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where costs are known in advance and set by the community rather than by one gatekeeper; this page cites no ceremony protocol that does this (sections 3 and 7). A person can ask what a ceremony costs and who set the price before taking part. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 12, technique 26, records that misfortune may be interpreted as requiring another ritual, offering, cleansing, or payment.

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Misfortune attributed to neglecting ceremony supplies the fear; the gatekeeper supplies the relief.

How it runs.

1. Illness, bad luck or family conflict is attributed to neglect of ceremony or of the ancestors (sections 12 and 15).
2. The attribution produces fear, and no explicit threat is needed; the page records that it "taxes refusal" (sections 1 and 15).
3. Relief is offered through ceremony, offerings, elder approval or initiation, which only the interpreter can give (section 12, technique 20).
4. Good fortune afterwards confirms that the offerings worked, and further misfortune means more is required (section 12, technique 8).
5. The next misfortune restarts the cycle with the person more dependent on the interpreter.

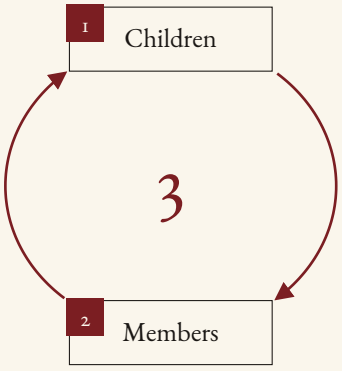
Techniques that feed it. 8 · Intermittent Reinforcement, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 27 · Manufactured Crisis, 21 · Learned Helplessness.

Why it closes. One interpreter controls the cause, the remedy and the credit. Because authority is informal and oral, no document can be cited in either direction (section 15).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a person can ask who in the community is empowered to hear a concern and can consult more than one source of care (section 23, question 2). Whether such a person exists is decided by each community. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The exit ledger in section 15 lists 'Misfortune attribution' as a cost: illness or bad luck attributed to neglecting ancestors or ceremony, with the denial "That's simply how the world works."

3 · Children to Members to Children



The loop was broken violently from outside: children removed to destroy transmission, and the damage is present-tense.

How it runs.

1. Residential and boarding schools removed children from their families to destroy language and ceremony (sections 5, 10 and 19).
2. Language and ceremony were not passed on, and transmission of knowledge was broken (section 10).
3. Where communities were broken and families dispersed, the checks of small, permanent communities weakened with them, and authority became harder to verify (section 10).
4. Language loss and child-welfare overrepresentation carry across generations (section 17).
5. The next generation has to recover what was removed, and the cycle's effects reach that generation's children (section 2).

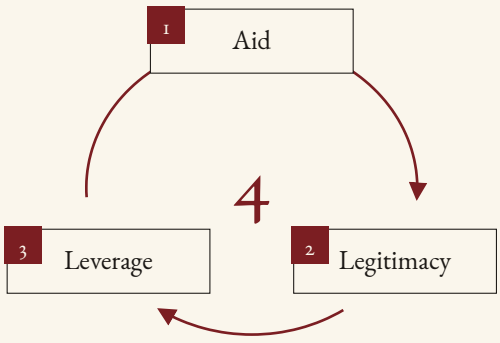
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 14 · Isolation, 24 · Identity Erosion, 23 · Infantilization.

Why it closes. The removal ended transmission at the point where a community renews itself, and its effects fall on the next generation. The page records the damage as present-tense (section 10).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It is being broken from within by language teaching and revival (sections 2 and 4); this page cites no nation's safeguarding protocol (section 3). Full release of school records by the churches and governments that hold them is in their hands (sections 14 and 19). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In the day described in section 2, a language teacher is teaching words back to the grandchildren of people who could not speak the language because it was beaten out of them. The teacher is a composite character.

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



The external version runs hardest here — churches contracted to run schools received both funding and legitimacy.

How it runs.

1. Governments contracted churches to run residential schools (sections 7 and 19).
2. The system was funded: the United States appropriated more than $23.3 billion (in 2023 dollars) between 1871 and 1969 for the boarding-school system and related assimilation policies (section 9).
3. The churches that ran the schools came to hold the records and, in documented cases, unmet settlement commitments (section 7).
4. Catholic entities were released in 2015 from a $25 million fundraising pledge after raising under $4 million, and re-pledged $30 million in 2021 (sections 9 and 19).
5. The institutions that hold the records and the money keep their standing while the pledges and the disclosure remain in their hands.

