Chapter 4

nayri kati ("Good Numbers") Indigenous Quantitative Methodology in Practice

Introduction

An Indigenous quantitative methodology is a quantitative methodology that embodies an Indigenous standpoint. In this chapter we define and demonstrate Indigenous quantitative methodology. Our aim is to make evident, first, how Indigenous quantitative methodologies can provide radically different insights into the statistical Indigene. Second, we show how Indigenous quantitative methodologies can provide insights into settler colonizing peoples and institutions, especially in their relationship to first world Indigenous peoples.

Our conceptualization of Indigenous quantitative methodology incorporates all the elements of a generic methodology defined in Chapter 2, but from an Indigenous frame. To demonstrate how this frame fundamentally changes the practice and processes of research our operationalization of a quantitative methodology, through the example of *nayri kati*,[1] is purposively constructed to reflect the embodiment of each of the constitutive elements of standpoint and the theoretical frame. The researcher's social position is first laid out, followed by an outline of the primary *nayri kati* theoretical framework. An explication of one of the three other standpoint tenets—epistemology, axiology, and ontology—is then aligned with the description of a specific research project. This format explains the philosophical underpinnings as well as the practice realities of research using an Indigenous quantitative methodology. The *nayri kati* examples, however, present only a hint of the potential and the capacity of Indigenous methodologies to reframe and re-invent Indigenous statistics.

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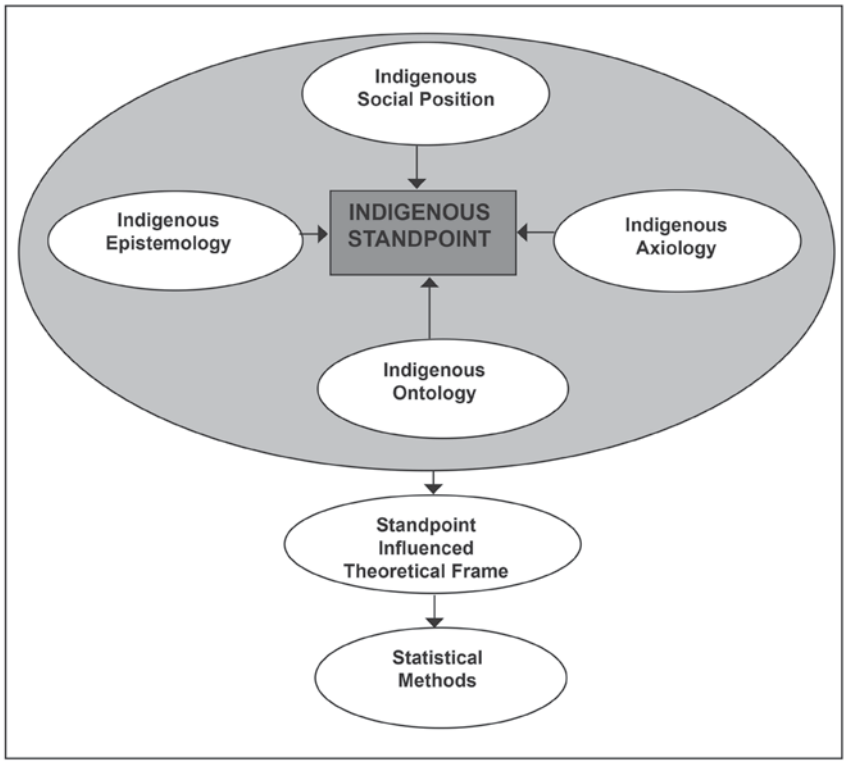
Defining Indigenous Quantitative Methodologies

Indigenous quantitative methodologies are methodologies within which the practices and the processes of the research are conceived and framed through an Indigenous standpoint. This definition aligns with our conceptualization of methodology in Chapter 2 and the discussion of the Indigenous methodology parameters in Chapter 3. As demonstrated in Figure 4.1, it is the researchers' standpoint that delineates the shared philosophical base that not only defines a quantitative methodology as an Indigenous methodology, but also situates that methodology within the broader Indigenous quantitative methodological paradigm.

Indigenous standpoint influences every aspect of the research methodology. The social position of Indigenous researchers differs politically, culturally, racially, and often economically from those of researchers from settler backgrounds. Using our extension of Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus* to include race capital as well as social, economic, and cultural capital (Walter 2010c), the filters and frames through which Indigenous researchers make sense of our world as well as our own position within it result in an Indigenous-shaped

Figure 4.1: Conceptualization of an Indigenous Quantitative Methodology



social position. Again, as argued in Chapter 2, our social position is not about individual choices. Our social position, inclusive of our capital relationalities, not only substantially prescribes our life circumstances, it forms the worldview through which we understand them. Thus, our research practice and how we approach research itself are molded by our social position. More particularly, while the makeup of social position will vary between Indigenous researchers, our similarities in racial, cultural, social, and economic capitals translate to shared understandings, values, and ways of seeing the world aligned with an Indigenous habitus. For us, the dominant settler population is the sometimes difficult to comprehend "them."

Epistemologically, this means that as Indigenous researchers what we regard as knowledge and how knowledges are prioritized is encapsulated within our Indigenous social and cultural framework. The epistemic consequences of Indigenous experiential existence will, therefore, differ from that derived from dominant settler social and cultural frameworks. For example, for Indigenous scholars, the Western canon of our respective disciplines is theoretically useful, but must be reframed and re-interpreted to be made sense within our research, as per how we have reframed Bourdieu's concept of social space to include racial capital. From these same frameworks, the axiological values we incorporate into how we do research will influence the practice and processes of that research. The topics we deem important and the way we go about investigating them will reflect Indigenous cultural, racial, political, and moral value systems rather than dominant Western mores. For example, our interactions with our Indigenous participants will be relational (Martin 2008; Wilson 2008) rather than transactional. Ontologically, Indigenous realities and ways of being vary significantly from settler understandings. From our various perspectives who we are, as Indigenous peoples and people, is far more than an individual statement of personality traits. This, of course, is the same for settler peoples, but the discourse of individualism operates as a cover for the majority of the settler population for what are equally strong, but dissimilar understandings of identity, cultural alignment, and belonging. It also follows that our theoretical frame will emanate from, and reflect, our standpoint.

In defining Indigenous quantitative methodologies, we stress the plurality: methodolog*ies*, not methodology. As we explained in the Introduction, while colonized first world Indigenous peoples share many attributes, such as our colonizing histories, our minority status, and our economic and political marginalization, we are not the same. Neither will Indigenous researchers from the same first world nation-states necessarily come from a single standpoint. This is not part of the essentialism debate. What we *are* arguing is that the quantitative methodologies of Indigenous people within and across colonized first world nation-states will have points of similarity along their social position,

epistemological, axiological, and ontological continuums. This will be manifest in the questions we pose, the answers we seek, the way we seek those answers, and the guiding theoretical frames that align with our standpoint. These parallel points are what categorize Indigenous quantitative methodologies as a distinctive paradigm. They form the demarcation line between Indigenous and colonizer settler quantitative methodological paradigms. Keep these caveats—that is, the differences as well as the similarities between first world colonized Indigenous peoples and the differences as well as the similarities between first world colonizing settler peoples—in mind when reading the next two chapters. For example, in *nayri kati*, standpoint is developed from within the Australian nation-state from the perspective of Australian Aboriginal peoples and contains other aspects unique to the researcher. We ask the reader to look past these specifics to garner a more general portrait of how an Indigenous quantitative methodology can be conceptualized, operationalized, and practiced.

