FINDING, CREATING, AND FOLLOWING FOOTPRINTS: THE INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By

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ABSTRACT

FINDING, CREATING, AND FOLLOWING FOOTPRINTS:
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Little research exists on the specific ways that Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing are integrated in institutions of higher education across Micronesia. This research study illuminates through case study the position of Palauan Knowledge within Palau Community College. An Indigenous methodology set within a broader Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008) is utilized to align with Palauan values of respect (*omenguul*) and responsibility (*ngerachel*). Through interviews (*chelededuch*) with nine collaborators, in addition to fieldnotes, observations, and archival documents, this study aimed to answer the following research questions: How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated within Palau Community College (PCC)? Secondly, how do stories from Indigenous teachers and Indigenous learning environments inform PCC?

Findings from this study reveal experiences of separation from Palauan Knowledge and the actions some collaborators took to preserve Palauan Knowledge. Collaborators' narratives highlight several instances where Palauan knowledge is honored within the college through visual and oral representations as well as with academic and community programming. Continuity of Palauan Knowledge through ongoing opportunities to sustain practices in and outside of the college is explored in the final reflections of collaborators who continue to challenge perspectives that Indigenous Knowledge is in the past. Ultimately, this study lays a foundation for the argument that Palauan Knowledge is demonstrated as resilient, dynamic and

adaptive to the needs of community. Recommendations concerning the elevation of Indigenous Knowledge at Palau Community College and other institutions of higher education that reside on Indigenous land are offered.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, Hasinta Sibetang Renguul Hannibal.

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CHAPTER 1: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

I entered this study through the blessings of conversations with family members, Elders, Palauan youth, and Indigenous scholars, as well as stories that have come before me in Palauan legends, chants and songs and within the stories found in Indigenous research. My commitment in "*re*righting and *re*writing" the stories of Oceania began when I obtained my Palauan passport in 2010, solidifying my Palauan citizenship (Smith, 2012, p. 29). I always recognized my Palauan heritage without needing to complete the non-traditional practice of applying for a Palauan passport. What was most important for me in this journey to obtain my passport, were the words imparted to me by the *rubak* (Elder male) who I met in the government office. A reminder of the obligation of name and place was connected to his words as he let me know that I had the responsibility to my *beluu* (village) to do something good, to do something for Palau. I came to Palau Community College wanting to do research about transfer programs and admission as this was a previous area of study in my master's program.

My focus changed with my pilot study when I engaged in conversations with the community college president about Indigenous Knowledge in navigating the ocean, cultivating the land and building structures from natural materials. Thereafter, I stepped into the stories of Indigenous Knowledge broadly and Palauan Knowledge specifically, a journey that has connected me more to my home, Palau. In keeping with the assertion by the *rubak*, I focused on ensuring that my study was respectful of Palauan (Indigenous) knowledge and ways of knowing, being and doing. Much of the research on the islands and people in Oceania has been exoticized and devalued. Meyer (2008) expanded on respectful outcomes of research saying: "knowledge that does not heal, bring together, challenge, surprise, encourage or expand our awareness is not part of the consciousness this world needs now" (p. 221). To understand my *re*righting and

*re*writing process, I start with this introductory chapter which includes, necessary context about the island of Palau and its history to encourage a relationship between readers and the ideas, stories and research questions of my study.

The Introduction of a New Place of Learning

Formal instruction through structured time, foreign language and written word is something that was exported by Western societies to the Pacific Islands (Epstein, 1987; Soaladaob, 2010; Thaman, 2003). Consequently, institutions of higher education were established in ways of knowing that dismissed if not replaced Indigenous Pacific knowledge and ways of being and doing. Furthermore, knowledge from Western settlers engendered unquestioned legitimacy and dominance over knowledge systems indigenous to the Pacific. The story of formal schooling is similar to that found in literature of Indigenous people from the United States, New Zealand, Canada and Australia (Cole, 2001; Smith, 2012). Like these larger nation-states, smaller island nations have higher education institutions that predominantly serve those indigenous to the land. However, researchers have largely neglected institutions in these smaller nations, mainly those in the United States-affiliated Pacific (former territories) such as the Republic of Palau. While similarities exist between Indigenous people from the larger nation-states and the U.S. affiliated Pacific, there exists unique geo-political, colonial and historical characteristics of the former territories (Wright & Balutski, 2013) that warrant deeper examination of higher education in the Oceania.

In the years under territorial authority, the United States retained the responsibility of stabilizing Palau and other Micronesian islands in the region after World War II (Epstein, 1987). The ultimate goal was to allow the islands to one day be self-sufficient nations, should they choose sovereignty. It is important to note that Palau's sole higher education institution is Palau

Community College, the site of this study. Palau obtained political sovereignty in 1994 and soon after became Indigenous controlled as leadership transitioned from the United States to Palau (Epstein, 1987). As an institution that was not created for or by Indigenous people of the Pacific, my study makes space for Indigenous voices (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004) at Palau Community College to illuminate ways in which Indigenous Knowledge Systems are integrated into the college. The next sections provide further context for my study: highlighting a call to collective action, my research questions, and additional background regarding the histories of the islands.

Call to Collective Action

Literature that addresses the Pacific is mainly focused on higher education institutions in larger, well-known islands such as Hawaii and New Zealand (Boyd et al., 2012; Collins & Mueller, 2016; Pio, Tipuna et al., 2014; Theodore, 2015). Little research of higher education institutions in the U.S. affiliated Pacific (Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Marshall Islands) exists and much of what is known comes from governmental agency reports, master's theses and dissertations (Administration, n.d.; Epstein, 1987; Heine, 2002; Rechebei, 2003; Soaladaob, 2010; Uriarte, 2010). A focus then, on islands such as Palau can further complicate our understandings of the manifestations of higher education in societies where Western and Indigenous Knowledge systems are interacting. The tension of Western education on Indigenous people of the Pacific and a call for culturally relevant practices is a body of research growing in number (Thaman, 2003).

Still missing, is the next part of the story that illuminates resistance to the colonial educational system in the newly independent nation-states. Reiterating the words of *Wiradjuri* scholar, Wendy Brady (1997): "my ancestors had in place, systems of education…which sustained them" (p. 421). It is therefore important to illustrate the way in which Palau

Community College challenges a status quo that has historically misrepresented, mistreated and devalued *Belauan* people and their ways of knowing, being and doing. *Cree* scholar, Neal Mcleod (2001) says it best, asserting that "every time a story is told, every time one word of an Indigenous language is spoken, we are resisting the deconstruction of our collective memory" (p. 31).

Research Questions

My study identified the ways in which Palau Community College incorporates Palauan Knowledge in addition to the knowledge of other Indigenous people of the Pacific. Altogether, this research sought to deepen our understanding of indigenization efforts by looking at a context that has a different relationship and history with higher education as compared to studies of other institutions whose Indigenous administration and students are in the majority (Gaviria, 2012; Hunt-Jinnouchi, 2010; Heavyrunner, 2009; Minnabarriet, 2012). *Assiniboine* scholar, Sweeney Windchief and *Hopi* scholar, Darold H. Joseph (2015) in the following quote, captured the essence of the study's purpose and its ultimate outcome:

> We celebrate not those who are claimed by the educational space, but rather those who choose to claim educational space as their own and use it to contribute back into their own communities (p. 268).

Hence, the story of this dissertation was guided by the following research questions: How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated within Palau Community College (PCC)? Secondly, how do stories from Indigenous teachers and Indigenous learning environments inform PCC?

Pacific Islands

The previous sections set the stage with an introduction to the research study, a call to collective action and the research questions. Before moving forward, I provide a brief overview

of the history of the Republic of Palau, as a country within a region (i.e. Micronesia) whose history is misunderstood and misrepresented, if not obscure to many. My aim was to provide context in order to engage readers in all elements of this study. Pio et al. (2014) pointed to the need for contextualization, citing that "world views are embedded in specific contexts and cannot be understood in isolation from their social, political and economic legacy" (p. 678). This section is in line with the Indigenous epistemological framework and my methodological approach. Locating my study in terms of the setting, Oceania, and the topic, higher education, acknowledged relationships and therefore supported the central value of relationality in Indigenous (Oceania) cultures.

Background of Oceania

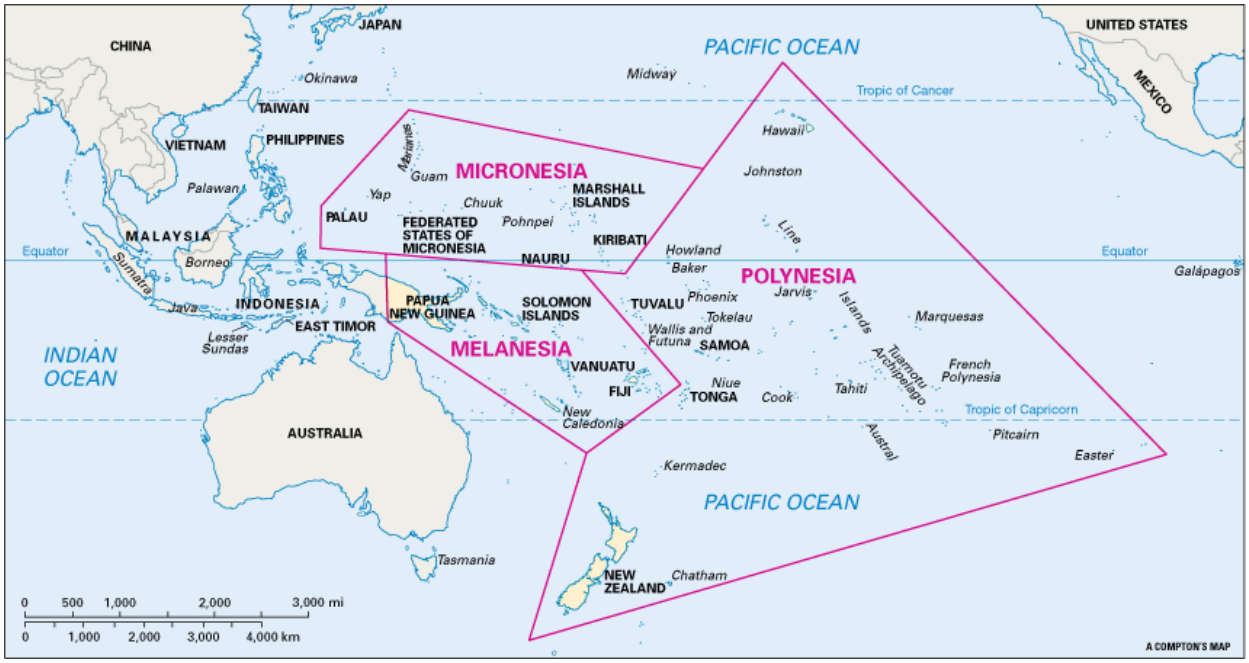
> Oceania is vast, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 160).

Hau'ofa (1994) in this opening quote and in his insistence to see Oceania as a "sea of islands" gives deference to the "totality of relationships," connecting Indigenous peoples of the Pacific to our ancestors who were the original explorers in the region (p. 6). These relationships reflect not only a relationship to land but also to the sea and includes various exchange communities amongst the islands that developed by generations and generations of seafarers (Cholmay, 2013; Hau'ofa, 1994). It was later that "continental men, Europeans and Americans" drew lines and boundaries that "confined ocean peoples to tiny spaces" (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 7), re-naming and labeling the region. Oceania was grouped and classified within the "northwest European imagin[ed]" categories of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Spikard, 2002, p. 43). To clarify and unmask, the terms Pacific Islands, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia as well as even some of the individual island names represents the destructive legacy of settler

colonialism in the renaming of Indigenous lands. Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu in Melanesia, Guam and Palau in Micronesia, and Tonga and Hawaii in Polynesia represent some of the Pacific islands grouped within these overarching terms. Spikard (2002) provides a good orientation of the location of the Pacific Islands: Melanesia includes the discrete societies located in islands such as the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. To the North of these islands are the many islands of Micronesia, separated by wide oceans that are more homogenous in culture as compared to Melanesia. The more familiar of the island groups, Polynesia, includes the islands of Hawaii in the North and New Zealand in the South, and then Tuvalu in the West and Easter Island in the East (see Figure 1).

Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi (Native Hawaiian) scholars, Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright and Brandi Jean Nālani Balutski (2014) assert that the development over time of each of the Pacific Island groups derived from very unique socio-historical contexts that function within distinct sociopolitical conditions. For instance, lands of Indigenous people in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Hawaii remain overrun by Western settlers. Specific to this study, the Micronesian region to which Palau is located in, has the "dubious distinction of having had more colonising powers imposing their will than any other colony in the world" (dé Ishtar, 1994, p. 4). This context then produces varying narratives of schooling. Soaladaob (2010) provides a brief history of schooling in Palau. The introduction of (Western) schooling began with Germany even though Spain was first there, Spaniards were focused on spreading Catholicism. After Germany, Japan instituted an expansive primary school system with some opportunity for advanced study based on examination. After WWII, the United States extended primary school and added secondary and advanced post-secondary education (vocational/technical).

Figure 1. The Pacific Islands: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia



To tell the story of Palau is also to acknowledge the colonial footprints within Oceania. The masking of Pacific Islander culture began with the invasion of a defenseless region by colonial powers (Wright & Balutski, 2013). The impacts of that time period continue to this day through lingering institutions and continued economic dependency. Colonization in the Pacific, dates back over 400 years ago with the early colonizers of England, Germany, and Spain. The focus, as with most of the European discovery and expansion campaign, was for economic prosperity as well as evangelism through missionaries (Pobustsky et al., 2005). The standard view and discussion of slavery is almost always based in the African slave trade. Most people are unaware of the enslavement of Oceania people. Blackbirding, in the 19th and 20th century, was a practice that involved deception and kidnapping of Indigenous people in the Pacific (i.e. Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) to labor on plantations in South America (Wright and Balutski, 2013). Additional impacts included the decimation of populations due to foreign diseases, the

illegitimate removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands including the use of land for nuclear testing (i.e. Marshall Islands), and the subjugation of traditional ruling systems.

Due to wars, particularly World War II and military interests, imperialism increased. The islands most affected during these wars include those within the strategic locations of Micronesia – *Guahan* (Guam), *Belau* (Palau), *Wa'ab* (Yap), Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae, Marshall Islands and Northern Mariana Islands (including Saipan, Ronin, and Tinian). These islands experienced initial occupation by Japan, who established formal schooling to the islands, forcing children to attend the schools to learn Japanese. At the conclusion of World War II, the islands transitioned to the United States as a "colonial war prize" (Pobustsky et al., 2005, p. 61). Most of the islands became Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) under the authority of the United States and over time have entered into varying degrees of sovereignty from territory to independent nations. My study specifically focused on an island that is a former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands deemed by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (2019) department as having "special relationship with the United States," the Republic of Palau.

Freely Associated States in Micronesia

The islands in Micronesia represent a geographically, ethnically and culturally diverse group of islands with varying political statuses: independent, commonwealth, unincorporated territory of the United States and constitutional government in free association with the U.S. (Heine, 2002, p. 2). As mentioned in the previous section, my study focused on an island in the latter group, the Freely Associated States (Campbell, 2010), or former TTPI, that have signed a Compact Agreement of Free Association (CoFA) with the United States. The Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands jointly signed an agreement in 1986 and the Republic of Palau signed a separate CoFA in 1994 (Epstein, 1987; Pobutsky et al., 2005).

Through the compact each independent island nation has an arrangement with the U.S. for economic, political and strategic provisions (Heine, 2002) in exchange for the U.S. to have access to land and water for military uses. The compact in Palau yielded different results because of the grass root campaign of *mechas* (Elder women). The women filed a lawsuit against the government to protect the *Belauan* constitution that upheld rights to land, respect for freedom and the preservation of traditional heritage. Zohl dé Ishtar (1994) quotes *Belauan* Gabriela Ngirmang, who was at the time the highest-ranking woman in East Koror, Palau: "Land has names here…land is the most valuable thing we have. It is our identity. Without it we are lost" (p.47). Ngirmang and other *Belauan* women, experienced violence and threats as they firmly stood to "ban all nuclear and any other toxic substances, [a] global first" for any nation and an ultimatum which has never been repeated (dé Ishtar, 1994, p. 44).

Higher Education in Palau

> School knowledge systems, however, were informed by a much more comprehensive system of knowledge which linked universities, scholarly societies, and imperial views of culture. Although colonial universities saw themselves as being part of an international community and inheritors of a legacy of western knowledge, they were also part of the historical processes of imperialism (Smith, 2012, p. 68).

While land was saved through the efforts of *Belauan* women, settler administrators and specifically the American administrations introduced and developed institutions that continue to this day. Maori (*Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou*) scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith in quote above highlights on such lingering colonial footprint, the post-secondary institution. Higher education in Palau was created, modeled, and supported by various departments and agencies of the United States government. The CoFA alliance included infrastructure and fiscal support for Palau's

higher education system. One source of funding comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides funding for the Micronesian Land Grant (2019) program. The program is administered by the College of Micronesia-FSM, the U.S. Congress-designated land-grant institution, and funds are allocated across the three Micronesian colleges that are partners/collaborators: Palau Community College, College of Micronesia-FSM, and College of the Marshall Islands (*Administration*, n.d.). Palau Community College and the other CoFA nations are designated Minority Serving Institution (MSI), specifically Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). MSIs aim to assist historically underrepresented students in matriculating to and graduating from institutions of higher education (Clifton & Gasman, 2015). Of the seven categories of MSIs, AANAPISI is the newest. The others include Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). AANAPISI was authorized first through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act in 2007 and later was authorized through the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008 (United States Department of Education, 2020).

Beyond the framework and funding of education in Micronesia, education policies and practices are in need of further inquiry—especially in terms of whose knowledges are at the margins and devalued. *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi* Scholar, Maenette Benham (2006) insists that schooling for native people has always been a contested space, one that is full of "conflict, struggle, and negotiation over content, context, value, instructional strategies, and measures of accountability" (p. 26). While Indigenous languages are recognized as national languages, within the educational systems in Palau, the English language supersedes native languages in use and legitimacy. English is the language of instruction in Palau, following the global trend of English

as the *lingua franca* and its influence as the language of economic success (Benham, 2006; Underwood, 1984). Native language and culture have therefore been targets for subjugation and decimation. Thaman (2003) asserts that Pacific Islander scholars and literature (and thus Indigenous Knowledge) have and continue to be silenced, devalued and ridiculed. This discussion of the history of Palau with reference to colonization gives further credence to the purpose of this study, reflecting a need to center the narratives of Indigenous Pacific Islander voices to understand how Indigenous Knowledges are integrated into Palau Community College.

Pilot study

Prior to data collection and three years before I would write my dissertation proposal, I conducted a pilot study that eventually revealed the topic of my research study. By this time, I had written several papers for several classes and conferences about Palau Community College regarding transfer admissions and its unique relationship with the United States. My initial goal was to better understand the college's transfer program through transfer rates, resources and services or the transfer experience through the lens of students. Even with this specific focus, I had very broad questions that allowed me to gather general stories about Palau Community College. For my pilot study, I talked with the president of the college, the librarian, some students in the tourism classes and an alumna of Palau Community College. My conversation with Patrick Tellei, the president of Palau, lasted almost two hours and that is when I was introduced to the Non-Instrumental Navigational Course taught by a master navigator from island of Satawal in the *Wa'ab* (Yap) island group. The course intrigued me because it was unlike other community college courses as class materials included the sun, moon, stars and clouds. Regarding my research topic, Patrick's advised me to "Go to the taro fields." It is the same guidance given by *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi* (Native Hawaiian) scholar, Haunani-Kay Trask.

She wrote in her book, *From a native daughter: Colonialism and sovereignty in Hawaii*: "To know my history, I had to put away my books and return to the land. I had to plant taro in the earth before I could understand the inseparable bond between people and *aina* (land)" (Trask, 1993, p. 118). The navigational course, the message from Tellei, and the words of Trask helped to steer me towards wanting to learn more about Indigenous Knowledge, and specifically Palauan Knowledge. I spent the next summers after the pilot study learning through experience and through story to further articulate the aim of my study.

Methodology

All the stories from my pilot and thereafter have inspired and guided me, but one story from my mother stands out. On many a hot and humid day, my mother, sister and I would walk to the beach in Palau to catch a cool breeze for relief. One day as we walked from the beach back towards our family land in Ngesang, Ngaraard, my mother reminisced about one of her childhood friends, who had recently passed away. My mother remembered the last time we were all together in Palau when her friend mentioned to her: "Sint (my mom) you know our footprints are all over here." My mom then pointed to where her friend's house used to be, now, satiated by fallen coconuts and an abundance of banana trees, grass, and other wild plants. I can take myself to that place again, amongst my mother's, her friends', and our ancestors' footprints. I appreciate the ability to connect with as well as take care of this land where my footprints too are embedded in Palau's story.

I employed the metaphor of footprints throughout my dissertation. I immediately felt connected to this story. Later that same year when my mom passed away, the words of this story "our footprints are all over here" became my new reality as I earnestly looked for my mother's footprints. It was even more significant to me when two weeks after my mom's passing, I had

my first child. My mom has walked before and alongside of me through the many steps within this doctoral program and especially this dissertation. She listened to me when I told her that I would pursue yet another degree and then I told her my objective would be to focus my study within Palau. She was excited when I told her my plans for a pilot study and that I wanted her to travel with me (I never went to Palau without my mother there). My mom offered me insights when I told her that my research study revolved around Palauan Knowledge. See, her footprints are all over this dissertation.

Dissertation Overview

The main story of this dissertation asserts that Indigenous Knowledge is not a fixed notion in the world. It challenges perspectives that Indigenous Knowledge is in the past and therefore has nothing to contribute to the ongoing process of knowledge production. The study focuses on examining Palau Community College and provides a story that demonstrates the resiliency of Palauan Knowledge. In Chapter 2, I situate my study within the conversation of the possibilities of Indigenous Knowledge within the academy. It goes through examining the notions of Western superiority that have marginalized and subjugated Indigenous Knowledges. I, then describe my epistemological framework, in Chapter 3, to espouse my approach within this study. It is grounded in the stories passed down to me from my family and ancestors. In Chapter 4, I espouse an Indigenous methodology that includes how I reflected and co-constructed this dissertation story alongside collaborators who shared their personal narratives and reflections about Palauan Knowledge.

Chapters 5 through 8, convey the many stories from collaborators that help to answer my research questions about Palauan Knowledge, Palau Community College, Indigenous places of learning and Indigenous teachers. Chapter 5 provides background information about the site of

this study, Palau Community College and brief descriptions of the collaborators within the study. Chapter 6 dives deeper into the personal narratives of collaborators to illuminate ways in which they were separated from knowledge. The chapter also includes a discussion on how some collaborators used the experiences of separation to work within various efforts to protect and preserve Palauan Knowledge. Following this discussion, Chapter 7, then focuses on the topic of incorporating Palauan Knowledge in Palau Community College. Chapter 8 brings the conversation to a broader context to examine how continuity can be envisioned both in and outside of Palau Community College (PCC). The chapter also provides some recommendations and ideas for future possibilities to honor Palauan Knowledge in the PCC. The final chapter (Chapter 9) reflects on the connections that are made throughout the dissertation and between the chapters of the study. It captures the main stories, new considerations, and what this dissertation journey has meant for me.

CHAPTER 2: INTERCONNECTING AND DISTINCT: STORIES OF INDIGENEITY

I grew up with stories. My mother is a storyteller. One day sitting on the beach in *Belau*, looking out towards the ocean my mother told me a story about death, wisdom, and intuition. We sat watching the waves come in and my mother began to talk about the passageway in the reef. It was a man-made path that the U.S. military created by dynamite. What they did not know is that the obstruction to the reef created a dangerous and deadly pathway, one that would capsize a boat and drown its passengers. My mom talked about many who lost their lives – foreign teachers and naïve youth. She also spoke of my grandfather, a fisherman, who knew the waters intimately, and through this connection could make it through that same passageway safely. She said my papa would say that it was a matter of waiting for the first wave after the calm, then counting each wave thereafter until number seven. Then on that seventh wave, the ocean granted you safe entry. Anything outside of the ocean's permission was perilous. The story is one of many that taught me how knowledgeable *rubaks* (Elder men in Palau) were of the ocean, the personal connection and relationship they have with changing currents (human-influenced or natural) as well as a reminder of the power and agency of the waters.

I enter this story of education in *Belau*, knowing it was a forced passageway for Indigenous people in the Pacific, one that has changed not only the flow of knowledge but also what type of knowledge is transmitted within the islands of *Belau*. My study seeks to illuminate the way in which Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing are incorporated within a higher education system that has historically as well as currently maintains Indigenous Knowledge (IK) at the margin. The formal higher educational system is still a new passageway for knowledge transmission and production in Palau. Much like the story that opens up this chapter, Indigenous

people of Oceania observed the new educational passageway and over time have adapted to it in ways where they center Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing.

In this chapter, I begin with a discussion on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in higher education, the new passageway, to help frame the study by illuminating insights, impacts, influences and possibilities of IK in the academy. The next section specifically focuses on Indigenous post-secondary institutions, providing important context of institutions created with a mission and vision to preserve, value and teach in ways that respect Indigenous Knowledges. Lastly, the literature review tells the story of higher education in Oceania to connect Pacific peoples to the larger conversation amongst Indigenous peoples and therefore to Indigenous Knowledge.