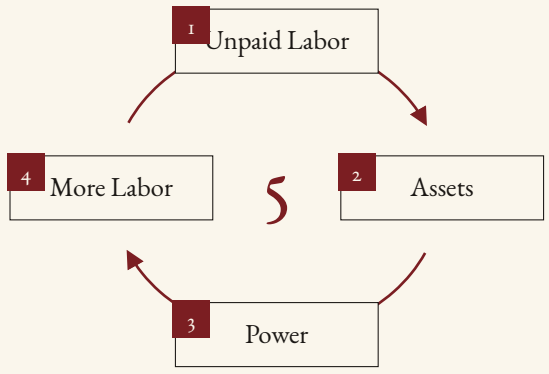
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 14 · Isolation, 15 · Triangulation, 17 · Smear Campaign.

Why it closes. The institutions paid to run the schools hold the records that would document them and the money they promised, so the pace of disclosure is set by them (sections 7 and 14).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens when records are released and promises are paid. The 2021 re-pledge came after public outcry (section 19), and the TRC's 94 Calls to Action set out what was asked. Release is in the hands of the churches and governments concerned. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission case in section 19 records the $25 million pledge, the 2015 release after under $4 million was raised, and the 2021 re-pledge of $30 million.

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Retreat and appropriation economies extract labor, knowledge, and revenue with nothing returning to source communities.

How it runs.

1. Practices and knowledge developed by communities are taken up by retreat operators, researchers and licensors, often without consent or benefit-sharing (sections 7 and 9).
2. They are converted into revenue at Western price points (section 9).

3. Source communities generally see none of it, and their own members cannot always afford to travel to gatherings (sections 10 and 17).
4. The outside economy gains revenue and standing, and draws on the practices again.
5. Unpaid labour has a recorded precedent in the residential schools, where the Canadian record documents substantial unpaid child labour as a routine component (section 17).

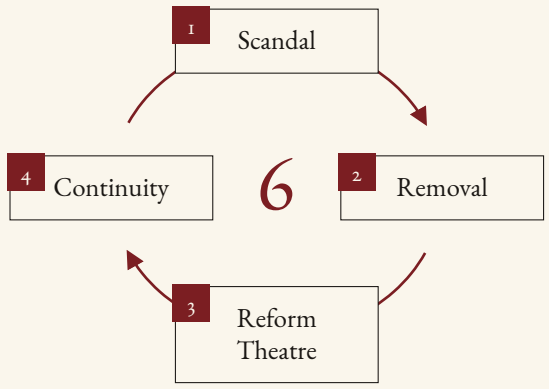
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 24 · Identity Erosion, 19 · Manufactured Consent.

Why it closes. Knowledge and ceremony are taken without a price, sold at a high one, and the revenue stays with the seller. Communities cannot easily reach the accounts (sections 9 and 10).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a community's own protocols for ceremony and research are followed. The Lakota declaration of 1993 said these ceremonies are not for sale (sections 5 and 19), and a participant can ask which community authorized a ceremony and then ask that community (section 23). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The Sedona sweat lodge case in section 19: a self-help teacher ran a lodge for paying participants, three died, and he was convicted of negligent homicide in 2011.

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



Institutions apologized and made pledges, and records remain unreleased in documented cases.

How it runs.

1. Findings emerge: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, unmarked graves identified from 2021, and the 2024 US boarding-school report (sections 5 and 19).
2. Institutions apologize and pledge: the Pope apologized in 2022 and Catholic entities re-pledged $30 million in 2021 (sections 9 and 19).
3. Records remain unreleased in documented cases and settlement commitments remain unmet (section 14).
4. Further disclosures may come from ground-penetrating radar rather than an archive, and institutions may express sorrow again (section 14; analysis, not a finding).
5. The institutions continue to hold what the next inquiry will need.