The central message of these examples is that they represent research that is framed through and within an Indigenous standpoint. It is not that non-Indigenous researchers could not physically do this work, just as it was possible for male researchers to have undertaken much of the groundbreaking work of feminist researchers in the 1970s and the 1980s. It is just far less likely that they would do so. The social position, epistemological, axiological, and ontological frame of settler researchers (or male researchers in the case of feminist researchers) is not conducive to envisioning the research and its processes and practices in the same way as envisioned by Indigenous researchers. Standpoint dictates research practice.

nayri kati: An Indigenous Quantitative Methodology

Meaning "good numbers" in the *palawa* Tasmanian Aboriginal language, *nayri kati* encompasses much more than a name. As philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1974) and Foucault (1972) have argued convincingly, language is neither a neutral nor transparent medium; it shapes not only what we say but what we can think and how we understand our social world. Language creates boundaries around our discursive capacities. Naming this quantitative methodology from my own Indigenous language, therefore, is more than artifice. It aligns the methodology with my[2] standpoint, proclaiming the influence of Indigeneity on how I see the world and, in turn, the project of quantitative research. Similarly, the reference to good numbers indicates that dominant modes of doing statistics do not necessarily operate in the interests of Indigenous peoples. As detailed in Chapter 1, the dominant terrain of Indigenous statistics operates in ways that entrench political, cultural, and social marginalization for Indigenous communities and, conversely, entrench the privileged positions and viewpoints of the settler majority.

nayri kati encapsulates two key methodological purposes. The first is to generate statistical data through an Indigenous lens that:

1. privileges Indigenous voices, knowledges, and understandings;
2. does not take Euro-Australians or their accompanying value systems as the unacknowledged norm;
3. does not take a presumption of Indigenous deficit as its starting point.

The second purpose is to challenge the hegemony of Indigenous statistical practice by exposing the standpoint from which it operates. This standpoint is currently obscured under a mantle of presumed neutrality. These two purposes are manifest in the following demonstration of *nayri kati* and are articulated in each of the examples of *nayri kati* in practice.

naryi kati Standpoint

naryi kati Social Location

How a researcher perceives the world in which his or her research topic is located is inevitably, but complexly, influenced by the filters and frames of life experiences and social, cultural, economic, and personal identity location. The personal, political, cultural, and the academic become entwined. We are not just researchers; we are *socially located* researchers. This applies to Indigenous researchers as much as it does to those from other racial and/or cultural backgrounds. As Indigenous researchers from colonized first world Indigenous peoples, we share an Indigenous lived reality. But our experiences of Indigeneity are not identical, nor are our other life and social positions. In Australia, Indigenous women's life experiences and circumstances differ from those of Indigenous men; being a salt water person is not the same as being a desert person; being *pakana* is not the same as being Yolngu (an Australian Aboriginal people from northeastern Australia); being an older person means my perspectives and priorities are different from those of a younger person; and I have lived through, and been influenced by, different life circumstances and social and historical actualities. None of these dimensions of the experiences of Indigeneity accord directly with the Indigenous lived reality of being Māori, or Native Hawaiian, or Native American, although the similarity of the logic of our nation-states' rationalities ensure some similarities. *nayri kati* is therefore influenced by my social, cultural, and economic location as well as my Indigenous identity, my life history, and that of my Aboriginal nation.

For researchers, explicating our social position can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, spelling out who we are, who we think we are, and why provides insight across the multiple facets of our lives, and life biography allows us an understanding of why we are the scholars and the researchers that we are. In illuminating and often surprising ways, how the intersections of biology,

class location, biography, and history have influenced our understanding of both ourselves and the social world can be cathartic and reassuring. The process also refutes the capacity to hide within what Mills (1997) refers to as "epistemologies of ignorance." While specifically referring to racial epistemologies of ignorance whereby the cognitive model of the dominant Euro majority precludes self-transparency and any genuine understanding of racial social realities, epistemologies of ignorance which preclude self-transparency and a genuine understanding of social realities and the (white) world which they themselves both create and sustain, can also be linked to the other key social forces of class and gender. We are not, and cannot be, separated from these positions and lived realities when we research. We are as embedded in our social worlds as our research subjects, and we embody our social position in how we approach, understand, and do research.

On the other hand, explicating our social position publicly can make us vulnerable as both people and researchers. This is particularly the case for Indigenous researchers. The social position of others to whom we are revealing can mean that what we reveal can actually further our construction and essentialization as the Indigene, an object of curiosity, diminishing our scholarship in the process. For example, while now being very clear about how I understand my social position when I present my work, I consciously resist public discussion of my personal background as part of that presentation. This resistance emerges from a scenario, faced by many Indigenous scholars, of being asked personal identity or generic Indigenous questions rather than scholarship related questions by conference or other audiences.

For example, I was once asked after a presentation on the terrain of race relations in Australia if I could explain why some local Aboriginal people (a community of which I was not a member) were unwilling to participate in an event he was trying to organize. I am also frequently asked to tell the audience about my Aboriginal background. Publicly, I am firmly polite that that is not the topic of my presentation, please ask a relevant question. Privately, I am irritated at what I perceive as a racialized affront and a white privilege power play, although the asker may or may not have perceived it as such. Asking a personal rather than a presentation-related question is tantamount to a public refusal to recognize my scholarship. Such a question indicates that, for the asker, Indigeneity trumps scholarship. I am being defined by race in a way that those who are Euro-Australian never are, and a consequence of that definition is that the questioner is reasserting his or her dominant racial positioning. The assumption of a right of entry to the personal also reduces me from a peer to an object of voyeurism.

Again, I regard this as a manifestation of white privilege, although I know that the requester is often unaware that I might find the question

offensive. I see it as an attempt to reassert the traditional subject-object order non-Indigenous/Indigenous relations (Indigenous audiences never ask me these sorts of questions). Regardless of my qualifications or the strength of my scholarship I have to be the object, not the subject analyser. Can you imagine a male white American historian presenting on the American war of independence being asked to describe how being Euro-American had impacted on his life and how he practiced his culture. But in the interest this book's standpoint focus, I will here contextualize my research standpoint through a description of my social position.

nayri kati Indigenous Context of Social Location

I am a descendant of the *trawlwoolway* people of northeastern Tasmania. This identity and heritage is heavily influenced by the colonizing history of Tasmania and its Aboriginal peoples. When the British established their first colonial settlement in Tasmania in 1803, it is estimated that the island was already occupied by between 4,000 and 10,000 Tasmanians, grouped across the island in nine nations (Ryan 1995). Unlike other Indigenous lands they colonized, such as those now situated within the United States, Canada, and New Zealand, the British made no formal treaties with Australian Aboriginal peoples. Instead, they chose to interpret those peoples' hunter-gatherer lifestyle to mean that no recognizable rule of law existed. Under the British legal doctrine of *terra nullius* (un-owned land) the land was claimed and occupied in the name of the British Crown without recourse or recompense to its population.

The overt purpose of British colonization was to provide a dumping ground for the convicted felons overcrowding English jails and other penal institutions. And although initially limited to small areas of Tasmania, the first killings of Aboriginal people took place within the first weeks of the British presence. European diseases also quickly took their toll on those living in proximity to the penal colonies and supporting townships. An additional menace was the sealers who came to plunder the large fur seal populations of the islands off the northeast coast of Tasmania. By the early nineteenth century these men were regularly kidnapping Aboriginal women as concubines and workers, prized for their seal catching and skinning skills.