Higher Education: A New Passageway for Indigenous Knowledge

Much of the literature on Indigenous Knowledge in higher education calls attention to its devaluation as well as the lack of legitimacy it receives (Battiste, 2008; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Erwin & Muzzin, 2015; Schofield et al., 2011; Smith, 2012; Teaiwa, 2006; Thaman, 2003). At the heart of these discussions is the fact that Indigenous identity has been subjugated by the educational systems brought by White-settler culture that privilege Western knowledge systems (Gonzalez & Colangelo, 2010; Semali & Kincheloe, 2011; Teaiwa, 2006). Amidst the "predominantly Euro-Western defined and ascribed structures, academic disciplines, policies, and practices" it has been a challenge in the academy "to create meaningful spaces for Indigenous peoples" (Pidgeon, 2016, p.77). *Choctaw* scholar, Devon Abbott Mihesuah and *Dakota* scholar, *Waziyatawin* Angela Cavender Wilson (2004) assert that:

> "By purposely ignoring Indigenous voices, publishing repetitive monographs that offer little to tribes, hiring unqualified faculty, graduating unprepared students, and devaluing

Indigenous programs and concerns on campus, many scholars and universities are still supporting, promoting, and acting upon many of the same colonial ideologies" (p. 31). Gonzalez and Congalelo (2010) specifically call out these colonial ideologies, arguing that not much has changed from previous perceptions of Indigenous peoples as savages, instead "these settler nations have essentially changed only the means and not the substance of how they treat Indigenous peoples, particularly with regards to higher education" (p. 6). Moreover, this colonial legacy continues to create tensions for Indigenous Knowledge in the academy due to the expectations of agencies and organizations overseeing institutional evaluation and accreditations through mainstream standards (Cole, 2011). "The academy is the privileged center of meaning… making dominated by imperial nation-states; as such, its primary history is one that has served colonialist cultural interests, both directly and covertly" (Justice, 2004, p. 101).

The question that many scholars have debated in regards to the inclusion of local, Indigenous Knowledge is what place, if any, is there for Indigenous Knowledge in higher education (Barnhardt, 1991; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Hunt-Jinnouchi, 2011; Justice, 2004; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Pidgeon, 2008, 2016). *Cherokee* scholar, Daniel Justice (2004) asserts that within higher education "we cannot underestimate the trauma and violence of the loss of [Indigenous] Mother tongues, but we can work to ensure that those cultural understandings continue into the future" (p. 106). Justice (2004) encourages and reminds Indigenous people that the academy is as much our inheritance as our connection to the land and further asserts that Indigenous peoples have a right and entitlement to be a part of the meaning making of this world. With these words, I assert that the inclusion of and the re-righting of Indigenous Knowledge through research that acknowledges Indigenous values of relationship, respect and reciprocity

(Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2001, 2008) is a restorative and necessary research agenda.

A way to resist the subjugation of Indigenous Knowledges is looking to indigenize the academy through what Corntassel (2012) describes as everyday resurgence of practices helping towards the regeneration of Indigenous Knowledge. Indigenization is described by Pidgeon (2016) as "a movement centering Indigenous Knowledges and ways of being within the academy, in essence transforming institutional initiatives, such as policy, curricular and co-curricular programs, and practices to support Indigenous success and empowerment" (p. 77). In the process of indigenization, it is important to note that Indigenous scholars caution that not all aspects of IK may be appropriate to share according to Indigenous practice (Smith, 1999; Wright & Baluski, 2016). The next section covers six studies in Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) to highlight what literature exists on the important conversation of indigenizing the academy. The first two studies based in the U.S., focus on reclaiming higher education to demonstrate the important influence and impact of IK on Indigenous identity and student success. The final four studies help to widen the discussion of the legitimacy of Indigenous Knowledge in higher education by engaging other higher education stakeholders as well as looking at non-US contexts.

Reclaiming the Higher Education Passageway

"The act of claiming higher education as Indigenous space: American Indian/Alaska Native examples," told by *Assiniboine* scholar Sweeney Windchief and *Hopi* scholar, Darold H. Joseph (2015) and the "Indigenous Knowledges and the Story of the Bean," imparted by *Lumbee* scholar Bryan Brayboy and scholar Emma Maughan (2009) offer the stories of Indigenous students who are reclaiming the higher education passageway through Indigenous ways of

knowing, being and doing. Windchief and Joseph (2015) analyzed videos from Indigenous video-sharing websites and valuations of Indigenous offices and programs. These videos and reports highlighted instances of survival when Indigenous students took ownership of their educational spaces through ceremony and tradition. The power of the students' examples led to the authors' recommendation that students engage in a "conscious act of seeking" Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing while simultaneously participating in post-secondary education (Windchief & Joseph, 2015, p. 279). On the other hand, Brayboy and Maughan's (2009) scholarly essay is a story that provides examples of how Indigenous Knowledge informs the work of Indigenous pre-service teachers at a PWI in the United States. Though this article does not espouse a methodology, it mirrors a participatory research orientation, with observations and interactions between researcher and teacher participants. The article asserts that by centering IKs within curriculum, "predominantly non-Indigenous educational spaces might come to value IKs as both worthy and useful" (p. 5).

These two articles offer important insight regarding positive impacts of reclaiming higher education by integrating Indigenous Knowledge. The articles leave room for further research within different contexts as well as through different sources and methods. First, the stories from Brayboy and Maughan (2009) and Windchief and Joseph (2015) exist within institutions where Indigenous people are in the minority (PWI) in the institution, opening up questions for the how Indigenous Knowledge lives within Indigenous Post-secondary Institutions such as Palau Community College, an Indigenous-controlled institution in Oceania. Secondly, these studies focused on students. Additional inquiry is needed to understand how other higher education stakeholders (Elders, community members, administrators, faculty and/or staff) incorporate IK within the academy. Lastly, with IK at the center, the indigenization of the research process is

also important. Windchief and Joseph's (2015) study focused on storytelling by gathering and analyzing data of Indigenous student voice resisting in online spaces, while Brayboy and Maughan (2009) present their findings in a narrative on how IK informs Indigenous teachers' classroom lessons. With oral tradition at the core of many Indigenous cultures, storytelling data and methodology are then congruent with an Indigenous paradigm. In other words, these articles "honour orality as means of transmitting knowledge and uphold the relational which is necessary to maintain a collectivist tradition" (Kovach, 2010, p. 42). My study seeks to expand the research and include these considerations.

Hazards: Evidence of Tension

Just like the danger that is present for boats and passengers that go through the man-made passageway in my opening story, there are hazards for IK as it navigates through the higher education pathway. The review of literature that discusses these dangers and provides important background information for my study. The articles within this section share the commonality of being set within a PWI, but also differ from the previous articles in that they are from contexts outside of the United States (i.e., Australia, Canada, and South Africa).

The main thread throughout the articles in this section revolved around the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge as it relates to curriculum. Hart et al. (2012) cited tensions for pre-service teachers within Australian mainstream institutions, critiquing that IK reflected more of a "learning about" approach rather than "learning from" (p. 717). A powerful conclusion by the authors is that inadequate inclusion of IK creates a competition for its validity in the academy and also creates a void in opportunity for Indigenous students to reflect on IK in accordance to their professionalism as future leaders. Unlike Hart et al.'s (2012) study, Botha's (2007) analyzed questionnaires completed by faculty regarding the intensifying call for South African

higher education institutions to Africanise (indigenize) their curriculum. Problematic statements like “what will happen to our present standards of living” and suggestions that IK be haphazardly included in optional modules or in visits to experience another’s culture led to the research themes: “fear of Africanising” and “add-on to the curriculum” (Botha, 2007, p. 212).

Additionally, the integration of Indigenous Knowledges in institutions are impacted by limited resources, leading to missed opportunities like bringing in Elders or hiring Aboriginal faculty members (Hart et al., 2012; Pidgeon, 2008). Furthermore, Erwin and Muzzin’s (2015) study offer additional voices of concern regarding the absence of IK in higher education with particular attention to the “absence of the spiritual dimension which is the heart and soul of IK” (p. 60). Their study with Aboriginal students, staff and community members in a Canadian community college advocated for “welcoming the spiritual dimension beyond Aboriginal centers into curricula and in the spirit of the college” (p. 60).

The findings in these studies reveal the need to engage in additional research to center Indigenous Knowledges as a means to acknowledge the influence of IK, to support Indigenous identity and to challenge supremacy notions of Western Knowledges. Hart et al., (2012), Pidgeon (2008), and Erwin and Muzzin (2015) each provide contextual information shedding light on the historical and current status of Indigenous Knowledge and formal education developed by Western settlers. However, each of the studies’ context is unique and therefore lead to different realities for the inclusion of IK. Pidgeon (2008), in her recommendation, calls for additional research in universities across Canada and internationally, to illuminate the complexities involved in Indigenous higher education. My study seeks to further the research regarding IK within a context that has a very different colonial history as compared to Australia (Hart et al., 2012), South Africa (Botha, 2007) and Canada (Erwin & Muzzin, 2015; Pidgeon, 2008). As

mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Micronesia has the distinction of having the most colonizers of any colony in the world (dé Ishtar, 1994). Altogether, the colonial history and nation-nation relationship result in distinctive influences on Indigenous Knowledge and Palau's higher education system and therefore warrant further research. The next section is more representative of Palau Community College in terms of its institutional type with literature on Indigenous Post-secondary institutions as protectors of Indigenous Knowledge.

Indigenous Post-secondary Institutions: Protectors of Indigenous Knowledge

The discussions that arise from the previous section regarding Indigenous Knowledge focused on Predominantly White Institutions, whereas this section reviews the literature on Indigenous post-secondary institutions. In his book, *Uncommon Schools*, Wade Cole (2011) describes post-secondary institutions as sharing a common "commitment to serving indigenous students and preserving Indigenous cultures" (p. 119). The literature on Indigenous post-secondary institutions covered in this section is critical to the discussion of Indigenous Knowledge as it provides a unique perspective within a space where Indigenous people are the majority across student body, administration, faculty and staff.

Together, *St'uxwtews* and *Nlaka'pamux* scholar, Verna Billy Minnabarriet's (2012) and *Iñupiaq* scholar Pearl Kiyawn Brower's (2016) studies, based in the westernmost providence of Canada and Alaska respectively, provided insights on Indigenous leadership as a way to actualize educational sovereignty. Brower (2016) entered her research study with the understanding that Indigenous Knowledge is living, due in part to the participation of the Indigenous community, especially Elders, within the Tribal (Indigenous) Colleges. She further asserted that Indigenous holders of knowledge should be seen as teachers and not assistants. For Indigenous post-secondary colleges, Indigenous Knowledge was seen as a guiding force for

institutional leadership with IK approaches as instrumental in "helping students understand the cultural, academic, and social strength that they receive [and] help[ing] them realize their self-determining nature" (Minnabarriet, 2012, p. 111).

Gaviria's (2012) study on the sole post-secondary institution located in the most northern region of Canada, Nunavut Arctic College also demonstrated the important role of Indigenous leadership. The study adds to literature by examining the impact of globalized economic ventures on Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing, being and doing. Within this resource-rich (mineral, gas and oil) environment, "Nunavat face[s] tensions [in] development, decolonization and survival" and therefore contends with how to meet seemingly conflicting objectives (p.122). In line with other scholars (Agarwal, 1995; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1998; Nakata, Byrn, Nakata, & Gardiner, 2005) Gaviria (2012) insists that Indigenous Knowledge (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) does not only encompass knowledge from the past, but IK is also contemporary and changing, thus contradicting the view that Indigenous people are stuck in the past. This evolving presence is demonstrated by the intentional actions of Nunavat college administrators who address current global pressures utilizing the Inuit knowledge that values resourcefulness and seeks solutions through "creativity, adaptability and flexibility" (p.120).

The discussion of leadership is encompassed by a larger conversation about power. Indigenous post-secondary institutions operate as Aboriginal or Indigenous controlled, however they still have to contend with a society that is dominated by Western knowledge and a higher education institution steeped in Western standards (Gaviria, 2012). Hunt-Jinnouchi's (2011) study explored barriers for students who transfer between Aboriginal-controlled colleges and Public Post-secondary colleges in Canada. The study involved community consistent with an Indigenous epistemological framework and methodological approach, as in my study. The article

recounted the statement of an Elder who insisted that Aboriginal controlled institutions were not stepping stones to public post-secondary institutions, but rather "sacred places of learning…designed to resist mainstream pedagogy in order to retain cultural practice and understanding and to revitalize language and traditional practice" (Hunt-Jinnouchi, 2011, p. 293). The study was an affirmation of the importance of building self-identity and knowledge in your own culture. It was also an assertion that "Indigenous Knowledge and practice is equally valid" (p. 295).

All in all, these studies cover institutions recognized as Indigenous by law or by governmental agency in large nation-states (Canada and the United States) that continue colonial efforts. Palau Community College, on the other hand, was developed by American settlers to train Palauans and other Micronesians in Western vocations (Epstein, 1987). So unlike Indigenous post-secondary institutions, Palau Community College was not recognized as an Indigenous institution for *Belauans* and their knowledge but was an effort to encourage Western economic interests and values. Even as we learn from these Indigenous post-secondary institutions, as mentioned before, institutions in the Pacific have rarely been the focus of research. Research about Palau Community College can respond to Minnabarriet's (2012) call for the stories of Indigenous post-secondary institutions to be told, such that the story specifically includes the way in which the institution is shaped by Indigenous Knowledge. Lastly, in line with a responsibility to the community the research on Palau Community College can inform the institution on how they can better meet the needs of the institution's Indigenous objectives such as what happened with Nunavit's assessment. The next section moves to Oceania to provide context broadly covering the various islands in the region and then specifically reviewing literature in Palau. The discussion seeks to demonstrate Indigenous Knowledge in the region.

The Story of Higher Education Research in the Pacific Islands

Like other Indigenous peoples in the world, formal education was exported by Western societies to Oceania. Western settlers established and maintained institutions of higher education predicated with assumptions that their knowledges were superior over local, Indigenous Knowledge (Heine, 2012). This section helps to provide the story of higher education in the Oceania focusing on the larger nation-states of New Zealand and the United States (Hawaii), where most of the literature on Indigenous Knowledge in higher education exists. The subsequent section highlights the limited research within the region of Micronesia, where the Republic of Palau and its sole institution, Palau Community College exists.

Formal Education and Indigenous (Oceania) Knowledge in Polynesia

The image of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific and their knowledge systems exist mostly amongst the islands of Polynesia. As mentioned in the previous section on Indigenous post-secondary institutions, much of the research regarding Indigenous institutions are within the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Cole, 2011). This section reviews higher education literature within two of the aforementioned countries, New Zealand and the United States, concerning the Indigenous peoples of Pacific, Maori and Native Hawaiians respectively.

The studies by Pio et al. (2014), and Mueller and Collins (2016) each looked at ways that universities could better integrate Indigenous values and knowledge. Pio et al. (2014) reviewed how universities in New Zealand "re-imagine[d] policies and practices drawing from the complex richness of indigenous world view" (p. 676). On the other hand, Collins and Mueller (2016) focused on how university agents in Hawaii interacted with the Indigenous Knowledge and ways of being of Native Hawaiian taro farmers. My study is an extension of this work, one that honors the indigeneity of the land by legitimizing and incorporating Indigenous Knowledge

throughout the higher education institution. In return, it allows for reciprocity and respect for Indigenous peoples who have been marginalized from contributing to knowledge production in the university. Pio et al. (2014) reflected on positive narratives of Indigenous people in the academy and their study contributing to enlarging the space for indigenous worldviews in the university. Collins and Mueller (2016) highlight the sacred relationship between community members (taro farmers) and land, in an effort to impress upon the university to recognize Indigenous epistemologies, further indigenizing the university's land grant mission.

Studies in New Zealand and Hawaii also focus on the impact of the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge on student success. Kepa and Manu'atu (2011) studied the way that New Zealand tertiary institutions marginalized Indigenous and Oceania migrant peoples (i.e. Tongans, Samoans). Conflicts arose between Western and Indigenous worldviews. For example, mainstream pedagogy in New Zealand is entrenched in "assumptions of individualism and competition" while, the language and tradition of Oceania peoples express values of collectivity and connectivity (p. 619). Indigenous scholars (Hart, 2010; Smith, 2012; Thaman, 2003) do not posit that Indigenous Knowledge is all encompassing. Boyd et al. (2011) discussed culturally responsive programs that make room for many knowledge systems recommending that the university's curriculum have both "indigenous and western knowledge of nutrition, exercise and health promotion" (p. 27). The underlying premise is the need to center Indigenous Knowledge as a consequence of centuries of suppression (Pidgeon, 2016; Windchief & Joseph, 2015).

Formal Education and Indigenous Knowledge in Micronesia

While New Zealand and Hawaii in the United States are representatives of Oceania, there are still so many other Indigenous people in the Pacific to add to this conversation. This dissertation addresses this gap, by including voices from the Micronesian islands and specifically

from Palau. The way of knowing, being and doing in Palau was consistently impacted through hundreds of years of colonization. When sovereignty was finally in their sights, the "huge flow of American aid, became so 'unreal' as to inhibit even the limited indigenously-based and sustainable development, that might have taken place" (Epstein, 1997, p. 145). Only in the mid 1990's did Palau gain Indigenous control over their educational institutions (K-12 and higher education) and thereafter conversations concerning the inclusion of Palauan culture and ways of knowing in education intensified. The limited research that is emerging from the U.S. affiliated Pacific tells a story of resistance to the dominance of Western ways of knowing in the Pacific and an assertion to include Indigenous Knowledge systems (Cholmay, 2013; Soaladoab, 2010; Uriarte, 2010). These studies essentially establish the debate surrounding knowledge systems and imagines what (re)centering Indigenous Knowledge would look like in K-12 and higher education institutions (Uriarte, 2010).

Indigenous Knowledge in the K-12 system

Much of the conversations about Indigenous Knowledge in education is at the primary and secondary levels of education in Micronesia. O'Neill and Spenneman (2008) provide some context for the marginalization of Indigenous Knowledge in education, asserting that continued dependence and accreditation by Western educational organizations essentially result in heavily Western-oriented curriculum. Their study specifically examined K-12 education in Micronesia where curriculum was U.S.-centered at the expense of more culturally, geographically and nationally relevant material. While their critique is aligned with researching IK in education, their context is different in that they studied primary and secondary schools. Conversely, my study turns from a primary focus on barriers and instead to the centering of stories reflecting the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Palau Community College.

Belauan scholar, Kiblas Soaladaob (2010), showed the impact of Western education on Palauan society particularly through the lives of Palauan youth. She interviewed nine Palauan *ngeasek* (youth) and seven *ulsemuul* (Elders) to gain an understanding of the conflicts between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Her research found that both *ulsemuul* and *ngeasek* valued their traditions and culture; however, they acknowledged that living with both Palauan and Western ideologies present, makes it harder to maintain traditional practices. She further emphasized that a lack of interrogating conflicts amongst different ways of knowing minimized the opportunity to combat its negative impacts. Soaladoab's (2010) study also focused on understanding if Palauan youth value Palauan Knowledge and whether the interaction of Western and Palauan ways of knowing contributed to an identity crisis. A participant described Palauan Knowledge as being "intangible heritage," where you must know who you are and your [family] beginnings. Even more, the participant discussed that Palauan Knowledge must be practiced (do knowledge) and lived, not something idly kept in a museum. My study adds to the inquiries from this study, seeking to learn more about how Palau Community College resists the dominant notion of a typical community college.

These two studies display the growing narrative showcasing how Indigenous Knowledge lives in practice (Pidgeon, 2016) within formal education systems. The inclusion of these studies while relevant, still point to a lack of literature of Indigenous Knowledge within the higher education context in Palau. My study seeks to address this gap by looking at how Indigenous Knowledge is incorporated in Palau Community College. The next section discusses a master's thesis that opens up this discussion within Palauan higher education.

Indigenous Knowledge and Higher Education in Palau

Belauan scholar, Edelene O. Uriarte (2010), argued for the need to have an academic program dedicated to the teachings of Palauan tradition at Palau Community College. Her study included interviews of students and Elders who asserted that Palauan culture and ways of knowing must be the center and rationale for all curriculum. Uriarte (2010) insisted that the first step in creating a Palauan Studies Program was to have "our (Palauan) culture, our way of knowing and how we see the world around us as the center and key rationale for all course instruction in the curricula" (p. 5). She eventually concluded that the development of a Palauan Studies Program was a necessary step towards the decolonization of Palau Community College. Since the publishing of this master's thesis, Palau Community College has established a Palauan Studies Program. Even so, there is so much more pertaining to Indigenous Knowledge to examine within Palau Community College. As seen in other studies, Indigenous or Aboriginal centers and programs can be an overemphasized and overtaxed space for the recognition of indigeneity of the institution (Erwin & Muzzin, 2015; Windchief & Joseph, 2015), so there is a need to identify Indigenous Knowledges and examine the incorporation of those knowledges in other areas within the college. Additionally, my study differs from Uriarte's (2010) and other research studies in that I also engage as a learner within Indigenous learning environments, such as taro fields, to listen, observe, learn and talk with Elders and other teachers. This engagement allows me to honor the Indigenous epistemological framework of the study by centering Indigenous Knowledge in Indigenous spaces of learning. In the end opportunities to engage Indigenous teachers and learning environments help to recognize the "depth of Indigenous Knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place, offer[ing] lessons that can

benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 24-25).

Summary of Chapter

The interaction of Western and Indigenous ways creates what Lather (2006) denotes as a hybrid practice. It is a weaving in and out of Pacific Islander way of life, history of colonization, aspirations and socio-economic needs, with that of Western ways of knowing, forms of education, economics and global politics (Lather, 2006). Furthermore, Lather (2006), writes about the importance of research in not only giving voice to the voiceless but preventing the dying "of people, of culture, of eco-systems" (p. 44). Research can help to tease out the tensions and arguments regarding the level of authenticity of Indigenous Knowledge in an Indigenous community college. It would also be faulty to not acknowledge the influence of Indigenous Knowledge on the Western curriculum that is being taught within these colleges.

What was illuminated in this section still does not help in understanding the Palauan context since most of the research has been done in large nation-states that are not geographically isolated. Therefore, my study provides a unique perspective of how indigeneity is reflected in a context where little has been written. Furthermore, existing research focuses on indigenizing institutions that are either predominantly White in student demographics and/or surrounded by a mostly non-Indigenous context. Similarities exist in that Western ideology looms regardless of location and institution due to lingering influences of colonization in additional to globalization. Nevertheless, even when we map on what we know about Indigenous post-secondary institutions to Palau Community College, there is still room to conceptualize and learn about how Indigenous Knowledge is integrated, in a higher education context with

Indigenous student and staff in majority, in a country whose population also reflects this majority.

CHAPTER 3: CENTERING PALAU AND ALL RELATIONS

Family histories are especially important to Indigenous culture, and that of Indigenous people of the Pacific. I am the daughter of David William Hannibal and Hasinta Renguul Sibetang Hannibal. The Indigenous land to which my father comes from is unknown. My grandfather, Lawrence Hannibal's stories traces us to Philadelphia where he grew up, to South Carolina and then to Jamaica. My grandmother, Katherine Jackson Hannibal's stories trace only to Kansas. These histories are incomplete without a connection to the original land of my family as a result of slavery. On my mother's side, my grandfather Renguul Rekewis is from Ngarechelong and my grandmother, Klei Sibetang Renguul, from Ngaraard. In Palau, we trace our lineage through women. My lineage traces from Ngesang within the hamlet of Elab on the *despedal* (east coast) of Babeldaob which is the largest island within the island nation of *Belau* (Palau).

It is my family history on my mother's side that I know the most. Sitting with my *mamang* (grandmother) or hearing stories from my mom about my *mamang* reminds me of the vast amount of the knowledge she holds regarding our family lineage and its connection to land and water. Women in Palau have a deep relationship with land through taro cultivation and clan and family land ownership. My *mamang* retells Palauan legends that describe how we came to be in Ngaraard as well as the relationships we have to people in other villages. She became a titleholder in a village in Ngiwal, travelling from our home in Ngaraard to Ngiwal with the knowledge passed down through oral history regarding her place as the ranking *mechas* (Elder women) and therefore, the successor titleholder. Such knowledge is important to the Indigenous historical preservation of family, village, and/or clan land. Additionally, the knowledge she holds settles issues and disputes about land. For example, she once travelled to the Bureau of Land and

Survey (an office not needed before colonization) in Koror, to correct an illegitimate claim regarding land boundaries. On another occasion, she expressed her displeasure in an unauthorized cellular tower on our family land, immediately ordering its removal and insisting the repair and return of the land to its original state. Through these stories, my *mamang* imparts knowledge passed on from generation to generation of family genealogy and connected to that are lessons for respectful use and treatment of land.

Deluill: The Foundation of Indigenous Ontology and Epistemology

I started this chapter with a brief description of my family lineage and with the lessons about relationship from my grandmother. Before moving to epistemology, Meyer (2001) describes Indigenous ontology as answering the questions of who you are, who are your people, and where are you from. It is with this definition of ontology that Meyer (2001) asserts that a better understanding of epistemology results from knowing who is talking. At the core of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology is relationships. Relationality involves relationship with others, with relatives alive and past, with ideas, with the environment/land, and with the cosmos (Meyer, 2001; Wilson, 2008). *Belauan* scholar, Kiblas Soaladaob's (2010) study on Indigenous Knowledge with regards to Palauan youth espoused three dimensions of relationships, first the act of building relationships started at the home, secondly these relationships were widened to and cultivated in community and lastly relationships are developed consistently over one's entire life. Meyer (2001) identifies relationship as an epistemological category, further describing relationship and knowledge as the notion of self through other. In particular, he explains that relationship to land and water are different based on one's history, genealogy, culture, context and experience.

