



BEADWORKING AS AN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH PARADIGM

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Abstract: In this article, I outline three principles that form the conceptual basis of an emerging Indigenous research paradigm that I call beadworking. I then relate how beadworking informs my understanding of and engagement with an Indigenous research methodology. Beadworking addresses how Indigenous Peoples' creation of beadwork can be used to help Indigenous researchers navigate the research process, while being grounded from within an Indigenous worldview. It is my hope that in sharing my research paradigm, it will inspire other Indigenous researchers to define and articulate their own research paradigms through the unique positionality of their own Indigenous People.

Keywords: beadwork; Indigenous quantitative research; Indigenous mixed method research; Indigenous qualitative research; Indigenous paradigm; Blackfoot

I was sitting in my classroom in the 11th grade, when my Aboriginal Studies teacher, a member of the Blood Tribe, relayed to my class how Rhode Island came to be owned by non-Indigenous People.¹ The narrative took me by surprise for two reasons. First, that human beings could take advantage of a group of people so underhandedly. I would come to learn more about the oppression and genocide of Indigenous Peoples during my adolescent and adult years. Second, it was in this moment that I learned that glass beads were not traditional to my People (the Blood Tribe who are a part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, and are located in south western Canada and Northern Montana, United States), but instead had come from the European colonizers.

I felt some inner turmoil over the use of glass beads within my beading projects. Glass beads had become so entrenched in my culture, it was nearly impossible not to see them somewhere on our regalia or leatherworking projects. I had developed a love for glass beads at the age of five years old, when my mother began teaching me the art of beadwork through the use of glass beads. However, I learned that this fact did not seem to change the way my People felt about or used glass beads in our artwork. I decided to continue using glass beads in my own projects.

I had come to understand the world through my beading...

Nearly a decade later I would begin my graduate studies in the Indigenous Peoples Education program at the University of Alberta. In this program I would come to learn about and engage with concepts such as, research paradigm,² methodology,³ and methods.⁴ Through my wonderful Indigenous professors, I came to immerse myself in these concepts by grounding them from within an Indigenous worldview.⁵

Shortly after finishing my doctorate, I was sitting in my craft room working on a pair of deer leather moccasins that I intended to gift to a knowledge holder. As I was counting the beads in my geometric design, a profound thought occurred to me about beadwork. I had spent my entire life being involved with beadwork; thus, I had come to understand the world around me through my beading (which I will discuss further in the following sections). At that particular moment I realized that Indigenous beadwork can be used as a research paradigm; one that would help guide me as I navigated through the research process. My understanding of beadwork is influenced by my own People's ways of knowing (epistemology⁶), being (ontology⁷), and doing (axiology⁸). In this article, I intend to outline the conceptual basis of an emerging research paradigm that I call *beadworking*. In the first half of the paper, I will outline the three principles of beadworking. Last, I will articulate how to apply the principles of beadworking to research studies in relation to an Indigenous research methodology.

Beadworking: A Research Paradigm

Beadworking is rooted in the historically and geographically located epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies of Indigenous Peoples. While it recognizes that variations exist between groups of Indigenous Peoples, beadworking is founded in the historical, political and cultural commonalities that exist amongst Indigenous Peoples. As I am a member of the Blood Tribe, residing within Canada, the focus of this paper will be on Canadian law and legislation.

Three principles form the conceptual basis of beadworking. These are: 1) beadworking as an act of resistance; 2) beadworking as an act of knowledge transmission; and 3) beadworking as an act of resiliency. These principles are all interconnected and interrelated; it is their relationship with one another that forms the framework of beadworking. Although their relationship is cyclical in nature, for simplicity's sake, I will explain the themes in a linear manner.

Beadworking: An Act of Resistance

The British Crown and the Indigenous Peoples made many agreements on the northern section of the North American continent (which would later be called Canada). The acts that affected my People, the Bloods, specifically were the Royal Proclamation Act (1763), the Gradual Civilization Act (1857), the British North America (BNA) Act (1867), the Gradual Enfranchisement Act (1869), the Indian Act (1876), and Treaty 7 (1877). These acts (which the colonizer wrote solely) dictated who could and could not be considered an "Indian," and what an Indian could and could not do. They dictated where we could travel, who we could marry, what we could consume, what level of education we could attain, what religion we could practice, and what cultural practices we could and could not do.

Over a hundred-year span, multiple amendments would be made to the original 1876 Indian Act. It is not my intention to illustrate the Government of Canada's assimilative agenda in this paper, but rather I would like to guide you to the amendments made in the Indian Acts that had an influence on the making of and production of Indigenous beadwork. Specifically there are four amendments that I would like to point out.