By the mid 1820s, an influx of British settler colonists moved what had been sporadic contact violence to all out war. The "black wars" saw regular military expeditions against the Tasmanians and growing public demands by the colonists for something to be done about the "Aboriginal problem" (Bonwick 1969). The failure of military means to subdue the Tasmanians saw the colonial authorities moved to conciliatory ploys. In exchange for relocating to off-shore islands, the Tasmanians were promised they would be free to live an unfettered life. With a population now reduced to just hundreds, the Tasmanians agreed. The promise of freedom was never kept. Exile was captivity and confinement

under colonial authority in the purpose built establishment at Wybalenna (Black Man's Houses) on Flinders Island (Reynolds 1995).

At Wybalenna, unhealthy living conditions and despair resulted in on-going illness and early death among the Tasmanians. Numbers continued to plummet. By 1841, when my matriarch Woretemoeteyenner was released into the care of her daughter Dalrymple Briggs in mainland Tasmania (the only Tasmanian ever released from Wybalenna), only forty-seven other traditional Aboriginal people remained alive. By 1876, the last of the original Tasmanians, Trucanini, was also dead.[3] The only survivors were the progeny of the sealer-kidnapped women who escaped the initial roundup. I, and the vast majority of other contemporary Aboriginal Tasmanians, am descended from these women and their captors.

For the colonists, the extinction of the Tasmanians, supported by theories of social Darwinism, was portrayed as a regrettable but unavoidable consequence of colonization. It was (is) as if the Tasmanians had merely faded away rather than being hunted, shot, and held in disease-ridden captivity until they were all dead. Myths of the Tasmanians as the occupiers of the lowest rung on the Chain of Being also circulated and bodily remains were much sought after by British, European, and North American museums, universities, and other seats of Western learning. The skeleton of Trucanini, against her express wishes, was disinterred and put on public display at the Tasmanian Museum until the mid 1950s. And perhaps as the ultimate extinction, throughout most of the twentieth century it was official Tasmanian government policy that there were no Aboriginal Tasmanians. Tasmanian descendants, such as myself, were told we didn't exist. The official and the actual were of course very different. The Aboriginality of many Tasmanian families was well known by themselves and their neighbours, and Aboriginal children were specifically targeted for welfare removal from their families.

This all changed in the 1970s when Aboriginal political activism led to official (re)recognition of the Tasmanian population. In 1976, Trucanini's cremated remains were scattered in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel as per her original wishes by Tasmanian descendants, and we began and continue our efforts to have the stolen remains of our people returned for respectful burial in their homelands. Small parcels of land, including the Wybalenna site, have now been returned to the community, and an official state apology for the forced removal of Aboriginal children was made in 2006, along with the establishment of a compensation fund. Despite these advances, the Aboriginal population, now numbering over 10,000, remains the poorest and most socially disadvantaged group in Tasmania.

The Translation of Social Location to Research Methodology

What does all this mean for my social position? My age means I know what it is to be disallowed my Aboriginal identity, simultaneously with that same

Aboriginality being a pejorative social marker. My understandings are also consolidated through my family's involvement in the political and functional revival of Aboriginal Tasmania in the mid 1970s and my own early employment at a then fledgling Aboriginal community legal and social support organization. Coming from a large, poor family contributed to my leaving school early without qualifications. As such, my journey into academia and research has been a long, arduous one, undertaken as an adult and combined with family and other paid work responsibilities. Yes, I now fit the profile, socio-economically, of being middle class, but such class status is most definitely "late onset." It is also one in which my fit, in terms of my social and cultural capital, remains tenuous.

This social position obviously affects my understanding of my place in the world as a person and as a researcher. It means I am highly sensitive to race as a social construct and as a lived reality, and tend to perceive the key Australian racial binary of whiteness and Indigeneity in ways usually not open to my non-Indigenous (mostly white) academic colleagues. For my scholarship and research these sensitivities foster my intrigue with the politics of race and how race, particularly whiteness, is performed to create the "everyday" of Australian social space, in contrast with Indigeneity. This intellectual prism energizes my fascination with the phenomenon of power, especially as it pertains to the relations between the colonizing state, the white settler majority, and co-resident Aboriginal populations. The social forces of gender and class and their intersection with race also fall under this scholarly purview. In the following sections, this social position is clearly reflected within *nayri kati's* conceptualization and practice.

nayri kati Theoretical Framework

In our methodology map, the research theoretical framework flows from standpoint, and this is how *nayri kati* should be conceptualized. Its exposition is placed here to demonstrate how theoretical framework embodies the *nayri kati* standpoint *and* how this is reflected in the research examples. The major theoretical and conceptual frame used within *nayri kati* is my theory of the domain of Aboriginality. This is a theoretical frame that has been evolving for me over a number of years (see Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2010; Walter 2009). My theory is aligned within the broader critical race relations paradigm and has power as its central theoretical concern. It seeks to provide a theoretical platform for understanding how power is used in micro and macro social arrangements and interactions to bolster the claims and interests of the privileged that are the dominant Euro-Australian population, culture, political, and economic interests. *naryi kati*'s theoretical frame, then, is informed by the terrain of race relations and the position of Indigenous people in Australian society, in relation to the dominant group. Its focus is the way power embeds this disadvantaged

and privileged positioning via the everyday racial landscape of present and past social-structural reality.

The relationship and power interactions of the Australian nation-state towards its Indigenous peoples are also theoretically central. This conceptual grid can be figuratively and theoretically mapped as the domain of Aboriginality.[4] Within this context, the term Aboriginality does not denote identity. Rather, the term encapsulates the lived experience of being Indigenous in Australia in relation to the settler population and the broader impact of these power relations on individual and group life chances and life options. The domain is multifaceted, with intersecting layers, but components can be identified within thematic clusters.

Cluster 1: Material Poverty

Cluster 1, material poverty, incorporating our comparative socio-economic position, is the one most readily identified Indigenous positioning, especially for non-Indigenous Australians. Indeed, as argued in the Introduction, it forms a central platform, based on statistics, on how the Indigenous people in this country are seen by the Euro-Australian majority, the nation-state, and sometimes by ourselves. What this cluster indicates first is that, regardless of region, background, urban or remote location, Indigenous peoples are always the most disadvantaged across all socio-economic indicators (AIHW 2011a). But material poverty is more than just contemporary socio-economic position. Material poverty must also be understood as stemming from Indigenous exclusion from a relative share of Australian society's resources and opportunities. It is also about the embedded over-privilege of the majority and the normalization of this privilege in Australian society. Our exclusion from resources and opportunities is historic as well as contemporary. The result is the second item: an inherited socio-economic deprivation accruing and accumulating across and into the life chances of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities. This material poverty marker can be contrasted with how privilege accrues and accumulates across the life chances of settler populations, especially those granted our dispossessed lands. Additionally, not only are Indigenous people poor, but we are explicitly and implicitly excluded from the right to any material privilege. Non-Aboriginal Australia expects Aboriginal people to be poor, and any notion of Indigenous prosperity appears to be resented (Walter 2008). Equality, in non-Indigenous terms, does not seem to extend to an equitable share of privilege.

Cluster 2: Absences and Omissions

A cluster of four absences encapsulates the normalized Australian omission of the Indigenous. First and second, Indigenous people are spatially and socially separated from non-Indigenous Australia. Over two-thirds of Aboriginal

people live in regional and metropolitan urban areas, yet Indigenous lives remain separated in almost all spheres from non-Indigenous lives within the same geographic location. Most non-Indigenous Australians' lives are totally disconnected from Indigenous people or realities. As shown in the research example later in this chapter, the vast majority of Euro-Australians do not mix regularly with an Aboriginal people, and census mapping of the urban places where over three-quarters of Aboriginal people reside shows that even when we live in the same cities, we don't live in the same spaces, physically or socially (Atkinson, Taylor, and Walter 2010; Walter 2008). Third and fourth, these absences are magnified by the physical and symbolic absence of Indigenous Australia/ns from the political realm and spheres of influence. This extends to the nation-state's concept of itself and the business of state. Except as a directly problematic topic, Indigenous people as citizens are missing in conceptions of everyday Australian life, and these absences are unremarked and deemed unremarkable in contemporary mainstream Australian culture. The one place we do appear is as culturally appropriated icons. Our dancers, our didgeridoo players, and our traditional cultural ceremonies are regularly called upon to provide spectacles of Australianness, especially for visiting dignitaries and high level public and political events, but the spaces for our contemporary realties remain firmly restricted.