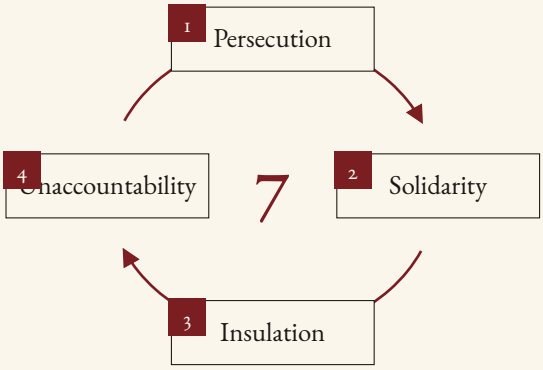
Techniques that feed it. 17 · Smear Campaign, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. An apology can be given without the records or payment that would make it checkable, so the demand is met in words while the material stays where it is (sections 14 and 19).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens when records are released in full and pledges are paid. That is in the hands of the institutions and of the governments that contracted them (section 14). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The papal apology case in section 19 records an apology "seven years after the TRC's final report", with the church's financial record set out in the same section.

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



This is the one tradition where the persecution loop's premise is overwhelming — which makes naming internal harm hardest, and no less necessary.

How it runs.

1. Outside institutions suppressed ceremony and removed children (sections 5 and 10).
2. Communities protected what remained through secrecy and elder authority, which "protected these traditions from extermination" (section 12, technique 7).
3. Sacred knowledge is legitimately restricted by initiation and kinship (section 11).
4. The same secrecy can shield a specific abusive elder, and reporting means accusing kin (sections 10 and 11).
5. Internal criticism can then be called colonial betrayal, and the harm stays unreported (sections 3 and 15).

Techniques that feed it. 7 · Double Bind, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 11 · Projection, 12 · DARVO.

Why it closes. The history that justifies the protection is real and documented, so questions about internal harm can be treated as a continuation of that history (section 3). With no hierarchy above the community, there is no appeal (section 15).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where nations build their own safeguarding protocols (sections 3 and 7) and where a community names who is empowered to hear a complaint (section 23, question 2). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The day described in section 2 includes a girl who does not want to be in a room with a respected uncle, and a teacher who knows there is no one to report to because the nearest body is a circle of his relatives. The scene is a composite.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Several of these loops describe harm done from outside, and the rest describe patterns that may appear inside some communities. For each loop, ask which kind it is, and who could break it.

The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first.

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

Direct, checkable comparisons: a public statement on one side, the documented record on the other, and the receipt that links them. This is the most falsifiable section on the page, because each row either matches its source or it doesn't.

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
We have apologized and moved forward.	Records remain unreleased in documented cases, and settlement commitments have gone unmet.	GOVERNMENT REPORT
This retreat honors indigenous tradition.	Ask which community authorized it. Then ask that community.	OFFICIAL POLICY · Lakota Declaration
Criticizing anything here continues colonialism.	This is the objection the page answers in section 3; it names no one who says it and attributes no motive.	PATTERN OBSERVED

Sacred knowledge must be protected by secrecy.	True, and the same secrecy can shield one individual from the community's own accountability.	PATTERN OBSERVED

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. Apologies and pledges issued, records still withheld in documented cases and settlements still unmet in documented cases.

Who holds the chair now. The denominations that hold the records, and the states that contracted them.

Prediction (analysis, not a finding). Further disclosures may come from ground-penetrating radar rather than from an archive, and institutions may express sorrow again.

Apologies and pledges issued, records still withheld in documented cases and settlements still unmet in documented cases.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Test one row yourself. Pick a "they say" line you have actually heard said in person, then read the receipt. If the record matches the statement, this page is wrong about that row, and you should tell us. If it doesn't, what does it mean that you had never seen the receipt?

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

What leaving actually costs here, in family, work, housing, money and legal status, and how each of those costs is officially denied. Where the cost is low, the page says so plainly.

What leaving costs

- In some communities, where tradition, family, and ethnicity are one fabric, questioning practice can read as betraying identity itself; misfortune attribution ('the ancestors are angry') taxes refusal without any explicit threat. This page names no community. **PATTERN OBSERVED**

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Identity and kinship	Not documented on this page	Tradition, family, and ethnicity are one fabric; questioning practice can read as betraying the people who survived cultural genocide	“Culture isn't something you leave.”
Misfortune attribution	Yes	Illness or bad luck attributed to neglecting ancestors or ceremony	“That's simply how the world works.”
Community standing	Varies	In small communities, dissent from a respected elder is socially expensive	“Elders are respected, not obeyed.”
Colonial double bind	Structural	Criticizing internal harm risks being weaponized by outsiders who caused the greater harm — the hardest bind in this codex	Not a denial: a genuine dilemma the codex names rather than resolves.

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Very high deniability	Oral tradition means almost nothing is written — there is no document to cite, in either direction.

