UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# THE TALKING STICK WAY

# AN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2017

THE TALKING STICK WAY:
AN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

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# Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my ancestors whose lives, sacrifices and courage have provided inspiration and reasons for me to undertake work that will provide guidance and hope for researchers, Indigenous or non, who like me engage more holistic perspectives of what we do and what our work contributes to through relational and humanizing ways of knowing, being and doing.

# Acknowledgements

Without family and friends who have "put up smoke" on my behalf, I could not have accomplished this next step of my academic journey. I wish to especially thank my eldest daughter Dani, who became my "roomie" just after I started graduate work and whose presence helped me to both stay focused and reasonably sane throughout this journey. She, along with our beagle Foley, helped me achieve a life-balance with their loving distractions.

As well, I wish to thank all the Indigenous researchers and mentors who have patiently given of their time, thoughts and words so that I might more fully understand what it means to be in a community of warriors whose work is far beyond that of employment or study. I join other Indigenous scholars in a belief that our work represents a sacred oath to our own, other peoples and other-than-humans of this world and beyond, as we are all part of humanity's story.

I wish to also acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Sean O'Neill, whose encouragement and support of my research vision, in all its versions, reflects mentorship and friendship. Within our many conversations we always found our way toward a visit about the wonderful world and joys of music. In this I found personal inspiration amidst what would seem to be an unrelated topic to that of my research question. It was not unrelated though, as there is a rhythm and tempo required to the work we do as researchers and without that understanding we become lost. I thank Sean for helping me see my way through. I hope to always bring honor to him and the academic lineage he represents, which now includes me. Through this study I have a greater appreciation of the relevance for on-going preparation to do research as practice of researcher professional development.

I also wish to thank my committee members, Dr.'s Dan Swan and Sam Duwe, whose work within archaeology and material culture inspires me to believe that there can be no true inquiry to human life and its meanings without a collaboration between what is social, cultural and material. It is my belief that through stories produced from such 'ally' relationships we have the means to understand life at a deeper level through asking deeper questions. As an Indigenous researcher, these stories inspire me to believe research is truly a conversation that motivates us to engage projects that furthers hope of a better way of being in relationship with one another and other-than-humans that can provide mutual benefit. With these ways, we can then promote research as models of a worldview that centers relationality through its practices of care that are instructional, inspirational and possibly life sustaining.

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# Abstract


The Talking Stick Way: An Indigenous research methodology
for engaging diverse global conversations

This study explores persistent gaps in knowledge concerning the relevance, presence and benefit of Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. Investigation, from an Indigenous relational perspective, reveals the topic is far from exhausted and required a deeper and thicker approach; one that disrupts dominate research approaches and western-based mentalities about who should be studying whom. This study was guided by a shared cultural knowledge, the Talking Stick—a mnemonic artifact imbued with an Indigenous philosophy of communication reflecting four values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility as a theoretical framework. These were operationalized through the creation of the Talking Stick Way—the methodology utilized for this study. Conversations about use of an Indigenous knowledge as a research approach, revealed five critical sub-questions that prompted a two-part study with three sites of inquiry. Mixed-methods were utilized to investigate non-Indigenous researcher practices, the use of the Talking Stick Way within non-Indigenous research, and use of a physical Talking Stick, that resulted in the 'birth' of a 'Signing' Stick. Results revealed a need for further understanding of what are Indigenous methodologies and researcher self-knowing and 'teaming' as non-Indigenous researcher development. These are addressed through the creation of a map, referred to as An Indigenous Way of Doing Research. As well, the definition of community is extended to a global scale which challenges concepts of collaborative research, yet also increases the value of Indigenous researcher skills outside Indigenous contexts. Ultimately this study offers a transformative space for consideration of cross-culture use of Indigenous methodologies and their burgeoning implications for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers that further enables use of a relational worldview for creation of projects in humanization.

# I

## The Gist of the Story

*After school one day, I was at the kitchen table unloading my backpack. It was stuffed full, again, with flyers handed out at the tribal school I attended at Fort Washakie. As an eighth grader, I was a prime target for non-Indigenous researchers studying Shoshone lifeways. Choosing one of the flyers, I went into the living room and sat across from my uncle, who was repairing a horse bridle. "Why do they do this?" I said showing him the flyer. He glanced at it. I continued, "People come to us and say, 'Here's your solution. Now what's your problem?' They don't ask us first what we need or think. They lure us with sports equipment and food, to get information. They 'study' us, then leave. How does this help us?" My uncle nodded and said, "They think they know us already from what they've read. They don't hear what we say even when we do speak. If they did, they could better understand who we are and why, and if we need their help." He looked over at me and said, "But, they don't really want to know because they believe their ways are the only ways of being and doing things." He shook his head, then added, "I think they behave this way because they have forgotten who they are as human beings." With a heavy sigh, I crumpled the flyer and went outside to sit on the porch. The afternoon wind starting to blow, as I thought about my uncle's words.*

*As years went by, I continued to observe the way non-Indigenous researchers went about their work. They still rarely asked what made us happy and proud Shoshone people. Even when the time came where we 'collaborated' in studies, our voices were tucked behind or within the dominant voice of the researchers. They never asked if our knowledge—our 'good' ways—with their meanings unaltered by western mentalities, could be helpful to them. They never asked what we thought of them.*[1]

[1] Within Indigenous research methodologies it is common to begin with a personal story to frame the context and question and to also locate the researcher within the study and heuristically—at a personal level (Absolon 2010/2005; S. Wilson 2010; Hampton 1995; Moustakas 1990).

Tsaan be'tchu! Good day.

To introduce this work, I need to first acknowledge my homelands, ancestors and then myself[2]. I was raised on my people's ancestral lands—that once extended throughout much of modern day western America, yet since the 1800s has been greatly diminished. "Home" is in Wyoming, where 2.4 million acres of Wind River mountain range and its foothills are now referred to as the Wind River Indian Reservation. Through my mother, I am Eastern Shoshone and from my father I am of Metis Cree and Scottish heritage. I am an Indigenous woman and this self-identification and positioning within an academic work may trouble some readers. Yet, it is an honest way to approach the subjective nature of this work that also reveals my cultural preferences, biases and politically-based experiences (L.T. Smith 2012; G. Smith via Kovach 2009).

The story I shared to open this chapter encapsulates the topic of this study and the basis for my research question, which has haunted me most of my life. I present these to you through Story—an Indigenous way of sharing, and what more natural and iconic version of human expression exists? Stories move to and fro and go in circles (Cruikshank 1998). In these ways Story reflects the iterative process of doing research, especially when they include reflexive methods (Srivastava and Hopwood 2009; Coffey 1999). Stories occur in many forms and have at least one crucial objective, a desire to share knowledge.

I provide this thesis as a form of written storytelling—as stories, from an Indigenous perspective, embody our theories about life and living and how relationships are created and maintained, and as such represent a holistic interdependent reality limited only by our own imaginations (Howe 1999). In these ways, Story is an Indigenous methodology that creates a space for you and me to share experiences through this thesis. Herein, along

[2] It is appropriate for Indigenous people to introduce themselves through sharing their relationship with land, culture and family that has influenced their personal worldviews—this "is required by the Indigenous axiology and methodology of relational accountability" (S. Wilson 2008; Absalon and Willett 2005).

an undulating path, we will wend amidst past and present spirit-filled and temporal conversations that engage a diversity of people and other-than-humans from near and far.

This is what stories do, as they cannot help but include others (Mucina 2011). In this space, there also resides hope that if you hold to a non-Indigenous worldview or are unfamiliar with an Indigenous way of doing research, you can find in this work a commonality with me in the realization we are both human beings and part of a larger story. This essential fact of relationality can assist with the opening of minds to possibilities of what that entails. Story helps us to fuse our humanity into a common direction—a theory—and in the venue of this thesis, story assists in recognizing, acknowledging and utilizing knowledge from seemingly disparate places so as to enable a project in humanization (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017).

Through the design and accomplishment of this study per the tenets of huu'pi daigwap—Talking Stick, an Indigenous philosophy of communication—we are better able to understand that research is a diverse yet global conversation—a story—and as such requires a duty of care. My Shoshone elders, Rupert Weeks (1981) and John Washakie (2004; 2017), share stories from our ancestors about a way of being and caring for one another that requires first being a good listener and the importance of intentions. Acoma storyteller, Simon Ortiz (1977), reminds us that we are all children of the same family—the human family—and we must take care of one another and teach each other how to do this in ways that "fill us up" and benefits all life; and "if a person has no stories, they are an empty person" (Tohe 2017).

Well, I have many stories to share with you.

The way research is accomplished within Indigenous communities and who benefits from it remains a heated discourse within academia and within these communities as well. In fact, for most Indigenous peoples, *research* is a "dirty word" (L. T. Smith 1999). As a result, Indigenous scholars have and continue to develop research methodologies derived

from their own cultural knowledges and shared worldviews. After all, "Indigenous peoples have always had their own ways of exploring, developing, and sharing knowledge" (Hart 2017). With increased use of these ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003), they are proving to be more appropriate and culturally sensitive ways to address the needs of Indigenous peoples (L.T. Smith 2012). However, what has yet to be addressed, from an Indigenous perspective, is "how might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts?"

I believe the season has arrived for such a question that engages deeper thinking about the broader perspective of relationality regarding research practices. Lakota scholar, Vine Deloria, Jr (1997), suggests: "Every society needs educated people, but the primary responsibility of educated people is to bring wisdom back into the community and make it available to others so that the lives they are leading make sense" (4). I ask that we expand this thinking and consider, we are 'all related'—as humans and other-than-humans—within the web of life, and as such, represent a "global community."

From a relational "global community" perspective, all knowledges have relevance and may be utilized in mutually beneficial ways. With this thinking we are enabled to narrow the oppositional binary and hierarchal perceptions (L.T. Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Porsangor 2004; Cook-Lynn 1997; Crazy Bull 1997a) held about the scientific value and practical usefulness of Indigenous knowledges within non-Indigenous contexts—especially when applied to researcher preparation, study design and conduct.

The approach to my research question appears, on the surface, to be rather obvious. Yet, I now understand engaging such a question, from an Indigenous perspective, is anything but. Such a question will not and has not gone unchallenged—by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and individuals (Hart et al 2017; T. Ingold 2017; Cajete 2015; L. Lambert 2014; M. Walter 2013; D. Rasmussen 2013; B. Chilisa 2012; M. Kovach 2011, 2010; Carjuzza and Fenimore-Smith 2010, L. Grande 2008, S. Wilson 2008; T. McGhee 2008; Guba and Lincoln 2005; L. T. Smith 1999; Rigney 1999; V. Deloria, Jr. 1997). These

challenges have provided rationales, though, for why such a question is necessary to be investigated and the way this study has been designed and accomplished.

This thesis additionally addresses five sub-questions, derived from critically reflecting on conversations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, as part of 'reviewing present knowledge', about my question and challenges presented through my literature review. These sub-questions are: what are Indigenous research methodologies; should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and; are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

Few studies presently exist that specifically investigate, from an Indigenous perspective, the presence and use of Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. "From an Indigenous perspective" is an important aspect of this study, as it is key to the conception of the primary question, the revelation of sub-questions, design of the approach, and the analysis that created my conclusions. What this means is, I have followed the consensus about principles that guide our understanding of what Indigenous research methodologies are. Best practices and protocols, as provided by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and those from my own experience working with Indigenous knowledges, have also been utilized. This enabled me to create a "lens" from a shared Indigenous knowledge and to operationalize its four representative values, as principles, to guide the design of this study's methodology; which also becomes the Indigenous research methodology I look for within non-Indigenous contexts for evidence of its use.

To be noted, is the precedence set by this study's approach. Through an Indigenous perspective for engaging inquiry about cross-cultural use of Indigenous knowledges as research methodologies, I disrupt dominate research approaches and western-based mentalities about who should be studying whom, and also a perceived value of Indigenous researcher skills utilized outside Indigenous contexts.

Regarding previous studies, I take note of three: Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach's 2011 study, "Toward an IK-Friendly Pedagogy in Mainstream Classrooms: A single site pilot study of non-Indigenous faculty perspectives on integrating Indigenous Knowledges into their course instruction", looks at the challenges of integrating Indigenous Knowledges into general course instruction.

Another is Cree scholar Michael A. Hart's 2017 project with Silvia Straka and Gladys Rowe, shared through his article "Working Across Contexts: Practice Considerations of Doing Indigenist/Anti-Colonial Research". Hart suggests 'teaming' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars as an experiential exercise in understanding non-Indigenous researcher intentions and dynamics of co-creating knowledge that may potentially reify colonial power and oppression exemplified through most western-Euro research methodologies.

Third, is Tewa scientist and scholar Gregory Cajete's (2015) work shared through his study and book, "Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire." Cajete stresses the context of community as being the medium for the "4Rs", he presents, and are to be understood and learned as sustainable knowledge that also reflects relationality. From his own Tewa traditions Cajete utilizes a storytelling methodology to define "community" as that which includes the whole of human existence, including other-than-humans, that also decenters humans from the web of life. With this definition of community, he proposes Indigenous pedagogy as the means for 21st century knowing, learning and remembering of ways that are healing, uniting and ultimately mutually beneficial.

Most related research to-date pertains to use of Indigenous methodologies *within* Indigenous communities and contexts. Recently these include studies that provide conversation about and guidelines to address concerns over the protection of Indigenous knowledges and use of them by non-Indigenous researchers. Overall, where we do find utilization of Indigenous-based knowledge within non-Indigenous contexts, the focus is usually within

biodiversity projects. Yet, these do not reflect use of Indigenous methodologies, as the research has not been mutually beneficial and privileged western-Euro approaches that essentially "mine" for Indigenous knowledge that is utilized for the sole benefit of non-Indigenous peoples. Primarily, scholarship from an Indigenous perspective, related to education, health, environmental studies, postcolonial theory—as it were—and decolonizing methodologies come closest to the topic of my study. I share further information about this context in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

As there is a dearth of research, from an Indigenous perspective, regarding "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts," I attempt to provide a space to further understanding of what Indigenous research methodologies are and to learn about their presence and usefulness within non-Indigenous contexts. I approached this work through an Indigenous way of doing research that begins with "preparing to-do research" that entails exercises to understand my socio-cultural position. This knowledge then assisted me in creating an anthropological "lens", constituted from the philosophy of the Talking Stick—a shared Indigenous perspective of communicating in good and right ways—represented by four values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. Then, these were operationalized to design this study's methodology, the Talking Stick Way; which also becomes the Indigenous research methodology I "gaze" within non-Indigenous contexts for evidence of its use.

To address my research question and the five critical sub-questions, I went about my study in two parts: first by focusing on the beginning part of my primary question, "how might we understand…Indigenous methodologies…", and the first four sub-questions: what are Indigenous research methodologies; should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and; how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers.

Investigating these created Part 1 of this thesis and primarily responds to results from experiences and knowledge gained through preparing-to-do research and Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices. Therein I gained new understandings of my thesis topic and question through a mixed-methods approach (Creswell 2013; Porsangor 2004)—that utilizes both Indigenous methods and congruent "ally" methods found within a qualitative research approach. Inquiry tools were: review of present knowledge, natural conversations, researcher reflexive journaling, participant observation, and participant reflexivity through transformative-based questionnaire. As a result, I provide a summary that reflects a consensus among Indigenous scholars of "what are Indigenous research methodologies." As a new understanding, I also create and include a "map" that describes an Indigenous way of doing research, that adapts and extends that of Shawn Wilson's "Elements of an Indigenous Methodology" (2016), which entails a five-element process. I became familiar with Wilson's work and discussed my thoughts with him and received permission to enhance and extend his model.

My map, provides an eight-element process and the creation of it, in its expanded form, occurred inadvertently as I reflected on what was said and seen while conducting my study (Kahakalau 2004). Ultimately, I believe this way of knowing has arrived within the 'season' it is needed, as I broaden consideration of Indigenous research methodologies as a lens to peer within non-Indigenous specific contexts.

In referring to this 'map' as "An Indigenous Way to Do Research", significance is given to the word "an"; as "teachings come from many places" (Kovach 2009:50) and while I subscribe to a collective consensus of characteristics and principles of what Indigenous research methodologies are, I provide here only my version of what one could be. This map has also become a necessary new knowledge and focal point of this study, as it not only provides additional explanation of *what* Indigenous methodologies are, it also provides a means to understand their construction and how to possibly better recognize them. As well,

this map provides needed guidance as to how they can be created with respect for and attention to concerns of misrepresentation and inappropriate use of Indigenous knowledges. I see this map as a pedagogical tool, assisting with researcher professional development and the narrowing of gaps in knowledge of how Indigenous research methodologies are beneficial in non-Indigenous contexts.

This is expressly noted through an initial element within the map: "preparing-to-do research." Accomplishing the tasks of this element assists researchers in determining their socio-cultural position, which logically informs the remainder of a research project's design (Creswell 2013; Porsangor 2004) as it can address "why would a person like me, ask a question like that."

This process is especially helpful for Indigenous researchers who are not familiar with an Indigenous way of doing research as it extends their personal knowledge, skill sets and professional value through responsible use of Indigenous knowledges as research methodologies within both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts.

First Nation scholar, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011), speaks to this in her work, "Dancing on our Turtle's Back", wherein she reminds us that it is our responsibility, as Indigenous peoples, to share our values as collective knowledges to promote holistic ways of being. This is also supported by the work of Marie Battiste (2002), who addresses the need to recognize Indigenous knowledges as innovative and humanizing ways to reform colonial-based education systems for the benefit of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, instructors and administrators. I interpret these works as a call to be useful with my knowledges and skills, as an academic Indigenous researcher, for the betterment of our world. In these ways Indigenous research methodologies, being relationally-based, are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts.

It is also through an Indigenous way of preparing-to-do research, as a focused understanding of one's socio-cultural position, we can address a rising need for non-Indigenous researchers to explore a relational worldview. Simpson (2001:145) puts it this way,

> Outside researchers [who] are willing to spend time looking inside themselves, uncovering their own biases, and privileges and [who] are willing to learn *from* our people—not *about* Aboriginal peoples, but about themselves and their place in the cosmos—they are willing to be transformed, in a sense, they are willing to be *developed*.

What this means is the tenets and protocols of an Indigenous way of doing research are encouraged for use as researcher development and practice (S. Wilson 2008). Consider what Hawaiian scholar Renee Pualani Louis (2007) shares, "Indigenous methodologies do not privilege Indigenous researchers because of their Indigeneity, since there are many 'insider' views, and these are thus suitable for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers." Many other Indigenous scholars agree that within their communities there are many 'voices' who contribute to the ways of knowing, being and doing that their people engage and sometimes these 'ways' are also shared-ways among other Indigenous peoples. Additionally, important to note is the agreement that Indigenous methodologies are founded on epistemologies that center on an ecosystems approach to cultural development (Medin et al 2013). This means "cultural elements co-develop and may reinforce one another" (1). This opens-up consideration of Indigenous methodologies as models of ways to do research design that reflect other cultural philosophies as research frameworks.

Choctaw scholar Eber Hampton (1995), responding to the 'anthropological turn' toward more interpretive theoretical paradigms and methodologies, called for researcher self-reflection—especially regarding intentions—for doing research as an improvement to the way research is accomplished. This holds potential for non-Indigenous researchers to consider and experience Indigenous philosophies and methodologies, as models of designing and conducting research, through "teaming" opportunities (Hart 2017).

This would also assist in understanding how to answer the call for non-Indigenous researchers to constitute and contribute their own *cultural* worldviews to the process of research design and conduct that is mutually beneficial, thus becoming part of knowledge banks that reflect a human global community (Rasmussen 2013).

Additionally, this process of researcher preparation and approach to designing humanizing projects assists in decolonizing those western-Euro practices and ideologies that are essentially shackling devices that homogenize learning experiences (Kovach 2009) and goes against an Indigenous perspective that "knowledge for knowledge sake is a waste of time" (Louise 2007:131 citing Meyer 2003:57 and Crazy Bull 1997b). Research that is not beneficial to the quality of life for the community involved has little value. I apply this sentiment to the broader definition of community expressed through this thesis, which is an opportunity for understanding a relational worldview.

It is also an opportunity for methodology to become a focal point of research, which contrasts with the western-fashion of centering research on methods (S. Wilson 2008). Within an Indigenous way of doing research, methodology is the "interface" between relational philosophies about existing in the world in mutually beneficial ways and the means to accomplish this.

Overall, through the work found in Part 1, new knowledge is gained that provides understanding how research accomplished as a relational 'worldview in practice' with congruent methods, can better enable projects in humanization (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017; Freire 1978). Gaining a deeper awareness of ourselves that problematizes researcher practices (Radloff 2016), can help ensure all voices are heard and responded to, and this (re)conceptualizes how research can be a tool for improving how we see and study our world in ways that are mutually beneficial.

As Part 2 of this thesis, I engaged additional practice of the methodology I created to accomplish this study, as provided through discussion of the process detailed in the "map" in Part 1. Recall, this methodology exemplifies my study's framework, that is based on the Talking Stick philosophy of communication, whose values I operationalize as principles and refer to as the Talking Stick Way. This Indigenous philosophy and methodology enables understanding of the ways research is being accomplished or not, according to the

values and principles of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility—the "4Rs" (Cajete 2015; Weber-Pillwax 1999).

As stories move in concentric circles, this study's methodology—the Talking Stick Way—is not only the methodology I use to investigate the remainder of my primary question, "[are] Indigenous research methodologies relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts" and the fourth and fifth sub-questions: "How can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous scholars," and "Are they [Indigenous research methodologies] already being utilized within non-Indigenous contexts." The Talking Stick Way is also *the* Indigenous research methodology I look for within non-Indigenous contexts.

Part 2 responds to results from Inquiry Site 2: Review of non-Indigenous research projects. Therein, I looked for the presence, use and benefits of the Talking Stick Way within non-Indigenous contexts through literature review. I highlight a community building project that utilized the Talking Stick (Vaugniaux 2000) and contrast this study with one accomplished by an Indigenous researcher (Cajete 2015).

I also include results from Inquiry Site 3: An international public event, specifically a gathering of deaf women of color. Through mixed-methods (Creswell 2013; Porsangor 2004)—such as natural conversation, participant observation, researcher participation, transformative-based questionnaire, and reflexive journaling—use of the Talking Stick methodology was introduced and observed within a gathering of American and International deaf women of color at an annual conference. Activities entailed introduction of a physical Talking Stick—as a mnemonic artifact—created specifically for the gathering, and the telling of stories about its origin and use, and the amazing "birthing" of it as a 'Signing' Stick that was then utilized in a Circle Gathering.

There are special considerations and limitations to creating and accomplishing a study such as I have done. First, the designating term "Indigenous" is still contested by many of the peoples' it is situated to represent. For example, in the Americas the term is

more readily accepted as meaning tribal and native peoples who are original to a physical landscape and who have been subject to Imperialism and colonization. In Canada, the term is not a first choice and instead "First Nations" is utilized. In Australia, the term "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" is preferred, but recently there is movement toward adopting "First Nations" as a term to represent a global collective of original peoples. I have chosen to use the term "Indigenous" or "First Nations", sometimes interchangeably, as it reflects my personal heritage and experiences.

As well, the term "non-Indigenous" has considerable limitations associated with it. I have chosen to use this term per my interpretation and experiences as a Shoshonean Indigenous woman, native to the country settlers named America. I understand this term as providing recognition of differences in cultural heritage, of an identity referred to as being "un-rooted" (Weil 1952) and a social perspective that reflects a worldview polar to that of being relationally based. My use of the term "non-Indigenous", within this study, depicts contexts that are not situated as a primary part of an Indigenous community or event. Thus, this definition includes non-Indigenous researcher practices as contexts for this study.

While this thesis does not focus on the much discussed and ensuing discourse debating the quantitative relevancy—or validity—of Indigenous methodologies within science based research, it does provide information to the conversation as to why use of Indigenous epistemologies—ways of knowing—and methodologies—ways of doing—continue to be a contested space within the academy (Hart et al 2017; Kovach 2009; S. Wilson 2008; L.T. Smith 1999). My personal experiences with this reality have provided additional rationale for investigating the understanding, presence and benefits of Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

Additionally, for clarity, my use of the word "relevant" within this study's primary research question does not assume Indigenous research methodologies require a form of non-Indigenous authority for use outside Indigenous contexts. This is supported by Cree

scholar Shawn Wilson, who through his work (2008) subscribes to and states, ""There should be no need for us to constantly justify, validate or change our work to fit foreign research paradigms" (127).

I came to intimately experience this statement, as one of the challenges of investigating my question was to get beyond the assumption—or academic conditioning—that I required authority from a non-Indigenous source, to turn an Indigenous research "lens" toward non-Indigenous contexts. This challenge was felt both as a subconscious response within myself and in conversations with others. Thus, early on in my research I opted to revise my study question to, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are *present* and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts." With the word "present" utilized, I no longer mentally "tripped" over the use of the word "relevant" and was able to access and gain new understandings of the knowledge I have encountered through this study. Reflecting on the thoughts and questions of Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors as well as study participants about the purpose of this study and perceptions of utilizing an Indigenous knowledge as a research tool and within non-Indigenous contexts prompted me to restructure this thesis into two parts.

I have followed a Shoshonean and Indigenous-shared epistemology—ways of knowing—for creating the framework and methodology for this study. I have also chosen congruent methods which include "ally" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008) methods of Qualitative research—an alternative western-Euro research paradigm—to exemplify relationality and to utilize the most appropriate methods for my study (G. Smith via Kovach 2009). In this way, my study engages a mixed-method approach reflecting the understanding that Indigenous methodologies do not reject non-Indigenous research methods nor replace other research methodologies (Porsangor 2004; L.T. Smith 2012).

As well, Indigenous methodologies are not a version of pan-Indianess (Kovach 2009) albeit many reflect shared beliefs among Indigenous peoples, yet they are always understood in the plural as they are numerous and diverse (Tuck 2015). Nor are Indigenous

methodologies a recasting of native knowledges as they are based on foundational ways of knowing, being and doing that have existed for eons. What though is recast are ideas about knowledge. Once western-Euro academia dismissed native knowledges as superstition and "animism", yet today this knowledge is referred to as "Indigenous science" (Cruickshank 1998:50).

As well, most native knowledges chosen as useful for research frameworks, methodologies and methods reflect relational qualities because they are constituted within a holistic worldview (S. Wilson 2008).

Porsangor (2004:116) provides a foundational rationale and expectations for utilizing Indigenous methodologies

> [they] ensure that the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples will be observed; to protect indigenous knowledge from misinterpretation and misuse; to demystify knowledge about indigenous peoples, to tell indigenous peoples' stories in their voices; to give credit to the true owners of indigenous knowledge; to communicate the results of research back to the owners of this knowledge, in order to support them in their desire to be subjects rather than objects of research, to decide about their present and future, and to determine their place in the world.

The objectives and significance of my research subscribes to these principles, yet, also extends their purpose and applicability beyond their local origins through definitions of community that reflect a global relationality.

Ultimately, this study contributes *new understandings* of knowledges that support Indigenous research methodologies as being focused on the process of preparing-to-do research that can then assist in designing and accomplishing studies that are mutually beneficial to all stakeholders of the study. This contrasts with a western-Euro goal of discovering "new" knowledge that often privileges colonial methodologies and benefits its political- and economic-based agendas, frequently determined by dominant institutions of higher learning and funding sources (L.T. Smith 2012).

We can also gain understanding that within Indigenous methodologies there are additional benefits of capacity building and community healing (Le & Gobert 2015). We realize this through first understanding, more succinctly, *what* Indigenous methodologies are. Provided in this thesis is a summary of Indigenous scholar consensus, followed by the creation of a "map" that suggests a pedagogy of an Indigenous way of doing research based on understanding one's socio-cultural position. Within this process, attention is given toward understanding one's intentions and decisions, which then informs the remainder of a study's design, thus creating a cohesive approach to accomplishing research. This helps us to see Indigenous methodologies as holistic thinking.

This "map" is an opportunity for understanding how relationality can be practiced through an Indigenous research process that is useful to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researcher practice. As Indigenous research methodologies were initially constituted and remain valuable as a means for Indigenous people to address Indigenous needs, the process I propose extends Indigenous research approaches as a lens applicable to non-Indigenous contexts.

This contributes to emergent thinking (Schwartz 2008) in at least two ways: first, Indigenous researcher professional development is enhanced, and associated skills utilization is extended in terms of moving beyond working only "in our own backyard" with Indigenous methodologies (Ling et al 2016). This engages discussion about the reality of being an academic researcher who aligns with an Indigenous worldview and or paradigm, and that this requires a dual ability to understand both research approaches derived from western-Euro foundations and those Indigenous approaches that center on Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies (Dana Sacco 2010).

Through indicating adaptable aspects within the map's eight-element process, conversation is prompted as to whether non-Indigenous researchers *should* utilize Indigenous methodologies outside an Indigenous context. Investigating this question, does not move

away from historically based and ethical concerns regarding Indigenous methodologies being utilized outside the tenets or principles that constitute them (L.T. Smith 2012; S. Wilson 2008). Yet, this question does create deeper thinking about what is meant by "relational accountability" (S. Wilson 2008:77) in terms of community defined at larger scales beyond the local.

What I am curious about, is if Indigenous methodologies—keeping within their ontological, epistemological and axiological/deontological meanings and purposes—as 'good' and 'right' ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003) within Indigenous contexts, are useful and beneficial for research of phenomena that does not specifically engage an Indigenous context or issue. To inquire about this potential reveals my hope that research, accomplished by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers alike, can reflect projects in humanizing and a relational worldview in practice (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017; Absolon and Willett 2004; Steinhauer 2002).

I follow Kawato's (2008) suggestion that to truly understand something, we need to create it. My thesis attempts to accomplish this and in doing so, also answers a call for creation of Indigenous frameworks and methodologies that reflect academic research design and practice that is not an "aspect" or "perspective" of a western-Euro research paradigm. This call is issued from Indigenous scholars such as Opaskwayak Cree scholar Dr. Shawn Wilson, Blood Tribe (Blackfoot Confederacy) scholar Dr. Leroy Little Bear, and Marie Battiste, Mi'kmaw First Nation scholar, and many others.

Ultimately, designing and accomplishing research from an Indigenous perspective broadens academia as a site of responsive critical thinking. This study attempts to accomplish these objectives through the development of an overall research framework based on an Indigenous philosophy of communication, represented by a mnemonic artifact—the Talking Stick. From this framework, a methodological approach is created by operationalizing four values present within the philosophy—that become the Talking Stick Way. This methodology involves a two-part approach and includes five sub-questions that together

create a critical lens utilized to investigate my research question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts".

**Thesis Organization**

The write-up of this thesis follows a story-way of communicating through a writing style that reflects sharing my research journey with you, an individual reader, in an intimate fashion exemplified through first-person narrative. This contrasts with a western-Euro third-person reporting style. Providing this Introductory Chapter in the ways that I have, is a means for you to learn a bit about me, as an Indigenous woman and researcher. As you are reading, our stories become entwined, as you experience and react to what I am providing within this written work. In this way, we are co-creators of a relationship and that is part of what Indigenous methodologies represent.

Chapter II provides background for this study and begins by addressing four Indigenous discourse protocols, then shares the context that further developed my research question and sub-questions, which prompted the need for this write-up to be accomplished in two-parts. Overall, the easy answer to my research question is, through an enhanced understanding of what Indigenous methodologies are, we might also learn if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts.

However, this question did not have an easy answer. Within this chapter, I touch on conversations I engaged and observed that question the ethical use of Indigenous methodologies by Indigenous researchers for use outside Indigenous contexts, as well as use of them by non-Indigenous researchers working on studies both within and outside Indigenous contexts. Included in these conversations were inquiries about how Indigenous methodologies can be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers and whether they are already being utilized by them within non-Indigenous contexts. I reflected on these conversations and recognized

themes within them, that became five sub-questions. These led to a deeper and expanded literature review that subsequently created a revision in how I would approach my study.

Chapter III begins Part 1 with the heading, "How might we understand…" and expounds specifically on present knowledge of what Indigenous methodologies are, as provided by various Indigenous scholars. As Indigenous research methodologies are already in use within academia, both as critical quantitative and qualitative research approaches, by Indigenous scholars within Indigenous contexts (Walter and Anderson 2013/2016; Kovach 2010; Denzin, Lincoln and Smith 2008; S. Wilson 2008; LT Smith 1999/2012), I include several visuals of "Indigenous ways of doing research" created through projects accomplished by Indigenous scholars.

In addition to a summary of "what are Indigenous methodologies," I engage questions about translatable and adaptable elements of an Indigenous way of doing research useful for non-Indigenous researcher knowledge and practice, that emphasize sensitivity to peoples and their cultures. These 'elements' are presented and reviewed in the next chapter.

Chapter IV provides a "map" created as a visual aid to assist with further understanding of "what Indigenous methodologies are." This map has been enhanced by what I understand from knowledge gained through my own preparation to do research and Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices. To understand the eight elements of the map, I invite you to my research journey, in terms of how I worked with it as a process of preparing-to-do research that informed the design and accomplishment of this study. At this point I have accomplished the investigation of the first part of my research question and the first four sub-questions. By having this knowledge, the significance of the "map" I have created and its usefulness as a pedagogy, is realized, as it furthers understanding of Indigenous research methodologies as being constitutive of projects of humanization.

This chapter provides the key focus of this study as within these elements, I share selections of the theoretical framework for this study—the Talking Stick philosophy of communication—and introduce you to the creation of the Talking Stick Way as an Indigenous methodology for doing research applicable to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts.

Chapter V begins Part 2 of this thesis. Here I put into practice the Talking Stick Way as means to answer the second half of my research question, revised now as, "…is the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous methodology, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts." I summarize my methodological approach for this study and the mixed-methods utilized within three sites of inquiry: the first site focused on research practices of non-Indigenous graduate students. This investigation's results created the need for Part 1 of this thesis. It is here you understand the story-way of this study and write-up that moves in a spiraling and looping back pattern—a rather iterative process—as the need for two parts to explain this study was realized mid-way through my research.

The second site of inquiry accomplished a systematic review of previous research to understand if the Talking Stick philosophy of communication and or its representative mnemonic artifact have been utilized by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts. I summarize a case study about developing community building skills among diverse participants wherein the Talking Stick was a method for facilitation of this work. I contrast this with a similar community building study accomplished by an Indigenous researcher as means to highlight dynamics revealed within use of an Indigenous methodology by a non-Indigenous researcher.

The third site of inquiry involved the "birthing" of a Signing Stick through its presentation and use within a Circle Gathering during a session at the 2017 annual Deaf Women of Color conference. This activity was requested by non-Indigenous planners who invited a Cherokee member of the association to facilitate the circle. The facilitator, being a seasoned Indigenous researcher, was a relative novice to the use of an Indigenous

knowledge as a research methodology. As we are graduate student colleagues, she has knowledge of my experience with a Talking Stick and requested my assistance.

Chapter VI provides a thematic-based narrative, as discussion, of my analysis of the process of this study as an Indigenous methodology that gained new understandings of knowledge through investigation of the five sub-questions, within three sites of inquiry.

Chapter VII wraps up this thesis with conclusions drawn from themes, as new understandings of knowledge, that emerged from my experiences in preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous way and through application of the Talking Stick Way within three sites of inquiry to understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts.

This chapter is titled Moral(s) of the Story, as what has emerged reflects the importance of an Indigenous way of preparing-to-do research that emphasizes tasks of self-knowing to reveal one's socio-cultural position. Within these tasks, intentions are revealed that can determine whether a project of humanization is being planned, conducted or has been accomplished. Through the process of doing research in an Indigenous way there is possibility of a relational-based research project to be experienced and understood as being beneficial to non-Indigenous researchers. Implications of this study and recommendations for further study reflect new understandings of "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

This is the way of it…

# II

## This is the Way of It…

As a Shoshonean woman and Indigenous person of the United States I have no choice but to recall the historical experiences of my ancestors and live the contemporary results of them. This reality has not lain silent within me. Indeed, it has been the motivation for much of the curiosity I have about our world, especially how we, as human beings, exist within it. This curiosity has inspired my quest to also understand how and why most humans have become forgetful of the fact we are part of a larger story. This lapse seems to have enabled them to reside in a state of belief wherein they are the center of that story, yet seem to exist as islands; segregated from one another and the environments around them.

Previously, I shared the words of Vine Deloria, Jr. (1997) that reminds us, we are part of a community and what we learn is for the benefit of those in that community. With this thesis I extend that meaning by defining "our community" at a global scale where knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003) reflects a relational and interdependent worldview that requires we care for one another in mutually beneficial ways which also includes the gathering and perpetuating of knowledge with that goal.

At a young age, I was given a Shoshone name after my first fasting-time that was accomplished on a cedar and pine tree covered ledge, near mountain glaciers in my homelands. That day I became havi khe wai peht – Mourning Dove Woman—and learned dabaido i hu bia, sun come up songs, which offer appreciation for another day to live life in good ways that can bring happiness and peace to the world. Elders taught me, living in these ways can only be accomplished through learning from one another in ways that are mutually beneficial.

In the previous Chapter, I began this thesis with a story, to share a memory that has haunted me since it was created. That story exemplifies, generally, the contemporary persistence of research accomplished outside a relational way of doing research and how it has often negatively impacted Indigenous communities throughout the world. That story is addressed, specifically, through my inquiry to understand if Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing—that are beneficial within Indigenous contexts—might also be of benefit within non-Indigenous contexts, and provide a means to narrow gaps in understanding how to accomplish research that reflects projects in humanization (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017; Freire 1978). I go about investigating this question through preparing-to-do this study and then accomplishing it in an Indigenous way of doing research, that entails utilizing an Indigenous knowledge, the Talking Stick, which exemplifies 'good' and 'right' ways of communicating—operationalized as a research methodology.

### *A Story context, prologue and protocols*

To further your understanding of whether Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts, I need to share a few more stories of why and how this came to be my research topic.

This chapter first situates this thesis within the context of an Indigenous way of doing research and of sharing it based on the pairing of the Talking Stick philosophy of communication with Story. I offer guidance for reading this thesis through a "prologue" to explain why I utilize this pairing and to address distractions my approach may create. Thereafter, I provide four additional sections, that supports the reason my research question is significant as a study.

First, I share that an initial step of my preparation-to-do research in an Indigenous way, was to visit with my elders and an international mix of Indigenous scholars and mentors regarding the use of the Talking Stick as the theoretical framework for my study. One outcome is what I refer to as "inadvertently" derived questions, that I observed as themes

running through the conversations I had with most of these individuals. These questions enhanced my approach to reviewing literature about the topic of thesis.

Then, I share a summary of present knowledge from Indigenous scholars, as context, about the journey to bring Indigenous ways of knowing into the academy as Indigenous research methodologies.

Next, I briefly share two stories about the work of Indigenous scholars that utilized their cultural-based knowledges as research methodologies, to exemplify the way studies have been accomplished that reflect a relational worldview and I also connect their methodology to this present study.

I also provide a side-bar through a visit about collaboration and worldviews that hopefully provides a balance within my narrative. I share ally research activities that lightens the view of research as being entirely a negative impact within Indigenous studies.

Finally, I share three brief stories that reveal first, a re-visit with most of the Indigenous elders, scholar and mentors I initially visited with. This re-visit engaged discussion about my research question and its use as a topic for academic study, in-light of knowledge from my literature review and the five "inadvertent" questions. I also share a story about being enrolled in a University of Oklahoma graduate writing class, in a parallel period with that of the re-visit. Experiences within that class correlate with Indigenous discourse about risks and challenges of engaging Indigenous ways of knowing and bringing them into an academic setting. As well, I noted questions and comments by the non-Indigenous students and instructor within this class, were like those posed by the Indigenous individuals I had visited with previously. This experience led to the development of the first of three study Inquiry Sites. In Part 2, Chapter V, I provide detail of each of the three sites.

The above knowledge is provided in this Background chapter because it, collectively, prompted me to revise my research question and approach, and essentially required this thesis be shared in two parts.

*Prologue:*

It is appropriate that I am sharing these stories as the season changes from Fall to Winter. In Wyoming, upon my homelands at the Eastern Shoshone Wind River Indian Reservation, snow has already fallen. You see, for Shoshone people, especially in days' past, we would tell most of our stories during winter months after the sun had gone down. These would be 'life-teaching' stories. There are others that are meant for the day, such as how to work with the land, water and horses and where to go for the best hunting and gathering of foodstuffs and items for crafts. In the urban setting these stories translate to life experienced in neighborhoods amidst mixed-cultures and having news and knowledge brought into our lives through technology. Most stories told in the winter are those of a larger scope based on values that help understand how to get along with one another and how we, as humans, are only one small part of the vast web of life that exists on this planet and elsewhere in the universe. These stories not only include humans but also other-than-humans such as animals, birds, fish, rocks, trees and even stars in the night sky. One such story is about a group of brothers on a rabbit round-up that reflects the pattern of the Big Dipper constellation and how team work brings success. First Nation scholar Thomas King (2003) believes "you can't understand the world without telling a story" (32).