Indigenous Epistemology as the Guiding Framework

Arriving at this point in articulating the epistemological framework for this study involved connecting to my family history as explained in the story above. Patrick, Palau Community College's president told me, that it is important to know who you are so that you can make connections with others and their stories. When I listen to my *mamang*'s stories, they go in a circle, weaving the past, present, and future, all-important to understanding and respecting the significance and impact of such knowledge. Much like my time engaging with family and stories, how I came to espouse an Indigenous epistemological framework involved going in circles, getting lost, opening up and listening. It involved reading the work of Indigenous scholars espouse Indigenous epistemology. Epistemology is a Western research concept. Both *Cree/Saulteaux* scholar, Margaret Kovach (2005) and *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi* scholar Manulani Alui Meyer (2001) discuss the conflicts involved in the language of research. Kovach (2005) describes research language as having the ability to silence those at the margins. Furthermore, she explains that in an effort to achieve Western legitimacy the pressure is to absorb the dominant research language or else have your work be disregarded in the academy. It is here where Meyer (2001) rationalizes using Western concepts because it is part of the discourse of power in the university to deconstruct and arrive at a consensus of questioning the meaning of words. As with Kovach, Meyer and other scholars, I utilize Western research concepts imagined and explained through an Indigenous lens. The next section involves defining epistemology and then a discussion on what is Indigenous epistemology.

Defining Epistemology and its Relationships

It is important to listen to Indigenous scholars make sense of epistemology. It is clear from their discussion that inherent in their interpretations is an Indigenous perspective. *Cree*

scholar, Shawn Wilson (2008) defines epistemology as "the study of the nature of thinking or knowing [involving] the theory of how we come to have knowledge or how we know that we know something" (p. 33). Kovach (2010) adds that epistemology is knowledge nested within social relations of knowledge production. According to Wilson (2008), epistemology builds upon specific ontologies and Meyer (2001) similarly shares this view, insisting that epistemology and ontology are inseparable. Kovach (2005) explains that an Indigenous epistemology assesses research from one's own personal/cultural knowledge and includes asking critical and challenging questions. I will define and discuss Indigenous epistemology connecting elements described by Indigenous scholars to my own personal cultural knowledge, Palauan epistemology.

Indigenous Epistemology

An Indigenous epistemology is an important framework because it supports the central topic of this study, Indigenous Knowledge in the academy. *Soloman* islands scholar David Gegeo (2001) insists that Native Pacific Islander students and scholars use "native epistemologies to construct and theorize knowledge" (p. 57). He describes Indigenous epistemology as a "cultural groups' ways of thinking and of creating, reformulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses and media of communication, anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture" (p. 58). *Cree* scholar, Michael Anthony Hart (2010) explains Indigenous epistemology as "a fluid way of knowing derived from teachings transmitted from generation to generation by storytelling, where each story is alive with the nuances of the storyteller" (p.8). Hart (2010) further discusses Indigenous epistemology as a subjectively based process including dreaming, visioning, meditation and prayer. Indigenous epistemology helps me in identifying, understanding, honoring and appreciating Indigenous Knowledge. The purpose of this chapter is to help readers understand my approach to the research study including how

Indigenous epistemology has influenced every aspect of the study including the construction and embodiment of the introduction, literature review, research questions, methodology, data chapters, and conclusion. Through the writings of Indigenous scholars such as Hart (2010), Meyer (2008) and Wilson (2008), I describe Indigenous epistemology, how we come to know, through three common ways of knowing espoused by Indigenous scholars: 1) experience; 2) language; and 3) the subconscious (Hart, 2010; Meyer, 2001; Wilson, 2008).

Experience

Indigenous people have acquired much of their knowledge in direct experience with the natural environment (Argawal, 1995; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998). Indigenous schooling for *Belauans,* existed in the home and taro fields for girls and women and in the ocean and *bai* (meetinghouse) for men and boys (The Palauan Historical Society, 1997). Learning also happened through ceremony, in direct participation or through observation. It included *ngasech* (first birth ceremony) and *cheldecheduch* (settling of estate after a death). Experience is foundational to this study. Out of respect and responsibility, I will incorporate traditional learning spaces to center indigeneity for myself and also as a place to listen, get lost, and learn.

Language

"Not merely a passageway to knowledge, language is a form of knowing by itself; a people's way of thinking and feeling is revealed through its music." (Trask, 1993, p. 114). Indigenous epistemology materializes from traditional languages. My mom's cousin, when discussing Palauan culture, explained to me that it was hard to teach without language. In fact, Kovach (2005) emphasizes that "language is a central system of how cultures code, create, and transmit meaning" (p. 52). She asserts its centrality when she writes: "the stronghold of language, writing and worldview in generating truth creates difficulties for Indigenous peoples

whose traditional philosophies are held deep within constructs that are neither written nor consistent with patterns of dominant language" (p. 26). Absolon and Willett (2005) believe that cultural worldviews are embedded in language and charge that Indigenous researchers continue to re-name research even if those reading misunderstand due to the absence or inability to accurately translate words or the lack of an epistemological framework to understand the meaning of words. My study seeks to elevate Indigenous language, anticipating and encouraging the use of Palauan language. I also endeavor to utilize more stories, chants, and reference words within my study to indigenize the final written product.

The Subconscious

Indigenous epistemology involves the subconscious: dreams and visions. Indigenous epistemology appreciates that which can be gained beyond the five senses which includes the subconscious – dreams (Wilson, 2003). It is a method consistent with the theme of relationship that which connects you to an extra-intellectual space or provides "answers from above" (Wilson, 2003, p. 111). Hart (2010) asserted that the spiritual and physical realm play an important role in connecting humans to "the perpetuation of nature processes in the world [that] must be sanctioned through ceremony and ritual" (p. 7). My study will respect the spiritual relationship of Indigenous people to ancestors, land, water and sacred rituals including personal journaling (field notes) about spiritual experiences and attentiveness to the spiritual realm in conversation.

Conclusion

For Indigenous cultures, genealogy matters. The stories in Palau vary depending on the village that you come from. At every point, I will locate myself as well as endeavor to locate the storytellers' positionality, which will respect a co-creating approach of the study. A focus on how

one identifies (village, island, educator, Elder, title-holder, etc.) will be both forefront and background as I listen to the storyteller, connect and develop a relationship with the storyteller, as well as analyze and present their story. Indigenizing within the academy also means indigenizing research. It is my intention, to honor an Indigenous approach throughout this study. I do so by an awareness, responsibility and respect of all relationships, continually engaging in story while being reflexive of my subjective insights as a storyteller. It also means recognizing a fundamental way of learning from experience with land; paying close attention to language and its meaning and embracing the insights that come from the subconscious of others in addition my own spiritual experiences.

CHAPTER 4: FOOTPRINTS

Name and place (*beluu)* are salient markers of identity for Palauans. *Chelbulel a blai ma beluu* was an important discipline for young people of traditional Palau. It is with an understanding of who you are and most importantly, who you represent that provides guidance for how you conduct yourself in respectful and acceptable ways. An old Palauan saying advises:

> *A belkul a tekoi er Belau el kmo, omtebedang el merael e ke mo dechor ra tmuil, e mesang a blim ma omtebedang ra beluu e ke mo ra klemedaol e mesang a beluam. A chomorael el mo ra ngii di el ker, e ke mertii kederaol.* [Translated it says:] When leaving home, go and stand at the edge of the yard and take a good look at your house. When leaving town, go to the *klemedaol* (landing and departure dock) and take a good look at your *beluu* (village). Anywhere you go, hide your *kederaol* (shore) (Palau Society of Historians, 1997).

My *Belauan* family names, Renguul (grandfather) and Sibetang (grandmother) are tied to a place – Ngarecholong and Ngaraard, respectively. When there is mention of my *mamang* (grandmother), Klei Sibetang Renguul, there is an instant acknowledgement of respect and honor, from her title, wisdom, age, and reputation. It is something as *chediil* (children); we observe and therefore know we are to strive to continue to bring honor to our *blai* (house) and *beluu* (village/place). It is with this understanding of my responsibility to bring honor to whom and where I come from that an Indigenous research paradigm is fitting. The next section espouses an Indigenous methodology, connecting it to Indigenous epistemology to illuminate an approach that is respectful of Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing, being and doing setting up a later conversation of methods. Before methods, I discuss Indigenous axiology to help

focus the research along Indigenous values. Indigenous methodology and axiology then help to select and influence the final sections: 1) methods and 2) research protocol descriptions.

Indigenous Methodology

An Indigenous approach to methodology continues with relationships at its core as described in the previous chapter describing Indigenous ontology and epistemology. An Indigenous methodology is specifically concerned with relational understanding and accountability (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Relational accountability compels researchers to ask the question: "Am I fulfilling my role as a researcher" rather than "answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse" (Wilson, 2001, p. 177). The Palauan saying at the opening of this chapter contains the message of responsibility. I am honored knowing that the research I conducted was possible because of the honor already established by all my relations. Lastly, Indigenous methodology's presence challenges the status quo that has historically misrepresented, mistreated and devalued Indigenous people and their ways of knowing and being. Mcleod (2001) says it best asserting that "[e]very time a story is told, every time one word of an Indigenous language is spoken, we are resisting the deconstruction of our collective memory" (p. 31).

Elder Shawn Wilson (2003) in his book, *Research is Ceremony*, provides a story of the development of an Indigenous paradigm co-constructed through personal experience and storytelling with other Indigenous scholars. He asserts that an Indigenous paradigm is different from dominant paradigms in that its fundamental belief stresses that knowledge is relational, a collective process, that cannot be owned by an individual. Furthermore, he emphasizes that an Indigenous paradigm incorporates an *Indigenous* ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology, removing it from incongruent research tools found in dominant frameworks. In terms

of the researcher and reader relationship, Wilson (2003) insists that the storyteller (researcher) must impart their story, their life and experience, so that listeners understand where the storyteller is coming from, thereby making the "absorption of the knowledge that much easier" (p. 32). My story is weaved throughout this study.

Wilson (2008) writes that an "Indigenous methodology must be a process that adheres to relational accountability [with] respect, reciprocity, and responsibility [as] key features" (p.77). Furthermore, Wilson (2008) asserts, "the knowledge that the researcher interprets must be respectful of and help to build the relationships that have been established through the process of finding the information" (p. 77). The research methodology of this dissertation will follow the story that was presented in the introduction chapter of this dissertation. The metaphor of footprints resonated so much with me when I jotted it down within my dissertation notebook. It was our first day in Palau and I did not have a single interview scheduled. My mom, sister and I strolled from the sandy beach to the unpaved dirt road and then over a small bridge. My mother stopped as we made it to the other side and began to speak, reminiscing about her friend who had passed away less than 3 months earlier. My mom looked out into a space full of freely growing vegetation and fallen leaves, sheaths, and coconuts. Looking out at this place, she mentioned where her friend's house had been. She told my sister and I that the previous summer that we were there, her friend mentioned to her "Sint (my mom) you know our footprints are all over here."

The methodology guided by this metaphor orients me to face the past in order to take the narrative forward (Andreotti et al., 2017). I am retracing footprints in order to see the changes that have happened along the way. The remainder of this dissertation takes you through a journey of understanding how Palau knowledge is incorporated into Palau Community College. It is a

journey where I walk alongside collaborators individually as they bring me through the paths that they have taken. The story then invites the collaborators take a walk together. Each chapter is another step that we, collaborators, myself and all of our relations take together to understand the past that then brings us into the present. I recognize that many people have walked this path and I tried my best to illuminate their footprints and identify steps of possibility.

Indigenous Axiology

Along this circular journey to understand Indigenous methodology, it is also important to include a discussion on Indigenous axiology. Axiology is concerned with the values and ethics guiding the search for knowledge (Wilson, 2008). Therefore, returning to the definition of epistemology, how we come to know, in Indigenous Knowledge is impacted by axiology questions such as what is ethical in the pursuit of the knowledge as well as what the knowledge will be used for. As mentioned before, Indigenous axiology must maintain relational accountability, meaning "that the methodology must be based in a community context (be relational) and has to demonstrate respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action)" (Wilson, 2008, p. 99). The following values are some of the principles of the traditional education system in Palau as described by the Palauan Society of Historians (1997). These values are shared amongst various Indigenous peoples and through the practice of relational accountability will be discussed within the context of Palau. Indigenous scholars also discuss the values in scholarly research. They include 1) *Omenguul* (respect) 2) *Ngerachel* (responsibility); and 3) *Klechubechub* (care and compassion).

Omenguul (Respect)

Omenguul was implanted and developed in the hearts of young Palauans in traditional times. Parents first taught this in the home and then children would honor their parents through

enacting respect with extended family members and with others within the village (Palauan Society of Historians, 1997). The popular Micronesian story of two brothers, Rongolap and Rongechik, reflect the importance of obedience and respect. Specifically, the story instructs us to have respect for one's father, teacher, environment and fellow human beings and "of course great love and respect for the canoe" (Cholmay, 2013, p. 68). Linda Smith, a *Maori* scholar, writes that "the term respect is consistently used by Indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity" (p.125). Respect within this study necessitates relationship building with the ideas and people involved in the study and identification of and guidance from Elders and Indigenous scholars. It also means respecting research as Cholmay (2013) does, beginning her collection of her data with giving thanks and asking permission to share sacred knowledge and culture.

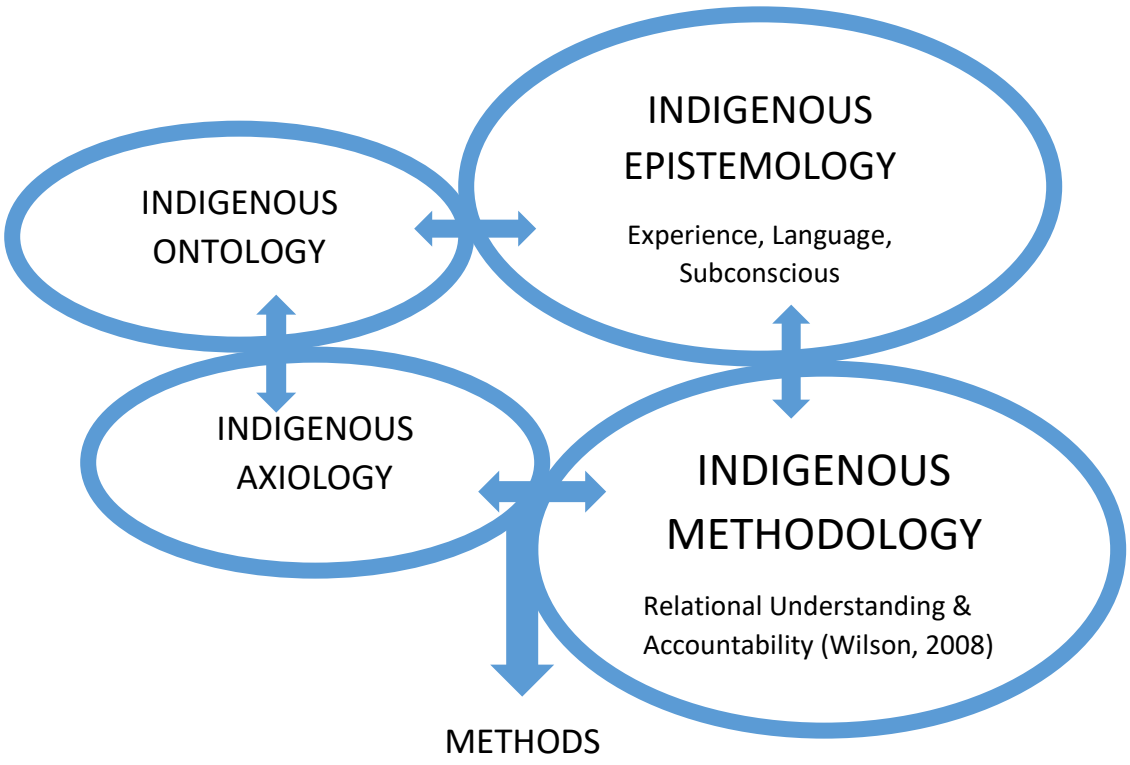
Ngerachel (Responsibility for Duties)

In Palauan culture, one's responsibilities were given at home and learned through observation and then experience. This included working within the taro patches or going fishing (Palauan Society of Historians, 1997). *Cree* scholar, Shawn Wilson (2008), describes methodology as a way of gaining more knowledge. He further insists that research within Indigenous communities must approach research with an interest to build relationship with an ultimate goal of providing results that are useful for the community. Indigenous scholars highlight a commitment to community and an understanding that in this relationship there are responsibilities on both sides. Wilson (2001) further probes researchers to ponder, "[w]hat are my obligations in this relationship" (p. 177).

Ulekerreu ma Klechubechub (Care, Love and Compassion)

Receiving visitors and treating others with compassion was instilled in Palauan youth. Within research this would reflect relational accountability and recognition that we must have compassion for all life. *Klechubechub* can be explained as the "belief that as we receive from others, we must also offer to others" (Hart, 2010). Compassion upholds the value of reciprocity, where giving back to the community is always at the forefront of the research.

Figure 2. Indigenous Research Paradigm Model



Methods

The methods section focuses on how I gathered individual stories and information for this study. The following discussion provides information about collaborators, *cheldecheduch* (interviews), meeting location, field notes and observations, and archival documents.

Subsequently, there will be a discussion of research protocol. The section concludes with discussion on data analysis.

Collaborators

Within this dissertation, I will refer to the Palauans who shared their stories with me for this dissertation as collaborators. Throughout this dissertation journey, the term participant was not a word that I felt fit the relationship that I developed with Palauans in this study. I tried to avoid using the term as much as I could, using 'individual' or 'Palauan' instead. I later attended a conference where the term collaborator was utilized to describe the individuals who Indigenous scholar, Nizhoni Chow-Garcia (2019) interviewed for her study. The term collaborator best honors the contributions of the Palauans who shared their personal stories and also imparted information to me in a way that also acknowledged my responsibility as a Palauan to honor Palauan Knowledge.

I arrived in Palau to conduct my study without a scheduled interview. I had made attempts to contact individuals and was unable to set anything up. I traveled to Palau by way of Michigan, California, Hawaii, and Guam. On this long journey to Palau I made up my mind to spend as much time at Palau Community College as I could. I also talked more in depth with my family about the goals of my study. On the second day of our visit, my aunt who is an elementary school teacher, informed me that the 8th grade class was touring Palau Community College that day. I immediately got my dissertation materials together and traveled with my sister to the college. The school bus left ahead of us, so I joined my cousin and his class midway through their tour. The tour encompassed visiting most of the programs within the buildings they were housed. Some of the programs included nursing, criminal justice, construction, and information technology. While on the tour, I spoke with some of the instructors and college

students mentioning my study. The career fair was the last part of the tour and this is where I met many of the collaborators.

In total, I engaged with nine *Belauans* and each of the collaborators had different relationships to the college. Their roles in relation to the college included community members active in college related programs/activities, administrators, faculty/instructors, staff, students, and alumni. Several of the collaborators had more than one connection to Palau Community College. In the next chapter, I provide a brief discussion of the nine Palauans. While not mentioned in the collaborator section in the next chapter, my family and friends are also contributors in co-constructing this story about Palauan Knowledge and Palau Community College. It is through their stories that Palauan Knowledge was first passed on to me and so it naturally flows into and throughout this dissertation. As mentioned, in my methodology story within Chapter 1, my family's footprints are all over Palau. Their footprints are evoked through storytelling, revealed in the subconscious, learned through instruction and observation and done in relationship with land. With the latter, land is also a collaborator and out of respect and responsibility, I made sure to also bring in my experiences in traditional learning spaces to center Palauan indigeneity for myself and also to listen, get lost and learn. So, through these relationships with 1) Palau Community College collaborators, 2) family and friends 3) and land I was able to share this story of Indigenous Knowledge in Palau and specifically within Palau Community College.

Cheldecheduch (Interview)

The method of collecting stories of Indigenous Knowledge respects the oral tradition of storytelling that historically and still currently carries Indigenous Knowledge from generation to generation. In Indigenous cultures, storytelling is a teaching tool and therefore stories told in

research are teaching tools as well (Iseke, 2013). Mcleod (2001) describes the colonization and exploitation of Indigenous people, separated them physically, mentally, and spiritually from home. It is through storytelling that Indigenous people can experience "coming home" (p. 21). Home represents Indigenous tradition, language, culture, and land. Furthermore, "to come home through stories is to anchor [Indigenous people] in the world" as well as preserve the dignity of an Indigenous person (p. 33).

The storytelling method is known by different names across Indigenous cultures as well as is a method touted by Western frameworks. For *Belau* and this research study, my primary method of data collection is *cheldecheduch*. Traditionally, *cheldecheduch* is a practice where an estate is settled after an individual has passed. It is generally translated to mean speech, discussion, discourse, or a meeting and is a time when elders pass on oral histories to younger members of their family (Soaladaob, 2010). The use of *cheldecheduch* allows for relational accountability to people and setting. Soaladaob (2010) presents *cheldecheduch* as a discourse methodology that can represent different levels, both formal and informal conversation. As I mentioned, family and land are sources of information for this dissertation. I therefore met in Indigenous places of learning to learn from them. This included the home, the beaches, stone paths, and the *mesei* (taro patch). I was in taro fields with my relatives and adhered to my place as the younger woman, listening, observing and taking direction (experiencing). Indigenous scholars mention that out of respect for Elders sometimes you may not enter with a set of questions nor use recording device if not permitted (Wilson, 2003). I intend to seek consent prior to any recordings.

Meeting Location

Locations for interviews were chosen by the collaborator. Some collaborators chose to meet in the library and others were able to meet in their office or conference room on Palau Community College's campus. In line with traditional and contemporary Palauan practice, monetary gifts were given to collaborators as a symbol of thanks. The next section details information of the settings that collaborators have experience in, that are also potential meetings locations.

Field Notes and Observations

The method of field notes was important for my study because they put me in relationship with all aspects of the research. Field notes provided reflection before, during and after engaging with collaborators. They were helpful in gathering initial impressions (tastes, smells, sounds, look and feel of the environment), keeping particular focus on the key topics for the study, and capturing observational notes where what is important to the collaborators overshadows the personal reactions of the researcher (Emerson et al., 1995). I had my notebook with me but limited the note taking out of the respect garnered from deep listening and observation. The field notes served to honor the relationship to both environment and people such that: (1) an understanding of the location of the meeting helped me to illuminate the proper cultural protocol attached to the location where the interview took place and (2) an understanding of how the social status of the collaborator in relation to me influenced the interaction. I also include notes from ceremonies, rituals and cultural practices that I took part in as well as journaling visions and dreams that I had or that others shared with me.

Archival Documents

Archival data reflect existing records I was able to be selective of what to examine and include in the data analysis (McBurney & White, 2004). It provided me with both historical and contemporary insights about Palau Community College. Much of the documents I received from my visit to the Micronesian-Pacific Collection in PCC's library. I was given the small booklet with the Palauan Constitution. Also, I was able get some pictures of newsletters, articles and book chapters (story of Lee Boo). I also received pamphlets from Belau Museum form one of the collaborators, Sholeh. One of the pamphlets addressed Palauan pregnancy and birth practices: *omesurech* (hot bath after first birth), *omengat* (steaming with medicinal plants), mo*-tuobed* (or Ngasech is the celebration of arrival of first child). Other pamphlets covered *omenged* (fishing), and building *bai* (traditional meeting house). I also purchased the book, *Many Voices, One Dream: From Mokko to Palau Community College* by Floyd Takeuchi as well as the book of poetry, *The Palauan Perspectives* by Hermana Ramarui. Thomas another collaborator provided me with several books published by the Cooperative Research and Extension office.

Research Protocol Considerations

At the beginning of *cheldecheduch*, the anonymity of participants may not be culturally appropriate (Wilson, 2003; Thomas, 2005). Naming attaches the authentic self to one's own personal story. Names are important because they denote honor, convey ranking, hold purpose, and connect individuals to ancestors. The separation of this is connected to the historical legacy of colonizers imposing and stripping the identity of Indigenous people and thus breaking relational ties. On the other hand, I also understand the position in which anonymity might be requested, such that to protect the names and families from readers of these stories who may misconstrue what is said. Therefore, I recognize that it is not my place to decide on whether

pseudonyms will be used, but rather I gave participants a choice and allow that choice to be changed anytime during and after the *cheldecheduch* and research process.

Co-constructing the Main Story

In analysis, relational accountability to human, spirit and inanimate beings must be carefully communicated. Wilson (2003) in his comments on data analysis poses the following question: what relationships help hold the ideas together? Furthermore, he insists that the analysis must be focused on synthesis rather than the deconstruction of ideas. The ultimate goal, then was to build relationships that provide useful results for the community. Through the data collection process, in other words, "the process of 'coming home' through stories could be thought of as the experience of discerning the liminal space between [Indigenous] culture and the mainstream society" (Mcleod, 2001, p. 20).

