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"USING MOTION PICTURE STORYTELLING AS AN INDIGENOUS METHOD TO EXPLORE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AN AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE TRIBE"

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“USING MOTION PICTURE STORYTELLING AS AN INDIGENOUS METHOD TO EXPLORE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AN AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE TRIBE”

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR
THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

For many American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, food is important, not only for basic health reasons, but cultural, traditional and spiritual as well. The concepts of food sovereignty have various definitions, from political to healthful (Claeys, 2013; Whitman, 2010; Grassroots International, 2018; Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007). Though we understand what food sovereignty is in a general concept, in order to understand food sovereignty at a local level, it may be necessary to gather knowledge from members of an AI/AN community. To best gain that knowledge is to use Indigenous research, which is a method in which researchers *Indigenize* the process of common western theory, such as understanding the local phenomenon and understanding the Indigenous community from whom we interact and learn. Since each community's perceptions will be different from tribe to tribe and community to community, it would be necessary to have community members share their perspectives on what food sovereignty means to them and share the knowledge that a researcher would not obtain otherwise.

In partnership with the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation in Oklahoma, the concept of motion picture storytelling was used to collect qualitative data from 5 AI/AN community members to share their knowledge, experience, thoughts, beliefs and ideas on food sovereignty through story. Using indigenous methods of research, the tribal citizens had complete control in how they shared their motion picture stories through the moving images, dialogue, discussions or any other means they wish to use to share their concepts of food sovereignty and how it relates to them, their family, and their community. Then, data was collected and an observation on what was recorded was made, using theme content

analysis. After the data was interpreted, the storytellers were contacted for member checking, to confirm or explain the interpretation.

Findings showed that culture, tradition and community is an important factor to food sovereignty on an individual/community level. The five themes discovered were land, health, culture/tradition, Bird Creek Farms, and In-Lon-Schka. The stories also revealed that the stories are strong in this AI/AN community and the storytellers were active participants and embraced the sharing of their stories.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Focus and Question

Based on reviewing the literature, examining the need for Indigenous research and shared Indigenous knowledge, as well as practicing in the field of food and health research within Indigenous Tribes, as well as having a background in moviemaking, and being an Indigenous researcher, it has been observed that Indigenous Peoples have a deep relation with food, as well as a deep relation with storytelling. Understanding that the use of motion pictures may be an evolved approach to storytelling for Indigenous Peoples, much in the way writing and audio recording stories was a way to collect the wisdom, tradition and knowledge as has been done in previous generations. The motion pictures have been used to collect qualitative data before, but many times it's used to understand the *problems* of a certain group. The reason for this study is to have the stories of a culture by its tribal leaders/citizens shared and for the researcher to learn Indigenous Knowledge from this culture. By limiting the stories to five individuals and their families, it makes the relationship between the outside researcher and the community leaders to have more of a reciprocal learning experience.

The goals of this study are to capture the stories of five individuals as they share their perspectives and understanding of food sovereignty on an individual, family and community level. The focus is to use Indigenous methods to capture these stories by allowing the individuals to process their stories with minimum input from the outside

researcher. Finally, the goal is that stories of related themes will emerge, and that the researcher will learn from the tribal community and, if not share impactful stories, at least interesting stories will emerge.

Food Sovereignty in Brief

Since its inception, food sovereignty has become multilayered with multiple definitions. Originally, the intent of the food sovereignty movement was to give the people their rights to have healthy and culturally appropriate foods that are produced with the intent of ecological, social and economic sustainability (Whitman, 2010). Food sovereignty also offers people the right to define what their food is and how to control their agricultural system. In essence, this allows the option of power to be in the hands of the producers, distributors and consumers of the food, as opposed to being controlled by a corporate entity, with the intent to defend the interest and inclusion for later generations, and giving the local producers more power, with a specific focus on peasants and family farmers (Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007).

As the definition evolved, the focus shifted to the rights of people, community and country and how they wish to define what is appropriate for their singular circumstance, as it relates to agriculture, labor and policies in an economic, social, ecological and cultural way (Grass Roots International, 2018). The first Nations of Canada used the concept of Food sovereignty as a state of being where "all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice." (First Nations Development

Institute, 2014). In essence, food sovereignty is a term created by a mixed group of peasant farmers of both indigenous and non-indigenous groups. It was created to recognize the political and economic power that is affiliated with food and agriculture, to give power back to the nations and people in order to control their own food systems, markets, production, culture and environment (Wittman, 2010).

The Food hHistory of American Indian/Alaska Natives

For American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), many tribes have a traditional/cultural consideration for food. Traditional foods such as deer, elk, bison, salmon, berries, corn, etc., and the activities that surround the use in partaking of these foods have spiritual, medicinal and social significance (Blue Bird Jernigan, et al., 2011). Studies have also shown that some communities report that convenience, ease and price are more important than local origin or cultural connection in selecting food (Stroink & Nelson, 2009). Yet, even though these three components are mentioned, it is also found that in a food access study, community members reported that if given the access to traditional food and teaching how to hunt and/or harvest traditional foods would be central in a healthy food environment and healthy community (Blue Bird Jernigan, et al., 2011).

Traditionally, the food that we collect from our environment has had significant and religious meanings (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015). There is little knowledge of what life was like during the time of full Indigenous occupation on this continent, but it is known that there was a civilization present with an estimated population of approximately 90-112

million Peoples (Jacobs, 1974). As with any civilization, each culture and tribe had various beliefs, ways of life and ways of food gathering. While many of the Peoples of this land were farmers and gatherers, many of whom raised corn, as well as growing crops such as beans, squash, peppers, cotton, strawberries and so on (Debo, 1973), the original Peoples would also hunt animals, such as various fish, elk, deer, bear and other game, and there were some Indigenous Peoples who were nomadic and would move across various parts of the continent to hunt and gather (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015). Out of these Peoples, it has been known that, traditionally, many of The Peoples hold the land and these foods in high esteem, with the idea that the land and animals are or share the identity of The Peoples and that the land provides food and medicine (Wesner, 2015). For instance, in order to maintain the food and land, the Peoples created a path of fire to extend the grasslands so that the bison can travel from the northern and southern plains to the east coast to the Iroquois. The pasture was developed and managed by the Peoples to create one of the world's largest gardens and grazing lands to expanded accessibility (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015).

Figure 1. Native food history in comparison to native history. From slide introduced during the cultural night.

An Indigenous History of Food Sovereignty

Beginning in 1492, the Europeans came to the land of the Arawak and Taino Peoples and quickly began moving and controlling the land's resources, as well as enslaving The Peoples. Continuing their agenda, the Europeans found themselves in the east, where the Powhatan, Pemaquid, Naragansett, Mohegans and Wampanoags (as well as other inhabitants of that area) resided. As the European settler-colonialists continued to occupy the land and decimate the forests for their need of space, they also had a need to move The People from their place of occupation (Brown, 2007).

By 1838, the settler-colonialists expanded westward, moving many Nations to Indian Territory to what is now Oklahoma on a trek that is called *The Trail of Tears*. The colonizers continued their trek westward, moving Nations, having wars with Nations, depleting the land of its resources, including the Peoples, animals, and environment along the way (Brown, 2007). Having this large influx of colonizers changed the eating habits of the Indigenous Peoples. As the European population grew larger, the animals were overhunted, sometimes for fur trade, other times for sport. The waterways were becoming polluted and diverted. When removed from the ancestral land, many were put onto reservations, where they were unable to hunt or fish. The colonizers expected all Indigenous Peoples to farm without the realization that there were some tribes who were nomadic hunter-gatherers and not farmers (Mihesuah, 2005).

During the boarding school period, children were sent away from family, connection and land. There, they were abused and refused to practice their culture, religion or speak their language. Also, because of the displacement, the health deteriorated. They were unable to learn the ways in which they hunted and gathered the food, such as using food for medicine, sharing knowledge of agricultural techniques, preserving seeds, and so on (Mihesuah, 2005), thus, slowing down, and sometimes ending, the sharing of knowledge for future generations.

As the colonizers settled in the west, demand of water use was heightened, which made the traditional irrigation systems dry up and destroy all farming, thus, destroying access to traditional foods (Smith-Morris, 2004, McLaughlin, 2010). In order to supplement the loss of traditional foods, the U.S. Government offered commodity foods, which consisted of canned meat, white flour, sugar and lard, which had adverse health

effects. For instance, diabetes, a non-existent disease in Native populations immediately rose at the end of world war II. With tribes in the southwest being hit the hardest (Sherman & Dooley, 2017).

Many tribal nations had similar circumstances. When forced removal to the Indian Territory occurred, many tribes found farming and cultivation to be complicated. Over 39 tribes were moved to the Indian Territory, most from the Northeastern, Southeastern and Plains area (OHS, 2019, Howard, 1955) Here, tribes, had agricultural difficulties that impeded their farming practices. Some tribes turned to subsistence farming and raising cattle. The rest of the tribes adjusted and continue to remain on the land, even after Indian Territory became the state of Oklahoma.

Table 1. A timeline of AI/AN history as related to food, land and policy (Pevar, 2012, Duran & Duran, 1995).

Time	Period	Description
before 1492	Indigenous Autonomy	- Limited knowledge of this era. - Food wise, there was shared knowledge and understand of hunting, fishing, growing food and preservation
1492-1828	First Contact/Invasion	- Began as peaceful, grew to violence. - Diseases decimated the population. - Invasion of territories, taking position, decimation of Land and the settler-colonialists expands their population and quest for more land
1828-1887	Subjugation, relocation/reservation	- Forced removal to the west by the colonizers - Discovery of gold, slaughter of animals (specifically the sacred buffalo) - Established boarding schools - Pollution and changes in water access - Extreme change of food access and eating
1887-1934	Allotment and Assimilation	- General Allotment Act was created to end tribal sovereignty - Depletion of reservations - sell of surplus lands to non-Indians

		- Disruption of land connection once again
1934-1953	Indian Reorganization	- Indian Reorganization Act gave tribes a small bit of autonomy by enacting land base protection - Told to adopt a constitution and a self-governance
1953-1968	Termination and Forced Relocation	- Termination of trust relationship with Tribes and another chance at assimilation - Sending Tribal Peoples to urban areas, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco - This caused another disruption of connection to land. Having adapted to the new location, Tribal members are once again removed
1968-Present	Tribal Self-Determination	- Some tribes regained tribal identity; others fought to maintain it - This was a period of tribal sovereignty and self-determination - Tribes were regaining food sovereignty in their land, whether in the original place or adopted place.

The Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation

The Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation is an AI/AN People who have a reservation in Oklahoma (BIA, 2015). The government name of the Nation is the Osage tribe/nation. The other traditional name is *Ni-U-Ko¢n-Ska*, which, in English, means "Children of the Middle Waters" (Osage Nation, 2019). The names Wah-Zha-Zhe and Osage will be interchangeable throughout this paper, since the Nation accept both titles. The tribe's reservation is set in mostly rural environments with a portion of its land being in Tulsa (BIA, 2015). The Wah-Zha-Zhe tribal government is in Pawhuska (Osage Nation, 2019), which has a population of 3,636 (City-Data, 2019), with an overall tribal population of approximately 6,172 who live in the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation (BIA, 2016). Registered tribal

members are approximately 20,000 people (Osage Nation, 2019). For the Wah-Zha-Zhe, traditional foods were buffalo, deer, rabbit, and other animals that could be hunted. Farming-wise, they grew corn, squash, and a variety of vegetables (Rollings, 1995). The tribe's history is traced back to living in the area of what is known as Kentucky (Rollings, 1995) in the Ohio Valley region (Osage Nation, 2019). Being a semi-migrant tribe, they moved west to the areas of what is now known as Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas (Rollings, 1995).