In the 1884 amendment to the Indian Act, the government prohibited the practicing of the potlatch ceremony and Tamanawas dances (Indian Act, 1884):

Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlach" or in the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than six nor less than two months in any gaol or other place of confinement; and any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly, an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of the same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment. (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1884, c. 27, s. 3)

This would later extend to all dances, ceremonies and festivals in the 1895 amendment to the Indian Act (Indian Act, 1895):

Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourages either directly or indirectly another to celebrate, any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony, goods or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles, takes place before, at, or after the celebration of the same, and every Indian or other person who engages or assists in any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than two months; but nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the holding of any agricultural show or exhibition or the giving or prizes for exhibits thereat. (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1895, c. 35, s. 6)

The 1884 and 1895 amendments to the Indian Act would affect Indigenous Peoples ability to engage in any kind of ceremony, such as gifting. Gifting is a means in which to honour and show appreciation for specific individuals. Gifting is a common occurrence in almost any type of Indigenous ceremony and may include, but is not limited to beadwork. Specifically these two amendments would influence the creation, completion, and conveyance of beadwork.

The 1914 amendment to the Indian Act would make it illegal for any Indian to appear in their regalia off-reserve. Indigenous People would need official permission to wear their regalia to special events such as: dances, shows, exhibitions, stampedes, or pageants (Indian Act, 1914):

Any Indian in the province of Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan or Alberta, or in the Territories who participates in any Indian dance outside the bounds of his own reserve, or who participates in any show, exhibition, performance, stampede or pageant in aboriginal costume without the consent of

the Superintendent general of Indian Affairs or his authorized Agent, and any person who induces or employs any Indian to take part in such dance, show, exhibition, performance, stampede or pageant, or induces any Indian to leave his reserve or employs any Indian for such a purpose, whether the dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant has taken place or not, shall on summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty-five dollars, or to imprisonment for one month, or to both penalty and imprisonment. (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1914, c. 35, s. 8)

Through the Indian Acts the Crown was able to control what attire Indigenous People could wear off-reserve. However, the Crown also influenced the attire that Indigenous Peoples wore on-reserve. Indigenous children were given school uniforms to wear while attending residential schools. The mission of residential schools was to “kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Pratt, 1973, p. 260). Residential schools required the pupils to wear European-styled clothing as part of the mission to civilize the Indian. On the Blood Reserve, two residential schools existed, which are: 1) St. Paul’s (Anglican), and; 2) St. Mary’s (Roman Catholic). St. Paul’s instigated a cadet program for the adolescent males. Below is a photo, from the Cardston News newspaper of the Blood Indian Cadet Corps in 1944. The Cadet Corps would also influence what Indigenous children would wear while living on the reserve (Layzell, 1944). I chose this photograph, as my grandfather Morris Hind Bull is the second row from the bottom, and is the fifth child from left or right. My grandfather is 14 years old in this photograph.



Figure 1. Picture of St. Paul’s Cadet Corps, *Cardston News*, 1944.

Alongside the Treaty Payment Annuities, the Crown was also distributing European clothing to be worn instead of Indigenous traditional wear on reserves.⁹

Amidst the banning of ceremonies and curbing the attire of Indigenous Peoples, museums across the world began to accumulate with Indigenous “artifacts.” Namely: funerary objects, sacred objects, and cultural objects (Platzman, 1992). Ceremonial objects and beaded artwork were stolen and put on display in museums for the world to scrutinize.

Furthermore, an additional amendment to the Indian Act in 1927 would make it illegal for Indigenous Peoples to seek legal counsel or action:

Every person who, without the consent of the Superintendent General expressed in writing, receives, obtains, solicits or requests from any Indian any payment or contribution or promise of any payment or contribution for the purpose of raising a fund or providing money for the prosecution of any claim which the tribe or band of Indians to which such Indian belongs, or of which he is a member, has or is represented to have for the recovery of any claim or money for the benefit of the said tribe or band, shall be guilty of an offence and liable upon summary conviction for each such offence to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two months. (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1927, c. 32, s. 6)

Under such restrictions, Indigenous People could not fight for their rights through the legal system. The Indian Act was slowly and deliberately diminishing Indigenous Peoples ability to act as sovereign nations. The traditional governing systems were changed in favour of a Eurocentric model (Smith, 1999). Indigenous Peoples could not participate in their own ceremonies or wear their own traditional attire.

Despite this, Indigenous Peoples resisted the colonizers acts to “kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Pratt, 1973, p. 260). Indigenous Peoples fought to maintain their identity as Indigenous Peoples, even though they could not take legal action against the Crown. There are instances in which individuals would continue to practice their ceremonies despite the law; they would suffer the consequences and be imprisoned, such as 90-year-old Taytapasahsung (The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996a). Indigenous Peoples also continued to bead and create beautiful artwork, although some of these objects were stolen and relocated to foreign countries.

In light of the atrocities that occurred during World War II, the world became increasingly aware of how the Canadian Government treated the Indigenous Peoples.

