CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL VIEWS
OF VALIDITY

A Conversation

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Collaboration among the coauthors of this chapter began in 2004 when Karen Kirkhart was invited to serve as a consultant to a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). The grant supported the development of an Indigenous Evaluation Framework (IEF) by Joan LaFrance and Richard Nichols.[2] At the beginning of the project to develop the IEF, the NSF recommended that AIHEC engage an evaluation theorist with the suggestion that it would be useful to the evaluation profession to understand how an Indigenous perspective contributes to Western evaluation theory. Over the years, the authors have engaged in conversations about ways in which culture itself, and an Indigenous cultural lens in particular, influences views on evaluation theory.

In this chapter, we share our exploration of culture and Western evaluation notions of validity. Our conversation was spurred by Karen's question to Richard and Joan regarding the role or placement of validity within the

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IEF. Given her work in proposing a theory of multicultural validity, she was especially interested in how the creators of the IEF viewed validity. Since the IEF does not address validity directly, the question generated our exploration of ways in which validity is addressed in the literature and how the notion of validity fits within an Indigenous cultural framework. This exploration was guided by the following questions: What is the role of culture in conversations about validity? and Is "validity" a relevant concept for Indigenous inquiry? What is the role of validity within the IEF? We also explored the ways in which our conversations and collaborations have influenced our own views of validity in evaluation practice, specifically the contributions to Karen's theory of multicultural validity and Joan and Richard's views on the relevance of validity to the IEF.

Our intent in this chapter is to expand the construct of validity by exploring how it is approached from within Indigenous epistemology through Joan and Richard's discussions with Elders who are members of their respective tribes. Our collaboration continues to mold and reshape appreciations of validity. Reflections on Indigenous epistemology and on IEF in particular have led to shifts in how the construct of multicultural validity (Kirkhart, 1995, 2005, 2013) is understood and portrayed. IEF both affirms and expands the construct of multicultural validity and its justifications; it also reveals limitations.

We conclude with a discussion of the value of positioning culture as central to our work as evaluators and the importance of probing further into the cultural expressions of how "trustworthiness" or "correctness" is expressed within different tribal languages. Our intent is not to press for a singular viewpoint but to open a conversation that engages the assumptions and values from multiple perspectives. With that in mind, we have indicated the conversations we have had by noting our names next to the sections in which we took a lead role in sharing information or views.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT VALIDITY? (KAREN)

Culture and Validity

Our conversation is grounded in the assumption that validity must be fundamentally understood as a cultural construction (Johnson, Kirkhart, Madison, Noley, & Solano-Flores, 2008; Kirkhart, 2005; Kvale, 1995). Citing Cronbach, Johnson et al. (2008) remind us that all constructs are cultural products. It follows that it is necessary to note both the location and boundaries of those constructions. Neither validity nor validation carries the same meaning across cultural contexts (Kirkhart, 2005). Kvale (1995)

addresses linguistic boundaries of validity in noting that as a psychology student in Norway, "the very terms *validity* and *reliability* did not belong to the Norwegian vernacular, but were some foreign English-Latin terms" (p. 20; emphasis in the original).[3] Cultural location is not neutral with respect to the exercise of power. Historically, validity has been situated within the social history and culture of dominant groups, such that the legitimizing function of validity, discussed below, reflects and reinforces that social history and power, with negative consequences for persons in nondominant groups. (Scheurich & Young [1997] make this point eloquently with respect to race and racism.)

Validity has long been contested space. Efforts to redefine or reposition validity are not new. Conversations have been percolating over several decades. (See, for example, Argyris, 1968; Campbell, 1979, 1986; Chen, 2010; Cronbach, 1980, 1988; House, 1980; Kane, 1992, 2003; Lather, 1986, 1993, 2001; Lissitz, 2009; Messick, 1989, 1995; Moss, 1995, 2005a, 2005b; Scheurich, 1996; Shepard, 1993; Thomas, 2006.) However, culture has not always been part of these conversations nor has inclusion been their motivation. While assumptions of "culture-free" testing have long been abandoned by measurement specialists (Haertel, 2013), meaningful inclusion of culture in validation has not consistently followed. This concern notwithstanding, culture has been explicitly included in perspectives on validity emerging from critical race theory (e.g., Scheurich, 1996; Stanfield, 2011; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008), feminist theory (e.g., Collins, 1991; Haraway, 1988; Lather, 1986, 1993, 2001), measurement theory (e.g., Moss, 1998; Shepard, 1997), and clinical assessment (Ridley, Tracy, Pruitt-Stephens, Wimsatt, & Beard, 2008).

Throughout validity discussions, differences emerge on its core definition: Is validity best understood as a single unified construct or as composed of different distinct subtypes? Scholars from different epistemological positions have defined validity by dividing it. Maxwell (1992) subdivides it by type of understanding (descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalizability, evaluative validity) as does Lather (1993; ironic validity, paralogical validity, rhizomatic validity, voluptuous validity). Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002) propose four types of validity: statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, construct validity, external validity. Brinberg and McGrath (1985) propose a Validity Network Schema (VNS), which maps the relations of different aspects of validity to different phases of the research process. VNS groups "validities" (p. 23) by stages: validity as value, validity as correspondence, and validity as robustness. Cronbach (1988) and Messick (1989, 1995) came to reject an emphasis on validity "types" in favor of a unified validity theory, seeing previously named "types" of validity as "strands within a cable of validity argument" (Cronbach, 1988, p. 4). Cronbach (1988) spoke instead of different perspectives from which

validity can be argued, foreshadowing our attention to justifications of multicultural validity, discussed below.