I am assuming you are familiar with the western-Euro "formula" of writing-up a thesis, and might be wondering why my writing is in a personable fashion and already infuses conversation with methodology. You see, it is important for me as an Indigenous person and researcher to engage this study within an Indigenous way of doing this work. This can be understood through my use of the phrase "This is the Way of It," as it reflects how I frame, accomplish, write-up and share this study per an Indigenous philosophy of communication represented by the Talking Stick. I will go into detail about this in Chapter IV.

Suffice it to say, I am utilizing a knowledge sharing method that reflects an Indigenous storytelling tradition that is an expression of Indigenous perspectives that does not

flow in a western-linear fashion. In this way it might better resemble a song, with its cyclical ways and repetition of key phrases and points of connection (S. O'Neill 2017).

The experience of this study reveals many interconnected and undulating loops with circle-back patterns. For instance, before I even had a notion of what to study, I knew I would approach it from a conceptual philosophy that reflects good and right ways to communicate. I was already looking at the big picture of what I interpret research is meant to accomplish—this being the building of relationships. The Indigenous knowledge I utilize for this study is also hard-wired into my own knowing, being and doing—my socio-cultural position—that is based on who I am as a Shoshonean woman, Indigenous person and researcher. I know and understand this because I actively reflect on my worldview and what informs it, but also what sustains and changes it. This knowledge becomes an embodied story, setting the stage for what and how I do research. In this way, Story, becomes a complimentary and congruent method for writing-up and sharing this thesis.

This dynamic collaboration between Story and the Talking Stick way of communication enables me to perform my work as an Indigenous researcher, providing space to articulate—to the best of my present ability—this study to an audience that may not hold to my worldviews or understandings of how to accomplish research that is relationally-based.

For Choctaw author LeAnne Howe (1999), stories have the power to create and negotiate a new way of viewing and reacting to realities. They have the power to transform into action what is spoken. Her people's word for creation is *nok* or *nuk*. Teachers are referred to as *nukfokchi*, as they have the power to inspire creativity through their stories—this is referred to as 'teaching.'

"The story is a living thing, an organic process, a way of life" (Grapevine 1998:66) that also inspires and encourages us to question our meanings about life and our interpretation of it; this is because story and interpretation are ongoing social processes that continually occur between us (Mucino 2011).

Storytelling also reflects the essence of an Indigenous socio-ecological worldview as it is a social practice, if not also a spiritual one, that is a way to bring together and bind people within a common understanding (Simpson 2013). We find this 'binding' within theories, which are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions (Creswell 2013). Story is a structure that can hold or support, as a framework, the theory used in a research study and is able to introduce and describe it to explain why the research topic exists.

Rowe (2014) introduced me to the idea that for Indigenous peoples, stories are our theories, thus are useful as guidance within the design and practice of research. I found Adams and Donovan (1995:175) had also shared her thinking, through their work with feminist theories

> Just as theorizing is a form of storytelling, so too is storytelling a form of theorizing. Our theories represent our beliefs—our stories—about how the world works; our stories about how the world works leads us, consciously or not, to the creation of theory, as we repeat and revise them.

I realize that story, as a theoretical framework, also positions the researcher outside an objective frame. This imposes a subjective perspective of action that disrupts western-Euro understandings of what constitutes knowledge production. Within a western-Euro mentality, it seems the very word 'story' promotes too simplistic a process for what is deemed academic methodology (Sium and Ritskes 2013). As a narrative approach stories useful within anthropological research, related to primitive and or contemporary Indigenous cultures, are often perceived as a threat and as 'unfinished business' because Indigenous peoples have not disappeared and in fact are fully present, politically valid and intellectually engaging in their critiques of what colonization has meant to our collective pasts, present and futures (Sium and Ritskes 2013; L. T. Smith 2012).

Further,

> Indigenous stories are a reclamation of Indigenous voice, Indigenous land, and Indigenous sovereignty. They are vital to decolonization. Indigenous storytelling works to both deconstruct colonial ways of coming to know, as well as construct alternatives - recognizing that these two processes do not happen in a linear trajectory; accountability is an important aspect of Indigenous storytelling…that trust and responsibility are key ingredients to storytelling…and to demonstrate that in order for their work to be transformative, the storyteller must feel a sense of intellectual and often spiritual responsibility to the audience they speak to…because, for Indigenous peoples, stories are open-ended processes for speaking reclamation and resurgence, dialogue and contestation, they are part of a cycle of renewal and recreation (Sium Ritskes 2013).

Finally, storytelling as a research framework is an act of public ceremony that bridges and strengthen relationships between we humans and the cosmos (S. Wilson 2008). In this way, storytelling is also a globally decolonizing act that has relevance to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike—as surely in these contemporary times, there is recognition that we humans and other-than-humans are all impacted by past and present colonial methodologies and the forecast of a future based on them (Lowe 2015; Byrd 2011).

Use of the phrase "This is the Way of it...," also reflects way-finding for a journey the question of this study takes us on, as this question derives from a mix of personal curiosity and hope that motivates all stories (Mertens 2013 et al). This study and its write-up are organized and shared as an evolving story and it is this "style" that exemplifies the spherical, yet emergent spiral-way of Indigenous knowing, being and doing (Kovach 2010; Wilson 2008; Martin 2003).

Within this "style" of writing are four additional protocols I subscribe to as they are shared Indigenous discourse methods, that you may not be used to within a western-Euro-based academic research process. First, I am writing in the first person versus the third, as it is ethically necessary for me to do so. To do otherwise would be an act of betrayal of my worldview about identity and kinship (Behar 2017). To not foreground my own voice in the research would deny and mask my identity as a Shoshone woman, as a practitioner of In-

digenous scholarship, and ultimately my ancestors who have forged my path with their visions and lives and instilled in me courage to be part of academia. These ways of being an inquiry method and of sharing knowledge are addressed and practiced by Indigenous peoples the world-over as well as within western-based scholarship (Berry 2006). An academic axiom is that research is a conversation not only between researcher and study participants, but also with the literature, thus requiring researcher reflexivity throughout the process (Steinberg 2006: Grele 1994).

Associated with this "situating" of self, is a pronounced locating of the researcher as "storyteller." This reflects a worldview wherein examination of our world requires ourselves being part of it (Wilson 2008). This contrasts with western-Euro research approaches which often place the researcher as an outside observer and interpreter (Bedford 1996; Tilley 1994; Watkins 2000, 2006; Watkins 2000, 2006; Bernardini 2005; Sheehan and Lilly 2006; Wilson 2008; Trigger 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Kovach 2009; Byrd 2011; Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Mertens 2013; Lambert 2014; et al). We often see an Indigenous way of doing research occurring first through an introduction style that is a way of "setting the stage" for sharing information. You experienced this already through the personal story I opened this thesis with.

Another protocol of my worldview includes acknowledgement of who is sharing knowledge—in terms of what other stories exist and who are telling them—that relate to the ones I am telling. Paraphrasing of a person's thoughts and written works is heavily encouraged within Western scholarship. Most Indigenous scholars tend to quote the person's words, such as with use of in-sentence quotes and 'block' quotes. You see, words are representative of an individual's personhood and agency (Wilson 2008). Quoting directly, shows my respect for the relationship that is created by recognizing another individual's contribution of their new understandings of knowledge (Weiser 2017). This contrasts with engaging in acts of appropriation of a knowledge as something a researcher has 'discovered' and puts

forth as if it is their own (Hermes 1998). The Indigenous viewpoint extends rules about plagiarism and of comprehension. Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001), an Indigenous Australian educator, states it this way, "A person's word belongs to that person and in some instances, can be viewed as being that person" (156). This speaks to the relationship a person has with their knowledge source and of respectful ways we can acknowledge that relationship. My preference is to provide a mix of quotes and paraphrasing, when and where most appropriate and helpful in understanding my work in relation to others' scholarship.

Finally, within a western-Euro research process, knowledge is considered open to anyone and is considered an object of human cultural patrimony (McGhee 2008). This contrasts with most Indigenous beliefs that knowledge is alive and sacred and there are often protocols around access to it, especially when it centers on a peoples' identity and belief systems (S. Wilson 2008). Related to this and my earlier comment about relationships with knowledge sources, is the academic requirement to "create" new knowledge through research. These mentalities are in direct opposition to most Indigenous beliefs about knowing and learning whereby knowledge, as a phenomenon, already exists and evolves with each experience of it and as such is always in a state of becoming a version of itself, and in the case of humans, is based on the relationship with how we think (Jacobs 2008). These beliefs acknowledge and recognize that knowledge already exists prior to our taking notice of it. This statement contrasts with the debatable "solipsism" philosophy that suggests reality does not exist until humans observe it. As well, this may seem only a matter of semantics, but it goes deeper than that. The issue touches on heuristics—ways enabling knowing—that engage axiological and deontological positions—these being ethics and duties of care that hold one accountable to their actions. Hence, you will realize I rather avoid use of the terms "findings" and "discover."

Indigenous-based protocols for doing research help me to understand the relevance of what I contribute as scholarship and that there is value in expanding thought about present knowledge through sharing the way I have come to know it, in contrast to only "filling

gaps" within someone else's contribution (S. Wilson 2008). In this way, I as a researcher do not "discover" or "find" knowledge, but instead gain new understandings of existing knowledge based on my perspective of it and share it with acknowledgement of this process.

The most evident ways my thesis will disrupt the "formula" of western-based academic writing styles and expectations are my use of Story as a communication form to share my written thesis and the four protocols I have just shared. These being: a story-way of sharing that is not linear-based and is decolonizing; a first versus third person 'voice' that situates me as both author of this study and a method of inquiry; use of quotes more often than paraphrases, and; a cultural perspective that the reason for research is not to 'create new knowledge'—as knowledge already exists—but instead is to "learn new ways of understanding and applying existing knowledge" (Jacobs 2008:17). I realize you will come across other aspects that should fit in this notice but those described here, I feel, will be most prominent. Thus, I ask for your patience in my attempt to articulate this study in ways that makes sense to both of us.

## ***Preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous Way***

### *Conversations about use of an Indigenous knowledge as study framework*

The way I prepared to do research led me to visit first with a mix of twenty-three Indigenous scholars from across the world, many who have been my friends and mentors for many years and several are Shoshonean elders I have known since childhood. The first visits took place in and between April and November of 2016. These related to my overarching question about Indigenous knowledges being beneficial for non-Indigenous use and my intentions of utilizing a particular Indigenous knowledge—the Talking Stick—that is also a shared knowledge among various Indigenous peoples—as the philosophical frame for my research project. I engaged Shoshonean cultural ways of Being and Doing that requires a "check-in" with my own community to receive advice and guidance to ensure that I was thinking about and doing my work from a culturally ethical place as a Shoshonean woman

and Indigenous researcher. This practice reflects an initial stage of doing research that involves understanding present knowledge related to the topic of a study.

This process of first checking-in with Indigenous community members, contrasts with western-Euro research practices of doing a literature review first and then relying solely on what is read to further develop a study question and approach. Of course, I have accomplished a literature review and that knowledge appears in this chapter and the next, as well as throughout this study.

Within these visits, I received support that enabled me to move forward with my use of the Talking Stick philosophy of communication and its four values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. As well, my intentions were accessed as being in a "good and right" way, and for public use of my personal Talking Stick as a mnemonic artifact to guide my own research planning and facilitate aspects of my study inquiries.

### *Inadvertently derived critical questions*

During these visits, which were informal and within natural conversations, I had anticipated questions related to the reason for my visit. Yet, what I also experienced were additional questions and conversations that enhanced and broadened my understanding of what I needed to consider in preparing for, designing and accomplishing my study. Through critically reflecting on this experience I recognized five consistent themes that ran through the conversations: 1) what are Indigenous methodologies; 2) should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; 3) should Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and; 5) are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

These themes became five questions that prompted me toward a more in-depth literature review. My objective then became about arriving at: a more succinct research question, a congruent methodology for accomplishing my study, and; what sites of inquiry and methods would be utilized to investigate my question. Crossing-through the functional steps were the five questions that enabled a deeper process of research to be engaged.

Next, I share what has been learned from my literature review related to "what are Indigenous methodologies" in terms of their origin story coming into academia and how the story-line has evolved.

### *Academia as new frontier for Indigenous Knowledges*

The journey of Indigenous ways of knowing within the academy, as research methodologies, spans just over thirty years. Largely, discourse on this topic has been as a response to the historical and still present practices of western-Euro research amidst Indigenous peoples' and calls for consideration of projects to be designed and conducted that reflect the voices and needs of the peoples who are the focus of a study. This speaks to an Indigenous perspective that essentially research is a colonial endeavor and requires decolonization (L.T. Smith 2012; Battiste 2000; Absolon and Willett 2004; Crazy Bull 1997b). Within this time frame there has been great movement toward understanding and seeing the benefits of utilizing a peoples' own traditional knowledge as ways to do research among their own and other Indigenous peoples (LT Smith 2012). I do acknowledge that prior to and during this time-period, there have also been non-Indigenous scholars who promoted ideas and theoretical concepts of a relational way of knowing, being and doing (Swan 2015, 1999; Kodish 2011; Baron 2008; Baron and Spitzer 2007; Lassiter 1998; Toelken 1998). Albeit more often than not research was accomplished without direct recognition of Indigenous contributions, parallels or influences, or for mutual benefit (Martin 2003). However, there has been progress and academia are being educated to the benefits of the emergence of other ways of knowing through the presence of Indigenous peoples becoming scholars

and presenting their works. The story evolves further though, as a result of Indigenous scholars working within the field of Indigenous studies. It becomes one that centers on the role non-Indigenous researchers should or can play within the field of Indigenous studies and use of Indigenous knowledges.

*Methodological reform, still top-down*

Since the dawn of an anthropology that set about marginalizing peoples who did not reflect western-Euro values or societies, research has largely been accomplished that served non-Indigenous political and economic agendas. Over the last two decades there has been conversations about Indigenous methodologies as appropriate research strategies that reflect Indigenous perspectives. This activity has largely centered around a positioning of Indigenous peoples within the way research is designed and accomplished wherein they are "informants" to a study. These endeavors are referred to as 'methodological reforms' that play to creation and application of culturally sensitive methodologies that move research from a positivist lens—that centers on objectifying study participants per non-Indigenous inquiry—toward approaches that enable "Indigenous intellectual sovereignty within research projects" (Henry et al 2002). Yet, in 1998, Silltoe's report on these endeavors revealed they have failed as their top-down approaches have not provided knowledge for sustainable improvement in the lives of those who are the focus of studies. Mutual benefit had yet to be accomplished. These two perceptions of the purpose for research are central to an Indigenous research agenda (L.T. Smith 2012) and are yet a focus of attempts to understand how to bring Indigenous participation into research (Guillemin 2016 et al).

The response to this has been a movement for encouraging members of Indigenous communities to become researchers, not just the researched who contribute knowledge for non-Indigenous researchers to interpret and present. In 1999 Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, accepted the call and created a study to explore the history of research among Indigenous peoples and identified how western-Euro research is transformed when conducted

from an Indigenous perspective, as questions are framed differently; priorities are ranked differently; problems are defined differently; and people participate on different terms (193) (Henry et al 2002).

Working from this platform, Indigenous researchers utilized western-Euro approaches found within interpretative, transformative or qualitative paradigms—alternatives to 'traditional' quantitative and positivist research approaches—such tools as post-structuralism, feminist theory, post-colonial and critical theory. These remain key choices as they create a space for consideration of such as culture, identity, self-determination and take up a position as a natural ally that meet the principles required of Indigenous research methodologies. Yet, there are still difficulties with these partnerships as Indigenous methodologies center on Indigenous epistemologies (Walter and Anderson 2013; L.T. Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Kovach 2009; S. Wilson 2008).

*An empirical Indigenous response reflects a relational epistemology*

This 'centering' of Indigenous epistemologies has created several disruptions within the academy through arguments posed by Indigenous scholars such as Maggie Walters and Chris Anderson (2013) and their positing that Indigenous quantitative methodologies exist and are critical to the unbinding of data as products of strictly western-Euro methodologies. At this writing, the text by Walters and Anderson, "Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology", appears to be the only currently known work focused on this topic. This fact is a glaring spotlight on the need for more published articles and texts addressing the science basis of Indigenous knowledges (Simonds 2013).

The authors contend that qualitative methodologies require partnership with statistical data and together they turn the present politically agendized deficient narratives, portrayed by most quantitative studies, toward narratives that benefit Indigenous peoples.

Utilizing Foucault's (1972) concept of *discourse* as practice and Bourdieu's (1984) *habitus*, Walters and Anderson engage a concept that shapes Indigenous worldviews

around acknowledgement of the past while also moving toward modernity, that does not assume this movement is away from Indigeneity. Scale is addressed here and reminds us that while the local Indigenous context has been situated as a place that dominates western-Euro imagination, the authors posit there are "large" sites that are also Indigenous places, such as cities, and 'big data' projects are necessary there. Cities did not become sites of Indigeneity when colonial methods of removal were forced upon natives of the land. Indeed, we are asked to remember that "almost all cities were Indigenous spaces first" (19). This calls for consideration that statistics are valuable within all scales affecting Indigenous lifeways and having congruent methodologies that reflect this reality is a frontier within the academy that requires a decolonizing lens.

Studies such as that by Walters and Anderson assist in diffusing the persistent academic argument challenging the instruction and use of Indigenous methodologies within institutions of higher education. This argument yet grasps at fraying tendrils of the idea that an Indigenous way of knowing does not reflect empirical rigor. Responses to the work of Walters and Anderson are encouraging.

Reviews have tended to be accomplished by non-Indigenous scholars and center on the impacts of an Indigenous quantitative-based methodological reality becoming present within empirically-based paradigmatic research—this being the recognition and acknowledgement of the necessarily decolonizing agenda of an Indigenous methodology. A key takeaway from these various reviews is a resounding response, as meditation, on a question within the Walters and Anderson text (2013), "As white researchers begin to decolonize and reach into Indigenous spaces, what happens when they attempt to claim those analytical spaces as their own" (74)? I am reminded of the work of Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd (2011) wherein she addresses a burgeoning reality of the transit nature of colonization with her question, "what happens to indigenous peoples and the stakes of sovereignty, land, and decolonization when conquest is reframed through the global historicities of race" (39)?

A tendril of this thinking persists in periphery form within this present study—this being the reality that colonial strategies have been no respecter of race or nationality, but are focused on satisfying the ravenous appetite of a shape-shifting Imperial beast, even to the point of cannibalism (Forbes 2008). Forbes, a Powhatan-Renapé scholar, remind us that society's nature—its internal dynamic—is to eat itself and if weakened, "other similar monsters will finish it off" (164). Yet, this is not a performance of extinction, but a systemic regenerative and reincarnation activity.

Engaging questions such as those posed by Walters and Anderson and that of Byrd and Forbes, may provide an opportunity to alter a forecast of continued appropriation of Indigenous experiences, as is a criticism of post-colonial theory (L.T. Smith 2012; Sawant 2011; Kovach 2009) and addressed through the works of scholars such as Said, Spivak and Bhabha. Ultimately, these responses circle back to a fundamental understanding that there is a need to decolonize research methodologies, be they engaged by Indigenous or non-Indigenous scholarship.

Walter's and Anderson's work issues a message of sovereignty and motivation: "quantitative research methodologies, the research practices they [western-Euro minded academics] engender, and the skills base to interpret and use them are central to validating our [Indigenous] declarations of research self-determination" (136). Within this message we also find pause for consideration of the role non-Indigenous researchers will occupy within Indigenous researcher realities.

*An ethical cross-road appears in the field of Indigenous studies*

As alluded to earlier, growing discussions center on whether non-Indigenous researchers *should* be utilizing Indigenous knowledge-based research methodologies (Hart et al 2017; Singh and Major 2017; Aveling 2013; Lowan-Trudeau 2012). Conversation circles around responses to increasing numbers of Indigenous scholars present in Indigenous research fields and the positive results of their use of Indigenous methodologies. Additionally,

the question of *should* non-Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies comes from generations of Indigenous peoples with yet open wounds where trusting hearts once beat and now lay on parched ground because of promise after promise and protocol after protocol being broken and twisted. The landscape of studying Indigenous lifeways has become dusty with distrust that thickens day by day and it seems this can only be slowed and possibly, hopefully, halted through purposefully addressing these issues in ways that heal and better identify intentions of all researchers (Hart et al 2017).

In response to this reality, suggestions have surfaced for non-Indigenous researchers to "team" with Indigenous researchers as a way to learn and subscribe to the tenets of Indigenous methodological-based principles. This recommendation is now a growing form of practice, required by Indigenous communities, as a way of doing research among their peoples. There is currently a consensus that this practice would not constitute risk of cultural appropriation of Indigenous ways of knowing; unless the non-Indigenous researcher were to use the knowledge out of context or disrupt the meaning-making relationship that formed the knowledge gathered within a study (S. Wilson 2008). In Chapter V, Inquiry Site 2 reflects the need for a 'teaming' experience to gain knowledge of the Talking Stick for use with collaborative community building among diverse participants. As well, within Inquiry Site 3, the use of an Indigenous knowledge by an Indigenous researcher with no extensive prior knowledge or relationship with it, was assisted by another Indigenous researcher who provided access to knowledge and the development of a relationship that exemplified teaming.

The topic of non-Indigenous researcher uses of Indigenous knowledges or of remaining within a field of study that is increasingly being populated by 'insider' researchers, is though, yet a blurred landscape. This is because there are suggestions that non-Indigenous researcher persistence within Indigenous studies should require the presence of Indigenous researcher lead investigators. Overall, there is no consensus yet on the matter, but recent literature finds non-Indigenous researchers mulling over these suggestions and positioning

themselves at a possible ethical cross-road. There appears only two paths currently leading in the directions of: move from the work of researching within Indigenous contexts (Aveling 2013) or embrace and be comfortable with an 'unknowing' that requires "teaming" with Indigenous researchers who lead research projects (Hart et al 2017; Tanaka 2015).

This 'unknowing' speaks to what my elders said about relationships and communication—that we need to listen well—and this requires engaging respect, resilience, reciprocity, and responsibility from a position of relationality and collaboration. Through practice of these values we may be enabled to learn where our skills are best utilized and embrace a way of doing research that reflects Indigenous perspectives as the lens of inquiry that also create bridges enabling mutual benefit, thus representing a more fully relational research agenda.

This conversation gives space for an additional personal concern investigated through my thesis. As an Indigenous researcher, I am continually developing skills to better create Indigenous research paradigms, methodologies and methods, based on my own and shared Indigenous knowledges, which are helpful within Indigenous contexts and enable a pedagogy to develop. Yet, I am an Indigenous *researcher*, also educated to understand and utilize western-Euro research approaches. With this diverse and mixed-set of skills, I cannot conceive of only working within Indigenous contexts. I turn again to the work of Walters and Anderson (2013) who are part of a growing discourse of Indigenous scholars who address this concern. They offer a succinct message for consideration (135)

> If we operate within a restricted range of research practice, we effectively become enclaved within an Indigenous-only research space: marginalized from, segregated from, and, as we believe is increasingly obvious, patronized by the broader world of scholarly and policy related research. We build the walls of our own isolation, constructing a research terrain in which we might feel comfortable and secure, but from which we are unable to challenge or even engage those outside this realm of peers.

While Walters and Anderson speak to Indigenous scholars particularized toward Indigenous contexts, she also opens the conversation within the academy for Indigenous

perspectives to be utilized as a lens to work within non-Indigenous contexts. Deserving of a reminder, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012:196) prompts additional consideration,

> when indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms.

I understand this as an opportunity that extends the value of Indigenous research methodologies through application within non-Indigenous contexts, which is an inquiry with a dearth of practice. As well, such a practice would more honestly engage a relational worldview and definition of community as being global.

Within both Walter's and Smith's statements, I find a common thread addressed—that of the previous concern about non-Indigenous researchers working within Indigenous contexts and that of Indigenous researchers utilizing decolonizing methodological skills within non-Indigenous contexts. Yet, the two are not of the same weft weight, as the discipline of anthropology has generally peered through a colonizing lens toward Indigenous contexts since at least the time of Socrates, his student Plato and his student Aristotle. My thesis adds to the journey of Indigenous methodologies within the academy, per a call for equal space within non-Indigenous contexts for inquiry through an Indigenous constituted research lens. This lens, while responding to the realities of colonial impacts, would assist in balancing the anthropological project.

These stories create an advent for non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous-based knowledges outside of Indigenous contexts. This is part of the topic of my thesis and that topic is often only yet whispered among trusted fellow scholars, as use of knowledges derived from cultural-based stories, landscapes and materials continue to be situated upon internal community and academic ethical battle grounds (Rigney 1999).

However, among non-Indigenous scholars, there is a parallel taking place through a persistent awareness of a need for more holistic and deeper levels of researcher preparation that enables understanding of an ethno-anthropology. Within Indigenous methodologies,

researcher preparation and tasks of reflexivity are invaluable to the work of research. Providing greater awareness to what they are and how they are created and practiced may assist in narrowing the gap about how they are beneficial to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of doing research. Beyond a functional role, Indigenous methodologies—primarily based on moral philosophies expressed in cultural ways—provide insight to the nature and axiom of research as being a conversation and as such requires researchers to be fully held accountable to values reflecting a broader duty of care (Sangha et al 2015; Flicker et al 2015).

Reflecting on this journey of Indigenous researchers and their cultural based knowledges being brought within western-Euro academia, especially as theoretical approaches and methods that gaze within non-indigenous contexts, I cannot help but realize a liminal space has been created. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers are situated in that space contending with a question of, how do we create a threshold that will support us both walking through it that does not yet exclude the other? Possibly a review of Bhabha's work (1994) with hybridity is in order. I am reminded of a quote by Gilles Deleuze in Dialogues (1987:10), "you should not try to find whether an idea is just or correct. You should look for a completely different idea, elsewhere in another area, so that something passes between the two, which is neither in one nor the other."

For now, there is excitement about the work that has been accomplished by Indigenous researchers who have successfully engaged cultural based knowledges that are beneficial to their peoples in ways that they have determined are needed for sustaining their lifeways. Next, to provide evidence of what has been accomplished by Indigenous researchers working with their Indigenous-based knowledges within research contexts, I share two brief summaries of projects presented through the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012).

### *Indigenous research studies – a worldview in practice*

*Two Indigenous studies within Indigenous contexts*

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), in her book "Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples", acknowledges that early work, such as hers, conceived of Indigenous methodologies as means to help Indigenous peoples help themselves. This came as a response to western-Euro research practices that marginalize and misrepresent the history and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples, their ways of knowing, being and doing, and primarily from a deficit narrative. Her work has produced an "Indigenous Research Agenda," represented visually in a chart that uses a metaphor of the movement of ocean water to reflect four processes utilized as methodologies. These are decolonization, healing, transformation and mobilization. There are also four "tides" represented as conditions of survival, recovery, development, and self-determination (121). These are non-sequential states of being that represent the realities of Indigenous communities. From an Indigenous perspective, identifying specific elements that are of benefit to Indigenous peoples is necessary for inclusion in any research methodology involving them. Her model is an example of standards that assist Indigenous researchers in leading the development, understanding and utilization of Indigenous research methodologies.

In this same text by Smith, she provides twenty-five examples of research projects, designed and accomplished through use of Indigenous methodologies by Indigenous researchers and or with assistance from western-scholar allies that articulate the benefits derived from them. These studies represent a cross-section of various Indigenous peoples and use of multi-disciplinary approaches. They also promote a distinction between methodology and method, as engaging an Indigenous way of doing research is concerned with broader political and socio-economic issues and methodology becomes the interface between local, national and or global scales (144). Two of these projects stand out for me— "Returning" and "Sharing"—as examples of a relational worldview in practice.

Within the "Returning" project (156) there are intersects with claiming and returning of resources, artifacts and even the living. As an Indigenous woman, raised on my homelands in Wyoming—referred to as an "Indian reservation"—and having attended a federal boarding school for native children, and having helped to create and operate museums and exhibits within them that display my identity as an Indigenous person, I can attest to personal experience with all the activities involved in this project. There has been both positive and negative results from these experiences.

The "Returning" project involved 'claiming'—as an exercise of remembering—that empowered the community to believe in their right to receive back what was taken from them. This included cultural materials that were stolen from their places within the community. Evidence of objectification was further realized when human remains were found among inventories at museums. Lands where traditional food gathering once occurred have been requested and returned. Even the living is being returned as programs develop that enable individuals, taken and referred to as "stolen generations", to be reunited with their families.

Overall, a project such as "Returning" provides opportunity for the community to recall what was and is theirs and to act in determined ways to reclaim what has been taken, lost or forgotten. Resilience becomes a goal and inspires other similar ways of being in community and of acting upon their Indigenous knowledges (156). I can understand, through a project such as this, that "returning" also represents a call to consider we, as human beings, are all on the same web of life and must return to a way of being and doing that reflects this fact through intentions that humanize our actions (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017).

The "Sharing" project (162) exemplifies a theme my thesis engages. The premise of this project is to promote knowledge as a collective benefit and the sharing of it as a responsibility of research. In this way "sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information"

(162). This motivates interest in understanding other ways of knowing, being and doing that are beneficial, not only at local and national scales, but globally as well.

The results of research by non-Indigenous scholars among Indigenous peoples is a well-known and temporally broad record that relates primarily stories of self-serving agendas, even when posed within a context of collaboration. I am reasonably sure you are aware of these and while it is not the intention of this thesis to expound on them, I do though contend that the question of this thesis derives from these situations. Their resulting impacts remind me of the reality of having to yet be vigilant in endeavors at understanding how research is a conversation that should reflect a deeper consideration and broader practice as being a duty of care. I have found encouragement and motivation through projects, such as these I have shared, that reflect successful Indigenous led projects that also exemplify non-Indigenous collaborations engaged within a relational worldview.

### *A word or two about collaborations and worldviews*

First Nation scholar Marie Battiste (2000) reminds us of our calling as researchers and educators, "Creating a balance between two worldviews is the great challenge facing modern educators" (202). The entirety of this thesis explores forms of collaboration that furthers the humanizing of research through practice of self-knowing. Within this practice resides clues to one's worldview—a particular philosophy or conception of the world.

The history of  non-Indigenous researchers within the field of Indigenous studies has been fraught with tales of dehumanizing practices that yet continue in some instances and position the work as that to be scrutinized and critiqued contemporarily. In the periphery of these stories are those that speak to honest intentions and approaches to research that reveals ways "non-Indigenous researchers and academics have positioned themselves and their work in relation to the people for whom the research still counts" (LT Smith 2012:17). It is my hope that these are the stories we come to hear more of. Especially important to this scenario are works accomplished by archaeologists and material culturalists

who engage interpretation and representation of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. We see this present in public forms of anthropology practice, such as that found within the work of museums. Swan and Jordan (2015), through their paper "Contingent Collaborations: Patterns of Reciprocity in Museum-Community Partnerships", provide ample evidence of positive approaches to and results of collaborations between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities. Also addressed in their paper, is the issue of 'shared systems of authority' that reflect an on-going need to assess one's intentions of doing research with Indigenous peoples, especially when partnering with Indigenous researchers. I speak to this topic further on.

Within my thesis I also refer to 'western-Euro' mentalities and research approaches. My use of this term echoes that of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012), which agrees with and references that of Stuart Hall's (1992) explanation of an Indigenous perspective of what is meant by a 'western' way of being. We find this definition is more than just about research reflecting a positivist approach. Within Smith and Hall's definitions, meanings are constitutive of a system referred to as the West and includes "an idea or concept, a language for imagining a set of complex stories, ideas, historical events and social relationships" (44). Hall suggests that this concept functions as a classification and comparative process that condenses the complexity of 'other' societies into representational images that are subject to evaluative criteria based on attributes described by a dominate idea of what a civilized and cultural society should be 'coded' according to. This description draws on what Foucault and Said refer to as a cultural archive of knowledge that created a 'positional superiority' that informed how people saw the world and themselves, as humans, within it. This also created a means to situate thoughts about other people per these terms. This 'positioning' led to a system of knowledge creation and utilization known as a western worldview.

The primary distinction between a western worldview and an Indigenous worldview is this positionality. The western worldview centers self in contrast to a decentered view

represented as a relational worldview, which most Indigenous peoples' belief systems are based on. Smith (2012) provides an interesting note about the accepted origins of western thinking. She contends that early European societies operated per a relational worldview wherein there were few distinctions made between human beings and the natural environment. She points to classical Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as being the founders of a humanistic perspective of life that centered, yet also separated and dissected people from their surrounding environments and created a hierarchal belief system. What is interesting here is how this particular belief system enabled axis of power to be created through such as those that emerged through the Enlightenment period, often referred to as 'modernity'. It is here that we can understand how a western worldview became a point of contention with a relational-based worldview, when seen through the project known as Imperialism and its method colonialism when crossing-through knowledge creation (LT Smith 2012; Ittmann et al 2010; Kovach 2009).

"The instruments or technologies of research were also instruments of knowledge and instruments for legitimating various colonial practices" (LT Smith 2012:63). Due to classification structures within the western system of understanding the world, Indigenous peoples were par with plants, animals and even inanimate objects. It seemed impossible for Europeans to believe such 'others' could have previously accomplished a lifestyle that was reflective of ways of knowing, being and doing that were equal to or better than what they had or have. This began a "globalization of knowledge and Western culture [that] constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the center of legitimate knowledge and the course of 'civilized' knowledge" (66). Not to further belabor the historical relationship between a western and relational worldview, it stands to reason why the need to express a 'decolonizing' voice exists within the academy as well as within communities of Indigenous peoples. As the 'beneficiaries' of a western way of being, colonized peoples also acquired a 'colonization of mind' (Thiong'o 1986). We Indigenous peoples and our non-Indigenous allies

have since been sorting and sifting through our own thoughts and assisting collective thinking about what is western and non-western thinking in terms of a worldview.

### *About my research question…*

*A re-visit with Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors*

Previously I shared with you visits I had with various Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors, regarding use of an Indigenous knowledge—this being the Talking Stick philosophy of communication—as the theoretical framework for my study. From those conversations five questions were derived that revised what I would engage as a literature review related to use of Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. Upon synthesizing the knowledges found through my review, I arrived at a more succinct question and realized it had been part of my life since childhood. The story I shared at the beginning of Chapter I that sets the theme and premise for this research study also reveals itself as one I have been working with throughout my life as an Indigenous woman, person, and researcher. Essentially, this enduring question wonders if Indigenous knowledges, utilized as research methodologies, that are beneficial to Indigenous peoples, are also relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts.

With my revised research question in-hand, I re-visited many of the Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors. However, three of the twenty-three original individuals I had previously visited with opted to not take a second visit with me. As a theme, their reasons reflected the following:

> upon further thought about use of Indigenous knowledges as methodologies by non-Indigenous researchers or within non-Indigenous contexts, Indigenous knowledges should only be utilized by Indigenous researchers within Indigenous contexts so as to limit the risk of these knowledges being appropriated by non-Indigenous peoples, who have shown a tendency to utilize Indigenous cultural knowledges and materials for only their benefit and have often altered the meanings, purposes and uses of these knowledges and materials.

That collective statement is my interpretation of three brief comments derived from two Indigenous elders (IE) and one Indigenous scholar (IS): "we should not give away our medicine" (IE1); "we have given away so much already, and these gifts have been abused" (IE2), and: "this is our time to do research our way for our own people's benefit" (IS). As I had already found this occurrence addressed within scholarship I had reviewed, this experience within my own research journey gave additional relevance and importance to understanding what Indigenous methodologies are and how to respect the knowledges they represent, especially when utilized outside their communities of origin.

As I visited with the others I kept these three statements foremost in my mind and introduced them into conversations along with a summary of my literature review, as means to re-check my intentions in investigating my question. I also shared my interpretation of their previous comments and situated them as five sub-questions, which were: 1) what are Indigenous methodologies; 2) should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; 3) should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and; 5) are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

### *Re-checking intentions*

Within this re-visit and as prompted by the reasoning for the absence of three individuals, I discussed again my intentions for utilizing the Talking Stick philosophy of communication as a research framework and of operationalizing its four values as the methodology of my intended study. I also informed them that I would now couple these, the framework and methodology, with the five critical questions and they would collectively become the lens to investigate my overarching question.

From these helpful conversations I was assured that my intentions for utilizing an Indigenous knowledge in research ways, came from a place of deep introspection that reflects sensitivity to concerns about risk and trust. Through preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous way, I felt confident that I would accomplish my study per a relational worldview.

During the re-visits I was additionally asked to consider giving more focus to how non-Indigenous researchers prepared for doing research and whether they knew about Indigenous methodologies. I considered this request and decided to create, as my Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices. This would also enable practice of my own methodology—the Talking Stick Way—within non-Indigenous contexts. An opportunity to more fully develop this site of inquiry was already part of my then current reality as a graduate student.

### *Graduate classroom experiences*

As I went about the work of preparing-to-do research and designing this study, especially that which related to understanding how my socio-cultural position informed the type of question I have chosen to study, it became abundantly clear to me, the first part of my question "How might we understand…Indigenous research methodologies…" required a primary focus. I had been so concerned with understanding what I mean by "non-Indigenous contexts" and of articulating my definition of it, that what actually needed to be addressed first was being masked by my own knowledge of Indigenous methodologies and how they are derived and should be utilized. Through review of present knowledge, I had assumed the quantity of literature I found regarding Indigenous methodologies was also part of a reading list or knowledge source engaged by Indigenous researchers and those non-Indigenous researchers whose disciplines and program emphasis focused or touched-on the study of Indigenous peoples'. Within the sphere of my topic, both assumptions were incorrect.

I more fully understood this, because of a course I had taken at the University of Oklahoma during the preparation and conduct of this study, wherein peer-review of our writing was the primary focus. As part of the course work we were to keep a 'writing' journal to use as a reflecting tool for what was being learned as a process. This course began in mid-January and closed in early May of 2017. There were nine other anthropology students, besides myself, and one instructor. Eight individuals were non-Indigenous and two identified as being "part" Indigenous but disclosed they were not culturally in relationship with their tribes and referred to themselves as being more "white" in how they saw the world and themselves within it.

From the start, I struggled to articulate, in writing, my thoughts and knowledge gained from investigating my research question. What concerned me most were reviews of my written work that returned with question marks asking for more and finer details and suggestions for alternative word use. From my perspective, I was providing what I felt was culturally appropriate and the suggested word changes often altered the meaning or context of what I was sharing. I was most surprised, though, when one student suggested that I may be "challenged by my bi-lingual skills and Indigenous worldview" as what he observed of my experiences in the class reflected a similarity to that of an ESL (English as a Second Language) student he was acquainted with. I had never considered this perspective was taken of me.

I hold each one of my colleagues in that class in great esteem, just as I do the instructor. That experience encouraged me to consider a personal and professional goal wherein finding middle-spaces for sharing and learning can occur that furthers the work of gaining ground within academia for the understanding and use of Indigenous ways of inquiry. Upon further conversations with and observations of my peers and the instructor, it was clear that what was being experienced included a lack of knowledge or familiarity of what my work reflected, engaged and provided as scholarship. I realized that as an Indigenous graduate student, working in the field of Indigenous methodologies, I am challenged

by the limited knowledge of my peers and instructors about *what* Indigenous methodologies are and that there exists ally paradigms and methods found within qualitative research practices. As well, there is an assumption that Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are not applicable within the world of non-Indigenous positivist-based scholarship. I found this experience and the reactions of non-Indigenous scholars to be typical from within a particularly western-Euro based academic community, as reported and supported by knowledge gained through my literature review and conversations with other Indigenous scholars (Hart et al 2017; T. Ingold 2017; Cajete 2015; L. Lambert 2014; M. Walter 2013; D. Rasmussen 2013; B. Chilisa 2012; M. Kovach 2011, 2010; Carjuzza and Fenimore-Smith 2010, L. Grande 2008, S. Wilson 2008; T. McGhee 2008; Guba and Lincoln 2005; L. T. Smith 1999; Rigney 1999; V. Deloria, Jr. 1997).

I also realized, there were similar questions that existed within the conversations I had with the non-Indigenous students and the instructor in that class, with the five questions that were of concern to the Indigenous individuals I had previously visited with. I decided to then create the first of my three inquiry sites, "Non-Indigenous researcher practices." I share further detail about this within Chapter IV.