In 1951, amendments were made to the Indian Act that would repeal a number of sections, including the following: a) the 1895 amendment to ban the practice of ceremonies and cultural customs; b) the 1914 amendment to ban Indigenous Peoples wearing their regalia off-reserve; and c) the 1927 amendment to ban Indigenous Peoples from seeking legal counsel or action (Indian Act, 1951).

From my oral history I have learned that prior to 1951, my great, great grandfather, Hind Bull, who was a minor chief and one of the original signatories of Treaty 7, had his regalia outfit taken and put on display in the Canadian Museum of History. After the seeking legal counsel or action ban had been lifted in 1951, my grandfather was able to hire a lawyer and litigate the return of our ancestor's belongings from the museum. It took four years of negotiations, and my family was only able to regain Hind Bull's buckskin outfit, without the moccasins, gloves, or headdress.

Despite all of the amendments made in the Indian Act that were a means to assimilate us into a Eurocentric way of life, Indigenous Peoples still continue to retain our identities as Indigenous People. We are still here. We are still Indigenous. We have resisted the governments' call to assimilate us. We have persevered and fought back to retain our identities. We have continued to make beadwork during the amendments in the Indian Act, and we have passed our beadwork down through the generations of our progeny (see *Figure 2*). I cherish the beadwork that has been handed down to me from my family and I will lovingly pass down my beadwork to my posterity. Beadworking is an act of resistance.



Figure 2. Bead embroidery stitched medallions made by my grandmother, Margaret Hind Bull.

Beadworking: An Act of Knowledge Transmission

My knowledge of how to execute beadwork first started by using the traditional education practices of my People, which begins with family. The family is the primary source of knowledge during the development of the child. It is through the children's relationship with their family that they come to learn their People's way of life. Furthermore, through kinship relationships one gains knowledge and understanding because "knowledge is transferred through these relationships" (Bastien, 2004, p. 106).

Issksinnima'tsstohksinni is the Blackfoot word that describes "pedagogy." Mistaken Chief and Kremer (2004) defined this term as "education in all forms" (p. 226). The term *Issksinnima'tsstohksinni* (pedagogy) describes an important distinction regarding the traditional educational practices of the Blackfoot People. Instead of separating education into different aspects of teaching and learning, the Blackfoot People combine these features to create an all-encompassing educational system. Chambers and Blood (2010) described Blackfoot pedagogy as seeking "to unite what is to be learned with how it is learned" (p. 1). Chambers and Blood (2010) further added that Blackfoot pedagogy is "more than teaching and learning ... [it] is about a way of living, being, and learning" (p. 1). To the Blackfoot, "knowledge, science, and religion are not separate" (Bastien, 2004, p. 81). Rather, they are interconnected; one topic does not exist without the other (p. 81). The Blackfoot believe in taking care of their whole being, which means tending to their mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being (Bastien, 2004; YellowHorn, 2002).

Embedded in the beading lessons that my mother would give me, were also teachings about our People's way of life that would help set the philosophical underpinnings of how to live my life as a Blackfoot woman. My bead lessons would help to develop my whole being, while being grounded in the Blackfoot's "knowledge, science, and religion" (Bastien, 2004, p. 81). It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe Blackfoot cosmology,¹⁰ and how that relates to the traditional educational practices of the Blackfoot. I would like to share with you the *Kitomohpipotokoi* or the natural laws of the Blackfoot, which include: reciprocity, interconnectedness, kindness/generosity, respect, balance/harmony, and sharing/giving (Bastien, 2004). The natural laws of the Blackfoot taught me my tribal responsibilities and are a part of the foundations of living the Blackfoot way of life. Each of the natural laws are interconnected to one another, nevertheless I will also speak to each law individually and I how it relates to beading.

Reciprocity. Once knowledge is received, the person has a responsibility to give back to others what has been transferred; this is the law of reciprocity. Living the law of

reciprocity allows me to live the four stages of Blackfoot learning, which are: 1) gain knowledge; 2) experiential knowledge; 3) embodiment of knowledge; and 4) transfer of knowledge (Bastien, 2004). Through my relationship with my mother, I would gain specific skills/knowledge needed for a beading project. I would then practice this skill/knowledge until I became proficient at it. The skill/knowledge would be transferred to me and become a part of who I am. Last, I now have the responsibility to share with others the beading skill/knowledge that I learned.

Interconnectedness. The Blackfoot People perceive their world through relationships; it is through these relationships that knowledge is shared with all of creation, also called relational knowledge. This concept speaks to the importance of interconnectedness, which means that knowledge is shared with the cosmos, animals, plants and the earth (Wilson, 2001). When talking about knowledge, Orion (1999) points out there is “nothing about us—nothing at all—that is entirely physical, or mental, or emotional, or spiritual” (p. 7). Knowledge is comprised of all these domains; this is also true regarding the knowledge that I gained from beading.