Given that validity is culturally located, how useful is it in diverse contexts of evaluation? Or, expressed in the inverse, is validity so inextricably tied to majority perspectives that it is implicitly a privileged imposition, an appropriation, a "colonization" (Smith, 2012) of local understandings? To address this question first requires an understanding of how validity has been invested with power to recognize and legitimate.

Validation and Legitimation: Inclusion or Exclusion?

Validity is recognized as occupying a position of privilege as an affirmation of good inquiry. Intersecting culture, which itself is not neutral but infused with both privilege and discrimination, validity stands as a powerful gatekeeper of whose ideas, methods, and worldviews are recognized as legitimate. Validity carries cultural authority, owing to the power that we have invested in the construct. Validation is used to inform but also to legitimate, regulate, and control (House, 1993).

> Validity holds authority in systems of inquiry—both research and evaluation. It signifies power and control over the legitimation and representation of knowledge (Bishop, 1998), which is contested space in decolonization. Who determines what is valid and invalid, legitimate and illegitimate? What is given heavy consideration and what is discounted? (Hopson, Kirkhart, & Bledsoe, 2012, pp. 65–66)

Scheurich (1996) argues that the different types of validity discussed above are actually masks concealing an underlying sameness, which resides in the exercise of power to set a boundary line between acceptable and unacceptable research. He asserts that "validity boundaries are always ideological power alignments. They always create insiders and outsiders" (p. 53). Recognizing the capacity of validity to selectively delegitimize worldviews, ways of knowing, and methods of inquiry even as it affirms others, one must exert caution in setting definitional boundaries (Johnson et al., 2008). It is important to move across epistemologies to open conversations about validity to cultural perspectives appropriate to the context at hand. The capacity to include multiple worldviews may be seen as a criterion of the validity of validity itself (Kirkhart, 2005, Kvale, 1995). However, if validity is broadened to include everything, it becomes nothing—it is no longer a useful construct. Therefore, one must be clear, not sloppy, about definitions and rationale, avoiding "flabby pluralism" (Bernstein, 1992, as cited in Moss et al., 2009). This chapter pushes the boundaries of validity by examining its role in contexts of Indigenous inquiry and evaluation.

IS VALIDITY A RELEVANT CONCEPT FOR INDIGENOUS INQUIRY? (RICHARD AND JOAN)

The IEF grew out of an extensive consultation with American Indian evaluators, educators, and cultural experts. Although it does not reject Western evaluation practice, the framework places evaluation within Indigenous epistemology and core values. In developing the IEF, we were guided by an understanding that an Indigenous framing could incorporate broadly held values while remaining flexible and responsive to local traditions and cultures. The framework is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Indigenous epistemology is founded on the traditions of a people, their creation stories, clan origins, and their oral record of encounters with the world. It also includes empirical knowledge and knowledge that is acquired through dreams, visions, and ceremonies. Core values acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are located in a specific place, that community and family are paramount, and there is a deep respect for the gifts of each member of the community. A value central to Indigenous peoples is sovereignty, which is expressed politically and through preservations of language and culture.

Figure 3.1 Indigenous Evaluation Model.

The IEF suggests a process by which tribal colleges and communities can use their own ways of knowing and core values to guide their evaluation practices. It does not discuss validity or the role of this concept within an Indigenous epistemology. From a Western perspective, validity is an aspiration that guides methodology. From an Indigenous perspective, it is difficult to separate out validity from methodology and, in fact, the Indigenous Evaluation Framework doesn't address validity as separate from process.

Indigenous Perceptions: Honoring the Talk

Although the IEF establishes a general framing of an Indigenous way of knowing or epistemology, it recommends that the ways of knowing be guided by specific tribal constructs expressed within a tribal language. We explored the concepts of "validity" within our own tribal contexts through a series of discussions with Tewa and Ojibwe Elders and native language speakers.[4] In so doing, our goal was to gain their sense of how one would describe the ideas of "correctness" or being able to trust the information one is learning. It is important to note that in both tribal languages, there is no literal translation for a Western term like validity. Truth or correctness is related to the discussion; it is through the action of speaking together that the truth is known.

In Tewa, the cultural protocol most appropriate when beginning the discussion is the offering of a traditional prayer to mark the seriousness of the conversation about to take place. As a Tewa language expert at Santa Clara Pueblo noted, "I've heard people say that they were discussing something so that the truth will come out: '*Heranho I' ta'ge na pii-iri*'." This word, *ta'ge* (the truth) and its variants *ta'gendi* (true), *ta'gen dan*—the emphasizer "an" is used to say "that's true"—are the most equivalent Tewa terms to get at the sense of validity in the evaluation sense. Interestingly, another meaning for *ta'ge* is "straight," as in drawing a straight line, plowing a straight row, or a carpenter making a straight cut. This incidental meaning indicates the value put on getting something straight, which supports using *ta'ge* as the Tewa equivalent of validity.