First contact with the European settlers happened in the late 1600s. By the 1800s, the settlers developed treaties, proclamations and articles in order to use land where the Wah-Zha-Zhe tribe resided. Land cession by the tribe began in 1808, which slowly lessened their occupation of the land in which they lived until they were relocated to southeast Kansas into what was called the Osage Diminished Reserve. After the American Civil War, the Wah-Zha-Zhe were able to negotiate their land control in Indian Territory, which helped gain more control of their land and sovereignty (Rollings, 1995, McAuliffe, 1999). The reservation was set up in what is now the northeastern part of Oklahoma in the Pawhuska, Gray Horse, Hominy and Fairfax community (Rollings, 1995).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the United States Congress passed the Curtis and Dawes act, an attempt to assimilate the Native American Indian Peoples into the United States. One of the intents with these two tribes was to dismantle the reservations. With this change in the government interaction with tribes, the Wah-Zha-Zhe used the ownership of their land to negotiate the allotment process, thus slowing the process of Oklahoma becoming a state. In this negotiation the tribes were able to retain below the surface

communal mineral rights. Based on headrights, members of the tribe were able to have a percentage of any capital that was gained from these mineral rights (Rollings, 1995).

Once settled on this land, the Wah-Zha-Zhe found that the land had agricultural difficulties that impeded their farming practices. In order to maintain as a tribe, they turned to subsistence farming and raising cattle. Though there were agricultural difficulties, the land had bluestem grass, which is considered the best grass for cattle to graze on. With this knowledge, they leased the land to ranchers for grazing (Rollings, 1995). They remained on the land as the only AI/AN tribe to have a reservation in Oklahoma. Making use of the land, the tribe has found ways to practice food sovereignty.

Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty, as a concept, is multilayered and has multiple definitions, not to mention the complications of the term sovereignty and its etymology. The root word of sovereign is *soverain,* from the latin term *superanus*, which is corresponding to the word *super*. So, the term sovereign is related to the words supreme or superior. Or as it is defined in the dictionary, having supreme authority (Donnelly, 2004). Thus, using the term sovereignty in a discussion of food use and rights, sovereignty may not be the best term. Perhaps food independence would have been the better choice. To alleviate confusion or misunderstanding, food sovereignty isn't about the supremacy of food (though it can be sometimes), but a term chosen for understanding the concepts of food rights, choice and

traditionalism. As for the actual definition of food sovereignty, in one of its original incarnations and most accepted definitions, it is written as such:

> "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability."
>
> (Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007)

This definition was created in order to protect the peasant farmers and their rights. As the definition evolved, it changed into a more all-inclusive definition, by subtle changes in the terms and wording. Paraphrasing, these subtle changes are as such: *peoples, communities, and countries* have the right to define the *agriculture, labor, fishing, food and land policies*, as well as rights to safe and nutritiously appropriate food with a right to

have *food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.* There is also a reference to ecological, social and economic, as well as cultural emphasis on what is appropriate and unique in the concepts, systems and circumstances of the people, moment and location (Grass Roots International, 2018).

In essence, food sovereignty was a term created to recognize the political and economic power that is affiliated with food and agriculture, to give power back to the nations and people in order to control their own food systems, markets, production, culture and environment. By giving food sovereignty a name and definition, it gives the power back to the people to develop their own right, maintain their culture, community and social justice, not only in trade and agriculture but as Indigenous Peoples (Wittman, 2010).

The concepts of food sovereignty are said to have its origins in the mid-1980s in response to the loss of state support for agriculture and gain of United States food imports to Central America. In its original context, food sovereignty was viewed as food security on a national level and continuing the rights of the agriculture producers (Claeys, 2013). La Via Campesina, an organization created by peasants, small-scale farmers, farm workers and Indigenous communities gathered in 1996, in Tlaxcala, Mexico, at the Second International Conference Vía Campesina to discussed ideas into how to give food Sovereignty a broader scope; not just focus on food security concepts but also to address production diversity, culturally appropriate foods, as well as nutritious foods. In opposition of the original way in which food is handled within the political and economic structures, this developed a link to justice and democracy by giving the productive resource powers to the people who produce the foods that are distributed (Wittman, 2010). Food sovereignty also gives power in developing (or redeveloping) the understanding of the connections

between food, agriculture and environment, as well as our relationships with one another. La via Campesina also noticed the connection of food sovereignty with women and showed that women play key roles in food production procurement, food preparation, family food security and food culture (Wittman, 2010).

The theory of food sovereignty is to enact change in how food is distributed. It is seen that food is imposed by industry and globalization. This concept creates a gap between the food and the consumer, added on with the issues of unhealthy processed foods, as well as limiting the knowledge of what we are eating. In this context, the consumer has a loss in their relationship to food, that they would previously have a connection to, such as the meaning and cultural significance that food plays in all communities (Wittman, 2010), but specifically within AI/AN communities. Traditionally speaking, the population rights include the basics of hunting, gathering, fishing, growing and eating of the foods.

Food sovereignty is not just for farmer's rights, but it is also for human rights in relation to food and food security. Since the beginning of the food sovereignty movement, there have been a lot of changes within the government acceptance of what food sovereignty is in many parts of the world. Legislation advances have happened in Venezuela, Mali, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nepal and Senegal. Food sovereignty is a way to address global food issues. The frames of food sovereignty have a historical contingent, rooted in food regime and influenced by the political and economic ideology. Dr. Michael W. Hamm and Dr. Anne C. Bellows say that food sovereignty is a state of being where a community can obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet while maintaining a sustainable food system to give a community self-reliance and social justice (FNDI, 2012). Furthermore, the World Bank and United Nations, as well as many

individual government entities have identified food sovereignty as a global concern (Brem-Wilson, 2015).

There are limitations in the understanding of food sovereignty. Since it is a variably interpreted concept, the approach to a food sovereignty idea may be different for each culture and population. One AI/AN community's understanding of food sovereignty may be different than the other. There are also limited studies on food sovereignty within AI/AN populations and the majority of them focus more on Indigenous Peoples of the world. In the limited discussions, there are a handful of First Nations studies that look into the Indigenous concepts of food sovereignty. For the First Nations Institutions, the definition for food sovereignty that they use is:

> Food sovereignty is that state of being where "all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice."
>
> (First Nations Development Institute, 2014).

For many AI/AN Peoples, the concept of food sovereignty is to emphasize the cultural aspects of it. On a tribal level, food sovereignty is about the nation itself having the control of food consumption and systems (FNDI, 2018). In a general sense, some tribes like to see food sovereignty as a way to reconnect to the land, rediscovering the food gathering of the ancestors, regain sovereignty in the ways in which we hunt, fish, and grow

our foods that have been removed by the history of colonialism. The intent is to still have a focus on rights, but also explore cultural responsibilities and relationships with the environment and revitalizing the knowledge systems of food sovereignty. For many Tribal Peoples, the land is medicine and by reaffirming the spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical relationship to the land, water, plants and all living things will have a reciprocal effect in sustaining the communities and culture. For many Indigenous Peoples, the definition of food sovereignty is to stop viewing food as a commodity, and to develop systems and practices that reflect their cultural value in producing, consuming and distributing food, there is also the understanding that humans and environment are relational in reciprocity, respect and obligations. Also, we must understand that AI/AN Peoples haves the belief that we do not manage the land but instead manage our behaviors to the land (Coté, 2016).

For many Indigenous Peoples, the concept of food sovereignty is to move away from western philosophy and move towards the Indigenous Peoples way of knowledge and the attempt for autonomy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination (Coté, 2016). There is also the understanding that the creator has given to us food as a gift. So, to control and regulate food by laws, policies and institutions is unnatural. For AI/ANs, food sovereignty is to practice our sacred responsibility in order to maintain good health, have a relationship with the land, plants and animals. For the Indigenous Foods Sovereignty (IFS) movement, they laid out four key principles as a suggestion:

1. Sacred or divine sovereignty – Food is a gift from the Creator; in this respect the right to food is sacred and cannot be constrained or recalled by colonial laws,

policies and institutions. Indigenous food sovereignty is fundamentally achieved by upholding our sacred responsibility to nurture healthy, interdependent relationships with the land, plants and animals that provide us with our food.

2. Participatory – IFS is fundamentally based on "action", or the day to day practice of maintaining cultural harvesting strategies. To maintain Indigenous food sovereignty as a living reality for both present and future generations, continued participation in cultural harvesting strategies at all of the individual, family, community and regional levels is key.
3. Self-determination – The ability to respond to our own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods. The ability to make decisions over the amount and quality of food we hunt, fish, gather, grow and eat. Freedom from dependence on grocery stores or corporately controlled food production, distribution and consumption in industrialized economies.
4. Policy - IFS attempts to reconcile Indigenous food and cultural values with colonial laws and policies and mainstream economic activities. IFS, thereby, provides a restorative framework for policy reform in forestry, fisheries, rangeland, environmental conservation, health, agriculture, and rural and community development.

(IFSNW, 2019)

As these principles are guidelines, it must be understood that each culture has a different approach and understanding of food sovereignty and their relationship to land, water, plants and animals may differ. There is also the belief that traditional knowledge

and cultural practices must be passed on to future generations. There is also the understand that traditional foods have social, cultural, spiritual and psychological significance and that all these food systems must be regarded not as a commodity but as our relatives (Coté, 2016).

Motion Picture Storytelling

In 1966, an anthropological research professor and a communications professor traveled to the Navajo Nation for an anthropological/communications study. The researchers recruited seven Navajos from the area of Pine Springs, AZ to make a film about what was important to the seven Navajos. The film was then screened in the Pine Springs community. This film titled, *Navajos Film Themselves* had a huge impact in visual anthropology. For critics who felt it was patronizing, there are others who saw it as empowering, in that it is one of the first times that motion picture cameras were put in the "hands of those usually subjected to the objectifying gaze" (Peterson, 2013, p. 29). This is one of the first studies to put the power of the visual story in the hands of Indigenous Peoples and has its roots in motion picture storytelling.

Motion picture storytelling allows members of the community to use motion pictures to investigate issues of concern, and communicate their knowledge (Catalani, Campbell, Herbst, Spriggate, Butler, and Minkler, 2012, p. 20). The concepts of Motion Picture Storytelling in participatory research is a fairly new and constantly evolving process and using the motion picture image as a way of expressing Indigenous knowledge is even less common, yet this method of research helps maintain the concepts of putting

the power of the story in the hands of the participants and is a way to connect to the traditional concepts of oral storytelling.

In the past, Motion Picture Storytelling through the means of film media was an expensive concept. It was usually a single filmmaker who had to apply for a grant, and it could be, at times, a laborious process, having to shoot on film, process the film in a lab and cut the film on an editing board. This made it so that only a certain few individuals had the luxury to use this medium. Through the latter half of the 20th century, video became a new form of communication. Yet, even having a video camera and editing system was unfeasible for most communities. Now, in its modern incarnation, *video* is an accessible format for most anyone who hopes to find it. With smart phones and tablets that can record High Definition quality footage, and the access to editing software are already available on most of our laptops and computers, and with the internet as a place of distribution, we have come to a place where the *New Media* is the dominant form of communication.

Motion Picture Storytelling has many different uses. It can be used as an analytical design and assessment tool for a study, and it can also be used as an art mechanism for community intervention. Motion Picture Storytelling as a participatory research method builds on the tradition of photovoice, in that they are both tools for community engagement, policy change, community action and advocacy, enriching public health, and empowerment (McDonald, Catalani, & Minkler, 2012). Photovoice is a process in which people can identify, represent and enhance their communities through photography. In research, photovoice has three main goals: to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion, and reach policymakers (Wang

& Burris, 1997). Much like photovoice, Motion Picture Storytelling may use all or some of techniques and goals, but more than photovoice, it has a multisensory approach. In photovoice, the participants work with a single image, whereas, in the video medium, they have the power of using multiple photographic frames per second (fps) – for most videos it is 30 fps – with recorded audio information (Hurbis-Cherrier, 2011) that can be shared in various community settings, including, theatres, homes, classrooms, community centers, and the online community (Catalani, et al. 2012). Motion Picture Storytelling can be a research and advocacy approach that empowers community filmmakers to tell their own stories and not be subjected to outside perspective. For this paper, the term Motion Picture Storytelling is an all-encompassing description for all forms of motion picture interventions, such as videovoice, participatory video, transmedia storytelling, community-based documentary filmmaking and digital storytelling.