### *Five critical sub-questions and revision of study approach*

I found the similarity of questions expressed by the students and instructor in the writing class with those posed to me earlier by Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors more than interesting. This result motivated me to develop these into five sub-questions that assisted in the investigation of my primary question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

From preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous way, I opened up space for a deeper reality and understanding of what I needed to research related to my topic of inter-

est. As well, experiences within preparing-to-do research assisted with going about research in a relational way. From these understandings I have come to realize, there is a broad need to further understand *what* are Indigenous methodologies and this also requires a succinct way of understanding *how* Indigenous methodologies are derived.

## Reflecting back…

Over thirty years ago Indigenous scholars, largely from universities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, began writing about their concerns with 'standard academic research' processes. More specifically, these concerns "questioned the relevance, politics, ethicality and practice of research" (LT Smith 2012:x) that ignored the realities of Indigenous lifeways that did not fit within the western-Euro research agenda. These scholars assisted with reforms in academia and its views about doing research within Indigenous contexts that produced principles and protocols that brought Indigenous peoples inside research projects.

They became researchers leading other Indigenous students toward utilizing their cultural knowledges as ways to accomplish a more humanitarian study among their own people. They spoke out against the burgeoning challenges, from academia, of being criticized for using Indigenous-based research methodologies and were made to re-write their works to justify this use, or were asked to provide more information than was given that reified distrust, as well they were asked to re-situate their use of Indigenous methodologies within western theoretical frameworks. They responded by writing about these experiences of continual colonial oppression that remained within western-Euro dominate academia and its research practices.

This discourse necessarily reconstituted memories of the historical record of contact with Europeans who observed Indigenous peoples and then promoted a science constructed on "a version of Indigenous 'reality' embedded in a scientific discourse that has no Indigenous input, in a language that is non-Indigenous by and for a non-Indigenous audience"

(Budby 2001b; Murphy 2000; Rigney 2000). In the present day these activities continue, although there are becoming more and more stories shared that relate the creation of collaborations, partnerships and allies that enable the leadership of Indigenous researchers for projects that also engage Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Presently a growing ray of hope resides on the academic landscape, where once there only existed a ravaged space as evidence of a colonial presence.

These Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous allies, were and yet remain courageous in their persistence of articulating research through Indigenous perspectives. This reflects an overall Indigenous thriving through self-determination that promotes a "right to restore, maintain, and develop their own civilization in accordance with their own traditions and ceremonies" (Battiste 2000:286).

My research question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts" has not easily surfaced outside my own curiosity. Lengthy discussions amidst wisps of sage and cedar smoke provided me with clarity about my intentions in sharing the knowledge to be gained and revealed through this work. Ultimately, prevailing guidance came from a collective of shared Indigenous thoughts on the matter. Thus, I stand by my intentions to represent a worldview based on values that reflect interrelatedness and interconnectedness that requires we share knowledge, not just with our own peoples, but with all life as this helps us as individuals and communities explore and understand who we are and who we may become. Through this way of being in relationship we are also better equipped to receive and ask deeper questions. Investigating these can assist with the creation of projects in humanization that promotes community at a global scale and reflects a truer relational worldview in practice.

As well, my question extends discourse about the benefits of Indigenous methodology toward collaborative action with non-Indigenous researchers, through my endeavors to narrow gaps of misunderstandings about the usefulness of other ways of knowing. With

this thesis, I hope to answer the calls of Indigenous scholars such as Leroy Little Bear, Shawn Wilson, Gregory Cajete, Margaret Kovach, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Graham Smith, Lester-Irabinna Rigney, Bagele Chilisa, Lori Lambert, Jelena Porsanger, and Leanne Simpson, for creation of research frameworks and methodologies based on our own cultural knowledges instead of only placing our knowledge within western theoretical frameworks. With my present work, I also engage the possibility that elements of an Indigenous research methodology are translatable within the work of non-Indigenous scholars. Again, to me this reveals research as being a conversation that subscribes to values reflecting communication as being a duty of care. This is especially seen through the way research is accomplished within an Indigenous perspective I created for this study. I expound on this "way" in subsequent chapters.

This thesis, is grounded in the writings of Indigenous scholar experiences and at times reflects the persistence of similar challenges. As well, it is a model of collaborative research design that is supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholar contemporaries who advocate for and ally with an Indigenous-based paradigm, methodology and mixed-methods research practice. This thesis also adds to and extends this movement with considerations posed within the five critical sub-questions derived through an Indigenous way of doing research and of experiences that reinforced the need to investigate "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

At this point, there is need to share two remaining observations of my approach to this study. First, my initial use of the word "relevant" within my question, created a distraction in how I wanted to approach investigating it. Within my own mind, I began replacing "relevant" with "present." This enabled me to dispense with a subconscious mantra that reminded me I was not and did not need to prove my Indigenous methodology is equal to or sits within a western-Euro way of doing research (S. Wilson 2008). Through this revision, I

was able to access knowledge that was previously masked and bound within a learned academic colonial superiority. Through support and guidance from Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors, I recognized this and moved forward with my study in a way that answers the call for more Indigenous scholars to utilize Indigenous knowledges as both research frameworks and methodologies (Little Bear 2011; S. Wilson 2008). Associated with this was an additional re-vision of thought on the word 'relevance' as a result of the five questions posed by Indigenous individuals I had visited. I realized there is need to retain the word relevance but also to include the word "present." My research question has now become, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

Second, from my perspective, what I have designed as a research study and how I accomplished it stands on its own as both an original research framework—the Talking Stick Philosophy of communication that represents four values—and as an Indigenous research methodology—the Talking Stick Way—based on those values that became guiding principles for my version of an Indigenous way of doing research. The value and purpose of the Talking Stick Way is that it helps us to see how research is being created and practiced, or not, in ways that promote projects in humanization.

Now, the story becomes about understanding *what* Indigenous methodologies are and *how* one is derived. I assist with this through providing, in the next chapter, a summary of the understandings provided by other Indigenous scholars, as they too sought to define "what are Indigenous methodologies." Following this I include, in chapter IV, a "map" of an Indigenous way of doing research that I have adapted from the work of Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2016). What I created enhances his model with a focus on researcher preparation with tasks that develop one's socio-cultural position. As well, I have extended the model to include consideration of ways non-Indigenous researchers may utilize it for creating research methodologies based on what they learn from knowledge gained

through tasks that develop their own socio-cultural position. Ultimately, I hope this instructional way of sharing my thesis and the knowledge I have gained through it, will enable the practice of a relational worldview by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers alike.

This is the Way of It…

# III

## Part 1

## "How might we understand…"

Recall, Battiste (2000:2002) shared that "creating a balance between two worldviews is the great challenge facing modern educators." From my perspective as an Indigenous scholar, these words are critical and provide emphasis to the value of the work I have accomplished with this study.

Through tasks associated with preparing-to-do research from an Indigenous perspective, I visited with Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors regarding my use of a shared Indigenous knowledge, the Talking Stick, as the theoretical framework of this study. During those conversations five questions were recognized as being critical lenses by which to accomplish my literature review, and assisted with the revision of my research question and approach to investigate it. In an interesting parallel, my participation in a graduate writing class also prompted the same questions, as has knowledges gained from Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices. Recall, these questions being: 1) what are Indigenous methodologies; 2) should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; 3) should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and; 5) are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

This chapter specifically responds to question number 1, "what are Indigenous methodologies" and more generally reveals associations with the remaining four questions.

Through the journey thus far, I have experienced and realized the truth of what Steinhauer (2002) found when she was tasked to provide her "Thoughts on an Indigenous Research Methodology." After weeks of combing through literary works she could not find a

single concise answer to what an Indigenous research methodology is. She concluded that she would never find a specific answer because the very purpose and performance of an Indigenous research methodology is not a singular event. As well, Indigenous methodologies are particular to the knowledges present among the people and beliefs they derive from. Even if there are shared foundational philosophies among various peoples, what is understood and created from them reflects the culture of the people utilizing the philosophy. In this way, we can only appropriately refer to the use of these knowledges in the plural as they are numerous and diverse (Tuck 2015). Hence, the term "Indigenous research *methodologies*."

I now address "*How might we understand* if Indigenous methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts," as an emphasis of my primary research question. My research is, in the first sense, about finding the answer to "*how"* and I do that from a position that, to look for something, we must have a way—a lens—to look for it and to do that, we must first have an idea of what sort of lens it is we need. This reflects a fundamental approach for doing research. As my question engages a qualitative inquiry approach, whereby iterative and emergence of further questions and reflective processes occur, I have opted to utilize an Indigenous knowledge, the Talking Stick, and its philosophy of communicating in ways that reflect values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. Methodologies, as an interface between philosophy-theory and methods-techniques, need to be congruent with the philosophy so as to enable compatibility of methods. Methodologies ask us to consider how we are going to use our ways of thinking-knowing to gain understanding of our world (S. Wilson 2008). I opted to operationalize the four values of the Talking Stick as guiding principles for my methodology—how I would go about investigating my question. What I have created then, is an Indigenous methodology, as it is based on an Indigenous way of knowing. I refer to this methodology as the Talking Stick Way. I go into the story of the philosophy behind the Talking Stick in the next chapter.

The chapter you are reading now provides a summary of what Indigenous methodologies are and attempts to broaden our understanding of what makes a methodology Indigenous (Steinhauer 2002).

*What are Indigenous Methodologies?*

I shared earlier, that over the last thirty-plus years, Indigenous scholars have diligently worked to have their ways of knowing present within their academic research practices. I have often referred to these individuals as "Indigenous scholar-elders," as their examples are that which I rely on to guide my own development and work as an Indigenous researcher. To understand *what* Indigenous methodologies are and *how* to recognize them, requires also knowing their story. These stories also address *why* it has been and continues to be necessary for the development of Indigenous methodologies and *who* has assisted with its progress.

As I shared in the previous chapter, there is a long and broad history of the reasons why there became and continues to be need of other ways of knowing. In fact, various scholarship reveals as many as 400 years-worth of research has been accumulated through observing, describing and analyzing Indigenous peoples' lives and cultural life-ways (Getty 2010). Historically, lack of relevance for alternative worldviews within academia has been the primary argument for not knowing such knowledges exist. From an Indigenous perspective that stance has come as a result of an extension of the Imperial project and its methodology of colonization that conceived the way academic research is accomplished. There is a growing amount of discourse relating this argument.

Indigenous methodologies, per decolonization endeavors, have been presented as ways to more appropriately address research through Indigenous perspectives that enable correction of western-based anthropologically derived ways of going about it. Moral and ethical questions have arisen about ways of interpreting and representing information gained as a result of work accomplished by non-Indigenous researchers. This appears to be

focused on questions of empirically based processes, this being quantitative based data gathering and analysis, as compared to the more qualitative methodologies of Indigenous ways of knowing. Through addressing these criticisms, Indigenous scholars have made a powerful case for the need of their ways of knowing the world that suggests effective ways of addressing issues of their own realities, through use of their own chosen methods. This crosses-through resilience, resurgence and self-determination narratives.

As well, Indigenous methodologies are gradually becoming experienced and acknowledged as beneficial in studying and addressing realities of the collective population of human beings through collaboration with non-Indigenous researchers, in ways established as protocols by Indigenous communities. This in and of itself reflects an essential aspect of understanding the relevance and benefits, within non-Indigenous contexts, of an Indigenous research methodology. This "essential aspect" is the translatability of many Indigenous research methodologies and or their various elements within non-Indigenous contexts, due to the simple fact that "human minds from different cultures are in some ways 'wired' the same way" (Ryser 2017:4). If one subscribes to this theory, the challenges to translatability become more about socio-political concerns. This study provides hope for Indigenous methodologies to be utilized as ways to narrow gaps of misunderstanding between peoples of diverse cultures and to engage in conversations that effect positive change at local, national and global scales.

The journey for academic acceptance and research use of Indigenous philosophies has been long and persistently challenging. Dynamics of historical colonization and resulting socio-political structures have impacted the ways knowledge production is accomplished by Indigenous peoples. Understanding the necessity to exam and explain philosophical choices for the framework of research is an important component of designing and articulating its methodology. Indigenous scholars have effectively met challenges to their methods of doing research.

Bagele Chilisa (2012), an African scholar from the village of Nshakashogwe, Botswana, addresses the continued challenge of positing the value of Indigenous philosophies as valid ways of engaging academic research. She cautions, there are those within scholarly circles who practice what is termed "academic imperialism"—this being a continuous project of colonial suppression that denies, dismisses and overall quashes other ways of knowing and their resulting theories, perspectives and methodologies. Her story addresses use of an Indigenous philosophy amidst academic controversy of their use as valid ways of accomplishing research.

It is generally accepted that this "controversy" has its origins within Euro-Western belief systems that dismiss, as non-existent or irrelevant, knowledge from Indigenous peoples, who are currently or former historically colonized societies (Cajete 2015; Chilisa 2012; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; LT Smith 1999). This belief system is supported and perpetuated by the thoughts of such as French scholar Lucien Levy-Bruhl who, in his 1910 *How Natives Think* and 1923 ethnographic work *Primitive Mentality*, claims philosophy only belongs to Greek and European knowledge traditions as their knowledge derives from written knowledge traditions and as such there can be no Indigenous philosophy as they are "pre-logical" thinkers (Ndaba 1999). Ndaba reviews this as being a statement addressing the fact that Indigenous ways of knowing originate from a peoples' cultural experiences and are largely oral in transmission, and this fact leads thinkers such as Levy-Bruhl to the conclusion Indigenous knowledges are incapable of being critically assessed.

Today, there is a growing body of work that provides a different perspective that is supported by both archaeology and socio-cultural anthropology that reveals such as wampum belts were memorialized agreements, Mayan codices are part of a large library of knowledge, and Khipu knots represent various kinds of communication (Russell 2017). It is only the western mind that defers to a normalizing communication structure to define what is and is not written knowledge.

I am relieved by scholarship that counters that of Levy-Bruhl's, which considers multiple ways to construct meaning as a result of understanding that humans do not have singular expressions of their experiences. This thinking has been enabled by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger with their introduction of the discipline of Phenomenology, within the field of Philosophy. This theory has its basis in the study of how humans experience, from the first-person point of view, their world—or as Husserl conceived as being one's "life-world."

This was additionally supported by theorists' such as Lévi-Strauss and his Structuralism theory. Albeit controversial, but with adjustments within post-structuralism. his introduction of a transformational tool for knowing and analyzing the nature of certain types of social facts (2016 Descola; Lévi-Strauss 1979, 1982) expanded anthropological methodologies and analysis.

The work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky with the theory of Constructivism, as an epistemological stance addressing ways of knowing and learning, also provides understanding that knowledge-making is experiential and shared. With Bourdieu's Habitus and Doxa theories of practice (Bourdieu 1977)—that introduce psychological considerations of dealing with the social world through recognizing practices of agency—we find a bridge is built between elements of theory and research. Foucault's work in advocating for pluralism in western academia that recognizes Indigenous 'knowledge systems', shines a light on gaps that exist within philosophical understandings of what is research and its products. Most Indigenous scholars appreciate Foucault's efforts, but also feel Indigenous pedagogical traditions already exist and yet are deemed valid only upon the recognition of them within western academia. Shawn Wilson (2008) states it this way, "It would be giving away the power of an Indigenous research paradigm to say that it needs to be justified by a dominant paradigm" (42). Today there is burgeoning discourse regarding this position.

Western theories and their scholars have assisted the practice of phenomenology as a way to understand the creation of knowledge with holistic intention, based on human understandings of their worlds and ways of making meaning. Support from western scholarship such as these just mentioned, provides means for alliance and recognition of Indigenous philosophically based research, as also being based on a relationality of experience and as having an axiology—value system—that represents models of care and of helping to "improve the reality of research participants" (Wilson 2008:37).

It is not my intention to tease out this issue with further conversation about phenomenology, but I do need to address a prevailing distinction between western and Indigenous philosophies. Basically, within dominant paradigms, a foundational belief is that the individual is central to constructions of society and knowledge gained therein becomes property—a thing—that the individual monopolizes for self-focused agendas that seek to generalize ways of knowing only as a tool for their own benefit (Wilson 2001). We see this in the primary paradigms that comprise western-Eurocentric ways of doing research.

Generally, there are four aspects that make up a research paradigm, these are ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. This last aspect is rarely fully addressed by western dominant researchers. Within this study I have added deontology to this list of aspects, as it too speaks to values, but as those that hold accountable the actions of researchers. As well there are two primary paradigms operating in western-Euro research, these are quantitative and qualitative. Within these there are approximately four foundational theories utilized today.

Positivism and postpositivsm, both based on research practices of Descartes and Bacon, foundationally represent a theory that there can be only one reality—this is their ontology—and as such their epistemology is based on the idea that knowledge is only acquired by humans through human interpretation and must reflect a goal of objectivity. There is growing agreement that a western-Euro fashion of doing research utilizes "manipulative and experimental types of research to try to increase objectivity in order to get

closer to that reality" (Wilson 2001:175). Use of these theories have largely focused on "solving 'indigenous problems'…and has disempowered indigenous peoples who have long been used merely as passive objects of Western research" (Porsanger 2004:108; LT Smith 2012). This disempowering extends to a lack of recognition of the long history of Indigenous peoples having existed and survived for eons, as a result of their own knowledges. The primary use of a "problem" based inquiry also creates a focus on forwarding deficit based narratives of the lives of Indigenous peoples.

Critical theory has its origins from what is referred to as the Frankfurt School and engages social and political philosophy as responses to the works of Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber. This theory is an alternative to positivism and postpositivsm. There are relatively two approaches with the first being the sociological approach and the other found within literary studies and its theories. While critical theorists, and also those of the postmodern mindset—who reject the need to universalize knowledge and prefer methods that personalize research— "have created space within Western science for representation, voice and a multiplicity of truths…there has been little systemic shift in the ideology of knowledge production" (Kovach 2009:28). Critical theory, though, is still founded in the western mentality that it is the researcher who will change the current reality "and through their own interpretation be able to improve the lives of those people they work with (Wilson 2001). Yet, we can also begin to see there is practical wisdom in understanding where there can and should be collaboration. After all, "we need to use all the very best available theoretical and methodological tools, and where necessary develop new approaches when these tools are inadequate" (Kovach 2009:91).

Another primary western approach is Constructivist theory. This school of thought is founded on the belief that there are multiple realities and they are socially constructed—this is its ontological position. Epistemologically, constructivists seek to find common meaning—or a mutual reality—between researcher and those being worked with, through comparison and contrast with an ultimate goal for consensus that moves the work forward in

ways that are mutually beneficial (Wilson 2008). Again, we can see where this theory is beneficial to that of Indigenous researchers. In fact, the philosophical position of this study recognizes both a critical and constructivist perspective within the mix of what I have created as an Indigenous methodology.

The four theories I have presented here are only a glimpse of the overriding western-ways of thinking about how to approach research. There are in fact multiple avenues of inquiry built inside the two major paradigms. These also reflect the historical fascination of western science to "problematize the indigenous" (LT Smith 2012) and are representatives of an overall western-Eurocentric theoretical perspective that has dominated research focus. Maurier (1979) summarizes this as

> Western philosophy is polarized by the problem of knowledge, the problem of universals, the problem of immediate awareness, the problem of empiricism, the problem of philosophical critique, and recently, the question of phenomenology…the problem of living, of life, is far more important than the problem of knowledge (11).

While the essence of this statement may reflect the essential approach taken by researchers using western-Euro paradigms, "the problem of knowledge" is still at the forefront of what needs to be addressed in order for Indigenous ways of knowing to be more clearly understood and utilized.

In contrast to western-Euro paradigms and theories, knowledges within Indigenous philosophies are not owned but experienced and are dialogues that characterize an epistemological relationship and are not mere techniques, as they engage the social versus the individualistic character of knowing (Freire 2005). Indigenous philosophies as methodologies are fluid and context-based and work toward social change (Wilson 2001). As such, per the thoughts of Indigenous scholar-elder, Vine Deloria Jr. (2004), there is a fundamental need to critically consider and foreground philosophical underpinnings of research that engage Indigenous ideologies. The relational factor inherent in Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies is central and requires reflection on the inter-relationship between philosophy—

a practice of understanding the principles of knowing, being and doing—and ideology, this being a set of beliefs that is learned and implemented (Kovach 2010; Wilson 2008).

The common western-Euro argument that philosophies must derive from a tradition of written form or an assumption that there can be a subjective science, promotes hegemonic—dominant above other—ways of thinking. This also masks the fact that all philosophy is a culmination of past, present and emergent thinking assembled from a variety of sources. Logically, philosophies must be responsive to the realities of contemporary lifeways to remain relevant. Thus, I contend philosophy as a practice can be deemed a global articulation of knowledge that expands temporal reasoning into that which includes phenomenological reasoning. Understanding construction of philosophy in this way makes an argument for the validity of Indigenous philosophies as being dynamic and responsive means that are on par with that of western-based rationales for the construction of scientific research (Bear 2000; Henderson 2000a). However, Indigenous methodologies are distinguished from western-based models as they center on Indigenous knowledges and reflect relationality at their core.

Muskego Inninuwuk (Cree) scholar Gladys Rowe (2014) suggests, "We come to understand more about an idea through exploring what it is connected to, and what it is in relation with…this relational understanding is also important for the researcher in order to express their relationship with the ideas and concepts that are being explored" (3).

As Rowe suggests, it is important to understand that Indigenous research frameworks represent an Indigenous philosophy, derived from one's own cultural world that may also be shared by other Indigenous peoples. They engage particular ways of understanding knowing (epistemology) and being (axiology and ontology) and is a basis for a way of doing (methodology) research (Wilson 2008). This then reveals the research framework—the principles that guide the work of research—that exists because of various relationships.

Martin (2003:5) provides a summary of the features of an Indigenous research methodology as being:

1. Recognition of our world views, our knowledge and our realities as distinctive and vital to our existence and survival. This serves as a research framework;

2. Honoring Aboriginal social mores as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal people in our own lands and when in the lands of other Aboriginal people;

3. Emphasizing the social, historical and political contexts which shape our experiences, our lives, positions and futures;

4. Privileging the voices, experiences, and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands;

5. Identifying and redressing issues of importance for us.

Cree scholar Kovach (2009) created a research framework that contained the following key qualities that center on tribal epistemology, thus was distinctive from western forms:

A. Holistic epistemology
B. Story
C. Relational Purpose
D. The experiential
E. Tribal ethics
F. Tribal ways of gaining knowledge
G. An overall consideration of colonial relationship

Kovach's Nêhiýaw-centered model is also translatable to non-Indigenous researchers' use as well as a lens for looking inside non-Indigenous contexts. This aligns with my study's goal and provides guidance in understanding how to accomplish it. I explore this thinking further through sharing my study construction in the next chapter.

Kovach agrees with other Indigenous scholars that an Indigenous methodology "describes the theory and method of conducting research that flows from an Indigenous epistemology" (20). She uses this term interchangeably with Indigenous research frameworks and Indigenous inquiry. I also agree with Kovach and other Indigenous scholars on use of this definition for the term Indigenous methodologies, but for clarity within this thesis I utilize distinct definitions of framework—being philosophy derived, methodology—the philosophy operationalized, and method—the practice of these two in congruent ways. I contend there is need to add researcher reflective practice to this equation. Through paying attention to

how you think and why, you are enabled to have a clearer vision of how you do research and why. This is a crucial aspect of Indigenous methodology construction.

Weber-Pillwax (1999) suggests that those who participate in the discourse of Indigenous research methodology should include a consideration of such principles as:

1. The interconnectedness of all living things,
2. The impact of motives and intentions on person and community,
3. The foundation of research as lived indigenous experience,
4. The groundedness of theories in indigenous epistemology,
5. The transformative nature of research,
6. The sacredness and the responsibility of maintaining personal and community integrity, and
7. The recognition of languages and cultures as living processes. (pp. 31-32)

Ultimately, "the knowledge valued in aboriginal societies derives from multiple sources including traditional teaching, empirical observations, and revelations" (Castellano 2000:23). As many theories have begun reflecting more contextual based ways of gaining knowledge, why is it important to also have an Indigenous methodology?

### *Why we need Indigenous research methodologies*

This question speaks to the rationale of having Indigenous methodologies situated outside western-Euro theoretical frameworks, yet within a collaborative relationship. Beyond what Rowe (2014) has contributed about stories being our theories, answers may be found within such as Patel (2015) provides through her definition for an 'answerable space'—being those places where a fostering of respect, responsibility and reciprocity can be accomplished that responds to a need to humanize research practices (Menzies 2001; Peters 2013; San Pedro and Kinloch 2017).

Earlier in this chapter I shared four major western-Euro theories that are utilized within academia. There may be a tendency to think these represent only one space in which to accomplish research and all else resides outside of these places. We may find some assurance though, that theoretical collaboration is possible through the work of Kawagley and Barnhart (2005) which, I perceive, affords Indigenous researchers like myself, with avenues

to consider when trying to understand where overlaps may be occurring between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge sources.

As this study engages an Indigenous way of knowing within non-Indigenous specific contexts, understanding that my research framework must respond to perceived overlaps of epistemology held within both, is paramount. Despite discourse debating western and Indigenous approaches to research, I needed to find an "answerable space" for myself to understand how to investigate my question. I was assisted by the work of Kawagley and Barnhart (2005) who explored overlaps between traditional native knowledge and western science and arrived at a version of a common ground that is dialogic and relational in scope (Figure 1). They adapted Sidney Stephens (2000) diagram for their needs of understanding if and where qualities between the two could assist them in developing curriculum that is responsible to and beneficial for meeting needs of Indigenous students for creation of a culturally responsive science program. The work did not stop there though. Benefits to non-Indigenous educators and students are imbedded in the curriculum as it centers on a relational premise. This enables an inclusive process of educating with the goal of enhancing knowledges found within both cultural perspectives toward a common ground approach to knowledge acquisition and application.

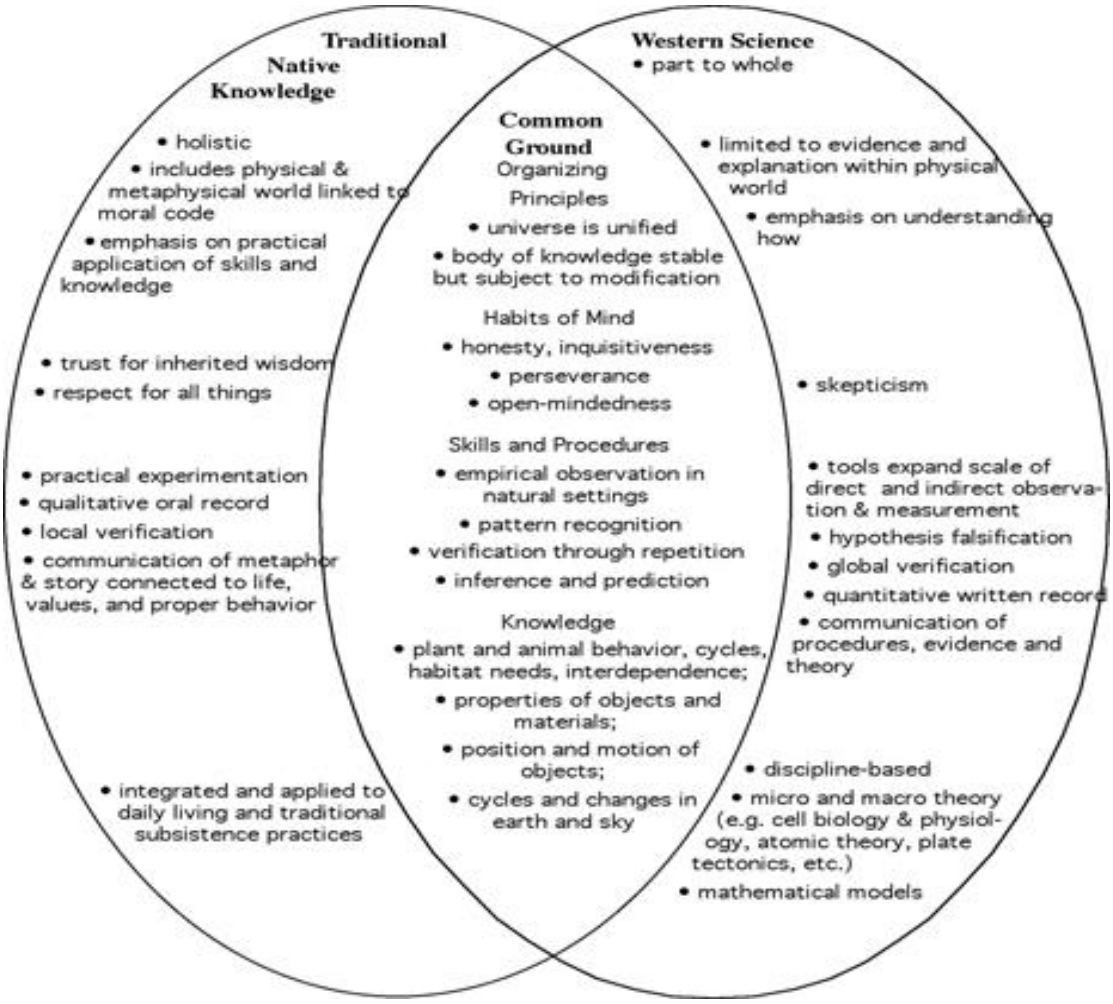


Figure 1: Kawagley and Barnhart (2005:16). Adapted from Stephens (2000) Qualities Associated with Traditional Knowledge and Western Science. Courtesy of Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

From a research methodology perspective, I interpret this diagram as expressing an endeavor to be culturally responsive to the need for Indigenous research frameworks, as examples of a relational philosophy that contrast with current research models that subscribe to individualism in knowledge seeking and production, to also provide insight to their intersection with western-based theories. Understanding information included in the "Common Ground" diagram as being points of overlap provides a guideline for the type of framework that was needed for my study.

As well, Lori Lambert (2014), Mi'kmaq/Abenaki, has created a research framework (Fig. 2) reflecting a "common ground" philosophy that responds to themes she found in her research regarding Indigenous Research Methodologies in the Behavioral Sciences and centers them within tribal knowledges. Her "Spider Web Conceptual Framework" reflects a process of decolonizing research methods that follows the line of thinking behind Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012,1999) construction of an Indigenous research agenda. This addresses concerns about the "context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with consideration of the implications of research for its participants and their communities" (ix).

Lambert's work follows that of L.T. Smith's call for decolonizing of research practices. Many other Indigenous scholars also express the need for research to be accomplished from an Indigenous perspective that respects the pasts of peoples' who have been and remain impacted by colonization. In this way, "the work of research must move the community forward past historical trauma and into self-determination" (61). I find this call is applicable within many, if not most, non-Indigenous peoples' communities as well, due to the transit nature of the imperial project (Byrd 2011).

Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd's work (2011) aligns with the emphasis of decolonization of not only research practices but also of understanding colonization is not only a 'native' experience and tragedy. Smith and Lambert's call positions the researcher as historian to see that a lineage has developed within our collective worlds through the methodology of colonization. Byrd, considers this from, among many stories, social justice issues related to twin tragedies occurring in Guyana in 1978. One the assassination of United States Congressman Leo Ryan and his traveling companions and the other a mass suicide-murder of over 900 people who were follows of Reverend Jim Jones' teachings.

I mention Byrd's study to exemplify the protest of Indigenous scholars against use of what is termed a "postcolonial" theory as a research framework. Within the Guyana tragedy resides a lesson about relationality and that segregating what is local history and

knowledges from the larger web of life, creates a dehumanization of our experiences collectively. This enables a binary perception that what is applicable to some people is not to others. We can hardly afford to retain this mentality contemporarily. While post-colonial theory engages the subaltern body-politic—centering on the collective nature of colonized peoples' interpretation of their emotional and experiential situatedness—it persists in relegating colonization to the past and ignores what is a present human dilemma and reality. Byrd asks us "What might it mean to be responsible to history and the temporal densities that the collision of old and new world philosophies set in motion" (78)? Consideration of this question should reside within the way we go about creating research methodologies in ways that decolonize practices that posit congruency as being unachievable between such as what Indigenous methodologies present and those of dominant theories. This reads as the approach Anderson (2004) contends that "postcolonial theories are relevant to all; there are no spaces that are not colonized" (239). The other side of this assumption is that this stance minimizes the trauma of the colonized and portrays the colonizer as victims and absolves them (LT Smith 2005).

What we find within Lambert's Spider Web diagram of Indigenous relationality is consideration of "what we all share in common and what ties us together" (219). Visions of re-writing the story of humanity from 'the other side'—based on an Indigenous inspired worldview—is possible in the present through a collaborative effort between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers who can see similar goals within their questions. I find hope within this vision as both providing a means to "imagine indigenous decolonization as a process that restores life and allows settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the violences of U.S. empire" (Byrd 2011: 229). Thinking in these process ways can assist us in creating research ways of knowing, being and doing that reveal the beauty of our collective existence as humans and other-than-humans.

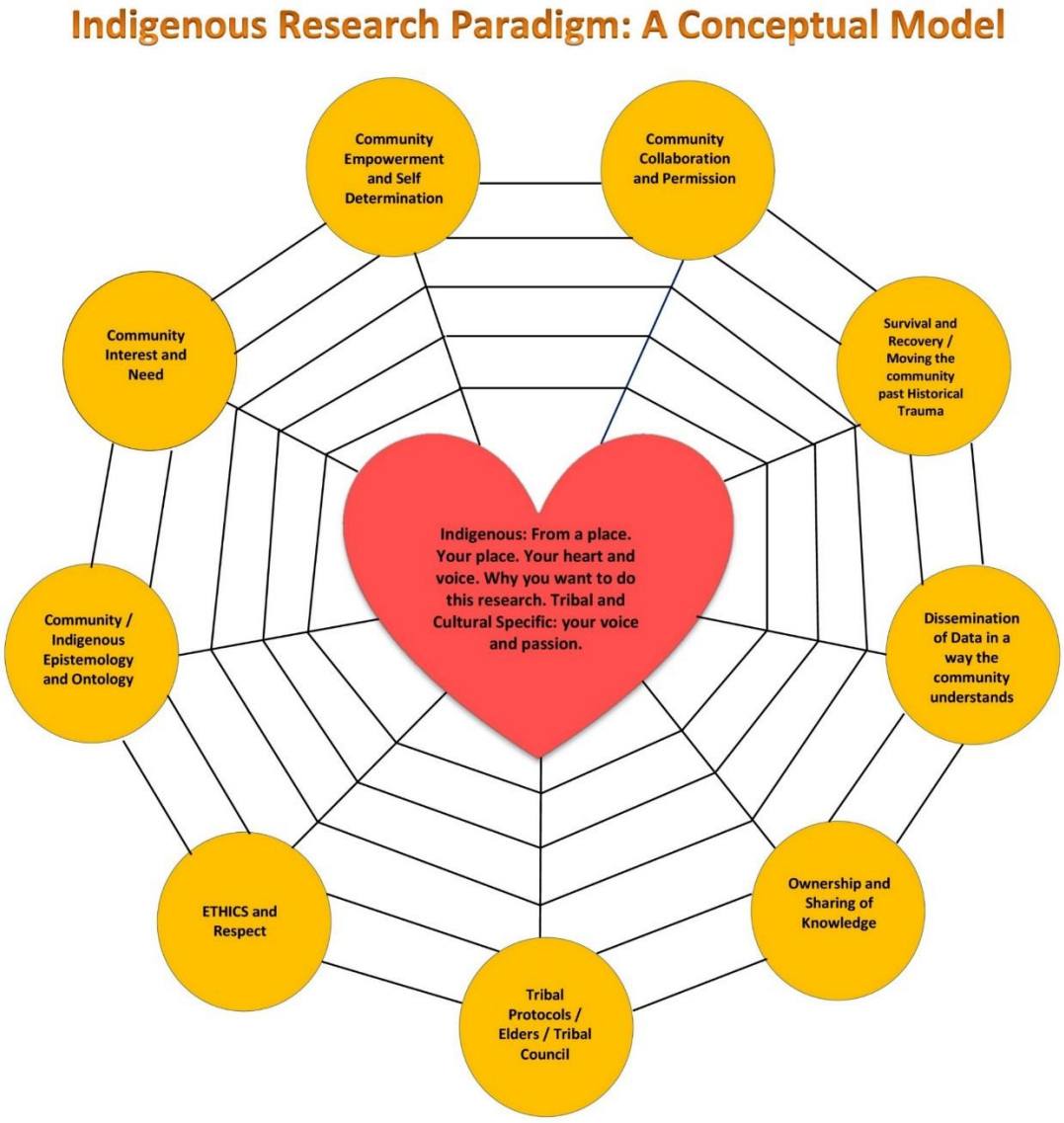


Figure 2: Lori Lambert (2014) Spider Web Conceptual Framework that represents her thoughts on a model for ways similarities between Indigenous peoples' realities can be understood in terms of research practice that decolonizes dominant western methodologies.

To answer my question "*Why do frameworks matter within Indigenous research inquiry,"* I share the thoughts of Indigenous scholar-elders that provide both insight to *what* are Indigenous methodologies and why they are important as a grounding for research design.

Shawn Wilson (2008) sums up the overarching answer through expressing a forward-based vision of why Indigenous research methodologies are crucial to the study of Indigenous contexts

> The development of an Indigenous research paradigm is of great importance to Indigenous people because it allows the development of Indigenous theory and methods of practice…it will assist in the understanding of Indigenous issues, cultures and values [and] students should have the choice of studying "Native" issues that are researched and presented from an Indigenous paradigm (19).

Margaret Kovach (2009:41-42) provides a broader and personally more accountable perspective of what Indigenous methodologies are and how they advocate for researcher self-knowing and transparency of intentions in study design and conduct that create a demand that knowledge be written differently—be you Indigenous or not

> Conceptual frameworks make visible the way we see the world. Within research, these frameworks are either transparent (i.e. through form) or not, yet they are always present. The rationale for explicit representation of one's conceptual framework is that it provides insight into a researcher's beliefs about knowledge production, in general, and how those beliefs will impact the research project. The content and form of the conceptual framework itself assists in illustrating the researcher's standpoint, thus giving the reader insight into the interpretative lens that influences the research…[in this way] we carry our framework…making visible the [conceptual]…in conducting research, the explicitness of our choices and the beliefs that influence them [and] sends a purposeful message about who we are as researches…[and] allows an opportunity to be honest about our perspective as researchers.

I join other Indigenous researchers in being excited at knowing there are becoming more and more scholars, from around the world, who are working with their peoples' knowledges in their research. You can find them within settings such as the American Indigenous Research Association (AIRA), Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) and Native Organization of Indigenous Scholars (NOIS). There are also becoming more of us who are doing the work of looking deep within our socio-cultural positions to find Indigenous knowledges that are culturally appropriate and philosophically

suited to become overarching frameworks for research design, as they are already serving in that capacity as guidance for our peoples (Steinhauer (2002).

Today there are becoming more non-Indigenous scholars and universities who are seeing the need and benefit for what Indigenous scholars bring to the table and of how they themselves can be part of and utilize aspects of these approaches for their own work (Hart et al 2017; Lowan-Trudeau 2012; Getty 2010). It is my hope that this thesis expresses this need and assists in understanding how non-Indigenous researchers can avoid appropriation of Indigenous knowledges, through teaming with Indigenous researchers, adapting and utilizing within their appropriate context the principles governing Indigenous methodology use. As well, I hope non-Indigenous researchers can yet still engage their desire and role to be researchers within any context. I now believe this can be accomplished through preparing-to-do research in ways that arrive at understanding of one's own socio-cultural position. This then assists in locating applicable philosophies, methodologies and methods that are derived from one's own culture and or a shared worldview.

This opens-up the conversation to include a call for non-Indigenous researchers to reach inside their own cultures for knowledges that can be operationalized as research methodologies. This may also accomplish creation of both an avenue for curiosity about other cultures and their beneficial knowledges, as well as narrow the gap—or maybe it is more of a correcting of an imbalance—of the duration and content acquired through an anthropological gaze at Indigenous peoples and their lifeways.

## Reflecting back…

We can now understand that fundamentally, Indigenous methodologies are derived from a peoples' own cultural-based knowledges and are ways for them to investigate, address and present their questions, issues and needs as they deem appropriate according to their own worldviews. They also provide a means to more directly understand another's realities and issues from their own perspective. Most Indigenous methodologies are based on

a shared perception of self-in-relation wherein all humans are interconnected with each other, their environments and other-than-humans. This contrasts with most western-Euro methodologies that view the world in dissected ways and objectifies self, other humans, nature and all that exists within an environment. On the surface, it would seem the two approaches have positionality as a dialectic difference. This bespeaks a colonial-dominant normalizing worldview that has occurred within western-Euro ways of knowing. From an Indigenous perspective of doing research, the primary difference between these approaches is in how relationality is revealed and practiced (Wilson 2008).