In other discussions with the Tewa speakers at Santa Clara Pueblo, there was another word, *kori* (correct) and *korindi* (something is correct or right), that we considered as also getting at the concept of validity. However, put in the context of having discussions to come to a conclusion that something is valid—*Heranho I' kori na pii-iri*—it didn't "sound right," as the Tewa elder noted. Again, interestingly, *kori* used as a verb, also means "to fix" or "to make correct."

In the Ojibwe tradition, tobacco is used to honor the speaker and establish the importance of what is to be discussed. To understand how to approach the concept of validity, tobacco was offered in discussions with two

Ojibwe elders.[5] In an initial Elder discussion, the term *apaenimoowin* which means "to trust, count on or to put confidence in it" (Johnston, 2007, p. 57), was chosen as the best way to convey a notion of trusting that the information shared is correct. Another expression is *apaenimoondaugaewin.* This word expresses an engagement with the speaker and stresses the importance of listening. One Elder explained that *imoon* connotes paying attention to the sound of the voice; *daugaewin* is the sound of the voice which is coming to you. It is important to listen mindfully to hear the speaker who is giving information that you can have confidence or trust it. Listening mindfully is not a passive act; rather, the listener engages in discussion to fully understand the speaker. It is through a relational engagement that the listener can trust what the speaker is conveying. Johnston (2007) describes the Ojibwe word *gawakeinaendumoowin* as meaning truth, certitude, correctness, which he notes means literally "the right mind." However, in the Elder discussion, the preferred word to use for the construct was *apaenimoowin.*

The discussions with the Tewa and Ojibwe Elders reinforce the notion that "validity" emerges when attention is given to doing things in the correct way. It is an understanding that "truth will come out" through talking together. Kovach (2009), a Cree scholar, emphasizes the centrality of relationship within Indigenous research methodology, noting that Indigenous knowledges can never be standardized for "they are in relation to place and person" (p. 56). Relationship with the place or context informs the necessary protocols and ethics related to doing research or evaluation. This same notion of relationship is captured by Wilson's (2008) "relational accountability." He describes the essence of this accountability as research within a community context which is respectful, responsible, and has reciprocity. In his book, *Research is Ceremony*, Wilson (2008) uses a dialectic mode, a conversation, to illustrate the principles of his view of an indigenous research paradigm. In one of the dialogues with fellow Indigenous scholars, he explains that

> Studies conducted by some researcher on an Indigenous topic may successfully meet the criteria by which dominant system research is judged, such as validity and reliability. . . . But if the researcher is separated from the research and it is taken away from its relationships, it will not be accepted within the Indigenous paradigm. . . . Rather than the goals of validity and reliability, research from an Indigenous paradigm should aim to be authentic or credible. . . . The research must accurately reflect and build upon the relationships between the ideas and participants. The analysis must be true to the voices of all the participants and reflect an understanding of the topic that is shared by research and participants alike. In other words, it has to hold to relational accountability. (pp. 101–102)

These notions of relational accountability, or what constitutes authenticity, are central to the IEF. The framework attempts to shift the focus of

evaluation toward responsiveness to tribal values and community needs. The IEF suggests ways to choose methods and processes that create a credible relationship between evaluation (and the evaluators), the program implementers, those served by a program, and the contextual setting of the community. The evaluation and implementation of program are intertwined, interrelated. The truth emerges through a relationship between the evaluator, stakeholders, participants, and the utility of the evaluation to the community.

The suggestion of the elders that truth emerges through the talking fits within the Indigenous focus on storytelling. The IEF notes that Indigenous evaluation is a form of storytelling—creating the means through which a program can be understood in its own context through capturing the experience of those involved and analyzing the lessons learned. Kovach explains that "The privileging of story in knowledge-seeking systems means honouring 'the talk.' To provide openings for narrative, Indigenous researchers use a variety of methods, such as conversations, interviews, and research/sharing circles" (2009, p. 99). Regarding validity, Kovach notes,

> Inevitably, the personal nature of a story will bring to light questions about the legitimacy of knowledge. Does relationship imply subjectivity? Does subjectivity contaminate evidence of "real" knowledge? In Western research, this is about the validity of research. Knowledge then becomes that which can be proven true. (p. 102)

[QA: Year does not agree with reference.]

Kovach cites Stevenson's (2000, p. 249) work with Cree knowledge holders and the use of tobacco as a reciprocal gift ensuring "to speak from the heart, to speak their truth." And she cites how, in her own research practice, "the exchange of tobacco signified that what was spoken was truth as each person knew it." This mutual belief in another's integrity leads to maintaining relational balance. "If relational balance is not a high cultural value, such methods of 'validity' will fall flat" (p. 103).

In the Indigenous Evaluation Framework, we emphasize similar holistic, less structured discussions for data gathering as well as using cultural protocols to set the conversation "in a good place." Methodologically, then, it is also important in Santa Clara and Ojibwe traditions to gather oral information and to get as many perspectives as possible. When evaluators use discussion as a prime method for data collection, they must trust the content of the discussions to be valid. The use of cultural protocols is important to set the discussion in the right place. It is through this process that evaluators understand the truths as expressed by those with whom they are speaking. When things are done the "right way," the program's story as it develops during the evaluation process can be trusted. In this sense, validity is discovered along the way.