Storyteller and AI/AN

For the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Peoples, traditions, cultures and beliefs are paramount in their process of healing, and a way to healing for this culture is through story. All cultures have a basis in story and storytelling. Through our creation stories, to traditional stories passed down through generations, and even through a friend of a friend story, these stories have evolved over time into becoming our own – from the first light of the fire, a group would sit around and tell stories of conflict or stories for learning or stories for healing. These stories which come from the oral tradition, asks that the audience listen attentively, absorb the stories in order to remember them and pass them

on to the next generation (Hodge, Pasqua, Marquez & Geishirt-Cantrell, 2002). As the stories progress and the medium changes, these stories continue to pass down through the generations, going through a cultural evolution and evolve from stories told through spoken word to stories written on paper, and then the stories are recorded for audio preservation up until the motion pictures come along, and our oral tradition evolves into community-based Motion Picture Storytelling.

Using Motion Picture Storytelling for community/tribal members to express their perceptions of certain themes is a fairly recent concept, but with the advent of tools and equipment for creating such stories, the use of this form of data collection for research will be of great use. Though there is a limitation of interventions, there are good resources for development of research, and to use this practice as a dissertation would be unique and could inspire different approaches for intervention, as well as having this approach be a way in which researchers can understand the community they are working with, make connections with the community, create a dialogue, and perhaps understand that the interventions in which they are taking on may already be in place.

With the advent of what is termed *New Media* or *Transmedia,* a platform that is beyond the traditional media platform of television and film. New Media and Transmedia is the expansion of media through virtual reality, internet, CDROM, gaming, and the multiple platforms that are available and being developed as this is written (Flew, 2007). Because of this new phenomenon, we find ourselves in a time where access to media has become even more prominent. With these advances of digital technology, we are starting to put the research in the hands of the subject, thus making the participants active researchers, which develops into leaders of their communities.

As a form of communication, the strategy of motion picture storytelling can increase knowledge and awareness of Indigenous beliefs, issues and understanding. This form of research can help influence perceptions, beliefs and attitudes, as well as influence the way in which researchers practice on certain societies. This form of research can help prompt action, reinforce knowledge, advocate for policy change, and increase demands for support in the envirobiopsychesocial impact of communities. This research can also be used as a support to refute any misconceptions brought on by past practices, develop leadership skills and strengthen organizational relationships (Burgess & Green, 2009). It can also be a way of communicating and sharing stories.

When looking into motion picture storytelling and how we interact with our communities, one must think of interpersonal communication theory, a concept used for understanding provider-client interaction, where social support in health through interpersonal relationships can influence health behaviors and decision-making. Evidence has shown that the patient/provider relationships can affect health disparities. Through bias, providers can contribute to health disparities by encouraging health promotion and disease prevention behavior and service based on ethnic perception. Through bias, they may also withhold treatments or services while denying benefits and rights (Van Ryn & Fu, 2003). Evidence of physician's contributions to racial/ethnic disparities have been found in the rates of kidney transplants, cardiac procedures, pain assessment and control, and mental health services. Also, it has been found that poor communication can be a link to health disparities. Social support also affects health, specifically with mental and physical well-being (Van Ryn & Fu, 2003). Using this format of intervention could be helpful by giving the clients the voice as the interventionist to address what their needs are, create interaction

and let the researchers and others within the community to know what best practices can help.

Dr. Michael Rich has spent years working on the concept of Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA), a concept that "builds on the innate comfort that children and adolescents have with audiovisual media to give them control of an important information stream about their own health and well-being" (Rich, 2004). In this study, clinicians provide cameras to young people and have them teach clinicians about their experience and need through a visual narrative. This paper states that VIA are important to research, education, policy-making, and advocacy, as well as providing key information about the patient's health. The use of motion picture and visual art has been especially emphasized as a viable strategy in health promotion practice and medical education (Chávez, Israel, Allen, DeCarlo, Lichtenstein, Schulz, Buyer & McGranaghan, 2004).

Motion picture storytelling enhances research by giving communities the opportunity to offer their stories and solutions, as well as integrate their feedback and involvement, and empower them with the control of the process. The necessity of using this form of storytelling is that it offers the opportunity for the community to tell their stories and have control over the use of the image and voice. It also offers a balance of power between the researchers, institutions and community perspectives. This form of storytelling can always be a way of documentation that can have a better communicative comprehension of in the disseminating results for information, education and influence on policy.

Using Indigenous Methods for Participatory Research

Indigenous research is a method in which researchers *Indigenize* the process of common western theory in research, such as understand the local phenomenon and understanding of the community in which we interact. With Indigenous methods, there is a sensitivity in research in which a researcher will create the constructs, methods, and theories based on the experiences and knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples that are in partnership with western research. Though western ideology in scientific research is the *accepted* norm in academia, there can be an integration of western and Indigenous methods (Chilisa, 2012). Currently, researchers are trained in a western culture research method.

In Indigenous methods, two terms are commonly used: *Decolonize* and *Indigenize.* Though they are very similar in definition, there are distinctions. *Decolonize* is a term that is used as a process of understanding the western societies colonial mindset to control, subjugate and deculturize those who have suffered under colonial rule to where there is a loss of culture, identity, knowledge, beliefs and so on. This is a way of removing the colonized culture from having a captive outlook upon their existence. Decolonization is to restore and develop cultural practices, thought, belief, and values that are suppressed but still needed, in order to empower oneself (Chilisa, 2012).

Indigenize is somewhat similar to *decolonize* in that it too is a process of regaining our cultural practices, thoughts, beliefs and values, but it is more of a process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge that transforms the space, place and heart. Both understand the input of western knowledge, but with *Indigenize,* it means that it does not intend to remove western knowledge completely. The intent is to find ways in which

western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge can be appreciated and understood together and not as separate entities but having harmony of two ways of knowing. Indigenous knowledge has a relationship to land, culture, community and selves (Antoine, Mason, Mason, Palahicky & Rodriguez de France, 2019) in a combined state. This is not much different than the western science concepts of biopsychosocial, but it is on a larger sense by adding the environment and the spiritual. To further reach an understanding of *Indigenization*, is the idea that for each culture it could mean something different, which makes it more complex. For the purpose of this paper, the reader is asked to understand the combination of these two terms as we seek to respect the traditional ways of the Peoples with whom we hope to co-learn, and by giving them the power to tell their story in whichever way we see fit. We hope to indigenize the process of motion picture storytelling.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Motion picture storytelling is a modification of digital storytelling, videovoice and the other various forms of media interventions. Motion Picture Storytelling is intended to have the community members act as researchers in examining the subject and themes provided to continue the dialogue and understand these themes and subjects on a community level. It will also be used as a tool to explore ways in which a community can create and show visual stories and how that will be perceived when allowed to create that story with limited input from the outside researchers. This innovative method uses the power of visual media and the culturally-centered tradition of storytelling to engage tribal citizenry in the documentation and re-imagining of their community landscapes (Miller & Smith, 2012). As an indigenized method, motion picture storytelling's intent is to share the power of the community, identify leaders, communicate the themes and subjects, and give the AI/AN community a chance to express their culture through their personal, family and community stories. In order to maintain the concept of indigenization, this study will give the power to the motion picture storyteller to tell the story they wish to tell or capture the image that they wish to film, with the hope that they can offer a unique perspective that is culturally-centered and not controlled by the outside researcher. The intent of motion picture storytelling is a way in which research can be indigenized in the motion picture world. Chilisa (2012) discusses that an indigenous group can present their ways of perceived reality, and that their ways of knowing have a value system that can inform the research process. Using this concept, the idea of motion picture storytelling is to indigenize

the process of creating motion pictures by putting the power in the hands of the chosen storyteller.

Motion picture storytelling can change, depending on the community/Nation/tribe. For this particular study, the first step of the motion picture storytelling process was to inform tribally selected representation and leaders the intent of using Motion Picture Storytelling. Using Indigenous methods by engaging the tribe in the process (Catalani, Veneziale, Campbell, Herbst, Butler, Springgate, & Minkler, 2012), discussions of best practices and approaches for engaging in community filmmaking were shared. Finding a best practice that is suitable for the tribe, the decision was made on what approaches to take for motion picture storytelling. Before and during the discussion, there were recommendations in the planned process while listening to concerns, thoughts, input, etc. For this particular tribe, the decision was to have those who decided to participate to have the option of shooting one to three stories over the course of a year. A decision was made in how the stories would be told. The general outline was as followed:

The participants in this study were called *Storytellers*. The storytellers consisted of 5-10 participants (18+) who lived in and around the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation. The storytellers had the option to collect footage of families, friends, and their communities. A consent process was be used to inform community members of the risks of participation in their videos, such as loss of privacy, but also be informed of the benefits, such as an opportunity to share experiences and ideas. Once the storytellers were chosen and had committed, they were guided in how to discuss the purpose and use of video footage, explaining to potential talent that footage may appear in a final video about food sovereignty, based on the viewpoints and ideas of people who live and work there. The storytellers were informed

that that they have the right to stop participating at any time. One storyteller did decline, due to the fact that they were worried that the visual images could affect the family's privacy.

Procedure

The recruitment process was done in conjunction with the tribal partner leaders and citizens. Topics to discussed were:

- Who would best represent the tribal nations?
- Recruitments tactics. Recruit through Email, word of mouth, and recommendations.
- Decisions on accessing the equipment.

Other input was that the storyteller must be 18 and over but were permitted to use their children if they consented. If they chose to use other children, they must get the parent/guardian/caregiver's consent. The storytellers were offered guidance when needed throughout the process, and the research partners acted as producers, and when needed, trainers.

The approach to this study used culturally appropriate practices to tell stories. The way in which this approach will be unique is that we will emphasize the methods of using AI/AN storytelling through the communication of research process and findings. Using Indigenous research as a method of collecting stories through the tribal members by using Sony HDR-CX405 video cameras to collect qualitative data on a 16GB Secure Digital (SD) card (Figure 2). This fits within the Indigenous research methods paradigm in that it is a

participatory approach that gives the voice to the community/tribe/Nation and offers the chance to empower, promote inclusivity, and be respectful to the storyteller in the telling and sharing of their stories (Chilisa, 2012).

Figure 2. Sony HDR-CX405. A small handheld camera used for collecting video data. Secure Digital (SD) card used for sharing the recorded information.

With the use of motion picture storytelling, the plan was to find deeper reflections of the individuals within the tribal community s they create stories that address the feelings, concerns, discussions and reflections of food sovereignty issues involved within the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation.

Once all decisions were in place, we recruited in the first two sessions of the monthly meetings, which were dubbed *Cultural Nights*. At the cultural nights, we invited the family of the participants to share in a meal and be engaged in a presentation on food sovereignty. At Cultural Nights, 20 individuals were recruited in order to ensure that five storytellers would be able to complete at least one story. The storytellers were incentivized with a $20 Walmart gift cards upon completion of their story. If they wished to do more, the storytellers would be incentivized up to three more stories, receiving a $20 Walmart gift card each time.