Informal enforcement	Very high	Kinship, respect, and community standing are the entire mechanism.
Leadership distance	High	No hierarchy exists above the community; there is nobody to appeal to and nobody to hold responsible.
Doctrinal ambiguity	High	Oral, local, and variable teaching can be reinterpreted with no textual check.
Cultural outsourcing	Complex	Here the usual analysis inverts: outsiders blame 'culture' for harm they caused, and the appropriation economy hides behind culture too.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Relatives and community members enforce; no institution issues instructions.
Sacred secrecy	High	Legitimate initiatory restriction genuinely does also shield individual conduct — the codex holds both facts.
Exit cost denial	Medium	Rarely denied, because leaving is rarely framed as a possibility at all.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Where tradition, family and ethnicity are one fabric, questioning a practice can feel like betraying your identity. Blaming misfortune on angry ancestors taxes refusal without any explicit threat. If you have ever stayed silent about something because speaking would feel like siding with the colonizer, the page's last question is for you: has protecting an abuser ever helped your nation survive anything?

16 The ledger

BEFORE YOU READ

The balance sheet. It shows who benefits, who pays, and what leverage flows back to the institution in return for what it gives.

Who benefits

- Within: specific gatekeepers where secrecy shields conduct from community accountability. Without — and far larger: the appropriation economy, extractive researchers, and states that alternately suppress and commodify indigenous religion.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT / ACADEMIC SOURCE

Money out, leverage back

- Ayahuasca and psychedelic retreat tourism generates very large revenues, frequently operated by non-Indigenous entrepreneurs, with

source communities bypassed and safety screening inadequate. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

- Extractive research and cultural licensing have published, patented, and monetized knowledge without community consent or benefit-sharing. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- Churches that operated residential schools have in documented cases failed to release records or fully fund settlements they agreed to — leverage exercised by withholding. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Child witchcraft accusations in parts of West and Central Africa have led to abandonment and violence; UNICEF describes cultural, social, economic and political causes and does not rank them [11]. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Who pays

- Indigenous children in residential and mission schools — the largest documented religious harm in this profile, inflicted from outside. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Girls subjected to FGM where it is defended as tradition (a social practice found across religions [10]).
- Children accused of witchcraft in parts of West and Central Africa.
- Women and young people abused by ceremonial figures who are also kin and authority.
- Source communities whose ceremonies generate Western revenue they never see.
- Retreat participants harmed in unregulated settings.

- Two-spirit people, whose roles missionaries specifically targeted.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find yourself in this table. Are you among those who benefit, those who pay, or both? Most readers are both. The question is whether the exchange was ever explained to you in these terms, and whether you would agree to it if it had been.

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the weight lands hardest, and what it compounds with: poverty, childhood, gender, a lack of civil alternatives. This is the human stakes stated plainly.

Where the weight lands

The table below sets out who carries the heaviest weight and what each harm compounds with. Each row draws on material recorded elsewhere on this page [1] [10] [11] [12] [13].

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Children in residential and mission schools	This is the largest documented religious harm in this profile; it was inflicted from outside, and thousands of deaths are recorded.	It compounds across generations in language loss and child-welfare overrepresentation.
Girls subjected to FGM where it is defended as tradition	FGM is a social practice found in communities of several religions and none; it is recorded here only where it is defended as tradition [10].	It compounds where the practitioner is also kin.
Children accused of witchcraft	They suffer abandonment and violence; UNICEF links the practice to cultural, social, economic and political causes [11].	It compounds with the economic and political pressures UNICEF describes [11].
Young people harmed by ceremonial figures	Harm is nearly impossible to report where the figure is uncle, healer, and authority at once.	It compounds in dispersed communities with no alternative access to culture.
Source communities	Their ceremony is monetized abroad and nothing returns to them.	It compounds while their own members cannot afford to travel to gatherings.
Two-spirit people	Their roles were specifically targeted by missionaries and are not fully restored.	It compounds with imported patriarchy now defended as tradition.

From The Children's Codex

- *Labour and unpaid ministry* — Residential school labour: The Canadian residential-school record documents substantial unpaid child labour as a routine component of the system.

The table below sets out who carries the heaviest weight and what each harm compounds with.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The first row is children taken into residential and mission schools: the largest documented religious harm in this profile, inflicted from outside, with effects that carry across generations in lost languages and in overrepresentation in child welfare. Then girls subjected to FGM where it is defended as tradition, a practice found across several religions. The page holds both. Can you acknowledge harm done *to* a people without being silent about harm done *within* it?