This does not advocate an entirely essentializing perspective—one that engages duality and sets one way of being above another. Consider though, centering relationships that subscribe to a principle of mutual benefit is a hallmark of Indigenous knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003). This has been beneficial as a foundational approach for research methodologies within Indigenous communities and as a guideline for how non-Indigenous researchers should consider doing their work within Indigenous communities (LT Smith 2012). Subsequently, I wondered "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts?"

In the next chapter I share the ontology of the Talking Stick philosophy and how I operationalized it to become the methodology I have used to create this thesis and to investigate my question. I present it as pedagogy, that responds to the results of the conversations I had with Indigenous scholar mentors, classmates and faculty and from results of my Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices. I provide detail of this investigation in Chapter V along with the other two sites of inquiry. These knowledges contributed to five critical sub-questions of which the first four are addressed in this present chapter and the next.

I posit, from what I have learned through this research, the four principles derived from the Talking Stick philosophy, reflect crucial and humanitarian ways of knowing about

ourselves within our environments, which is beneficial and greatly needed within ways academic research is accomplished (Little Bear 2011; Kovach 2009; S. Wilson 2008; Absolon and Willett 2005; Hampton 2005).

As I shared earlier, I am providing detail of the 'how' I created the Talking Stick Way Indigenous methodology and subsequent research design as a process of my research, and as an example of *what* an Indigenous methodology is or could be. Sharing *how* I created an Indigenous research study, that begins with researcher preparation through to the write-up of the study, enables recognition of my version of what an Indigenous methodology is. I provide a visual diagram as a "map" and I refer to it as "An Indigenous Way of Doing Research".

As a reminder before we proceed, my question requires first understanding what Indigenous methodologies are, supported by the collective critical questions posed by Indigenous community members and understandings gained from observation and conversations with non-Indigenous graduate students about their research practices. I have, in this current chapter, provided an overview of knowledge to assist with this. Next, to aid understanding of "what are Indigenous research methodologies" and to be able to recognize one, I have created a process that represents that knowledge (Kawato (2008).

This is the way of it…

# IV

## Part 1 continued…

## Understanding *what* Indigenous Methodologies are through An Indigenous Way of Doing Research…a Map

Herein, I follow Kawato's (2008) suggestion that to truly understand something, we need to create it. Recall, in Chapter II I referenced a decision to develop, as my first site of inquiry, a study of non-Indigenous researcher practices. I have yet to provide detail about that study and remain just as hush about it here, as I have opted to include its details within Chapter V along with information about the other two sites of inquiry engaged within this thesis. However, what follows does reflect understandings gained from inquiry site 1, that responds to the five sub-questions.

I shared previously that since at least the 1990s Indigenous scholars have found ways to address the discord that they feel when having to work within western-dominant positivist research paradigms. Through working to understand their own socio-cultural positions these scholars reached into their Indigenous cultures and brought forth knowledges, appropriately determined by their peoples, as being beneficial ways of making inquiry about their own needs and issues. During and because of this activity, culturally sensitive guidelines, or standards, have been designed and shared that address the impacts of colonization that enables Indigenous researchers to go about their work within a shared worldview based on concepts of relationality. These ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003) are grounded in the belief that to study our world we must be part of it (Wilson 2008; Hampton 1995). An important aspect of this way of doing research requires a level of self-knowing that positions a researcher within their studies and reflects an on-going conversation that creates spaces of transformation and co-creation of learning practices that

expands concepts of humanity and of being human. This provides consideration that research is also a form of communication that models, or should model, a duty of care. Researchers are philosophers after all (Bateson 1972), as they subscribe to principles about ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology and, these influence how he or she sees the world and acts in and upon it. Being a researcher has immense accountability inherent in the work of making an inquiry and providing interpretations that are placed into the world, as they represent a perspective that impacts those they work with and among. It is imperative that the work of research reflect this level of attention, self-knowing and responsibility.

### *A relational-based process for research design*

From my understanding of the work of my Indigenous scholar-elders, I have crafted a novel approach to my own study that relates the way Indigenous methodologies can be created and how they are translatable within non-Indigenous researcher preparation and research design. It is this that I share and speak to as we continue.

Please note the following two points: The way I go about providing recognition and understanding of what Indigenous methodologies are, have been grounded by the information provided in the previous chapters. Review of the work accomplished by other Indigenous scholars and the standards that have been derived from their collective works, has informed the way I go about doing research and went about designing this study.

As well, although there has become a collective understanding and agreement to what Indigenous methodologies are, this does not promote a "pan-Indian" generalization of them (Grayshield and Mihecoby 2010; Kovach 2009; Weber-Pillwax 1999). Nor do they represent material for the "recasting" of native knowledges (Cruickshank 1998:50) as a continuum of western rationality that persists in questioning their legitimacy. I have engaged this study process with the understanding that our stories—our Indigenous knowledges—are and always have been our theories about human relationships with each other and

other-than-humans (Rowe 2014; Simpson 2011). These relationships can be known through ways that are comparable to western ways of inquiry, even quantitatively, as that method also measures relationships and their variables.

I have shared that a key component of Indigenous methodological construction rests within identifying knowledges from the researcher's own culture (Simpson 2011; Kovach 2009; Wilson 2008; LT Smith 1999, 2012). I refer to this as the "socio-cultural position" that informs the design of a study. What I provide next is not to be construed as the only way an Indigenous methodology is derived. My socio-cultural position as an Indigenous researcher asks that I consider utilizing my Shoshonean cultural knowledges and or a shared cultural knowledge source as the founding framework for my study design. I have an option to not do so. What I am sharing here is my option to engage this study from a position of being an Indigenous person and a researcher who chooses to utilize an Indigenous philosophy and operationalize it for use as a research methodology. The fact that it is referred to as "Indigenous" derives from it being created from an Indigenous knowledge source, by an Indigenous person who is also a researcher.

To enable further recognition of what an Indigenous methodology is I have created a "map" that is the way I have gone about conceptualizing and designing my own study according to an Indigenous way of doing research. This "map" is a pedagogical hallmark of my study as it is the way to accomplish the creation of a theoretical framework as well as a study methodology.

I go further and create a methodology to place the map into practice and engage data gathering through the lens of this methodology. As a result, I am providing a more 'instructive' approach to sharing this thesis in contrast to only "reporting on" this work. I alert you to the fact that this will appear as methodology, method, results and discussion, as it seems with the way I have gone about preparing for and accomplishing this study, I have created what I sought to discover; as such is often the case when working within an Indigenous methodology (Wilson 2008).

What follows is a visual reference of the philosophy, perspective and process I have created in designing my study according to an Indigenous way of doing research (Fig. 3). It represents my personal journey as a researcher within the process of *knowing* the source of knowledge (epistemology) that informs the *being* (axiology and ontology) in relationship with the *doing* (methodology) of scholarly work. Engaging this process reveals personal intentions behind research questions through answering "why am *I*—a person like me—asking a question like this." This assists in understanding why particular places or sites of study and whom to study with are chosen versus others. Understanding of what paradigm or theoretical framework to work with is also enhanced, as meditating on one's socio-cultural position provides opportunities to build a relationship with a belief system that becomes the lens the study will be viewed through. The methodology, as a product of this lens, and the methods chosen are congruent with this approach.

This process ultimately enables the foregrounding of relationships, with self (through researcher preparation) and others through a *revisit*, with study participants and or stakeholders, about the question, study site(s), philosophical framework, methodology and methods chosen. Collaboratively reviewing these aspects of the study design, as epistemological, ontological, axiological and deontological positions, provides attention to the act of research as a being a required conversation that holds the researcher and participants accountable to ways of doing research based on consensus. This assists in determining how an analysis of knowledge newly understood (data) is to be accomplished and how its interpretation as results or findings derive from both the subjective socio-cultural position of the researcher as well as from objective measures of the data. In this way, a mixed-method approach would be relevant for an Indigenous methodology. We thus find, within the alternative western Qualitative approach to doing research, an ally. I address this further within presentation of Element 4: Developing a methodology and selecting methods.

All this can be seen and understood through the product of this process exemplified in the "map" I provide for you in Figure 3. Please note, my use of the term "map" reflects

not only a wayfinding tool but acknowledgement that knowledge inquiries and sharing occur on a multidimensional landscape that reflects a *coming to know* philosophy of collaboration found within most Indigenous worldviews. Cajete (2015) refers to this way of collaborative knowing as a "holistic social context that upholds the importance of each individual [who] is valued as contributing to the whole" (203).

Indigenous perspectives of research, as being relationally-based and reflexive, have received notice recently among non-Indigenous scholars, institutions of higher learning and social and anthropological associations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The reality that most, but not all, western-Euro-based research methodologies still promote a continuance of marginalization has become more evident for non-Indigenous researchers with leanings akin to that of Indigenous perspectives. I say, "not all," as there are western methods and theories which are adaptable and beneficial as "allies" that promote a more dialogical and egalitarian approach to research activities (L.T. Smith 2012). These are primarily found within an alternative western paradigm, Qualitative research. Its methodologies represent a "legitimate mode of social and human exploration, without apology or comparisons to quantitative research" (Creswell 2013:6). I will provide more detail as I share this study's design. Suffice it to say, qualitative inquiry advocates for multiple diverse approaches—methodologies with congruent methods—and situates a study within the reflexive "presence" of the researcher. This means the socio-cultural position of the researcher sits amidst, not outside of, the research that utilizes an inductive-deductive logic process that requires complex reasoning skills throughout the entire research process (Creswell 2013). Like Indigenous methodological processes, qualitative research provides insight to the entire process of research design which considers conceptualizing a problem or question as a pre-planning practice. The difference is that Indigenous methodologies center on Indigenous knowledges and their relationship to what is being studied that produces mutual benefit.

A key element of an Indigenous methodology is the pre-planning endeavor of researcher development that promotes understanding of the 'researcher-self.' Graduate student Cristina Costa (2014), among others, took notice of the importance of this practice within her own work as a result of trying to understand how and where her work reflected mutual benefit. It is no wonder non-Indigenous researchers are paying closer attention these days, as this attribute of an Indigenous way of doing research promotes and emphasizes a key endeavor of an academic researcher—this being the ability to justify the choices we make in research design. This is best accomplished as a reflexive exercise that entails meditation on ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. Indigenous methodologies have two additional positions, these being a researchers' axiological and deontological stance—one's ethics, morals and associated responsibility to the values that guide the search for knowledge, especially how knowledge is gained that reveals relational accountability (Wilson 2008). With contemplative attention towards knowing-self through these five positions, the philosophical quest of every researcher, where we stand, is achievable.

### *Typology of the Talking Stick Way*

*Eight concentric and iterative elements*

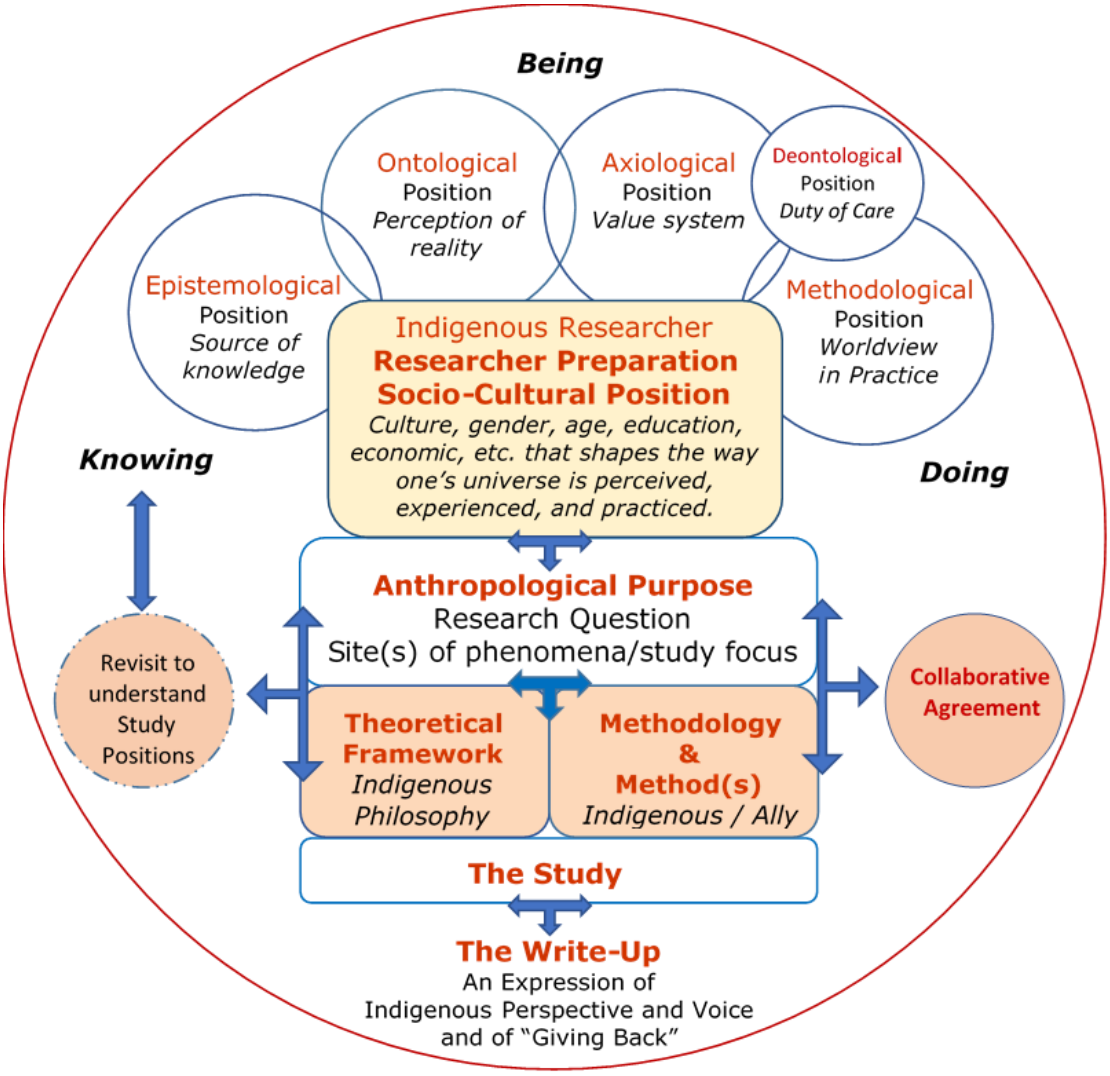


Figure 3: Ren Freeman, 2017: *An Indigenous Way of Doing Research*. Adapted from S. Wilson 2016 AIRA presentation: Elements of an Indigenous Research Methodology, with permission 5/2017. This 'map' assists in understanding the research process as a conversation of self-knowing, through pre-study preparation that establishes a socio-cultural position that then informs the remaining elements of the design of a research study.

The 'map' (fig. 3) I have provided has eight key elements, with sub-elements where required for further contribution to the process, and will guide us through the remainder of this chapter. This map and its corresponding narrative outline represents the first of two

methodologies and the first work accomplished through this study. Focus is necessarily on Element 1 as it refers to a commitment of on-going professional development a researcher. This assists in conceptually determining an approach to share the study, and is prelude to development of a research question. This reflects a holistic and pro-active approach to the work of research that does not dissect its process, but fundamentally moves between and within each aspect of a study. The second methodology appears in the next chapter to share the way I go about practicing the methodology I have created to accomplish this study.

What follows here are reflections and findings of my process for preparing to create and accomplish my study with inclusion of references to scholars whose work and words relate to the activities within each Element's theme. I am sharing this approach in an instructional manner to enhance understanding of "what are Indigenous research methodologies", and concludes Part 1 of my study. I beg your patience and understanding as I try to accommodate most levels of knowledge about anthropology and research processes and articulate them in ways that are useful to the practice of research.

This is the way of it…

## Element 1: First things First - Researcher Preparation

As an Indigenous researcher, preparing-to-do the work of research is just as important as doing it. In fact, researcher self-preparation is the initial process of creating and engaging an Indigenous methodology. Hence, doing research in an Indigenous way begins in the middle of a personal story of professional development that calls for meditation about what has created one's overall socio-cultural position. This can be accomplished through understanding positions of *knowing*—one's epistemology or sources of knowledge—and of *being*—one's ontology and axiology or perception of reality and value system(s). This is also seen as a person's worldview—an understanding of reality and one's place within it that is created from a set of beliefs and practices that create a global or local perspective (O'Neill 2006; Kuhn 1962). The process of preparing-to-do research creates a means to consider

one's intentions about *being* a researcher that leads to self-knowledge of ways—*methodologies*—one generally would go about *doing* research. This requires a conversation with our self and a deeper understanding of self as a researcher.

Chickasaw scholar, Eber Hampton (1995), calls for remembrance of why and how we identify as researchers. The message of his article "Memory comes before knowledge: research may improve if researchers remember their motives" grounds my research approach that begins with a focus on understanding what influences and determines my socio-cultural self. Additionally, as I am an Indigenous person, who is also an anthropological researcher, I practice a research ethic that entails the practice of critical introspection that considers my research practice within an accountability to an Indigenous collective (Dana-Sacco 2010). This generally engages the whole of the exercise of understanding my socio-cultural position and specifically addresses personal accountability as a reflexive ethic of research practice.

To assist with understanding the process of this initial element—Researcher Preparation—I provide a diagram (Fig. 4) of the relationship researcher preparation has with the development of a research question. You will recognize this as the top portion of the overall "map" for an Indigenous Way of Doing Research provided earlier.

The completion of this series of actions provides the Socio-Cultural Position of a researcher and informs the remaining design elements of a study.


Figure 4: 2017 Ren Freeman. Preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous Way.

*Why is a person like me asking a question like that?*

We can see from this diagram that preparation to do research entails having a conversation with ones-self that provides a clearer understanding of what your worldview is as a result of your socio-cultural position. Many scholars have discussed and defined what a "worldview" is and most agree that we as researchers, Indigenous or non- "must have a clear understanding of the worldview that grounds and drives our work (O'Neill 2006; Frison 2004). With that worldview embedded, we can choose the research methods, tools, or techniques that we will use" (Steinhauer 2002:78). Within western-Euro research practice a "worldview" can be the adoption of someone else's theoretical framework or approach.

Within most Indigenous research there is a standard that the personal and relational aspect of this definition. This understanding also aligns with another canon of research design: situating or locating one's self as the researcher within one's study. Cruikshank (1998) describes this as an axiom of research and the way an Indigenous researcher assumes the role of a storyteller and their way of sharing a tale reflects their own character in the telling.

*A way to prepare and develop as a researcher*

Meditating on who I am as a human being, as an Indigenous person and as a researcher requires a kind of self-conversation that reflects Kovach's (2010) "conversational method" that is a re-membering and sharing in ways that are helpful to further a dialog. It is a form of autoethnography—an interpreting and telling of ourselves that is a layered account (Ronai 1995), "a telling that creates a 'continuous dialectic of experience, emerging from the multitude of reflexive voices that simultaneously produce and interpret…text(s)" (396), (Jones 2008). When we reflect on who we are as a past and present actor in our own lives we do not tell a solo story. We are in relationship with those who are in our memories and they assist in interpreting who we are and who they are.

An Indigenous way of doing research would have you explore your positions of knowing, being and doing through understanding how they build on the construction of each other and inform an overall socio-cultural position. This position is not static though, as each day our experiences influence the way we know and understand our realities and ways of valuing them, that then informs and reflects how we go about living our lives and seeing the world we are within and which is around us.

What follows is a rather elongated example of what I have referred to as "meditating" on my positions of epistemology, ontology, axiology, deontology and methodology—this I define as the checking-in with my worldview.

Related to the idea of adaptable or translatable elements of an Indigenous way of doing research, I suggest that it is within this first element of the process that you will find the most useful information for non-Indigenous researcher practice that enables the design and conduct of research to reflect a relational worldview.

It is my hope that this way of sharing my research will enable you to develop a relationship with me and that this approach will in turn allow acknowledgement and respect for the processes and information provided through this exercise in preparing-to-do a study.

Through this exercise, I arrived at the following story. It is a culmination of meditations on who I am because of what landscape I am associated with, the people of that landscape and our culture, and aspects of my life experiences through time and how these relate to my becoming and being an Indigenous researcher. These culminate into the way I perceive research should be accomplished and has been, for this study, accomplished. Within this personal story, I also reflect on the work of other scholars. Recall, I am sharing this with you during my career as an anthropologist and as a graduate student of socio-cultural anthropology. This reality contributes to the epistemological, ontological, axiological, deontological and methodological positions that collectively create my Socio-Cultural Position.

### *My Worldview: A Reflexive Exercise*

Among many Indigenous peoples, telling a story always begins with information about the storyteller (Chilisa 2012; Wilson 2008; Redshirt 2001; LT Smith 1999). Within Indigenous research methodologies, sharing of one's personal background as a form of introduction reflects a worldview wherein examination of our world requires ourselves being part of it. This also positions the researcher as a method of inquiry that represents a heuristic process—a way of knowing based on researcher reflexivity (Moustakas 1990; Wilson 2008; Creswell 2013). Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2002) puts it this way: "In our culture we begin by introducing ourselves by naming our geography, where we come from,

then our ancestral lines, and then finally we name the people" (169) an in this way we name our self.

This is the way of it…

## *I am Soe Soe're - People of the Long Grass*

### *My Homelands and People*

As an Eastern Shoshone woman, my homelands are in the state of Wyoming located along the Northwestern base of the Wind River Mountains, which are part of the Rocky Mountain range of North America. Western scholars such as Frison, Steward, Haines, McCracken and others have contributed largely to information regarding the material record of the Shoshone people. Shoshonean cultural and historical information have also been aided by anthropologist Sven Liljeblad's study of linguistics from an ethnohistorian perspective and Raymond Fogelson's "ethno-ethnohistorian" process. Both approaches have afforded opportunity for oral histories, provided by Shoshonean peoples, to be included in scholarly discourse. To we Shoshone, the area where our reservation lands are now located have been visited and occupied by our people since time immemorial. This knowledge contributes to an understanding of persistence of ways that have afforded survival of my people.

More specifically, I am from Fort Washakie, a small rural community where the Eastern Shoshone tribal governance 'agency' is located on the Wind River Indian Reservation and is referred to as Udadye, "Warm Valley." The community name of Fort Washakie memorializes an ancestor who is our last traditionally recognized leader, Washakie (Fig. 5), who passed away in 1900 and was provided a full U.S. military burial, the only chief to be granted such.

Figure 5. Chief Washakie. Date unknown. Courtesy of Smithsonian Museum, Baker and Johnson Collection.

Washakie was present at the signing of both the 1863 and 1868 Fort Bridger treaties that established an initial 44,672,000 acres for the Eastern Shoshone tribe and included parts of Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, but has since dwindled to 2,774,000 acres (Eastern Shoshone Tribe 2017) (Fig. 6). This area is referred to as a gateway to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, whose creation contributed greatly to the diminished mobility and subsistence areas for my Shoshone people (Nabokov and Loendorf 2004).

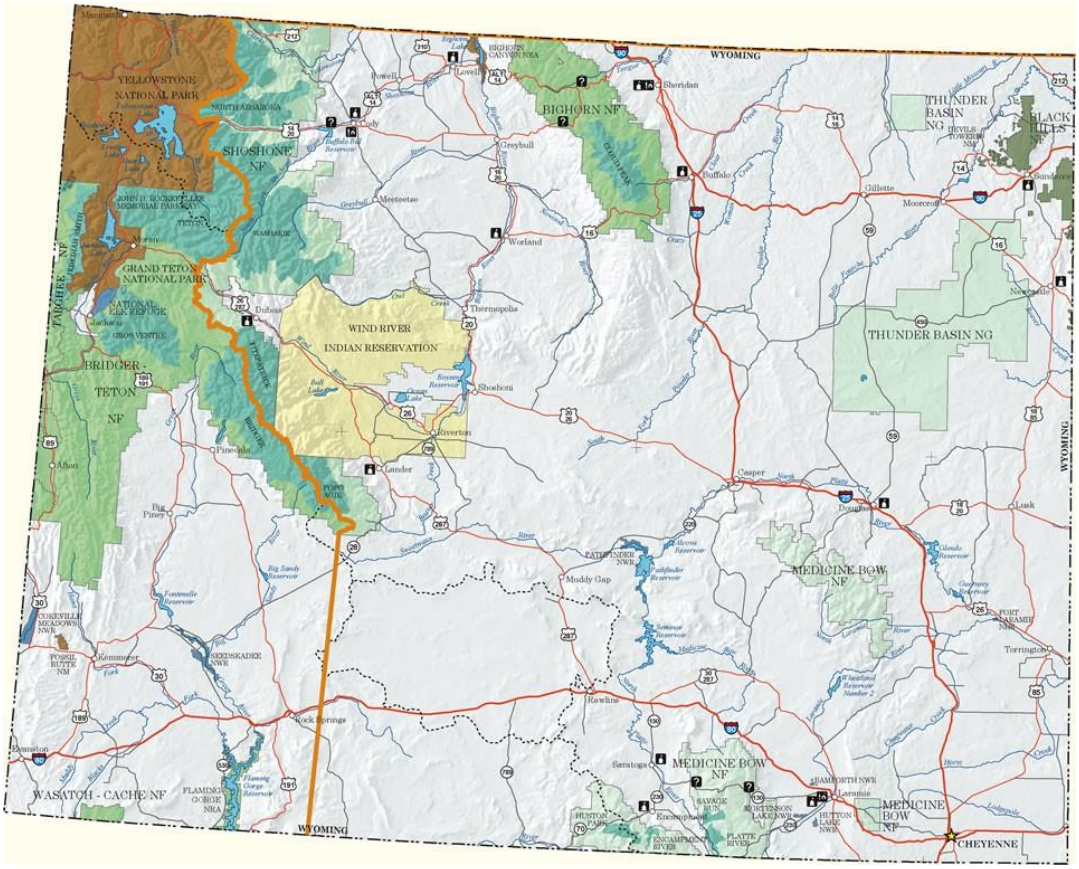


Figure 6. USGS Map of the State of Wyoming with present day Wind River Indian Reservation location highlighted.

*I am SoeSoe'ree Wai'peht – a Shoshone Woman*

Not so long ago it was the custom of Wind River Shoshone to never divulge their Shoshonean gifted-names to 'outsiders' unless absolutely necessary (Shimkin 1947). I know this to be true and as late as the 1990's many of my people held to this tradition. For myself, I invoke the exception of 'absolutely necessary.' What I endeavor with my work is to narrow or even close gaps created by historical and contemporary colonial-based binary and divisive methodologies, through building bridges based on an Indigenous way of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003). It is my belief, there are those of us who must step forth

into these gaps and offer ourselves as material for such constructions. In sharing who I am, in these ways, it can be understood how I also am a method of inquiry. It is through an embodiment of our questions that we can attain a deeper way of thinking about them. It is my hope that I invoke what the words of Chickasaw author Linda Hogan (1995) expresses: Walking. I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.

It is my ancestors who guide my work and to whom I am ultimately accountable to. In my spirit, I carry an enduring question that they asked upon seeing their lifeways altered in ways that created a reality they could not understand. They asked, 'Why do things have to be done in ways that break relationships between us as human beings and other-than-humans?' I endeavor to seek answers to this question.

I am SoeSoe'ree Havi'khe Wai'peht. Shoshone Mourning Dove Woman, a name given to me by my great-grandfather John Trejillo, a Sundance lodge keeper for my people and descendent of Numuunu, Comanche, Sundance leader Yellow Hand, upon completion of my first 'fasting' ceremony at the age of 13. I am Agaidüka –Salmon Eater—(Lemhi) from Todsa, "beloved grandmother of the Eastern Shoshone," eldest daughter of Bazil, adopted son and blood-nephew of Sacajawea and her brother, Agaidüka Chief, Cameahwait. I am of the Yellow Bang clan.

I am also Bia'ikaa sheéhche. Woman Who Seeks to Learn. This name was bestowed on me by Joe Medicine Crow, Crow tribal historian, upon the request of Thomas Yellowtail, Joe's uncle and a Sundance leader for the Apsaalooké (Crow) people of Montana. This was done so that I would be brought into the Whistling Water clan and reflects a matrilineal social culture and process for recognizing and naming an Apsaalooké child. Through me, my son, whose father is Crow, was given a name by his great-grandfather Thomas Yellowtail. This naming represents the relationship between Shoshone-Crow Sundance ways.

I have two daughters, who are ten and twelve years older than my son and are of the Mandan-Hidatsa people of North Dakota. They received their names and clans through

ceremonies represented by their father's people. I am also gah-gook—grandmother—to two young boys whose father is Cheyenne-Arapaho from Oklahoma. The eldest is named after a Shoshone great-uncle and the younger named for our Comanche ancestor Yellow Hand.

My father is First Nation Métis-Cree from Alberta, Canada and our people are originally from Manitoba. His grandfather was French and Cree—Métis—and his grandmother was Cree but also of Scottish descent, being a descendant of Sir George Simpson, of British Hudson Bay Company history. My 'dad', was a Northern Cheyenne man who came into my life when I was seventeen years old. His family live primarily on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana.

I began and have lived most of my life within native communities. As a result, I have the perspective of an Indigenous person that sees the world as being in relationship with and having a responsibility of care for one another—be they human or other-than-human.

*I am an Indigenous Researcher*

Although a foundational core of one's identity, a worldview is not a static belief system, rather it continuously expands in response to the practice of it in daily life (Bourdieu 1991). "Ah ha" moments can forever alter a person's view of themselves and how they live within and understand their relationship with others. Even within intimate relationships, such as those between family members and close friends, opportunities exist for each person to grow in their understanding of one's-self and why they think and behave the way they do because of contrasting dialogical exchanges (O'Neill 2013 in review of Bakhtin). It is while communicating with others, that we can situate ourselves within our realities.

What follows is a coming of age story that I hope clarifies how my identity as an Indigenous researcher helped contribute to the creation of my research question and led to the type of research design and approaches I utilize. By presenting aspects of this personal journey, I engage an ethic of Indigenous research that responds not only to a need to share

knowledge, but to also inform the ways knowledge is constructed and represented (Battiste 2000; LT Smith 1999).

My favorite part of the year has always been winter. I believe that most of my worldview emerged then. In Shoshonean culture, stories are usually told in the winter when snow is knee-deep, and life assumes a slower pace—enabling time to gather close and strengthen relationships. Our stories are not mere pastime activities, as they are not in the western-style fabrications; rather they are the means of passing on of culturally distinct moral and practical knowledge that instructs our daily lives (de Certeau 1984). It is the practice of these knowledges—morals of our stories—that provides a means to consider where we fit, individually and collectively, within the environments we find ourselves. Times of storytelling provide such a space of practice for developing one's personal and collective worldview.

I was thirteen in 1974 and was with about thirty other people in the Rock Hall—our community building located in the heart of Fort Washakie. We were gathered in celebration of a family member's birthday. Rupert Weeks, a Shoshonean elder and Storyteller, was occupying youth with stories about a trip he took to a place on our lands where ancient rock writing exists. "But why…" I had started to ask amidst his story, causing Rupert to look directly at me. He did not shame me for interrupting, but he did share there are right and good ways to communicate and that I must let him finish his story as my questions would probably be answered. I was instructed to be a patient listener because all stories have lessons in them that connect us with each other. Stories, he said, also contain information that addresses something personal in each of us. He continued, prophetically it now seems, to also encourage my questioning. He said, far too often people take what they are told as the only way of knowing, being or doing something. My family and community know me as a person who always asks questions. In fact, I once received a t-shirt with the letter 'Y' on it. Such has been my nature to look beyond what is apparent. Stories are our theories (Rowe

2014) and Rupert helped me to understand that my curiosity and need to distill meanings from what I found, was a practice of being a researcher. I had yet, though, to understand I was also an "Indigenous" researcher and what that means.

My first year of high school began at Flandreau Indian School (FIS) in South Dakota. FIS, an accredited off-reservation boarding school for native students in grades 9-12, was established in 1892. It was one of many federal government schools created to assimilate native children and their families, physically and cognitively, away from their cultural lifeways toward a western religious way of being (Battiste 2011). I attended in 1975, during the swan song of the Imperial boarding school campaign. FIS, though, remains open today but its philosophy has seemingly changed. Rather than "scrubbing" the Indianess from its students, it celebrates the various tribal cultures represented in its student population (Grace 2015). My experience at this boarding school was both traumatic and enlightening. I learned I was of a people who had been "colonized," and I shared this experience in various indelible ways with students from numerous other tribes located throughout the country and for that matter, the world. I learned, from conversations and books I found in the school library, that the historical and colonized history of my Shoshone people created a reference to me as being an "Indigenous" person.

The term *Indigenous* when coupled with the title *Researcher* expresses both a symbolic stance of sovereignty and a way of being (Kovach 2009). *Indigenous* is a term of inclusivity that creates a platform for voices of not just a single person but for those native peoples who have worldviews because of similar experiences. It is further inclusive because it describes a people who philosophically align with their landscapes and subscribe to a worldview of interconnectedness between humans and other-than-humans.

Politically, the term "Indigenous" is also descriptive of a collective identity of native peoples who have been and remain subjected to Imperial colonial methodologies of termination or assimilation with an accompanying loss of physical and cultural resources—to in-

clude land, language and cultural knowledges—as a result. However, "Indigenous" as a collective term can be problematic because it glosses specific experiences of the differences between peoples described by the term (L.T. Smith 1999). Tare those Indigenous peoples who have not been removed from their homelands and yet are still subjected to ongoing political and social distress because of Imperial mentalities and other non-displacement colonial methodologies.

Ultimately, though, I have opted to embrace the term Indigenous and the plural noun Indigenous peoples. It foregrounds the existence of experiences and the issues and struggles of some of the world's colonized peoples, including mine. The term expresses self-determination and the denial of postcolonial narratives. As some Indigenous scholars have written, the term also reminds the world that Indigenous people represent an unfinished work of decolonization (L.T. Smith 1999 citing Wilmer 1993). The coupling of the term Indigenous with that of "researcher" also troubles perceptions of who, exactly, this term represents.

Locating oneself within a study is a complex, yet clarifying, process for an Indigenous researcher. Mertens, Cram and Chilisa (2013) in *Indigenous Pathways into Social Research*, provide context for understanding the way Indigenous peoples, in roles as researchers, engage "negotiations with power, resistance to oppression, and the value that comes from understanding Indigenous ways of knowing in conjunction with research in culturally complex communities" (12).

Introducing ones-self as an Indigenous person, as in the way I have done, provides an example of a protocol of disclosure "about one's cultural location, so that connection can be made on political, cultural and social grounds and relations established" (Martin 2009:204). Prior to making such a statement, an Indigenous person should consider their basis of claiming such an identity. Asking ourselves such questions as: Am I a person of biologically native ancestry who grew up within my community and have an awareness of my traditions and culture, thus defining my Indigenous worldview? Did I grow up outside my

community and cultural ways, but still identify as being Indigenous, possibly with a mixed-cultural worldview? Or, might I be someone who has recently learned I have Indigenous bloodlines and am curious now? Possibly I identify as not being an Indigenous person but am a researcher of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. This type of self-reflection also attests to the internal diversity among Indigenous people and is part of the reasoning for the United Nations to create the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. That Declaration foregrounds the fact that most Indigenous people live in multiple-identity realities.

There are heated debates among Indigenous peoples around issues of self-definition because of their political, cultural and genealogical experiences (L.T. Smith 1999). I am not engaging those debates here. I am though, acknowledging that occurrences exist whereby Indigenous scholarly works are perceived as also providing a work based on Indigenous methodologies. What may be occurring more often is that an Indigenous person has accomplished a scholarly work but has utilized a dominate research framework and associated methods. Or possibly, an Indigenous philosophy or methodology has been a perspective within a dominant approach as a method. The Indigenous researcher has not though, engaged their own or an Indigenous cultural philosophy or worldview as a framework.

Confusion about these standpoints remind us to be conscientious of entertaining perceptions that can take issues and approaches out of an Indigenous research framework as a context (S. Wilson 2008). This is not to say that such a scholar is not writing from an Indigenous experience. Representation, as a concept, situates knowledge as "truth" and as Indigenous scholars we must embrace an added layer of accountability. To do otherwise, encourages a response that creates unrealistic assumptions about the work. Additionally, a glossing may occur of the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing, originating from culturally based sources.

Presently, I define Indigenous research as that accomplished by Indigenous individuals who view their work through a lens constituted from their personal relationship with

their Indigenous culture. Indigenous individuals who do research with other Indigenous peoples or outside Indigenous contexts still reflect this definition. This way of being and doing actively informs the creation of research designs and methods that reflect an Indigenous worldview. Further, this definition provides key distinctions between Indigenous research methodologies and that of dominate western methodologies.

Castellano (2004) notes that a conscientious gathering of information and an equally conscientious extraction and distribution of its meanings, have always created Indigenous knowledge. This describes a unique practice of research and how it can be accomplished. The ways of gathering knowledge (note, a distinction here as being versus the western term 'information', which will be discussed later) and who benefits from what is found, assists me in describing who I am as an Indigenous Researcher.

There is a moral position that I stake out—a stance taken when on a battlefield—through embracing the role of an Indigenous scholar and researcher professionally. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) writes that the word 'research' could well be the "dirtiest" word in the Indigenous world (1). As an anthropological method, research has and often still engages an objectifying, egregious and unethical practice of placing Indigenous people solely in the past, versus a people with a viable and vocal present (A. Simpson 2016). I share more in upcoming chapters about how crafting and utilizing Indigenous methodologies address these issues. Suffice it to state here, I subscribe to standards set by my Indigenous scholar-elders that guide my intentions, gathering of knowledge and its utilization.

My experiences since attending Flandreau during my freshman year of high school, and finishing up at the border-town school fourteen miles from Fort Washakie, continued to pull me toward understanding how and why my identity and worldview as an Eastern Shoshone woman created different realities for me, both on and off the reservation. I considered that these differences were created as a result of a lack of communication or of misunderstanding of what is communicated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Growing up I often felt I lived on an island because reservation life, coupled with border-town realities, presents many boundaries that are both physical and psychological. As a result, I actively sought opportunities to travel and aspired to become an astronaut, an occupation that proved elusive. Yet I still endeavored to experience other cultures through road trips and spent time in the air racking up both traveler miles and flight hours. Ultimately though, attending college afforded me opportunities for developing my ideas about recognizing and building communication bridges.

As an undergraduate student, at the University of Denver in Colorado, I chose to focus on inter- and cross-cultural communication. I entered that field based on my relationship with a Shoshonean worldview of communication and it being about connecting in positive ways with others, especially within non-Indigenous social and political environments, with a goal of sharing worldviews (Weeks 1961, 1981).

Dell Hymes (1962, 1964), a linguistics anthropologist, introduced this concept into the study of communication as a practice of meaning-making. His work locates the social, cultural practices, and beliefs of a people within various forms of communication and has become known as "Ethnographic Communication".

Inspired by this concept I began seeking out Indigenous scholars to see how they articulated their worldviews. It was the early 1980s and at the time, few scholars wrote on native topics from an Indigenous perspective and virtually none utilized research frameworks based on their own cultural philosophies. It seemed all their writing was as counterpoints to the impacts of legislative assimilationist policies following the "salvage research" era of anthropology that engaged termination and acculturation narratives (Stanner 1972; Newman 2001; Martin 2003). These promoted a forecast that Indigenous peoples would be unrecognizable as such within the coming decades.

In 1944, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was created. Since then, scholarship has focused primarily on accounts asserting tribal sovereignty through

enforcement of treaties that deal with land and mineral rights, education and health reparations. These were largely represented through platforms not based on Indigenous cultural perspectives, at least not until recently. While learning what history books revealed about Imperialism's colonial endeavors I came across one writer, an Indigenous scholar-elder, who did represent an Indigenous perspective in her work.

Ella Cara Deloria, Dakota, was born one year before the Massacre at Wounded Knee in 1889 on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. She received a bachelor's degree in 1915 from Columbia Teacher's College and worked with Franz Boas as a translator of Dakota Sioux texts (DeMallie 1988). In 1926 Boas had invited Deloria to again work with him in New York and it was there she met Ruth Benedict. Deloria's work provided an example of what I was looking for in an Indigenous scholar as being a bridge builder. She was caught between two worlds, one pulling native people toward assimilation to western values and that of her Sioux Nation, which was then embroiled in a stance of resistance to colonization. Her personal response was to engage her cultural ways of being responsive to transformations through creative and resourceful means (Cotera 2008).