The Cultural Nights happened once a month in the spring and fall semester of 2018. There, they were given PowerPoint presentations that discussed food sovereignty. At the end of these Cultural Nights presentations there was time set aside for discussions and questions and answers about food sovereignty. These set of questions were used for the motion picture storytelling portion of the study (See Appendix A). All of these sets of questions pertained to food sovereignty. The storytellers were asked to choose one or more of the questions to explore the themes within these questions. The storyteller would choose how and what they would approach the filming of these themes and questions to capture on a SD card. Once they captured the images and sounds that they wanted, they sent me the SD card, in which the images were recorded. They had the option to mail the SD card, hand deliver the SD card, or one of the researchers could go out to the place of choice to retrieve them. Once the SD card was secured, the images and sounds that were recorded were watched and notes were taken to find the TCA and then phone calls were made for any additional questions for member checking.

The sample of storytellers for this study were chosen from the Food Resource Equity and Sustainability for Health study (FRESH) at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University Health Sciences Center, in partnership with the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation. The sample was chosen through the participants who attended culture nights. There were twenty cameras distributed, with the expectations of having at least five participant samples to choose from.

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the storytellers. Five participants were chosen out of the FRESH overall sample (N=170). Participants were randomly chosen based on the weight of the information shared and the length of stories

shot. I received 12 films from the storytellers and was able to member check eight. Out of the eight, I chose five whose input was thick and/or shot more footage. The storytellers age ranged from 28 to 45. The ages were 28, 36, two who were aged 41, and 45. They consisted of one male and four females. All lived in the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation. All four were Wah-Zha-Zhe, with one being Seneca-Cayuga. Within the family dynamic, other tribal affiliations included Navajo, Cherokee, Oglala Sioux and Creek. Even though this sample was chosen in the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation, many tribes have various representations from other nations that live within the nation (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographics of AI Participants in current study (n=5). LOCATION: Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation.

Storyteller	**Tribal representation**	**Age**	**Other tribal affiliation in household**
4	Wah-Zha-Zhe	28	Navajo
9	Wah-Zha-Zhe	36	
48	Wah-Zha-Zhe	41	Cherokee/Oglala Sioux/Creek
190	Wah-Zha-Zhe	45	
194	Seneca-Cayuga	41	

The storytellers were chosen at the first and second cultural nights that were held in Pawhuska, OK and Fairfax, OK for those who participated in the FRESH study. Which means that they were 18 years or older and had at least one child age 2-5 in the Wah-Zha-Zhe educational program, such as the Wah-Zha-Zhe Early Learning Academies (WELA) or the head start. The choosing of the participants was based on volunteers who signed up as adult members of the family who decide to do the Motion Picture Storytelling. Each month, there were discussion of food sovereignty principles with a list of questions at the end.

Food Sovereignty Themes

Using the questions at the ends, each individual/family were to use those themes and questions by either choosing one, some, or all of the questions to follow as a theme for shooting their stories. The goal was to give the participants the opportunity to use these questions to help them discuss the themes that were important to them (Appendix A).

The questions and themes were concepts explored during the parent nights. The intent was to search these themes or be inspired by these themes in order to tell their stories. We had five participants capture their stories to tell it in the way that they wished to share. The videos were captured on SD cards. They were then returned and viewed. Notes and transcripts were made. Once certain themes were discovered, participants were called. Discussions of the themes discovered were used to check to make sure the analysis were accurate.

The storytellers were given the themes to explore and were allowed the option to turn in up to three video stories, and each time they did, they were given a $20 gift card. Some only did one story, while others did two, and a few did three.

Data Analysis

Using thematic content analysis (TCA) to understand the concepts of food sovereignty through motion picture storytelling is a way to collect qualitative data. TCA is one of the foundations of qualitative analysis. It helps find common themes across the various participants (Anderson, 2007). To ensure quality, member checking was be used.

Member checking helps a researcher improve accuracy, credibility and validity (Harper & Cole, 2012) of the data collected by the participants when using motion picture storytelling. To ensure quality, the phone calls during member checking were recorded onto either an iPhone or onto the computer using the software, Final Cut. Next, a transcription would be made of the films, as well as a description of the images that were recorded. The phone calls that were made were also transcribed. All of these elements were used to find recurring themes in order to decipher what the concepts of food sovereignty mean to each storyteller together and individually. The storytellers were each given a numerical identity, i.e., storyteller 4, storyteller 9, etc. The numerical value given to the storytellers is based upon the system that the FRESH study had created.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Description of Films

Below is a summary of the data collected for the stories. These films, as well as the phone interviews conducted, were collected and transcribed to determine the themes for the study.

Storyteller 4

Storyteller 4 was told a story by placing a camera in a wide master shot, in the kitchen where Storyteller 4 sat at a kitchen table with Storyteller 4's family. The subjects of the film consisted of Storyteller 4, 4's sister, mother and stepfather, while children ran around in the background and foreground. In the film, a selection of the questions was asked, and the group discussed the themes. Storyteller 4's intent was to show a multi-generational perspective on the key themes of food sovereignty.

Storyteller 9

Storyteller 9 created a story about a garden that was being raised in the backyard. The story included the family of three children (ages 1, 3, and 5) the husband and the wife, as well as their pet dog with whom the children would interact. The film shows the kids helping in the garden as they talk about the garden. The wife is holding the camera and

filming the story. The husband is interviewed to discuss his perspective of food sovereignty.

Storyteller 48

Storyteller 48 worked with a sibling to interview each other. This film discussed the topic of food sovereignty as it relates to them. Storyteller 48 discusses the work being done in the nation as a Public Health Educator and how food sovereignty is practiced with the elderly by creating gardens and greenhouses. An important story that was told was how Storyteller 48 found a seed in Kansas that was from their great-grandfather's farm, and they tell the history of how that seed came and how their great-grandfather helped feed some people in the Ponca tribe.

Storyteller 190

This was a straight forward on-camera talk by Storyteller 190 who tells the story of not using the term food sovereignty but instead using traditional foods. Storyteller 190 also discusses what that means and how these concepts are being used in traditional ways, as well as the way in which Bird Creek Farms is a way that these concepts are practiced. The discussion is on the resiliency of the tribe and that the traditions have remained intact.

Storyteller 194

This story was told by a single camera focused on Storyteller 194 as the storyteller tells the story to the camera. Storyteller 194 goes through the themes of interest and tells about the family journey and that though storyteller 194 is not from the Wah-Zha-Zhe

Nation, the storyteller has become a part of the community, specifically through the brother-in-law. The storyteller chooses to tell the story of the Nation, Storyteller 194's brother-in-law who practices food sovereignty by raising cattle and sharing the food from the cattle with the family. Storyteller 194 proceeds to tell the history of Storyteller 194's family and how food sovereignty was practiced by being raised on a farm, learning how to tend a garden, take care of the livestock and work on a farm. The storyteller explains how the spouse, who is non-Native, raises the children to hunt and learn how to live off the land. For Storyteller 194, this is the way food sovereignty is practiced in the family.

CHAPTER 4

THEMES

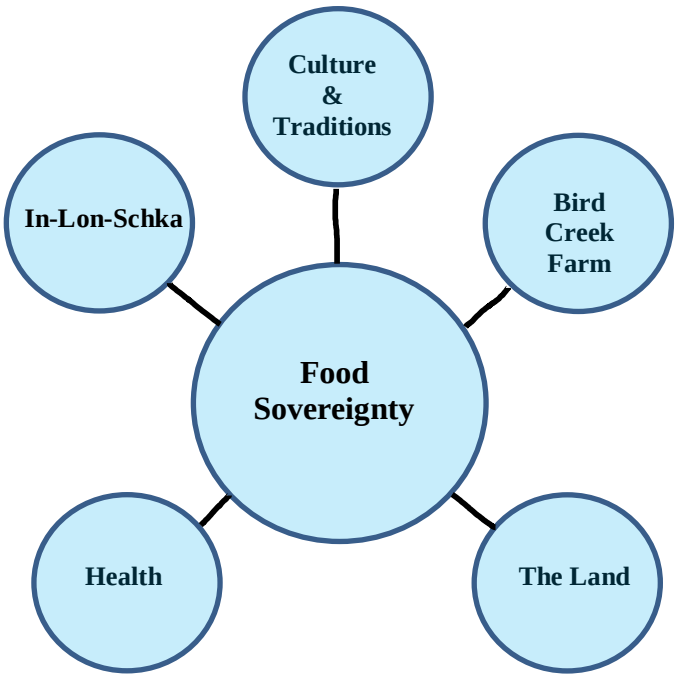
For this sample of storytellers, the themes that were explored, in relationship to food sovereignty, were varied. Common themes included practicing culture and traditions as a form of food sovereignty, the use of gardens, being and eating healthy, Bird Creek Farms, the feeding of others, and, the most common theme and discussed subject was a ceremony called In-Lon-Schka. The way in which this portion is that summaries of discussions, topics and subjects related to the theme will mostly be summarized and there will be added quotes when needed, but everything written in each of these themes are summaries of statements that were made in the films and in the member checking.

The themes (see Figure 3) are structured in categories of:

1. **Land.** This theme incorporated understanding of ways in which the land can provide in the practice of food sovereignty, such as a garden or a greenhouse.
2. **Health** was a theme used to explore the changing environment of food intake. There were also discussions of how some traditional foods could be considered unhealthy
3. **Culture and traditions.** This was an important theme for the storytellers, since many of them were very active in their culture and traditions and were raising their children to be a part of it.
4. **Bird Creek Farm.** This is a place that became a common thematic subject. It is entwined with the other four themes.

5. **In-Lon-Schka.** This theme seemed to be the most important of them all. It is linked to culture and traditions but has a higher value to the weight of importance it has for all the Storytellers. This was a theme that all storytellers mentioned, and many had in-depth explorations of this theme.

Figure 3. Themes: The land, health, culture and traditions, Bird Creek Farms, and In-Lon-Schka.



Overall Perspectives on Food Sovereignty

In the discussion of food sovereignty, all storytellers made references of not having heard, had limited knowledge, or didn't know of the term food sovereignty until it was introduced in the study. Once the concept of food sovereignty was introduced the

storytellers understood it in other terms and were able to explain it t from an AI/AN Wah-Zha-Zhe perspective.

Storyteller 4

In Storyteller 4's film, the storyteller stated that food sovereignty is a term "not used in our community". For the father in the film, it "means nothing". The idea of food sovereignty was about regaining the traditions and ideas of our past, such as hunting and preparing food similar to how it was done traditionally by the ancestors. Storyteller 4 continued to describe how the lack of being food sovereign has affected our health. Food sovereignty is good for the community, and the community should have rights to a farmer's market, gardens, school gardens, and backyard gardens. Storyteller 4 states that modern food intake in the communities doesn't fit with food sovereignty very well and everyone should have the choice of not having chemicals or genetically modified organisms in the foods consumed. One of the important aspects of food sovereignty for the sister is that capitalism has affected our food and how we treat it. Storyteller 4 feels that it is important to eat communally with others, because it is better when working together, helping and feeding each other.

> "It's something new, something I can wrap my mind around because I know what the two words mean. I can put them together and kind of grasp it, but it's not something that people think about, talk about, and I don't really know if they really care about…but like you said, it has become a really hot topic. This is the age of information, we have access to why things are happening, why people are

so unhealthy; we're starting to become collectively smarter as a populace, as a community, and we're trying to understand the need to be healthy, and we have a right, or we're trying to gain the right, to have our own farmer's market, to have our own garden. That's been a very hot topic, especially with our tribe. It would be a great idea if the school has a garden or everyone in their backyard had a garden. It's becoming more and more popular and that is food sovereignty – being able to do that for yourself. Not having to rely on whatever GMO produce at your one grocery store within a fifty-mile radius or whatever."

(Storyteller 4)

The Sister also discusses how true food sovereignty would be about not taking food for granted and regaining the control over the way in which we approach food.