18 The middle tiers

BEFORE YOU READ

The people in the middle: local clergy, teachers, officials and volunteers who apply rules they did not write. The section exists so that an institution is not collapsed into a monolith, and so that people in the middle can see their own position in it.

The table lists four roles in communities and research, what each does, what each sees, what each is asked to do and what each could refuse. The roles are described in general terms and name no person or nation.

ROLE (continued)	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Cultural and language teachers	Carry the recovery work	Which young people are being harmed by someone they cannot accuse	Keep the peace during a revival	Treat a young person's safety as secondary to the revival
Tribal council members	Govern, including on ceremony and research protocols	That there is no external authority and therefore no excuse	Prioritize sovereignty	Leave safeguarding unwritten
Ceremonial helpers and firekeepers	Support the ceremony, see who enters, and tend the ceremonial fire	Which outsiders are paying and which participants are unwell	Respect the leader	Assist a ceremony run for payment by someone with no authorization
Researchers and archivists working with communities	Handle the records	What institutions still hold and will not release	Publish	Publish restricted knowledge without community consent

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a local leader, a teacher or a volunteer, this section is about you. It is not an accusation: most of the people who carry out a rule did not write it. But the middle tier is also where a rule is most often quietly softened, or quietly enforced. Which do you do, and what would happen to you if you chose differently?

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

Named, dated, sourced incidents: court records, government inquiries, regulators' findings and on-the-record reporting. Read the outcome lines in particular. They show what actually changed, if anything.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

WHEN: 2008–2015

WHAT: A national commission documented the residential school system, largely operated by churches under government contract, which removed Indigenous children from families to eliminate language and ceremony. It recorded thousands of deaths and characterized the system as cultural genocide.

RECORD: TRC final report (government inquiry)

OUTCOME: 94 Calls to Action issued. Catholic entities were released from a $25 million fundraising pledge in 2015 after raising under $4 million, and re-pledged $30 million in 2021 after public outcry — harm inflicted on these traditions from outside them.

TACTICS: 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 14 · Isolation, 24 · Identity Erosion

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [1] [2] [3]

The boarding-school count (United States, 2022–2024)

WHEN: 2022–2024

WHAT: The Interior Department's investigation identified 417 federal Indian boarding schools in 37 states or territories, at least 74 burial sites, and at least 973 children who died while attending some of them [13].

RECORD: *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report*, Vol. II (July 2024) [13]

OUTCOME: The department reviewed about 103 million pages of records and held listening sessions with survivors at 12 locations [13].

TACTICS: 14 · Isolation, 24 · Identity Erosion, 23 · Infantilization

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

"Bringing Them Home" (Australia, 1997)

WHEN: 1997

WHAT: A national inquiry documented the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, c. 1910–1970 [4].

RECORD: Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing Them Home* (tabled 26 May 1997) [4]

OUTCOME: The "Stolen Generations" became part of the national record [4].

TACTICS: 14 · Isolation, 24 · Identity Erosion

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

A papal apology (Canada, 2022)

WHEN: 2022

WHAT: Speaking at Maskwacis, Alberta, near a former residential school, Pope Francis said: "I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by so many Christians against the Indigenous peoples" [14].

RECORD: NPR, 25 July 2022 [14]

OUTCOME: An apology seven years after the TRC's final report; the church's financial record is set out above [13][14]. The apology attributes the evil to "so many Christians"; tagging it as Plausible Deniability (30) is this codex's reading, not a finding of any inquiry.

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Ceremony sold, three dead (United States, 2009–2011)

WHEN: 2009–2011

WHAT: James Arthur Ray ran a sweat lodge for paying participants at a Sedona retreat; three died [9].

RECORD: CNN's report of the verdict in *State of Arizona v. James Arthur Ray* [9]; KJZZ [22]

OUTCOME: Convicted of negligent homicide in 2011 [9] [22]; the court ruled on the deaths, not on appropriation. Lakota leaders had condemned the sale of their ceremonies in 1993 [8].

TACTICS: 26 · Financial Control

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Five documented cases on this page rest on a named record. The most common reaction to documented cases is "that was them, not us." Before settling on that, read the outcome lines. Did anything change in the arrangements that allowed each case to happen?

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

What has already been broken once, somewhere, and what would count as real change here. It is a benchmark, not a prediction.