Transcription

The interviews were renamed, filed and organized to ease the transcription process. I transcribed the data without any transcription service as I was wary of any misinterpretations due to accents and lack of knowledge of Palauan language. For recordings where Palauan was spoken, I sought the assistance of a Palauan student to ensure that I had the right translation. This helped with my limited knowledge of Palauan language, grammar and spelling, thereby assisting with accuracy and enhancing the research process.

Storytelling

During this process of storytelling, I was attentive to those key concepts and values espoused in Indigenous ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. Shawn Wilson (2003) insists on a synthesis rather than the deconstruction of ideas in the analysis process.

Wilson's (2008) quote often came to mind throughout my own as well as the storytelling of others within the writing of this dissertation. The quote reads:

> While I may be the one who is the storyteller…the knowledge that I present does not belong to me or even to the amalgamation of us friends who participated in the research…the knowledge is part of the relationships between us and cannot be owned (p.121).

I have already defined this dissertation as engaging the footprints of many from the past, present and eventual future. It is therefore a collective story I narrate that is both about and is, itself, Palauan Knowledge.

With relational accountability in mind, I listened to recordings to illuminate stories that honored relationships to Palauan Knowledge, the main topic of this study. I entered in conversations with other Indigenous scholars and especially those from Oceania. These scholars pushed me to see the research with an Indigenous lens and specifically in alignment with Palauan ways of knowing, being and doing. I found myself longing to be present with the collaborators again as I read through transcriptions. To come close to this, I on many occasions returned to the recordings and to simply listen. I did not write during the listening session, but instead was focused on the tone and on the words. I reviewed my field notes on the location of the interview and listened to the sounds in the background as I visualized the location where the interview took place. During this time, it helped to close my eyes so that I could remove some of the noise from my current position to better visualize both collaborator and place.

In the midst of reviewing collaborator narratives, stories arose from within my learning and experience. These personal stories were steppingstones guiding me along the journey of writing this dissertation. The stories derived from the experiences that I was simultaneously having in Indigenous places of learning. These stories were observations of the land as I took

walks around my home, hiked up and down ancient stone paths, strolled on the beach to watch the sunrise and explored Palau Community College. The stories anchored me in my relationship with collaborators and my relationship to this dissertation.

I took all the data (recordings, field notes, and archived data) and created visual representations (pictures and diagrams) to help me make sense of the many stories from collaborators. I drew circles and spirals that represented the non-linear process I found in the stories of collaborators as well as with my own process. This drawing included the words: re-centering, unlearning, negotiating, remembering, reconnecting, and listening. I created another visual representation that captured the story of the mesei (taro patch) based on my conversations, observations and time with my *mamang* (grandmother) and aunts. The sketch included taro, proverb, Palauan chants and legends (see Appendix I). An important visual for me was that of the map of Palau that illustrated a snapshot of Palauan lineage of each of the collaborators and I included myself. I mapped the collaborators based on the state within Palau where their parents were from. Palau Community College and Palau's capital were also indicated on the map. The map also showed all the states within the island of Babeldaob which held many of the stories about Palauan Knowledge. It aligns with relational accountability and helped me to think about the connections that collaborators had with each other, any relationship to me as well as any association with the location of the community college or to the island of Babeldaob.

As I walked alongside each of the collaborators, their stories revealed both similar and divergent paths. These paths at times connected to footprints from Indigenous scholars in my review of literature and then also added some new and interesting insights. I also followed some paths that are yet to be told because they are not meant for this dissertation story. Still other paths were sacred such that a written account would not be in proper relationship to either hold or pass

on the story. Scholars caution that not all Indigenous Knowledge can be shared (Smith, 1999; Wright & Balutski, 2016) and so some I guard as knowledge specifically for my family and others I do not make widely accessible so that narratives are not misappropriated or misinterpreted.

Lastly, dreams and visions were both sources of knowledge and sources of support in interpreting the narratives of collaborators. During this process I was attentive to the dreams and visions that I could remember and wrote them down in my notebook. I often talked to my mother about these dreams and she would often provide Palauan interpretations to the dream or aspects of the dream. After her passing, I still talked to her this time in expectations that she would respond later in a memory or dream. In order to focus I also turned to meditation in order to give over control to gain understandings from recordings, drawings, and my written streams of consciousness.

CHAPTER 5: BACKGROUND: PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND COLLABORATORS

In my many visits to Palau, I passed by Palau Community College (PCC) on my way to visit my family or to run errands for my mamang in Koror. I barely noticed the college and therefore did not know its story. Ten years later, I have spent a considerable amount of time learning about Palau Community College, through conversations, research and observation. My understanding of the way in which Palau Community College integrated Palauan Knowledge could not have been possible without the stories of the past. This chapter takes you on a journey that reveals the colonial footprints held within the history of Palau Community College. The story traces its beginnings with the Japanese administration to the American administration and then to today, as an institution in the sovereign country of Palau. Along the way to becoming a community college, PCC subsisted through a violent and destructive war and its name was changed five times. Following the historical account of Palau Community College, are brief profiles of the collaborators revealing their connections to the PCC (student, faculty, staff, alumni, and/or community member), how we met and how collaborators define Palauan Knowledge. I challenge readers to picture Palauan Knowledge – language, land, people, water, genealogy – while listening to the stories within this chapter. The hope is that this introduction will provide the footing necessary to walk in better relationship and understanding of the ideas presented in subsequent chapters.

Palau Community College

Palau Community College's journey reflects the political and economic transformation over time in Palau as well as within the Pacific region. Schooling is part of the colonial legacy from settler nations that came to Palau: Germany, Japan, and the United States. Most of the

background provided in this chapter will focus on Japan and the United States who had the most far-reaching influence on learning in Palau. The following section serves to provide background for the development of Palau's only post-secondary institution, Palau Community College.

Education was a byproduct of the "World Powers" campaign to occupy islands in Oceania. The primary aim was to obtain authority over Palau (and other Micronesia islands) for militaristic leverage (Richard, 1957). Schooling, then, became a tool used to assimilate Palauans to the values and ideals of the World Power. In order to understand how Palau Community College came into existence, it is important to include the development of formal schooling on the island. There is no community college without the establishment of education systems for children. These schools would serve a significant role in suppressing Palauan Knowledge. As mentioned, militarization is the impetus for foreign presence in the islands and it is the military who also initiated schooling during both the Japanese and American period of rule. Since Palau was a "prize" of battle, it is the military who first established order in the transition following war (Pobutsky et al., 2005). The impacts of military development and warfare have resulted in significant loss of indigenous education and knowledge. What follows next is not only a historical account but a story about the violence experienced by Palauan people and land as well as the damage done to the relationship between Palauan land and people. The story of Palau Community College follows a timeline of post-war development leading to the development of advanced education. In this chapter, I discuss the origins of Palau Community College following World War I, starting with the Japanese Administration's school: Mokko Tote Yoseijo. At the end of World War II, Mokko transitions to the Micronesian Occupational Center under the American Administration. This section concludes with a discussion of Palau Community College following Palau's move towards independence.

Japanese Administration: Mokko Totei Yoseijo

The origin of Palau Community College is traced to the period of time (1914-1940s) when Palau was one of several Micronesian islands in Japan's League of Nations South Pacific Mandate (Genz, et al., 2016). Japan saw the Pacific Islands, including Palau as a strategic economic and military position and therefore after World War I took over the islands from Germany. A transformation in learning and instruction began to take shape with the founding of the first school by the Japanese military in 1915 (Mita, 2009). Maki Mita (2009) provides a historical account of Palau under Japanese rule through the stories of Palauan elders whose lives as children were greatly impacted by forced attendance in Japanese schools. The Japanese military created the first schools and in 1918, schooling was transitioned to civilian administration with a honka (basic course) and hoshuka (advanced course) curriculum structure for students, ages eight to twelve. By 1918 there were five schools across the islands of Palau: Koror, Melekeok, Peleliu, Anguar, and Ngaraard. Later in 1922, the League of Nations became governed by Nanyo-cho and thereafter a clear division of schooling in Palau was established. Palauan students who spoke Japanese as a second language, attended schools named kogakko that utilized honka/hoshuka curriculum. On the other hand, Japanese children in Palau attended schools called kokumingakko. These schools aimed to make moral, health and living improvements. Mita (2009) asserts that outside of the Japanese stated purposes of schooling, it was clear from assemblies, curriculum and the presence of Japanese educators that the unspoken aim was to force obedience to Japan and its emperor.

Palauan children were forced to attend school or else their parents would be punished and jailed for not complying (Mita, 2009). Furthermore, those students not living in Koror, who were the few selected to attend advanced courses in Kogakko Koror would be further

disconnected from their families having to travel by boat as well as live in dormitories. Additionally, students were instructed in the Japanese language while many schools also prohibited Palauan from being spoken. *Mechas* Veronica Remeriang Kazuma recounted in Mita's (2009) study that her Japanese teacher would assign a Palauan student called Kangotoban (language watcher). This student would police peers during class and recess, reporting the names of students who spoke Palauan to teachers so that they would be disciplined. Stories from those who lived under Japanese administration revealed a goal of assimilation to Japanese ways of knowing, being and doing through instruction in Japanese geography, mathematics, and history (Mita, 2009). Additionally, Palauan students were expected to honor Japanese authority instead of Palauan leadership with daily assembly recitations of "We are the children of the emperor, we will be splendid Japanese" (Mita, 2009, p. 22).

Once a primary and secondary schooling system was in place, Japan looked to continue education for a very elite group of students. The school would be located in the bustling center of Palau: the city of Koror. Here, they opened a carpentry apprenticeship trade school called *Mokko Totei Yoseijo* for 15 students, selected from the different Micronesian islands in the Japanese Mandate (Mita, 2009). Carpentry was the initial course, and then administration added mechanics and civil engineering. The apprenticeship introduced new ways of knowing, being and doing through Japanese skills, tools, and measurements (Mita, 2009). When Japan joined the Axis Alliance in World War II, Mokko students were enlisted to support the Japanese military. They served in various roles, utilizing the skills they honed during their Mokko training and were assets due to their knowledge of the Palauan landscape.

The influences of Mokko Totei Yoseijo are ever present in Palauan society and within Palau Community College. The skill of carving continues through Palauan storyboards and

Japanese buildings can be found across the many islands of Palau. I mention these two colonial legacies because they connect to key aspects of my dissertation story. Storyboard carvings are popular art pieces in Palau with the artform reclaimed to keep alive and carve Palauan legends, traditionally passed down in the oral tradition or painted on a *bai* (traditional meeting house). Another interesting fact is what I learned while walking with Patrick around the campus. He informed me that the college's administration building served as a Japanese hospital during World War II and close by this building is a sealed entrance to a hidden tunnel system that secretly transported wounded Japanese soldiers from the ocean. The buildings on PCC's campus and the tunnels beneath it represent the lingering footprints of colonial rule. To summarize, colonial narratives from the Japanese administration provide insight into how Palauan Knowledge was impacted by land theft and institutional assimilation. Strict requirements for schooling suppressed any presence of Palauan Knowledge and buildings were constructed on land taken to serve military/empire needs and settler places of learning.

American Administration: Micronesian Occupational Center (MOC)

Following the Allies victory in World War II in 1945, Palau once again was under military rule with the United States Navy providing interim governance over the islands. Palau along with the other Micronesian islands formerly under the Japanese Mandate (Guam, Mariana Islands, *Wa'ab/*Yap, Pohnepei, Chuuk, Kosrae, and the Marshall Islands) were assigned by the United Nations to the United States. The distinct islands were identified as six districts and called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). An early initiative of the U.S. Naval government included establishing a system for elementary education, and a plan to encourage Palauans to pursue higher education (Tellei, 2005). In 1951 management of the islands was passed from the navy onto the U.S. Department of Interior (Richard, 1957). While under

territorial control, the United States was charged with promoting social, political and economic advancement in the territories.

Amidst the major island groups, the United States set up stations or occupational centers that had either a technical and or career focused mission (Uriarte, 2010; Rechebei, 2003). At the same time, there was also an uptick in funding for education initiatives by the Kennedy administration that sent American teachers to Micronesia through Peace Corp programming. In terms of the occupational centers, while Micronesians worked within administration many of the department heads and teachers were expatriates. As a result, the Japanese apprenticeship school, Mokko Totei Yoseijo, was reopened and renamed Palau Intermediate School with carpentry, boatbuilding, and a homemaking curriculum. Seven years later the school transformed into Palau Vocational School (1955-1968). In 1969, there was yet another transition when the vocational school became a two-year vocational/technical institution and was renamed Micronesian Occupational Center. A couple years later in 1972, the occupational center began the process to obtain full accreditation by the Accrediting Commissions for Community College and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and received approval five years later in 1977 (Uriarte, 2010). Still, more changes, re-organization and renaming were to come.

> On March 29, 1977, Trust Territory Public Law No. 7-29, amended later by Public Law 7-130, created the College of Micronesia as a public corporation under its own Board of Regents. The law, which took effect October 1, 1977, joined into a single post-secondary educational system the Micronesian Occupational Center and the Community College of Micronesia (which included the CCM-affiliated School of Nursing). In May 1978, Micronesian Occupational Center officially became Micronesian Occupational College, a

> distinct and complementary part of the College of Micronesia. (Palau Community College, 2015, p. 11).

Micronesian Occupational College in Palau was a satellite site of the Community College of Micronesia that served the six Micronesian island districts in the Trust territory. The Community College of Micronesia received considerable support from various U.S. departments (Education, Interior, etc.) including funding from the Department of Agriculture that followed a designation as a 1980 Land Grant institution (Micronesia Land Grant, 2019).

In the 1970s, the trust territory would start the process of voting on the status of their relationship with the United States (Tellei, 2005). Palau decided to pursue their own constitution and therefore a separate Compact of Free Association with the United States in 1994. The signed compacts produced yet another transition for Micronesian Occupational College. The centers and stations across the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands that formerly made up the Community College of Micronesia developed into three separate community colleges. Even though there are three distinct colleges, a treaty unified them under a public corporation known as the College of Micronesia (Lerner & Drier, 1990). This treaty allowed the community colleges to retain their U.S. Land Grant Status with funds going to the public corporation that would then disperse funds to the three different institutions.

It is during the United States administration that interdependence becomes the byproduct of the "advancements" made to supposedly assist Palau and other islands in recovering after their land and bodies were used and sacrificed for foreign wars. Interdependence exists because Palau has a valuable asset that the U.S. needed: a vast ocean to flex their military might. Interdependence crept in through Western K-12 and post-secondary systems. It was bolstered by the approval of U.S. accrediting body and enticed by renewable funding opportunities. This

interdependence illuminates lasting constraints on how Palauan Knowledge may show up in the institution. The next discussion moves to a new era with an independent Palau and yet another name change for its only higher education institution.

Independent Nation: Palau Community College

In 1993, Micronesian Occupational College became an independent college with its own board and was renamed Palau Community College. It is located in the downtown city of Koror in the Republic of Palau. The college enrollment in 2015 was 627 students of which 99% of the students are from the Pacific Islands with 76% from Palau and 23% from other Micronesian islands (Palau Community College, 2018). The college's website provides the following mission statement and education philosophy:

> Palau Community College is an accessible public educational institution helping to meet the technical, academic, cultural, social, and economic needs of students and communities by promoting learning opportunities and developing personal excellence. PCC's mission is to educate and enable students to cope with changing societies, and to prepare those interested to enter the workforce or to pursue higher education beyond PCC. (Palau Community College, 2015, p.12).

The language of instruction in the college is English. Palauan is spoken in some of the Palauan Studies courses. All in all, the CoFA agreement asserts an emphasis for advancing *quality* in the education systems of the island. Palau Community College is therefore accredited by a U.S. agency (ACCJC WASC). This accreditation is important for transferability of courses in articulation agreements with colleges and universities in the United States, as well as an eligibility requirement for U.S. grant applications and Federal Financial Aid.

A rarity of community college campuses, Palau Community College has on-campus student housing. The facilities at Palau Community College serve faculty, staff and students affiliated with the college in addition to national purposes. The track and field is actually the Palau's National Track utilized for nation-wide sporting events and practices. Government departments have offices on campus grounds including Palau Language Commission. The Tan Siu Lin Library is the largest in the country and is open to everyone in Palau (Palau Community College, n.d.). It includes the Micronesian-Pacific Collection that carries special materials from all over Micronesia. The collection was established in 1994 and consists of books, journals, maps, audio/visual and digital items, newspapers and government reports and documents (Micronesia Pacific Collection, n.d.).

Funding

According to Palau Community College's audit report (2018), it receives an appropriated budget ($2.4 million) approved by *Olbiil Era Kelulau* (Palau National Congress) and the College's Board of Trustees. The college also receives revenue through tuition and fees as well as obtains funding from U.S. departmental grants. A majority of the operating revenue comes from U.S. department grants ($3.2 million). PCC received funding in 2018 from the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine through a collaborative project grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Additionally, from the 2018 audit report, PCC received grant dollars from US. Department of Interior for joint training of Palauan government and PCC employees and monies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for Maintenance Assistance Program (MAP) funding for PCC Food and Agriculture Science program. Specifically, through the Department of Education, Palau Community receives grants from the following programs:

Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), Talent Search, and Upward Bound. The college previously received funding through the department's College Access Challenge Grant Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2019; Palau Community College, 2018). It is also important to note that for eligible Palauan citizens as a part of the Palau's COFA agreement, federal financial aid is available through the U.S. Department of Education programs: Pell grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (SEOG) and Work Study. Those citizens of the Republic of Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia also receive U.S. federal financial aid, however their CoFA agreement only provides student funding through the Pell grant program.

Lastly, the College established an endowment fund in 1998 that is entrusted to the college's Board of Trustees. The fund is in place to support future stability and programming in the college. It currently has $5.1 million, with a goal to use interests from the fund for college programming and objectives, once it reaches $10 million. The fund has received donations from Palauan and foreign companies as well as any individual working in Palau can sign up to have a set amount of money deducted from their paychecks. The college also holds different fundraising events throughout the year (Palau Community College, 2018).

Academic Programs

The community college has 21 accredited degree programs across three schools: 1) School of Arts & Sciences, 2) School of Business, and 3) School of Technical Education. Students can receive an Associate of Arts Degree (AS), Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS), Associate of Science Degree (AS), and Associate of Technical Studies Degree (ATS) in various programs (see Appendix G). The main programs of study include education and tourism.

The campus has articulation agreements with 15 colleges in the United States and three universities in Japan (see Appendix H).

In collaboration with San Diego State University's Center for Pacific Studies, a bachelor's and master's degree is offered. Other institutions are housed or provide services on the campus including Penn Foster Career School, National Occupational Competency Testing Institute, and Pacific Islands University.

Other Programs

As previously mentioned while under American administration, the College of Micronesia served as a public corporation amongst the Micronesian Trust Territory islands (Guam, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Yap, Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Palau). The public corporation continues to be recognized as having U.S. Land Grant status through the CoFA agreements, resulting in stream of funding for agriculture research in Micronesia. The College of Micronesia exists within the U.S. Land grant system as the only consortium of colleges. The Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) is PCC's office that administers the land grant activities. It has four divisions: 1) Agriculture, 2) Family & Consumer Education, 3) Natural Resources & Environmental Education Division, and 4) Enriched Food and Nutrition Education Program. CRE has three initiatives: Research (Agriculture Experiment Station), Extension (CRE) and Residential Instruction (Palau Community College, 2015)

Palau Community College also offers Adult School allowing people to obtain a high school diploma. Those attending Adult School can chose from two tracks: 1) Vocational and 2) College Preparation. The college also offers non-credit courses including a non-instrumental navigational course.

Summary of Palau Community College Section

The stories provided within this section offers context for the development of Palau Community College. It is layered by a legacy of colonization and imperialism where Palau and other Micronesian islands were viewed as colonial prizes of war (Pobutsky et al., 2005). Through World War I and II, Palau was propelled into a global battle for superiority between World Powers. Their land and livelihood was sacrificed and reduced as sites of military training, staging and combat. When war tensions lessened stabilization of the islands resulted in the introduction of settler ways of being, knowing and doing. Education systems were established to create a foundation of settler knowledges through primary and secondary education with the creation of advanced education through apprenticeship, vocational/technical school and then community college.

Schooling was a means to build a World Power's dominance, exporting their values and worldviews. The exchange was not reciprocal. Japanese rule involved a forceful removal of Palauan youth to schools where students were conditioned into strict obedience to Japanese leadership and where Palauan language was marginalized and forbidden. School and other official Japanese buildings were constructed disrupting the ways of knowing connected to relationships between land, water and people. I included the details of the Japanese administration because the youth forced into schooling are the parents and the grandparents of the collaborators within this study. My grandfather is one of these people, who spoke Japanese and was trained to be a builder. His generation is one who was impacted on a large scale by foreign schooling. Their ability to keep Palauan Knowledge alive amidst intentional silencing lays the foundation for resisting, reconnecting and reclaiming Palauan Knowledge within Palau Community College and all over the island of Palau.

The time under American authority established the current American style system of education on the island. Through an influx of money, expatriates and knowledge, Palau Community College transitioned from an intermediate school, then vocational/technical school, later to occupational center, then occupational college and finally to community college. Along these transitions, additional imperatives were advanced to provide valuable exposure to American culture, society and government as well as measuring citizens of the territories according to U.S. standards of success (Smith, 1969; U.S. Department of Interior, 1978). The history of Japanese and American influence as well as a continued relationship through American accreditation and funding allows us to better understand the site under discussion within this study. What follows next is background information for the Palauan collaborators who shared narratives about Palauan Knowledge, Palau Community College and Palau.

Profiles of Collaborators

I had the honor to speak with Palauans who are connected to the Palau Community College in different and overlapping roles including student, community member, instructor, alumni, and administrator. The aim of this section is to provide some introductory information about the collaborators. The collaborators were born between 1950 and 1990, a time when a U.S.-influenced K-12 system served as a main source of American influence. Each one of them attended primary school in Palau. It is their secondary and higher education stories that are divergent. I provide some insight within their descriptions of how each of the collaborators defined Palauan Knowledge. After the individual introductions, I reflect on the collaborators collectively.

Julita

I first met Julita in the Belochel building (PCC's cafeteria) during a college fair where she was tabling for the Palauan Studies program. She described her role at PCC as a community liaison or consultant who is invited to speak in the Palauan Studies courses. Before her conversation with me, Julita revealed her continuing work with Palauan Knowledge as she told me she had just finished a meeting with an archaeologist who is in Palau for a project to study Palauan terraces. Julita informed me that the project seeks to gather the stories surrounding the history and purpose of the terraces.

A search to find connections is respected and valued, so as Julita and I walked towards the conference room for the interview, Julita engaged me in conversations about our family connections. Interweaved in conversations about Palauan Knowledge, Julita reminded and encouraged me to attend a *kemeldiil* (funeral) of our family member. She went on to tell me that I would see Palauan Knowledge lived out through the ceremony.

Of all of the collaborators, Julita went the furthest away from Palau for secondary education and spoke of this experience saying:

> I was an exchange student…There is one girl now since passed away and myself were the first American field service students from Palau. And in fact, from Micronesia, so there is two of us from Palau, two from Yap, and two from Saipan that is the current CNMI (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). I actually spent my senior year in high school in Ojai, CA. So, I grew up, I graduated and I spent four years in the local Catholic Midland High School and then I finished my senior year there.

After spending time on the mainland, Julita made her way closer to Palau and attended the University of Hawaii at Manoa for both her bachelor's and master's degrees. Upon completion

of her degrees, she returned to Palau. Julita described herself as a student of Palauan Knowledge and of her own culture. She spoke of Palauan Knowledge as the terminology that you learn through relationships to land and to people. She characterized herself as a strong proponent for speaking the Palauan language and regarded genealogy as vital to Palauan traditions.

Sholeh

At the same college fair, I met the next collaborator, Sholeh, after Julita encouraged me to go to her table. She was outreaching to prospective students about the many resources at her job with Belau National Museum. Sholeh is an alumna of Palau Community College and currently works as the Herbarium Assistant, preserving Palauan Knowledge associated with plant life. She informed me that she was asked by administrators at Palau Community College to share information about what is available to learn at the museum as well any career opportunities. On her table, Sholeh had information of a new exhibit that incorporated Palauan Knowledge within the museum. She explained that the museum's permanent exhibits bring visitors through foreign administrations: German, Spanish, Japanese, and American. Like Julita, Sholeh has worked with several projects to document Palauan Knowledge through interviews with elders.

Sholeh and I are not related but we are similar in age and also have a Palauan mother and an American father. She explained that her mom demonstrated and passed on to her a love for plants and I instantly thought about my mother who has always shared a love of plants through gardening and visits to countless gardens. This was a reminder about how Palauan women are deeply connected to land.

Education in Palau was more developed when Sholeh grew up with both public and private K-12 schools. She explained the different school cultures from her experience at a private Catholic school education at Midzenty (K-8) in contrast to that of her transition to Palau's only

public secondary school, Palau High School. After high school graduation, Sholeh went on to study and graduate with a degree in marine biology from Palau Community College.

Sholeh defined Palauan Knowledge as the legends that your family tell you that instill the lessons about how you interact and behave in Palauan society. She added that your relatives also pass on Palauan Knowledge connected to the environment and culture.