The Indigenous Evaluation Framework emphasizes the use of mixed methods for gaining useful information. Although quantitative measures are often necessary and not discouraged in the IEF, they need to be complemented by the relational act of conversation to fully understand the program's story. This relationship also necessitates communicating the analysis in multiple formats to ensure the lessons learned are of value to the community.

THE INFLUENCE OF OUR COLLABORATIONS (JOAN, RICHARD, AND KAREN)

Over the years, we have gained understandings and deepened our thinking through our collaborations and conversations. Karen has adapted her thinking about multicultural validity, and Richard and Joan have reflected on the influence of multicultural validity on their view of the IEF and evaluation in Indian communities. Our exploration of the questions posed in the conversations leading to this chapter have also had an influence on our perspectives of the roles and limitations of the Western notion of validity. We discuss these in this section with our voices noted in the subtitles.

Multicultural Validity: Origins and Evolutions (Karen)

Before I explain how my collaboration with Joan and Richard has molded my understanding of validity, I need to tell the story of how the idea of multicultural validity came to be and continued to grow. Multicultural validity emerged from my examination of validity and culture, specifically the variety of ways in which validity is argued or justified. I first proposed multicultural validity against a backdrop of societal relevance, historical tradition, and social justice, with particular emphasis on social justice (Kirkhart, 1995).

I introduced the term *multicultural validity* at the annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association in 1994. It was defined as the accuracy and trustworthiness of understandings and actions across multiple, intersecting dimensions of cultural difference (Kirkhart, 1995). From the outset, I favored a single unified validity theory (Messick, 1995), avoiding carving validity into categories by attaching modifiers. "Multicultural" is used not to subdivide validity but to explicitly acknowledge the diversity among and within cultural dimensions and the value of examining multiple means of argument and validation. It is a "situated" validity (Lather, 2001).

In my early work, I saw multicultural validity as drawing positive and necessary attention to culture by moving it to the center of validity arguments (Kirkhart, 1995). Today, I understand multicultural validity as centering validity arguments in culture (Kirkhart, 2013). Because culture infuses

all understandings, the emphasis on differences becomes redundant (and potentially "othering"), though standpoint theories or "epistemologies of specificity" (Carter, 2003, p. 30) have been central to my development of the construct, as discussed below. This marks a significant shift in emphasis, though my original definition continues to anchor the construct.

Working within an inclusive definition of culture, theory development proceeded both by reflecting on the cultural location of traditional majority definitions of validity (in both measurement and design) and exploring understandings of validity embedded in standpoints or perspectives of specificity. Feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability studies, aging studies, and Indigenous epistemology all contribute nuances of meaning that challenge and expand majority definitions of validity.

My conceptualization of multicultural validity is grounded in the well-articulated arguments-based approach that has evolved over the past four decades (Cronbach, 1988; Greene, 2011; Kane, 2003; Shepard, 1993). Determinations of validity are arrived at through considerations of available evidence that pair justifications supporting confidence in the accuracy of understandings and actions with opposing arguments (threats) that undermine such confidence. Theory development itself mirrored this conceptualization, moving back and forth between threats and justifications.

Justifications were originally presented as "dimensions" of validity (Kirkhart, 1995), and the first three dimensions I proposed were methodological, interpersonal, and consequential. Methodological validity referred to "the soundness or trustworthiness of understandings warranted by our methods of inquiry" (Kirkhart, 1995, p. 4), inclusive of measurement validity and design logic validity. This dimension was rooted in conceptions of validity from psychometrics and experimental design. By contrast, interpersonal validity was grounded in qualitative methods and drew attention to "the soundness or trustworthiness of understandings emanating from personal interactions" (Kirkhart, 1995, p. 4). Consequential validity called attention to "the soundness of change exerted on systems by evaluation and the extent to which those changes are just" (Kirkhart, 1995, p. 4). Attention to consequences bridges quantitative and qualitative methods and is heavily influenced by critical theory's attention to how power is exercised in evaluation.

Over the next decade, language shifted to justifications rather than dimensions, to avoid fragmenting validity. I added two more justifications to the original three (Kirkhart, 2005). I understood experiential justifications as separate from interpersonal justifications following Stanfield's 1998 AEA plenary address (Stanfield, 1999). Stanfield used the term "relevance validity" to pose the question, "Even if the design and data meet the reliability and validity standards of Campbell and Stanley (1966) or of a particular social scientific or policy-making community, *do the data fit the realities of the people it supposedly represents?*" (1999, p. 419; emphasis added). Experiential justifications of

validity focus on the extent to which interpretations are, in Stanfield's words, "isomorphic with the experiences of real people" (p. 418). In the context of evaluation, this refers to "congruence with the lived experience of participants in the program and in the evaluation process" (Kirkhart, 2005, p. 23).