Kindness/Generosity. Kindness and generosity begin with having a good heart, which is defined as one who will “be honest, speak straight, speak the truth, be kind... [and] tell what is true” (Bastien, 2004, p. 96). A good heart is needed, because kindness and generosity are how a person first decides to share their knowledge with others. It is through the kindness and generosity of my relations that I learned how to bead. This also teaches me that our behavior (whether or not we decide to share the knowledge that has been bestowed upon us) has consequences for myself, my family and my relations. Bastien (2004) teaches, “how to be and how to live with others in the world is one of the initial teachings in the development of any child” (p. 37).

Respect. Respect starts with listening to others during our daily lives; these interactions will result in lessons that may be “subtle or they may be momentous” (Bastien, 2004, p. 73). As well, to respect all that is alive in the universe, as every living creature is viewed as valuable and possesses knowledge that we can learn from. As I would listen to my mother’s specific beading lessons, she also taught me about our People’s way of life so that I would come to know my place in the universe.

Balance/Harmony. Balance is the mission of the Blackfoot People and is the “motivation of life and the impetus for all relationships” (Bastien, 2004, p. 11). As well, balance is at the heart of Blackfoot ontology, epistemology, and pedagogy¹¹ (Bastien, 2004). Giving and sharing are needed in order to maintain balance (Bastien, 2004). Bastien (2004) describes harmony as, “the experiences we have as we live are perceived as learning opportunities and challenges for living in harmony with ourselves

and within a cosmic universe” (p. 130). A good heart and a good life are needed in order to maintain balance and harmony.

Balance and harmony are at the heart of each stage of my beadwork. I must start all my projects with a good heart, which allows for my mind to be enlightened about the projects I will create. The design must be balanced and harmonious, as well, the colours and bead types must be harmonious for the project. I must live a good life that gives me balance in my everyday life, which allows me to bead. Balance and harmony will guide my beadwork.

Sharing/Giving. Sharing and giving speaks to the contributions that each Blackfoot individual makes for the benefit of their Tribe. Bastien (2004) explains the natural law of sharing as “accepting the responsibility of sharing knowledge and knowing in the manner that maintains the cultural integrity of knowledge as well as the protocol of coming to know” (p. 75). The Creator has given us all gifts, and it is through the giving of these gifts to others that we strengthen our relationships with one another and are of service to each other.

Beading has taught me the importance of sharing and giving; these principles are at the core of beading. My mother shared with me her knowledge of beadwork, which consequently are the lessons from my ancestors that have been handed down to her. That knowledge has been transferred to me, and I have a responsibility to share this knowledge with others as well. I share it with my family. I share it with my Tribe, and I share it with my children.

Growing up, my parents always stressed to me the importance of giving service to others. Service could be the giving of your time or the giving of your talents. Through my beadwork I have learned the joy of giving. I have used my bead talent to gift to others custom made beaded art. Gifting allows me to show respect to others who have shared their talents with me. In kindness and generosity I give these gifts, which also allows me to engage in reciprocity.

At the beginning of this paper, I shared that I was making a pair of moccasins for a knowledge holder. I would like to illustrate how the making of these moccasins allowed me to engage with the Blackfoot natural laws of the universe. First, I lived the law of reciprocity, which dictates that when something is shared, like knowledge, I must give something back in return. In exchange for the knowledge that was shared with me, I gifted a pair of moccasins (see *Figure 3*). Second, I lived the law of interconnectedness, which influences how I perceive my world through the relationships that I develop. My understanding of and undertaking of research has been greatly influenced by this knowledge holder. It is through this relationship, that I have come to

perceive the world around me as a researcher. Additionally, it is my knowledge of being a researcher that has allowed me to look at beading and see a connection to research.

Third, I lived the law of kindness and generosity. My relationship with this knowledge holder began with a good heart, as he generously gave to me of his time so that I could learn to research. With a good heart I generously gave of my time to learn, design and create these moccasins for him. Fourth, I lived the law of respect, which begins with listening. I listened to what he taught me so that I could become a researcher. I also listened to the non-research related details he shared with me. I lived the law of respect by taking what he shared with me and created a design that reflected these things.

Fourth, I lived the law of balance. The design I created is balanced, and reflects my worldview as a Blackfoot woman. Fifth, I lived the law of sharing and giving, which is needed in order to maintain balance. The knowledge holder shared and gave to me much of his time and of his knowledge. To balance this relationship, I gave of my time and talents and gifted him with the pair of moccasins.



Figure 3. Deer leather moccasins, using bead embroidery stitch.

Each of the natural laws of the universe are interconnected and interrelated to one another. My bead lessons have allowed me to learn about and engage with each of these natural laws. Beadworking is an act of knowledge transmission.