Grace

In order to collect my thoughts, I would sometimes go to the library where I would meet Grace. She is an alumna of Palau Community College and has worked there for over 20 years. When she graduated from PCC, her first job was as a librarian assistant organizing catalogue material. In, 2010, she moved to her current position still in PCC's Tan Siu Lin library, specifically in the Micronesia-Pacific Collection. Her responsibilities include managing and collecting historical and current materials, articles, writings, and other artifacts that connect to Micronesia generally, with special emphasis on Palau.

Grace is someone who I met during my pilot study and during that time she gave me an in-depth tour of the Micronesia-Pacific collection. I spent many hours going through the collection of dissertations and books. It was nice to talk to her and learn from someone who has a lot of knowledge about the institution. When I returned, she introduced me to even more material which I utilized as sources (archived documents) for this study.

Grace's educational experience was solely in Palau including attending Palau Community College where she received an Associate of Science degree in library science, a program she mentioned no longer exists. Palauan Knowledge for Grace was represented by Palauan customs, that is knowledge connected to *kemeldiil* (funeral) and first birth ceremony.

Hermana

Hermana was the third person I met at the career fair. She is a guest lecturer in the Palauan Studies program and is involved in its summer programming for children. Hermana is a natural storyteller who has written a book of poems about imperialism and sovereignty in Palau entitled *The Palauan Perspectives* (1984). I instantly was drawn into Hermana's storytelling as she had so many unique perspectives from her time in Guam and the arrogancy and ignorance she experienced from Americans' perceptions of Palau's "dependence" on the United States. She fought their unquestioned assertions and elevated Palauan way of being, knowing and doing within her poetry. At the end our conversation, she enthusiastically invited my sister and I to join the Palauan Studies course that she was lecturing in later that day. My sister and I attended, listened, laughed, and learned so much from her stories as well as from the collective group of students and instructors in the class. It was another day that I had no knowledge of how it would turn out, but it was very much a Palauan day spent in stories and in building additional and deeper relationships.

Like Sholeh, Hermana attended a Catholic primary school in Palau, but to obtain her high school diploma Hermana had to go abroad like Julita though not as far just to the nearby island of Guam. After graduating from high school, she returned to Palau to work for a year at Palau elementary school and then attended Washington State University. The cold and long distance from Palau wore on her and she soon transferred to and received her bachelor's degree from the University of Guam.

Hermana spoke about Palauan Knowledge as those things that are important like history, and values like caring for elders and people as well as the expertise held by elders. She also

focused on the importance of learning Palauan language because she said it is the way you learn your culture.

Elicita

Elicita is the final collaborator that I met in the college's cafeteria during the prospective student fair. She is the coordinator and instructor in the Palauan Studies program at Palau Community College and formerly was an English instructor at the college. Elicita described her current role as bringing people together to identify content for the different courses that made of the academic program. Some of the collaborators mentioned in this section (Julita, Mat, and Hermana) are community members that she invites to share stories in the Palauan Studies courses.

It was truly an honor to meet Elicita and hear first-hand some pivotal stories of Palauan resistance. I could never have imagined that I would engage with a *mechas* (Elder woman) from the ethnographer accounts (dé Ishtar, 1994) I had read about in my review of literature at the beginning of my dissertation journey. I definitely reveled in her depictions of the Palauan matriarchal resolve to protect Palauan land, so evidently displaying the power of ancestral knowledge and Palauan women's relationship to land.

When describing Palauan Knowledge, Elicita focused on the knowledge that is connected to what is expected and required in Palauan society. She goes on to talk about learning traditional concepts like the chief system in Palau as well as the knowledge that supports a relationship and good stewardship of land. Palauan Knowledge she insists comes from an understanding of Palauan values of respect and responsibility.

Patrick

Years prior to my study, I spoke to my mother about a potential study at Palau Community College. My mother then talked with my *mamang* (grandmother) who encouraged me to go and speak with my relative, Patrick, the community college president. My grandmother and mother accompanied me to the college to set meet with him. I was able to schedule a time to converse and spent almost two hours listening to stories about the college and about Palau. He is the one who encouraged me to think about my study in the context of my familial lineage and the village that my family is from. I am sure that my previous interest in transfer admissions would have gleaned interesting conversations but the time I took to reflect on his guidance, the stories he told and the knowledge he sent me to find has turned out to be so invaluable. Alongside and within this study is my own re-centering and remembering of Palauan Knowledge.

Patrick is an alumnus of Micronesian Occupational College (former name of Palau Community College) and the current President of Palau Community College. He received a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and a doctorate from the University of San Diego.

According to Patrick, so many things are encompassed within the term, Palauan Knowledge. He describes it as the knowledge you get through your lifetime especially within your upbringing. It includes genealogy, customs (both mother's and father's side), knowledge about plants, and resources, and about techniques connected to fishing, taro cultivation and building.

Thomas

After talking to Patrick about additional collaborators for my study, he immediately connected me with Thomas because of the work he does in the *mesei* (taro patch). Thomas is the

Vice President of the Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) at Palau Community College. He described his role as working with the community to demonstrate and train in food and nutrition education. He also promotes environmental conservation and technical advancements in agriculture production.

Thomas was described by another collaborator, Dalton, as someone who really is knowledgeable about Palauan ways and passes that knowledge on to others. I certainly can agree with that sentiment because in my short time with Thomas I learned a lot. He was genuinely interested in sharing as much information with me not only for my study but for me. Thomas gifted me all of the CRE publications that he had, from taro cultivation to medicinal plants. He also encouraged me to have my family contact him if they wanted help with supplies and assistance in growing a garden. At the end of our conversation, he asked me about learning Palauan language, and we talked about how his wife could teach me.

Thomas received his bachelor's degree from US International University and a master's degree from San Diego State University. Thomas talked about Palauan Knowledge that concerned values of respect and Palauan custom and practice. He also discusses Palauan Knowledge that is connected to the work that he does now including the skills and techniques connected to taro cultivation and medicinal plants.

Mat

Grace introduced me to Mat while I was taking a break to write in the library. Mat is a former instructor and administrator at Palau High School. Mat attended elementary in Ngeschar and then went to Koror to go to intermediate school (7 - 9th grade). He later attended the centralized high school for all of the Trust Territories that was first located in Chuuk and then in Pohnpei. Thereafter Mat started teaching at Palau High School and in 1972, he was recruited to

Hawaii to develop a Palauan language and grammar book with a linguist at the University of Hawaii. These books are currently being used in the elementary school and my sister and I have copies of the book to aid us in learning the Palauan language.

Mat later returned to Hawaii and received a master's in linguistics and became Vice Principal of Palau High School and worked in Ministry of Education. He also worked for PCC when it was Micronesian Occupational College and later coordinating PCC's Federal Title II program. Mat defined Palauan Knowledge as inclusive of Palauan customs and language. He emphasized that it is also about the "knowledge of being Palauan" through knowing your clan and your status in society.

Dalton

I met Dalton when I attended Hermana's guest lecture in the Palauan Studies course. He was a student within the course, and he agreed right away to talk to me. The interview was conducted on the second floor of the Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) office where he worked as a farmer/research assistant. His direct supervisor is Thomas, one of the collaborators for this study. Dalton's main role for CRE is to teach community members about local food and eating healthy. Dalton is an alumnus of Palau Community College and he also continues to take classes at PCC specifically in the Palauan Studies Program: 1) Palauan History and 2) Palauan Grammar. Dalton described Palauan Knowledge as pertaining to Palauan culture and tradition. Furthermore, he mentioned that Palauan Knowledge involves techniques through taro and other cultivation as well as through the building of the *bai* (men's meeting house).

Collective Overview of the Collaborators

I was so honored to have the collaborators share their narratives about Palauan Knowledge with me. The brief descriptions above give you a glimpse of the collaborators: how

we met, about their schooling experiences, connections that I have with them and how they conceptualize Palauan Knowledge. I was fortunate to have made connections in years prior through visits to the college to drop off and pick up my cousins for class and during my pilot study. Each collaborator connected me to or told me about other people who I should talk to for my study. I ended up meeting with some and others I was unable to meet because of my short stay and their availability. As I reflected on the profiles of the collaborators, generational differences are evident. A majority of the collaborators were young adults while Palau was striving for independence and with no secondary school many of the collaborators attended high schools abroad and also attended college abroad. They were away from Palauan land and community and this impacted their engagement with Palauan Knowledge. Those born in the 80s and 90s were able to attend both high school and college and stay in Palau, but they were also impacted by globalization particularly through increased mass and social media that brought other cultures and knowledges through technology.

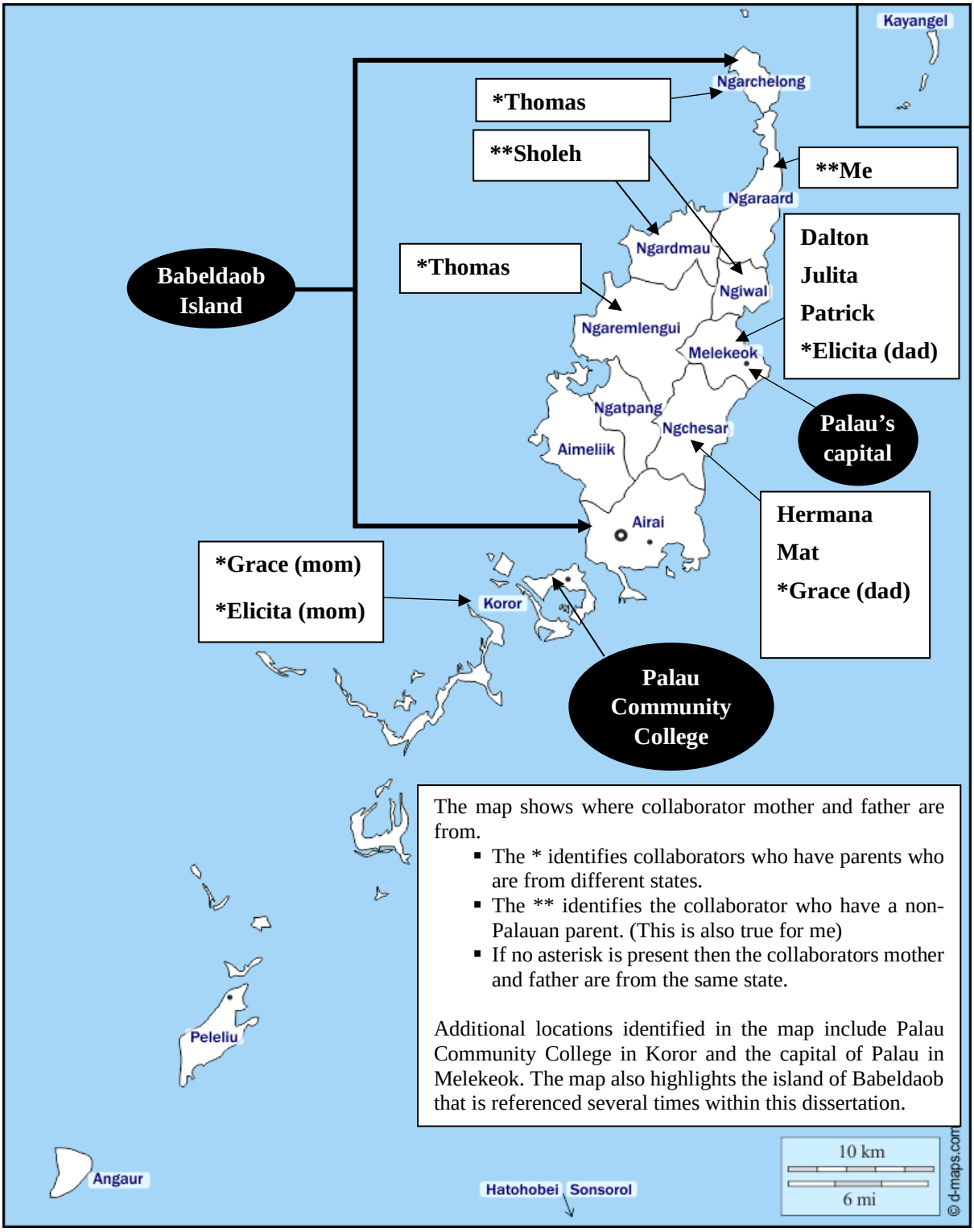
In addition to these descriptions, I created a map that provided a visual of where collaborators' mothers and fathers are from. There are no collaborators with family from *Airai, Aimeliik, Anguar, Hatohobei, Kayangel, Ngatpang, Peleliu,* and *Sonsorol*. For background, the island of Palau includes over 300 islands. Amongst 10 of these islands, there are 16 states. Starting in the far south and moving north are the states: Hatohobei and Sonsorol, who are located within the islands of Tobi and Sonsorol respectively. Next is Anguar and Peleliu whose state and island names are the same. Palau Community College (represented on the map) is located in Koror, the most populous state stretching across three islands: Oreor, Ngerekebesang and Malakal. Koror state is connected by bridge to the largest island in Palau, Babeldaob, which has 10 states. On the western side of Babeldaob, starting in the south are the following states:

Airai, Ngchesar, Melekeok, and Ngiwal. On the eastern side of the island starting in the south are Aimeliik, Ngatpang, Ngaremlengui, and Ngardmau. At the north end of Babeldaob is Ngaraard and Ngarchelong, two states that have both an eastern and western shoreline. Finally, the northernmost state is Kayangel whose island name is also Kayangel. The capital of Palau (formerly in Koror) is located in Melekeok state on the island of Babeldaob. Most of the collaborators' parents (Dalton, Grace, Hermana, Julita, Mat, Patrick, Sholeh, Thomas and me) were from states in Babeldaob, aside from Grace and Elicita's mothers who are from Koror.

Summary

The chapter provided context for Palau Community College, the site of this dissertation study as well as for the Palauan collaborators who shared their narratives about Palauan Knowledge. Palau Community College and the collaborators are represented on the map described in this chapter and weaved into both of description sections is a storied history of foreign development and settler schooling. As mentioned in my aim for this study, I wanted to bring in voices from diverse perspectives within Palau Community College. My study included collaborators who were faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members and many of them had multiple roles within the college. In subsequent chapters, collaborators also reveal their involvement in maintaining, preserving and centering Palauan Knowledge outside of the college. The following chapters build onto the stories presented in this chapter and aim to answer how Palauan Knowledge is incorporated into Palau Community College. Secondly and equally important is responding to the question on how Indigenous teachers and Indigenous places of learning inform Palau Community College.

Figure 3. Map of Palau: Family Origins[1]



[1] Reprinted and edited from "Map of Palau" by d-maps, 2019. Copyright (2009) by d-maps. Reprinted with permission.

CHAPTER 6: TAKING STEPS TOWARD REMEMBERING

The initial research question for this study sought to answer the question: How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated into Palau Community College? In this chapter, my own process to re-center Palauan ways of knowing, being and doing allowed me to open up so I could think and see differently. After conversations with collaborators, I understood that the story does not start with the institution itself nor with identifying and discussing ways in which Indigenous Knowledge appears in the institution. Instead the collaborators in this study, helped me to see and think about their personal experiences of separation from, and reconnecting with Palauan Knowledge. Collaborators' stories are a part of and make up a larger story including the impacts, changes, and resurgence of Palauan Knowledge in Palau. I suggest a need to examine these stories in order to illuminate the relationship between Palauan Knowledge and Palauan people. Collaborators' personal journeys of contending with the duality of living with settler knowledges and Palauan Knowledge provided important context for what they would later do in honoring Palauan Knowledge at Palau Community College.

In the previous chapter a brief history of Palau Community College (PCC) included stories of foreign influence and settler colonialism that disrupted, separated, and changed this relationship. The stories told in the PCC background chapter provided some insight into the colonial impacts of what de Ishtar (1994) described as Micronesia having the most colonizers of any colony in the world. Though other settlers came to Palau before, Japan and the United States had a wide-reaching imperialistic plan that included instilling settler ways of knowing through their given educational philosophies and systems. Japanese and American influence came up in most collaborator conversations with the United States having the prevailing influence due to significant and continued interdependence. Most of the conversation in this chapter involves

American influence though there is some mention of Japanese influence as there remains a lingering colonial legacy from their time of rule.

As I acknowledge the impacts of colonization in Palau, I also want to bring to the foreground here and throughout this chapter descriptions of Palauan Knowledge.
All collaborators definitively referred to Palauan Knowledge as something passed down amongst family members. One way that knowledge was disseminated is through storytelling. Oral history is at the core of Palauan Knowledge and through remembering by storytellers, it is alive. Sholeh described remembering Palauan Knowledge saying that it "starts with the family. It is the responsibility of the parents and other family members to teach children the way as well." Thomas reiterated this idea and adds on its purpose, saying, "The knowledge of Palau is from your own family, you get skills from your family...it is a type of apprenticeship."

What emerged from my conversations with collaborators, I suggest is a storyline that collectively speaks about separation from Palauan Knowledge. What followed for some collaborators was an effort to reconnect and protect Palauan Knowledge. It became evident to me that dissonance arose as collaborators reflected on their own engagement in Western education and culture. The result created an urgency to reclaim broken, lost, and displaced relationships with Palauan Knowledge. This personal journey of reflections served as motivation discussed in the next chapter, for the ways that collaborators would incorporate Palauan Knowledge in Palau Community College. In this chapter, I walk alongside collaborators to learn the stories from their past. These narratives illuminate a separation from Palauan Knowledge through changes in content, contexts and values. What follows after, are the various steps collaborators have taken to remember Palauan Knowledge. Through resisting, reclaiming and reconnection collaborators are fighting for the preservation of Palauan Knowledge as a means of survival.

Stories of Separation

Collaborators spoke about their concerns with the continuance of Palauan Knowledge in Palau. These concerns intertwined with collaborators individual experiences of Western knowledge. It is with this realization that I return to my review of literature by Indigenous scholars and specifically to *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi Scholar*, Maenette Benham's (2006) depiction of schooling for native people. Benham described it as a contested space replete with "conflict, struggle, and negotiation over content, context, value, instructional strategies, and measures of accountability" (p. 26). The collaborators, similarly, became a living embodiment of contested space, navigating the unknown waters of a Western culture and system of education. What follows is a discussion of the "conflict[s], struggle[s] and negotiation[s]" experienced by collaborators based on settler-colonial "content, context [and] values" that separated them from learning and living with Palauan Knowledge.

Content

In this section, I focus on collaborators' memories about Palauan Knowledge content and their narratives of separation from it. These stories reveal separation as a result of the marginalization and suppression of Palauan Knowledge and in its place the introduction and requirement to master new content advanced by settler nations. Making meaningful space for Indigenous peoples that centers Indigenous Knowledge (Pidgeon, 2016) is central to my study. At its origin, settler views of Palau lacked any consideration of Palauan Knowledge as valid content to be included in society and specifically in the curriculum they developed and taught in schools. I define content as subjects or topics of learning associated with Palauan Knowledge. For reference, collaborators' individual definitions of Palauan Knowledge were included in the previous chapter. These definitions appear throughout the chapter. While there were differences

and similarities, these definitions are helpful in understanding collaborators' reflections in this chapter and the chapters thereafter.

Collaborators' stories were full of knowledge passed on from elders and family members onto the next generation. They discussed the content of learning, pre-contact, as being grounded in relationships to family, clan members, village, and land. Furthermore, these relationships encompassed content about genealogy, cultivation techniques, fishing skills, and Palauan legends/chants, all taught through storytelling and learning by doing. When I think about skills in particular, I remember the immense knowledge and wisdom of my grandpa and grandmother who were skilled in oceanography to navigate and fish and geography for taro cultivation and food gathering. This knowledge, I also found in my aunts, uncles, and mother.

When I visited Koror, Patrick, the president of Palau Community College, commented about how I was fortunate to spend my days with family in Ngaraard as it was known as Honto. The word, honto, is a Japanese word that referenced the island of Babeldaob, a more rural part of Palau. In his view I was fortunate due to the fact that Honto is a place "where people live more like in the old days." My time in Honto with my family involves less time, if any, with electronics and more time walking, swimming, telling stories, as well as living life in relationship with Palauan land to grow and gather (and not purchase) taro, bananas, coconut, crab, fish and other seafood. When I am home with my family in Ngaraard I am more engaged and aware of the cosmos: the sun, stars and moon. In comparison to my home in the states, they are more visible and brighter with little if any light noise from cars, row by row houses, and large residential and commercial buildings. It is also easier to see the association of the cosmos to the things on our earth, low and high tides, crab migration patterns, and taro cultivation. So, I think about my time gathering these stories for this dissertation to include the time I spend with my

family including my *mamang* (grandmother). She has no formal degrees; however, she knows more than any degree could provide through a life lived in expertise of knowing, being and doing with Palauan land, culture, genealogy and so much more. She teaches us through oral stories, through observation, and redirecting us.

As I think about the knowledge that my mamang embodies, I am drawn back to what Patrick told me about how different life is in Koror. It is different because this was the epicenter for Japanese and later American development. Collaborators' stories revealed conflicts, struggles and negotiations experienced in education systems set up by Japanese and American administrations. Schooling became a place that required less if any Palauan Knowledge to be passed on. The knowledge with, and of, one's relations were dismissed instead to be redirected and sometimes forced into learning the new settler content.

Language

The predominant conversation about content revolved around language. *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi* Scholar, Trask (1993) asserts "Not merely a passageway to knowledge, language is a form of knowing by itself; a people's way of thinking and feeling is revealed through its music" (p. 114). As mentioned before, when Palau was under Japanese rule, Palauan language was forbidden and punished if spoken in schools. Ultimately, Palauan language was displaced. A return to the Palauan language in schooling was not realized when the United States "liberated" Palau from the Japanese. Instead a continued shift away from Palauan language continued with an American perspective of what social, political and economic advancements were needed to re-develop a war-torn Palau. In these improvements, English permeated through educational and political systems, drawing time away from learning Palauan language.

Competence in the English language became a hallmark of American plans for Palauan advancement. Hermana, an elder and guest speaker in the Palauan Studies Program, reflected on her own experience with the pervasiveness of English in primary school curriculum saying: "We did not teach, we did not learn about Palauan, whatsoever. It was not the thing to do. You just have to learn the English language, the English text, with the little English we knew." In reflecting on this statement, I connect Hermana's words with Tongan scholar, Kona Helu Thaman (2003) asserting that "formal educational institutions…have not regarded Oceanic cultural knowledge, skills, and values as worthy of inclusion." Mat, a former faculty member of PCC and a guest speaker in the Palauan Studies Program, described English as the main "medium" used by the United States to ease their responsibility of managing the multilingual islands of Micronesia. The United States did not show an appreciation for the knowledges and languages of the islands nor was there a reciprocal relationship for the exchange of knowledge. Instead as Hermana commented English dominated the content of instruction. The time, energy and struggle for English proficiency created a hierarchy of languages, displacing Palauan language and therefore the knowledge embedded within and from Palauan language.

A separation from Palauan language is compounded by the realization that two successive generations faced two different imperialistic attacks on Palauan Knowledge. Apart from the settler institutions (schools, democratic government, capitalist economy) that facilitated the separation, Palauan village, clan and home environments now include a generation torn apart by war and also forced to learn Japanese with their children and grandchildren, the next generations, whose lives are greatly impacted by American ways including the English language. The collaborators within this dissertation make up the children and grandchildren of those who grew up in the transition under American rule. Distance was created between the different

generations of a family. School age children left their Palauan homes to foreign schools assimilating them into a Japanese or American way of life, all while their parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, the traditional teachers, were left in the dark to adapt to a way of being, knowing and doing that would change without their "students." Dalton, an alumnus and farmer/research assistant for PCC's Cooperative Research and Extension office, demonstrated this distancing describing his (younger) generation as being capable of counting to 10 at most in Palauan and relying instead on English terms for numbers and mixing English numbers and other terms in conversations when speaking Palauan. In comparison he lauded his work supervisor, Thomas, a *rubak* (Palauan male elder) and also a collaborator in this study, as someone who is not only knowledgeable of Palauan terms for numbers, but Dalton was also inspired that his supervisor uses the Palauan numbers, regularly and with ease.

Palauan language is something to be learned through repetition and within an engagement with land and Palauan traditional practices. Julita captures the importance of learning Palauan language and provided further insight to support why the separation discussed in the previous chapter is compelling. She speaks about Palauan language saying:

> …if we do not speak [Palauan] then people are not exposed to it and they think there is no terminology for particular things, when actually there are. That is why it is important, a good example for you is your mother has a Palauan father and a Palauan mother, so in English a mother's brother and the father's brother is uncle in Western [culture], right? But in Palauan culture…they have different names and designations because they're loaded with meaning, it connects to your land, your culture, your tradition, and your title. So, your maternal uncle when you speak in English you cannot [express a difference], your maternal uncle is different from your paternal uncle in Palauan. Uncle for the

> maternal uncle is *okdemelel* and paternal uncle is *obekul*. We are a matrilineal society. Right now, there is young people always using the word aunty or uncle as respect but…they are not equal they have different meaning to you as a person in terms of land and authority and clan affiliation and things like that.

Julita in the above statement emphasizes Palauan responsibilities that are represented by whether a given family member is on the maternal or paternal side of one's family. A separation of knowledge is then important to acknowledge, as language is not only a way to pass on knowledge but it is "knowledge by itself" (Trask, 1993, p. 114). It is also not only tied to relationships between people but also with land. The next section will touch on Palauan relationship and knowledge of land through a discussion of context.