Cluster 3: Burden of Disregard

The social and spatial separations of Indigenous absences allow for non-Indigenous/Indigenous relations to be pejoratively based. Indigenous Australia carries what Sheehan (personal communication 2007) refers to as the "burden of disregard," the normalization of disrespect towards Aboriginal peoples that permeates everyday Australian life. Within our social institutions, if we are represented at all, it is as an equity group. This allows the core business of the institutions to be conducted outside any regard for the specific needs of their Indigenous constituents or, more problematically, the benefits such engagement could bring. And while most Australians are horrified at the idea of being cast as racist, a constant patter of casual and usually thoughtless denigration of Aboriginal people and culture is threaded into the fabric of the nation's conversations. It is heard everywhere: in taxis, in the hairdresser's, in restaurants.[5] The widely discussed "deficits" and "inadequacies" of Indigenous people, culture, and lifestyles also provide a circular rationale for Indigenous inequality. Our inequality is deemed the consequence of our inability to live "normal lives." Moreover, the huge inequities in life chances are perceived through an on-going, individually and community invasive, judgemental, but socially remote, media and public scrutiny. Despite our making up only 2.5 percent of the total Australian story there is not a week that does not include an

Indigenous story in Australian mainstream media, and the vast majority of these focus on aspects such as poverty, alcohol consumption, lack of attendance at schooling, and the list goes on. And while many of these stories are sympathetic to the Indigenous plight, they also embed negative stereotypes.

Cluster 4: Ongoing Dispossessions

Categorizing dispossessions encompass more than loss of land or culture or traditional knowledges. Colonization has meant most Indigenous people are

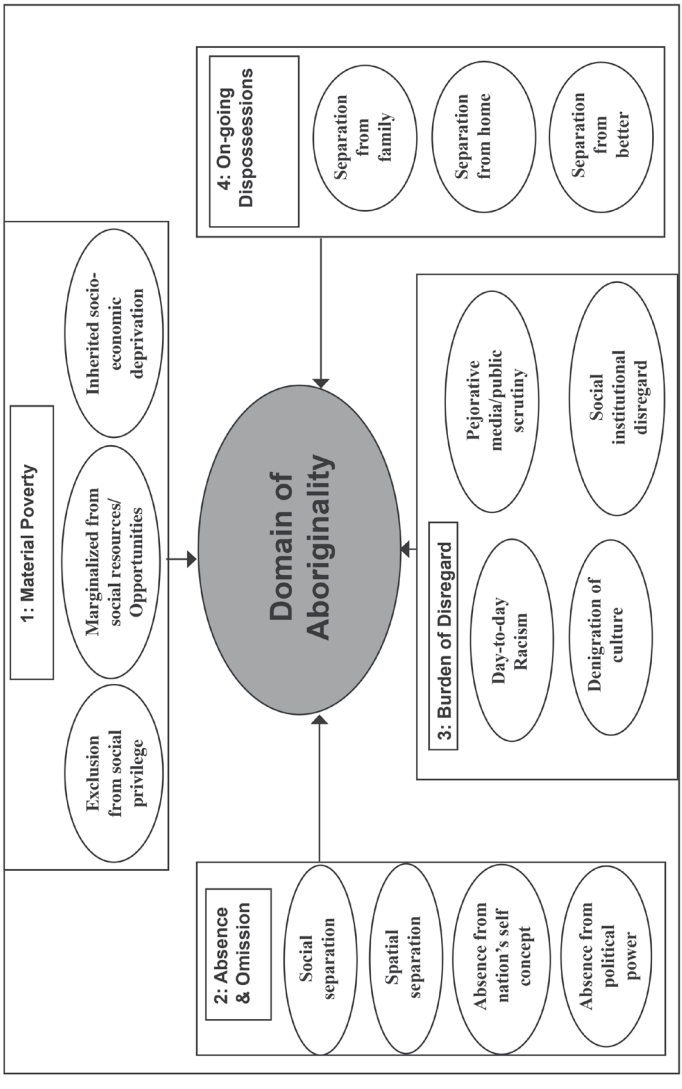


Figure 4.2: The Domain of Aboriginality: The Terrain of an Indigenous Life in Australia

Source: An earlier iteration of this figure appeared in Walter 2008 and Moreton-Robinson and Walter 2009

separated from country, and claims to country thus remain perpetually subservient to the entitlement demands of non-Indigenous Australia. In my own case of Tasmanian pakana peoples, lack of ongoing physical inhabitation of the traditional country from which we were forcibly dispossessed has also meant that our identity as Indigenous peoples has also been consistently challenged. And for a significant proportion of Indigenous people, the legacy of dispossessions also means a separation in some shape or form from family. Yet, perhaps the most penetrating dispossession is in the expectation of a poor deal. The lived experience of this generation and those who came before is too often founded on ill-health, substance abuse, and the early and pointless deaths of family members. The result is that dramatically circumscribed life chances and a hard daily reality have become a normalized aspect of Indigenous life. For many the weight of today's difficulties means a soul destroying dispossession from hope for a different future, for individuals or for communities (see Dudgeon et al. 2012 for a searing account of how lack of hope, and lack of self worth emanating from the burden and disregard, absence and omissions, and dispossessions damage Indigenous peoples).

nayri kati Epistemology

As detailed in Chapter 1, epistemology concerns what is counted as knowledge, who can and who cannot be knowledgeable, and the hierarchy of how knowledges are valued. In traditional (Western) quantitative methodologies the epistemic designation of knowers and knowledge is value-ranked along a culturally, racially, and socially laden continuum. Hierarchies of knower and knowledge by subject/object position exist in which the usual position of the Indigene is limited to data source, even if it is increasingly fashionable to "consult" this data source. The epistemic boundaries of *nayri kati* challenge these established hierarchies of knower and knowledge. *naryi kati* epistemically places race, and relatedly power, at the center of its approach, placing the Indigene as the observer of these phenomena.

The vast majority of existing Indigenous related quantitative research in Australia (and other colonized first world nations), as detailed in Chapter 1, is research conducted by non-Indigenous researchers on data collected from Indigenous peoples. These studies use national omnibus surveys, such as the national census, or administrative collections, such as birth, death, and marriage records, or, in some cases, specifically collected data, such as that from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Surveys (NATSIS), which were run in 1994, 2002, 2008, and are due again in 2014. The prevailing methodology for these researches is Western quantitative methodology, with Euro-Australian dominant knowledges shaping how the research is done. The question or questions that the research addresses are conceived and developed by

non-Indigenous, predominantly Euro-Australian entities and are usually predicated on the primary objective of measuring what are defined as Indigenous problems. For example, census, health administrative collection and NATSIS data are all used to provide the results for the biennial national report—*The Social and Health Wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*—produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. In almost all of these studies (see next section for an example of an exception) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the objects of the research, providing data whose subject, level, type, analysis, and interpretation have been developed by non-Indigenous expert knowers.

In deliberate and direct contrast to this approach, within *nayri kati*, even when some of the same data sources are utilized, Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous knowers are prioritized. This methodological practice entails overtly including Indigenous voices and knowledges in all "knowledge related" aspects of the research process. That is, Indigenous knowledges and conceptual and practical understandings are the lens through which research knowledge is revealed. This epistemic hierarchy also forestalls the restriction of Indigenous quantitative research to Indigenous subjects.