Beadworking: An Act of Resiliency

The arrival of Europeans during colonialism has forever altered the experiences of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. Colonization wrought many economic, political, and social changes to the detriment of the original inhabitants of the Americas as it forcefully imposed the Eurocentric way of life upon Indigenous Peoples (Battiste, 1995; Smith, 1999; Sockbeson, 2011). Indigenous People have the highest social and economic distress rates compared to any other ethnic group in Canada (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003; Sockbeson, 2011). Studies have found that the laws and policies set in place for Indigenous Peoples have led to these political and social distress rates (RCAP, 1996b; St. Germain & Sibbeston, 2007; Sockbeson, 2011).

Traditionally, Indigenous Peoples hunted, fished and gathered; their geographical location was directed by their economic activities. Colonization disrupted these economic activities with the displacement of Indigenous Peoples who were forced onto reservations, sometimes away from their own traditional territory (Hinge & Van Hoorn, 1981; Indian Act, 1911). The Indian Act would place further limitations on Indigenous Peoples' ability to hunt, fish and gather on their Native lands. St. Germain and Sibbeston (2007) have found that these laws and policies have led to an economic marginalization with the results of low level of education, high poverty levels, high unemployment rates, poor housing, homelessness and a lack of food security.

Colonization has also led to a change in the political structures of the Blackfoot People, which include the processes of decision-making and the structure of leadership. Each of these concepts are built upon the foundational principles of interconnectedness and interdependency of relationships. Bastien (2004) describes how colonization has changed the social structure of the Blackfoot:

However, when choice is removed and we are forced to look outside of our own culture for direction and motivation, it easily leads to cultural paralysis resulting in genocide. This process severed tribal people from who they were and continues to promote a Eurocentred human development perspective based on looking outside of one's self, outside of one's tribal culture, and outside of one's relationships with a cosmic universe. The dissociated self and its dissociation from the natural order are the result of conceptual abstraction in an objectified, separate world. (p. 165)

Traditionally decision-making was made through the consensus of the Tribe. The advice and wisdom of the Elders was taken into consideration; as well, the advice and wisdom of special knowledge holders with unique skills and attributes were taken into consideration (Blackfoot Gallery Committee, 2001). The passing of the Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians (1869) was a means to stop the traditional political structure of Indigenous Peoples. The act removed the traditional tribal leadership model and replaced it with a Eurocentric model. Traditionally, campaigns never occurred in order to become the leader of the Tribe. Tribe members would recognize certain attributes of a person, and this person would emerge as a leader (Blackfoot Gallery Committee, 2001). Colonization would also change the role of women in the new political system. No longer would women be a part of the decision making, or be allowed to vote in band elections (Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, 1869) until 1951 (Indian Act, 1951).

Colonization has also led to a restructuring of Indigenous Peoples traditional social structures. One of the natural laws of the Blackfoot is the law of interconnectedness, which means that all of creation is interconnected and interrelated. It also indicates that one living creation is not of higher importance than any other living creation: That the Creator has created every living creature equal. It is through this belief that balance can be maintained throughout all of creation. The settlers, who colonized the traditional territory of the Indigenous Peoples, do not hold this same belief. Instead, a hierarchy of social structure was introduced to the Indigenous Peoples.

For centuries, Indigenous Peoples endured oppressive educational practices through the use of boarding schools, day schools, and residential schools (Morris, McLeod, & Danesi, 1993; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003), which led to a diminished understanding and use of their own cultural ways of knowing (epistemology), being (ontology), and doing (axiology; Sockbeson, 2009). Education systems were the main method of imposing Eurocentric ideologies (social, political and economic), because schools served as sites of oppression to enforce Eurocentric educational practices upon the Indigenous (Smith, 2006).

Pratt (1973) described the objective of residential schools as to “kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (p. 260). Despite the colonizers best efforts to change us and to assimilate us into a Eurocentric way of life, we have resisted. We have fought and are still fighting to retain and maintain our Indigenous way of life. So that we can continue to practice and live our own ways of knowing, being, and doing. We are still here. We are resilient. We are Indigenous. In the face of such oppression and persecution, we continue to exist. We adapted to the changes, while still maintaining our identities as Indigenous People. While in the face of such oppression, we took the colonizer’s beads,

made the beads a part of our culture and created beautiful art with it (see *Figure 4*). Beadwork is an act of resiliency.



Figure 4. Blue and silver beaded cascading hair barrette, using loom and bead stringing stitch.

Beadworking and an Indigenous Research Methodology

My understanding of an Indigenous research methodology has been informed by Indigenous researchers Dr. Cora Weber-Pillwax and Dr. Karen Martin. Weber-Pillwax (1999) offers principles to live by when conducting Indigenous research, which are:

- 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 responsibility of maintaining person and community integrity;
and
- 7.the recognition of languages and cultures as living processes (p. 31)

Martin (2002) described four main elements that also capture the essence of Indigenous research, which are:

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. Honouring 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; identifying and redressing issues of importance for us. (p. 5)

In this section, I will articulate how I apply the three principles of beadworking to research in relation to an Indigenous research methodology.