"Could we even have them going back to the hunt? I think that we are so indoctrinated in this lifestyle – it was put on Indians. I think true food sovereignty is looking at true sovereignty. It's our food. It's what makes us. So, when we don't have control over that, or we take it for granted or we assume this is the only way to be, then I think that we really lose our lease on things. I think if we take control of our food, that could be something that not only has huge physical, health, and lifestyle on the tribe, I think it has huge existential implications. It's what makes us up."

(Storyteller 4 – Sister)

Storyteller 9

Storyteller 9 stated that there was some knowledge of food sovereignty, just a few things they had read about but only acknowledged it in passing. Storyteller 9's spouse describes that for their family, food sovereignty is about the garden and tilling of the land. The spouse talks about managing diet and nutrition is another way to practice food sovereignty. According to the spouse, in Pawhuska, the town in which they preside, quality food is hard to find in the grocery store. Plus, the spouse discusses how the family plans to build more on the garden. The spouse explains food sovereignty in relation to their garden and involving the children:

> "Food sovereignty is something we control in our lives. Sometimes we have to supplement with store bought things but it's a fun activity, it's a lifelong activity that the kids can learn from, and so it's positive for our family."
> (Storyteller 9 – Spouse)

The spouse's goal is to help the kids learn how to harvest. The feeling is that having a voice or making decisions about food sovereignty were very limited, though we have a freedom and a right to fresh foods. In the spouse's perspective, "a lot of it, right now, is in the hands of the people and the decisions we make."

Storyteller 48

Storyteller 48 said that there wasn't a familiarity with food sovereignty. It was something that Storyteller 48 heard about a decade ago, but the concept didn't have an impact. Now that Storyteller 48 has a child, the concepts and impact has become more of an important issue. Since there are limited grocery stores in Pawhuska, the practice of food sovereignty is important because it is believed that communities need to take charge of the food system. Advocating for what's available in the grocery store is an important thing, because this affects the ways in which we serve, choose to serve and eat.

> "I wasn't Familiar with food sovereignty. it wasn't a term that we grew up with. I think I heard about food sovereignty about a decade ago. It didn't impact me at the time in my life. Since having children – I'm a mom and a wife, I raise four kids – food sovereignty has become more an issue. Especially where we live is rural. And then there's some communities that are within 30 miles of us. Grocery stores (are) close(d), and we haven't had a grocery store here where we live. Becoming familiar with what food sovereignty is has made it more important to me. Food sovereignty, to me, is us having the power to take charge of our food systems, what we serve our children, how we grow it, how much we grow, the production, to be healthy and to advocate for the food we have in our local grocery stores. What we're served and what we choose to serve and what we choose to eat ourselves, and that is what food sovereignty means to me…The topic of food sovereignty, I feel people are

learning more, it is becoming an important topic. I feel like we are in the beginning phases. The potential we can do through foods and what we can do for ourselves." (Storyteller 48)

Since learning of food sovereignty, the topic has become more important. As a form of food sovereignty, Storyteller 48 is going to take a master gardener class. This became offered to the residence of the elder's home and all but two have signed up for it.

In this film, the brother of storyteller 48 was interviewed, in which the brother stated that food is a "necessity for survival". The brother discussed how the 1906 allotment act broke up parcels and so it broke down the community mindset in how to survive. It was a big impact upon the ancestors. This turned the community practicing culture into one that has an individual mindset. This was "another way to divide us".

Storyteller 190

Storyteller 190's story states that the term food sovereignty is not used but it is something that is observed. Food sovereignty is observed in that the tribe uses traditional food in the same way that the ancestors did.

> "It's not so much used as it is observed. In the community that I live in, it's a small rural community. Although we don't say food sovereignty, we do use traditional food in the way that our ancestors did, in the way of preparing meals like the way our ancestors did. To me, that is food sovereignty."
>
> (Storyteller 190)

Food sovereignty can have different meanings in the various communities. For Storyteller 190, it's eating what the ancestors ate, whether it's growing traditional corn, vegetables and other fruits. Food sovereignty is also about the preparation of the food and being able to do so as the ancestors did.

Storyteller 190 raises the children in the family in the traditional ways when it comes to food – how to prepare the foods and understanding what it's like to share meals within their community and other communities. Wah-Zha-Zhe always have food is an important component to the traditions of the Wah-Zha-Zhe people, in other words, having food to feed others is important for the tribe.

Storyteller 194

Storyteller 194 states that food sovereignty isn't a term that many people talk or know about. It was not something that Storyteller 194 knew about until it was discussed in this study. Once the term was introduced, the thoughts about food sovereignty was about the quality of food for family and its accessibility, and the ease of getting fresh fruits and vegetables. Also, an important component for Storyteller 194 is that you didn't have to

worry about when the next meal was going to come. Food sovereignty is also about how the food is cooked and how the teachings of these foods are passed down to the children. Storyteller 194 is not Wah-Zha-Zhe, yet, eats food that the parents had taught Storyteller 194. Being of mixed-race, the traditions of both her cultures are taught. Storyteller 194 is Seneca-Cayuga and white.

In the overall perspectives of food sovereignty, the Storytellers also found barriers and problems with the practice of food sovereignty. There are complications of fresh food access. There are systemic issues that doesn't allow the full practice of food sovereignty. The area of the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation is mostly a food desert, so being able to get fresh foods are complicated. There is limited availability of healthy foods because a majority of places to eat offer fast food meals. Storyteller 194 discusses the problems by stating that practicing food sovereignty is complicated in that the rights to practice food sovereignty is there, but if the food is not available to you, how do you exercise that right?

> "Practicing food sovereignty rights – you might have a right but if it's not available to you, how do you plan on exercising that right? It's a big long process. I know there are certificates given to the older Native Americans who can take them to the food markets to get fresh food at the garden in Fairfax. But, you know, it's all in people working together…to have land and to farm it…
>
> "…I don't know, you can sit there and have all these goals, but if no one is willing to work towards them, how are you going to make things better?" (Storyteller 194)

Also, personal barriers can be having the time, money and desire to cook the proper and healthier food. Storyteller 194 was the only one who mentioned that cost would be a barrier to practicing food sovereignty.

The Land

For all but one, the storytellers discussed ways in which the land offers ways to practice food sovereignty. Three discussed either having a garden or creating a garden in order to grow the foods that they would like to use. One discussed understanding the land for hunting and fishing. The overall consensus is that the land provides and to be a part of it can offer the reconnection to the traditional life, as well as finding alternatives to survival and finding the fresh foods needed.

According to Storyteller 4 and 48, systems that are already in place are gardens for the elders. The garden is harvested weekly and served as a salad bar for lunch. Storyteller 4's story states that, as a business standing point, this is food sovereignty. Storyteller 48 works on this elder program. It was funded through the Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A greenhouse was built there, as well as a garden. The vegetables from the garden and greenhouse are delivered to all residents in the elder's center. Due to this success, the Public Health Program and Community Health Representative Program delivered hoop houses and over 100 houseplants for 28 elder's homes. This initiative was provided to promote health and wellness, specifically in mental health.

For children, there is a camp for children ages 10-14. Storyteller 48 discussed this but did not elaborate. According to the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation, what she is referring to is a hunt camp, which is a part of a three-phase program called, "Grow, gather, hunt" (Osage Nation, 2019). The camp teaches the youth the cultural ways that the ancestors hunted. In this camp, kids learn to make spears, baskets, fish with a pole, make snares and learn archery. They also learn how to grow traditional food, learn diabetes prevention, and outdoor safety. They also learn how to preserve a garden by canning food (Osage Nation, 2019). Storyteller 48 stated that the food from the gardens would be served to the kids during the camp. Since it was fresh from the garden, the kids tended to enjoy it more and would eat multiple bowls of their vegetables – "that was really cool to see that".

Storyteller 9 and 194 state that they have a garden, and Storyteller 48 plans to have a garden. The major part of Storyteller 9's story is the garden. The film shows the mother doing soil testing with the kids. The youngest child sits by in a rocking chair while dogs run and play. Storyteller 9 tells the story of how gardens can be complicated. The family had tried gardens and greenhouses, and at times, some of the vegetables had failed to grow – "It's been a bumpy road". They had a hard time planting traditional squash. Storyteller 48 states that working full time and maintaining the gardens is a hard task. With the responsibilities of culture and community, all these things can be very taxing.

Storyteller 48 states that through the program that Storyteller 48 works with, they tried to grow a traditional garden. When searching for Wah-Zha-Zhe corn, they met a gentleman in California. He's into farming and he's Wah-Zha-Zhe. He helped Storyteller 48 retrieve Wah-Zha-Zhe corn.

Storyteller 194 has a “little garden in the backyard”. They grow wilted lettuce, tomatoes, jalapenos, peppers, cherry tomatoes, and cucumbers. Storyteller 194 estimates to have about 10 different plants growing. Storyteller 194 doesn’t know many people who have gardens. Storyteller 194 and the spouse teach their children how to grow plants. Storyteller 194 says the kids are excited to plant. The mother of Storyteller 194 used to make wilted lettuce so they would like to pursue learning how to prepare that as a meal. When Storyteller 194 was a child, the grandparents and parents had a garden at their house. They would grow them in the spring and summer.

> “We never really went without. We were never hungry that I ever knew about. My grandpa always said if his mom didn’t can peaches, they never would have made it through the depression. That’s how they lived, through canned peaches. That’s all they ate.”
> (Storyteller 194)

The grandparents also had a ranch, which is still around. The uncle had cattle and was a steer roper. Presently, he takes care of the grandparent’s land and house. Storyteller 194 expresses the joy of growing up on farm land and wishes that the children of Storyteller 194 would have that experience. Growing up on the farm, there were chickens, vegetation, cattle, a puppy and kittens. For Storyteller 194, these were a few of the things that made the experience of living on the farm delightful.

Storyteller 194’s grandparents had a garden and taught Storyteller 194’s mother how to raise a garden. Then when Storyteller 194 was a child, Storyteller 194 was taught

to raise a garden. Now, Storyteller 194 is trying to teach the children in their family about raising a garden. Storyteller 194 feels that if you start the children young, it will be become a norm and they would continue to practice growing a garden. Right now, the child is four, enjoys being out in the garden and loves watering and picking the plants.

> "I'm sure from his mom canning peaches, my Mimi's parents having a garden, which made my parents have a garden, now I have one. I think that if people start young and continue to do things like that… it (gardening) would continue to carry on. I think people not having any time, it just disappears, just through generation after generation, and people not having the land."
>
> (Storyteller 194)

Being raised to live off the land was important to Storyteller 194 growing up. Though Storyteller 194's father was not AI, Storyteller 194 learned the importance of living off the land from him. They would grow their own food and hunt the animals. Usually, they would hunt rabbit, squirrel or deer.

The brother-in-law of Storyteller 194 is Wah-Zha-Zhe. He tells Storyteller 194 about connecting with the people and being a part of the dances. The Wah-Zha-Zhe have many dances throughout the year and one is very sacred ceremony called, In-Lon-Schka (more on this later).

The spouse of Storyteller 194 is not native but practices hunting and gathering and loves living off of the land. He takes the children out to learn to shoot a gun and tells them, "you better learn to live off the land". For this family, it is good to know how to grow crops

and shoot guns because it is a way of survival. The spouse grew up hunting rabbit, squirrel and fish. The spouse also received food from the commodity subsistence food program. The spouse's family also grew a garden.

> "I just hope that my child has a garden when she gets older and she enjoys it because we're trying to make it fun for her."
> (Storyteller 194)

Health

FRESH was a health intervention study and so it was expected that there would be discussions of health. Also, food sovereignty is often related to food security so having a population that live in what is considered an obesogenic/food desert environment, the discussions of health would arise. obesogenic/food desert means that there are an abundance of small food stores, fast-food restaurants and limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and supermarkets are scarce (Gittelsohn & Rowan, 2011). In this case, three of the storytellers referenced health.