Context

Content was not the only thing that changed as a result of settler interests, context, the place where learning occurred was replaced. A different location and time for learning was established and this played a significant role in separating Palauans from Palauan Knowledge. Traditional learning in Palau was done in relationship. Knowledge was gained in listening and observing the land as well as engaging in land practices and care. Julita, a guest speaker in the Palauan Studies Program, emphatically asserted that Palauans had their own education and that they had a knowledge that through oral tradition was passed down generation after generation. In a melancholy voice, she also indicated that this way of knowing "does not happen in the same way" in Palau. The knowledge still exists, it is the introduction of new colonial spaces for learning that have marginalized Palauan Knowledge as well as limited the time spent in traditional places of learning.

Urbanization in Palau has impacted land within Palau with significant transformations in the city of Koror, where Palau Community College is located. As I stayed and learned with family in honto (rural Palau), I began to contend with my own observations of the displacement of Indigenous places of learning. Hermana spoke about the losses experienced through colonization and war saying: "A lot of people lost their land especially in Koror…and I am staying here [in Koror where] you have no place for a taro patch and to grow your own vegetable and fruit, so you have to buy taro and tapioca." She reveals here that the Indigenous context of learning in Koror is limited due to lands seized for empire building (Japan), then utilized for war times (Japan) and then through a new administration, a return to empire building (United States). Before colonial influences, Palauans maintained a reciprocal relationship through subsistence living with land, nurturing and protecting it as they received nurturing back. Hermana described a new relationship with land, grounded in settler values that now commodifies it for profit. Palauan Knowledge is taught in a context that involves land: birds, plants, wind, sun, moon, fish and other relationships to sea, land, and sky. Within this context abound lessons of healing, survival, responsibility, and reciprocity. All of this is misplaced and fittingly captured by Sefa Dei (2011): "Educating the whole child is impossible if s/he is understood as divorced from a particular socio-cultural (and we might add environmental) context" (p.9).

The location where teaching happens provides insight about the learning that is taking place as well as reflects the culture of the decision makers and educators. Through my discussions with collaborators about Palauan Knowledge, each spoke about Palauan Indigenous spaces of learning including such places as the *mesei* (taro patch), the ocean and clubs. Mat discussed the traditional purpose of men's and women's club as being a "source of knowledge...when they go to certain men's clubs with different ages, they work together and

learn skills. Women [have] the same thing." Mat emphasized that these spaces were non-existent when he grew up and instead his main focus was to attend (American-styled) school and when time provided, he would learn some Palauan Knowledge from his parents and also from books written by anthropologists.

Primary schools were established within all Micronesian islands under U.S. authority (1940s-1980s), however secondary schools were scattered across the different islands. High schools, because there were few meant that they were selective and comprised students from different Micronesian island cultures with varying practices and languages. Palau acquired a high school later than the other Micronesian islands, therefore some students left Palau to further their studies. Mat and Hermana attended high school in Micronesian islands, Pohnpei and Guam respectively, while Julita traveled to California, in the U.S. mainland as an exchange student. Julita and Hermana described these new environments as a challenge in their learning. The American idea that education held the keys towards advancement was a motivating factor for Julita, who recounted her goal as an elementary student to excel in school in order to attend a prestigious male-only Jesuit high school in a nearby island in Micronesia. While she did not end up there, she started to get emotional when speaking about her time abroad saying: "It was once I was outside of Palau, is when I really started to appreciate what I had." She goes on to describe being in the United States during their difficult moments where people were fighting to be heard and for protection (i.e. movements including women's and civil rights). At this time, she saw a similar need to get back to Palau, to protect and fight to safeguard Palau from the changes that have and were happening. The foreign environment also shaped Hermana, who experienced challenges in Guam (U.S. territory). Hermana found herself surrounded by fluent English speakers and explained her experience as "hard [and] for about three months we went to class

and we really have problems." She also described feeling insecure and therefore did not speak out of fear that others would laugh at her. Another major factor that further distanced both Julita and Hermana was that they lived with American families. *Palauan* scholar, Kiblas Soaladaob (2010) insisted that Palauan Knowledge must be lived and practiced with families. For Mat, Julita, Hermana and other Palauans, the living situation through exchange programs and boarding schools further reinforced a separation from Palauan home life and therefore Palauan Knowledge.

Context also involves a negotiation of the new demands on time. Sholeh, an alumna of PCC working for the Belau National Museum, spoke about the limitations of school and work on her own upbringing and that of her children. She longingly smiled as she discussed the knowledge and compassion her mother has about plants and remembered playing and helping in the taro patch when she was young. Sholeh though described these times as occurring in weekend visits with her aunties rather than what previously was a more consistent and daily practice. For her kids, Sholeh said: "I wish we lived in the village so we can go and explore and like see the wonderful environment that Palau has to offer, so they can learn." Colonial forms of work and school have consumed time and energy in competition with the time previously spent in traditional places of gathering and learning.

In reflection of collaborators' narratives, changing Palauan's physical location of learning was a clear act of separating Indigenous people from their relationship with land, an important source of knowledge. Collaborators' narratives also revealed conflicts and struggles from the change. It altered familial, clan and village relationships as schooling involved hours in the day away from families and for some years of separation when they left to attend school abroad.

Values

The changes in content and context mentioned in the previous sections are indicative of the values held by Japanese and American administrations. I argue that three main institutions: the military, government (constitutional monarchy for Japan and democracy for the United States), and compulsory education perpetuated these settler values. The latter, compulsory education, is the institution most familiar and salient to collaborators and therefore most discussed within this chapter. The context of a day followed the practices of the foreign ruling nation and thereby aligned with their values for how time was spent and what were the designated places of learning. The content of instruction within schools also espoused the values of the ruling society.

Genz et al. (2016) insisted that the ultimate aim of settler nations of the Pacific Islands was based in global imperial narratives, with many seeking to establish themselves as empire builders in Oceania. A strict allegiance to the emperor was valued highly by the Japanese and a daily pledge of loyalty to the emperor was a required mantra of every Palauan student while under Japanese rule (Mita, 2009). Mat described the strict obedience demanded by Japanese as dramatically changing Palauan way of life: “They required everyone to speak Japanese. Palauan language was not the norm. Some traditions were eliminated, and men’s club was destroyed.” Then with the United States, Soaladaob’s (2010) study identified values of individualism and the pursuit of the American dream articulated in rigid pathways of learning in elementary and secondary education systems within Palau. The result meant Palauan Knowledge was disregarded for Japanese and later American ways of knowing, being and doing.

As discussed in the introduction of this study, the “languages and traditions of Oceania peoples express values of collectivity and connectivity” (Kepa and Manu’atu, 2011, p. 619). For

Palau specifically, connectivity involved relationships to family, clan, village and land and collectivity was showcased in cooperative groups within Palauan practices (taro cultivation, fishing, building of the *bai*-meeting house) and traditions (*omesurech*-hot bath ceremony and *kemediil*-funeral). Specifically, for youth, Sholeh talked about American principles embedded in schooling and mass media negatively impacting their ability to participate in collective practices in the taro patch, fishing or *bai* building. Additionally Hermana described the American focus on the nuclear family as influential in Palauan society saying "it seems that your focus is on your immediate family and you do not have time to see your [other] relatives because you have to pay attention to your kids, which is really good. But it is not what we were before, in a way there are some strengths, but before the community helped [with raising] children."

All participants discussed respect as a core value within Palauan society. Sholeh pointed to traditional storytelling to highlight the long-standing value of respect in relationship: "just reading the stories and legends, there was always a deep respect for community members." Thomas emphasized that "respect is the foundation of all Palauan way of life, custom and practice". He adds further that: "without [respect] there is discrepancy and Palauan way of life is all over the place because respect holds everything intact…[it] hold[s] the complex system together."

Specifically, Hermana, Elicita and Julita spoke about respect for ancestors and elders who pass on knowledge and expertise gained through years of engaging in Palauan customs, traditions, and daily activities. Hermana described the respect due to elders as making sure to care for them and to deeply listen to their stories and guidance. She provided a description of *melengmes*, the Palauan word encompassing respect, saying, "*melengmes* means, really more like respect and care and valu[ing] what is being discussed…and also [value] people. If I do that

to you, *melengmes*, I give you my best, my respect." Collaborators' stories revealed that the respect of elders has been altered leading to a separation from Palauan Knowledge. Less time is spent in community with elders and instead driven by the value systems of the United States. Thomas discussed the conflict saying:

> When it is Palauan way of life, then there is a lot of respect and restrictions in expressing your beliefs freely. It seems the elders are right, and the children are not. I don't believe they should be on the same playing field, but I believe [Palauans] are able to play both roles.

Thomas and Hermana both described freedom of speech as being highly valued within classrooms in the U.S. whereas Palauan culture values deep and respectful listening to elders and other teachers within the learning process. American values of individuality and competition within Palauan society have challenged Palauan values. As people are striving for earnings (US dollars) and achieve degrees and credentials, the knowledge previously shared by elders is undervalued and marginalized. In speaking about Indigenous and Western epistemology, Leanne Simpson (2014) highlights the type of contrast that fits this discussion. She asserts her own Nishnaabe epistemology as "lack[ing] overt coercion and authority, values so normalized within western mainstream pedagogy that they are rarely critiqued" (p.7).

Responsibility is another important value in Palauan society, one that is ascribed to you through your relationships. Collaborators highlight a separation from Palauan Knowledge due to a change in responsibilities that were once ascribed to the clan and family structure. Patrick spoke of Palauan Knowledge and responsibility. "Knowing the knowledge base and each person's mother's side and the father's side requires that you need to know your place in the family, that clan and that clan's role in the community." Responsibility is then tied to your

lineage and the knowledge of your role according to the roles and responsibilities of your family and the clan of your family. He goes on to speak about how Western life has separated youth in particular from these responsibilities including children who cannot swim and therefore cannot go fishing or that less than a handful of traditional meeting houses (*bai*) exist, therefore a widely known traditional responsibility is now obscurely known. Mat focused on what a separation from clan responsibility meant in terms of Palauan identity insisting that "real knowledge is missing: the knowledge of themselves as being a member of their clan, before [Palauans] understood who they were in Palauan society." This separation makes it difficult to interact in Palauan customs as they often come with specific roles based on your role in the family.

Elicita, the coordinator of the Palauan Studies Program, addresses how Palau's traditional governance was impacted by the inclusion of the American political system. She revealed that "although we have a chiefly system, how do we balance this the concept of democracy as well as the traditional concept…to me the traditional values of [Palauan] chiefly system is like democratic." While Elicita finds similarities, Dalton provided challenges to both systems existing in Palau, saying, "We cannot run our government without money, that is when we lost some traditional ways, only now people [are] start[ing] to learn. It seems that people are trying to preserve it now." The American administration introduced a capitalist economy and therefore the dollar currency. Dalton and Hermana insisted that money now blurs the roles as expected contributions towards customs is more focused on the dollar instead of on Palauan money beads, land, *toluk* (women's money dish), and food (taro). I suggest that collaborators' varying comments illuminate the complexities of changing responsibilities that come with settler institutions espousing new values.

In the end, throughout my conversations, collaborators emphasized how Palauan values lay the foundation for Palauan Knowledge to exist and evolve, especially in contact with other knowledge systems. It is in this reflection that collaborators start to recognize the need to protect Palauan Knowledge.

Resisting, Reconnecting and Reclaiming

Amidst the stories of conflict, struggle and negotiation of settler-colonial content, context, and values, are narratives of resisting, reconnecting, and reclaiming Palauan Knowledge. The discussion thus far has covered the ways in which Palauan collaborators recognized in their own lives, as well as through observation in and about Palau, that they identified a separation from Palauan Knowledge. In this section; I suggest that the stories of separation served as motivation to center Palauan Knowledge and resulted in actions towards the survival of Palauan Knowledge. Collaborators stories revealed three aspects of Palauan Knowledge to be protected: language, land and culture.

Language Survival

Language is a way to transfer knowledge through words and at the same time language, itself, is knowledge. The Palauan language has experienced decades of suppression and silencing at the expense of settler objectives and languages. Palauan language thrived through an oral tradition embedded in relationships to all living beings past and present. The survival of Palauan language necessitates centering it for Palauan youth. I felt a sense of urgency and hope for the survival of Palauan language in Hermana's words when she shared: "but now I am kind of getting worried about it because these kids just like to speak English, so they are not really good in English and not good in Palauan. So, we are embracing them to [learn Palauan] first and they can actually do both." While she recognizes that English is a part of Palau, she also asserts two

points: that Palauan language is central in instruction first and that it is taught in depth so there is mastery in one's indigenous language.

The Palauan legislature along with other Micronesian islands lobbied the United States out of concern because of the loss of language. Palau specifically also called for the inclusion of curriculum with major emphasis on Palauan culture taught by Palauan teachers (Emesiochl, 1977). Mat was a part of this effort through the Bilingual project team (1970-1971) that focused on strengthening Palauan language and requiring the study of Palauan culture in the early primary school years. Hermana expressed her earnestness in joining this project after returning from her high school experience abroad. Again, Palauan Knowledge was embedded in an oral tradition also communicated through rock/*bai* paintings, pottery, and wood/stone carvings. Mat revealed that for his generation, Palauan was first written based on how people spoke it. The bilingual project focused on developing a standardized Palauan language so there would be one standard for spelling and pronouncing Palauan words.

In efforts to protect the Palauan language, Mat described standardization as something met with struggle, negotiation, and conflict. Kovach (2005) asserted that "the stronghold of language, writing and worldview in generating "truth" creates difficulties for Indigenous peoples whose traditional philosophies are held deep within constructs that are neither written nor consistent with patterns of dominant language" (p. 26). It was clear the process to standardize was messy. In order to safeguard Palauan language in schools there needed to be compromise over spelling and pronunciation. Standardization meant fitting Palauan concepts and terminology into a rigid standard. Mat expressed that those from the older generation who learned to write how they spoke were resistant to the standardized spelling and grammar books that were being created. Differences arose as the bilingual project was underway. The team working on the

language project made note of the different words that depended on where in Palau you lived. Additionally, there were different ways that people pronounced words. The differences are plausible especially with the geography of Palau and how some states are separated by vast landscapes or ocean waters (refer to Figure 4). Mat described these regional and village differences. “The student from Babeldaob when they come to Koror have a different spelling from Anguar…Ngaraard they have a little sort of k sound for some words that others do not.” These nuances and distinctions are not found in the products of this standardization process: Palauan grammar books and dictionary. Nevertheless, this was an attempt to resist the loss of the mother tongue.

Land Survival

Land is a significant source of Palauan Knowledge, deepened through a committed relationship of reciprocity and compassion. Patrick explained that to be in and learn from the land is the most authentic way to gain Palauan Knowledge. He emphasized that there is much to learn from connection to land, even encouraging me to go back to my grandmother and aunts to be and learn from them in the taro patch. Ceremonies, nourishment, healing, and life depend on the survival of land.

Women have a deep connection to fields, trees, and plants through taro and garden cultivation. For most traditional land, titles are ascribed to women and with that comes a responsibility to protect it. Elicita insists that the preservation of Palauan Knowledge is tied to the preservation of land. It is this inherent responsibility of women that Elicita joined her mother and other women to thwart the demands of the United States as Palau moved towards independence. The fight by Palauan women for a nuclear-free constitution was waged for 15 years (1979-1994). I was and still am incredibly fortunate to have Elicita share these stories:

> I was one of them, those who were against the militarization and nuclearization of Palau, I was one who was really resisting…we were making sure that the message was being sent, this is too small to have a nuclear submarine, this is too small an island to have a military base, this is too small to have 32 acres, to have Babeldaob to be the sort of a burial for the nuclear stuff…NO! This is too small an island for those things…I believe that the message was clear, we had enough of the Marshall Islands, and [from that] we learned the lesson that Palau wants to be nuclear-free. But what does that mean in the world, given the geography and what does that mean, it is just a few people who want to say that we want to be nuclear free, can we have that as a member of the UN, can we have that as a small island in the world. But I think the message is being heard and hopefully it is the people of today it is us that are going to make that change, if we are not careful if we do not know our history that will leave us to make a decision that is detrimental to our lives and our children, especially the children, because we are older and we want the children to have a sustainable lifestyle and sustainable future and that is what our mothers and our grandparents want[ed].

Elicita and other *mechas* (elder women) did not want the devastating violence and destruction that comes with militarization and nuclearization, two things that had already devastated the Marshall Islands (nuclear tests on the Bikini Atoll in the 40s and 60s). Her words above also illuminate a consciousness that their self-determination had propelled them into world view. The spotlight on Palau would highlight a contrast in values. For the United States access to Palauan land and its surrounding waters was for strategic defense in the region, while for Palau, the women were asserting Palauan values of respect and responsibility of land. Elicita's mother, Gabriela Ngiramang forged the effort towards the world's first nuclear-free constitution and

defended the effort utilizing the women's organization that she led: "*Otil a Belaud*" meaning anchor of our land (dé Ishtar, 1994; Selman project, 2019). In this constitution the women included a clause that required a 75% vote before nuclear weapons could come to Palau. As mentioned, the resistance lasted 15 years and during this time 11 separate votes were held, and each time the clause was approved (Selman project, 2019). Elicita described how taro patches were used to educate women about the vote. Resistance then was centered in an Indigenous place of learning, the taro patch, reconnecting to a space where Palauan Knowledge is shared generation after generation. Grounded in Indigenous leadership (Palauan matriarchy), Palauan Knowledge was protected through *mesei* (taro field) activism.

A motivation to preserve Palauan Knowledge comes from the responsibility to protect the land and to leave land that generations to come can learn from. It is appropriate that resistance to pressures took place within the taro patch. A Palauan proverb is "A mesei a delal a telid' meaning the taro field is the mother of life. Elicita and other Palauan women were protectors of Palauan land: the ocean, stonepaths, mangroves, hills and beaches.

Cultural Survival

Palau has a distinct culture with language, customs, values, social structure and history. Identity within Palauan culture is important. One's identity is found in your relationship to a community: your family, then clan, then village, and country. The separation from Palauan content, context and values have altered Palauan identity. Furthermore, Julita explained knowing who you are is also about knowing the geography of Palau, the land. She went on to say that Palauan "genealogy connects us to place and [the] rootedness in a place." Patrick places the importance of protecting Palauan culture as a responsibility to the next generation and that the passing on of Palauan customs, values, language and history links us to "Palauanism."

Cultural survival emphasizes the need to understand that Indigenous Knowledge is not set in the past, but instead is changing and contemporary (Gaviria, 2012). As previously discussed in this chapter, Palauan daily life involved in Indigenous places of learning and with Indigenous teachers was replaced by settler developments (i.e. Formal schooling). Despite these changes Palauan Knowledge continues to exist. For instance, Elicita acknowledged this point in the different ruling systems in Palau, a matrilineal/chief system with that of the democratic system implemented by the United States. She affirmed that the democratic governance has a place now in Palauan society but if Palauans are asked to protect Ibedul, the High Chief of Koror/Oreor, then certainly they will protect him because the chief is a part of their identity. Clan structure and responsibility still remains.

Cultural survival involves the protection of Palauan identity. Julita expressed her motivation for asserting a Palauan identity and her pride in its resurgence when she said: We cannot be America, we cannot be Japanese, we are Palauan, we need to keep the good stuff that keeps us growing and nurturing and I think that is coming back." The, "we" in her statement is indicative of the collective culture of Palau. Julita described a shared goal of cultural survival through her involvement in the Palau Conservation Society. Julita recalled that a few Palauans "came together to form an organization…and [established] the Palau Conservation Society and the rest is history. PCS focused on protection and conservation way back then and now it's exploding in Palau and the world." She has continued to work within spaces to document Palauan Knowledge. As mentioned in chapter five, before my scheduled time to speak with her, Julita was meeting about a project to learn more about the traditional Palauan terraces in Babeldaob whose existence is little known. It is this sustained commitment along with her

knowledge and experience that she is a valuable voice for Palauan Knowledge within and outside of Palau Community College.

Summary of the Section

Even though Palauans are in the majority in Palau, the discussion within this chapter shows that Western ways are clearly evident in the political, educational, and economic landscape in Palau and therefore over time have impacted Palauan Knowledge. Education systems did not embark on relationship building but instead impacted the relationships that Palauans had with their own histories, practices, community and identity. Wright & Balutski (2013) asserted that for island nations in the Pacific, there exists unique geo-political, colonial and historical characteristics of the former territories. When added together, settler colonial content, context and values, resulted in a formidable separation from Palauan Knowledge.

At the University of Hawaii, Hermana was studying English and expressed through poetry the liminal existence of Palau as a U.S. territory striving for self-determination and sovereignty. She described her process of writing poems saying:

> So, poetry [became] kind of like, a little a bit of protest, but then at the same time compromise, accepting, and understanding it. And then pleading for friendship and [a closer] relationship, all because we have no choice…because [Palau has] become interdependent. [We] did not have anything to give, actually well we do, but we get so much with money [from the U.S.].

Her thoughts provide a good metaphor for the ideas presented in this chapter. It mirrors the complicated and complex realities of having to reconcile settler and Palauan content, context, and values.

The discussion in this chapter provides additional insight into the backgrounds of the collaborators and of Palau to better understand the stories presented throughout this dissertation and especially within subsequent chapters. For several of the collaborators their efforts to safeguard Palauan Knowledge came before their work at Palau Community College. The next chapter goes beyond the motivations expressed in this chapter to illustrate collaborators understanding of how Palauan Knowledge is incorporated into Palau Community College.

CHAPTER 7: RE-CENTERING AND HONORING PALAUAN KNOWLEDGE IN PALAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Originally, I entered this study inspired by the stories from my pilot study that uncovered footprints of Palauan Knowledge. I wanted to learn more about how such knowledge manifests within Palau Community College. I settled with a research question that would interrogate how Palau Community College integrated Palauan Knowledge. It became clear to me from my conversations with collaborators that I needed to begin with the circumstances that lay the foundation for the inclusion of Palauan Knowledge. This was accomplished in the previous chapter that revealed a common storyline of personal experiences that revealed personal accounts of the history of colonization that separated collaborators (and our ancestors) from Palauan Knowledge. The focus of this chapter continues along the lines of how Chapter 6 ended, regarding the motivation to preserve Palauan Knowledge. To understand how Palauan Knowledge is honored in Palau Community College was to hear about the individual and collective experiences of collaborators.

For a community college whose beginnings encompassed settler goals and outcomes, it is Palauan people who are finding ways to incorporate Palauan Knowledge in the college. Elicita, the coordinator of the Palauan Studies Program, spoke about the importance of a collective effort in Palau Community College in honoring Palauan Knowledge:

> It is a collective movement of people, collective effort to make things work…so not one is left behind...somehow the integrity of preservation of knowledge is important because if we want to live in this island ecosystem we have to make wise decision.

Here Elicita highlights, responsibility and collectivity, two Palauan values cited in the previous chapter. Palauan identity is dependent on the wise choices that come from a responsibility to

preserve Palauan Knowledge. Elicita's words are clear "a collective movement of people," moving not individually but collectively for your village, your clan, and for Palau. As she talks about the collective, I cannot help but think about her story from the previous chapter of women in the taro patch fighting for a nuclear free constitution. It is her mother who lead that movement alongside other women who were against the nuclear compact and stood up to protect Palauan people and land, despite an assassination, threats and intimidation. So, as I reflected on Elicita's statement about responsibility and collectivity, I know that it comes from a genuine compassion for Palau and Palauan Knowledge that has been modelled for her and conversely a role that she has stepped into.

The major question of this chapter focuses on what Elicita identifies as a "very collective, very community orientated" effort by Palauans to honor Palauan Knowledge in the community college. Colonial legacies discussed in the previous chapter are still evident in the stories of this chapter because a relationship with other knowledges continues. Even though settler institutions marginalized Palauan Knowledge, within this American style institution, it is present and centered by Palauans. I also found that collaborators' stories used settler ways of knowing like research, written word, linguistics, and poetry to preserve and thereby re-center Palauan Knowledge at Palau Community College. The following discussions highlights the ways that collaborators and other Palauans have honored Palauan Knowledge through visual representations and within academic and community programs.

Representation

Traveling from Ngaraard, Babeldaob, where my grandmother and family live to Koror where the community college is located is about an hour drive. I am always pleasantly overwhelmed by the fertile land replete with contrasting landscapes and a diversity of vegetation.

The drive to Koror involves downhill paths that provide views of the expansive coral reef barrier surrounding the island as well as views of the clear, blue, green waters that disappear into the dark blue ocean depths. I pass by spaces that I have walked, hiked and run through and yet as we pass by there is so much more that I have not encountered. There are fertile mangrove forests and jungles, distant red terraces, and village stone paths. I have particular landmarks: trees and hills

Figure 4. Picture of Palau's Landscape (Babeldaob)

that I am familiar with and look to them to indicate my particular position and time within the journey. Some days we stop the car alongside the road to take in the beauty, and I hear the buzzing of insects and the breeze rustling through the trees. There is an occasional bird or frog that crosses our path, the latter especially after rainfall. As we leave the more rural island of Babeldaob and approach urban Koror, more people and cars fill the streets. We cross the Japanese Friendship Bridge connecting Babeldaob to Koror and enter a place, with high-rise

hotels, cement and asphalt paved roads, apartment complexes, houses, stores, cafes, and government buildings. The distance along with the high cost of gasoline, often meant that time in Koror would involve a flurry of activities: visiting other relatives and friends in Koror as well as helping my grandmother with errands and business matters.