An Act of Resistance

Beadworking, as an act of resistance, means to resist what is dictated to us as Indigenous People. Just as all the laws and policies in Canada were written to exert power and control over Indigenous People, we did not submit ourselves to these calls of domination. Nor did we curtail the making of and creating of our beadwork, when legislation tried to suppress it. Instead we continued to make beadwork and passed this knowledge down to our children (see *Figure 5*). The same sentiment should be manifest through Indigenous research studies. Maori scholar Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) captured Indigenous People's experience with non-Indigenous researchers' best, when she asserted the following:

The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful...It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments. (p. 1)

Indigenous research in the academy is relatively new, and is used as a means to decolonize ourselves and the people around us (Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2008). Just as my ancestors resisted the government's legislation to curtail the making of and gifting of our beadwork, I too will use these principles when it comes to researching. Beadworking, as a research paradigm, has taught me to resist the research that has come before me at the hands of non-Indigenous researchers. I will resist the colonizers' research frameworks, methodologies, analyses, and conclusions that have oppressed Indigenous People. I will resist the interpretations that non-Indigenous researchers have made, which advances a Eurocentric agenda. I will resist the colonial gaze that research has offered, and no longer be subject to being the observed (Walter & Anderson, 2013).

Instead, I will return the colonial gaze by engaging in my own research using frameworks and methodologies that are grounded in my own People's ways of knowing, being and doing. I will become the observer and engage in research that benefits and enriches the lives of Indigenous People (Walter, 2005). This means, as an Indigenous researcher, that I can and will research both Indigenous and non-Indigenous People. Changing our role as the observed to the observer can lead to, "chang[ing] the way in which [Indigenous and non-Indigenous people] see each other and in which we observe each other and the way that we respond to the differences in each other. Only then can we all progress together in nationhood" (Brady, 1999, p. 30).



Figure 5. Beaded green and blue seed bead and Czech fire polished round bead stick barrette, using embroidery stitch.

Although the glass beads came from the Europeans we call our creations Native American Beadwork, because our creations reflect our culture. We resisted using the glass beads in ways that are indicative of how Europeans would use beads, and made our beading unique to us.

An Act of Knowledge

Beadworking as an act of knowledge, means to use the traditional knowledge of my People which situates my own understanding and application of knowing, being and doing in the world. I will use the Blackfoot natural laws of the universe to inform my research methodology and methods. I will rely heavily on the natural law of interconnectedness and balance, when choosing the methods that I will use as a tool to gain the knowledge that I desire. The law of interconnectedness teaches me that all knowledge is interconnected. The law of balance teaches me to go about my knowledge seeking in a balanced way. Weber-Pillwax (1999) and Martin (2002) prescribe a set of principles to live by, rather than a set procedure to follow in order to conduct Indigenous research. This is done, because Indigenous People are not uniform. Variation exists between the different groups of Indigenous People in the manner of their epistemology, ontology, and axiology. You will notice that Weber-Pillwax (1999) and Martin (2002) did not place limits on what Indigenous research could and could not do. Neither researcher indicates that Indigenous research must only be quantitative or only qualitative. Indigenous research can be both; it can be quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed method approach.

Beading teaches me that knowledge is interconnected. In order to make a pair of moccasins, a beader would need to employ both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to finish the project. Science is needed to prepare the materials (tanning of the hide), math is needed to work out the bead design and measurements (sole, vamp, welt, to name a few), adding, subtracting, multiplication, and division are needed when sewing the beads together (see *Figures 6 and 7*), and instructions from a skilled moccasin maker. The moccasin maker would then experiment with science, math, and oral instructions in order to make a pair of moccasins. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative methods must be employed to make a pair of moccasins. Elementary arithmetic is needed to create these flowers. Addition and subtraction are needed to create one pedal. Multiplication and division are needed to work out the remaining pedals.



Tiffany Dionne Prete

Figure 6. Yellow and White 7 pointed flower, using embroidery stitch.



Tiffany Dionne Prete

Figure 7. White and blue 5 pointed 3D flower using brick stitch.

Balance is the mission of the Blackfoot People (Bastien, 2004). Likewise, balance and harmony guide the process of my beadwork designs. In *Figure 8* the design and project is symmetrical and balanced. As well, balance and harmony will guide the research methods that I use. Whichever method the Indigenous researcher decides to use, it must be done in a balanced way. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods together uses a balanced way of looking at the research problem (Prete, 2018). If using solely a quantitative or qualitative research design, they too must be carried out in a balanced way. Triangulation must be carried out while only using multiple quantitative or qualitative methods, as it will allow for the use of multiple perspectives and view the research problem in a balanced way.