Deloria chose to document, through writing, her Dakota language and culture. Her text *Waterlily,* written in the early 1940s about pre-contact Sioux culture, was a much longer document than what was eventually published in 1988, nearly twenty years after her death. Benedict and Boas chose to edit the text to half its original length for their purposes of highlighting an anthropological example of kinship and their transformations within Sioux social culture. Deloria's longer version had provided more background about Sioux worldviews and ways of knowing. As the text was written in 'story' form and contextually through the lens of a Sioux woman it has become, at least to me, a rare early example of utilizing literary communication to relate Indigenous worldviews to a non-native audience. It also therefore, exemplifies an Indigenous research methodology.

Indigenous scholar Lynn Grande wrote in *Red Pedagogy* (2004) that articulating and sharing our stories reveals 'survivance'—meaning a methodology of recovery, reimagination, and reinvestment of Indigenous ways of being through literary expressions. Deloria's example of situating oneself between two seemingly opposing positions exemplifies Grande's definition of a survival method. This then provides the impetus for my own inquiries about articulating worldviews within a middle-ground space that also represents a place of common ground—a place of social and ecological relationality. Deloria's challenges from within the academy, these being a resistance to other ways of knowing, of expressing that knowledge, and receiving recognition for her work as an Indigenous person, have proved to be persistent. In the early 1990s these challenges began to be actively addressed through the work of Indigenous scholars, largely from New Zealand, Australia and Canada writing about Indigenous research methodologies.

I have avidly read these scholars' work and that of many of their students. As an Indigenous woman and scholar, I have found an affinity with them as they share experiences that reflect many of my own internal thoughts and emotions, worldviews and sociopolitical realities. Indigenous research methodologies represent to we Indigenous researchers, and through us to a non-Indigenous audience, ways of addressing the past, present and future as we live and perceive them. Most of the work to-date, in this regard, has been to provide a desperately needed means, through our own voices, of foregrounding our various Indigenous realities and methods of addressing issues of colonial impacts. This is accomplished through utilizing knowledge we have held within our peoples since time immemorial. I have always wondered though, if Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing would be relevant and just as beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts.

Through her 2001 article "Aboriginal Peoples and Knowledge: Decolonizing our Processes", Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson provides awareness and practice of the concept of studying non-Indigenous peoples and practices by Indigenous people. Her field of

work involves Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Best known by its acronym, TEK—a concept largely developed outside Indigenous communities or input—is used by academia, non-government and governmental organizations and departments with an interest or investment in environmental issues. Often Indigenous knowledge has been gathered in ways that have situated knowledge as 'data' without the foundational worldviews associated with it.

Simpson's approach is unique as she does not study her own people or culture related to this field, but instead studies those who are studying TEK, who are primarily non-Indigenous. She does this work through her Anishinaabe perspective and without apology or words that seek permission, as again, the concept of seeing the world through Indigenous eyes is yet a rare thing and subject to academic censorship. Simpson's work has shed light on the need for Indigenous scholarship that lends voice to Indigenous knowledge. Even more than that, it has highlighted the need for understanding non-Indigenous perspectives about their selves and their intentions. Studies such as these can create a bridge between perceived opposing goals and gain access to ways of communicating that are mutually beneficial. In the case of an Indigenous worldview, that embraces concepts of socio-ecological and economical ideologies, "mutually" includes human and other-than-humans as well. There is accountability imbedded in this way of being.

Chickasaw scholar Eber Hampton (1995) posits that research should include the sharing of one's personal motives for doing a study, from a position of being within the study itself and not as a dislocated, unaffected observer. As I shared earlier, gazing through my Shoshone Indigenous 'eyes', I began to pay closer attention to what I perceived as the ways Indigenous individuals lived their lives in contrast to non-Indigenous people and within non-Indigenous environments. I had consciously dubbed particular contexts as not being Indigenous nor "my way" of perceiving reality. What, then, do I mean by "non-Indigenous" contexts? On the surface, it might mean an environment not within Indigenous lands, communities nor part of "our" activities or issues as descendants of colonized native peoples. My use of this phrase requires more to be considered though, to understand how I

define and work with non-Indigenous contexts. Aside from the obvious understanding of biological ancestry as a descriptive meaning for being Indigenous or not, there are other scenarios to be considered.

In 2013, writer Derek Rasmussen declared that, to his knowledge, there exists no departments nor textbooks within universities that specifically address non-indigenous societies. He provides a definition of non-indigenous contexts as being civilizations that hold no relationship, other than capitalist ones, with a physical landscape in a rooted-way that also provides a definition for their worldview. This way of being also tends to center on human individualism, often over family and community (Wilson 2008, 2001). Rasmussen contends, citing French philosopher Simone Weil (1949, 1952), that this status and disposition have created global upheavals because of the "uprooted" nature of non-indigenous peoples, and this provides a further psychological and sociological definition to the phrase "non-indigenous."

Weil's phrase and social theory derive as a report commissioned by the Free French Resistance movement in the 1940s. She defines "Uprootedness" as an overarching, if not universal, human condition because of severed ties to the past, leading to the dissolution of an identity related to a specific community. The key premise of her book, "The Need for Roots", is that people need to recognize the ways they have severed ties to their pasts in order to regain their "rootedness." Weil addresses the constitution of a non-Indigenous identity in a similar way as Rasmussen suggests.

I recognize a similarity in Weil's social theory to that of an earlier work by Max Weber. His "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1905) also addresses a need to understand one's relationship with community through being a productive member of one. Both philosophers provide attention to the emergence of modern capitalist thought about relationality through their recommendations.

These perspectives foreground the foundation of what is included in my definition of "non-Indigenous", this being a mentality of disconnectedness and objectification that contrasts with the relational and subjective way of being that is present in most Indigenous worldviews. Presently, I define "non-Indigenous-specific contexts" as being those that involve a people whose worldview does not stem from a connectedness of self with landscapes and whose immediate concern is not related to addressing impacts of colonization that persist in creating a disconnection with one's environment and cultural community.

Having then settled on what I mean by "non-Indigenous-specific contexts" I set about gaining understanding of what various non-Indigenous scenarios an Indigenous methodology might be introduced into. I decided to explore this through graduate research in 2015. I also decided I would engage my work as an Indigenous scholar and accomplish research from an Indigenous perspective.

Having read *Research as Ceremony* by Shawn Wilson (2008), I realized I was responding to a call made by him and other Indigenous scholars who wanted to advance Indigenous research from being a perspective within western-Euro paradigms and theories to those based on an Indigenous philosophy (Wilson 2008; Little Bear 2011, 2000). This could then operationalize as a research methodology by subscribing to various standards already created for accomplishing research within Indigenous communities. To me, an obvious research question was "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

## Reflecting back…

I have provided you with insight to the construction of my worldview as it pertains to the question of a study. Recall, we began working with this element in the middle of a story, as is the usual case when engaging the process of doing research. I had a question I wanted to ask and investigate through an academic study. To prepare myself to design and

implement a methodology to accomplish my study required I understand why a person such as myself would be asking such a question.

Within this map, Element 1: Researcher Preparation, provides insight to what an Indigenous methodology is through creation of one, and provides me with content to determine a definition of what my worldview is. At a high level, I have found that my overall definition aligns with a synthesis of definitions provided by scholars such as Cajete (2015), Wilson (2001), Chisan (2001), Makokis (2001) Henderson (2000) and Graveline (1998). This definition is: My worldview reflects how I see myself—my socio-cultural position—in relation to all else and derives from a shared vision of equal interconnectedness between all beings and forms within a symbiotic relationship guided by values and principles of natural laws—love, honesty, caring and sharing—that require living in ways that incorporate respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. The more intimate definitions of my worldview are found within the stories I have shared. Their basis tends to remain consistent, but the details are relative to the reasons re-membering (Cruikshank 1998) is invoked. What then is recalled is reflective of what is being asked and alters the definition of one's worldview accordingly.

### Element 1a: Sharing the Researcher Socio-Cultural Position

Sharing of one's story reflects a cyclical way of creating a research study and decisions need to be made as to what is to be shared and in what ways and when, and also what is to be left out and why. For Indigenous scholars, our socio-cultural position is often part of the introduction provided within verbal presentations and the introduction of a written document (LT Smith 2012, 1999). As well, our story is often found throughout our work as we subscribe to the view that we cannot observe or interpret the world without being part of it and can reflect a method referred to as autoethnography.

Through preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous way we return to a place that is actually an on-going practice of self-knowing. When a study is envisioned we often start

with a question that reflects an interest in a theme that has caught our attention. Considering why we have asked a question about a particular occurrence helps us to understand where we are within the story we want to create through a study and entails self-storying. This method "provides a space for marginalized voices to acquire authority in knowledge production" (Shabbar 2015:29).

Autoethnography, as a form of self-storying, engages a larger discourse within the work of anthropology that calls into question who is the center of a study. This reflects debates around the turn of social sciences toward more interpretative, qualitative, narrative, and critical inquiry in relation to representation, legitimation and praxis (Jones 1998).

Within an Indigenous methodology, everyone is either in the center or decentered and aligned with one another, as this reflects the relationality of an Indigenous worldview. As Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) puts it "*research is ceremony"* [italics in original] (69) and preparing-to-do research reflects setting into motion a collective conversation that considers the relationships of all who are participating.

What though must also be determined, either from a design stance or through a more fluid approach, is the quantity and balance of self-researcher information to be shared and why. Intentions are always at the heart of communication. Preparing-to-do research through understanding your own ways of knowing, being and doing assists with the practice of designing and accomplishing research in accountable ways. This reflects development of a meaningfully deeper understanding of self as researcher and how one goes about doing a study in mutually beneficial ways. Cruikshank (1998) describes it this way

> The work we do is grounded in talk, in dialogue, in interactive relationships. What too often are missing from scholarly studies…are interruption and risk. Academics too often frame the experiences of others with reference to scholarly norms. Yet unless we put ourselves in interactive situations where we are exposed and vulnerable, where these norms are interrupted and challenged, we can never recognize the limitations of our own descriptions. It is these dialogues that are most productive, because they prevent us from becoming overconfident about our own interpretations (165).

Reflecting back…

Ultimately, through the exercise of researcher preparation we come to understand our socio-cultural position. Through this we are able to also understand why we have asked a particular question and can see if and where we may need to adjust it to reflect the intentions of the study being designed. These intentions, though, are only a place to start.

The exercise of self-development flows into the act of doing research by providing understandings of self as context and content, through the socio-cultural position of a researcher, as means to develop the research question, its purpose and selection of sites where it can be investigated.

## Element 2: Anthropological Purpose: Question and Site(s) of Inquiry

As revealed in Element 1, I came by my research question through meditating on what my socio-cultural position is. Exploration of my worldview, to develop my socio-cultural position, revealed an interest in how humans communicate that reflect their cultural being. This then becomes important information for understanding the appropriateness of selecting communication as a broad site for my inquiry.

Within an Indigenous way of doing research determining a study question "remains a necessity" (Kovach 2009:114) as the purpose of our work surfaces through the way we unfold the story of our self in relation to the world we inhabit.

I being an Indigenous researcher provide the filter that my research question requires. It is from my worldview that I came to 'wonder' about, what I understood to be, contrasting ways of communicating that occur between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Communication is understood to be a defining element of being human and as such requires connectivity in ways that are by definition, relational (Duranti 1997). My research question expounds on this by asking if non-Indigenous contexts might reveal use of similar philosophies of communicating that are found within Indigenous knowledges.

Referring back to figure 4, we can see that *intentions* follow understanding one's Socio-Cultural Position. Knowing why doing a particular research study is important to you develops a clearer understanding of its Purpose. You can see the cyclical way of thinking found within Indigenous ways of doing research, are present in how you go about determining your research question, understanding your intentions related to this question and how it determines your purpose for doing the study you now need to design. There is a referring back to the Socio-Cultural Position, as well as refining it, that is part of this process as well.

In consideration of what specific places of inquiry I might engage, I chose both a fluid and strategic process to select where to investigate my question. By this I mean I peered through the question I was asking, like looking through binoculars, and determined where and what could bring me into the realm of communication in a way that permitted me to understand how a practice of research could be revealed within it.

Selection of sites of inquiry are typically determined through development and understanding of the methodology and then methods for use of the study. I will reserve detail of this aspect of Element 1 to the conversation we will have in Element 4, Methodology and Methods. Here, I provide what I have shared, I will focus on research related to communication that is occurring outside Indigenous contexts and as it related to academic research.

We find the beginnings of a broader relational ethic of doing research is established upon completion of this element. We are now moving outside the realm of our own experience to understand what can be accomplished through this study

## Reflecting back…

It is important to understand what has been accomplished and how up to this point. The basis for my research question was found through *practice* of the initial element of creating an Indigenous methodology. This was Element 1: Researcher Preparation. We can also see that this basis is provided as a story by way of sharing an introduction of myself. Typically, an Indigenous researcher will begin an oral presentation by naming their people

first, the land or geographic community they belong to, their family and then themselves (LT Smith 2012, 1999). This is a way to reveal relationships that the researcher is part of and accountable to and represents an Indigenous relational style of introduction (LT Smith 2012, 1999). What I have provided within Element 1 is the process I engaged as a meditation that revealed the person and researcher I am and why, being this person, I would ask the research question I have. From my perspective, I have a cultural worldview that opens-up the universe for inquiry and is centered on the relationships that are found within it.

How I determined the sites of investigation for my study question were also based on understanding how I see the world as an Indigenous person and academic interested in the field of inter- and cross-cultural communication. Anthropological study of this form of communication through research within diverse global human and other-than-human populations reflects this interest.

I am ready to now move forward, as I am more able to clearly understand what type of lens, or framework, I need to work with.

## Element 3: Choosing or developing a theoretical framework

Having committed to engage Indigenous protocols for developing an Indigenous methodology to investigate my research question, I needed to consider precisely what Indigenous philosophy, related to communication, could be utilized and that would also represent my own Shoshonean worldview. I also wanted to engage ways that reflect a critical approach to the meaning of accountability within ways of doing research and forms of communicating.

I determined, through Element 1 and researcher preparation, that the Talking Stick philosophy of communication was an appropriate choice by which to create the Talking Stick Way as the methodology for my study. As a relational philosophy and visible reminder of 'good' ways to communicate, the Talking Stick has been utilized by many Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

At this point it is important to understand that I cannot yet provide detail of *what* a Talking Stick or a Talking Stick Way *is*. Doing so would objectify the Talking Stick and demean its story, which provides the context for its origins apart from humans and the construction of its relationship with humans. As well, explaining here in detail what the Talking Stick Way *is* would pre-empt the very methodology that my question required be created. I ask for your patience as details unfold in the next section.

Typically, a research study will work within theories created by scholars that have become a way of doing research within distinct disciplines and contexts. These are known as paradigms. Wilson (2008) provides a definition of an Indigenous paradigm as being relational to the core of what a paradigm is. He describes the process as this

> [a paradigm is] a set of underlying beliefs that guide our actions [thus] a research paradigm is the beliefs that guide our actions as researchers [and] an Indigenous research paradigm is made up of an Indigenous ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology [and] influence the tools we as researchers use in finding out more about the cosmos (13).

Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach (2010) reminds us that "Indigenous research frameworks ask for clarity of both the academic and personal purpose" (114) for doing a study. This is typical of most research designs but within an Indigenous way of doing research the purpose reflects an on-going kinship that exists between personal purpose and a methodology. This is revealed through stories—our theories—that are philosophies about ways of knowing, being and doing found within the researchers' culture. Eber Hampton (1995) refers to this knowledge as "medicine bundles" that hold memories that shape personal truth. From this perspective, it is a necessity to unfold these and determine your motivation for doing research. This practice will enable understanding where a relationship exists between the research question and the theory required to see how to investigate it. With this approach, there is personal and community accountability built into the purpose of doing research.

Basing a way of doing research on an Indigenous methodology requires remembering that it derives from knowledges found among our elders that has been transmitted as an oral tradition, through time, to contemporary Indigenous scholars and this should never be trivialized (Foley 2003). Understanding the origin story of the knowledge basis for philosophy provides cultural grounding (Kovach 2009) of research when seen as a relationship.

## The Talking Stick and Its Way

Recalling the quote at the beginning of Chapter III, "Creating a balance between two worldviews is the great challenge facing modern educators" (Battiste 2000:202), I contend that this "balance" may be accomplished through identifying an Indigenous philosophy that reflects a common human feature that can move between Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts. I identify communication as this feature. As I have shared, Indigenous peoples have been utilizing, since time immemorial, their knowledges as methodologies—ways of doing—that have proven to be beneficial in identifying needs, issues and approaches to the realities they live each day and as a collective people. As well, these ways are humanizing and reveal a manner of being human that reflects a relational perspective of living that is mutually beneficial (Wilson 2008; Hodder 1982; Bormida 1973).

## An ontology of a Talking Stick

Eduardo Kohn (2013), in his text "How Forests Think" created through his work among Runa people in Ecuador's Upper Amazon, came to understand that "encounters with other kinds of beings force us to recognize the fact that seeing, representing, and perhaps knowing, even thinking, are not exclusively human affairs" (1). We find this is the case regarding the story of a Talking Stick, as a culturally imbued representative of an Indigenous philosophy of communication. What follows are stories related to and about the Talking Stick to provide further understanding of the relevance for its philosophy and physicality within this study.

The story of a Talking Stick first begins outside of human thought or activity. I briefly reference anthropologist Philippe Descola, a student of Claude Levi-Strauss who is the acclaimed "father" of structuralism—a movement to decode universal abstract theories as models of human social organization—and his work (2013, 2005), "Beyond Nature and Culture" wherein he shares his study among the Achuar people of the Amazon and situates his argument for a deconstruction of the idea of a universal nature. I also reference a story found in the work of Marcel Mauss (1927) to provide a basis for understanding the *nature of a thing* that supports the Talking Stick, a material artifact culturally imbued with an Indigenous philosophy of communication, as being an actor in the creation of tribal social ideologies. This story then becomes about human recognition of natural attributes that exist within trees, whose wood is selected for use in making a Talking Stick. This 'making' is guided by a ritual story that begins with human intentions to gift a Talking Stick to another person, thus operationalizing the Indigenous communication philosophy. This also enables a way to consider social aspects of 'gifting' that reveals the recipient of a Talking Stick as becoming a participant in a kinship of moral obligation and responsibility.

The Talking Stick, as an object, is part of the material culture of several tribal peoples. I share a brief sketch of three tribes who have retained their knowledge and use of the Talking Stick. As an object, it is also an important mnemonic device that contributes to the advancement of anthropology through, at the very least, enhancement of the archaeological record of a people's ethnography and the perpetuation of an aspect of their culture that presents as a duty of care within their worldview of being interconnected that is mutually beneficial.

## The Gift of a Talking Stick

### *Its own Being*

Descola's work with the Achuar people of the Amazon highlights his stance against anthropologies fascination with nature-culture dualism and posits consideration of existing

with and the creation of human relationships with "things" in the world. His understanding of Achuar cosmology, that endows environmental elements such as plants, animals, rocks and the like with qualities typically reserved for humans such as cognition, moral and social distinction, makes the case for his call to revision theories based on a universal social reality. This stance largely addresses issues of identity development and kinship structures. Descola's work blurs the lines between what is meant by being human and non-human and in this way, also engages the work of Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castros (1998). De Castros provides us with a decentering perspective of being human that promotes human reality is not the only reality and grounds the origins of the Talking Stick as existing prior to human recognition. This meaning, there is a time when the Talking Stick is its own being, as a part of a community that reflects its reality as belonging to a species of tree (Avant 2017; Lopez 2015).

Marcel Mauss (1927), through his work "The Gift", provides us with a timeless reminder of the importance of physical symbols as being more than objects of sentiment or alliance. Gifts embody stories about their making and the purposes they represent. They are also reminders of responsibilities associated with human intentions that prompted their creation. Thus, they constitute relationships around their exchange.

### *The Spirit of a Thing Given*

I find in Mauss's essay 'The Gift" and the story of "The Spirit of the Thing Given" (1925, Guyer 2016 translation), an example of an Indigenous worldview, like my own, held by Maori from Aotearoa, land of the long white cloud, commonly referred to as New Zealand. Within that story, we come to understand that trees from which Talking Sticks are made have a culturally appointed status of personhood with a defined 'spirit' or 'nature' related to its species and wood type.

The origins of the stories that describe how these qualities came to be have been lost to time or are held sacred and for select listeners only. There are, though, some stories

still shared in public ways by Indigenous people out of respect for the relationship they have with trees.

In Mauss's story, Maori believe that trees have a spirit—a nature—that reflects first its species, as being hard or soft wooded and then its inherent "qualities" referred to as its *hau*, or its spirit, that exists initially apart from the experience of humans.

Vernon Lopez (2015) a Mashpee Wampanoag, shares this same understanding by stating that trees are their own species and have their own 'ways' about them. Joan Tavares Avant (2017), also an elder and historian of the same people, begins her teaching about the Talking Stick, through relating stories referencing trees as being members of a Standing People Clan, whom her people are in relationship with. As well, she refers to the spirit and qualities of trees as "wood meanings." For example, Birch represents truth and new beginnings and a cleansing of the past and Maple is a tree of offering, generosity, balance, and practicality. What Avant describes is the way her people interpret the nature or the spirit of the tree and what it provides for the people through their use of its wood. These uses include being a food source, clothing, medicines and a means to create physical symbols that represent the culture and worldviews of a people. To be noted, is that creation of a variety of Talking Sticks, each from a different type of wood, is possible because of its 'nature'. The purpose of a Talking Stick is understood to be for the benefit of facilitating good and right communication and this ideology is shared as a practice among Indigenous peoples.

The philosophy of communication that is culturally imbued within a Talking Stick derives from a higher level of moral standards that guides human relationships with one another as well as with other-than-humans (Hallowell 1960). These 'standards', or values, are universal as ways to be caring when communicating with others. Imbued within the Talking Stick are values interpreted as being respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991; Cajete 2015).

Respect is shown "by exhibiting a willingness to listen, to be humble, to be cautious, to increase knowledge. To not trample over the 'mana' of people" (L.T. Smith 2000:242).

Resilience, reciprocity and responsibility follow respect as the 'doing' ways that represents a relational worldview wherein mutual benefit is the focus.

Through this knowledge, we have learned that within a physical Talking Stick the essence of a tree, its "wood meanings", is coupled with an Indigenous philosophy of communication that creates its meaning and purpose within its relationship with humans.

We can understand this relationship through an example of making a gift from wood. In a Western sense, craftspeople who work with wood often begin with thoughts of what the product's technical use is that they want to make. In contrast, most Indigenous woodworkers begin by hearing the intentions of a person who wants to give a gift, based on a philosophical meaning, made of wood. By this I mean, the value-laden purpose for the gift and who will be the recipient are determinants of what is to be created. This then provides information useful for matching a wood's spirit or nature with these intentions. Gonzalez-Ruibal (2010) expresses this as an emergent "understanding of the being of humans and non-humans and the collectives constituted by both" (2). In other words, the coming together of the intentions of a person wanting to give a gift made of a particular type of wood to another person, creates a kinship between the giver and the gift as well as with the tree and the Maker of the gift. The development of this kind of 'kinship' represents the epistemology—a way of knowing, the ontology and axiology—ways of being, and methodology—ways of doing, that are embodied within the Talking Stick.

As I have chosen to promote an Indigenous communication philosophy as the basis for my theoretical framework, I need to locate myself in relationship with a Talking Stick. Through presenting aspects of this relationship, I engage an ethic of Indigenous research that responds to a need to not just share knowledge but to also inform the ways this knowledge is constructed and represented (LT Smith 1999).

In 1989, a Talking Stick came into my life as a gift, an inheritance to be specific, and with it cultural responsibilities (Battiste 2000).

This is the way of it…

*My Story: A gift of inheritance and responsibility*

This section begins by sharing my relationship with a Talking Stick. I have been anxious about this, in part because the story involves two people who have gone on from this life—a great-aunt and my stepfather, my "dad." As well, there are pieces of this story that I cannot share publicly. Subsequently, there has been a long gestation period wherein I solicited the thoughts of elders, the Makers of Talking Sticks, and other recipients of a Talking Stick. I have reflected on their words within my own spirit as to what knowledge should be shared. What follows is what I feel is appropriate to be shared at this time.

During the mid-1980s my "dad" was elected to his nation's tribal council. He was somewhat nervous about his role as a new representative of leadership for his tribe. He decided to feed the elders in his family and asked them to share with him what they expected of a tribal councilperson. One of his aunts declared that he needed a Talking Stick. She said she would "gift" him with one and it would help him to be a good speaker, but even more importantly, it would help him to be a good listener and to do what was needed to help his people.

His aunt, knowing of the close relationship between dad and myself, asked me to go with her to speak to a person who made Talking Sticks for their tribe and to learn the Making Story. That next morning, we drove along a winding road through a high and wooded mountain "divide" area that I knew well. At the time, I was a forest firefighter for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and had patrolled the whole of the reservation for various reasons.

Turning off the paved highway, we found the road to the Maker's house was a dirt rutted path that made for slow going and provided time for the aunt to share with me the story of a Talking Stick she had been gifted with years before. I learned that the intentions

of the person giving a Stick are the foundation of the relationship between it and its recipient. This is because these are shared with the Maker and provide guidance for the selection of a particular type of wood, and its qualities, that would become a Talking Stick. Adornments, if any, are selected to reflect these same intentions.

Our visit to the Maker had provided me with a gift as well. I was the recipient of the Making Story and had been given the right to receive requests to create Talking Sticks. As the Talking Stick is a shared knowledge among various Indigenous peoples, it is not unusual for individuals from other tribes to be presented with such gifts. With this came responsibilities that tied me to the ritual ways required of a Maker and of sharing the Purpose story of the Talking Stick created for a person. That story relays the nature of the wood and the intentions of the person who seeks out the Maker, who then learns of the qualities of the recipient and binds all four within a relationship of kinship. There is also a responsibility for the Maker to share this knowledge for reasons of perpetuating cultural ways of knowing. This includes the passing on of these ways to others who will in-turn become part of this relationship whose lineage originates from ancient times.

After being presented with his Talking Stick, dad went on to serve his people for several years. He was part of important dialogues that created actions toward alleviating challenges that enabled better lifeways for his people that were associated with crime laws, health care, environmental issues, and educational systems.

There came a day, at the beginning of the summer of 1989, when I received a Talking Stick (Fig. 7). My dad had succumbed to cancer and was buried during the Memorial holiday. I was bestowed, per his wishes, with the very Talking Stick I had been intimately a part of creating for him.

Figure7. Personal property of Ren Freeman. An inherited Talking Stick.

Through this story of how a Talking Stick is paired, as a gift given, with an individual's character and intentions, it was no surprise that dad's Stick came to me. My personal interests are like what his had been and coupling of the nature of the wood and the meaning behind the embellishments suited my own character as well. Of course, dad's feather, that is tied to one end of the Talking Stick stayed with him. Utilizing a feather with a Talking Stick is a private matter and reflects the relationship the holder has with a Stick. The feather represents the intentions of the holder and is also a functional tool. Once the feather is attached to a Stick its spirit and philosophy are activated.

Over the years since receiving my dad's Talking Stick, I have accumulated many stories through practice of its philosophy of "good" and "right" ways of communication. I feel it has also helped me to be a more conscientious and accountable speaker and listener. Intentions of care for self and others guide each creation step and use for both a physical Talking Stick and its communication philosophy.

*Creation Story of a Talking Stick: An Overview – It begins with Intentions*

As I have shared previously, there are similarities within Indigenous worldviews and the creation story of a Talking Stick that crosses through several North American tribal cultures. I will share more about this in the next section. Here, I share an expanded version—as a general overview—of the creation of a Talking Stick and how it becomes a *way* of knowing, being and doing communication in 'good' ways.

Typically, and only from my own knowledge and understanding of that from other Indigenous peoples, the creation of a Talking Stick, begins with an individual, the Giver, wanting to 'gift' a Talking Stick to another person. I provided this information through Mauss's relating of The Spirit of a Thing. Here, I speak more to the intentions within these activities.

The Giver seeks out a Maker of Talking Sticks. This person has received the Making Story and Ways to go about collaborating with a tree and its nature to be permitted use of a piece of its wood. The Giver makes their intentions known to the Maker. These involve a story about the nature of the person who will receive the Talking Stick. The intentions also include specific purposes the Giver chooses to have the Talking Stick be imbued with, beyond it already being a symbol of good ways to communicate. This information and partnership between the Giver and Maker are the catalyst for selecting a tree species. Together, they seek out a particular type of tree through an Indigenous ritual practice like that accomplished prior to and after hunting and gathering food stuffs. Once the tree provides a piece of itself—a stick—and with this its 'nature', the Maker begins the crafting of a Talking Stick. The manner and ways the Maker accomplishes this is personal to his or her own cultural rituals and technical instruction. In these ways, the Giver, the Maker and the Tree represent a symbiotic relationship. When the Talking Stick is bestowed, the recipient becomes kin with the Giver, Maker, Tree, and a personal feather that is provided by the recipient themselves or as another type of gift. The feather's story is entirely different, but associated with that of the Talking Stick. I will not be addressing that here.

I have shared this information with the intention of providing an example of how philosophies, as part of a person's culture, can become the theoretical foundation for a way of knowing, being and doing that is useful for purposes of designing and conducting research. In this way, the process of looking within one's own socio-cultural position—be you Indigenous or non-Indigenous—is translatable, should you choose to follow an Indigenous way of doing research.

I realize, like so many other Indigenous scholars, that bringing Indigenous methodologies into the academy has risks (G. Smith 1997). The historical and present-day relationship between Indigenous peoples and those of a persistent colonial regime should give us pause. We need to understand the politics of colonization, but, in a way that does not center it within our discourse (LT Smith 2012). The onus resides within our intentions to utilize Indigenous knowledge in a public way. We are encouraged to apply a guardian lens to our conscience that assists us in acting responsibly.

As an elusive concept, intentions as something to be thought about and through, seem to have become somewhat cliché in contemporary society. Possibly this is because of philosophies surrounding the concept that create a lack of urgency, ease in their application and hesitancy in being held accountable to what is intended. There is a marriage of mind, agency and ethic within the concept of intention. The Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy provides a definition of "intention" that situates it in three distinct theories: intention for the future, intention with actions and intentional action. Within all three there is 'doing' intended and it is first the ethic of mind that determines if action will be taken and in what form and with what results.

Anscombe (1963) wrote "we may infer that we are pretty much in the dark about the character of the concept [intention] which it represents," alluding to positions of epistemology and axiology that require understanding of the concept of intention. Within this realm we contend with one's belief about accountability of thoughts that become actions.

Our elders beseech us to have care and remind us that we are all part of humanity and have this shared responsibility. These thoughts were presented in 1980 through a Resolution at the Fifth Annual Meeting of Traditional Elders

> There are many things to be shared with the Four Colors of humanity in our common destiny as one with our Mother the Earth. It is this sharing that must be considered with great care by the Elders and the medicine people who carry the Sacred Trusts, so that no harm may come to people through ignorance and misuse of these powerful forces (447).

Through attention to obligations of care, both axiological, moral obligation, and deontological, obligation as a duty of care, we can move within a critical space that helps us to share our knowledges and culture, when and where appropriate, in meaningful ways that decolonizes instead of reifies harmful practices. This call for care is present in the cultural philosophy of communication that the Talking Stick represents.

### *Philosophy of the Talking Stick*

As I shared, the Talking Stick is culturally imbued with a philosophy of communication that represents "good" and "right" ways to not only communicate, but to also be in relationship. This connects the story of a tree with that of a human.

Where and when this philosophy became associated with the "nature" of trees derives from many tribal stories and some though have also been lost to time or are not appropriate to share in a public way. A consensus though is there was need of Native peoples to communicate with others typically of non-native origins and created the Talking Stick as a cross-cultural tool to facilitate conversation (Vuagniaux 2000). It is well documented that "signing" was broadly utilized by American Indian peoples historically in North America, especially as a trade language and today is referred to as a *lingua franca* (Davis and McKay-Cody 2009; McKay-Cody 1998, 1997). Thus, it stands to reason that creation of a specific object for communication would require the conversations it assists in facilitating

be of an elevated nature or at least require centering on what the philosophy represents, evokes and invokes.

From my knowledge and experience with a Talking Stick and how I have collaborated with one, building relationships through communication is the focus. Reviewing the root meaning of the word itself can reflect how we have come to understand why a Talking Stick exists. The word communication and the term "Talking Stick" are both American English words. Yet Talking Stick is a translation of Indigenous beliefs about the role, function and purpose of communicating. If we look at the Latin root of the word "communication" we find *communicare* and its meaning is to share intentions—the motivations or reasons—for conveying information. In looking at the word *talking* there is inference of a physical act of speaking. In my Shoshone language, we have various words that relate this act to *who* is talking and often *about what*. Daig'wape is a root verb for expressing the act of speaking but also infers someone is listening and is required to actively respond.

If we review the Talking Stick from a semantic position, we find it is a "syntagmatic" sign—de Suasser's term for the horizontal location of a 'sign' in relation to other signs, that creates the basis of its meaning (Duranti 1997). In a big picture way related to my study, I understand this to mean, the physical Talking Stick gains its meaning through its relationship with humans in need of a physical symbol that represents a belief in ways to communicate that respect the intentions of those who are in conversation. We can understand then, that the Talking Stick represents a call to have care acted upon between speaker, listener and observer and in a circular process moves between these roles simultaneously.

I must diverge slightly by returning to the rationale for an extended exercise of researcher preparation and consider that it too represents a duty of care. Foucault (1981) addressed caring for oneself as a form of knowing oneself and this is where I situate my argument for attention to researcher preparation as a practice of doing research. Following Socratic and Platonic currents of thought he suggests

> […] the problem for the subject or the individual soul is to turn its gaze upon itself, to recognize itself in what it is and to recall the truths that issue from it and that it has been able to contemplate (29).

This reflects Foucault's agreement with the ancient Greeks that it was counterproductive to have focus on other than the self, if one wanted to be useful in social and political life. This message may have come through time as one Gandhi stressed for the human population, as being a call to reflect on changing ourselves in order to change the world. Through these philosophies we can understand care-of-the-self represents individual freedom, positive relationships with others and ethical participation in social organization of daily life (Batters 2011).

I find, then, the Talking Stick philosophy of communication is a duty of care for self and others. Usually the term *duty of care* is associated with law and health professions. Duty implies a moral obligation—an expectation to be held accountable to. Communication interfaces with this expectation and those who are speaking and listening, and also those who are observing the exchange. Through its function as an agent of values associated with states of well-being we can understand that, how communication is accomplished in caring ways can be a site of inquiry when seen through the lens of a Talking Stick. This is because it represents values of communication and when engaged, becomes a way of communicating that is observable and can be measured.

Returning to the terms axiology—values of moral obligation—and deontology—values as rules or duties of obligation—we find within the Talking Stick philosophy both are present as it reflects values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility that are also principles of a way of being and doing. I speak to this within my inquiry site 2, wherein Cajete (2015) assigns these values, referring to them as the "four Rs" (177), to the evaluation framework he has created for an Indigenous leadership program focused on works of community building. This exemplifies these values as being principles to be acted upon.

Through reflecting on what has been learned of the Talking Stick and its philosophy, I wondered about its relevance if the physical stick was not utilized.

### *The "invisible" Talking Stick: Philosophy as method*

There is an assumption that use of the Talking Stick philosophy of communication requires a physical Talking Stick. There is though, an additional consideration of this philosophy to be of influence and motivate action outside of its physical representation and boundaries.

Stephen Beyer (2016) works with people from diverse lifeways to build communities of healing around conflict and trauma through mediation and nonviolence training. Within this work he utilizes the Talking Stick philosophy as well as a concept he refers to as the "Invisible Talking Stick" (119).

Beyer does utilize physical objects. He has a 'traditional' stick, as well as a rock, a feather, a particular ballpoint pen and other items he works with that are representative of the intentions of an individual or group for being in communication. The mnemonic symbolism—a reminder cue—stresses that an objects' presence is what is most important within his work. He couples the Talking Stick philosophy of communicating in "good" ways with an object that then 'holds' the space for conversation to occur within. As his work engages people from various and diverse lifeways and who may be physically located in different places in the world, he also teaches a way of being in community that engages a conscientious behavior that reflects the Talking Stick philosophy through an "invisible" Talking Stick.

What is necessary, for the effective use of the "invisible" Talking Stick, entails an increased awareness of particular values and agreement to the practice of behaving in ways that calls upon associated standards of ethics and requires accountability to them. There is possibility then, these values may become a way of knowing, being and doing practiced in everyday life.

Through his work with an invisible Talking Stick, Beyer extends our knowledge of its use as a philosophy for building community wherein individuals may be physically present or not. As well, we can now understand there may be no need to have the Talking Stick physically present. This aspect of the Talking Stick philosophy is useful as a methodology and method within non-Indigenous practice.

## Reflecting back…

I have shared a story of a Talking Stick, but only as an overview and how it generally becomes a partner within a specific human relationship. Within stories I have heard and read from various Indigenous peoples, the philosophy of communication has been assigned to it as its purpose. Through understanding that philosophy can operate as a methodology and a method through its physical and "invisible" use, we come closer to what the usefulness of the Talking Stick can represent as a framework for academic research. Through providing an "overview" of what I have learned and personally experienced with Talking Sticks respects the fact that there are many tribes with a version of their own Talking Stick story and of the physical stick they utilize. As a physical representative of a way of knowing and being, for many tribal peoples, the Talking Stick is also helpful to the field of archaeology.

Cherokee, Mi'kmaq, and Kwakwaka'wakw are three tribes who have retained their knowledge and use of Talking Sticks and have similar Making Stories to that I have shared.

### *Materiality of the Talking Stick*

I return to Kohn (2013) whose thoughts inform us of the persistence of the shackles of western-Euro ideologies that refuse consideration of other-than-humans as being conceptual agents and partners in the work of research and not just as objects for study and utilization. His work assists in grounding the concept of a physical object as being the basis of a

research methodology because of its own essence and purpose. It is appropriate that I cite him as my research approach "disrupts" western-Euro ways of conceiving of and gathering knowledge through collaboration with a Talking Stick

> We are colonized by certain ways of thinking about rationality… [yet] because thought extends beyond the human—we can think beyond the human [and] we can create then, conceptual tools out of the unexpected properties of the world beyond the human—freeing our thinking of that exclusive content which makes us think humans are exceptional and the only ones doing the observing" (21, 22).

The materiality of a Talking Stick contributes to the field of archaeology through expanding practices and theories of what constitutes new knowledge gathering. The following three brief ethnographic sketches are of North American tribes that hold stories about their relationship with a Talking Stick, having retained their Making Stories, and who collaborate with sticks today. These relationships represent a complex material culture and semiotics—an innate capacity of humans to produce and understand signs (Preucel 2006)—that informs archaeology about construction of social ideologies that center on the object to understand human forms of interaction, such as communication. Objects specifically in relationship with humans, can reveal their transformational capabilities through their materiality— "the social constitution of self and society by means of the object world" (Preucel 2006:5; Gonzalez-Ruibal 2011; Hodder 1982). This expands the practice of archaeology when considering ecologies of human and other-than-humans as being inextricably woven within an active social practice, such as communication (Yellowhorn 1996; Anyon et al 1997; Chilton 1999; Tilley 1999; Echo-Hawk 2000; Watkins 2000; Smith and Wobst 2005; Colwell-Chanthaphohn and Ferguson 2008). Ultimately, as a mnemonic tool, the Talking Stick presents evidence of the perpetuation of cultural protocols of communication that are shared among various Indigenous peoples (Little Bear 2000).

This is the way of it…

Stories perpetuate knowledge that contributes to the creation of human social structures and are often evidenced through associated material culture. The Talking Stick, as an object, is also a mnemonic device—a symbolic reminder—providing an array of cultural information that is appealing to archaeologists who seek evidences about human pasts through study of present realities (Yellowhorn 1996; Anyon et al 1997; Echo-Hawk 2000; Watkins 2000; LT Smith and Wobst 2005; Colwell-Chanthaphohn and Ferguson 2008; McGhee 2008). It is the mnemonic attribute of a Talking Stick that has become the basis of my research design, with its reminder of communicating in 'good' ways that are mutually beneficial. This ideology is expressed through meaning-making attributes of the Talking Stick that also relates it to archaeology in several ways, such as a material "survival"—in both concept and form—reflecting Tylor's (1871) definition of practices that are carried forward through time and are utilized in similar or even new ways. Another is as a semiotic enterprise, through its synchronic—temporally situated—nature as a culturally crafted object (Saussure, translated by Baskin 1959) with an associated philosophy that does not require its physical form be present to be understood as a concept.