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its 94 Calls to Action	Survivors who testified about their own childhoods	2008–2015	It cost survivors the public reliving of their childhoods, on the record.
The American Indian Religious Freedom Act and repatriation legislation	Decades of Indigenous political organizing	1978, 1990	A century of illegality came first.
The Lakota declaration against exploiters of sacred ceremony	Lakota elders	1993	This page cites no measure of the declaration's effect.
The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Indigenous delegations over two decades	2007	It met sustained state resistance.

First Nations setting their own research protocols (OCAP)	First Nations Information Governance Centre	Since 1998	No cost is recorded. This is an example, not the answer to the whole bind, which the page names and does not resolve.

The standing invitation to community reviewers takes precedence over every other editorial rule on it.

What would change this page

This page revises when its own subjects say it errs. The standing invitation to community reviewers takes precedence over every other editorial rule on it.

Sources for this section: 1 2 6 7 8 21

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Some rows here record a change that has already happened somewhere; others name what would count as change here. When you are told something "can't change", it is fair to ask: can't, or won't? And who decided?

21 Voices from inside

BEFORE YOU READ

People and bodies from within Indigenous communities whose public statements are recorded on this page. The voices listed speak about harm done from outside, and the page names no internal critic.

- **The Lakota Summit V,** whose 1993 declaration condemned outsiders who sell Lakota spirituality [8].

- **The survivors who spoke to the TRC,** whose testimony made the "cultural genocide" finding [12].
- **The survivors heard in the US listening sessions,** at 12 locations, quoted in the Interior report [13].
- **The families of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** [12].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Each voice here speaks about harm from outside, and the page's own question is about harm from inside. If someone in your nation raised that question tomorrow, how would they be heard, and by whom?

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

The same questions under different governments. What a member can say, leave, marry or inherit depends heavily on the state, and these cards show how differently it plays out.

Canada

APEX: Authority rests with each nation's own governance.

LAW: The law is the residential-schools settlement and the work of the TRC [1].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is the TRC's final report [1], the 2022 papal apology [14] and the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) [12].

EXIT: —

REGULATOR: The regulators are the courts and the federal government [13].

TELL: The harm was done by church and state together [1].

United States

APEX: Authority rests with each tribal nation's own governance.

LAW: The law is the 1978 Religious Freedom Act and NAGPRA [5][6].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is the 2024 boarding-school report [13].

EXIT: —

REGULATOR: The regulators are federal courts and tribal governments.

TELL: More than $23.3 billion (in 2023 dollars) went to the boarding schools and related assimilation policies [13].

Australia

APEX: Authority rests with community and land councils.

LAW: The law consists of the *Bringing Them Home* inquiry [4].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is the Stolen Generations [4].

EXIT: —

REGULATOR: —

TELL: Removal policy ran for about sixty years [4].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers Canada, the United States and Australia. Your country changes what this tradition can do to you, and what you can do about it. If you live somewhere not listed, ask which of these cards your country most resembles. If you are a voter, note that each of these arrangements was chosen by a government.

23 The questions

BEFORE YOU READ

The six questions the documented record could not resolve. Each is set out below: why it is being asked, and a concrete example already on this page that it points back to.

QUESTION 1 OF 6

Which church ran the school your family was taken to, and has it released its records in full? If not, ask what it is protecting after a hundred years.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Records held by the churches that ran the schools are records of what happened to specific children. The question asks whether they have been released in full, and if not, what is being protected.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records that the residential school system was "largely operated by churches under government contract," and that Catholic entities were released from a $25 million fundraising pledge in 2015 after raising under $4 million.

QUESTION 2 OF 6

If a ceremonial leader harmed a young person, ask who in your nation is empowered to hear it — and if the answer is nobody, ask whether that is tradition or damage.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If nobody in a nation is empowered to hear a complaint against a ceremonial leader, young people have nowhere to go. The question asks whether that absence is tradition, or damage.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table's unanswered question: "Protection from outsiders is owed and overdue. Who protects the insider from the elder?"

QUESTION 3 OF 6

Ask a non-Indigenous person selling your ceremony to name the community that authorized them. Then ask that community.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A ceremony sold by an outsider either has a community's authorization or it doesn't. The question asks for the name of that community, and then asks the community itself.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records James Arthur Ray's sweat lodge for paying participants, where three died, and notes that Lakota leaders had condemned the sale of their ceremonies in 1993 [89].