Theory was the fifth justification addressed, inclusive of theory underlying the program, the evaluation, and assumptions of validity itself (Kirkhart, 2005). Theory came into clearer focus as I revisited Messick's (1989) core definition of validity as "an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the *adequacy* and *appropriateness* of *inferences* and *actions* based on test scores or other modes of assessment" (p. 13; emphasis in the original). Theory can work for or against validity (Kirkhart, 2005). Theories themselves are culturally located and can be sources of prejudice and/or used to support same (see Haertel's [2013] example of heriditarian theory supporting IQ testing). To support validity, theory must be congruent with cultural context (Kirkhart, 2010).

As the justifications expanded, I continued to watch for corresponding threats as well (Kirkhart, 2011). Each was sharpened by juxtaposition with the other. The five justificatory perspectives are not independent of one another. They are used in concert; none is sufficient on its own. The relative weight and attention given to each justification depends on the context of use.

When I began to collaborate with Joan and Richard, I read works by Indigenous scholars and observed Richard and Joan's interactions with tribal college and community members and with members of their Advisory Board. I had many questions. Our conversations expanded my thinking and challenged my previous understandings of culture and validity. Their influence is visible in the evolution of the justifications themselves, in how multicultural validity is visually represented, and in reflections on the location of the validation process.

First, my understanding of the five justifications and connections among them has continued to evolve. While evaluation has long been understood as a social practice (Abma & Widdershoven, 2008), social relations have often been viewed within the confines of *human* interactions. Indigenous literature suggested that my focusing interpersonal justifications on interactions among people was too narrow. Indigenous epistemology makes clear that the relationships that are central to meaning-making extend beyond relationships among people (Deloria, 1999c). *Interpersonal justifications* have therefore been recast and renamed *relational justifications* (Kirkhart, 2012), to address relationships among all forms of life in the natural world, inclusive of relations among people, the land, plants, birds, and animals.

Working within the IEF also led to a new appreciation of the centrality of epistemology. *Methodological justifications* feature a growing recognition of the primacy of epistemology (Hopson et al., 2012). Although the justifications are interrelated, the early placement of epistemology under theory

was problematic, potentially contributing to a disconnection and undervaluing of its foundational role in methodology. When I read Kovach's (2009) work, her placement of epistemology alongside method, under methodology resonated with me. My initial conceptualizations approached methodology more narrowly in terms of design validity and measurement validity, but Indigenous perspectives revised and expanded this justification by inextricably linking method and worldview.

The IEF framework aligns evaluation theory with Indigenous contexts, and in so doing, it stretches previously defined parameters of evaluation theory, expanding *theoretical justifications* of validity. I've always appreciated the five components of evaluation theory laid out by Shadish, Cook, and Leviton (1991) for helping the profession think clearly within and across evaluation theory. While IEF speaks to these five components—social programming, knowledge use, valuing, knowledge construction, and evaluation practice—it does so in ways that expand the dimensions themselves. For example, the social programming component as described by Shadish et al. takes social problem-solving as the central issue. The focus on social problems may have the unintended consequence of drawing attention to deficits rather than strengths. An Indigenous worldview places value on living a good and ethical life rather than correcting deficits or remediating problems. Similarly, in considering knowledge use, social betterment replaces social problem-solving as the organizing issue. In the valuing component, IEF builds upon core values—people of a place, recognizing our gifts, centrality of community and family, and sovereignty—but it also engages values in ways that differ from the vision of Shadish and colleagues. Evaluation is seen as an opportunity for learning rather than as a judgment of merit or worth, the notion of judgment having a very toxic history among Indigenous peoples, associated with exploitation, oppression, and loss.

As I discussed above, *experiential justifications* originated in concerns about accurately representing the human condition, articulated in Stanfield's (1999) concept of relevance validity. My early understandings related to people's lived experience, particularly with oppression, discrimination, or colonization. Indigenous epistemology expands the parameters of experience in terms of both time and space. Time frames are lengthened; human life is marked in generations, not decades (Deloria, 1999b). Experience includes both outward and inward space, physical and metaphysical, objective and subjective (Ermine, 1999). Dreams, visions, and prophecies and any information received from birds, animals, or plants are understood as a natural part of the human experience, rather than separating fact and experience into artificial categories (Deloria, 1999a). This was new territory for me.

Consequential justifications appeared as one of the original elements in the multicultural validity framework (Kirkhart, 1995), recognized for its connection to social justice (House, 1980, 1993) as well as to the history

of social consequences considered in measurement validation (Cronbach, 1980, 1988; Messick, 1989, 1994, 1995; Moss, 1998; Shepard, 1993, 1997). Consequences are viewed in terms of impacts resulting from participation in evaluation or from actions taken based on results. Typically, the impacts in question are traced to a specific person or group of persons. Under IEF, consequences are also viewed in terms of the good of the whole—the sovereignty and well-being of the tribe or community (LaFrance & Crazy Bull, 2009; LaFrance & Nichols, 2010). Preservation or restoration of tribal traditions, cultural practices, and language are paramount (Crazy Bull, 1997). As in relational justifications, the core values of IEF draw attention beyond human concerns to include impacts on the land and environment.