Research Example 1: Indigenous Knowers and Evaluators

Indigenous participation in higher education has long been a subject of the higher education sector, government, and policy interest in Australia and other first world settler nations. Under the Howard Government (1996–2007), Indigenous education was considered such a high priority that a report on all aspects, including Indigenous higher education, was delivered annually to the national parliament. Each of these reports (2001–2008) was written by non-Indigenous bureaucrats from the responsible government department. Their common format was to aggregate statistics provided by individual universities, highlight points from the individual university Indigenous Education Statements (IES), and intersperse these statistics with vignettes about, and photos of, various Indigenous student centers. The general message of each of the reports was that although progress was slower than desired, progress was being made. For example, the 2006 report (DEEWR 2008: 129) concludes regarding Indigenous student enrolment that:

> after a decline in 2005, overall 2006 Indigenous enrolments return to 2001–2004 levels. Especially noteworthy is the increase in participation in higher level courses and the rapid decline in students undertaking Enabling and other non-degree courses.

In 2011 I was the quantitative researcher on a study which also had as its topic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in higher education

(Moreton-Robinson, Walter, Singh, and Kimber 2011). This research was commissioned by the panel of *The Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*. Our brief was to evaluate the public Australian universities' performances in relation to Indigenous governance. This study, similar to the previous national reports, also used departmental statistics and the publicly available annual Indigenous Education Statements issued by each university. Our selection of the same data sources was a deliberate strategy to forestall delegitimization of our analysis by labelling it political or activist. Epistemologically, for this project, however, Indigenous researchers were the observers, not non-Indigenous bureaucrats. And it was Indigenous conceptual and practical understandings that formed the knowledge lens through which university Indigenous governance was evaluated. The process and practice of this research shows how this epistemological positioning shaped the research design, data analysis, and interpretation of results.

First, we conceptualized governance to encompass Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and direct influence on university executive functions and the regulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in higher education. Regulation refers to the strategies, programs and objectives to increase Indigenous outcomes including embedding Indigenous knowledges within universities' operations.

We then translated this conceptualisation into two research questions:

1. How well do universities incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation into their structures of governance?
2. How efficacious is the governance of programs to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff participation and cultural presence within universities?

Our theoretical framework, customary management practice, also deliberately drew on standard (Western) management theory. Customary management practice was defined as per Collier (1998) as practices, processes, activities, and monitoring systems organizations implement in any area of major activity. My role was to quantitatively analyze the departmental statistics on Indigenous students, undergraduate and graduate, as well as staff numbers, and to devise a way of numerically evaluating data from the content analysis of the Indigenous Education Statements on Indigenous staff and student participation and participation in university governance undertaken by other members of the research team.

Rather than statistical aggregation, we purposely kept the data disaggregated by university. Aggregation can be a statistical decontextualizing device that distances data from the people and institutions whose actions, or lack of, contribute to creating the thing these data are measuring. I further

devised a numerical scale whereby the performance of each of the thirty-seven Australian universities could be evaluated across the dimensions of Indigenous governance presence, Indigenous undergraduate and post-graduate student access, and attainment and Indigenous staff employment. First, we accorded scores to each institution based on what the IES content analysis indicated about the level of that university's policies, objectives, targets, key performance indicators, and formal evaluation of its Indigenous participation activities. Student and staff enrolment and employment statistics were also analyzed and scored by comparing actual numbers with what the numbers would be if Indigenous staff and students were represented at Australian Bureau of Statistics state-based Indigenous population figure rates. For the governance and cultural competence measures we also included a score based on whether the university reported an Indigenous appointment at the senior management level.

Our scale allowed us to rate individual universities and then rank them by order of overall performance. Our results indicated that two-thirds of Australian universities recorded total scores of less than 50 points out of a possible 100. A reduced anonymized version of this rating/ranking is represented in Table 4.1.

For this study, the Indigenous standpoint of knowers has significant epistemic consequences. How were these manifested? First, in contrast to most similar studies, the universities were our objects of study, not our knowers. We evaluated their performance against publicly available data, just as the bureaucrats had done, but interrogated those data in a very different manner. It was a critical analysis framed through an Indigenous world view. Second, our Indigenous scholar knowledge informed our conceptualization, question generation, and operationalization of the key concept, Indigenous governance. Together, these knowledges allowed us to evaluate aspects of governance more broadly and in ways more in tune with our own understandings of sector connections. Third, by individually rating and ranking universities we showed not only that progress is slow but in what spaces and places. We brought a relational accountability of specific universities to their Indigenous communities into the analysis for the first time. The fact that some universities, albeit a minority, were achieving a rating of above 50 points also foreclosed the standard responses that the sector is committed to raising levels of Indigenous governance. For example, each of these universities has Indigenous clauses in their industrial awards, and each talks about their commitment to Indigenous employment and leadership (NTEU 2012). Our results, however, clearly demonstrate that while some universities are taking active steps to increase Indigenous participation, others remain in the "committed to being committed" category. The fact that some universities are making gains also refuted the common argument reported by our colleagues at universities around the nation that they, the universities, were committed to greater Indigenous participation, but that the Indigenous community was hard to engage.

Table 4.1: Indigenous Governance Scores of Australian Universities

University	Students Access & Attainment 40%	Academic Professional Staff 30%	Governance Engagement 30%	Total Score 100
University a	26	17	21	**64**
University b	26	30	7	**63**
University c	19	25	14	**55**
University d	18	21	14	**53**
University e	21	26	3	**50**
University f	17	20	11	**48**
University g	18	19	5	**41**
University h	13	22	3	**38**
University i	14	16	6	**36**
University j	9	16	9	**34**
University k	13	18	2	**33**
University l	7	15	10	**32**
University m	16	12	2	**30**
University n	7	8	12	**27**
University o	7	14	5	**26**
University p	9	13	3	**25**

Source: Derived from Moreton-Robinson, Walter, Singh, and Kimber 2011

Fourth, and most critically, by asking different questions of the same data, the problematic of low and only minimally increasing Indigenous participation in the higher education sector was situated within the individual university and the sector, not with Aboriginal staff or centers. We found that those universities who had best defined policies, backed by clear objectives, targets, key performance indicators, and on-going evaluation of these, were also those with the highest number of Indigenous enrolments, staff, and Indigenous participation in governance. This correlation was not related to chance. Clearly, university leaders who back their commitment with action achieved better results.

Finally, the power of the data is demonstrated by how this report has been used. As expected, the first response by a number of university hierarchies was

to question our methods, a response quickly blunted by reference to our data sources and theoretical frame. More importantly, it has been widely picked up by Indigenous higher education leaders and others throughout the sector and used both to commend their universities and as evidence for the need for university-wide changes in how Indigenous business is done.