In these ways, the Talking Stick has become a multi-use tool that reflects the cultural and social needs of those who craft and utilize it. This is visually revealed by differing characteristics of Talking Sticks, such as their size and adornments. The Talking Stick then becomes a representation of an aspect of a people's culture and worldview. This situates the Talking Stick as interpretable in the archaeological record and can be engaged by scholars of Indigenous archaeology—this being a practice decolonizing western dominant practices of archaeology and centers humans and their histories within subjective versus objective contexts for study (Watkins 2010; Atalay 2006). George Nicholas (1997) defines Indigenous archaeology as a practice that responds to the needs of, collaborates with and is often accomplished by Indigenous people. Choctaw archaeologist Joe Watkins (2011) sug-

gests that whichever definition of Indigenous archaeology is chosen it still "has characteristics that add to the scientific study of the human past…[and] is not meant to supplant scientific archaeology but to add to archaeology's interpretative powers" (46).

Archaeology as an academic field has a focus on process and as such Indigenous Archaeology enables local and Indigenous groups to participate in ways that represent their cultures according to their perspectives. This creates an invaluable access to knowledges that may not be available outside a peoples' sharing of it. This access is often through collaborative work with Indigenous individuals or as part of a project that holds "consultations" with Indigenous groups. Consultation is a requirement in the United States through legislation that has been enacted to protect cultural patrimony. The inclusion of Indigenous participation in archaeological endeavors is not without controversy though.

Some opposition yet exists that questions the relevancy of Indigenous knowing as an archaeological benefit and has been referred to as a political platform instead of an anthropological approach. Archaeologist Robert McGhee (2008) provides a contrast to Watkins' (2003) position within the subject of "Indigenous archaeology," as a means of theoretical discourse within the discipline. McGhee argues against Watkins belief that material culture of "American Indians" (137) creates a relevant linkage between the past and present whether evidences of a present-day object can be found in a context of the past. McGhee comes down on the side of opposing what he refers to as an "essentialist" archaeology that permits an "uncritical acceptance" (2008:580) of Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing their pasts and present existence. He cites a quote by Niezen (2003) that provides an emotional response to those who support endeavors of a collective Indigenous Archaeology as being a "startling achievement" (3)

> The interesting thing about the relative newness of this concept [Indigenous people as a collective voice] is that it refers to a primordial identity, to people with primary attachments to land and culture, "tradition" people with lasting connections to ways of life that have survived "since time immemorial." That this innovation should be so widely accepted is a startling achievement.

McGhee settles on a position that proponents of Indigenous knowledge, as a component of archaeology, should be conscientious of reifying a "primitive" stereotype. He contends, through acceptance of an essentialist image of Indigenous people—as Sahlins' (1995) cautioned—would result in creating a paradox by "delivering them [Indigenous peoples] intellectually to the imperialism that has been afflicting them economically and politically" (119). McGhee further suggests that Indigenous archaeology should not be a component of the academic discipline of archaeology, but as a branch with Indigenous or Aboriginal Studies.

This suggestion makes the case for works by Indigenous archaeologists such as Paulette Steeves (2016), Cree-Metis scholar, who successfully defended her doctoral dissertation that utilized Indigenous method and theory. Her work shone a light on the colonial legacy of archaeology and as it contemporarily being academically exclusionary of other ways of knowing. She submits that while there are collaborations and consultations occurring, interpretation and representation of the data still have yet to be addressed satisfactorily from an Indigenous perspective. As an archaeologist, she contends that the liminal space between western science and Indigenous methodologies promote research as being about relationships and addressing power imbalance found within archaeological practices.

It is my position that a study such as I have designed and engaged provides relief for those opposing Indigenous knowledges, seeing them as only an essentializing component of the anthropological project. My question seeks to build a bridge between worldviews, if not to also promote what Ingold (2017) suggests as a way to collaborate, around human ways of communicating that reflect, not a furtherance of the binary mentalities that McGhee represents, but as a means to understand the importance of embracing all forms of knowing as a practice of interconnectedness and balancing of knowledge.

In this way I also disagree with McGhee, because of the ways and means that archaeology entered into the realm of the study of humans, there is need to maintain an ethic about the value of an emic position of an Indigenous archaeology. This affords opportunity

to give voice to those whose pasts are studied and is a means of decolonizing western-Euro practices within the discipline. Archaeology as a study of human pasts, should also reflect humanizing practices. We as Indigenous and non-Indigenous are more similar in essential ways because of being human, and the consideration of Indigenous archaeology as being a "branch" of the study of being human is an insult that back-peddles the project to the days of those who twisted Darwin's theories of human evolution, such as Lamarck, Spencer, and Galton—to name a few—into socio-political petri dishes for the development of racism, injustice and inequality.

Ultimately, McGhee (2004) argues that the field of archaeology should reflect the 'universal' nature of human history. This is also reflected in the essence of what Indigenous Archaeologies posit. The issues he contends in 2008, appear primarily to be an argument against access to and use of Indigenous knowledge as a means by Indigenous groups to also engage a political platform. Surely, he understands that being Indigenous originates on a political stage (LT Smith 2009) and our ways and material history have usually been studied without our consent or input, hence legislative action to assist in correcting these practices. This can be seen through the 1990 enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRPA), that is legislation directing the return of funerary and sacred artifacts and human remains to be returned to the Native peoples they originate from.

To also contend that we, as Indigenous, see and hold our ways of knowing 'above' non-Indigenous peoples—McGhee's essentialist argument—is concerning, as the essentialist position is a worldview that acknowledges attributes that reflect culture, identity and function. Whereas the 'universal' position McGhee speaks of is akin to "melting pot" theories (coined by Israel Zangwill, an immigrant to America) and homogenization of humans as a species. From an Indigenous perspective, essentialism is not a hierarchical position. In terms of McGhee's argument of Indigenous essentialism being more about mysticism and romanticism, he fails to remember this has been a construct, not of our doing.

McGhee (2008) himself presents that, as early as 1515 with Thomas More's *Utopia*, the creation of a society and persons behaving in essentialist ways were actually a political foil to spotlight issues he had with contemporary English society. Therein was built a lens that such as Bishop Vasco de Quiroga utilized in 1535 upon observing Michoacán communities and labeling them as a 'New World' because of his yearning for the return of Golden Age ideologies (Porter 1979). Again, this necessitates a decolonization of mentalities that Indigenous peoples constitute a western version of essentialist personas and beliefs. How could this be possible if Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing reflect a worldview of interconnectedness and relational socio-ecology? Essentialism as an Indigenous way of being, I contend, is neither contrived or insincere (Hviding 1993) but foregrounds opposition to colonial methodologies of racial typology yet existing within the field of archaeology.

This typology includes discourse about the presence of Indigenous individuals as archaeologists who bring their perspectives to the work, as more than contacts, negotiators or translators within research projects or other "useful" means (Atalay 2010:51). Atalay brought to the fore discussion of applying her skills as an archaeologist to non-Indigenous contexts. She conjoins the reality that Indigenous perspectives are relevant for material study of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and that acceptance of this deconstructs western-Euro academic mentalities that 'the other' should only study 'the self' (Atalay 2010). Conversely, there are those in the academy who feel it is because of one's 'proximity' and identity as an Indigenous person that their work within their own culture is seen as not being rigorous. This belies a difference in standards of assessment of Indigenous professionals within anthropology as a discipline and archaeology as a field within it.

Atalay (2006) provides a treatise about "Indigenous archaeology and the methods and theories associated with its practice and how it contributes to a much-needed dialogue that looks beyond the long-held western-Euro way of viewing archaeology, the past, and heritage" (284). She provides discussion for decolonizing archaeological thought about use of Indigenous ways of knowing that afford a benefit to not just Western inquiry but also to

those whom are the descendants of those being studied. With more ethical and socially just archaeological practices there can be achieved acknowledgement of the worldviews, traditional knowledges and lifeways of Indigenous peoples and a decolonization of archaeology as a discipline, that embraces a broader approach to knowledge reproduction as a collaborative endeavor that builds new theories and methods (Yellowhorn 1996; Anyon et al 1997; Echo-Hawk 2000; Watkins 2000; Smith and Wobst 2005; Colwell-Chanthaphohn and Ferguson 2008). As archaeology has become a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of historical trajectories, it is already situated as a partner to Indigenous knowledge forms and methodologies. The 'turn' will be furthered once those who listen and who is listened too come into a balance based about intentions and who is to benefit from archaeological work (George 2010).

As "cultural values and beliefs take form or are manifested in artifacts and objects—that is, in material culture" (Berger 2014:17) they provide a window into the world of their makers and the societies that they represent, especially when viewed through the lens of an Indigenous perspective.

### *The Talking Stick as a shared material culture and philosophy of communication*

As human beings, we resonate and respond to things, especially those that represent relationships and our individual and collective relevance within society. There is correlation within various Indigenous cultures that the Talking Stick, as not only a physical object, is also an aspect of *ontology*—worldview, *epistemology*—ways of knowing, *methodology*—how knowledge is gained, *axiology*—ethics and morals, and *deontology*—responsibilities or duties that have persisted through time. Earlier, I referred to the works of Descola, de Castros and Mauss that supports this position. As a mnemonic tool, the Talking Stick presents evidence of the perpetuation of cultural protocols of communication that are shared among various Indigenous peoples throughout the world (Little Bear 2000).

Next, I provide three brief ethnographic sketches of North American tribes, among several others, that have maintained their relationship with a Talking Stick—through having retained their Making Stories—and who collaborate with Sticks today.

### *Cherokee* – Eastern Band

Cherokee people, per their own stories, have always been of a literary disposition. Their spoken language and use of communication-based societal norms are legendary.

The Southern Appalachian Mountains of the United States has been home to Eastern Cherokee people since time immemorial and once spanned a territory ranging over 100,000 miles and included present-day areas bordered on the west by the Mississippi River, the north by the Ohio River and south and east by the Piedmont River of Georgia and Alabama. Prior to European contact in the early 1600s, they were already politically structured as a confederation. Leaders of the seven clans met regularly as a council and utilized instruments—objects with culturally imbued meanings—to facilitate communication and regulated behaviors within the meetings (Locust 1998).

By the 1800's Cherokee members purchased 57,000 acres of property known as the Qualla Boundary and today is located within North Carolina's Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Eastern Cherokee people refer to this area as the Land of Blue Smoke. In 1821, Sequoyah provided a written language for his people through creation of symbols that represented sounds in their speech. The syllabary had eighty-five characters.

Today there are approximately 14,000 members. This population does not include those members from other bands of Cherokee, who were removed in 1838 to points west of their homelands during a dark stain on American history known as the Trail of Tears. It was through sacrifice and diplomatic assemblage of their members that the Eastern Band of Cherokee survived, hidden in the mountains.

Cherokee scholars Carol Locust and Loretta Standley both agree that the Talking Stick represents an instrument that would have, historically, been utilized for gathering their people for discussion of important information that required diplomatic solutions.

Standley (2017) shares that the native communication styles entail listening intently and speaking in-turn to show respect for those involved in conversation. In this way, a methodology of shared commitment is practiced. This reference to the Talking Stick's purpose, is echoed by Locust (1998) who also describes it as having been used centuries before by many other tribes and in this way built inter-cultural communication between one another. Today the Talking Stick remains a part of Cherokee culture (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. Example of a Cherokee Talking Stick. Photographs courtesy of Yvonne Avant.

Cherokee scholar Phyllis Cronbaugh, in her 2010 text "The Talking Stick: Guarantee you are Understood and Not Just Heard," provides further information about the ways the Talking Stick provides a means to clarify and establish relationship agreements. She also provides information about meanings of colors used for adornment of Sticks that represent such elements as religious beliefs and personal character traits either culturally imbued within the Talking Stick or representative of the holder of the stick. Examples Cronbaugh provides are: Blue represents intuition, prayer, and wisdom; Black represents clarity, focus, success and victory, and; Red represents life, faith and happiness.

*Mi'kmaq* – Nova Scotia

As early as 1609, with the writings of Lescarbot, the native people of the landscapes of what today are known as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, part of Canada's Maritime Provinces, were recognized as being ancestral to the area, and were referred to by the names Souriquois or Sourique. Yet, it is from the writings of Bernard Gilpin, in 1877, published in parts through 1898, that the earliest ethnographic information derives based on his work among the people in 1831. Here it is we learn these same people became known as the Mi'kmaq, yet no explanation as to why this term was chosen is provided. Today the term has the meaning "human being" or "the people" (Gambill 2009) and is how they refer to themselves today. Historically, they referred to their selves as Lnu nikmaq, meaning kin, as a greeting (Johnston 2013). It is thought Mi'kmaq were part of the Algonquin linguistic family as their language was heard to resemble a possible dialect of it. It is yet understood this way today.

The Talking Stick has been a part of the culture of Mi'kmaq/Mi'kmaw people since time immemorial as their ancestors utilized it as a symbol representing the facilitation of protocols and philosophies of group communication (Benwah 2004). Today the Talking Stick also remains a part of how their culture is represented through emblems used by community programs and family crests (Fig 9).

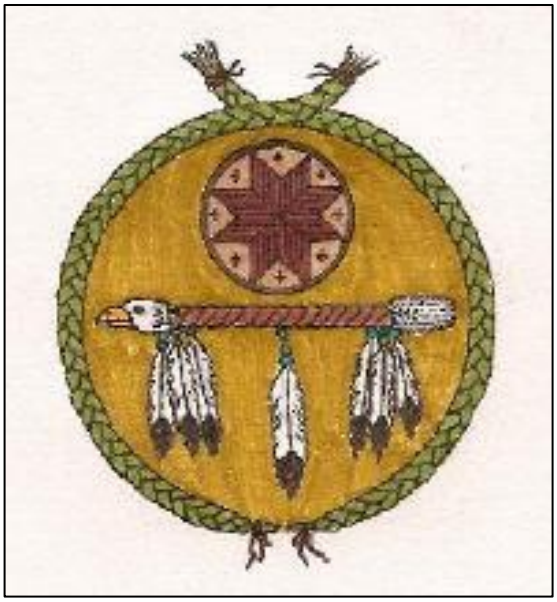

Figure 9. Image courtesy of Bras d'Or First Nation Mi'kmaq. A social program emblem.

Mi'kmaq scholar Laura Donaldson (1998) writes that the Talking Stick remains a necessary component of their gatherings wherein oral stories, discussions and deliberations are held. The 'Stick' guarantees that whomever wants to speak can be heard without fear of criticisms or interruptions. She further provides that once people are assembled a person will address those present and asks to speak and is handed the Talking Stick by the 'Keeper'. When finished, they pass the Stick to the person on their left (sometimes it goes next to a person who has requested it) and they either state something about what the prior person spoke of, if appropriate, or they begin a new conversation of their own. The Talking Stick goes around in this way until everyone has an opportunity to speak. If only one issue or question is presented, the Stick returns to the first person who spoke and the 'Keeper' summarizes what has been shared.

From this account of the partnership with a Talking Stick, to create a place of trust and safety for speaking within a group, we see that the usefulness of a Talking Stick includes cognitive elements that provide an emotional aspect of the Stick's purpose.

*Kwakwaka'wakw* – Vancouver, British Columbia

Kwakwaka'wakw, were formerly referred to as Kwakiutl in 1895 by anthropologist Franz Boas through his collaborative study with George Hunt "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians" and subsequent works. In 1907 photographer Edward S. Curtis brought to the public images of Kwakwaka'wakw people and their lifeways.

Then, as now, the Kwakwaka'wakw people reside on their ancestral homelands, today known as British Columbia's southwestern coast and Vancouver Island. They are of the Wakashan linguistic family that has three major dialects: Haisla, Heiltsug and southern Kwakiutl (Goodfellow 2005). Today the Kwakwaka'wakw people are composed of fifteen nations of approximately 8,000 people.

As a coastal people, they subsist primarily on marine-based foods, with octopus a delicacy and salmon a valuable trade food source. Aspects of their culture were and are represented and maintained through woodworking technology. Their material culture reflects Kwakwaka'wakw relations with spiritual and real animals as totems that guide cultural rituals, ceremonies and ways of being and of living from day to day (Shearer 2000).

One such item is the Talking Stick. In the early 1900's photographer Edward S. Curtis provided an image of a Kwakwaka'wakw man to support information about woven bark robes that are unique among the people. Yet, this same image (Fig. 10) provides evidence of the use of the Talking Stick among early members of the tribe and of its importance as a representative material culture.

Figure 10. Kwakwaka'wakw man with Talking Stick, or Speaker's Stick. Photograph by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1914. Courtesy of Edward S. Curtis Collection/Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (neg. no. LC-USZ62-52213).

Today, Kwakwaka'wakw people still create Talking Sticks that have similar elaborate carvings and that tell a story or stories pertinent to the intentions of creating the Stick. Richard Hunt (Fig. 11), a celebrated Kwakwaka'wakw artist, ritualist and dancer from Alert Bay, Canada, resides today in Victoria, British Columbia. He began carving with his father in 1973, at the age of thirteen and represents a long lineage of traditional artisans.

In 1988, Hunt carved the world's largest totem pole from a 775-year-old cedar tree harvested from Port Renfrew. The carving, "Cedar Man Holding Talking Stick" (Figs 12 and 13), is nearly seven feet tall and located in Duncan, British Columbia near the courthouse.

Figure 11. Photograph courtesy of Diane Hunt. Richard Hunt, Kwakwaka'wakw artist.

The pole features the Cedar Man holding a Talking Stick with carved representations of Kwagu'l family crests. Per Hunt, the Talking Stick, for Kwakwaka'wakw people, represents a way to facilitate communication. It is held and used by leaders when gathered for meetings and for dispute resolution.

Figures 12 and 13. Photographs courtesy of Cedar Man Gallery. Richard Hunt totem pole carving. "Cedar Man Holding Talking Stick." Located in Duncan, British Columbia.

It is clear the Talking Stick has been and remains an important aspect of various Indigenous cultures. Through the partnership of human and other-than-humans we come to understand that within the same existential space there are relationships created that are inextricably woven kinships (Gonzalez-Ruibal 2011; Webmoor and Witmore 2008). Through them respective cultural intentions and purposes can be accomplished. In these ways, we can understand how tools of communication can provide a means to understand the material culture of a people, which are capable of translating their own stories about their selves.

## Indigenous Knowledges as valid contributions to archaeology

Putting a little distance between McGhee's political view of the placement for the study of Indigenous knowledges within the field of archaeology, I provide the logic of Preucel (2006) who brings the topic back to my focus and reminds us that objects, like language, do mediate social identities and relations, but are not part of the same structured system that language is; yet, objects do have the "power to fix meanings in ways that are not possible with language" (84). There is a common tendency of archaeologists and material culture anthropologists to first assume a found ornate object represents a religious aspect of an Indigenous culture. There are distinctions that can be provided through the stories of a people that enhance archaeological understandings of the difference between practical objects that enhance memory of historically based knowledges and those objects that also provide this context but are of a more particularly sacred use.

For a moment, I need to lay the main story aside and comment on a perceived similarity between the Talking Stick and a Ceremonial Pipe. Both objects represent material culture and philosophies of various Indigenous peoples and are utilized as instruments for culturally related purposes. The Talking Stick belongs to a knowledge tradition that is created through personal intentions. While this activity has ritual elements, such as the way a

Maker is engaged, and a piece of wood is sought and worked with, there rarely is overt religious or spiritual *ceremony* required in the *utilization* of a Talking Stick, per its purpose to facilitate communication. Most tribal peoples will though smudge—use the smoke of burning sage or cedar—to "cleanse" a Talking Stick—and pray "over" it for understanding of its ways and empowerment of its purpose. This though does not constitute the Talking Stick as a distinctly sacred item, thus its philosophy and use are appropriate as translatable between Indigenous cultures and also within non-Indigenous contexts.

In contrast, pipe cultures are ceremonial in nature and purpose, as I understand them, and represent a sacred way of praying that acknowledges the Creator and seeks blessings for or on behalf of individuals and communities of Indigenous people (Swan 1999). With this purpose, the Pipe can be understood to be primarily relevant only within the culture and for the needs of Indigenous peoples.

Both instruments though, reveal Indigenous ways of knowing that derive from philosophies that cannot be objectified themselves, as they are processes of knowing and being. In other words, both the Talking Stick and the Pipe emphasize the importance of values such as that the Talking Stick represents, these being respect, reciprocity, relation, protocol, holistic knowing, relevancy, story, and interpretative meaning (Kovach 2009).

## Reflecting back…

Overall, what has been learned through the story of a Talking Stick, is that it represents a culturally imbued Indigenous philosophy of communication. As a physical artefact—the Talking Stick—is a symbol of relationality that promotes values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility as a duty of care. It is also an appropriate Indigenous theoretical framework that can be operationalized as an Indigenous research methodology.

Through sharing knowledge about the Talking Stick, in these ways, I hope you understand that my goal with this study is not that of an "object study," but of a way to provide a unique story of how a piece of wood, with a 'nature' of its own, becomes a Talking

Stick through its relationship with humans. This relationship reflects a model of communication that is useful as an Indigenous research framework and methodology because of the values that are inherent in its philosophy. It is this model that both accomplishes the *how* of my research question and provides the means for engaging the topic of my study—which "gazes" at non-Indigenous contexts through this Indigenous lens to understand if Indigenous research methodologies are being utilized and are beneficial. With this I have created an Indigenous research framework and methodology.

### Element 4: Methodology, sites of inquiry and methods

As previously shared, the initial push to identify knowledges and how to operationalize them, within ethical protocols congruent with belief systems of Indigenous peoples, began as a need to help Indigenous people decolonize strategies within western-Euro based research approaches (LT Smith 2012, 1999). Numerous Indigenous scholar-elders have worked to create processes for creating Indigenous methodologies that have revealed benefits to Indigenous peoples and have assisted in creating space within academia for research practices that reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003). In developing a methodology for a study, accomplishing what has been presented in the previous three Elements of this guide should be heeded to ensure congruency of framework, methodology and methods.

To briefly recap, my study includes answering the call of several Indigenous scholar-elders to create our own research frameworks—to provide alternatives to couching our studies within western-Euro dominant paradigms—and research methodologies based on Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, as well as to identify and utilize our own methods and or consider a mixed-method approach to accomplishing research. This call has essentially gone out to Indigenous scholars for working within our own or another Indigenous context. My question for this study addresses a gap in current knowledge about the presence and benefit of Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous specific

contexts. As well, my study creates an anthropological gaze, based on an Indigenous perspective, of non-Indigenous researcher practices. Working through the previous Elements has helped me to gain a clearer understanding of my core epistemological, ontological, axiological and personal methodological positions. This provides me with a Socio-cultural position to work with as I go about the further design of my study and its implementation. Having determined my research question, associated sub-questions, and understanding why I would ask such a question, I also chose a field to study within, which is communication. Enabled with insight as to how best to approach investigating my question, I acted upon standards created by Indigenous scholar-elders, and drew from within my Shoshonean culture, my personal experiences as an Indigenous woman and shared Indigenous beliefs a philosophy to serve as the framework that my question now resides within. This is the Talking Stick, a culturally imbued artifact whose nature and relationship with human beings represents a philosophy of communication that reminds us of, evokes and invokes four values as guides for doing communication in "good ways." With all this accomplished, determining the methodology and methods to investigate my question is the next process.

Within an Indigenous framework, a methodology becomes an interface between the paradigm and its framework, that reflects a relational-based worldview, with congruent methods for making inquiry and gathering newly understood knowledges, as a result of seeing them through an Indigenous lens. This way of designing and going about accomplishing research is not constructed the way most western-Euro based studies are, with box shaped hypothesis that keeps the researcher at a distance from the sources of knowledge that are gathered per pre-assumptions of what will be found.

This comparison is not essentially oppositional. As we go along you can understand that what I am sharing are efforts of decolonization of dominant research practices and the reasons for these endeavors. They are integrated through the chapters of this study and within each Element of the map through inclusion of contrasting comments and knowledge

related to Indigenous ways of doing research. When developing a methodology for a research study, from an Indigenous relational perspective, there is need to understand how the approach you are envisioning relates to other non-Indigenous approaches. Because a relational worldview is the basis of my study framework, consideration of working with "ally" approaches and methods is appropriate, if not ideologically essential.

I am going to recap what Indigenous research methodologies are, as I understand them from the work of Indigenous scholar-elders and my own research practices. I then review a western methodological approach whose methods are considered appropriate "allies". Then, I also review thoughts around Eastern research methodologies that are referred to as being "Indigenous." Through review of these we can better understand what options are available for development of an Indigenous research methodology and to assist with selecting partner methods to engage a study.

## Indigenous research methodologies

As I have provided a more extensive response to "what are Indigenous methodologies" within the previous chapter, I only offer a summary here.

Indigenous scholars agree that for a methodology to be considered *Indigenous* it should come from one's own culture and be based on a cultural philosophy of knowing—an epistemological position—and as such is a paradigmatic approach to doing research (Kovach 2009; Wilson 2008). There is a caveat to this though. If creation of an Indigenous methodology is the goal, it necessarily derives from an Indigenous epistemology. It then becomes important to also have a relationship with this way of knowing. This opens up consideration of how a non-Indigenous researcher might work with an Indigenous methodology.

Martin (2003) provides her interpretation of what Indigenous methodologies are through describing characteristics that address five focal points: 1) Recognition of Indigenous worldviews, knowledge and ontological—perception of reality—distinctions as being

vital to a peoples' existence and survival; 2) Understanding that social mores, as ways to live, learn and situate ourselves, reflect a relationship with a landscape; 3) Recognizing experiences, present lives and futures are bound with the social, historical and political contexts of Indigenous realities; 4) Recognizing that ways of knowing, being and doing privilege Indigenous voices, people and lands, and; 5) Indigenous methodologies assist in identifying and addressing issues of importance to Indigenous peoples' and their communities.

We can understand then, this way of doing research represents an "interplay (the relationship)—represented by methodology—between methods and framework and the extent to which a method, itself, is congruent with an Indigenous worldview" (Kovach 2010:40). This is in contrast to western-Euro-based research practices that focus on methods, primarily quantitative—mathematically measurable—as their defining characteristic. There is an alternative western approach, though, known as "qualitative" research that is referred to as an 'ally' (Kovach 2009) of Indigenous ways of doing research.

## An alternative western research methodology

### *Qualitative Research as 'ally'*

Described as an "intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material" (Creswell 2013:42), qualitative research, or inquiry, appears an apt partner for Indigenous ways of doing research.

The *qualitative* argument enables the voice of the participant to be part of the research in meaningful ways, beyond being an object of study. Indigenous scholars are divided in their opinion as to how helpful a western-based methodology can be in articulating the decolonizing approach that most Indigenous research methodologies take (Bishop 2014) and that has been the focus of most Indigenous scholars (LT Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Kovach 2009).

Wilson (2008) contends a focus on decolonizing western paradigms, their theories and their methodologies, as the only way to utilize qualitative approaches within Indigenous research, is not sufficient. This retains Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing as a perspective of a western-based way of doing research. Wilson also is of the belief that past attempts to use Indigenous perspectives within a dominant paradigm have not been successful in creating an understanding that relationality is the center of Indigenous research methodologies. As well, he posits "the problem with that is that we can never really remove the tools from their underlying beliefs" (13). This aligns with the message scholar Lorde (1983) delivered in her work with feminist theory and American slave narratives. She states, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (27), referring to retaining of a mindset that the "master's house" is the only place and source of support for alternative perspectives to emerge from.

Consider, the dominant western approach to research is based on what is referred to as empirically founded data, or *quantitative* methods. A common definition of quantitative research provides, it is the way testing objective theories is accomplished through examining the relationship among variables which in turn can be measured and produces numbered data that can be analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell 2013). As such, quantitative research is seen as being empirically based—what is experienced or seen versus what is based on theory—and accomplished through systematic scientific experiments via mathematical or statistical techniques that provide data that is numerical and relational in form, such as that found in tables and formulas. This understanding prompts one to ask, with a definition that includes the study of a "relationship", can the empirical methodology truly be so polar from that of an Indigenous way of doing research, so as to cause the challenges to its validity that we have and continue to see within academia?

Indigenous scholars Maggie Walters and Chris Anderson (2013), with their groundbreaking work, "Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology", posit a need for data to be produced by and for Indigenous peoples that moves away from 'deficit' based

narratives produced by mainstream quantitative methodologies. Their standpoint reflects empirical research as an eminently political enterprise (L.T. Smith 2012). Developing Indigenous quantitative methodologies would then create knowledge that is not only informative but is also beneficial to Indigenous and diverse peoples. Walters and Anderson align their argument with that of philosopher Ian Hacking's (2004) who contends statistical categories have a socially productive effect as a consequence, whereby humans respond to and even come to identify with classifications and are thus 'created' as deficit peoples requiring intervention. This then is perceived as critical ways Indigenous identity and self-determination are bound up with non-Indigenous political agendas (Coburn 2015; Walters and Anderson 2013; L.T. Smith 2012). What Walters and Anderson propose is turning the gaze so that Indigenous scholars are the researchers and non-Indigenous peoples are the subjects within a quantitative study. Hence enabling the reveal of colonial methodologies and challenging their positivist and post-positivist platforms as objectively based. This echoes Kovach's (2009) statement about how research should be accomplished, "We know what we know from where we stand. We need to be honest about that" (7). This situates quantitative methodologies in relationship with qualitative methodologies in ways that are useful as allies within an Indigenous research methodology.

There is further support for this available from Kovach (2009) who shares, there are three philosophical assumptions regarding Indigenous methodologies and qualitative research—an alternative western methodology—that addresses methodologies generally and Indigenous methodologies more specifically. She posits, any methodology contains both a knowledge belief system and its methods of understanding it. As well, within Indigenous methodologies, which value relationality, process and context is akin to qualitative approaches within western research. We see this through such works as feminist, queer and participatory action research. Third, what sets Indigenous methodologies apart from qualitative research methodologies, though, is that they center on tribal ways of knowing—their epistemologies are reflected in socio-cultural positions of relationality that comes from

knowledge sources found among communities of tribal peoples. These are often shared worldviews among Indigenous peoples.

Further, qualitative research often has a general question established as a guide and subsequent specific questions emerge in the course of the study and as such, the method for answering them must also emerge. This is often referred to as a "grounded theory approach" (Creswell 2013).

A qualitative research way entails a methodology and methods that works within Indigenous methodologies as it is more fluid and responsive to the needs of study participants and often knowledge is newly understood. This creates a need to adjust study approaches accordingly, as it supports an emergent knowledge production methodology.

Choosing to partner with western research paradigms, theories or a method within one is a decision that can lead to longer discussions about the debates of western-Euro views of scientific neutrality as a western-based goal for research. I choose not to follow that tendril here, more than I have already. Instead, I repeat the stance of most Indigenous researchers and many non-Indigenous scholars working within qualitative research, that because we are human beings doing this work, we are subjective by nature. This, in a more honest way, represents research as a conversation that is held between researcher and those part of a study, as the telling, response and expansion of experiences are results of the creation and engagement of a relationship that shares knowledge.

## An Eastern-based research methodology

Since the late 1990s leading Asian and 'ally' western scholars have written on the need for Asian indigenous knowledges to be incorporated within academia and corporate business practices. This is to address the current imbalance of prolific dominant—western—philosophies and methods utilized within research methodologies. These scholars also cite a need to lend encouragement to each other for development of Asian context-derived business approaches that are currently largely based on Anglo-American business models

(Fang 2009; Meyer 2006). Referred to as the "phenomenon" or "informal network" in Asia, theories are now being derived from Confucianism and Taoism, with the epistemological balancing frame of Yin-Yang. There are currently three specific foci for this work, these being an etic—cross-indigenizing geocentric, or globalizing, approach; an emic—Asian context as being distinctive from western research approaches, and are useful for research among Asian populations, and; a call to develop indigenous research methods to address "unique" indigenous methodological issues.

Within Eastern Asia there is growing recognition of the need for indigenous research methodologies as pedagogy and to assist with business organization and management to better address local issues and globalization. Asian scholars such as Chen, Fang, Li, and Tsui agree to the following perspective and definition, "we have defined indigenous research in a broad sense to encompass the context-sensitive and context-specific approaches to a uniquely local phenomenon or issue in Asia, which may have global implications" (Li 2016).

An Asian perspective represents and draws from Eastern philosophies and religions to frame research approaches to understand how their diverse and distinctive influences affect society, teams, and individuals' behavior in beneficial ways. This is investigated through three distinct strategies identified by Asian scholars:

As a primary focus, efforts are to contextualize research from local knowledge to develop indigenous constructs and models that are distinctive from, but useful in *enhancing*, prevailing Western ones (2002 Chan). This engages the Yin-Yang philosophy of balance, with inherent geocentric implications (Li 2016, 2012a, 2007a, b; Lin, Lu, Li 2015)—these being integrative local and global knowledges—to address the currently overly singular western approach of gathering knowledge. Li (2012a, b, c) expresses this as being "necessary for a global body of wisdom and knowledge" to exist and be helpful as an "asymmetrical balance between the two partners [referring to western and Asian epistemological systems] in each specific domain. These "domains" Li refers to are the dialectical either/or logic

of western research theoretical frameworks and the either/and Asian logic. This applies the Eastern philosophy of Yin-Yang balance to the work and creates an emic/etic integration of knowledge philosophies referred to as the "geocentric approach" (Li 2016).

As a second focus, an "indigenization-from-within" approach looks at major similarities and distinctions within local phenomena, such as philosophical, religious, economic, political, social and intellectual traditions held within cultures from East Asia, China, Japan and South Korea regions. This is to address a need for development of new theories that do not "benchmark against Anglo-American models" (White 2002), and instead enables comparative research within the region that can produce rich cultural knowledge from local sources are useful and centers on *conducting research within* an Asian population.

The third focus, encourages development of research *methods* that are indigenous-based within an Asian context to address "unique" issues of methodology (Chen 2002). This will situate Asian context-based research from being a perspective within western-Euro based paradigms.

As expected, in review of the efforts of Asian scholars to develop research methodologies that reflect their worldview in comparison to those of American and other global Indigenous scholars with the same intent, there are interesting similarities and differences in challenges, purpose, perspective, and approaches.

Regarding the challenge of reaching a consensus of what Indigenous research looks like as a methodology and establishing a definition for it, American and other non-Asian Indigenous scholars have made great strides in creating a collective fundamental definition of what Indigenous methodologies are. Notably, there is emphasis on use of the plural form of the word "methodology" as there is agreement that Indigenous people share similarities within their worldviews, largely a result of colonization. Yet, similarities also exist where there are distinct variations, based on surviving ancient knowledges, and these are recognized and encouraged through use of the plural form of methodology, this being "methodologies." Within the Eastern Asian challenge of defining Indigenous research methodologies,

scholars appear to be seeking a universal standard and definition for what constitutes indigenous research.

I also note that Asian scholars spell the word Indigenous with a little "i" and wondered about that distinction. While I have yet to find an explicit explanation, I do think the reasoning may be addressed in writings by Peter Pi Li (2012a, 2011), wherein he states, "all research is indigenous in nature" (870). Within most American Indigenous and other Indigenous peoples who express the use of the word with a capital "I", there is understanding this represents our collective identity as a people who have been impacted by colonization. That experience does not appear to read-through in Asian contexts. There is though, an expanse of reference to the high level of western influences within Asian lifeways and especially business contexts that appears to be the impetus for development of indigenous research methodologies (Chen 2002).

Regarding the three focal points, I note the following:

The primary focus on integration of Asian indigenous knowledges, the "indigenization-from-within approach," as an enhancement to western research practices is unadvised and unattainable per most American and other non-Asian Indigenous scholars' perspective. They cite Wilson's (2008) stance that follows Lorde's (1983) that there is little hope of Indigenous methodologies integrating with western-based theories as there is a dominant position established by them that provides very little support for equal billing of specific Indigenous research methodologies. Asian scholars note, as do other Indigenous scholars, that there are western approaches useful within indigenous-Indigenous research contexts. This refers to qualitative research methods and from an Asian researcher's perspective these are necessary to be utilized, now. This aligns with focus three.

Within the second Asian focus, being an emic approach to research within Asian contexts, we find a similar purpose with that of American and other non-Asian Indigenous purpose. However, this being a "second" focus within Asian priorities highlights the fact that endeavors to create Indigenous methodologies to address Indigenous research needs

has been a primary focus among other Indigenous scholarship endeavors. As well, the emphasis has been on decolonizing western-based research practices and has only a slim contrast to the current Asian premise for identification of indigenous knowledge sources as methodological resources. It appears Asian purposes are for self-determination but as means to recognize where cross-indigenization can occur at regional and global levels. This is not entirely at odds with other Indigenous researcher goals. Lambert (2014) notes the United Nations organization advocates for Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge as they are an important resource within an emerging global economy. This type of support extends the importance of Indigenous knowledges beyond local concerns. Cajete (2001) posits that human societies will require and benefit from the collective strengths of all cultures.

The third Asian focus, this being the creation of methods that reflect and are congruent with their research philosophies and methodologies is also a concern and present endeavors among American and non-Asian Indigenous scholars. Cheng et al (2009) and Chinn (2007) both describe use of decolonizing methodologies for use within business and educational contexts. These research lens may prove more useful as western-Euro approaches challenge use of Chinese culture, traditions and an eastern social thought.

## Reflecting back…

Issues of originality and translatability reflect heated debates within academia and have hindered knowledge creation and understanding of how Indigenous research methodologies can be translatable as a practice between culturally distinct Indigenous researchers and between non-Indigenous researchers.

There has been and remains resistance to epistemological disruptions within western-Euro research practices and this stymies creation of new knowledge (Kovach 2009). Suggestions, or insistence, to place Indigenous methodologies within existing western re-

search theories is a reaction to uphold a generalizing and universalizing goal of the anthropological project (LT Smith 2012, 1999). Creation of a pan-Indigenous approach has been met with protest by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and researchers. Within academic research the turn toward specialization—being a topic concentration—has afforded a louder voice for interpretive theoretical frameworks that enable cultural differences to be recognized and appreciated as forms of knowledge beneficial to understanding the multilayered reality of human existence.

Methodologically, insistence on universalizing research practices can be understood to also be a means of holding the limit of "acceptable" methodologies to those currently existing within the dominant majority. This has created confusion and problems of congruency, at the very least, and upholds colonial mentalities about Indigenous perspectives (Kovach 2009, Wilson 2008). Partnerships between Indigenous methodologies and western research practices have been accomplished whereby the research design has included Indigenous researchers and collaborators, methods such as Talking Circles, and protocols such as offerings. Yet, this design does not accomplish the centering of research practices from an Indigenous perspective of relationality. Doing so would provide different questions –and not just from a deficit narrative—to be investigated that can reveal new understandings of what is being studied. The issue of congruency of worldviews is not, though, an entirely a non-Indigenous issue.

As Indigenous peoples, we tend to hold to a worldview that shares common and enduring beliefs about the world (Kovach 2009). Indigenous scholar Leroy Little Bear (2000) contends "there is enough similarity among North American Indian philosophies to apply concepts generally" (79). This is largely due to the bounding of our knowledges to our landscapes and a relational view of existence. Kovach, being a Cree scholar can follow her Plains traditions for research work within a Coast Salish context because there is understanding that their ways of knowing are similar. Her work also provides evidence that this holds true within the work of urban Indigenous researchers who are located culturally

within their peoples' knowledge ways. This associates with a movement to reclaim the ability to hold these knowledges as a personal identity. Recognizing here, the work required to understand one's socio-cultural position, provides further support of incorporating an emphasis on researcher preparation as a part of the preparing-to-do research practice of designing and accomplishing a study. Adaptability of a methodology is both desired and imperative for the present state of humanity and the study of it.

For non-Indigenous researchers' there is possibility, if not necessity, for use of an Indigenous way of doing research through understanding translatable and adaptable aspects of methodologies founded on Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Please note, not all research accomplished within Indigenous contexts requires an Indigenous approach as, and recall, the researcher's socio-cultural position and kind of question being investigated determine the methodology most appropriate for a study. There are also other factors, addressed in the upcoming Elements 5 and 6, that affect decisions of methodology.

For now, we can find an example of work that reflects a holistic and relational perspective as space for translation and adaptation through that engaged by Inuit scholar Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt (2005). "To extend our understanding of the processes of learning that occur within and at the intersection of diverse world views and knowledge systems" (8), describes their efforts and provides insight into the possibilities, if not imperative, of methodologies that are beneficial outside local origins of Indigenous knowledge.