I have come to learn that a part of beading consists of pattern recognition and replication. There are a number of bead stitches (peyote, brick, herringbone, lazy, embroidery, right angle weave, loom, square, as well as others) that one can use to create beaded art. *Figure 9* illustrates a simple herringbone stitch using blue and white seed beads. *Figure 10* is another bracelet that uses the exact same stitch, but with variations throughout the length of the bracelet. As one masters the art of beading, pattern recognition becomes easier to spot and replicate.

Data analysis mimics my understanding of creating beautiful bead art. I will analyze the data I have collected and look for patterns that exist within the data. If I am undertaking a qualitative research study, I will employ thematic analysis, which allows me to look for patterns that emerge from the data. These patterns will become the themes that I will write the research findings about. Should I use a quantitative research study, I too will engage in pattern recognition with the data as I undertake inferential data analysis approaches. I will determine whether or not a pattern, or relationship, exists between the independent and dependent variables. The pattern or lack thereof, will be written about in the findings section.



Figure 8. Orange and gold collared necklace, using bead embroidery and tubular peyote stitch.



Figure 9. Blue and white herringbone stitch bracelet.



Figure 10. Turquoise and silver herringbone stitch using Czech fire glass beads.

An Act of Resiliency

Beadworking as an act of resiliency means to be poised in adaptability. Just as the colonizers brought their beads and ideologies to our homelands hoping to transform us, we did not submit to the colonizers' will. Indigenous People took the colonizers' beads and adapted the beads into our culture, making use of the beads in a way that is unique to us. *Figure 11* illustrates this principle. At the beginning of my paper, I shared with you that my great, great grandfather Hind Bull's buckskin outfit was taken from him and displayed in the Canadian Museum of History. Through the help of a lawyer my grandfather was able to get Hind Bull's buckskin outfit back, without the moccasins, gloves, or headdress. My mother, grandmother, and a first cousin took the beading that my ancestors had made from the colonizers beads and recreated a new buckskin outfit and adapted it to meet the needs of my grandfather Morris Hind Bull. They also created new moccasins and a headdress for the outfit. My grandfather had been elected as a

band councilmen on our reserve. My family made him this outfit in commemoration of this achievement.



Figure 11. From left to right, my mother Margaret R. Bevans, my grandmother Margaret Hind Bull, my grandfather Morris Hind Bull, my aunt Verdun Hind Bull-Morning Owl, and my aunt Shirley Hind Bull.

The research methods that we use should also follow the pattern of adaptability. As we embark upon Indigenous research, methods will emerge that are unique to Indigenous Peoples. But we are adaptable. We can use methods that are common to the colonizers research, and adapt these methods to work within our own Indigenous paradigms and methodologies.

I was taught how to bead using the traditional educational system of my People, which begins with family and employs experiential learning. Experience is an essential method to the Blackfoot traditional way of learning, as it is the method upon which all other methods are built. Furthermore, this method utilizes personal responsibility for learning and is taught through one's kinship relations. It is through personal experience that one comes to understand the knowledge that they have gained. Bastien (2004) remarked, "the critical aspect of coming to know is [through] participation" (p. 98). Experiential learning is a rigorous pedagogical method as it is an "integrative process

which uses all the faculties necessary for learning” (Bastien, 2000, p. 157). Hence, experience is the precursor for learning.

At the age of five years old, I began learning to bead through my kinship relations and experiential learning technique. I was mainly given oral instructions and sometimes a demonstration of the placement of the first few beads. I was then left to learn on my own. Through perseverance and trial and error, I learned the importance of choosing the right materials for the bead projects I created. I learned what type (seed, delica, bugle, rivoli, crystal, gemstone, rondelle, three cut, two cut, pipe bone, and so forth) and size of beads I needed for what material I would bead on. I learned what type of stringing material (imitation sinew, bead thread, fishing line, fire line, or wire) works best for the type of bead and material I would be working with. I learned what type of needle and size I would need for the types of projects I would do. I learned what tools and findings I would need to create my bead art. I learned a plethora of stitches and the types of beads that work best for each stitch. I learned how to vary the tension of my stringing material for tight, medium and loose stitches. I learned what I needed to do to protect my fingers from bleeding and blistering from using a tight tension for my stitches. And I mastered the elusive invisible knot.