Aiming for an Indigenous Epistemological Fit

In research where Indigenous people are also the subject of the research, the *nayri kati* epistemic prioritization of Indigenous voices goes further. Most critically, the information sought from Indigenous subjects and the "for what purpose" must be developed using Indigenous knowledges and understandings. This does not preclude the involvement of non-Indigenous researchers in the work, but in the hierarchy it is Indigenous knowers and knowledge that take the dominant position. As the Indigenous knowers framing the research and the Indigenous subjects of research are rarely the same people, this epistemological rule does not guarantee epistemic fit. Unless we are working with our own individual Indigenous communities, we are also outsiders. And as the literature on insider/outsider debate makes clear (see Acker 2000; Adler and Adler 1987), being an insider is still problematic when determining the relationship and most appropriate interaction between a researcher and the researched. This positioning can be even more problematic in Indigenous research given the family and kin relationships involved. But it does provide a broader scope for symmetry. It does lessen the power differential between the researcher and the researched from that common in the dominant methodology of research on Indigenous people, which even within the major data collection agencies tends to restrict the Indigenous presence to controlled "consultation."

nayri kati also recognizes and incorporates existing philosophical work on Indigenous epistemologically. As our scholars cogently argue (see Martin 2008; Rigney 2001; West 1998), knowledges located within research are not, ever, the property of the researcher. For Indigenous peoples worldwide, knowing and seeking knowledge is never a solo enterprise. It also cannot be separated from our understanding of who knowers can be—that not all knowers can be knowers of all things, and not all things can be known (see Martin 2008; Wilson 2008). Knowledge, therefore, cannot be discovered, or owned. But it can be revealed and shared, and the how, by whom, to whom, from what perspective and for what purpose this revealing occurs is one of the facets that delineate an Indigenous methodology.

nayri kati Axiology

Research cannot be a value free zone, and all quantitative methodologies are value infused entities. Critically, the decisions we make about the research process,

from the inception of the research idea to its final interpretation and dissemination, are not spontaneous. A key shaper of these decisions is the researcher and/or his or her controlling institution's value systems, even when—perhaps *especially* when—these are unacknowledged. The question asked in Chapter 2 of how much a researcher's and/or his or her funders' value systems can be disentangled from his or her research practice, therefore, is also valid for Indigenous quantitative researchers. For *nayri kati*, the answer stems from personal values and judgement systems embedded in my particular milieu: I recognize the unattainability of the holy grail of research objectivity but also recognize the imperative of always aiming towards it.

Other value systems, however, are consciously included. *nayri kati*'s explicit axiological frame incorporates and prioritizes relevant Indigenous value systems. The primary value is that the research is tangibly operating for, and in, Indigenous interests. The first axiological infused decision, therefore, is whether the research should be undertaken at all. For example, research framed from a model of Indigenous deficit outlined in Chapter 1 actively undermines the Indigenous position across colonizer settler nations. Other research can be less malignant but no more axiologically valid. For example, the seemingly intransigent socio-economically deprived position of many first world Indigenous peoples can lead to quantitative research undertaken without any pre-ordained Indigenous benefit or purpose. That is, research for research's sake. Collecting data on an Indigenous community's housing situation, for instance, without that research being directly tied to the possibility of remedial housing funding is harmful in its lack of purpose and its imposition of a research burden. A better topic, if you could get the funding, would be an evaluation of the efficacy of housing social services for Indigenous people. Alternatively, research that might ostensibly be in Indigenous peoples' interests does not always automatically reflect Indigenous value systems. This lack of fit can be very frustrating to non-Indigenous research commissioners or designers who cannot understand why there is resistance to some of their plans when they are manifestly trying to improve the social position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What is primarily at issue here is not Indigenous value systems but the non-recognition of settler value systems, by those that hold them, as actually being value systems.

An example of how these barriers and clashes of value systems can be successfully mediated is found in the research processes of the on-going Australian Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC 2005). This large scale panel study of nearly 2,000 study children from around Australia took four years to move from design to implementation. From the beginning the project has been overseen in all its elements by a steering committee co-chaired by leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. The rest of the committee is made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous (nearly all Euro-Australian)

researchers and the implementing department officials and project team. The first misfit of values was over how the recruitment of families would be conducted. From an Indigenous value frame, research with these families could not proceed without their full engagement. This was much more than signed consent. It meant that any participants fully understood what they were committing to and what the project would mean for their family and the broader Indigenous population, were fully in agreement with the philosophy and aims of the study, and felt the project to be tangibly in their interests. In short, trusting relationships had to be built, and the building of those relationships had to conform to what our Indigenous families and communities regarded as the appropriate way to build a relationship. The non-Indigenous researchers who had worked with Indigenous peoples were also supportive of this need.

The steering committee needed to convince, and then convince again, the funding department that we could not begin surveying until we were assured that the study communities and families were fully informed and in support. The minimal informing and consent processes common for Euro-Australian participant survey research were not consistent with Indigenous values. More critically, their deployment would likely render the research ineffective—the success of the longitudinal survey is all about the success of recruiting participants, and standard Western approaches could not just be translated to this study. Instead, we needed repeated, not one-off, community visits from study staff, on-going contact with our families, the employment of local Indigenous data collection staff where possible, and a start date for data collection that built in these requirements. To the funding department's credit they made the axiological transition and put in the extra time, training, and visits required, along with coping with the extra expenses such consulting work required. We are now collecting Wave 8 data in what is proving to be a high participant retention study.

Even now new axiological problems emerge. The very success of the survey has led to many other agencies and government bodies requesting survey items be included. The steering committee mostly resists these additions. Yes, the items might be interesting, but unless they fall within the original purview of the intent of the survey—exploring how Indigenous children grow up strong—then they are outside of the agreement we made with our families and communities. We do not have their permission.

Research Example 2: Exploring Non-Indigenous Values

Projects that reflect Indigenous values and operate perceptibly in Indigenous interests do not necessarily involve research on, or with, Indigenous peoples. *nayri kati*'s axiological frame can also be applied in research based on colonizer settler Australian responses; in essence, evaluating non-Indigenous value systems through an Indigenous value frame. This practice is demonstrated by my inclusion

of three sets of Indigenous-related items within the 2007 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA) (Walter 2012). The AuSSA survey is a mail out/mail back survey that canvasses the attitudes of a national representative group of Australians on items as varied as government priorities and abortion (AuSSA 2007). The 2007 survey had 2,699 respondents, around 94 percent of whom were from European or Euro-Australian backgrounds.

My topic was contemporary race relations as evidenced through the attitudes of non-Indigenous Australians towards Indigenous issues. The topic emerges from my interest in race related inequality and seeks to apply an Indigenous lens in making sense of the unequal Indigenous positioning in the broader Australian society. From this perspective research on Indigenous inequality is intricately entwined with its opposite, non-Indigenous privilege. These two seemingly embedded aspects of Australian social relations are also embedded in the terrain of non-Indigenous/Indigenous race relations. My theoretical framework was the domain of Aboriginality (Walter 2009). As detailed in Chapter 1, this theory operationalizes the power dimensions of non-Indigenous/Indigenous race relations via the continual positioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander as the "other," socially, politically, culturally, and economically.

Table 4.2: Frequencies of AuSSA questions H1, a through f—Indigenous Attitude Statements

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Agree* %	Neither %	Disagree* %
a. Aboriginal people are now treated equally to other Australians	23	19	58
f. Injustices towards Aboriginal people are now all in the past	26	22	52
c. Aboriginal people should not have to change their culture to fit into Australian society	53	23	25
e. Aboriginal people who no longer follow traditional lifestyles are not really Aboriginal	23	20	58
b. Aboriginal people's levels of disadvantage justifies extra government assistance	45	21	34
d. Granting land rights to Aboriginal people is unfair to other Australians	42	25	33

* Results on Strong Agree and Agree categories and Strongly Disagree and Disagree combined in this table.

Note: The 4 responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were removed from the analysis.