In Chapter III I provided the diagram from Kawagley and Barnhardt's work, which exemplifies the fact that Indigenous people perform "science" as ways of sustaining their lifeways. Subsistence practices utilize a broad variety of science based methodologies and their collaborative functionality provides a contrast to a western-based focus on compartmentalizing knowledge with little emphasis on the synthesis, symbiotic, and interrelated aspects of this functionality (Burgess 1999). In other words, for the Alaskan native hunter of yesterday and today, a lack of understanding and use of such collaborative methods

would mean the possibility of starvation for his family and village. From a research stance expressing a relational worldview, we see that the sociological and ecological sciences are cast together in ways that humanize the work of science. The fact that Indigenous knowledges have always been responsive to changes in the world, and not just those affecting their peoples' lifeways, creates confidence in the ability of non-Indigenous use, if they so choose, of ways to address contemporary global issues such as those created by climate change and diminishing or polluted environmental resources. There is hard work required and yet is being accomplished with the possibility related to reconciling issues of congruency between Indigenous methodologies and those of a western-Euro fashion of doing research.

## The Talking Stick Way

Understanding the story of the Talking Stick, as theory and as being a physical representation—a symbol—of a cultural philosophy of communicating with values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility, I can operationalize—set into action—these as principles that contribute to the way I go about creating this study, as well as creating the methodology itself.

### *Values operationalized as Principles that reflect an Indigenous way of doing research*

The Talking Stick Way is a means to investigate if "good" ways of communicating are present within non-Indigenous contexts. "Good" has been defined by the framework created from the Talking Stick philosophy of communication that reflects values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. These values have now been operationalized as a research methodology.

*A Mixed-Methods Approach: Developing and sharing ways of inquiry*

Indigenous research reflects relationships and the building of community. Our worldview requires a perspective that highlights the disparities and inequalities as well as the strengths and joys of a people to adequately inquire into and share knowledge (C. Smith 2013). Rigor of this way of doing research is inherent as our research methodologies are constructed with self-reflexivity, accountability to others and a responsibility for going about a study in mutually beneficial ways. Methods—specific tools utilized to gather knowledge—are expected to be respectful of the process of acquiring knowledge. The process is often more important than what is derived from the methods, as doing research should enable healing, self-determination and education to occur (LT Smith 2012, 1999).

I have found an "ally" within Qualitative research, and utilize several of its ways to accomplish the gathering of knowledge. Its definition of "mixed-methods" reflects the fact that this inquiry approach gathers multiple forms of knowledge through multiple ways in contrast to a western-fashion of utilizing a single method (Creswell 2013). Qualitative methods typically utilized are interviews, observations and documents. Knowledge is reviewed and analyzed through organizing it within themes found across all the data gathered. These themes are the result of both inductive and deductive reasoning performed throughout the research process.

It is paramount that the most appropriate research characteristics and methods available be utilized. Qualitative research provides an Indigenous way of doing research with qualities that are interpretative of and situated within the socio-cultural position of the researcher. Some of these characteristics are (Creswell 2013): knowledge is gathered within a natural setting and participants are engaged in conversations; the researcher is an instrument of inquiry as they create their own means to gather data, including creation of theoretical frameworks, through grounded theory practice; use of multiple methods to gather information; utilization of an inductive-deductive logic process; defer to meanings

provided by participants in contrast to privileging their own meanings of data and or provide an interpretation that is reviewed by the participants and utilized as a multi-perspective result; emergent design is key and reflects a less prescribed methodology so as to be flexible and responsive to the knowledge gathered and what is interpreted from it; reflexivity is present in the study through extended background information of the researcher and statements of what is to be gained from the study and by whom, and; a qualitative study develops a holistic sketch of what has been learned from the entirety of the study.

It is easy to see how qualitative research, and it being an alternative western approach, reflects many of the same characteristics as that of an Indigenous way of doing research. The key difference is that this study, while utilizing some of the qualitative characteristics, is designed within the theoretical framework of an Indigenous knowledge source. Its methodology reflects a relational way of knowing, being and doing that is situated within a particular aspect of my own cultural worldview, which is also a shared worldview by other Indigenous peoples.

With the review of Indigenous, western-based and Eastern Asian methodologies, I find the construction of the methodology I have arrived at, this being the Talking Stick Way, may reflect a blend of all three and is an appropriate methodology for the investigation of my research question as it seeks to understand how and if diverse ways of knowing, being and doing are capable of working together toward a common goal.

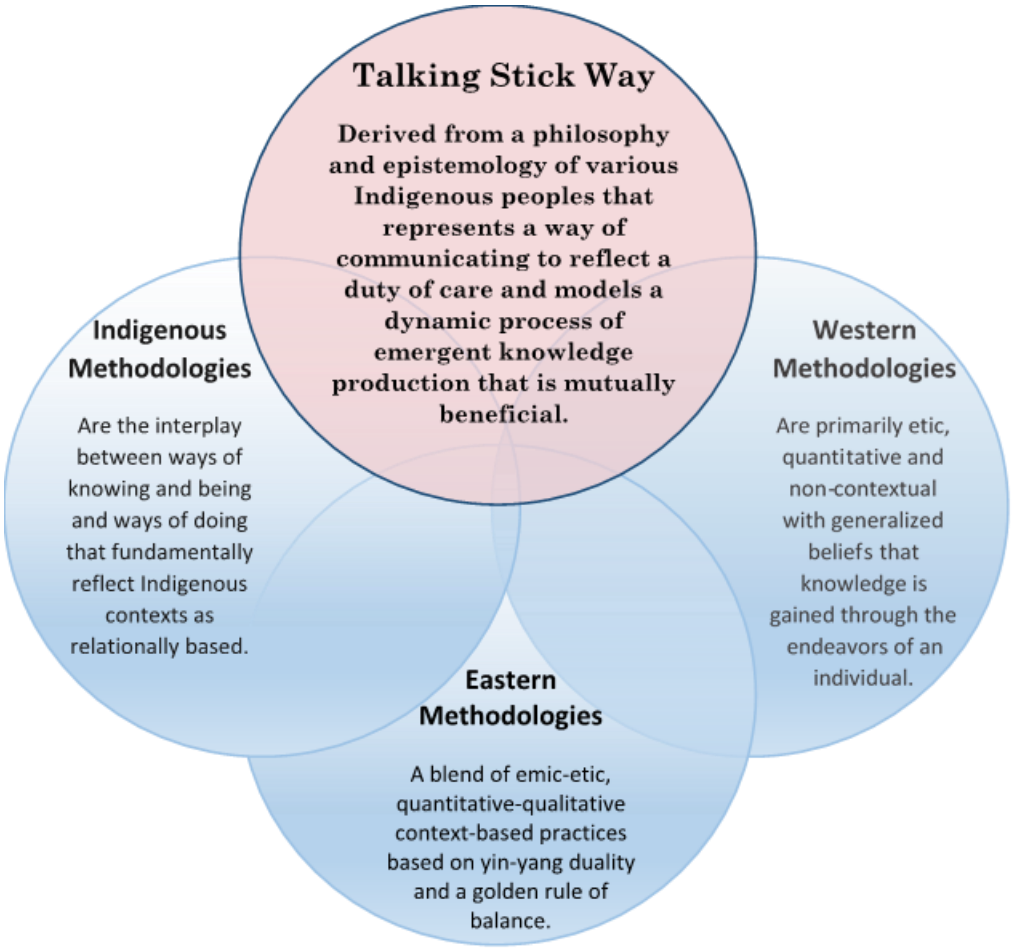


Figure 14: Ren Freeman 2017. The Talking Stick Way, a research methodology based on an Indigenous philosophy of communication that is shared by various Indigenous peoples and reflects mixed-methods of doing research that are found within Eastern and Western research methodologies that promote an 'ally' approach of an Indigenous Way of Doing Research.

We can now understand that the Talking Stick Way (Fig. 14) enables us to see if communication is being accomplished that reflects a duty of care derived from the collective values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. This methodology models a dynamic process of emergent knowledge production that is mutually beneficial. It also enables the creation of spaces for transformation and co-creation of learning practices that expand concepts of humanity and of being human.

We are not quite ready to begin the actual work of the study. Within the creation of an Indigenous methodology there is a very important aspect of doing research in an Indigenous way that reflects all four principles of the Talking Stick Way of doing this work. Thinking collaboratively about the design and process of doing a study requires checking with those you intend to work with for their opinions of the question, framework, methodology and methods you have planned to utilize.

## Element 5: Collaborative Agreement

Prior to moving on to conduct the study, Element 7, *and* absolutely prior to finalizing the write-up which resides in Element 8, I need you to recall that stories go in circles. Unlike the prediction of Leví-Strauss that circles inhibit emergence (1963) I invite you to consider a three-dimensional view of a circle. Seen in profile you might find the circle is a spiral and is inherently reflective of emergence. A circle seen as a grouped concentric structure is not segregating nor melding but entirely relational.

You see at this point, we again find ourselves returning to a prior point of this story. Being the Indigenous person I am, and coming from a culture that has a relational worldview, I tend to see the world in terms of a fluid way of being. This meaning I have approached this study from a place that decenters any singular society, including my own. This way of being is often shackled by linear processes, such as the way western ways of doing research require it be accomplished. These requirements force us to think and behave in ways that set us within a dialectical and hierarchal relationship that situates the researcher as all-knowing and encourages a dominant way of doing research. I put forth consideration of a "common humanity" (Archer 2010) that does not presume we all arrive at ways of knowing through the same path but through similar paths toward mutually beneficial goals. This can be accomplished through openness to processes that invite changes to occur when working in relational and collaborative research ways.

After all the hard work of getting to this point within the creation of a methodology that is reflective of an Indigenous way of doing research, it may seem counter-productive to package one's research question, framework, methodology and methods and submit them for review among key participants of the study and others who have a stake in the way you go about planning and accomplishing it. This activity, though, reflects the four values, as principles, of the Talking Stick Way of being in relationship through "good" and "right" ways of communicating. As well, there is knowledge to be gained through consultation with others who are integral to research work. As researchers, we must always be mindful of the impacts our work has upon those we study among and their perspective is invaluable to the research process.

How you go about gaining insight to the relevance of your research intentions largely depends upon what inquiry sites you have chosen to for your study. You are the only one who can determine this and reach out to whom your study will engage. If you have gone about doing research in an Indigenous way, you have already begun the process of building relationships with those whose knowledge and contexts reflect your topic of interest. Recall, part of preparing-to-do research, reflected in Element 1, entails researching and reviewing present knowledge. I visited with local, national and even international Indigenous individuals to gain insight about my approach and intentions to research my topic. This continued or began relationships with those who are part of my study. Thus, coming to a point of 'checking-in' and collaborating with those associated with your study should not be a 'cold call' activity. This enables a 'listening' aspect to what comes next.

When engaging this element of seeking collaborative agreement with what you have planned thus far as your study, you must be prepared for altering the work you have accomplished. This can mean dramatic shifts in what you have envisioned as a study.

Within this present thesis journey, I have had to revise my question, approaches and methods three times before settling on the present study. The first reason a revision was needed was due to a shift in participants that left me with their choice of one person,

as a representative voice, for the group. I learned this was because of that person's political position within the community I was working with and not because this person was the best suited to work with me. I also changed my study focus upon learning the knowledge being provided by this person was not necessarily from the sources I was led to believe they originated from. I re-visioned my study within the same philosophical frame but chose a different site of study.

Not long after beginning my work within the new theme I was advised by university faculty that engaging a "fringe" topic for my thesis may not be the best path "at the present time." "Fringe" is a term within anthropology that refers to research that is relatively new to a field of study. My approach delved into Imperial practices migrating into outer space. As a "futures" theme there is very little research from this perspective and it would have entailed much more time than I had originally anticipated. I have filed that study away for future consideration.

The third shift was also because of faculty advice that encouraged me to focus on the materiality of the Talking Stick that would have revised my thesis into an object study. This suggestion occurred because of a major shift within my academic program. I was not comfortable with the shift and eventually found my way back to what I feel is the study that best reflects what needs to be investigated in partnership with the Talking Stick. This is the present study you are reading about.

As you can see, there is flexibility and an openness to learning about one's self and others' intentions required with the practice of a relational way of doing research. We must not take for granted the generosity of those we work with nor of what we assume is their generosity.

There are a multitude of lessons to be learned about collaborative ways of doing research that reflect a *lack* of care. There is often a misunderstanding that just because participant input is requested and provided that their thoughts and work will be heard, valued and utilized in ways that reveal respect paid to them and their contributions (Simpson

2001). This has been a practice of most non-Indigenous researchers and reflects western-based mentalities about whose knowledge is put forth and shared. This speaks to a researcher's agenda that does not create equality in knowledge gathering and production and reifies research conducted without the permission, consultation or involvement of Indigenous peoples. In fact, Simpson (2009) has suggested researchers should create an agenda that reflects consensus and a willingness for researcher reflexivity and collaboration with one's study community. Porsanger (2004) supports this thinking by offering the following questions, formulated through the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999:10), as guidelines that address study methodologies, their methods and power relations in research:

> Whose research is this?
> Who owns it?
> Whose interests does it serve?
> Who will benefit from it?
> Who has designed its questions and framed its scope?
> Who will carry it out?
> Who will write it up?
> How will the results be disseminated?

Related to the call for self-reflexivity, found in the process of Element 1, there is need to incorporate both inter-personal and collective reflexivity in collaborating with one's study community. This locates the researcher as part of the study and the community that situates knowledge sharing and gathering as a participatory method of doing research and enables a critical evaluation of the methodology process (Nicholls 2008).

Simpson (2009) asks that researchers be "willing to spend time looking inside themselves, uncovering their own biases, and privileges and are willing to learn *from* our people—not *about* [emphasis is the author's] Aboriginal peoples, but about themselves and their place in the cosmos…[and] are willing to be transformed, in a sense, [and] willing to be *developed*" (145). This is similar to the request posed by Bruner's (1986, 1990, 1996) Constructivist theory which addresses instructional themes.

Within communication studies researchers may come across the Johari Window, developed in the 1950s by Joseph Luft and Harr Ingham. It is a model for understanding and teaching personal development in terms of interpersonal and intergroup relationships. In 2001 Anne Bell provided a modified version to enhance self-awareness and in 2009 Donna Mertens modified the model to reflect research and evaluation contexts. Within the Johari Window model researchers reflect on self within contexts through understanding their standpoints within questions such as: Things others know about me; Things I know about myself; Things other don't know about me, and; Things I don't know about myself (Mertens 2009). The last question is an area of emergent knowledge that develops in relationship with participants and stakeholders of a study. In these ways it is easy to see how understanding one's socio-cultural position flows throughout the entirety of a research project.

The way to go about collaborating with a study community is manifold and dependent upon several variables, especially those found within the Socio-Cultural Position of the researcher and how they accomplished their background work for the study. Today, there are regulatory protocols established by Indigenous communities that need to be considered in addition to the obligatory ethics application required of most academic institutions. Working according to a research agenda that includes a broader methodology, to include cultural and ethical protocols, values and behaviors explicitly reflects an Indigenous way of doing research (Porsanger 2004).

## Element 6: Revisit Knowing, Being and Doing related to the Study's Design

Often researchers will by-pass or spend little time 'checking' their Socio-Cultural Position in the way I have done, as reflected in Element 1. The relevance and benefit of that step is also realized in Element 6, where a 're-visit' of the positions of epistemology, ontology, and axiology and deontology is necessary. Within the previous Element there is need to understand the context that exists related to the research question.

Within this element, exists an evaluative process wherein additional questions are posed to assure a relevance of study design with the Indigenous perspective of doing research. Wilson (2001) suggested the following:

> What is my role as a researcher and what are my obligations? Does this method [asked of each method] allow me to fulfill my obligations in my role? Does this method help to build a relationship between myself as a researcher and my topic? Does it build respectful relationships with the other participants in the research? Relationships with the idea or topic, as well as with the people or mice or trees or whatever you are working with, have to be considered (178).

Once clarity is gained through understanding where changes have occurred within the study design, because of the collaborative agreement process, and corrected, the study can proceed.

I am not going into depth with narrative for this element as this exercise is self-explanatory and repeats the tasks of self-knowing, self-in context and self-in community expressed in this and previous elements. I will, though, provide that by accomplishing this step of the process understandings of intent and realization of how a duty of care has been engaged is achievable.

## Element 7: Going about the 'doing' of the study

An Indigenous way of doing research encourages the selection of methods, to accommodate the "doing" of a study, by how they are associated with the lens—the framework—and the methodology. Their congruence with these determine the way knowledge gathering and analysis will be accomplished (Kovach 2009).

In Element 4, Methodology and Methods, we learned that western science places importance on the method as the way to interpret knowledge, yet within Indigenous ways of doing research, "meaning comes from the context and the process, not the content"

(Simpson 2011:43). Through "doing" research with methods that are reflective of an Indigenous based methodology, we can center the process of gathering knowledge so that what becomes known is mutually beneficial and reflects a socio-ecological relationality.

Through revisiting the study design with the community, who is connected to or is the basis of the study, we can understand if changes are required to the question, framework, methodology or methods that the researcher has drafted. Undoubtedly, there will be changes required. However, as the researcher is a method of inquiry, per locating oneself within the context of the study as a reflexive component, an iterative method is also engaged. This movement within the study itself creates a rigorous analytics process that enables emergence of knowledge that can be assessed for themes that may not have been visible through another approach (Chilisa 2012).

Within an Indigenous way of doing research there is similarity in approach and in how "findings" are arrived at with that of qualitative studies. As a side-bar, the term "findings" is a western term that implies something was discovered, while within an Indigenous methodology interpretation this is accomplished as a new way of understanding what already exists and is a meaning-making approach (Kovach 2009). The way knowledge is gathered, analyzed and interpreted are not separate activities either, but are engaged collectively throughout the research process (Wolcott 1994). This contrasts with the western-based "analytical ladder" (Kirby et al 2006) that progresses along a reductive and linear path.

The "doing" of a study can be understood as the creating of relationships between a researcher and humans who are partners and or participants and also with other-than-humans. Within this study that involves a physical object there is still a need to understand its creation story, nature or spirit, and its history of activity through time. Many Indigenous peoples still retain stories of relationships of the land and its people and the meanings of such relationships.

As I have shared throughout this thesis, relationality is the fulcrum of an Indigenous way of doing research. Within each of the elements of this process there is a 'checking back' that is necessary for cohesion and building of trust that enables the values and principles of the Talking Stick to be activated and responded to through the 'doing' of them. The principles of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility are markers that can also be utilized as analytics for how a study has been planned and accomplished. Within this process is a re-iterative journey that is manifested as pathways between researcher, participants and what develops as new knowledge (Parr 2002).

As shared previously in Part 1 of this thesis, the origination of Indigenous methodologies within a research context derived from an outcry of how studies are accomplished among Indigenous peoples, that engage a western-Euro framework with methodologies largely reflecting colonial practices. As a thread woven throughout this thesis, understanding of that history and present realities requires a conscientiousness of the role of "outsider" and "insider" that a researcher is perceived within. The 'doing' of a study per an Indigenous way of doing research, whether within an Indigenous context or not, creates an awareness of the importance of the duty of care. This 'duty', invites and guides us to create projects that humanize our work.

## Element 8: The Write-Up

How a researcher chooses to write-up their study is usually based first on the discipline they are working within and the "formula" prescribed by it. Within this there may be freedom to explore various forms of writing practices that not only share what has been accomplished but also are a means of producing knowledge as a collaboration. In this way, writing becomes a method of knowing (Richardson and St. Pierre 2008).

I am not going into the details of writing formulas required by various disciplines, but will provide here what is expected of me within socio-cultural anthropology. Referred to broadly as "scientific writing," the structure follows the decorum of what type of product

will be written. Specifically, the "formula" includes an Introduction—that may or may not include a Background section and if not included here is a separate chapter; Literature Review, Methodology—that may or may not include Methods, as "tools" of inquiry, and if not, are a separate chapter that might detail a specialization; Substantive Chapters by topic and related to data and research objectives; Appendices and finally a Bibliography. This structure though has some flexibility when it comes to style.

There are study approaches that require a quantitative, more statistical, way of writing and then there are those that provide a more narrative form. Richardson and St. Pierre (1998), in their chapter on Writing, within Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) text, provide a wealth of advice and ideas on writing practices and formats that provide a means for writing to be utilized as a method of inquiry.

A methodology of sharing research as a reflexive and relational process occurs with the use of Story as a means of not only verbally providing information but also in the written form to create a relationship between the author and reader. This style of writing is common practice among qualitative research as it engages a cyclical way of sharing that follows a process that releases the reader from blocks of information, that only provide a sentence or two as transition between them. Within a Story approach, we see knowledge shared where and when it is appropriate to address it as a means of being helpful to the listener-reader in understanding how parts reflect the whole.

### *Storying as Indigenous Methodology*

In Chapter I, I provided a glimpse of my use of Story as a method for writing-up and sharing this thesis, and in Chapter II I provided more detailed information, as prologue, about my perspective of utilizing Story or narrative as a frame for my study. Here, I recall and enhance that information with a focus on the opportunity to utilize Story as a means to provide expression of an Indigenous perspective, voice and also as a means for

'giving back.' Through relating information that is respective of the values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility present in an Indigenous way of doing research we complete the circle and cycle of a study.

My use of a Story approach as methodology for the write-up of this thesis, as means to share my research journey reflects my Shoshonean worldview in practice within "a system of principles and general ways of organizing and structuring theoretical and practical activity" (Spirkin 2003). A "Story-way" presumes writing-up of a thesis begins with the *thought* of doing a study. This is alternative to most thesis development and practice styles, that follow a Descartes rationalistic model or a blend of classical and Kantian practice, that reflect waiting until the study is completed to begin writing about its activities and reports on process as a reflection versus an emerging production of knowledge. That also does not reflect a relational way of going about the write-up as is seen through most Indigenous research projects. The interface of relational ways of constructing research methodology engages a philosophical level of functionality. In choosing the Story approach, I engaged the Talking Stick philosophy of communicating as the premise for how I share this study, as my intentions are to be mindful of 'good ways' to communicate. These 'good ways' reflect the four values represented by the Talking Stick philosophy—these being respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility—and have become the fulcrum of how I chose to conceptualize and create the methodology for accomplishing my study and sharing it. There is power in Story as a frame because of the narratives about beliefs and cultural norms that provide shape and meaning to human cultures, and for transitions and emergence of new narratives (Dawson 2014).

"The Story of one cannot be told without unfolding the story of many" (Mucina 2011). Devi Mucina, a South African Ubuntu scholar from the Maseko Ngoni people, reminds us that if we relate to one another through storytelling, then storying is also a research method that expresses relationality and allows a culture to regenerate itself.

Viewed in this light, story becomes a way to not only share with you the journey this research is taking us on—as in the way I utilize story as a methodology—but also as a way to gather the knowledge being shared. Stories, as methodology, are like baskets that hold what we cherish and value. As a Shoshonean woman we hold knowledge within our stories and carry them with us—like precious cargo—to share as needed. This is found within the way my people carefully pick chokecherries, placing them into baskets and buckets for safe keeping until we have use of them; when again we sort them for types that are useful for purposes we intend or are required, such as for adding sweetness to dry meat soup, or for thick jams and go'suup—a berry 'gravy' for dipping bread into, or simply enjoying them as a treat that turns your tongue and teeth a dark purple. Knowledges gathered are like berries too. They need to be sorted in ways useful for what we intend for them and what is required of them.

Story, as a method and fundamental element of narrative inquiry, is a tool for gathering information that provides ways to explore how people interpret the world and their place within it, that otherwise is challenging to assess; thus, further allowing multi-level interpretation of the nuances and details being shared (Vink 2017; Wang and Geale 2015; Kovach 2010). In this way, 'doing' research relationally can be established between a participant and researcher at a level that creates trust and caring for the other as a collaborative practice. Providing knowledge in a Story-way also reflects an endeavor to meet my personal cultural responsibilities of sharing particular knowledge and of being open and available to learning other knowledges (Battiste 2000).

The value of a study written-up in story form is that what is being shared and the interpretation of it unfold in the process of doing the work and in writing about it (Kovach 2009). This provides for emergent thoughts to surface and are additional meaning-making tools for the study overall.

*Research as a giving back Way*

The story of how research has been more of a "taking" thing than a sharing or even a "giving back" thing is long and filled with knots that have been resistant to being untied. There are changes though within the realm of academic research that reflect understanding how "worldviews affect our belief systems, decision making, assumptions, and modes of problem solving" (Hart 2010:1). There is also the possibility of adapting aspects of another's worldview and expressing them in entirely personal ways that are similar but different from the culture that originated them (Sue & Sue 2003; Fitznor 1998).

We see this occur between various Indigenous peoples. I am not speaking to the realm of appropriation that frequently occurs among non-Indigenous peoples who come across cultural ways of Indigenous people. This is what most Indigenous peoples and Indigenous researchers speak against. What I am speaking to occurs as a "sharing" of knowledge that retains the essence of its origin. We see the alternative of this in a study accomplished by Nishnaabeg (Anishinaabe) scholar Leanne Simpson.

Simpson (2001) investigates the use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) by and held among Aboriginal peoples. Her work inspires my own as she did not study her people or another Indigenous people. Instead she worked with the people who were among her own, writing, defining and documenting TEK. These were non-Indigenous researchers who took this knowledge and created concepts outside of the Aboriginal community it originates from. Thus, what was developed only reflected what their non-Indigenous dominant society saw as important to understand and as being useful to their needs. Simpson refers to this process as "scientizing" Indigenous knowledges and it "has the impact of separating the knowledge from all the context (the relationships, the world views, values, ethics, cultures, processes, spirituality) that gives it meaning" (139). In this way, Indigenous knowledges are taken, changed and given back to the people they originated from in ways that are virtually unrecognizable to them. This is not an act of "giving back." Not in the way Indigenous research defines the process of writing-up and sharing what has been learned.

What is meant by "giving back" or as Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 1999) defines it, "giving voice", from an Indigenous perspective is not just a pragmatic function that involves the inclusion of a people and their knowledge within the work of creating a written product that is also given to all participants. "Giving voice" entails a much bigger picture and impact than what involves those the research pertains to and in the present time. "Giving voice" involves recognition of Indigenous philosophies as ways of knowing and as practice that is beneficial to not only the peoples who hold the knowledge, but also for those who encounter it in community and as a way of knowing, being and doing that is translatable within diverse global worldviews.

At the end of the day, when we as researchers reflect upon the work we have accomplished, might we ask ourselves if there has been any personal or internal change that became a new way of seeing ourselves, our immediate worlds and those beyond ourselves because of working in mutually beneficial ways. Adding this aspect as a way of doing research provides opportunity to understand self in the context of not only our own personal worlds, but also within the larger community that is our collective world.

## Reflecting back…

Within this chapter I first shared a recap of the events and my reflexive response to results found through the experiences I shared in Chapter II regarding two visits with Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors as part of the review of present knowledge. From those visits and experiences within a graduate writing class, five critical themes were derived, these being: 1) what are Indigenous methodologies; 2) should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 3) should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and: 5) are Indigenous methodologies being utilized by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts. These themes enhanced my

literature review and revised my research question and approach. These also became the five sub-questions that have assisted with the investigation of my primary question.

Continuing the story-line of "*how* might we understand," as a first part of this study, we have now arrived at a *way* an Indigenous methodology, based on an Indigenous knowledge represented by a physical artifact, can be created that reflects a deeper understanding of self, as researcher, as well as how to go about doing research that is relationally based and accountable to participants and recipients of a study. These activities represent the tenets of an Indigenous methodology.

Next, I share Part 2 of this thesis. Chapter V provides how and where knowledge has been experienced through providing a summary of the sites that were studied and the tools of inquiry that were utilized to understand "how might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts. Within this overarching research question reside five sub-questions. Through the lens of the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology, I have investigated these five questions through three sites of inquiry. The Talking Stick Way helps us to see if research, as a form of conversation, has been accomplished according to principles that reflect respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. These principles originate from an Indigenous philosophy of communication that represent these four principles as values that are present when communication is accomplished in 'good' and 'right' ways and can assist in creation of projects in humanization. Through this framework and methodology, we can understand if this has occurred through review of preparations to do research, the design of a research study and how it is accomplished.

This is the way of it…

# V

## Part 2

## Engaging the Talking Stick Way:
## Where and How knowledge has been experienced

This chapter shares how my study was undertaken. As it entails two parts I begin this chapter with a recap of Part 1 that summarizes the story of how I arrived at my research question and the development of five sub-questions that both deepened and thickened my investigation. Then, for Part 2 I convey details of the three sites of inquiry I engaged to learn if the Talking Stick Way is relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts. I have reserved my analysis and discussion of what has been learned from both Parts 1 and 2 for Chapter VI.

This is the way of it…

### Part 1: Recap, methodology and new understandings

I began this thesis in a way that portrays you, the reader, and myself, the storyteller, as being in relationship with one another as academic researchers. This reflects an Indigenous worldview that emphasizes an interconnectedness between humans and even other-than-humans and decenters any single person or species and their immediate environments, thus creating a concentric circle or web-based reality (Watkins 2000; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; LT Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Mertens and Cram 2013; Lambert 2014). Understanding the ontological basis for the research framework and analytics of this study as being about social and ecological relationality is crucial for also understanding the perspective I take in situating myself within the research and how I have accomplished this work.

In Chapter II, I introduced you further to an Indigenous way of doing research through sharing my practice of preparing-to-do research, that includes a process of gaining

awareness of what my socio-cultural position is in relation to the research work I was engaging. This was accomplished through fundamental tasks of reflecting on personal positions of epistemology, ontology, axiology, deontology and methodology as an Indigenous woman, person and researcher. As part of preparing-to-do research I also reviewed present knowledge. In an Indigenous way of doing research this begins with identifying Indigenous individuals to visit with about my study concept and approach, that included use of a shared Indigenous knowledge, the Talking Stick philosophy of communication, as my study framework to investigate whether Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts. This way of reviewing present knowledge is inductive and enables knowledges to emerge in contrast to a western-Euro deductive or reductive approach that establishes a hypothetical 'box' to fill with data derived through assumptive inquiry (Drawson et al 2017).

Subsequently, I visited with twenty-three Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors. Through review of these conversations I recognized five themes that enhanced and extended my literature review into a systematic review—that enabled me to understand various behavioral aspects of my topic. In the same time-frame I was a student in a graduate writing class and realized these same themes were presenting themselves during reviews of my writing and natural conversations with and among non-Indigenous students and the instructor.

With my new understandings of these knowledges I re-visited the same group of Indigenous individuals and discussed what I had learned. Three of the previous individuals opted to not have a re-visit as they felt Indigenous knowledges and their ways of helping Indigenous peoples should be held for only Indigenous researcher use and within Indigenous contexts. I introduced these comments to the conversation with the other Indigenous individuals. This provided an opportunity for a re-check of my intentions for engaging the study I now conceptualized. I was assured and newly confident that why and how I was going about my study reflected the values and principles of an Indigenous relational world

view and would provide a way to further understand 1) what are Indigenous research methodologies; 2) should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts; 3) should Indigenous methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and 5) are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. These five themes became sub-questions within my revised overarching research question, "how might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts" and broadened the investigation of my topic.

As well, in Chapter II, I shared what I had learned from my literature review about the journey of Indigenous knowledges coming into academia as research methodologies, as a response to historical and persistent western-Euro based research practices that dehumanizes Indigenous peoples and their lifeways. Further, as an example of the work of Indigenous scholars utilizing their knowledges as research methodologies, I provided brief summaries of two projects found within the ground-breaking work of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

In Chapter III, I provided a summary from my literature review that addresses sub-question 1: What are Indigenous methodologies. Through a narrative form, I shared various works accomplished to-date by Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous allies working in the field of Indigenous research that reveals a consensus about what makes a methodology Indigenous and why academia needs Indigenous research methodologies.

In Chapter IV, I combined knowledges gained from five research experiences I had, these being: visits with Indigenous individuals, literature review, a graduate writing class, and investigating non-Indigenous research practices through observation of and natural conversation with graduate research students and then also attending graduate presentations at an education symposium. These last two experiences represent Inquiry Site 1 of

this thesis. My understanding of these knowledges, reflected on through review of my journal notes and thematic analysis, then prompted and assisted me in constituting a "map" by which to lend additional understanding and recognition of "what are Indigenous methodologies", an Indigenous way of doing research and creation of an Indigenous research methodology. In true story fashion, the elements of the map had already been guiding my own research design and implementation of this study. As I worked through this study I enhanced and revised the processes and narratives of each of the eight elements within the map to reflect applicable new knowledge and understanding. I then placed the map within this write-up as an invitation for you to review that process. In this way, the map represents the structure of this study but one that is iterative in nature and reveals the results of knowledges gained from the study as an entirety. The map has become a pedagogical tool for, in part, understanding the topic and outcomes of this study.

The statement I made at the beginning of chapter IV bears repeating: "We have now arrived at a *way* an Indigenous methodology, based on an Indigenous knowledge represented by a physical artifact, can be created that reflects a deeper understanding of self, as researcher, as well as how to go about doing research that is relationally based and accountable to participants and recipients of a study. These activities represent the tenets of an Indigenous methodology."

## Part 2: The Talking Stick Way in practice

Recall, I had revised my question to include the word "present" and to proceed I now need to situate the "Talking Stick Way" within it as well. My question becomes, "How might we understand if the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology, is relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

Part 2 of this study is to put into practice the Talking Stick Way. As an Indigenous methodology derives from one's own understanding of their socio-cultural position and is based on knowledges found within one's own culture, or that they have a relationship with,

I opted to utilize this same methodology—the Talking Stick Way—as *the* methodology I search for within non-Indigenous contexts. Here are a couple of ways to understand what I have done (Fig. 15):

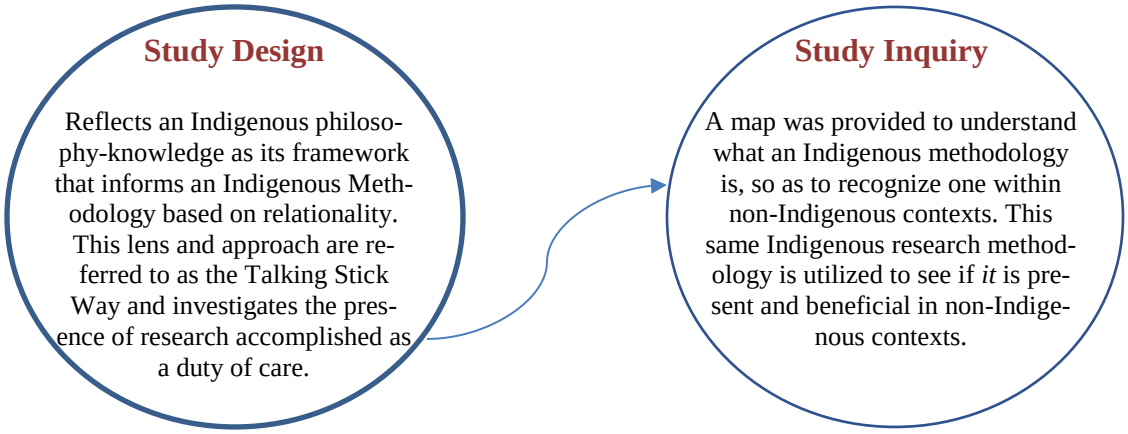


Figure 15: 2017 Ren Freeman, to understand the methodology that is created for and within the study titled, "The Talking Stick Way: An Indigenous methodology for engaging diverse global conversations," this diagram reveals that the methodology created as part of the Study Design, to conduct the study, is also the methodology utilized within the Sites of Inquiry that investigates whether it exists within non-Indigenous contexts.

Another way to understand this is:

Research question, part 1:

*How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies…*

Through first understanding what an Indigenous methodology is, through presenting my version of one that is utilized in this study, recognition of one is enabled. This was accomplished through understanding how I created my own study that also creates an Indigenous methodology to accomplish investigation of the second half of the research question.

Research question, part 2:

[Are Indigenous methodologies] *relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts.*

I utilize the Indigenous methodology I created for my own study, as *the* methodology I look for within non-Indigenous contexts. This rephrases the question to, "…is the Indigenous methodology, the Talking Stick Way, relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

The story continues…

What we now have is this: my study is designed as an Indigenous way of doing research (per the "map" I provided in Chapter III, as Figure 3) that reflects a relational perspective, as I have chosen to utilize the Talking Stick philosophy of communication that is a shared Indigenous knowledge. From this philosophy's values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility I have created a way of doing research that takes those values and creates principles of them that have become the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology. These principles are reflected in the ways I have conducted my study and how I am sharing it with you. A little twist comes about when I take this same methodology and utilize it as *the* methodology I look for within non-Indigenous contexts. You see how the story goes in circles?

What I provide next engages the work of this methodology and remaining half of my research question as Part 2 of this study. Within three sites of inquiry, through mixed-methods, I have investigated where and if the Talking Stick Way of doing research is relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts.

The following are three sites of inquiry engaged within this study and presented respectively.

## Part 2

### Prologue

Please understand, if you have not noticed yet, I resist using the terms data, discovered and found as practice to decolonize western-Euro ways of doing research. History and

anthropological practices position the researcher as having come upon peoples and their lifeways as somehow being lost. We and our ways have always existed, and we have never been something to be found (Battiste 2000). From this perspective, it would be more appropriate to express research as a means to see all peoples, other-than-humans, knowledges, events and the like as being newly experienced and understood by the researcher. This de-objectifies the practice and provides a relational way of doing research that extends the way knowledge can be understood.

As the Talking Stick Way represents a philosophy of communication that reflects principles of care in the way research is accomplished, I chose to remain within the communication arena and found inquiry sites that reflected my definition of "non-Indigenous specific contexts" to investigate my question.

Note, the use of the term "non-Indigenous" was difficult to navigate as a site choice per my worldview as an Indigenous person. From my perspective, we are all in relationship and to distinguish ways of being as either Indigenous or non-Indigenous seemed to oppose that perspective. My goal with this study has been to avoid the dialectic and focus only on what my definition of a "non-Indigenous" context is so as to understand if the Talking Stick Way is represented therein as a way of knowing applicable to academic research. Thus, my study moves to inquiry sites outside the Indigenous context to that of a non-Indigenous context defined earlier as sites where individuals do not self-identify as being an Indigenous person associated with a landscape that has been colonized by the Imperial project and today reflects impacts of those activities. Largely these are activities that have separated peoples and cultures from a landscape in significant ways so as to alter their identities and lifeways. This definition is broad, I realize, but it also prompts consideration for further inquiry of what exactly is meant by "non-Indigenous."

This is the way of it…

I have spent some time, within Part 1 of this study, specifically within Element 4 Methodology and Methods of the map, relating what qualitative research is and my use of it in this study as an "ally" with the Talking Stick Way. I will not be repeating that information here.

This study utilizes a mixed-methods (Creswell 2013; Denzin and Lincoln 2008) approach to gathering knowledge within sites of inquiry that respond to five sub-questions that assist in investigation of my primary question. This particularity of methods choice is related to my socio-cultural position as an Indigenous researcher and reflects what Duranti (1997) means by the choice of method for collecting data is a theoretical one. I share a brief description of each method I have utilized in Part 2 of this thesis, derived from both Indigenous knowledges and "ally" quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In Chapter V, within my sharing of the map, specifically within Element 4, I provided conversation about various research methodologies associated with the methods I have chosen.

Reflecting on the choosing of methods, I am reminded of the following, "Existing in relationship triggers everything: with people, with ideas, with the natural world" (Meyer (2008:221). As researchers, how we go about our work creates a 'truism' about what we have studied. In an Indigenous way of doing research, relationality is foremost and although created in steps or pieces, this way of doing a study is a fluid and intersecting endeavor (Wilson 2008). I think what Meyer describes is akin to how 'intentions' create the mood for the disposition of a research project. Western-Euro research practices focus heavily on the methods—the tools of inquiry—for gaining knowledge. In an Indigenous way of doing research, methodology is the important focal point and interface that reflects intentions of the framework's theoretical philosophy and directs which tools to utilize that responds to its principles. Recall, within the Talking Stick philosophy and now methodology these are represented by the values of: respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility.

Meyer and Wilson are joined by Kovach, with her belief that, "…our doing is intricately related with our knowing. We need only to look to the importance of protocol within

Indigenous communities to recognize that how activities (i.e. methods) are carried out matter" (2010:40). I follow Kovach in expressing the importance of selecting methods that are congruent with the Indigenous methodology developed and being utilized as the approach to what phenomena are being studied.

The following is an overview of the various methods I have utilized within my study generally and more specifically as identified in each of the three sites of inquiry. I provide this knowledge here, categorically, as guidance in reading through the remainder of this chapter as to where and how knowledge has been experienced.

## Indigenous-based methods of gathering knowledge

### *Natural conversations*

"Natural conversations" (Rowe 2010) are a manner of sharing that reflects the natural flow of conversations. This way of gathering knowledge is through non-guided means where the participant relates information only per understanding a basic theme. What is shared is an unfolding of the interpretation of one's worldview and may be different than that of the researcher. This enables new knowledge to be gained and understood by the researcher. This is a contrast to western-based methods of interviewing participants whereby a hypothesis or pre-designed questions are utilized and direct the conversation in ways that may inhibit new knowledge.