Choosing the most appropriate research method(s) uses an experiential learning technique, as it will take a little finesse and deep contemplation and reflection to determine what methods should be used. The Indigenous researcher is tasked with determining the right methods to express themselves and their community’s worldview in accordance with their own beliefs. Additionally, they must choose methods that best fit researchers’ and communities’ epistemology, culture, locality, societal experiences, histories, cultures, and values. Weber-Pillwax (2001) explained how she conducts research:

I use the practices and principles of methods and methodologies that seem to fit with and balance my own ways of being and looking at the world. I try to ensure that there will be no conflict between my ways of being and doing if I should decide to do research with a particular methodology or method. (p. 172)

When I began my studies in the Indigenous Peoples Education program, I was very eager to learn what Indigenous research methodology is and what it entails. I hoped to see a stark difference from Western research and learn methods that would be unique and belong only to Indigenous culture. It took a while to refocus my eyes from my formal Western education to understand that the difference depended entirely upon my methodology (Prete, 2011). An Indigenous research methodology does not need to operate under special Indigenous research methods; what mattered was how I planned

to use those methods to uphold and honour the people with whom I would work during my study (Steinhauer, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001). Just as I decided not to reject European glass beads, Simonds and Christopher (2013) emphasized that researchers should not “reject all Western methods and theories, as they may be adapted if deemed appropriate and beneficial by the local community” (p. 2187). Thus, it is important to choose a method that will best suit the community in which we work. Because each community is unique, the employment of different methods are needed to ensure that each community’s unique values and beliefs are left intact. Therefore, principles embedded in the methodology are community determined; that is, the research method must be culturally appropriate to that particular community.

Weber-Pillwax (2001) reminded researchers that the methods that they use must “mesh with the community” (p. 168). Therefore as researchers, we must employ methods that are the best fit for the communities with which we engage our research with. Beadworking as a research paradigm allows us to work with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Thus, we must be mindful of our communities and ensure that we are being culturally appropriate and being true to each community’s values and beliefs with the methods that we choose.

Conclusion

I have always been taught that to become Blackfoot is a life-long journey. I relate this to my understanding of beading. I have begun to master the art of beadwork. Although I would call myself a bead artist, I will always be a student of bead art. New beads and findings are being created and shared on a regular basis. It is up to me to decide whether or not to accept them and incorporate them into my bead art. I carry this attitude with me as a researcher. I will always be a student of research, since life is dynamic and constantly changing. As my dear friend, the knowledge holder I spoke of at the beginning of this paper who helped inspire me to write this research paradigm, always says: “If we knew everything, then there would be no need for research.” As a researcher I am constantly learning, and new ways of conducting research are continuously being created. In the future new research methods will be developed, and we as Indigenous researchers will need to individually decide whether or not they fit with our own way of being and if we will employ these methods or not.

The intent of this paper is to continue the conversation amongst Indigenous researchers on how we can engage in meaningful research that is grounded in our own People’s knowledge systems. Instead of using the colonizers’ research paradigms and methodologies, we can conceptualize our own Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies that will better fit the needs of our People.

The three principles of beadworking that I shared in this paper (beadworking as an act of resistance; beadworking as an act of knowledge; and beadworking as an act of resiliency) are an articulation of how I understand my world as a Blackfoot scholar embarking upon research. The themes are based upon the Blackfoot ways of knowing, being, and doing. Beadworking as a research paradigm also explains how I use an Indigenous research methodology and approach the methods of data collection and data analyses I will use to undertake my research.

It is my hope that in sharing my research paradigm, it will inspire other Indigenous researchers to define and articulate their own research paradigms through the unique positionality of their own Indigenous People. I envision a future in which an array of Indigenous research paradigms, methodologies and methods exist, from which future Indigenous researchers may benefit.

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ENDNOTES

¹ For more information on this topic, please see Paul Otto's (2015) work titled "The Dutch, Munsees, and the purchase of the Manhatttan Island."

² A paradigm reveals the way a researcher views the world, along with the paradigms philosophical underpinnings.

³ *Methodology* is the "theory of how knowledge is gained" (Wilson, 2008 pg. 34).

⁴ *Methods* refers to the instrument/tool used to extract the data sought during the research project.

⁵ *Worldview* refers to how we view the world.

⁶ *Epistemology* explains the "theory of how we come to have knowledge . . . Epistemology is tied into ontology" (Wilson, 2008, pg. 33).

⁷ *Ontology* explains the researcher's belief about the nature of reality. Wilson (2008) states, "Reality is in the relationships that one has with the truth . . . There is no one definite reality but rather different sets of relationships that make up an Indigenous ontology" (p. 73).

⁸ Wilson (2008) describes *axiology* as "the ethics or morals that guide the search for knowledge and judge which information is worthy of searching for. . . . [It] also concerns itself with the ethics of how that knowledge is gained" (p. 34).

⁹ Such records are found in the "Treaty Payment Annuity Pay List" for each reserve that is registered as status under the Indian Registrar with the Federal Government.

¹⁰ *Cosmology* refers to the theory of the existence of the universe.

¹¹ Mistaken Chief and Kremer (2004) define pedagogy as "education in all forms" (p. 226).