Source: Derived from data from AuSSA 2007

Table 4.3: Frequencies of Non-Indigenous/Indigenous Social Proximity Question

Social Proximity Items	Frequency	Percentage
I mix regularly with Aboriginal people on a day to day basis	245	9
I know Aboriginal people but do not mix regularly with them	1,187	45
I do not know any Aboriginal people personally	1,236	46
Totals	**2,668**	**100**

Source: Derived from data from AuSSA 2007

From this topic I posed two research questions (as opposed to survey items) about contemporary race relations. The first was concerned with non-Indigenous attitudes towards Indigenous people and issues, and the second was about the level of social proximity between non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people. Together, the research questions sought to identify the social, demographic, and cultural dimensions of non-Indigenous attitudes towards Indigenous inequality *and* how these related to their actual social interaction with Indigenous people. The first research question was operationalized by a set of survey items that asked respondents how much they agreed/disagreed with six statements about Aboriginal people; two relating to inequality; two relating to culture and identity; and two related to aspects of restorative justice, extra government assistance, and land rights. The aggregated frequency results are included in Table 4.2.

The second research question was operationalized via the inclusion of a non-Indigenous/Indigenous social proximity question. Respondents were asked about their level of interaction with Indigenous people across three levels. The responses were as in Table 4.3.

The analysis of the data from these survey items was conducted over three levels. The univariate frequency counts were followed by a cross-tabulation of the attitude responses with the socio-demographic characteristics of the responders. These results found that in line with other studies (see; Dunn et al. 2004; Goot and Rowse 2007; Goot and Watson 2001; Western 1969) that older, male, less educated, and more rural respondents were significantly more likely to have less egalitarian attitudes towards Aboriginal people and issues. A principle component analysis and reliability analysis also found that the items could be reduced to a single scale. An ordinary least squares multivariate regression, using this scale as the dependent variable, confirmed that, holding all other variables constant, non-Indigenous Australian women, those living in urban areas, those working as professionals, and those with higher education

all scored significantly higher Aboriginal attitude scores than non-Indigenous men, those in rural locations, those working in non-professional occupations, and those with less than a bachelor degree education level. The strongest predictor of a high score was being educated to a bachelor degree or above. In the multivariate analysis stage the level of social proximity of the respondents to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was not significant.

These results were then interpreted through the Domain of Aboriginality theoretical framework. The findings indicate that while a small majority of non-Indigenous Australians recognize the continuation of Indigenous inequality, a significant proportion actively disagree and a similar proportion choose not to agree or disagree. Given the continuation of the readily available dire socio-economic data emerging from the census and other national collections, and the regular media reporting of discrimination, poverty, and poor health outcomes, these results are remarkable. They indicate that Indigenous social inequality has become so normalized within Australian race relations that its pervasive presence is accepted without asking the burning question of how that inequality arises or is sustained.

Similarly, the cultural equality item results are also remarkable. With roughly one quarter of non-Indigenous Australians agreeing that Aboriginal people should have to change their culture to fit in, or lose identity if not traditional, they reflect the dominant position of non-Indigenous Australians within race relations. First, the results demonstrate a basic lack of acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as the original Australian culture—that is, that all "other" cultures are migrant cultures. Second, somewhat inconsistently, there is a refusal to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, like all cultures, cannot be static but must change over time. The culture of the Euro-Australian majority is markedly different from that of the First Fleet arrivals, yet no one suggests that to be truly Euro-Australian one must practice the culture and lifestyles of the first settlers.

Finally, there is the mismatch between the proportions recognizing the continued existence of inequality and injustice and those agreeing to the justice of redress. This finding suggests a dissonance between egalitarian attitudes expressed and a willingness to put those attitudes into action: an attitude/action gap. The interpretation is that the findings reflect the imbalance of power in Australian non-Indigenous/Indigenous relations. Addressing Indigenous rights and structural disadvantage is presumed to lead to a reduction in non-Indigenous privilege. From this conceptual vantage point we can understand why those non-Indigenous Australians with higher education, with their higher status and incomes, are less likely than those from lower socio-economic groups to perceive a risk of loss of privilege, and are therefore more likely to be supportive of remediating strategies.

The finding that less than 10 percent of non-Indigenous Australians mix regularly with Aboriginal people was an illuminating insight into non-Indigenous Australia's relationship with Aboriginal Australia. More enlightening, however, were results showing that interaction or non-interaction with Aboriginal people were not significant factors in their own right in predicting non-Indigenous Australian's Aboriginal issues attitudes. The logical explanation is that these attitudes are formed and held outside of any interaction with real Aboriginal people. The alternative attitudinal framing sources are the dominant discourses of Indigeneity presented within media and political realms. These sources in Australia, to date, are usually pejorative and static. The theoretical conclusion is that the disconnection between interaction *with* Aboriginal people and attitudes *toward*s Aboriginal people underpins the non-translation of recognition of continuing inequality into support for remedial actions.

naryi kati Ontology

The ontology that informs *nayri kati* privileges Indigenous world views and Indigenous understandings of who and what we are as peoples and individuals and our place in the world. It incorporates an Indigenous understanding of a world that is defined by our relationships with kin, community, ancestors, country, and place. Perceptions of the lived reality of being colonized Indigenous peoples sequestered within first world nations is reflected in the methodology's focus on non-Indigenous/Indigenous relations (and vice versa). This ontological aspect encompasses how Indigenous people are perceived to "be"—these societies' operational relations with their resident Indigenous peoples. Pragmatically, the ontological frame informing *nayri kati* is also one that challenges *and* exposes the ontological hegemony of Indigenous statistical practice. While statistics do not lie, the version of reality they reflect can, and does, vary. More critically, the statistical story framed through an Indigenous ontological lens will reflect this in both the questions the data seek to answer and the questions the researcher asks of the data.

An Indigenous Ontological Frame

As detailed in Chapter 1, standard Australian quantitative practice promulgates Indigenous data as benign numerical summaries presenting a picture that is objectively real. Not so. The ontological frame is a presumption of pejorative Indigenous racial/cultural difference and a norm of Indigenous deficit. Or more simply, our assertion is that the quantitative research questions asked are shaped by the askers' ontological frame, which extends to the results generated. For example, the central question of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children project discussed earlier is: "How do Australian Indigenous children grow up strong?" (LSIC 2005). This question, developed by a predominantly

Indigenous researcher steering committee, has a specific ontological frame. It seeks information on how our children can grow, develop, and live in a way that maximizes their life chances within and through their Indigeneity. A hypothetical question generated from an ontological frame built around a presumption of pejorative Indigenous racial/cultural difference for a similar longitudinal study of Indigenous children might have asked: "What are the patterns of economic, education and health disadvantage of Australian Indigenous children?" The answers to the former question are to be found in the stories and responses of Indigenous families on data items relating to the capacities and circumstances that operate to best support their raising of strong, healthy, resilient, and happy children in dire socio-economic and culturally marginalizing life circumstances. The answer to the latter question would be an over time examination of Indigenous children, reliant on their continuous comparison against an unquestioned white Australian norm via sets of standard socio-economic and demographic measures. For the first question, the ontological presumption is that the data can portray a unique, compelling picture of contemporary Indigenous peoples within this society, of value and validity in their own right. In the other, the ontological presumption is that the data always need dichotomous comparisons to allow interpretation and to give them substance.

Research Example 3: Mapping the Ontological Landscape

What might seem simple ontological differences lead to significantly different approaches to quantitative research. First, it depends how we understand the reality of our nation. For example, in the Commonwealth of Australia map in Figure 4.3, the light lines indicate the demarcation between the formerly individual colonies, combined under Federation in 1901 to form the six Australian states and two territories. From this perspective I have highlighted the city of Perth and towns of Maningrida and Dubbo as a precursor to the upcoming research example. These state and territory lines of course do not exist in reality. They are a conception of what Australia "is" based on colonization and colonial practices which are given solidity via legal processes. From an Indigenous perspective, Australia "is" very different—Australia is comprised of more than 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, the boundaries of which may cross contemporary state boundaries. From this perspective I have included in the map, again for the later research example, the nations of the traditional and contemporary owners of the lands on which Perth, Dubbo, and Maningrida sit.