Fast food was a source that was recognized as something that affects the community's health. One issue that was discussed by Storyteller 4 is that there is more eating out in public, in fast food type settings than there is communal eating. Eating in a community setting is a traditional/relational experience that Storyteller 4 wished to uphold. Eating out a lot in restaurants has affected the health and physique of a person. Since there is a prevalence of diabetes, the proof of unhealthy eating is there. The observance from the

sister in Storyteller 4's film is that it's obvious that "we're not eating healthy". The high fat, high sugar, high processed food intake is happening, but from her perspective, she also sees that there is a change in these unhealthy eating habits, as people are becoming aware of their health food intake.

Storyteller 190 says that every town in the wah-Zha-Zhe Nation has fast food. It is where many people go to eat. Storyteller 194 has noticed that even though people from the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation come to teach the children about healthy eating and lifestyles at their schools, the children are still becoming more overweight. Storyteller 194 blames it on the rise of fast foods and that fresh foods are mostly non-existent, and fresh foods are what's important to health. Local grocery stores are not helpful in that since there is no competition, they let the food expire and get molded. Storyteller 194 rarely shops at the local grocery stores and is willing, like a large portion of the community, to shop elsewhere. Owasso, which is 40 miles away, is a common destination for Storyteller 194 to shop. The grocery store that is mostly visited is called Sprouts, because the understanding is that there are healthier foods there. Other shopping destinations are Aldi and Super Walmart. Due to the easy access of fast food, Storyteller 194 believes that it has lessened the desire for the majority of the population to grow a garden. Instead, they want the quick meal, which in turn, makes it harder for today's generation to eat healthy. If this trend continues, this will make it harder for people to change.

Though the trend of unhealthy food in the society has been a problem, there is also the acknowledgement that some traditional food is unhealthy, such as frybread. At least one of the participants doesn't acknowledge it as a traditional food, two understand it to be traditional.

According to Storyteller 9, frybread is not a traditional food because it was introduced as a ration. Flour was not a part of the diet until the United States government would come and "dump" off a bag of food and we would eat it. After that, it started being called traditional food but, Storyteller 9 insists it isn't.

> "I think that was something we lost when the government first stepped into our lives. What we commonly refer to our traditional food is not our traditional food. Frybread is not a traditional food. We as a people did not have a flour that we were frying as a real tradition, and so once our food sources, our way of life was taking over, we weren't gardening then, we weren't hunting and gathering, moving around, following our food. We were allotted our land, we were stuck here, these are your rations, that, right there, changed everything. They'd come in with their wagons, probably, who knows, and dump off bags of food and that's what we started eating and now we're calling that traditional food but those aren't our traditional foods and I think that's where we got lost. And what we refer to as our traditional foods are not nutritional foods for us – even today."
>
> (Storyteller 9)

The other two didn't elaborate on it, but as they discussed traditional foods, they would state frybread. Storyteller 4 stated that it became a tradition once they learned to cook with fatback and flour. Another traditional food that is "not a real traditional food", according to the mother in Storyteller 4's story, are meat pies. It is an old dish that is high in fat but is "loved by many".

Some of the traditional food is fried and unhealthy, according to Storyteller 4, but what is healthy is the community spirit and the gathering of people together. It is more like a soul food and it helps the mental and emotional well-being. Storyteller 4's story states that the changes in habits have also changed health. Storyteller 4 theorizes that perhaps in early traditions, the food was still eaten but the ancestors were able to maintain good health because they would walk fifteen miles a day during a hunt and setting up camp, thus maintaining physical health while eating the different traditional foods.

Culture and Traditions

All storytellers mentioned the use of culture and traditions as they relate to food. Many reflected on history and the loss of culture and traditions, but they also wanted to focus on the regaining of culture and traditions and the culture and traditions that are practiced now.

For the storytellers, the loss of culture has an effect on them as Wah-Zha-Zhe Peoples. There are a lot of things that were lost, such as the use of acorns. Storyteller 4 mentions that people used to go out and gather acorns in a basket and then grind them into what could be best resembled to flour.

Storyteller 9 states that government intervention was a result of the loss of a lot of the traditions. Storyteller 190 observes that though there was a loss, the traditions were not drastically loss because, as a whole, the Wah-Zha-Zhe have kept most of the traditions. From ancestors to now, the Wah-Zha-Zhe has tried to keep the traditions as an important

function for the growth of the Nation. For Storyteller 194, the observation that is made is that agricultural traditions are lost since there are very few Indigenous farmers anymore.

Though there are traditions lost, there are still traditional and cultural things that are being regained or maintained. One thing that is noted by Storyteller 4 is that the traditional corn is being returned. The Wah-Zha-Zhe tribe is working at regaining these traditional corns. For Storyteller 48, the regaining of food culture was important. A part of Storyteller 48's job is to plant food for the elders, and during the search for seeds, Storyteller 48's discovery was that there was ancestor seed found that was Wah-Zha-Zhe brown corn. It had come from Storyteller 48's great-great grandfather's farm. It is now sold as an heirloom seed. Storyteller 48 purchased the seed and is going to plant it. It was a "great discovery".

Teaching and raising children to follow the culture and traditional ways are also important for the tribe. For Storyteller 9, her kids are heavily involved in the culture. It's "blended in the fabric of our lives". Storyteller 9's father, who is 89 years-old, lives in the house, and having him live with them is a big part of the culture. This shows the children the necessity of taking care of family and elders. For Storyteller 190, participation in cultural activities is an important function for the children. Storyteller 190 is a cook and the children are learning how to cook.

Only one storyteller mentioned using different parts of plants for healing. Storyteller 9 says that they do smudging and brewing up teas from different herbs. Storyteller 9 mixes salves for injuries. Storyteller 9 talked about growing up with a sweat lodge in the back yard. The spouse grew up in a Catholic Church, so the traditional and the western religion blend together. The herbs that are used by Storyteller 9 is grown in the

yard. The way in which Storyteller 9 got this knowledge was from an aunt who taught the kids how to brew different drinks. Many of these practices learned were passed down in the family.

For the Wah-Zha-Zhe, much of the culture and traditions are, according to Storyteller 9, "centered around meals". There is also the use of what Storyteller 9 calls "comfort foods". The culture is strong in the use of food. When people are sick or in the hospital, the first thought is to feed everybody. Even something as simple as a husband who, on the way home, stops to get a favorite snack for a wife shows the importance of food.

Storyteller 48 mentions that cooking is probably huge in every tribe. For the Wah-Zha-Zhe it's a big deal. She is a cook and, sometimes, she cooks for other districts for funerals. This is an important tradition. When I mentioned this to Jason George (2019), the director of Bird Creek Farms, he stated that caring and feeding people for a funeral is important in the community. Much of the community will most likely know the person who has walked on so the appointed cooks would cook a meal, and Bird Creek Farms would chop wood for a fire, and they would offer the farm foods when available. Storyteller 48 is a cook who will cook for other districts during a funeral.

The various community and family connections are important. For many members of the Wah-Zha-Zhe tribe, they are one and the same. Storyteller 48 will cook for the family about once a week, which includes the parents and sibling family – about twenty people. This is the connection and community aspect that Storyteller 4 mentioned. It is a chance for people to connect, talk, and share stories. For Storyteller 48, communities still take care of each other. This is what food sovereignty is about for Storyteller 48. Storyteller 48

mentions that there may be more done for the community and families that isn't even recognized because taking care of one another is just a natural act. Storyteller 48 says that people won't know what this means until they are a part of that community and sees how it works.

> **"**Not that that's not important – what we're eating – that's, like, very important to look at, but how we're eating, I think that is important too. I think that has to do with food sovereignty. You know, when you're camping, that's a very communal experience. Whereas, that's not the norm. We don't just cook for everybody all of the time. I think that was one thing that was really impactful to people at Standing Rock, I know it was for me. I went up there before it got real crazy but everybody was pitching in, man, and there was always food. To experience that and see – this does work. This kind of way of life is possible. I think that is really powerful again because we're so indoctrinated in this capitalistic mindset and that's how we treat our food too, you know. It's like, that's the only way there is to be but that's not true. I think it's important to have those experiences where you eat communally with others to get to that real basic human understanding. This doesn't have to be so hard. We do better when we're working together, helping each other and feeding each other. That has to do with food sovereignty."
> (Storyteller 4 – Sister)

See Appendix B for a list of foods mentioned in the stories that are traditional foods still prepared in a traditional way, and foods that are no longer prepared in a traditional way or rarely prepared in a traditional way.

Bird Creek Farms

In their stories, three (4, 9, and 190) of the storytellers mentioned Bird Creek Farms. Bird Creek Farms is a farm that had its genesis in August 2014 when they needed something to do with 270 acres of land (Osage Nation, 2015). It was created for training and community development for the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation. It has communal fields to grow native heirloom crops, specifically corn and pumpkins. There are lots available for individual and community garden beds that community members can grow their plants and vegetables on. The foods grown at the farm are used to harvest for the head start and immersion program, elders, Boys and Girls Club and cultural events. The wood from the trees that surround the site are used for cultural activities, funerals, sweats, and In-Lon-Schka. The goals of the farm were to promote health, wellness and culture. It is also there to promote food sovereignty and economic development. The mission of Bird Creek Farms is to have sustainable community agriculture that serves the nation, including youth, elders, and future generations for self-sufficiency and food sovereignty (Osage Nation, 2015). These three storytellers gave a general outline of this.

> "Our nation has been involved with a project called Bird Creek Farms… We've grown traditional foods from seeds that we have gotten throughout the years...

> I've been involved in growing stuff like that and they still do that. And through Bird Creek Farms, my daughter… is learning about the traditional foods and more of the traditional things that are incorporated through food and activity." (Storyteller 190)

Storyteller 9 offered this insight with Bird Creek Farms. Storyteller 9 wanted to see more from Bird Creek Farms, such as having a bigger part of the traditional gatherings. A dream would be to see ranches and Bird Creek Farms working together. To Storyteller 9, this would be food sovereignty.

In-Lon-Schka

This is one of the most commonly discussed themes in relation to food sovereignty. It is one of the most important ceremonies in Wah-Zha-Zhe culture (Osage Nation, 2013).In-Lon-Schka is a ceremonial dance that happens at the various Wah-Zha-Zhe villages: Grayhorse (the Dwellers upon the Hilltop), Pawhuska (the Dwellers in the Thorny Thicket), and Hominy (the Dwellers in the Upland Forest). The ceremony was brought to the Wah-Zha-Zhe Peoples from the Poncas and Kaw as a gift. In-Lon-Schka means playground of the eldest son (Callahan, 1993). According to Storyteller 4, the first-born son is the only one who wears red.

In-Lon-Schka takes place for three weekends during the month of June. It is a ceremonial dance that celebrates and passes on Osage culture. It is a homecoming of sorts that is intended to unite the Wah-Zha-Zhe Peoples from all around. It is a spiritual

experience that includes singing, drumming and dancing (Osage Nation, 2013). An important aspect of In-Lon-Schka is the feeding of the community.

The dances originally had a head cook and three assistant cooks. According to Callahan (1993), it now has a head cook and seven assistant cooks. Storyteller 4 claims that the food is prepared traditionally and cooked on a fire. The food is cooked in a wood firepit. During In-Lon-Schka, there are dinners in the three communities. The groceries are brought to the communities in boxes. The reason for this, according to Storyteller 9, is that originally the food would be carried from one community to the next and it took a long time to get from one place to the other. For Storyteller 9, In-Lon-Schka is a food sovereign practice. The cooks prepare the food at the camp. After it's prepared, they bring it out and share with whomever is there. Everything is made by the cooks. Storyteller 9 dances as well the spouse. The spouse has been dancing since childhood. Storyteller 9's dad and grandmother were head cooks for six years. The family dancers go back for years. Storyteller 48's sister was asked to be a cook, but the sister got ill, due to complications of a pregnancy and Storyteller 48 stepped in as a cook.