QUESTION 4 OF 6

If a cut, an early marriage, or an accusation is defended as tradition, ask which elder will state it publicly in their own name.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A harmful practice defended as tradition should be defended by name, in public. The question asks which elder will do so.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The who-gets-hurt table lists girls subjected to cutting or early marriage "in specific contexts."

QUESTION 5 OF 6

Ask who receives the money from a retreat run on your practices. Follow it all the way to the account.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Retreat money is traceable. The question asks you to follow it to the account and see whether it reaches the community whose practice is being sold.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table records ayahuasca tourism, retreat industries and appropriated ceremony sold at Western prices, "revenue frequently bypassing source communities."

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You may have been taught that internal criticism helps the colonizer. Ask honestly whether protecting an abuser has ever helped your nation survive anything.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The argument that internal criticism helps the colonizer has real historical weight. The question asks whether protecting an abuser has ever actually helped a nation survive.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records the U.S. Code of Indian Offenses (1883), which outlawed ceremonies, and the laws that reversed it in 1978 and 1990.

In closing

Many Indigenous nations were targeted by the institutions of other religions, and the accounting for that is nowhere near complete. Nothing on this page reduces that, and anyone who quotes it to excuse what was done to your family has misread it deliberately.

And still: sovereignty means governing yourselves, which includes the authority to hold your own accountable. Protection from outsiders and protection from insiders need not be opposites; some nations have built their own protocols for research, and a community can build them for ceremony and safeguarding as well. The most anti-colonial thing available is a community that does not need anyone's permission to protect its own children.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Choose one question and ask it this month, out loud, to a real person who could answer it. Then write down what happened. Were you answered, redirected, or told that asking was the problem? Whichever it was, the response is information.

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

Practical, non-theological guidance for someone who needs to step back or step away safely. It is a safety document, not an argument.

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **For survivors of residential and boarding schools and their families,** Indigenous crisis lines exist [15] [16].

2. **For outsiders:** if a "ceremony" is for sale to anyone who pays, the communities themselves have said it is not theirs to sell [8].
3. **If a practice harms a child** (FGM, witchcraft accusations), child-protection law may apply where you live; local child-protection services or the police are the people to ask [10] [11].
4. **Domestic violence support** run by and for Native people is available in the US [17].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Even if this section is not for you, it may be for someone you know. Most people who leave a close community say that the first person who listened without trying to argue them back mattered more than anything else. Could that person be you?

Domestic violence support run by and for Native people is available in the US.

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

Organizations that can help, each checked directly against its own site, with the date of the check. Nothing here is endorsed beyond that check.

Checked 2026-10-03.

ORGANIZATION	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Hope for Wellness Helpline	Indigenous people, 24/7	Canada	**1-855-242-3310** [15]
13YARN	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in crisis, 24/7	Australia	**13 92 76** [16]
StrongHearts Native Helpline	Domestic and sexual violence, 24/7 by call or text	US	**1-844-762-8483** [17]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Hope for Wellness Helpline** (Indigenous people, 24/7; Canada). People in crisis rarely have the energy to research options. Having a name ready is one of the most useful things you can do for someone else.



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

Every numbered citation on this page, with a named, checkable source. Spot-check a few before trusting the rest; that is the honest way to read any page in this book, including this one.

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report* (2015) — "cultural genocide"; at least 3,200 recorded deaths (which include illness, not only abuse); 94 Calls to Action; the last schools closed in 1996 — Government of Canada Publications. https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.807830/publication.html
2. CBC News, "Residential schools findings point to 'cultural genocide,' commission chair says" (2 June 2015). https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/residential-schools-findings-point-to-cultural-genocide-commission-chair-says-1.3093580
3. CBC News, "'Where is their soul?': Inside the failed push to make Catholic Church pay for its residential school abuses" (2021 — $25m in-kind fundraising pledge released by a Saskatchewan court in 2015 after less than $4m raised; bishops' $30m pledge in 2021). https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/church-residential-school-compensation-1.6082935
4. Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing Them Home* (tabled 26 May 1997) — forcible removals c. 1910–1970 — National Museum of Australia. https://digital-classroom.nma.gov.au/learning-modules/rights-and-freedoms-defining-moments-1945-present/121-1997-bringing-them-home-report-stolen-generations
5. Native American Rights Fund, "Healing from the Dark Period of Religious and Cultural Persecution" — the 1883 Code of Indian Offenses ("Religious Crimes Code") to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978). https://narf.org/history-religious-persecution/
6. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) — National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm
7. United Nations, *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (General Assembly, 13 Sept 2007). https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