I imagine that Koror had similar fertile lands compared to the descriptions from my journey in the opening of this section. Koror is home to highest clan within the entire island of Palau. Kupferman (2013) wrote an article about the impact of Western schooling in Micronesia where he discussed Koror's clan, particularly that of Chief Ibedul and his second son Lee Boo. The author described a plaque by Lee Boo's descendants that recognized him as the first ambassador and scholar of Palau. Within the community college's Micronesian Collection, Grace shared with me 18th century books with the journal entries of Captain Wilson, detailing the interaction between his crew and the High chief of Koror. Ibedul provided assistance in repairing Captain Wilson's ship and when they departed, Lee Boo, Ibedul's second son, joined the crew and travelled to England. Not too long after, Lee Boo fell ill, died and was buried in England. Lee Boo is recognized as the first Palauan student who had pursued Western schooling.

The following discussion now centuries from Lee Boo's time in England, moves to recognizing Palauans who are re-centering Palauan Knowledge in the American-style community college. My description earlier of the contrasting Palauan landscape was to emphasize the physical impacts of colonization on the natural landscape of Koror. As I mentioned, I can only imagine from what I know in other parts of the island and what I still see existing as to what Koror looked like before urban development. The following discussion begins with collaborators' stories about re-centering Palauan Knowledge within the physical structures of Palau Community College. The section ends with examples from Patrick's

interactions with his community college colleagues from the United States. These conversations are examples of centering Palauan Knowledge in order to disrupt notions of Western superiority.

Re-centering Palauan Knowledge through Physical Structures

The time I spent in Palau Community College illuminated the many colonial footprints of the settlers who came to Palau. These footprint stories provided context for the interaction of different ways of knowing, being and doing within Palau broadly, but specifically for my dissertation story about Palau Community College. The colonial history is physically represented in the building footprints left by Japan and the United States. Some of the buildings in Palau Community College were constructed under Japanese and American administrations while others were constructed by vocational students or through the assistance of U.S. military to meet the growing needs of students coming from Palau and other Micronesian island territories (Takeuchi, 2011). The Administration building is at the front of the school, clearly visible from Palau's Main Street and houses the President's office, board room, business office and Dean of students. Initially, it served as a hospital for the Japanese during World War II.

While talking about the ways in which Palauan Knowledge appeared within the institution, Julita, a guest speaker in the Palauan Studies Program, credited Patrick, the community college president, for renaming the college's buildings. She mentioned: "when you ask what are the names of [the] building[s], well before there was a time when they were A-B-C, but now they are Palauan names for trees or are fish." In renaming these buildings, Patrick re-centered Palauan Knowledge in the college by removing the American letters on each of the buildings. When Julita pointed this out, I realized that I missed this aspect in my many visits to the college. I then turned to the college's registration book given to me so I could review the campus map.

The renaming of the buildings is especially meaningful in re-centering Palauan Knowledge in Koror and at the college. I return to the description of my journey from a natural and fertile space abundant in plants and animal life in Babeldaob to this urban environment marked by development into and resourced by the land of Koror. It counters the colonial transformations to Koror's landscape from Japanese and American times to reclaim and honor Palauan's relationship to land and therefore uphold Palauan Knowledge. At the surface it seems like a simple action however so much knowledge is embodied in the names of these buildings. Still more relationships and stories are connected to Palauan legends, common Palauan words, medicinal knowledge, and traditional ceremonies and practices (see APPENDIX I). Palauan names that link to land is healing and my engagement with these names has brought up Palauan Knowledge that I knew and still more that I need to learn. I realize that taking a deep dive into the terms means that I am coming into my own reconciliation of Palauan Knowledge, learning Palauan words and discovering its connections to oral histories.

Honoring Palauan Knowledge is not only reflected in the names of the building but in other elements of the college. Positioned at the end of a courtyard and in front of PCC's bookstore is the *Mesekiu bai.* While not elaborately adorned like the elite *bai er a klobak* (the seat of the council of high chiefs), the *Mesekiu bai* is reminscent of the *tetib bai* or the *bai el beluu* that served as common spaces for men and women to gather, sit and eat (Tellei, 2014). The bai contains stories such as the legend of Uab and symbols representing *udoud* (Palauan money beads) or demonstrating *cheldechduch* (communication). Still more stories and symbols appear throughout the college honoring the traditional practice of painting the stories in bais. It is another way to reclaim the Palauan Knowledge of these buildings. The images appear on building walls, air conditioning units, pillars and stairways. They feature Palauan legends,

symbols, culture and land. As I walked around the college, I made note of these visual representations of traditional places of learning: *bai*s, the ocean, homes, and stone paths. The value of collectivity is exemplified through scenes of men and women together, men in a canoe in the ocean, warriors in a battle scene at sea, fish and turtles in the ocean. (See Figure 5 below and APPENDIX J)

Figure 5. Mural of Indigenous Places of Learning at Palau Community College

Centering Palauan Knowledge to Disrupt Notions of Western Superiority

Representation is not only illuminated within pictures, but Palauan knowledge is maintained through oral representations. Whenever I meet with Patrick, I find myself learning through the many stories he tells about Palau and also about his interactions with higher education professionals not from Palau. With the latter, he described encounters that I experience when discussing Palau with those who are unfamiliar with it. I often have to explain Palau so that people can both learn and find relationship, first explaining where Palau is, why Palau matters in discussions of global relations, and then connecting its histories to a relationship with the United States, Japan and other world powers. As we discussed Palauan Knowledge within Palau Community College, Patrick brings up a 10-minute talk he gave on a conference call with other

administrators in the United States, meeting to review the higher education accreditation process. Patrick described his call to action:

> I started by saying for some of you, you are so concerned about what you are doing with your accreditation. There are a lot more issues in this island called planet earth that we are in together. So, I do not know how many of you who are commissioners, have thought of our very existence on our planet. So, I am asking you to get out of your comfort zone in San Diego City College, Mesa Community College. I was on a zoom conference, so I was looking at them. How many of you drove an SUV to the meeting this morning and, do you know that your SUV is contributing to some of these island countries and the level rise in the climate…that we will have to relocate from these islands? So now you can tell they are saying, why is he raising the concept of climate change. Because you are responsible for that and if it is not in your consciousness, it must be in your conscious. You are listening to someone in your community, and some of the islands are actually going to disappear. These islands will be missing as a result of your inaction. You are so insular in your thinking. You are concerned about this teaching and the cost of this and that. There is more happening. If people are displaced it is our problem. The standards are not addressing this, your standards are hollow.

Here Patrick is asserting something that we do not pay too much attention to and that is the influence of Indigenous Knowledges within Western spaces. Patrick communicated to higher education officials the Palauan values, respect and responsibility to take care of land and people, one that must take in consideration global calculations beyond what people in the West may be aware of, see or know. He reiterated and urged for the higher education community of which he asserts he is a part of, to think about their environmental impact now and into the future. Patrick

is engaging Palauan Knowledge in a space where Indigenous worldviews and knowledge are unfamiliar and marginalized. Conservation is the universal term and one that is a popular movement, but a mutual and nurturing relationship with land has existed for a long time in Indigenous communities. It is a value that was referred to by several of the collaborators.

Additionally, the accreditation process remains dominated by Western ways of knowing, being and doing. It is a seemingly subtle actor, but here Patrick focused on their environmental footprint that has an impact globally and specifically for nations like Palau. Another example where Patrick challenges the Western accreditation body is when he takes issue with how Palau Community College and other Micronesian island colleges are scrutinized for their student's English proficiency. He defends the colleges and its students saying:

> The College of Micronesia-FSM, Marshall Islands and PCC, we play a role none of you play as a land grant institution and the national college, the buck stops with us. So, when you come to us and say this is something you can do and something you cannot do and then tell us our [English] language department is not good. I said the students studying here are proficient in one or two languages [other than English], they are just not doing well in English…[You have to] realize that these students are two steps ahead of you because they know another language and culture. For some of [the accreditation team] they are hearing this for the first time.

What Hermana said in the previous chapter about the pervasiveness of English in her K-12 experience continues to this day. As mentioned in the literature review, the population demographics of Palau and Palau Community College reflect a Palauan majority. This study sought to understand what similarities or differences exist in comparison to Indigenous institutions or Indigenous students in predominantly White spaces. As revealed in this

conversation with an accreditation team, even though Palauans are in the majority within the college and in the surrounding community, the superiority of Western knowledge still lingers through the accreditation process and the people involved in carrying it out.

Re-claiming Western spaces and conversations is also something that Patrick emphasized with guests to Palau Community College. He told me another story about a visiting faculty member who was assisting with the development of a course at Palau Community College. Patrick explained:

> The first [course plan] he submitted; I took him to the map in the front. I showed it to him and said what is in the center of the map? And he was looking and was like wow why is the U.S. way over on that side. Because U.S. is not the center of the universe, this is our map and so the U.S. is not in the center. But you know [Americans] are so used to when you put the map on the wall, U.S. is on the center. The professor, he was wondering why this center of nothingness. [The Pacific Islands] may be considered the center of nothingness to you but it is a home to 6.3 million people, of which 4 million who live in Papua New Guinea and the rest [of the islands are] scattered. If you cannot put yourself at that level to understand that, it will be tough to graph it.

Patrick established expectations with the professor in the creation of the course, asserting the Pacific and specifically Palau, is at the center of Palau Community College and therefore must also be centered in the development of courses and programs. The conversation resists the power dynamics that consistently upholds Western ways of knowing where "othered ways of knowing are disavowed displaced, negated, engulfed" (Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, & Hunt, 2015). In this example, Patrick is honoring Palauan Knowledge by centering Palau within knowledge

production (creation of a new course). As in the challenge to the accreditation team, Patrick is contesting a US-centric mindset to affirm Palau Community College's Palauan identity.

Academic and Community Programming

Visual and oral representations of Palauan knowledge covered in the previous section continue through the programmatic ways that Palauans are honoring Palauan Knowledge in the community college. It is aligned with comments by collaborators of the responsibility to your family, your clan and Palau. As I thought about the programs at Palau Community College, I was reminded of the words of Julita's principal at her eighth grade graduation that she shared with me: "pulling your raft and you are out to the reef but now you are out in the open ocean and [you have to] work hard and come back to serve your country, your village." My reflections on my experiences at Palau Community College leads me to see the college going through a continual process of what Julita's principal described as coming back. It is a return to intentionally center Palauan Knowledge and along the way acknowledging and contending with footprints, both Palauan and settler. Even with changing times, Palauan Knowledge is evolving. This section looks at ways in which re-centering is happening within 1) the Palauan Studies Program, 2) a n non-credit course 3) a summer youth program, and 4) through research and extension activities.

Palauan Studies Program

A significant footprint within Palau Community College's academic programs came with the development of a Palauan Studies Program. According to Patrick, the annual (Palauan) Women's conference drafted a resolution for Palau's government to include Palauan Knowledge within systems of education. Elicita discussed program development as "sort of something they have been trying to get off the ground that had passed for many years ago." Elicita gives credit to PCC's President for his leadership in being a role model for collective action in protecting

Palauan Knowledge by supporting the Palauan Studies Program. As mentioned previously, Elicita had already contended with conflicts between American and Palauan views on Palauan sovereignty. As a part of oppositional efforts, Elicita's role was to canvass between taro patches, educating women and assisting them in filing affidavits for a lawsuit to thwart US efforts to store nuclear waste and use Palauan land for military training. She spoke of this effort as grounding her views in creating and teaching within the Palauan Studies Program:

> And it is important…to have the Palauan Knowledge, especially here at the college. I continue because I believe in academia and action. I learned that from the women that we worked with, to be reflective of your actions and actively stand to educate the young people of this knowledge.

Elicita emphasized the need for Palauan Knowledge to have a place in Palau Community College. She expanded on this conversation to point to the lessons she learned from the women's movement that helped her in shaping the Palauan Studies Program. From the taro patches used to fight against nuclear storage in Palau to the ways Palau Community College can integrate Palauan Knowledge, Elicita is providing examples from her past and her present regarding the dynamic nature of Palauan Knowledge. It is this resiliency that provides hope for future collaborations between Palauan Knowledge, Indigenous places of learning and the academy.

Though Elicita was not present at the inception of the Palauan Studies Program, she acknowledged the need to include elders (*rubaks* and *mechas*) who would enrich the program with varying and similar insights on Palauan history, customs, language and practice. In developing the program, she explained: "I came to PCC in late 2013, then one of my assignments was to make classes for the [Palauan Studies] program. I talked about [the curriculum] with some ladies here and then to several other people." Additionally, she insisted that it was also important

to bring people to speak in the Palauan Studies courses. I was fortunate to be introduced to some of the elders who speak in the Palauan Studies Program: Hermana, Julita, and Mat (collaborators in this study). As Elicita mentioned later, the elders represent different pieces of the puzzle illuminating unique footprint stories of Palauan Knowledge that emerge from their personal experiences and family lineage. The knowledge shared in the Palauan Studies Program comprise the re-righting and resistance necessary to center and preserve Palauan ways of knowing, being and doing.

Elders as Guest Lectures

As guest lecturers in the Palauan Studies Program, Hermana, Julita and Mat provide stories that showcase how Palauan Knowledge has evolved. When Julita visits the course, she teaches students about respectful ways to interview elders as well as discusses the role of Palauan women in Palauan society. She is able to share a lot of knowledge from her work in co-founding the Palauan Conservation Society as well as the knowledge she has of taro cultivation. Students within the Palauan Studies courses engage with another elder, Hermana, through her published collection of poetry. I was able to sit in on her class lecture as she invited both me and my sister after her interview. We talked about how her poems were reminiscent of Palauan chants carrying information and lessons. In her class she explained her poetry and motivations for what she wrote. “I have…American friends that kind of tell me that we live under tax money…and I respond to them…I feel like I was invaded…because we were victims of war and…a lot of colonialism we did not have our freedom. We were like being imposed on and things were imposed on us.” Hermana is passing on the history of separation and passing on knowledge from a Palauan view of the impacts of colonization. Her poems resist a romanticized view of settler advancements and illuminated what Andreotti et al. (2015) describe as a

recognition of “epistemological dominances” (p. 24). Hermana also teaches within the advanced Palauan grammar course from her contributions in writing the Palauan Cultural Profile Curriculum and the Palauan Orthography used in Palauan K-12 schools. Mat, like Hermana, comes to the class to talk about the development of a standardized Palauan language.

Elicita not only centers Palauan Knowledge through elevating the voices of elders who speak in her classes, but she is also engages students in the same storytelling with the *mechas* and *rubaks* (elder woman and man) in their lives. She assigns a project much like what Julita has done in community-based preservation efforts to discover the hidden footprints of Palauan Knowledge: history, lineage, and lessons. Grace also mentioned the significance of Elicita’s interview assignment. As mentioned in the background chapter, Grace works in the Micronesia-Pacific Collection of Palau Community College’s library. She spoke about this storytelling assignment saying: “I ask for all the student papers and they fill out a consent form for us to keep them here...It is important to keep these Palauan stories.” Grace recognized that there is a lack of documented stories written from a Palauan perspective and honors Palauan Knowledge through her efforts to store these stories. She also regularly scours depositories for undergraduate papers, theses, dissertations and artifacts produced by Palauans to add to the Micronesia-Pacific Collection. It is here in the library’s special collection that I gathered many of the archived documents for this study. One such document is Palau Community College’s *Mesekiu’s* News, the college weekly newsletter. The central story for the week was “Collaborative learning: Tourism & Hospitality and Palauan Studies” was the central story of the week. The partnership between the two academic programs is an example how Palauan Knowledge can help inform non-Indigenous courses. The two courses that came together was the Palauan History & Culture

and Tour-Guiding & Travel Planning. The classes traveled to Ulong Island and learned about its history and heritage (Fritz, 2014, p.1).

Non-credit Course

During my pilot study, Patrick informed me about a non-instrumental navigation course (wayfaring) that was offered as a non-credit course at PCC. The instructor, Sesario Sewralur, is from the outer island of Yap and his father Mau Pialung helped bring the knowledge of wayfaring to the Native Hawaiians. While the knowledge of wayfaring is important to Oceanic cultures, my conversation with Julita revealed more about the impact of having such a course at Palau Community College. She mentioned that having Sesario in Palau has opened up knowledge about place names. She said:

> Before we never heard about that name, only some people in Koror around the area knew the name of the dock, so the fact that [Palau Community College] is reviving those place names, mean that we may learn more information like about practices and migration as the college talks to more people.

The navigation course is an example of Palau Community College's commitment to other Indigenous Oceanic knowledges as well. The relationship to Yap is a close one, as the people of Yap often sailed to Palau to get stone to make their money. I am also connected to Yap, my mother lived there for some time and my aunt (mother's sister) is married to a man from Yap. All in all, the wayfaring course and the knowledge shared and gleaned is an example of how Indigenous Knowledge from other cultures can assist in reviving Palauan Knowledge.

Summer Youth Program

The function of a community college is to be responsive to the local community. This is a characteristic that aligns with the collective nature of Palauan society. Patrick spoke about his

personal commitment to take youth in his family to learn Palauan history, knowledge and skills. He did this on the weekend because their weekdays are busy with video gaming, school and television. Patrick also explained how the college is trying to also outreach to youth about Palauan Knowledge. In partnership with Koror State Government Division of Cultural Affairs and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity, Palau Community College provides this program to "promote cultural appreciation in young Palauans by providing hands-on experiences" (Palau Community College, 2013, p. 1). Hermana is also involved in the program as one of the youth instructors and expanded on the types of experiences offered to students. These experiences include cultural practices such as basket weaving, making fish traps, and learning Palauan chants. Hermana talked about the importance of learning and embodying the origin story of Palau (*uchelel Belau*) and how many of Palau's customs come from the main central character, Uab. Hermana elaborates how she instructs the youth about the story narrating:

> Uab (a giant figure) fell so the population [of Palau] that was growing very fast would have a place to live. [After the islands were established with the body of Uab.], then came immigration,…educating people and then… *omes*, meaning like you transform, he became a woman and started going around educating people [on how to do] the taro patch all around the villages of Palau and then she went to the east coast and she did the ritual for the birth.

Each body part of Uab relates to a different part of the island and that body part relays certain qualities to the people from that region. An example is Ngarechlong which represent part of Uab's head and so people from this state are said to be intelligent. The story also transitions into other Palauan legends and customs: birth ritual and cultivation of taro. The reason why Uab fell was as a result of his greed. As he grew from baby into man, he was eating too much despite

limited food, so believing they would starve, villagers killed Uab. The story today is used to reflect efforts to support conservation efforts in Palau and worldwide (Public Broadcast Station, 2013). Simpson (2014) discusses indigenous stories "as a theoretical anchor whose meaning transforms over time and space within individual and collective Nishnaabeg consciousness." Likewise, legends in Palau take on slightly different meanings across the different villages within Palau and across different storytellers. In the end they hold a significant meaning. Simpson (2014) goes on to say that:

> Theory is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community, and generation of people. Theory is not just educational pursuit, it is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives.

Hermana and the other instructors through the summer youth program are helping in the regeneration of Palauan legends and therefore Palauan Knowledge through the Youth Summer Programs.

Research and Extension Activities

The Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) office of the college is a space where Palauan Knowledge of land is being honored. CRE helps to preserve taro knowledge and reconnects Palauans to the cultivation of land to promote the consumption of local foods. Julita spoke about CRE saying: "the college has extension programs in Ngremlengui (Babeldaob), so there is work in agriculture and [in] the *mesei* (taro fields) …[and] that is reviving Palauan Knowledge and practices." Thomas who runs CRE talked of the importance of taro saying:

> There is never enough taro; it is used for funeral…and first birth [ceremonies]…What we have been doing is work[ing] with the community in terms of supporting the food

> security problem due to climate change and issues with water resources (drought and salt water mixing).You cannot be eating all rice and no taro for [customs], that is not culturally acceptable.

Additionally, Thomas talked about concerns with food security due to a shipping strike and weeks without imported goods. Thomas' focus is to re-center Palauan Knowledge through a return to subsistence living and cultural survival through a renewed relationship to land. Research coming out of the center seeks to document the knowledge of skilled *mechas* (elders/women) in the taro fields. One of the projects sought to understand women's choice of fertilizer as they were not eager to use the commercial fertilizer that CRE offered. Thomas explained:

> We went around interviewing all the women…to know what kind of tree or grass they used to fertilize the taro patches…they use trees most of the time and some banana leaves… the [researcher's] results were very encouraging. [Their results showed that] traditional knowledge is still there and still very useful… [The women were] growing really good corm (meat of the taro plant). [The corm] was big, it was very starchy. Palauan women shy away from commercial fertilizer [because] they don't like it…they say that the corm is not good when it is used.

Even with a seemingly easier approach of using commercial fertilizer, Palauan women through years of expertise passed down through family knew their way of fertilizing was best even if it meant that they were taking the more labor-intensive route. The Cooperative Research and Extension office is doing similar projects that bring together Palauan Knowledge with other scientific knowledges. In the end, Thomas affirms that the center respects the knowledge of women and seeks to document what they are willing to share such as the Palauan names for the

different varieties of taro (Del Rosario, Esguerra, & Taro, 2015). At the end of our conversation, Thomas walked me out to where CRE's publications were kept and gifted me several books. These books are filled with Palauan Knowledge, old and new, covered information about taro cultivation, Palauan names for local varieties of taro, taro recipes, the processing of banana and medicinal plants. The information within these books leveraged knowledge from other cultures including other Pacific Islands to introduce new techniques, skills and products. The results from these developments provide an example for how Palauan Knowledge can work with other knowledges in order to evolve and meet the changing needs of the community.

Summary

The main takeaway from this chapter is that it answers the central research question of this study: How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated within Palau Community College (PCC)? The chapter revealed that Palauan Knowledge was being centered through the reclaiming of building footprints. Some of PCC's buildings trace back to Japanese administrations (former hospital) and others to the American administration. In the tradition of decorations on *bai* (traditional meeting house), stone, and caves, these colonial buildings were reinvisioned to center Palauan Knowledge. The buildings were renamed from the (American) alphabet to Palauan names for trees and fish. On the walls, columns, stairways, and air conditioning units, there are murals showing Palauan values, legends, and symbols. These images paint a picture much different than the views at the founding of the institution, one that appreciates and centers Palauan Knowledge.

In the courtyard of the college, is the *Mesekiu bai* much like the community-level *bais* in traditional times that are meant for feasts, planning, meetings, and to welcome guest. In the same fashion, the bai has tables for people to gather, sit, and eat. Palauan Knowledge is incorporated

by Palauan elders who share stories, legends, genealogy, and terminology with college students in the Palauan Studies Programs as well as to youth in a summer camp. The land grant office protected Palauan Knowledge through research, documentation, the promotion of subsistence living (educating and providing materials to cultivate or process Palauan staple foods like banana, taro, coconut, fish, etc.). Palauan Knowledge is honored through conversations with colleagues in the states that center Indigenous perspectives and values (skills of multilingual islanders and good stewardship of land to limit climate change).

What was presented in this chapter reflects a collective effort of people within and outside of the college to re-center and protect Palauan Knowledge. The next chapter looks to add to this chapter by discussing considerations and suggestions for the continuity of Palauan Knowledge in Palau Community College.

CHAPTER 8: CONTINUITY

I took a break from dissertation writing and closed my eyes to envision how I could better focus on this chapter. At this point I had written a very rough draft of the chapter but was struggling with its overall story. As I closed my eyes, my thoughts took me to back to Palau to a couple years prior to the start of my doctoral program. I was in Ngarchelong, the state that my grandfather is from, and a place that is just north of Ngaraard where my grandmother is from. My mother, cousins, and friends trekked down a steep hill accommodated by steps to make it easier to get down. At the bottom of our journey was a vast expanse of land with large stone monoliths scattered around. It was here with my mother where my vision first started. My memory went directly to my mother telling me how the large slabs of rock and engraved stones were the remnants of the original bai (meeting house) of Palau.

Figure 6. Stone Monoliths, Ngarchelong, Babeldaob

Still, other scenes connected to Palauan legends came to me. I saw myself walking along the stone path in Ngaraard with my mother, sister and cousins. The stone path has leads to the legend of a lake that for a time held the power to make people young forever. Then there were two more

visions connected to Palauan stories, they were the last ones that my mother shared with me before she passed away. My sister and I sat in the car listening to my mom and her best friend direct me in driving to Ngiwal, where we have familial connections. They described it as a place with two legends, the first, a legend of the strong man and the other of the breadfruit tree. The latter legend about the breadfruit tree connects to conversations later that I will discuss. While laughing my mom and her best friend described the common thing to say about people from Ngiwal, "7 eat 9" meaning that they eat seven meals and nine soups at each meal. Their "giant' stature is at the heart of the legend of the strong man, it is this and good warrior skills that people from Peleliu (southern island in Palau) sought out the strong man to assist them in battle. The stories were not just something I listened to, even more our footprints joined those who have been here before in this place where the legends originated. There are stories throughout this dissertation, and they are stories of the past, for the present, and to last into the future. These stories are footprints from my mother and all her relations, some who have also passed on. The stories and their re-telling are how Palauan Knowledge continues.