Similar to natural conversations, is Kovach's (2010) "conversational method", that is also "relational at its core" (40) and is more akin to storytelling, re-storying, yarning and re-membering as a means of gathering knowledge (Thomas 2005; Absolon & Willett 2004; Bishop 1999). It is conversational sharing purposed to assist others in understanding the context of responses.

*Participant-Reflexivity*

Within social science research the importance of reflexivity as a topic of discourse also reveals how the construction of knowledge tends to be researcher centered. This focus often subsumes or masks participant reflexivity as an active role within the act of gathering knowledge (Riach 2009).

Reflexivity evolved primarily through feminist research practice and brings into consideration questions of epistemology derived from participant agency (Oakley 1981). The importance of understanding the worldview of those who are participants of a study is paramount to the way knowledge is interpreted and analyzed. Through inclusion of participant reflexivity as a method of inquiry, researcher bias can be revealed and addressed in terms of maintaining mutual benefit of the process and outcomes of research.

Within this thesis, I actively encouraged participant comment as means to engage a relational-based study that enabled collaborative planning and interpretation of knowledge.

*Researcher Reflexivity*

Often referred to as 'self-research' or 'self-knowing', researcher reflexivity is utilized in various ways within this thesis. You first came across this as part of the exercise in Element 1- Researcher Preparation, of the map in Chapter IV. There, reflecting on one's epistemology, ontology, axiology, deontology and methodology assists in understanding the socio-cultural position that enables self-knowing. With this information, you can more fully answer the question, "why is a person like me asking a question like that?" Your ability to answer that question provides guidance for the remaining tasks of designing and accomplishing your research.

As a method of inquiry self-knowing takes on an extended dimension in terms of the social, cultural and political context research is conducted within (Cram 2009; Mertens 2009). It is here that understanding self is decentered, but aligned with that of study participants and their environments. How one conducts themselves, respects and responds to

these will determine the progress and outcomes of a study. Within Element five of the map, in Chapter IV, I addressed this as 'collaborative agreement'. As a method of inquiry, I engaged reflexive journaling, being mindful of the knowledge gained through self-knowing and contextual consideration of each site of inquiry.

## Qualitative and Quantitative-based methods of gathering knowledge

### *Participant-Observation*

Ingold (2017) posits, there is confusion about what is *participant* and what is *observation* in the sense that it is a method of ethnography. While this thesis is not an 'ethnography', it is an anthropological undertaking and as such entails working with participants and observing phenomena associated with them and of their responses to it.

Ingold sees participant observation not as a method—technique—of data gathering, *on* a people or *of* them, whereby observation is an act of objectification, but as a fundamental aspect of ontology. In this way, the researcher is situated as a listening participant who is learning from those who are part of a study, as to ways of being that can be transformative for both researcher and participants. The responsibility of the listener is foregrounded, whether you be the researcher or the participant. We might ask, what accountability is perceived and acted upon by the listener that benefits those who are sharing knowledge through what is observed (Cohen and Rapport 1995). This question relates to on-going debates about methods of anthropological studies as being an educational pathway that are a collaborative way to learn. Participant observation, in this thesis is accomplished as a method of inquiry with 'listening' as the means to understanding how what is observed is mutually beneficially to the learning of all involved.

### *Transformative-based Questionnaire*

Most ways that questioning, interviewing and surveying within research are accomplished are perceived by Indigenous peoples as being invasive methods of making inquiry,

and as Kovach (2009) puts it, "Well, we don't do interviews in Aboriginal culture. We have discussions and talks" (152). This statement addresses power relations within research methods (S. Wilson 2008; L.T. Smith 2012). Consideration of the 'way' to make inquiry is of utmost importance within an Indigenous way of doing research. When specific questions are needing to be asked it is often more appropriate to post the question as an open-ended request for thoughts, as feedback, about the topic or issue. This then creates a more level space that invites conversation into the process, that reflects a humbleness by the researcher.

Martin (2002) and Weber-Pillwax (1999) agree that research must benefit people who are connected to the research. Martin (2002:10) further adds

> In Indigenist research, methods for data collection are demonstrations of Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing. This entails following codes for communication and protocols for interacting that expects different behavior in different settings with different participants. This will vary in each setting and must be respected as part of the research activity, not just as a means to acquire research outcomes.

Within this thesis, I utilize a feed-back tool that is a simple request written on a sheet of paper that is offered to participants to share and document their thoughts. I have not asked for a series of boxes to be checked as yes or no responses nor guided their responses beyond restating the context of what I inquire about. Please see Appendix item _A_ for a copy of this tool.

Next, I relate the methodological use of methods utilized in each of three Inquiry Sites. I chose to report all sites together rather than separate them out among parts 1 and 2 of the thesis.

## Inquiry Site 1: Non-Indigenous researcher practices

### *Graduate research students*

Previously, in Chapter II, I shared that through my review of present knowledge, that included a visit and re-visit with Indigenous elders, scholars and mentors it had been

suggested I look at how non-Indigenous researchers accomplish research as contrast to an Indigenous way of doing research to understand their level of knowledge about Indigenous research methodologies. Within the same chapter I also shared challenges I encountered within a graduate writing course that focused on peer review of our writing related to thesis work, articles based on our research or development of research proposals. In that class, I quickly realized that the way I approached doing research and writing about it was quite different from that of non-Indigenous students. Within each of these experiences, themes were recognized then developed into five critical sub-questions.

These questions became a lens, respectively, to first accomplish a deeper level literature review and accomplish investigation of non-Indigenous researcher practices, with a focus on preparation, knowledge of qualitative research and Indigenous research methodologies. This investigation took the form of selecting non-Indigenous graduate research students from various disciplines within the University of Oklahoma at its Norman campus. In total, this group consisted of seven individuals that became participants for my Inquiry Site 1. Six of these students were at the Master's level and one was a doctoral level student. Beginning in May of 2016 through September 2017 I observed, had natural conversation with and reflexively journaled about what students shared with me individually. I focused my investigation on four themes: a) their preparation practices to do research; b) presentation of their work through an academic public defense; c) level of knowledge about qualitative research approaches, and d) level of knowledge about Indigenous research methodologies. My inquiry to student knowledge about qualitative research relates to the historical use of Indigenous methodologies within qualitative paradigms and similarity of approaches—such as critical, feminist and interpretative methodologies.

### *Education Symposium: Decolonizing Education Research and Practice*

An unintended site of inquiry provided additional opportunities to research non-Indigenous researcher practices within the same scope as I had designed for investigation

among non-Indigenous graduate students. In February of 2017, at the University of Oklahoma, through its Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, a symposium was offered with the theme, "Decolonizing Education Research and Practice."

I attended the symposium to ascertain, in addition to the goals stated for investigating non-Indigenous research practices, a) were Indigenous researchers presenting research that utilized Indigenous methodologies within either Indigenous or non-Indigenous contexts and b) if any non-Indigenous presenters were presenting research that utilized Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

The symposium was held on a single evening and opened at 5 p.m. and concluded at 9 p.m. with presentations officially beginning at 5:30 p.m. During the span of the symposium twenty-nine presentations were delivered within five sequential groups. Each presentation occurred within a thirty-minute block of time. There were four ten-minute breaks in-between each block. I attended one presentation per time-block and visited with presenters within the time prior to 5:30 p.m., following presentations and during each of the break periods. This amounted to a total of fifteen presenters I had natural conversation with and or observed prior to, in-between and during presentations, and logged the experiences through reflexive journaling. Of these fifteen, two were Indigenous, one was Latino, two were African-American, and ten were non-Indigenous.

## Part 2: The Talking Stick Way in practice

### Inquiry Site 2: The Talking Stick Way in present research

Through review of present knowledge in the form of literature about non-Indigenous research projects, I wanted to understand if the Talking Stick and its philosophy of communication was utilized as a methodology, by a non-Indigenous researcher within a non-Indigenous context, that also represented and utilized the four principles of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility, or a similar translation of these values.

In my review, I came across fourteen research projects. One represented experiences related to the five sub-questions. Vuagniaux's (2000) Master's thesis, titled "The Origins, Usage, & Effectiveness of the Talking Stick as Facilitation Tool in Multicultural Community Building", became the focus for this inquiry. What she concluded led me to review a similar project accomplished by an Indigenous research with a diverse group of community organizers.

*Building Community two ways*

Vuagniaux's research leads off with a quote taken from the 1980 Resolution of the Fifth Annual Meeting of Traditional Elders Circle (447)

> There are many things to be shared with the Four Colors of humanity in our common destiny as one with our Mother the Earth. It is this sharing that must be considered with great care by the Elders and the medicine people who carry the Sacred Trusts, so that no harm may come to people through ignorance and misuse of these powerful forces.

The objective of her study was to compare and contrast understandings and usage of the Talking Stick as a facilitation tool among native and non-native facilitators. Further, Vuagniaux's intent was to gain insight as to what properties the Talking Stick has that makes it effective within multi-cultural groups. Her study conclusion was that her approach had failed as participants were largely unclear as to the origin and use of the Talking Stick for their specific purposes.

Reflecting on the conclusion of Vuagniaux's thesis, I found it important to then contrast her approach, methods and outcomes with that of a similar community building project accomplished by Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete (2015). His work, titled "Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire", also looks at how communication is instrumental in building community from the perspective of identifying a pedagogy—ways of teaching and learning—based on Indigenous knowledges that are humanizing in their practice and translatable within multi-cultural experiences.

## Inquiry Site 3: Circle Gathering…conversations in a world of silence

In February of 2017, an inadvertent opportunity arrived in the form of an invitation to attend an international gathering of deaf women of color. A fellow Indigenous graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, Melanie McKay Cody, had contacted me on February 21 and requested use of my personal Talking Stick to assist her in facilitating a Circle Gathering at the conference to be held that year in Greensboro, North Carolina. I shared with her, cultural protocol prevented me from "lending" my Talking Stick to another person. I did though assure her that I would be presenting her with her own Talking Stick. Through passing on the Talking Stick Making Story to my eldest daughter, she created a Talking Stick we presented to McKay Cody in April 2017 (Figures 16 and 17).

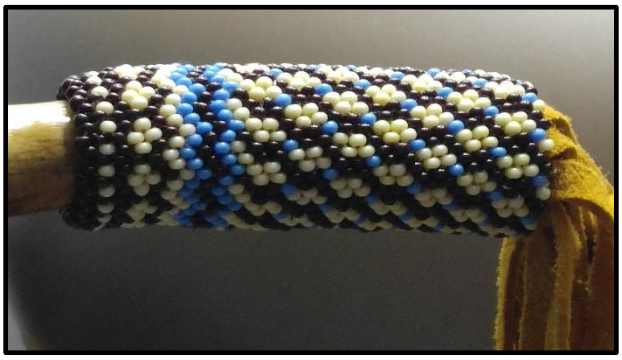

Figure 16: Danielle Freeman, March 2017. Beaded Signing Stick. Cherokee basket design.

Figure 17: Danielle Freeman, March 2017. Beaded Talking/Signing Stick.

On April 7, I travelled with my eldest daughter Danielle Freeman, from Norman, Oklahoma to my third site of inquiry. On a warm Sunday morning, April 9, 2017, in Greensboro, North Carolina sixty-three deaf women of color along with seven male visitors, one facilitator—Cherokee scholar Melanie McKay Cody, myself and my daughter, Danielle, assembled on the lawn outside the conference hotel dining area. After morning ceremony and the private presentation of a Talking Stick to McKay-Cody, by myself and new Maker Danielle, we re-assembled in a large room within the hotel to continue with the Gathering Circle. Reconvening entailed presenting the Talking Stick publicly, through the assistance of four interpreters situated in the center of the circle, who all faced a cardinal point.

*Birth of a Signing Stick*

The remainder of the presentation included the 'birth' of a "Signing Stick" (McKay Cody 2017) that responded to the need for creating a middle space amongst verbal speakers and non-speaking/non-hearing attendees. The Talking Stick philosophy of communicating in 'good' and 'right' ways was utilized to facilitate 'conversation' led by McKay Cody, who herself is an Indigenous deaf woman. The Signing Stick made its way around the Circle and was returned to McKay Cody. After the close of the Gathering Circle I invited attendees to visit with me and if possible share their thoughts about the use of the Signing Stick. I provided a single sheet feedback tool for their comments to be recorded on and engaged communication, via interpreters, with those attendees wishing to express themselves further. Of the sixty-three original attendees, forty-seven attended the full presentation with forty-three women 'visiting' with me informally and thirty-one turning in comments via the feedback sheet.

The inclusion of this event and experiences derived from it, within this thesis, provides evidence of the use of an Indigenous methodology by a new Indigenous recipient of a Talking Stick within non-Indigenous specific contexts and addresses concerns found among

Indigenous scholars reflected in sub-question 2: should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts.

## Reflecting back…

This chapter shared where and how I investigated my primary research question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

First, I recapped Part 1 and the methodological approach and methods that provided knowledge of other concerns related to use and presence of Indigenous methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. These became five sub-questions that revised how I approached my literature review and created the final version of my primary question. Additionally, as a response to these questions and knowledge gathered through Inquiry Site 1, I provided a summary of present knowledge and the inclusion of a "map" as an example of an Indigenous way of doing research to further assist with understanding sub-question 1, "what are Indigenous methodologies" and for recognition of one.

As a continuation of Part 2 of this thesis, the next chapter provides an analysis of the knowledge that has been experienced and gathered through this study, and as described in this current Chapter V. I share this through narrative form, based on thematic results.

# VI

## Knowledges revealed…

## new understandings and discussion

The stories experienced, newly understood and shared through this study derive from one path that evolved into new paths and, also crossed-through others. In this chapter I share the analysis of knowledge gathered through this study, from the point of preparing-to-do research through thesis write-up, per themes presenting as five sub-questions that thicken and deepen the meaning and value of my overarching research question. The broadness of sharing what knowledges have been revealed and my understandings of them contrasts with a western-Euro practice of only reporting on 'findings of data'. In an Indigenous way of doing research there is little dissection of knowledge and how it came about and what is understood of it. This reflects a relational epistemology and an Indigenous way of doing research.

*Deeper conversations*

Understood thematically, this thesis has been accomplished in two-parts, the first enabling the second. Collectively what has been learned is there is a need, among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, for a deeper understanding of *what* Indigenous methodologies are and how they should be created and utilized according to principles that thicken the practice of research (Geertz 2000). There is acknowledgement that normalizing of Indigenous knowledges goes against the philosophical use of Indigenous methodologies, as that would reflect and perpetuate historical and contemporary dehumanizing impacts of western-Euro based research practices (L.T. Smith 2012; Kovach 2009: S. Wilson 2008). There are values though, such as respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility repre-

sented by such as the Talking Stick philosophy of communication held by various Indigenous peoples and create a shared worldview. Within this worldview are layers of concern about use of Indigenous knowledges outside Indigenous contexts. Research accomplished from an Indigenous perspective first prompted conversations among Indigenous peoples whose insight to use of our knowledges provided five questions. These enabled a deeper meditation of why and how I wanted to research my question and enhanced my literature review.

*Preparing-to-do research, as research practice*

These values can be understood, at a personal level, through a process of preparing-to-do research as a professional practice when undertaking the design and accomplishment of an academic study. Through understanding of an Indigenous way of doing research it is revealed there are translatable elements applicable to non-Indigenous researchers. These are primarily those elements that require understanding of self in relation to participants of a study so as to create research that is a collaboration. As a practice, this would respond to protocols for use of Indigenous knowledges within research and optimize the process as a reflecting pool for assessing one's intentions.

Preparing-to-do research, specifically as professional development practice, that responds to values and principles of communicating in 'good' and 'right' ways, we as researchers are engaging the Talking Stick Way as the first Element of an Indigenous Way of Doing Research (Fig. 18).


Figure 18: 2017 Ren Freeman. Preparing-to-do research in an Indigenous Way. Through a focus of pre-study practice, the Talking Stick Way provides a means to understand the socio-cultural-self, as researcher, as a result of working through the various positions of knowing, being and doing. This enables understanding of the intentions for doing research and in understanding why a person such as the researcher would ask the question posed for investigation.

At a higher level, what I have accomplished and shared thus far assists in understanding what Indigenous methodology I utilize that investigates the first half of my research question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts." The study methodology has been to provide insight to what Indigenous methodologies are and to construct one to assist with the investigation of the remainder of my question. An Indigenous method I utilized, with the Talking Stick philosophy of communication, is Story—as a way of sharing information that engages Foucauldian Genealogy—an *archaeology of knowledge* (1972, 1969)

and his "care of the self" theory. Story was utilized to understand use of a physical artifact as a critical *think* on the relationship between other-than-human teachers and collaborators that informs humans about the lineage we share with one another's ideas, worldviews, and experiences. The latter, "care of the self" theory, was utilized to understand concepts of care as both axiology—moral obligation—and deontology—duty of care in sharing information that is helpful to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. Additional methods utilized were visual materials—use and creation of figures and diagrams as visual concepts to situate knowledge gathered; Personal Experience, as this methodology engaged reflecting on and sharing the way I accomplished the design and use of methods of this study. Finally, Journaling, as a reflexive means to log my thoughts and experiences as processes (Kovach 2009) of this research journey was a key method informing the approach and outcomes of this study, as it provided a means to iteratively log analysis and interpret newly understood knowledges, revealing their emergence and enabling the making of meaning as evidence of these processes and their content.

Within the iterative process of analyzing the knowledge I gained from the literature review, I also engaged theoretical triangulation (Chilisa 2012)—this meaning I compared different theoretical perspectives that inform research design. These perspectives were Indigenous, Western and East Asian. As a purpose of my research question is to understand where translatable elements exist within an Indigenous research methodology, I chose communication as a theoretical field and arrived at the creation of the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology for engaging diverse global conversations to see if the four values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility, that represent the Talking Stick philosophy, are present in the ways non-Indigenous research is accomplished and shared.

Further, attempting to understand if Indigenous methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts has required addressing ethical considerations of *should* Indigenous knowledges be utilized by Indigenous researchers within

non-Indigenous contexts or by non-Indigenous researchers within Indigenous contexts or further, by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts.

Very few studies have been accomplished that report use of Indigenous methodologies by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts. These have primarily been through assumptions of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and then attempts to practice them. Stories of successful collaborations have come about because of "teaming" with Indigenous scholars to investigate within Indigenous contexts. Yet, there remains resistance within the academy to embrace Indigenous scholars wanting to implement their own methodologies as frameworks for research projects. The reasoning is provided through understanding the historical relationship between western-Euro education premises that have marginalized peoples subjected to colonization.

Within Indigenous responses to questions of *should* Indigenous knowledges be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts, resides hesitancy based on valid distrust of non-Indigenous researchers and their theoretical conditioning. As well, non-Indigenous scholars have begun to question the relevance and usefulness of their participation as investigators on studies within Indigenous contexts. Discourse is relatively new on this topic and suggests further inquiry is needed to understand the dynamics of such considerations. Results of inquiry I obtained about these questions provides, there is a growing discourse about whether non-Indigenous researchers are yet necessary within research conducted amidst Indigenous peoples. Overall, there is a need for further contemplation of such thoughts and their impacts.

*A case for Teaming*

Inquiries to understand *how* can and *are* Indigenous research methodologies being utilized by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts, revealed results that loop back to the results and recommendations provided through the inquiry of the previous two *should* questions. These all suggest a need to first understand what Indigenous

research methodologies are through self-knowing in relation to understanding an Indigenous way of doing research. This also entails meditating on one's personal ethic about doing research as a non-Indigenous person within Indigenous contexts, especially considering the growing presence of Indigenous researchers within academia.

Through the review of two studies of community building, one accomplished by a non-Indigenous researcher through use of an Indigenous knowledge—the Talking Stick—and the other accomplished by an Indigenous scholar also utilizing an Indigenous knowledge, we see that at present, the recommended approaches are yet valid. Recommendations and reviews of research reveal "teaming" with a lead Indigenous researcher is advisable for non-Indigenous researchers to experience and learn how to accomplish research in an Indigenous way.

This realization brought a pause in the conversation to reflect on the question of Indigenous researchers utilizing an Indigenous constituted gaze upon non-Indigenous contexts. Seen from an Indigenous perspective this question reflects opportunities to utilize a hybrid understanding and application of research inquiry composed of both ally western-Euro and Indigenous methodologies, wherein Indigenous knowledges are the theoretical lens. This then expands the tool kit of Indigenous researchers and extends the use of Indigenous methodologies outside their origin contexts. This study's research question and five sub-questions reflect this hybridity.

*The 'Signing Stick', a relational worldview in practice*

Inquiry in the ways I have accomplished it, enables us to understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts. Use of the Talking Stick, as both its philosophy of communication and physical form, provided evidence that a relationally-based, collaborative and responsive methodology for doing research is possible and present. Use of this methodology to facilitate conversation within a world of silence reflected the concept of community as a global space and

one in which communication can be approached through use of an Indigenous methodology such as the Talking Stick Way.

Through engaging a process of doing research that maintains a focus on understanding our socio-cultural position in relation to what and who we are studying, we can see ourselves as part of that process, not outside of it.

## Reflecting Back…

I have reflected on my *being* an Indigenous researcher, as it is an important aspect of engaging the *process* of creating an Indigenous research framework and methodology to address my question. As a framework orients research (Bogdan and Biklen 1998) and expresses study intentions and motivations (Cohen and Manion 1994), I have shared my *perspective* about designing a framework based on an Indigenous worldview of social and ecological relationality—a perspective of interconnectedness between humans and other-than-humans (Hollowell 1952).

The importance of a relationship and of being accountable to it are foregrounded. This also contrasts with a western-Euro view of research relationality as being a bias, requiring the separation and dissection of relationships and knowledge (Kovach 2010). By invoking an overall concept of Story, as a study-sharing methodology, I also engage a worldview of being in and doing research from a place where Indigenous communication protocols are central to conversations (Kovach 2010). Finally, this aligns well with an Indigenous communication *philosophy* I collaborate with, that is represented by a physical object referred to as a Talking Stick, and this philosophy becomes my study framework. These three—process, perspective and philosophy—became a collective fulcrum for the Talking Stick Way, as an Indigenous research methodology, that I developed within and for this study.

In broad review of the map and corresponding information provided through each element, we can see that the values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility are

woven throughout the conception and creation of an Indigenous way of doing research. These values are a lens I have utilized to create an Indigenous methodology that enables us to see if this way of doing research is present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts.

I wondered, taking a relational-worldview approach, since Indigenous knowledges have been beneficial to Indigenous peoples might it be possible they can also be useful for non-Indigenous peoples. What I have learned is that this question is not easily answered. In fact, there are several questions that need to be addressed prior to and amidst understanding how to go about investigating such a thought. Within all scenarios investigated a thicker description of the importance of such a question as I have posed can be understood. Seen through the lens of an Indigenous way of knowing, such as the Talking Stick philosophy of communication, and then experienced through its principles as a methodology, we are presented with a deeper meaning of what research represents, as seen through the five sub-questions. Research has always been a catalyst of communication and if utilized as a holistic tool reflecting a relational worldview, it can bring conversations into a humanizing space. Within such a world there arrives hope that through a thicker and deeper understanding of how our thoughts and actions affect others, application of the values associated with such as the Talking Stick Way represents, researchers can see and conduct themselves as not separated by binary methods and methodologies, but as collaborators in gathering and presenting knowledges in mutually beneficial ways.

# VII

# Moral(s) of the Story

## Research is a conversation and a duty of care

This study has provided how and where knowledge has been experienced through investigation accomplished at three separate sites and explains the tools of inquiry that were utilized to understand "how might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts. Within this overarching research question reside five sub-questions: 1) what are Indigenous methodologies; 2) should Indigenous researchers utilize Indigenous methodologies within non-indigenous contexts; 3) should Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers; 4) how can Indigenous research methodologies be utilized by non-Indigenous researchers, and 5) are non-Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous research methodologies within non-Indigenous contexts. I accomplished investigations of these questions through the lens of the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology. The Talking Stick Way helps us to see if research, as a form of conversation, has been accomplished according to principles that reflect respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility. These principles originate from an Indigenous philosophy of communication wherein they are values present in forms of communication accomplished in 'good' and 'right' ways. Utilized as a research framework, these values as principles assist in the creation of projects in humanization. Through such a methodology, we can understand if this has occurred through review of preparations to do research, the design of a research study and how it is accomplished.

At the end of the day, philosophically, what we can understand from this study is that, through what Geertz (1973) refers to as 'thick description'—how structure and nature

are revealed through narrative interpretation—of a semiotic based Indigenous knowledge we are able to see how it affects and creates effects about the "deep play" of research as being a conversation that embodies values of humanization, and these should be the emphasis of researcher preparation and practice.

Specifically, this study investigates the primary research question and addresses five sub-questions in two parts. This was accomplished through use of a shared Indigenous knowledge, the Talking Stick philosophy of communication and its operationalized form—the Talking Stick Way, an Indigenous research methodology, with use of congruent mixed-methods. This research lens was applied to three separate sites of inquiry that reflected investigation of the five sub-questions through first, an investigation among non-Indigenous graduate students as to their research practices, knowledge of the qualitative research paradigm, and knowledge of Indigenous methodologies. Then investigation was accomplished within present research studies for evidence of the use of the Talking Stick Way by non-Indigenous researchers within non-Indigenous contexts. Finally, investigation was accomplished through use of the Talking Stick philosophy and its physical form within a gathering of deaf women of color. New understandings of knowledge were revealed that are helpful as pedagogy and practice for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and enables the creation and recognition of projects in humanization.

Part 1 entailed the selection of an Indigenous philosophy of communication, as a framework, that reflects values of respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility—"4Rs"—that are then operationalized as this thesis' methodology and practiced through completion of eight elements of a "map", titled "An Indigenous Way of Doing Research."

What is already understood is, "anthropology's foundational narrative is holistic, and it underscores connection" (Cruickshank 1998:1). Anthropology as the science of humankind helps us to see what has been learned through this study, as a fulcrum, is that research is a conversation and as a form of communication should reflect a duty of care. We see this through the Talking Stick Way methodology. Through both its philosophy and

practice, it makes visible the ways research can be or is being accomplished according to the 4R principles. This methodology represents a relational worldview that interprets the existence of humans and other-than-humans as being within a diverse global community.

Through the Talking Stick Way, we are better able to understand what Indigenous methodologies are and why they have been developed and utilized by Indigenous researchers within Indigenous contexts. We also come to understand how they center on Indigenous epistemologies and relationality. We are aided to see this through the "map"—an Indigenous way of doing research—that enables understanding of the importance of preparing-to-do research, accomplished through the exercise of determining one's socio-cultural position, which also informs and guides the design and work of a study. This way of doing research has elements beneficial to non-Indigenous researchers as professional development and understanding of a relational way of doing research.

Part 2, as practice of the Talking Stick Way as a research 'lens', revealed that Indigenous research methodologies are present within non-Indigenous contexts and, when utilized within a relational-based framework where 'teaming' with a lead Indigenous researcher is present, are mutually beneficial. With this understanding, Indigenous researchers, utilizing Indigenous research methodologies, can extend their professional skills and value, through use of them as a "gaze" upon non-Indigenous contexts and assist in further addressing western-Euro research practices that engage in colonial methodologies.

Overall, this thesis provides a means to address researcher roles and practices, from an Indigenous perspective, that engage research as being sites of conversation and places where duties of care should be implemented, to reflect a relational worldview. This methodology will enable reflection on researcher intentions and whether there is mutual benefit present in the design, conduct and write-up. This study extends current knowledge of the creation and use of Indigenous frameworks and methodologies. It also provides new knowledge through creation of an Indigenous way of doing research that focuses on and foregrounds preparing-to-do research as a practice and as key to accomplishing research

that is mutually beneficial. Various elements of this process are translatable for non-Indigenous researcher use and within non-Indigenous contexts. This study enables ways for research to be active projects of humanization.

Understanding what has transpired within this study requires thinking in cyclical ways. The story I have shared contains several other stories within it. The research question I arrived at extends original purposes for Indigenous methodologies, these being useful—and necessary—ways for Indigenous peoples to address our own issues from our own knowledge sources (LT Smith 2012). My question turns an Indigenous anthropological gaze toward non-Indigenous contexts. Through this study I constitute both an Indigenous framework and Indigenous research methodology and as means to further understand and recognize what an Indigenous research methodology may look like, I invited you to witness how I went about doing this, that also provided commentary to ways non-Indigenous researchers might engage an Indigenous way of doing research. That process represents the first of two parts of this study. The second was, through *practice* of the Talking Stick Way Indigenous methodology. Therein, I utilized the methodology further as *the* Indigenous research methodology I wanted to understand as being present and beneficial within non-Indigenous contexts.

The pedagogical frame of the Talking Stick Way as an Indigenous research methodology can now be understood through the following summary:

The *idea* guiding the work of creating an Indigenous way of doing research is first through personal curiosity stemming from my being an Indigenous woman from the Eastern Shoshone tribe and grounded in that culture. Second this work is also guided by hope that better ways to communicate can heal discord that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. I chose research practices as a site of discord. I recall from my earliest memories as a child, having noticed a difference between ways I saw the world and interpreted it from those of people who were not of my tribe, nor were Indigenous. I wondered if

Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing were present and just as helpful within non-Indigenous contexts as they are within Indigenous communities and among their peoples.

This led to an academic interest in the ways human beings communicated how and why they see world and behave in it the way they do. Through employment within Indigenous contexts and academic study, I came to understand that there is need to narrow the gaps of misunderstanding of one another, as this has created historical and present-day dynamics of inequality and injustice with impacts that are persistent in furthering Imperial and colonial methodologies. I became part of a growing movement among other Indigenous scholars to find ways of addressing the lack of our knowledges being present as research methodologies within academia. Through identification of ways of knowing and doing, and of creating them, within our own communities we have seen the benefits of these approaches.

As a result, the *goal* of this present study is to learn and make further inquiry about these benefits but from a position that creates an anthropological gaze upon non-Indigenous ways of preparing-to-do research and accomplishing it. Hence my overarching research question, "How might we understand if Indigenous research methodologies are relevant, present and beneficial within non-Indigenous specific contexts."

The *vision* motivating and the *philosophy*—or belief system—behind this question reflects a worldview based on human and other-than-human relationality that accomplishes mutual benefit through humanization of the ways we interact (San Pedro and Kinloch 2017; Gonzalez-Ruibal 2011; Webmoor and Witmore 2008; Tilley 1999).

The *way* I chose to investigate this question was through practice of an Indigenous way of doing research. Within this practice I designed the Talking Stick Way as the methodology I needed to use for this study. It follows a mixed-methods approach that represents doing research from a relational perspective (Creswell 2013).

The Talking Stick Way has as its *general principles* respect, resilience, reciprocity and responsibility that are found within the Indigenous philosophy of the Talking Stick, a

culturally imbued material artifact found among various Indigenous peoples and is a symbol of ways to communicate that reflect a duty of care (Cajete 2015; Weber-Pillwax 1999).

The *core concept* of this study and the creation of an Indigenous methodology such as the Talking Stick Way is in-part, to answer the call of Indigenous scholar-elders to have research methodologies founded on knowledges from within one's own socio-cultural position. These would then reflect a way of doing research that is not within or a perspective of western-Euro research paradigms. The concept of creating research methodologies from an Indigenous philosophical belief system is founded on a decolonizing research agenda (L.T. Smith 2012). This has assisted in addressing negative impacts derived from western-Euro based research methodologies.

This study and the creation of the Talking Stick Way extends that concept toward utilizing an Indigenous way of doing research that could also narrow gaps of misunderstanding that center on debates about the relevance of Indigenous knowledges within academia, their value within non-Indigenous contexts, and as a means to humanize the development and practice of academic research that benefits humans and other-than-humans, who all reside on the same web-of-life.

Self-teaching moments occurred early on as I found myself in a dialectic place of thinking that I had to prove or verify my practice and use of a methodology with that of western-Euro ways of doing research. I was encouraged by the realization that as Indigenous peoples, our stories are our theories and as they have always been among tribal and Indigenous peoples, methodologies that are part of our lifeways are already ways of knowing, being and doing and as such are ways of making inquiry about ourselves and our world, of interpreting what we find, and of making meaning from how and what we understand.

Using the word 'present" in my overarching question, liberated my mind from the validation frame and enabled me to more clearly see and focus on what my question was

asking. This being *how* might we understand and meant what was needed is to first recognize what an Indigenous methodology is and that required providing guidance in the creation of one.

As well, defining my use of the term "non-Indigenous" as a site of inquiry was challenging, especially when reviewed within my re-visit of socio-cultural positions. This led me to understand that there is an entire body of knowledge to be engaged pertaining to what does "non-Indigenous" mean. While I am not a non-Indigenous person, researching outside my own culture is experienced as a non-insider, therefore I can relate to some of the challenges of non-Indigenous people and researchers who come among Indigenous communities.

Ultimately from this study, we can understand that research is a conversation with self, with participants and collaborators of a study. This includes me and now you and others who read this study. Thus, research as a conversation, is a form of communication which has inherent values that represent a duty of care. This is exemplified through the Talking Stick philosophy of communication, which are vitally important ways of knowing and being. These are also in relationship with ways of doing. As an Indigenous way of doing research, these values reflect a process wherein there is a focus on researcher preparation to understand motives behind being and working as a researcher. This methodology, provided through the 'map', is translatable for the practice of research by other-than Indigenous researchers. Should they choose to engage this way of doing research. Consider this quote by Kirkpatrick Sale from his work, Human Scale (2007)

> The only way people will apply 'right behaviour' and behave in a responsible way is if they have been persuaded to see the problem concretely and to understand their own connections to it directly—and this can be done only at a limited scale. It can be done where the forces of government and society are still recognizable and comprehensible, where relations with other people are still intimate, and where the effects of individual actions are still visible; where abstractions on intangibles give way to the here and now, the seen and felt, the real and known. (168)

Implications for this methodology and what has been learned through this study provide that it is translatable as a universal way of doing research as a practice of preparing-to-do research, because it centers on the relationship a researcher has with him or herself and with collaborators in the study and those who will experience it as a written product. In a deeper way, this methodology assists in finding answers to why a person 'like' me would ask such a question and choose to study it in the site(s) I have chosen. This can create means to reflect on arriving at deeper questions and how they can enable voices to be revealed as partners of a study.

Consider, the Talking Stick Way presents a way of doing research that is based on understanding your own place in the world, as a researcher. If you identify with a cultural way of being, say Irish or Italian, you can place yourself within this identity and come to understand your ways of knowing, being and doing by working through your epistemologies, ontological, axiological positions and understand what your methodology is for going about research. You can understand, more clearly what your socio-cultural position is. You are enabled to understand how, as a non-Indigenous person, can represent a way of doing research, of providing new understandings of a cultural knowledge that may not have a current presence in academic research. This would assist in providing an additional cultural presence within the work of research. This is valuable in a relational worldview as it would deconstruct "othering" as a binary practice.

The Talking Stick Way is beneficial as a critical Indigenous pedagogy. It is culturally responsive and transformative. To date there are very few theories originating from Indigenous perspectives that translate into a curriculum that address and humanize research that is mutually beneficial in diverse and global settings.

There is also opportunity to engage an exciting qualitative methodology called 'grounded theory' that requires you walk amidst your research site with your question(s) and allow for the methodology and methods to reveal themselves. To be accomplished in

truly effective ways, that reveal stories within stories, the researcher needs to understand their socio-cultural position.

Personally, and relationally, important is how a methodology like the Talking Stick Way extends the work of an Indigenous researcher. For nearly three decades, Indigenous scholars have been striving to express their views, assemble their voices and create spaces within academia for Indigenous perspective of their lifeways. This has been greatly beneficial for empowering Indigenous peoples and communities to see their ways of knowing as ways to also voice their own experiences, needs and solutions to pressing issues because of negative impacts to their lives. Further, there is transformation that has been occurring in the way Indigenous peoples perceive themselves and life outside their own communities.

There is need to embrace the fact that today, colonial Imperialism has become a way of being because of capitalistic and homogenizing mentalities. While the impacts and experiences of this regime, by Indigenous peoples are different, so are those of non-Indigenous who are also negatively impacted. There are lessons to be learned from one another that will assist us all in understanding how to exist sustainably. I believe the Talking Stick Way is a methodology that can enable us to see our way through such endeavors.

Through this study, I am of the belief that there is value in creating a gaze that observes non-Indigenous individuals and populations—their cultures and lifeways—from an Indigenous perspective. Through research lens' that are critical and interpretive we can assemble knowledge that reflects more of the entirety of being human. We are part of a mosaic that, in its entirety, reveals what it means to be human. For far too long the anthropological gaze has been focused on non-Euro-western peoples from a colonizing frame that situates peoples within a hierarchal classification. Through the relational lens of Indigenous research methodologies, we can come closer to understanding knowledges about each other that reveals our interconnectedness and assists in making decisions about ways to sustain life that are mutually beneficial.

Reflecting on what has been my experience with this study I have begun to wonder if what I have created and refer to as a means to narrow gaps, is what feminist critics like Fineman and Thomasden (1991) refer to as "theories of the middle ground" (75). These are 'theories that mediate between 'stories' that appear to be at odds with one another, but are really more about discovering our similarities. I referred to something similar when I spoke about 'hybridity'.

In terms of further study, there are two specific areas I see necessary to investigate, as revealed through this study: understanding what is meant by being non-Indigenous and what would be the impacts of a non-Indigenous researcher deciding not to work in the field of studies of Indigenous peoples.

Further thoughts on this provide, well, the universe is wide open as the Talking Stick Way is a methodology based on communication forms. Consider the tasks associated with preparing-to-do research found in the map of an Indigenous way to do research. As a reflexive tool, boundaries of imagination are non-existent.

As Indigenous research methodologies are beneficial to both Indigenous researchers and the Indigenous communities we work in, it only stands to reason that the Indigenous way of doing research is beneficial to non-Indigenous researches as a practice of professional development and as humanizing ways to design and accomplish research. Through this study we see that there is indication of the need for more researchers, Indigenous and non-, to engage this process. Overall, we see from evidence found among the three study sites, the Talking Stick philosophy of communication and it as a methodology is present. However, what has also been understood is a need for the listener role to be more fully within human communication models.

A hope I have for this thesis is that it will bring movement away from deficit narratives about the diverse and global ways Indigenous peoples existed and continue to exist and ways we acquire and share knowledge, toward a narrative of resilience and of progress

based on Indigenous worldviews constituted from 'good' and 'right' ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2003).

Along with this is hope that through this thesis the entirety of these knowledges will assist in furthering understanding of what Indigenous research methodologies are, how these provide guidance for researcher preparation and practice—with adaptable elements for non-Indigenous use—and how these practices are also a skillset for Indigenous researchers to utilize within non-Indigenous contexts that extends both practitioner and Indigenous knowledge usefulness to further assist the creation of projects in humanization.

I began this thesis by sharing with you a story from my childhood that has rather 'haunted' me throughout my life and influenced educational and employment choices I have made. With the experiences I have had through designing and accomplishing this research study I have added to the overall story of 'what are Indigenous research methodologies' and also to the story about the conversation between my uncle and me. It goes a bit like this:

*One day, many years later, I found myself again watching my uncle going about ranch work. Observing this brought back memories of the conversation he and I had about researchers and the way they went about their work among we Shoshone people. Since that day, I have traveled the world as a visitor and researcher on other peoples' lands—observing and participating in their cultures. Through those experiences and this thesis, I realize that understanding self is a necessary requirement to even begin understanding of another person or people. I also now know that thinking in terms of how we are related as human beings and occupants of a shared physical world is exceedingly important, especially if we are to be in relationship with one another that can sustain life in positive ways. I now see the world, myself and others through the lens of the Talking Stick Way.*

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Appendix A: Feedback Tool:
April 2017 Deaf Women of Color Questionnaire

## The Signing Stick

**The Talking Stick, as representative of an Indigenous communication philosophy, is repurposed to reflect the needs of those it works with.**

I appreciate having been a part of the Talking Circle convened by Melanie McKay Cody today, April 9, 2017 as part of the annual Deaf Woman of Color Conference, held in Greensboro, North Carolina. I am honored to also be part of gifting Melanie with a Talking Stick that is now her Signing Stick.

I am wondering if you might take a moment and share with me your thoughts about what the Talking Stick/Signing Stick has helped you to understand about communicating in 'right' and 'good' ways.

☐ Please, would you mind also marking this box indicating you agree to the use of your answers and reference to you as a woman of color, within my research project titled: The Talking Stick Way: An Indigenous methodology for engaging diverse global conversations. Thank you! *Ren Freeman*

Survey #_4 2017:_____