Beyond enriching the particular justifications of multicultural validity, Indigenous worldviews reinforce a healthy skepticism about categories and categorization. To avoid getting "stuck" in categorical thinking, the image used to represent multicultural validity as a construct has also evolved. The previously hard-edged pentagons (Kirkhart, 2005, 2012) have been replaced by a circular representation (see Figure 3.2).[6] Validity is now
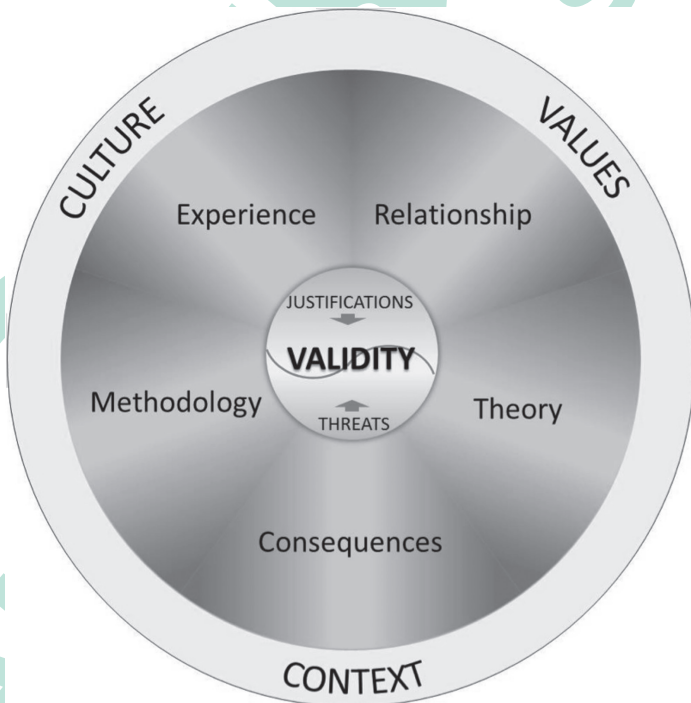

Figure 3.2   Validity, centered in culture, showing sources of justification and/or threat (Kirkhart, 2013).

centered in culture, grounded in values and context (LaFrance, Nichols, & Kirkhart, 2012). Borders among the five perspectives are intentionally softened or blurred, consistent with moving away from categorical thinking and acknowledging the interactions among the perspectives. The fluid, argument-based nature of validity is represented in the center symbol in which justifications and threats emanating from each perspective interact dynamically to support or challenge validity.

In addition to (re)shaping the conceptualization and representation of multicultural validity, Indigenous epistemology underscores attention to the location of the validation process and who is involved in it. Johnson et al. (2008) point to the cultural location of validation as a point of critique. *Where* tales are told is as important as *how* they are told (Carter, 2003). In discussing race-conscious research, Carter speaks to "the illegitimacy of the academy as the validation site" (2003, p. 34), cautioning that rules governing academic discourse may serve to protect dominant understandings and preserve traditional modes of inquiry. This is an important statement regarding how power acts through validation, but one must recognize that such critique comes from within the academy itself, thus avoiding a straw person positioning of academic scholarship in opposition to local knowledge. For example, Moss (1998) emphasizes the importance of meaning in local context, noting that understandings depend on "particular sociohistorical circumstances" (p. 7). Validation of Indigenous understandings occurs not in the academy but in the community, through community accountability (Kovach, 2009, p. 52) or relational accountability (Wilson, 2008, p. 99), both of which refer to the process through which understanding is gained—respectful, reciprocal, and relational—and the relevance and value of what is learned to the community.

Indigenous Evaluation and Multicultural Validity (Joan and Richard)

Karen's arguments for multicultural validity resonate with both of us, in our roles as evaluators and as authors of the IEF. We appreciate her groundbreaking work in creating a critical dimension for validity, one that that respects our diversity and recognizes the influence of culture. Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous evaluators need to reflect on the cultural competency of their practice and the implications of the cultural location of programs within the context of communities. We also appreciate her reconceptualization of the multicultural validity model. By grounding validity within culture and context, she mirrors our own conceptualization of an Indigenous framing where the epistemology specific to an Indigenous people and their values influences the validity of evaluation methodologies

within their context. Although all of the justifications within her framework inform good practice when working in Indigenous communities, we would highlight two in particular: relational and consequential justifications.

Evaluation is at its heart a relational activity. As evaluators, we have clients and stakeholders for whom we establish relationships and contractual agreements regarding the focus of the evaluation, questions to be addressed, and the audiences for reporting. Both the Indigenous evaluation and Indigenous research frameworks are at their heart community-based, relational activities. Kovach's (2009) notion of relational balance and Wilson's (2008) relational accountability center their research work within respectful and meaningful relationship with the community The importance of respectful relationship is excellently described by Smith (2012) when she explains,

> From the indigenous perspective, ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationships with each other and with the environment. The term "respect" is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. (p. 125)

We heard references to the importance of respectful relationships in our conversations with Tewa and Ojibwe Elders. As evaluators, attending to the dictates of the relational justification involves understanding how to "do things in the right way." Evaluators, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, will need to attend to the protocols important in establishing a good relationship. LaFrance (2004) suggested that those evaluators not from an Indigenous community include the time it takes to establish a proper relationship as an element of doing an evaluation. This can mean attending community dinners; or dropping in on the Elders lunch program to meet people and share food; attending feast days or other ceremonial activities; or participating in cultural activities such as powwows, canoe journeys, or rodeos. This allows the community to know the evaluator and to build relationships that are friendly and not solely based on being an evaluation expert. Indigenous evaluators follow protocols appropriate for the setting, such as the giving of tobacco or other practices that are the established customs.