These two perspectives of what is Australia are ontologically different. More crucially, the perspective of the researcher as to which one is the "true" version will likely sharply alter the questions asked and the interpretation of results in any analysis. A project I undertook for the Australian Bureau of Statistics using 2006 Census data offers an insight into this process (see Walter 2008). Writing

Figure 4.3: Australia by Urban Site and Traditional Country

for a predominantly non-Indigenous audience, my first ontological challenge was to disturb the standard practice of aggregating Indigenous data to the national or state level. Rather, I argued, broad stroke labelling under the bland and essentializing category of "the Indigenous population" decontextualizes Indigenous lived experience and blunts the compelling impact of statistical data. Each people has a unique history, affiliation to country, and cultural identity, and their location in specific places and spaces shapes the context and circumstances of their community and individual lives. Three Indigenous nations in their locations were selected for analysis: Kunbidji country at Maningrida, a remote community in the Northern Territory; Wuradjuri country at Dubbo, a regional town in New South Wales; and Noongar country at Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. The distinction between a primarily Indigenous township such as Maningrida with Indigenous/non-Indigenous shared geographic locations of Perth and Dubbo allowed dimensions of spatiality to figure in the interpretative frame alongside the broader social, cultural, political, and economic factors of place.

The second ontological break was to prefix the data analysis with the Indigenous story of each place. The historical and contemporary context was set as the interpretive mechanism for socio-demographic statistics. For example, Dubbo, a regional hub for western New South Wales, is Wiradjuri country and the traditional lands of the Tubbagah people. The Tubbagah people's historical and contemporaneous connection to country is tied to the cultural significance of the Terramungamine area. Systematically dispossessed via frontier violence during the mid 1800s, the remaining people were contained within the Talbaragar Reserve on the outskirts of town where the New South Wales Aboriginal Protection Board regulated every aspect of their lives until the late 1960s. The government closure of the Talbaragar reserve in the 1960s

resulted in a heavy concentration of Aboriginal residents within the town's public housing areas.

Now, the public housing "Gordon Estate"—home to a significant proportion of the Tubbagah people—is also being forcibly closed and its mostly Aboriginal residents moved. The history of resistance is also an important context of place. Tubbagah people have never accepted dispossession and oppression. Tubbagah leader William Ferguson launched the Aboriginal Protection Association in 1937 to lobby on behalf of Aboriginal rights and living conditions. In 1995 the Tubbagah people lodged a Native Title Claim over the 16.2 hectare Terramungamine reserve. Although immediately contested by local and state authorities on the basis of public access and the presence of a historic stock trail, an agreement was finally struck in 2002 over protection for Aboriginal burial sites and the preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The statistical analyses of each place demonstrate a mosaic of similarities and differences between Indigenous lives and across place. Living a Noongar life in Perth differs from living a Tubbagah life in Dubbo or a Kunbidgi life in Maningrida. All three peoples live in the same geographic space as their ancestors, and all have in recent times reasserted, via land claims, the legitimacy of their belonging place. All also share a history of colonization and dispossession from land and subsequent legislative control of their lives. But how these consequences are manifested varies by place. The Kunbidgi people form the majority population in their traditional country at Maningrida. At Dubbo the Tubbagah occupy their traditional space alongside a majority of non-Indigenous residents. And at Perth, the Noongar people form only a tiny minority within a metropolitan population of more than one million.

These locational proximities shape and create different contexts, and the 2006 census data reflect these different lived experiences by place. As shown in Table 4.4, Aboriginal people living in Perth are more likely to own their own home, be educated to Year 12, be in education between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four years of age, and have a higher weekly income than those in Dubbo or Maningrida. In Maningrida, home-ownership, education levels across all spheres, and median income are obviously differently constructed by remoteness, community owned housing stock, and lack of educational facilities and resources. Diversity between places, however, is overwhelmed by the endurance of negative similarities.

As shown in the final column of Table 4.4, compared with non-Indigenous peoples living in the same places (proxied here by national population data), the Indigenous socio-economic position is consistent regardless of geographic location. Across these widely divergent groups, that proportion of the population under the age of fifteen years is double or higher than that of the national (97.5 percent settler) population, while the proportion over the age of sixty-five is less

Table 4.4: Indigenous Figures by Location and National Population Figures

Indicator	Dubbo Indigenous	Perth Indigenous	Maningrida Indigenous	National Population
Aged < 15 years	42.4%	37.4%	36.8%	19.8%
Aged > 65 years	2.9%	2.2%	2.1%	13.%
Median age	17 years	20 years	20 years	37 years
Owner/Purchaser	33.9%	37.6%	6.5%	64.8%
Renter	62.0%	55.5%	90.3%	27.2%
Household with 6+ usual occupants	11.3%	11.5%	92.1%	3.1%
Educated to Year 12	15.6%	21.3%	5.3%	44.9%
Post-school qualifications	12.0%	13.0%	2.6%	44.0%
In education 18–24 years	12.4%	14.6%	na	39.5%
Unemployment rate	21.9%	16.1%	16.4%	5.2%
Labor market participation rate	56.3%	51.1%	44.7%	64.6%
Median weekly individual income	$306	$327	$209	$466

Source: Derived from Australian Census Data 2006

than a quarter that of the total population. In the urban areas of Perth and Dubbo home ownership rates are only a little over half of the national level, and rates of overcrowding four times as high. Unemployment rates are at least three times the national level despite lower levels of labor force participation and rates of post school qualifications, and grade 12 achievement less than a third of national levels. That the proportion of Aboriginal youth in education aged eighteen to twenty-four in the urban areas is less than a third of that of their settler compatriots indicates that this depressing picture is not likely to change in the short term.

The statistical picture that emerges from this analysis is that although 75 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in the same geographic

places as non-Indigenous Australians, we reside in different demographic and socio-economic realms. This analysis also provides compelling evidence to support a reversing of the ontological lens from "What are the socio-demographic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?" to "Why do these differences exist?" The Aboriginal populations of these places are from very different Aboriginal nations historically, culturally, and in regard to the social and geographical circumstances under which they currently live their lives. Yet their socio-economic positioning in relation to the socio-economic positioning of their respective settler populations is remarkably similar. Through a domain of Aboriginality theoretical framework, the question might equally be asked: "Why do Australian settler populations always occupy a position of dramatic socio-economic privilege in relation to Aboriginal populations, regardless of location?" Such an ontological lens compels very different research questions that differ greatly from the current dominant Australian research agenda.

Conclusion

We hope that this demonstration of Indigenous quantitative methodology in practice via the example of *nayri kati* demonstrates how quantitative methods can be successfully integrated and form an integral aspect of a valid Indigenous methodology. Indigenous quantitative methodologies can and do provide radically different statistical insights into Indigenous peoples. As critically, Indigenous quantitative methodologies can, and do, provide insights into white settler colonizing peoples and institutions, especially in their relationship to first world Indigenous peoples. In the following chapter, we explore similar issues in a Canadian context.

Notes

1 Capitalization of proper nouns is not a feature of the Tasmanian language palawa kani.

2 As *nayri kati* is a methodology used by author Walter, the singular voice is used in this part of the chapter.

3 Trucanini was survived for several years by Tasmanian women kidnapped by sealers to the Kangaroo Island off South Australia.

4 The description of the Domain of Aboriginality is summarized but also builds on parts of an earlier article: Walter 2009, "An Economy of Poverty: Power and the Domain of Aboriginality."

5 I have overheard similar casual denigrating conversations about Native American and Canadian Aboriginal peoples while visiting those countries.