8. Lakota Summit V, "Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality" (10 June 1993). https://www.spiritprotection.org/post/declaration-of-war-against-exploiters-of-lakota-spirituality-1993

9. CNN, "James Ray found guilty of negligent homicide in sweat lodge case" (22 June 2011). https://www.cnn.com/2011/CRIME/06/22/arizona.sweat.lodge.verdict/

10. World Health Organization, *Female genital mutilation* fact sheet. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation

11. UNICEF, *Children Accused of Witchcraft* (2010). https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/reports/children-accused-witchcraft

12. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Canada), *Reclaiming Power and Place* (2019). https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/

Further sources

13. US Department of the Interior, *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report*, Vol. II (30 July 2024) — 417 schools; at least 973 deaths; at least 74 burial sites; more than $23.3bn in appropriations (FY23 dollars), 1871–1969. https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media_document/doi_federal_indian_boarding_school_initiative_investigative_report_vii_final_508_compliant.pdf

14. NPR, "Pope apologizes for 'evil' committed at Canada's Indigenous residential schools" (25 July 2022). https://www.npr.org/2022/07/25/1113498723/pope-francis-apology-canada-residential-schools-indigenous-children

15. Indigenous Services Canada, Hope for Wellness Helpline — 1-855-242-3310, 24/7. https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576089519527/1576089566478

16. 13YARN — 13 92 76, 24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. https://www.13yarn.org.au/

17. StrongHearts Native Helpline — 1-844-762-8483 (1-844-7NATIVE). https://strongheartshelpline.org/

18. The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Potlatch Ban" — Indian Act amendment of 1884, in force 1 January 1885, repealed in 1951. https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/potlatch-ban

19. Gladue Centre, University of Saskatchewan, "Vankoughnet Requests the Statutory Abolishment of the Sun Dance" — 1895 Indian Act amendment prohibiting the Sun Dance and Thirst Dance. https://gladue.usask.ca/node/2580

20. Indigenous Services Canada, "Contributions to Indian Bands for Registration Administration" — Indian status determined under the Indian Act; bands funded to administer registration. https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1386259183292

21. First Nations Information Governance Centre, "OCAP" — the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession of First Nations data (established 1998). https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/

22. KJZZ, "James Arthur Ray, convicted of negligent homicide at Sedona sweat lodge, dies" (6 Jan 2025) — conviction in 2011 on three counts after three deaths. https://www.kjzz.org/kjzz-news/2025-01-06/james-arthur-ray-convicted-of-negligent-homicide-at-sedona-sweat-lodge-dies

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Don't take this page's word for anything either. People tend to believe a claim more the more often they have heard it, whether or not it is true; this is the "illusory truth effect" (Hasher, Goldstein & Toppino, 1977). Spot-check three citations at random. If any fails, tell us, and it will be corrected and logged.

27 What changed on this page

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated log of what changed on this page: corrections, additions and new sources. Changes are logged in public rather than made quietly.

- **2026-10-03:** Regraded the techniques whose grades rested on harm done from outside (none is now graded Documented, and none is sourced to a named document); stated that the thirty techniques are a framework for Indigenous, folk and ancestral traditions as a group, not findings about any named people; labelled the claim of abuse by ceremonial leaders as an allegation with no case cited; corrected the dates and wording on the bans on ceremony in Canada and the United States, the graves, the count of recorded deaths and the church's payments; corrected the statements on female genital mutilation, child witchcraft accusations and the missing and murdered women and girls inquiry; removed claims no source supported, and named and sourced two examples (Canada's Indian Act and the OCAP research principles).
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers, four documented cases, Voices from inside, three regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page keeps a public log of its own changes, mistakes included. Does the institution you belong to, give to, or were raised in keep one like it? If not, how would you know what it got wrong, and when?

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License), regular, italic and bold, with true small capitals and old-style figures in text and lining tabular figures in tables. Laid out with Paged.js in Chromium from the same Markdown that feeds the website. US Letter, single-sided, tagged for accessibility and checked against PDF/UA-1 with veraPDF. Built 2026-10-27. Text checked 2026-10-03.

Palette: ink, oxblood, gold, cream, rule. Seven type sizes. Rules of 0.4 pt and 2 pt only.