Kovach (2009) outlines a framework for her research among the Cree. It involves preparations that include understanding the tribal epistemology and cultural protocols, gathering knowledge, making meaning, and giving back. We believe that to be respectful or to make meaning, at a minimum, qualitative methods have to be used. Relationship within an Indigenous evaluation context requires "listening mindfully" to a number of perspectives and allowing for multiple voices to be heard through conversation and storytelling. The "validity" of our evaluations is best described as striving to be *authentic and credible* in our retelling of the story (Wilson, 2008).

The "test" for the validity of the evaluation is best understood by the value placed on reciprocity or the giving back to the community, which brings us to the importance of Karen's consequential justification.

As noted in the IEF, Indigenous evaluation is grounded in a commitment to give back to the community This is especially important given the negative feelings of many communities who have experienced evaluations that focused only on funder priorities and failed to capture the relevancy of the local work within the context of tribal circumstances and histories. In our discussions with American Indian educators, we learned of the distrust that "evaluation" connotes when participants described their experience with evaluations that justified claims of program failures and rationales to divert resources away from tribes (LaFrance & Nichols, 2009).

Deloria (1999b) explains an Elder traditional view regarding use of knowledge. "The old Indians . . . were interested in finding the proper moral path upon which human beings should walk. All knowledge, if it is to be useful, was directed toward that goal" (pp. 43–44). Within the IEF, this belief suggests that the knowledge learned through an evaluation should be put to use and it should be celebrated, not feared or ignored. The IEF views evaluation as a reflective process that leads to learning—and learning should be acted on. The spiral of acting, reflecting, learning, moving to improved action, is continuous and positions evaluation as contributing to better or improved ways to support community well-being.

> As the story of the program unfolds, we must allow ourselves time to reflect on information we are gathering and analyzing, and to celebrate what we have learned. . . . Our reflections on what we are learning allow us to extend our knowledge and to move forward. The knowledge we have gained from our story is reason to celebrate and should be viewed as both an educational and celebratory event. (LaFrance & Nichols, 2009, p. 118)

COMING FULL CIRCLE AND CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION (KAREN, JOAN, AND RICHARD)

As Indigenous and non-Indigenous evaluators, we face a question: What have we gained from our conversation? Our reflections on this question are shared in this concluding section.

Joan and Richard: This conversation was prompted by Karen's question about the role of validity in the IEF. Since it is not directly addressed in the IEF, nor had we found any reason to address it, we needed to reflect on how to respond her query. We realized that validity was rooted in the Western traditions of research and, as graduate students, we had learned the traditional positivist classifications and the various treats to validity described

by Cook and Campbell (1979). As we have become aware of different perspectives on the nature of validity through our discussions with Karen, we find some resonance with our views in the IEF. If the IEF were to embrace a position, it is perhaps in the constructivist or postmodern camp of Kvale (1995). Rejecting the notion of a universal truth, he recognizes "the possibility of specific local, personal and community forms of truth, with a focus on daily life and local narrative" (p. 21). In our experience, Indigenous evaluation is ultimately local and tribal. It is within the specific contextual circumstances of the community that the "truth" emerges.

Kvale (1995) suggests validity is found through the quality of craftsmanship, communication, and action. We would agree with these; however, within an Indigenous circle, they would take on cultural characteristics that differ somewhat from his descriptions. Craftsmanship involves the credibility of the inquirer in the eyes of the professional research and evaluation community. Such credibility is based on the quality of his or her past research and evaluations, and how well he/she maintains high standards. We would concur that the quality of the research or evaluation design, and the care taken in the questioning, interviewing, and interpretation processes are important in Indigenous evaluation. However, we would expand the craftsmanship to include the reputation of the evaluator in the Indigenous or tribal community. Professional reputation and position do not speak first; rather it is the care taken by the evaluator to respectfully establish the proper relationships and demonstrate the correct local protocols that establishes the credibility of the evaluator. It is from this base that the evaluator can participate in discussions and interviews that will lead to a credible representation of the findings in an evaluative investigation.

The notion of communicative validity also resonates (Kvale, 1995). However, in an Indigenous setting, it does not emerge from dialogue that is argumentative or continually questioning. Personal perceptions are respected and understood based on the personal experience of the speaker (Castellano, 2000). Indigenous communicative validity is a "social validity" (Castellano, 2000):

> In a council or talking circle of elders, you will not find arguments as to whose perception is more valid and therefore whose judgment should prevail. In other words, people do not contest one another to establish who is correct—who has the truth. Aboriginal societies make a distinction between perceptions, which are personal, and wisdom which has social validity and can serve as a basis for common action. Knowledge is validated through collective analysis and consensus building. (Castellano, 2000, p. 26)

The call to action, or to give back, as Kovach (2009) describes, is somewhat similar to the notion of pragmatic validity, which Kvale (1995) says goes beyond agreement reached through dialogue; it includes a commitment to act

on the interpretations of the evaluation. Indigenous knowledge is focused on utility, and Indigenous evaluation places emphasis on learning and applying these lessons to enhance community health, healing, and well-being.