> "I cook a lot. Culturally, my sister is the oldest daughter, you know, and my brother is the only son, and I don't know how it is in your tribe, but they are the best and they have status. My sister had been asked to be a cook on a committee during our dances and I ended up having to step in for her because she got married and got pregnant, and she had a bad pregnancy... So, I stepped in for her as a cook and I did that for a couple of drumkeepers and moved up to be a head cook and I became the

youngest head cook that we know of for our tribe and so I do cook. It's a huge deal in our tribe. It's a great honor."

(Storyteller 48)

Storyteller 38 had been a cook since age 19. Storyteller 48 continues to cook for funerals and dances. It has become a part of who she is and identity. Storyteller 48 explains that, "I would be lost without it."

Though the source book states that there is a head cook and seven assistant cooks, Storyteller 48 says that the drum keeper selects the number of cooks. The drum keeper is the person who, along with the family, is responsible for hosting and taking care of district members, as well as having various cultural responsibilities. According to Storyteller 48, generally, her district can have as much as seventeen cooks. Since being a cook is a great honor, many people from all walks of life, including "lawyers, professionals, stay at home moms…It's what they do. It's a sisterhood." It is also a great sacrifice. The days can go for 17 hours. They can get there around 7 am and be home after midnight. Along with being a ceremonial dance, it is also a community dinner that serves over 300 people.

Storyteller 48 breaks down the job of the cook in her district. When you begin, you start at the table, serving and preparing the table, where there are 8-10 people. The tables are butted up against each other. Every table has the same food on them. The set-up is significant where everything must be displayed a certain way. The foods are similarly placed on the table so that people sitting at the tables don't have to reach too far to get the food. Storyteller 190 states that there is even a traditional way to cut meat off of the bone of the hog. Storyteller 190 states that the children even participate, so the tradition and

culture is being passed down to them. They learn how to cook, how to shuck corn and so on.

According to Storyteller 48, Grayhorse got the drum from the Poncas, while Pawhuska and Hominy got the drum from the Kaws. Storyteller 48 says that not everybody is cultural, but for those who are, they are constantly learning. Each district pays for the food and no matter who shows up, stranger or not, they will be fed. There is a lot of food. It is expected to feed for twelve days. When they have snacks, the snacks are basically another meal. Storyteller 190 says that they use traditional food and the ways in which the food is prepared, is much in the same way the ancestors prepared the meals.

Themes Summary

Overall, many of the stories had similar frequencies in the themes that were discovered. Though food sovereignty was not a term that was used in their community, it is something that they perceive as being a way in which they control the intake of food but more than that it's how they carry on the traditions and culture of their Peoples. More than anything the ceremony of In-Lon-Schka has very high relevance for their experience of food sovereignty.

Many of the storytellers used basic camera work and usually did interview style storytelling and relied very little on creating thematic images. This may be due to the fact that our understanding of visual media in general is the concept of "selfies", which are photographs that are taken by oneself. Yet, the words and stories that were shared had a

huge impact and were important and moving, especially when linked together to find the themes to create an overall story.

One quote that was stated in the film of Storyteller 4 is that of which was said by the sister. She stated that “What we’re eating is important to look at, but how we’re eating is important too,” and she is referring to the community aspect of eating. How feeding everyone is an important part of food sovereignty.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The original ideas of food sovereignty were about the overall concepts of protection for peasant farmers. It was also about nutrition, sustainable methods, developing local control and social justice. These intents are surely mentioned in the films, but the main thing that's discussed is the need for tradition, culture and community – an aspect of food sovereignty but not encompassing the overall definition. For these five individuals, these may be concepts that are often thought about, but there are deeper understandings of what food sovereignty is.

An important aspect of food sovereignty is that it is a flexible definition that allows for communities to develop their own definition, to offer the citizens of a tribe the ability to express their ideas, needs and concerns to help develop food sovereignty concepts within their communities. This too also helps in practicing Indigenous methods. There are various differences but many similarities in which the storytellers expressed their concepts of themes within their stories. For further research, a larger sample, both in the sample size of the Wah-Zha-Zhe Peoples and incorporating other tribes, as well as using quantifiable data may change the analysis and either strengthen or expand the perceptions of the storytellers.

The findings were what was expected, in that culture and traditions have a strong impact on tribal peoples. The themes and stories were important in understanding that their ceremonies hold high importance for the tribal community. In relation to the IFS four key sovereignty principles, the Indigenous perspectives of the storytellers fell into many of the categories. In the principles it stated that there is a sacred or divine sovereignty (IFSNW,

2019). For the storytellers, in discussing the food, there was mention of how the food holds a spiritual place, wherein, when eating the food, you are eating the spirit of the land in which the food comes from, thus connecting you with that place.

Another thing that was not explored but may be given consideration is the concept of land as it relates to the Peoples. There are many stories and ways in which the Earth relates to the Peoples. For instance, even in this tribe, the different clans have different stories – around 24 (Burns, 2004). In one story, as written by Burns (2004), there is the discussion of the Peoples who came from the fourth upper world. It is a more elaborate story than what is written here, but as eagles, they came to the Earth when it was covered with water. With the help of Big Elk, who threw himself onto the waters four times until land came, then Big Elk called for the four winds to dry the land. He threw himself onto the earth once more and his hair became the grass and the plants. Wa kon ta brought the Earth and Sky together so that physical life – the plants and animals could exist. As the stories continue, the Wa sha she (Water People) joined the Hun ka (Earth People), Tsi Zhu (Sky People) and along the way, the Wa Sha She found the U-tah-non-dsi (Isolated Earth People) (Arkansas Archaeology Survey, 2019).

These stories show the reverence of the land and that spiritual, sacred and divine connection to the land. When exploring with tribes, it is also good to discuss the femininity of our connection to land. For many, we discuss the Earth as the Mother. In the Pueblo stories, it's two females who helped grow the plants of the Earth (Guitierrez, 1991). Also, in some Indigenous feminist theory, land is knowledge and knowing (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013). In this concept, when land is your mother, that is meant that it literally is the mother of many of the Tribal/Indigenous Peoples. As there are many (if not all) origin

stories that express the birth of us through natural elements, and for many, we come from the Earth. Amongst the Choctaw Peoples, we came from a mound from the Earth (Swanton, 2001). Land is an important topic for Indigenous Peoples, for some it's the first topic to discuss. Just discussing land in terms of food sovereignty can generate many studies and papers.

The second principle involves participation (IFSNW, 2019). This was an important theme among the storytellers. Prominent throughout was the discussion of gardens, growing the food, and using Bird Creek Farms. All of which are about harvesting strategies, whether large or small. The discussion for everyone is the discussion of passing down food traditions generationally.

In the third principle, the focus is on self-determination (IFSNW, 2019). For the participants, this, too, was an important principle. The discussions were ways in which they discussed the need to find healthier ways of eating and refraining from eating out at fast food restaurants. There are also stories of how healthy eating is important, as well as making use of culturally adapted food. The problems with finding fresh foods in grocery stores, may make it even more of a necessity to gain more freedom from the dependency on grocery stores, as well as the corporate entities that control food distribution. Some of the problems that were observed is that gaining the traditional aspects of food is complicated due to some loss of food traditions.

For the fourth principle, policy, there was limited discussions on this. Mostly talking about the way in which the rights to food sovereignty is there but the complications of practicing it are not. Some mentioned that the tribe itself is working to regain the traditional foods, such as heirloom foods, like the different corns that came from family

farms. Also, the discussion of having rights, but not being able to practice it is brought up. Perhaps, this is something that can be explored in further studies.

Having different tribes participate may change the perspective, as all tribes may not have ceremonies that focus on food. Some even focus on fasting. Finding results on those ceremonies would be interesting. Further research with other tribal communities may help in understanding food sovereignty among other tribes.

In-Lon-Schka is important for the tribe, but in the writings and reporting of this phenomena, many focus on the dancing, as opposed to the food, so there's the possibility that a larger sample size would not think of In-Lon-Schka as a food sovereignty practice but see it more as a focus on dancing. Research bias may have an effect on this study. An emic approach to this study could cause bias. As an AI/AN researcher, spending a year with this community and being very close with them may have the data be different from an outsider perspective. Another bias may be that the study incorporated qualitative data that is highly interpretive, even with the member checking, translation can fail.

It can also be understood that all these themes crossover and can be connected to other themes. Which made it complicated to compartmentalize these themes. It is also important to understand that spiritual elements need to be included in Indigenized research. And this theme, too, will cross-over into other themes. The theme cannot be separated from the spirituality and the person/culture. It is as if a part of any study will incorporate a religious study aspect to it.

As a researcher whose other purpose of taking on this study was to gain something from the storytellers. The lessons learned were far more than what would be expected if quantity data was collected. The shared stories would not allow for understanding of In-

Lon-Schka, as well as what food sovereignty would mean to the storytellers. This is an important aspect of Indigenous research. One must not just focus on the study of the participants as a statistic, though we can learn from statistical information, but without IK, the process would not be a reciprocal experience. Also, for Indigenous research, there are connections with the people, and time spent with them. This relates to the communal elements that are discussed in the films. In essence, the spiritual and the communal coexist. For, when we're talking about a community, not only does the discussions and themes pertain to to the community in just the physical domain, and beyond the individual study that is common in western research, but the community also encompasses our ancestors and future generation. Not only as it's conceptualized in food sovereignty, but in all aspects of most Indigenous communities.

Thus, just knowing the individual as singular entity will not get the full concept of the person. The researcher must know the complete cosmology of existence within an Indigenous culture. They must learn from the people in which they are collaborating with on a research and not just in the knowledge in which they seek, but the lessons that they are to be gifted to learn. This is one of the many ways to work with Indigenous Peoples and practice Indigenous research.

CHAPTER 6

REFLEXIVITY

I am an Oklahoma Chahta (Choctaw) from the southeast region of Oklahoma, in a town called Broken Bow. I spent a large portion of my life in the Choctaw Nation, and now find myself in a city called Tulsa, which is the land of the Wah-Zha-Zhe, the Tsa-la-gi (Cherokee), and the Mvskoke (Creek). I grew up with a mother, Betty Jacob, who was the first state certified language teacher and a father, Randy Jacob, who was deemed a historian, as well as a member of the tribal council, and a preacher. Both spent the majority of their lives standing up for the rights of the Choctaw Peoples and civil rights. It is also known, but not often discussed, that the Choctaw Tribe was about to lose their tribal identity in the 1970s. It was my parents and many other Choctaws who stood up against the BIA and our own tribe to ensure that our tribal sovereignty remained intact. So, these two and the other countless warriors who stood up to fight for our existence are whom I am indebted to and are the reason why I continue wanting to work with Indigenous Peoples. This may also be the reason that many people in my family have various leadership roles within the tribe, community and family.

Though I am Indigenous to this continent, it does not mean that I carry all knowledge of all Indigenous Peoples that exists, nor do I have the complete knowledge of my own Peoples. Nor do I think I ever will. Yet, if there are Peoples who are willing to share any knowledge with me, it is my goal to accept any and all things gifted to me and share what gifts I can give to them. Indigenous Knowledge is within my DNA, and so I do my best to hone the skills of continually gathering that knowledge that my People have

carried, in as much of a respectful way that I can. My whole life has been working with tribes, sharing my experiences, and sharing my knowledge as others share with me.

As a *researcher*, I have worked in studies of behavioral health as it pertains to nutrition. Yet, as an Indigenous person I continue to want to use our Indigenous Knowledge to not just look at nutrition, but all things that we are connected to: life, culture, community experience and beliefs. For the Indigenous Peoples, the understanding is that there are mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects that effects all things at all times. Western knowledge is getting there. They call it biopsychosocial. The study of food sovereignty is just the beginning of understanding these concepts.