Although we learned how others from a Western tradition viewed validity in ways compatible to our own understandings of how it might look in the IEF, we also were compelled to explore the notions of validity within our own tribal cultures. Ultimately, the concepts and principles of Indigenous evaluation should emerge from conversations *within*, conversations that involve our own languages, which seek meanings and understandings that are molded by our own tribal worldviews. Validity is an English word, one that we learned is not easily translated into our own Native languages. Cavino (2013) argues that only when her Maori peoples have the capacity to meet their evaluation needs using their own people and through their own models, will they realize the ultimate expression of sovereignty. We would agree with this view; however, our conversations with Elders to fully understand the nature of evaluation from our own traditional cultural and linguistic experience are just beginning.

Karen: You've also introduced me to important unpublished dissertation work that is undertaking such conversations, such as that of kas aruskevich (2010), Lakota scholar Dawn Frank (2010), and Hawai'ian scholar Peter K. Hanohano, Jr. (2001). It's significant to see how this literature is building, complementing and supporting your own work.

Joan and Richard: As our capacity grows to take ownership of our own conversations within our cultural and linguistic settings, and to conduct and control our own evaluations, we will be exercising ownership and sovereignty. It is from this position that Indigenous evaluation will be fully realized. However, this is not to say that we do not benefit from conversations with our non-Indigenous colleagues nor that we would no longer need to converse. In fact, our conversations will grow richer and deeper as we understand evaluation from very different cultural worldviews—just as we are learning from Western thinkers, we can offer the field our own Native wisdom.

Karen: I look forward to our continued collaborations during the next phase of your work, *Indigenous Evaluation Framework, Research and Capacity Building*.[7] What are implications for continuing the conversation or "advancing sensible discussion" (Cronbach, 1980) within the evaluation community?

Since our collaboration has been and remains a learning experience for me, I'm perhaps most aware of what I, as a non-Indigenous evaluator, have gained from this conversation. I think my learning differs depending on whether the context of practice is Indigenous or non-Indigenous. As a non-Indigenous evaluator potentially practicing (as a member of a team) in Indigenous contexts, I have learned a greater respect for and appreciation of alternate epistemologies and a willingness to embrace a postmodern stance

of not knowing. I have learned to watch and listen. Direct questioning and note-taking may be counterproductive and perceived as disrespectful, depending on the context of the conversation. I think it's also led me to slow down and not hurry to grasp at understanding. Experiences accumulate over the years, and some things will never be fully understood.

I increasingly notice and appreciate the significance of circles (Graveline, 1998) as our collaboration leads me into new Indigenous literature, then turns me around to revisit Western literature I had read quite some time ago and set aside. An example of the latter is Kvale's work, which has been central to our recent conversations, as indicated above. My early thinking on validity was also influenced by his work. This experience has made me more attentive to the value of circling back and being more patient with the process.

These lessons also carry over to my work as a non-Indigenous evaluator practicing in non-Indigenous contexts. It's led me to pay even closer attention to the cultural location of evaluation and to the dimensions of privilege that come from dominant positions. It's led me to be more aware of the edges of my competence and the limitations of my understanding. It's taught me to take the time to know the history of a place before evaluating it in the present moment.

Do these lessons ultimately speak to validity? I believe they do. They enhance the trustworthiness of our understandings and raise necessary challenges to reveal when validity is threatened.

Our conversations turn our attention reflexively back on the validity of validity, a question previously raised by Kvale (1995). In questioning the validity of the validity question itself, Kvale challenges us to "live so that we do not have to continually pose questions of validity" (p. 38). This seems congruent with "finding the proper moral and ethical road" on which to walk (Deloria, 1999b, p. 43). Ermine (1999) makes clear that this is an inward journey of connection to the Universe as well as an external one. It makes academic debates on validity seem very small in relation to the vastness of the topic.

NOTES

1. It is with great sorrow that we acknowledge Richard Nichols' passing early this year. His loss seems immense as we recall his thoughtful contributions to our writing and conversations. He is sorely missed. We dedicate this chapter to his memory.
2. National Science Foundation Grant No. REC-0438720, Carrie Billy, Principal Investigator.
3. As Thomas (2006) reminds us, the term *validity* has its origins in the Latin words *validus* (strong) and *valēre* (to be strong).

4. We want to acknowledge the tribal Elders who provided the words and helped in understanding their meanings. *Ku'daa wohaa* to Wanda Dozier, Santa Clara Pueblo Elder and Tewa Language Orthography Expert; *Chi miigwetch* to Ojibwe Elders Dr. Rosemary Christensen, who identified *apaenimoowin* as one word from the Ojibwe language that could be an approximation of the Western notion of validity and Ms. Jacqui LaValley, who further explained the meanings within the word. Another *miiqwetch* to Ojibwe scholar Dr. Megan Bang, who shared her understanding of the interaction between speaker and listener to establish a truthful understanding.

5. Since the author lives a number of miles from the elders, the offering was made symbolically by voicing the offering and promising to send it with gifts via the mail.

6. Thanks to Kelly D. Lane, MSW, Syracuse, NY for creating this graphic.

7. National Science Foundation Grant No. NSF DRL 1337347, Carrie Billy, Principal Investigator.

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