As a moviemaker, I have done my best to share stories from a place within the dreaming, in the best way that I can translate it. My goals are to share the stories of the Indigenous Peoples as they feel best reflects their stories. My belief of Indigenous filmmaking is that I am not the auteur, but all involved in creating the story are the storytellers. I am merely a vessel who is able to carry the stories and share them because the stories have a spirit and the stories are medicine.

In working with the Wah-Zha-Zhe, I have had friends from the Nation. My cousin is married to a tribal member. We are all connected. Having spent the years with the tribe, getting to know them, being close to them, creating a friendship, being a family, I have been humbled and I want to be careful in sharing their knowledge and their stories because too often have people been careless.

I always go into a project never knowing what I will find, with the hopes of enjoying the ritual and the journey of discovery. I love story. I wanted to see what kind of stories the

Peoples would create with a camera. Everything is a story. It is the spirit and the blessing. It is the prayer and the song. It is the dance. It is the ritual. It is the healing.

I will tell you something about stories

[he said]

They aren't just entertainment.

Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,

all we have to fight off illness and death.

You don’t have anything

If you don’t have the stories.

- Leslie Marmon Silko, from *Ceremony* (2006)

CHAPTER 7

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

There are limited studies that use motion pictures as an Indigenous method for research. This study can add more to the lack of research. With Indigenous cultures, qualitative research is a strength emphasizes the importance of oral traditions and using story as a way to express AI/ANs aspects of their existence. This study made use of mostly AI/AN or ethnic researchers. All but two on the research team were female. Many studies focus on AI/ANs as a generalized description of many different tribes. Focusing on one tribal reservation should be a consideration when researching this population.

Many limitations could have affected this study. Taking samples from a study already in progress may limit a more diverse selection. Though the questions were open-ended and allowed for the storytellers to limit the questions, it may have helped to lessen the number of questions for the themes.

Many limitations could have affected this study. The member checking was done on the phone. Upon further reflection, it may be more beneficial if the member checking was done as an on-camera interview, thus adding to the visual element of the stories. Allowing the storytellers to find their own themes and stories with limited input of the outside researcher may have affected the study. The questions asked may have been too heavy, so it may be recommended to give the storytellers a smaller selection or a singular theme to explore. Future studies should allow for the outside researcher to shoot the stories for the storytellers. In three phases it could be the storyteller shoots their story, the outside researcher does an on-camera interview with the storyteller (member checking), then a

third phase would give the choice to the storyteller to either continue making their story and do one more member checking, or have a small camera crew shoot their film while they direct.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest that for the storytellers, food sovereignty, at a personal/community level, means maintaining culture and traditions. Ecology and sustainability are important, but not the main priority. The majority of the storytellers are consumers and appear to not focus on the major part of the food systems and policies, yet many of them did express interest and opinions on the political factors of food sovereignty. The main theme to emerge is the consumption of food as it relates to tradition, culture, community and ceremony. All storytellers hold high importance on feeding others.

The findings suggest that the most important aspect of food sovereignty for the storytellers is that the ceremony dances, In-Lon-Schka, are held in the highest esteem. For In-Lon-Schka, the dances are sacred and important – you are not to take photographs or shoot video, if you are to participate in the ceremony, then you are only there to observe, unless invited to participate in the function that is assigned (Osage nation, 2019). Everyone who participates in the dance have an important and sacred job, and among those are the jobs of the cooks. The cook's contribution is not limited to just In-Lon-Schka, but it is something that is practiced year-round, such as when storyteller 48 expressed that not only does one cook for In-Lon-Schka, but they also cook for the family, when there's a funeral, and for other dances.

Though In-Lon-Schka is an important aspect of food sovereignty for the storytellers, it is sacred and should not be *studied* but experienced. For further research on food sovereignty, among the Wah-Zha-Zhe Peoples, exploring the stories of the larger

community will help in understanding their perceptions of food sovereignty, as well as exploring the stories of Bird Creek Farms and its goals of practicing food sovereignty and feeding the community.

Though these stories were funded through NIH, the stories themselves belong to the individuals, families, communities and tribe of the Wah-Zha-Zhe people so it is at their discretion whether these stories will be shared.

Now, it wouldn't be a true collaboration if I didn't allow the storytellers to have their input. So, here are words that express the importance of Indigenous Knowledge, the importance of Indigenous research and the importance of Motion picture Storytelling and understanding of food sovereignty:

Storyteller 194

> "…To integrate healthier lifestyles, a healthier way of living and eating and providing for ourselves. I just think that with today's society, that's going to be hard for the generation now. The generation before and the traditions before, that's what they had to do. Now, we don't have to do that. So, it has to be a want…it's a want for me to teach my children to eat healthy and to be healthy and to exercise and to eat fresh food but when people don't have that mindset and can be like, oh, yeah it was great when we used to eat like that or when grandma and grandpa had a garden or we used to go hunting or we had fresh meats but I don't

really care, or it's just too hard or there's just not enough time, it's going to be hard to change..."

Storyteller 9

SPOUSE: As long as we're making progress and it hits the mark occasionally, you know, the Osages have a word, it's called wah-sh-kon, that means *do your best.* So, that's kind of what we're trying to do. It's not perfection because, again, as long as we're trying to make the progress, like our garden, as long as we're putting in the efforts to make it better, I feel like that makes a positive difference in our children's lives, and whenever they see us doing things like that, being a good mentor, giving them a good example of what hopefully will be good things to do, things in life, and they'll carry it on in their lives. They'll pass some of those good things along to their kids. It's a good way.

Storyteller 190

"To my family, I raised my kids to appreciate that same aspect of traditional cultural foods, how to prepare them and what's it like for our community versus other communities…

"The Osage community always has the food as an important component…

"So, yes, I believe the majority of my community does participate and believe in food sovereignty."

Storyteller 4

SISTER: When a woman is pregnant and she's eating the food, that's important to that baby that's like, that's where they're from…

MOTHER: Well, there's the spirits in all the food that you eat…So, if you're eating food here on this continent while you're in gestation, those spirits are feeding that child, so that child comes into this world with the spirit life of that place where it was fed. It makes you native to that place.

Storyteller 48

"It was a huge surprise to me, although my sister knew about, and she's the one that told me about it. But we had found Osage brown corn and through my sister and then I contacted a couple of other people to find out some history about where this seed came from. I found out that this seed was actually from my great-great grandfather's farm. His name is Roanhorse. He was a medicine man for Grayhorse, and that Osage brown corn is from his garden and now it's sold from heirloom seeds. That's something that was surprising to me and just has piqued my interest even more in growing my own food. We have purchased some of those seeds for the corn…so through all of this it has been a great discovery and something that has helped me, and my family learn more about our ancestors.

"Also, something else that I will never forget, I was a teen, this is just a cultural tidbit story, during our ceremonial dances in June, at our Grayhorse District, our town crier had told us a story, he was old to me back then, he was probably at least 80-85…he told us a story of my great-great grandfather. When he was a child, my great-great grandfather, Roanhorse, had saved his people, he was Ponca, and they were starving. They traveled over to Grayhorse and he fed them all. He fed them and kept them throughout the whole winter for months. He said if it wasn't for him, they all would have died…it just goes to show what food can do. It's more than just *eat healthy*, it truly can take care of people and it is something that's passed from generation to generation.

"These are my stories. Thanks for this opportunity."

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Appendix A

List of themes and questions offered to the storytellers to explore that were introduced during each cultural night presentation.

Description	Suggested themes/questions
The first set of questions were created for STORYTELLER to find themes to explore for their stories.	1. Is food sovereignty a term used in your community? Why or why not? 2. What, if anything, does the term "food sovereignty" mean to you personally, to your family, to your community? 3. Does your community want to preserve its cultural/traditional agriculture or food traditions? If so, what ways are they doing? 4. Do you feel your agriculture and food traditions have been lost in your community? If so, why and how? 5. How are these traditions being passed on to future generations? 6. What do people in your community eat? How do they fit in food sovereignty and traditional foods? 7. Explore one of the 6 sovereignty principals: o Focuses on food for people. o Values food providers. o Localizes food systems. o Makes decisions locally. o Builds knowledge and skills. o Works with nature. 8. Tell us the Wah-Zha-Zhe Nation Food Sovereignty Story in your words and from your perspective. 9. Thinking about the Native history/Native food history slide (Figure 1), explore more of what was discussed and presented, adding your own personal reflections. You may also add more to that story that we may have missed that you think is important. 10. During the presentation in week 11, we got several examples of tribes who are addressing their food sovereignty rights, either through community or through policy. These are large ideas. You may be able to practice these ideas on an individual/family level. Were you influenced by any of these to practice on a family level, and what could you do that may have possibilities of expanding into the community/tribal level? Also, thinking about the discussion points, what do we need to

	understand and what do we need to improve upon for the future of food sovereignty? 11. In week 11, we discussed the 5 inter-related strategies of food. Which one do you think would be most realistic in doing right now and explore why? The 5 inter-related strategies: a. Build a community mindset for healthy foods b. Increase local agricultural & food production c. Generate local food economies d. Integrate local foods into community outlets e. Ensuring Sustainable development and Practices 12. There was a list of key findings and shared themes at the end of week 11. All of them were interesting and worth exploring. For the purpose of Motion Picture Storytelling, I would love for you to share stories and storytelling.
The second set of questions were a set of themes they could further explore if they wish	1. Do you know where your community's food supply comes from? a. How does it get to your community? b. Where do they get their food? 2. What other resources (and how much) are required to access food that you eat? 3. How would your community get food if a natural or other disaster stopped shipments? 4. Think about the last few meals you have eaten - how much of that food could have been produced locally? 5. Who decides what foods are available in your community (at the grocery store, delivered by the commodities program, etc.)? 6. Are there local producers? What do they produce? 7. Who decides what's grown? Where is local food processed? 8. What does nutritious mean to members in your community? 9. Is your community's food nutritious? Is it safe? Is it reliable? Do people pay a fair price for it? 10. Is there any other part of the key findings and shared themes portion in week 11 that you would like to explore or share? If so, please do. a. Sharing and preserving cultural knowledge b. Sharing stories and storytelling c. Food based activities and demonstrations d. Physical activity e. Nutrition education f. Programs designed for children and youth g. Curriculum development h. Food sovereignty

	i. Diabetes prevention j. Economic development and food related enterprises k. Increasing the availability of traditional foods l. Issues of affordability, availability, and accessibility m. Language preservation n. Sustainable agriculture and growing practices o. An advocacy vehicle for Native food systems 11. What is the relationship between food insecurity and food sovereignty? 12. What are the main drivers of food insecurity in your community? 13. How have historical or current governmental feeding programs helped your community? 14. How have these same programs disrupted local foods and local food-system control? 15. In your community, is healthy, nutritious and/or traditional food considered a "right," like clean air, water and an education? 16. How do people in your community learn about food and its impact on health? 17. Do you know the costs to your community in medical bills, lost time at work, and spiritual well-being for unhealthy community members? 18. How does food shape the world we live in? 19. In your community, is healthy, nutritious and/or traditional food considered a "right," like clean air, water and an education?

APPENDIX B

List of Traditional Wah-Zha-Zhe Foods.

This is not a comprehensive list, but a short list of what traditional foods were discussed during the creation of the motion picture stories.

Storyteller 4 and 194. According to Storyteller 194, Storyteller 4 and Storyteller 4's family, these are some traditional foods that are no longer or rarely prepared traditionally.

Foods still prepared traditionally	**Foods no longer or rarely prepared traditionally**
- Yonkapins - Hominy - Squash - Corn beef - -Meat gravy - Corn soup - Frybread - pork - buffalo - elk - deer - Bear - Wild onions - Persimmon - Wild blackberry - Paw paws - Grape dumpling	- Deer jerky - Cow jerky - Turkey jerky - Mushroom roots - Pemmican - Turtle - Skunk - Frog legs - Sandplum