I return to writing this chapter with a better vision of the story that will be told. It is a story that builds on and faces back to the previous chapters in this dissertation. Collaborators' narratives in Chapter 6 revealed the impacts of the forceful centering of settler worldviews, knowledges and places of learning over time in Palau. Though collaborators presented their individual stories and views, collectively their narratives illustrated a journey towards healing as Palauan Knowledge was reclaimed and re-centered. Chapter seven extends this conversation of healing the relationship between Palauans and Palauan Knowledge. The chapter demonstrated how Palauans honored Palauan Knowledge within the community college. Each chapter provided example after example of the ability for Palauan Knowledge to persist and it is this

point that is the crux of this chapter: the broader discussions of continuity in Palau including what needs to be done within and outside of Palau Community College. In this chapter, I begin by re-righting misunderstandings of Palauan Knowledge that promote efforts towards the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. I follow this discussion addressing the two spaces that can support continuity. The first is the non-formal places of learning that are outside of Palau Community College and involve community-based learning. The second and final section of this chapter involves formal places of learning that happen within the organizational structure of Palau Community College.

Re-righting Misunderstandings of Palauan Knowledge

To incorporate Palauan Knowledge in Palau Community College is to understand that Palauan Knowledge evolves. Scholars describe Indigenous Knowledge as dynamic, complex, and constantly modifying to the changing needs of the community (Andreotti et al., 2017; Argawal, 1995; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1998; Pidgeon, 2016). A long-standing fallacy perpetuated by settlers to disempower Indigenous peoples lay in relegating Indigenous Knowledge to the past and therefore demeaning it as unchanging and stagnant (Argwal, 1995; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Hao'fa, 1994). To be clear, the past, itself, is not to be dismissed either. Comments by collaborators: Thomas, Patrick and Elicita confirm Andreotti et al.'s (2017) assertion that the past provides important knowledge and insight to live in the present. The authors support their claim with the example of Maori people who move toward the future with their bodies facing the past and with their ancestors facing them. Altogether, there are two premises that come from collaborators: 1) Palauan Knowledge is embedded in a relationship with the past and 2) Palauan Knowledge evolves and changes to fit the environment and needs of the community. These assertions can be found in the following collaborator statements.

Thomas, who manages Palau Community College's land grant projects and research ventures, reiterated the resiliency of Palauan Knowledge to continue to exist by being grounded in the past and also evolving in the present. He stated that:

> The basic foundation is still the same. Palauan Knowledge throughout the many centuries and influences have evolved throughout so much. If [Palauans] from the 1800s arrive today they would see that the basic principles, values, and the knowledge of Palau is still here even though time has changed to suit the living conditions that we are in today.

Thomas defined later in our discussion that the basic foundation of Palauan Knowledge is that of respect and specifically respecting your community, Palauan customs and practices. Continuity then is the ability to be in an appropriate relationship with the conditions of the present, while also having a connection and deep respect shaped by the past. Elicita, the program coordinator and instructor in the Palauan Studies Program, also affirmed Palauan Knowledge's relationship to the past saying, "I think we need as people of today, we need to consistently see what happened in the past [as] we start engaging in decision-making because [the past] is important otherwise we will perish." Elicita, like Thomas also spoke about the value of respect connected to the continuity of Palauan Knowledge:

> I think to me that is very important in ways that [Palauan Knowledge] would continue… Although the changes are there, [you can] acknowledge [those] changes, but then not make the change be the driving force...We have a responsibility to the next generation to continue the importance of respect, of taking care of each other's human dignity, and good stewardship of the island itself, of the environment and people.

While reiterating the importance of respect, Elicita draws attention to the future. In order for the next generation to live as Palauans, the current generation must abide by the knowledge that their ancestors have passed down. This knowledge is found in respecting all relations.

On the other hand, Patrick, the community college's president, spoke specifically to the fact that the past is a place we cannot fully return to. He insisted that "we are all changed too…I just wanted to make sure when we paint [the past], we paint it in a way that [takes into context that] different colors were used because the sun rose on a different location and was shining in a different place." He explained through this metaphor and through our overall conversation that there is a need to maintain things from the past but we must also acknowledge that with changing circumstances, there are skills, information and practices that no longer are needed or are appropriate for the time.

In the midst of all the changes that have occurred in Palau, the Palauan symbol *Terroi el Beluu* directs Palauans to continuity. I found the symbol in a chapter of a book that is to be used in Palauan Studies Program. The chapter was authored by Patrick and in it he described the symbol as having:

> A circular figurine with two human heads, two legs and two arms. One of these figurines is encircled by *besebasech*, a continuous triangular pattern. This has come to symbolize continuity, each triangle representing a different season for planting, harvesting, etc. and showing how the members of the community need to cooperate and work in unison.

I adapted the symbol to represent the dynamic nature of Palauan Knowledge that includes the past, present and future. The past is important, so it is emboldened, and the body parts within the picture face the past. Palauan Knowledge is not linear therefore the past, present and future flow into each other through the various lines in the middle circle.

Figure 7. Terroi el Beluu (Adapted)

One other thing to consider about the past comes from Andreotti et al. (2017) who argue "since the future woven in the present is informed by the teachings of the past, any consideration of possible futurities needs a careful examination of the repeated patterns of our shared past, that is, the shared pasts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples (p.8)." While continuity relies on the centering of Palauan Knowledge, I agree with scholars that a pure knowledge does not exist (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). Indigenous and non-Indigenous Knowledges who have come into contact, cannot be disentangled from each other. These relationships have been established over years of contact through migration and colonization and they continue to interface through a world ever more connected through technology, partnerships/collaborations and media. At issue argued throughout my study, is the unbalanced and dismissive nature propagated by perceptions of Western knowledge superiority. Institutions have perpetuated these ideals; therefore, it is imperative to disrupt this message by centering Palauan Knowledge.

Non-formal Spaces of Learning

Even when posing a question about what else the college can do to incorporate Palauan Knowledge, collaborators responded by pointing to spaces external to the community college as being important for its continuity. These spaces align with the idea that Indigenous Knowledge is "interfaced with place" by way of the close relationship that Indigenous people have with nature (Andreotti et al., 2017, p.3). Non-formal places of learning include Indigenous teachers and places of learning as sources of knowledge. This connects to the second, and no less important, research question of my study, regarding how Indigenous teachers and places of learning inform Palau Community College? I also define non-formal places of learning as contemporary spaces created by Palauans external to the college. This would include organizations (non-profits) and democratic committees and representatives. In considering the continuity of Palauan Knowledge, the following discussion focuses on collaborators comments on leadership, experiential learning, elders and sacred knowledge. These components are necessary in maintaining Palauan Knowledge.

Leadership

As discussed in Chapter 7, community-oriented leadership is important within Palauan society. Leadership supports the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. Elicita spoke about Palau's traditional chief system of ruling saying: "Chiefs have the responsibility over everybody, it's really in Palauan Knowledge. The chiefs are in charge of taking care of the vulnerable in the community and if they get in trouble, [the chiefs] are in charge of getting them out of trouble." She continued with another example of leadership that looks to continuity saying:

> Our Palauan Knowledge is about good stewardship because when you go to the ocean you do not take everything there; we just take what we need. And one thing that really

> happened and I am so happy about it, [is] the marine sanctuary, the concept of *bul*, like when there is lack of food, then [a chief] would have a *bul* so that the environment will be given a chance to rejuvenate and to flourish.

Here, Elicita described the two types of non-formal places of learning that I defined at the opening of this section 1) Indigenous teachers and places of learning and 2) contemporary spaces outside of the college. The first, Indigenous teachers and places of learning is captured by her statement that chiefs have the power to declare a *bul* over Indigenous places of learning including places like the ocean and land. Mat and Patrick described, *bul,* as an action done in order to protect endangered sea life, plants and animals. What is different within Elicita's statement is who declared the *bul*. This declaration of a "marine sanctuary" by the President of the Republic of Palau, connects to the dynamic nature of Palauan Knowledge in that the call to action came from a place that was not Indigenous, the office of the President (democratic government) in the spirit of *bul* (Palauan Knowledge). This is in line with Thomas' earlier assertation that the basic foundation of respect is still intact.

Dalton, the youngest collaborator who works for CRE, provided a specific example of how chiefs and their roles have evolved saying:

> My dad is from Melekeok and he is the second ranking chief in our hamlet and one of his duties is that he gathers a small organization. We call it men's club because it is only for men...I am part of the club. We pay our own dues monthly, two dollars for membership and then we tend to go out and do projects. This club is an example of the [traditional] men's club before.

Dalton further explained that the purpose of the club was to meet particular needs of each of the families in the village. Projects within the men's club include fixing structures within the village,

such as the houses of families; maintaining the *bai* (traditional chief meeting house) in Melekeok; and restoring the village stone path. This aligns with Elicita's comment that the chief is responsible for the people in his village. Palauan Knowledge is therefore still existing albeit with some changes that meet the way of life in Palau such as paying monthly dues.

Experiential Learning

The above characterization of men's club segways into the next discussion on the important role of experiential learning in the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. Julita, a guest lecturer in the Palauan Studies Program, emphasized the need for experiential learning:

> I think in learning about Palau and your culture, so much is related to doing and I think if people do not work in the taro patch you do not learn…the finer terms [involved in the cultivation of] taro fields. Maybe you learn the big general terms but the specifics, you can lose that…There is continuation with the cultivation of taro, and it is the same way with the building of the *bai* (traditional meeting house).

Julita pointed out how fundamental learning by doing is for the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. Here the main idea is that there are deeper levels of knowledge, namely specific Palauan terms, that cannot be obtained in contexts other than Indigenous places of learning. Julita talks more about terms to say that "taro has many names and girls learn about the different taro varieties." I am in awe of the knowledge that women carry to know the many varieties of taro and that this knowledge certainly comes with from an intimate relationship with taro. It is one that is connected to many skills including knowing "certain techniques to prevent disease in taro," boundaries of land to plant and to maintain, adjusting to weather conditions including dry seasons, and utilizing the right leaves to create good mulch and covering to ward off weeds. Additionally, women in a small village would come together to work cooperatively in each

other's taro fields. Julita said the co-op was called *mengerakl* where "we come help you and the next day we go to someone else. So, in the taro field there were ways of helping each other"

I return to the Palauan tradition of men's club from the previous section to expand on this discussion about experiential learning. The sites involved in the building of a *bai* are Indigenous places of learning. Patrick, who is also from Melekeok like Dalton, spoke with pride about what he and others have been able to accomplish with young men. Patrick states:

> When we were young, we did not have this opportunity…[and] there was only one [*bai*]. Unless we built one for us, then our children would not have this knowledge. And now there are several that have been worked on. [The young men] are now experts and this is good for the next two generations.

Patrick continued by saying that anybody interested in the *bai* could join and learn by experience in the many tasks of the *bai*, from learning terminology to the "knowledge of things like the harvest and choosing nipa leaves used for the thatching of the *bai* roof."

Similar to the responsibility of maintaining the collective village space of a *bai*, Dalton spoke about how the men's club also maintains the village stone path. He explained:

> Now our role is not only in the village but to go to the part around the village [where the] rocks protect…waves from entering. What we do is we go and maintain them...We gather as much historical material from that area to build that stone path to keep it traditional.

Altogether the message that emerged from Julita, Dalton and Patrick, was that Palauan Knowledge relies on learning through experience. At the same time, Palauan Knowledge within these Indigenous spaces of learning have also changed so that it can continue to exist. Dalton's addressed this point in his conversation about men's club affirming that "today is different, the practice is the same, but some of our roles have changed."

Elders

Another consideration in the continuity of Palauan Knowledge was brought up in the concern for Palauan elders and the knowledge they carry. Hermana, a lecturer in the Palauan Studies Program and PCC's summer youth program, spoke about the possible loss of knowledge urging the community to recognize that "it is going to be difficult because a lot of people will soon pass away who know all about [Palauan land and genealogy]. As you can see Palau now is like almost a very young community because very few elderly are still alive." Dalton, a student also addressed the topic of elders when thinking about continuity:

> My experience especially in Babeldaob my grandmother lives in Babeldaob, most old people are in Babeldaob. They speak Palauan [terms that] I do not know...and use it in everyday life. Since they're there (in Babeldaob), they are the only ones there using it. But us in Koror do not hear that every day, if only we can move there, and work there, then we can hear it and practice it, that is the difference between us and them.

His words acknowledge the expertise localized in elders and further concedes that to obtain the knowledge from elders is to live in daily contact with them. He reiterates an earlier discussion by Patrick about the distinctiveness between rural Palau (Babeldaob) and urban Palau (Koror). Babeldaob is a place that allows you to be more connected to land and to people away from the distractions of a populated and crowded place. The difference is visible for Dalton, because his family is from Babeldaob and since he works in Koror, he is able to see this contrast. Herein lies a challenge to continuity and that is the varying obligations presented to Palauan youth. Dalton explained it:

> As for our traditional culture only fewer of us are experts in our traditional way and those few are old people and they remind us every day that we should do this, and we should

not do this because this is a foreign culture. But as for us a young generation it is different for us because we learn it in school the way we grow up we learn these foreign things, so it is hard for us to practice [Palauan Knowledge] in everyday life.

Sacred Knowledge

Lastly, the collaborators also insisted that the continuity of knowledge must also be respectful of sacred knowledge. There are boundaries to sharing certain aspects of Palauan Knowledge established before foreign contact. Hermana provides an example saying, "some families are known for their skills with medicine…they teach their children and we commoners (Palauans) are not supposed to know what they know." Julita and Sholeh also talk about this through their work experiences in Palauan community-based organizations, Palauan Conservation Society and Belau National Museum respectively. Reflecting on her interviews with elders to document and preserve Palauan Knowledge, Sholeh, an alumna of Palau Community College, affirmed that "knowledge is also secret…[and that] a lot of clans have their own knowledge and we do not want to pressure them like we have to get this…no it was whatever [they] want[ed] to share." Similarly, Julita added her personal feelings and understandings revealing:

> In retrospect…it was hard to talk to people to get this knowledge which don't belong to us…because you know some things, I do not have the right to know and that is respected in Palau… The point is who is asking and who wants to know…The [non-Palauan] researchers [in the past] when they came, they affiliated with a family.

The latter part of this quote referred to prior chapters and the importance of understanding what relationships might exist between people, may it be through family, clan or village lineage. It is imperative to state one's name and even more importantly your family's name. Additionally,

Julita expressed discomfort while interviewing to document Palauan Knowledge, which is not the way that stories were passed on traditionally. However, she continued because she did not want the general story that the elder could share, lost. It revealed a need to reconcile the benefits of collecting and protecting Palauan Knowledge with new ways of communication and storage. Though this is not to dismiss the oral tradition, Julita insisted "we want to encourage [Palauans] to tell stories to your children, to keep those stories in the community."

Palau Community College: A Formal Place of Learning

The discussion in the previous section provided important considerations for incorporating Palauan Knowledge in Palau Community College. The focus of this section is on Palau Community College as a formal place of learning and how it can further incorporate Palauan Knowledge in the college. As with the prior section on non-formal places of learning, leadership is also important in supporting the continuity of Palauan Knowledge at PCC. Referencing Patrick's leadership, Elicita insisted that PCC "is fortunate [to] have a leader...who has knowledge of what it means to be active in community life and in our small island." It is with his community-oriented leadership that she believes Palau Community College is positioned well to support efforts to continue to center and therefore include Palauan Knowledge. Centering Indigenous Knowledge in the academy according to Pidgeon (2016) is not captured by one strategy or policy change but a continual process whereby a postsecondary institution establishes "respectful relationships through relevant policies, programs and services." With this in mind, the following discussion addresses collaborators' suggestions on what else can be done across Palau Community College in the areas of: 1) academic programs 2) co-curricular opportunities and 3) community engagement.

Academic Programs

Palauan Studies Program holds a pivotal place in the centering and maintenance of Palauan Knowledge at Palau Community College. Julita characterized it as supplemental to the learning that is done with Indigenous teachers in Indigenous places of learning. At the same time, she also commented that the program "still needs a lot of work" with an emphasis on the development of options that can be taken by current students and can attract new students. Julita suggested that "for PCC, if it's possible to have basic Palauan courses for Palauan and non-Palauan students at PCC, so they can have some basic knowledge." Julita then began to list off possible topics that PCC students could take as a part of the requirement. These include Palauan genealogy and history; Palauan place names and terminology of the land; basic geography in Palau; and Palauan legends such as the creation story. Grace, an alumna of PCC and librarian assistant, made a similar statement suggesting that the college should look into making Palauan language [a course] requirement for [Palauan PCC] students and warned that if we do not really do it then [Palauan language] may be gone." She explained that although she is Palauan there are some words that she does not know and before she was able to go to her parents but they are no longer here, so if Palau Community College had a language requirement then Palauan students would be stronger in their language. Hermana also suggested that PCC focus on Palauan language to collectively come together as an institution to "[up]hold Palauan language like it is important. She wants to repair its place in the generations coming up because as mentioned by Dalton, there are so many foreign influences in their schooling that separates them from the knowledge of their elders. Patrick added another point and that was to open up courses in an online format. The target student would be a reverse transfer student that would encourage participation by Palauans away from the island.

Co-curricular Opportunities

Patrick and Sholeh briefly spoke about co-curricular opportunities in response to how Palau Community College could support the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. I define co-curricular opportunities as experiences that the college offers to students that are outside of their academic courses. While Patrick reiterated his belief in learning Palauan Knowledge in the home, first, as central to the continuity of Palauan Knowledge he also said that PCC can "certainly come up with a club and also try to encourage participation in communities. But that is something I come from, a community where young women and young men's groups are very strong." The discussion of mens' club in particular was elaborated on earlier in this chapter with comments by Patrick and Dalton in the non-formal places of learning section. Even though a strong presence exists in Melekeok, effort by Palau Community College could increase participation.

Additionally, Sholeh recognized that more should be done to connect Palau Community College students with Belau National Museum and thereby to Palauan Knowledge. She envisioned an opportunity where PCC students could work and learn alongside employees of the museum on existing projects or they could have a specific field or project in mind that they could propose to the museum to see how that might fit within the museum. Particularly for projects, Sholeh elaborated on a one project as an example of an experience that they could provide students.

> We got a grant to focus on the two [villages we identified] because they have the oldest Palauan Knowledge such as having *Modekengei* (Palauan religion) and a lot of the history connected to legends and great warriors. The villages have an old channel

> important [in travelling] to the reef and also still have nice stone paths. So, we decided to interview elders over a course of months, no actually a couple of years.

The opportunity reiterates the point Dalton made as these two villages are found in Babeldaob, the place where you can find elders and people living in close connection to land and traditional practices. As discussed, earlier elders are aging, and they are a valuable source of knowledge. Palau Community College could benefit from a partnership with Belau Museum to either create a co-curricular opportunity (internship) or to connect Belau Museum to the Palauan Studies Program.

Community Engagement

The community college plays an important role as the sole institution of higher education in Palau and a valuable aspect of the college in its engagement in the community. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Palau Community College offers a summer youth program as well as reaches out into the community through their Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) office. Palau Community College's (n.d.) CRE office "generate[s], develop[s] and disseminate[s] practical and sustainable technologies and knowledge in agriculture, aquaculture, environment, food and human sciences to benefit the people of the Republic of Palau and the surrounding regions." Thomas shared with me a potential project involved with bringing additional breadfruit trees to Palau, possibly importing that plants from Hawaii. He explained that there has been a reduction in breadfruit as a result of the changing context in Palau by way of destruction caused by typhoons as well as people removing the trees when they build their homes. More broadly, increasing the number of breadfruit trees is tied to the growing need to become self-sustainable especially as food security issues linger amidst what Thomas describes as "conflicts [in the region connected to] North Korea that could interrupt the ships bringing food to Palau."

The breadfruit plant called meduu is a common staple food and construction material within Oceania. The breadfruit tree is also connected to a Palauan legend of neglect and greed. I learned about the breadfruit story from my mom while conducting this study and it was one of

Figure 8. Palauan Legend of the Breadfruit Tree, Ngiwal, Babeldaob

the last stories she shared before her passing. The legend was about a poor old woman who lived in Ngiwal. After a day of catching fish, men from a nearby village would pass by her house without sharing any of their catch. She was left to only eat the fruit from the breadfruit tree until her son came home one day. Saddened that nobody had shared fish with her, he cut a branch of the breadfruit tree, first water came out and then fish. Thereafter the woman would just cut a branch when she needed fish. The villagers were envious of her, cut down the tree, and took fish for themselves. However, the water continued to flow out of the tree and soon drowned the villagers Their village is underwater to this day.

The breadfruit tree has significance in Palauan society as displayed through this story. A focus on bringing back the breadfruit tree and encouraging its cultivation and consumption is

continuity of Palauan Knowledge. The breadfruit tree is honored within Palauan legend and the lesson from this story connects to the goals of CRE's and this project. What we learn from the legend is to take care of each other as nobody cared for the poor old woman, whose son was away. And secondly is to take care of the land, to literally not cut down the breadfruit tree.

An additional resource for the community comes from Elicita's reflection on Palauan Knowledge that has been and would be gathered within Palau Community College as well as outside of the college. Elicita posed that the "challenge would be [for] there [to be] one place where we can have all of this, an archive...While some might say [in] the Arts and Cultures, or Koror State government...I think [Palau Community College] can serve as the repository…this would be the place where you go and look up Palauan Knowledge." She also added speaking directly to me that with this repository "PCC would be an appropriate place, so we need you to come back." She like Patrick emphasized "reaching out to outside of Palau, to the Palauan diaspora." Elicita mentioned this so that people of Palauan descent outside of Palau would engage with Palaun knowledge. Also, she said that this might encourage people to come to work in Palau Community College to continue the work of honoring Palauan Knowledge. She feels a sense of urgency as she is getting older and said "I am retiring or actually I am already retired and came back to do this Palauan Studies Program because it was important to bring together like minded people to work together and to ensure the continuity of Palauan Knowledge and practice."

Summary

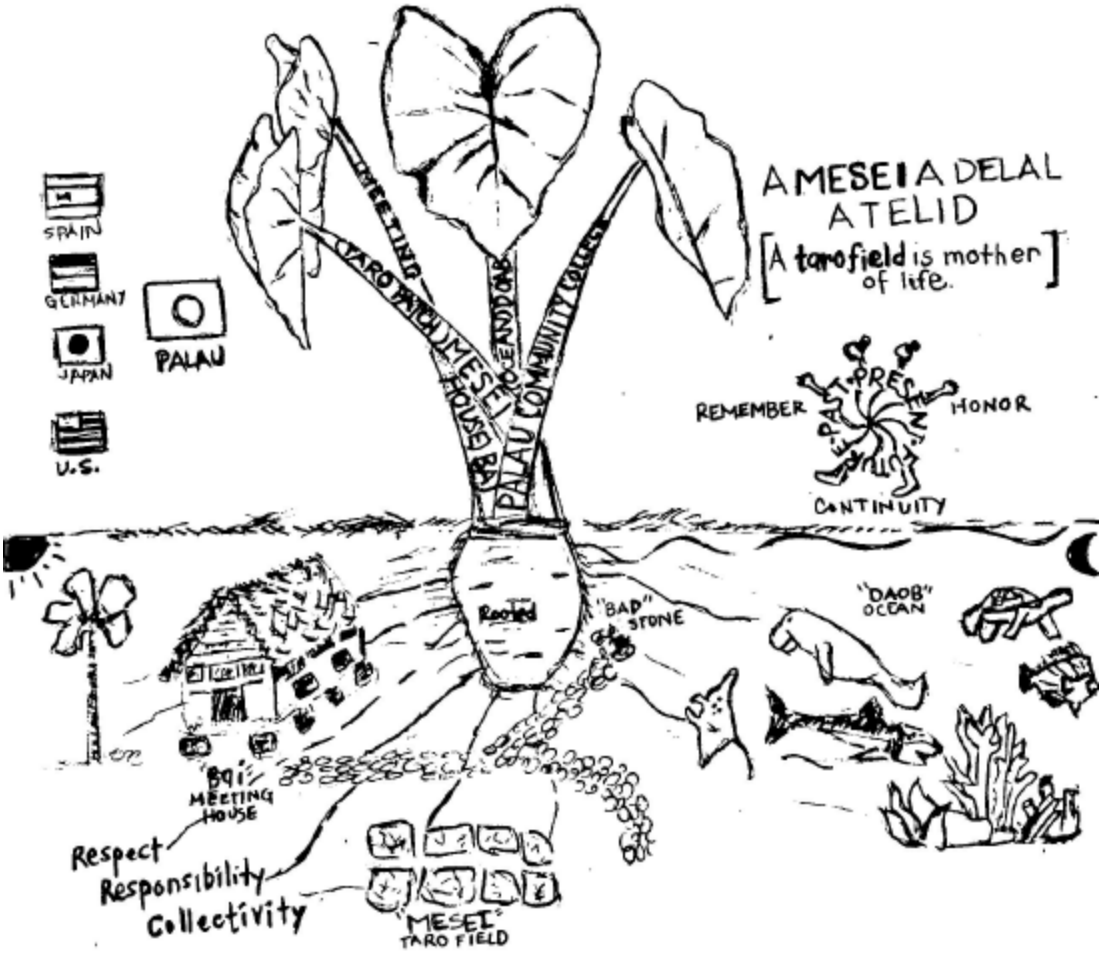
In discussing futurity, Andreotti et al. (2015) state that "Māori people walk backward toward the future with their bodies facing the past and with their ancestors facing them" (p. 3). Collaborator narratives within this chapter support this same orientation. The chapter first looked

to non-formal spaces for learning and found ways that Palauan Knowledge is being passed on to the next generation. A Palauan chant captures this: “We are in transition, we are transiting this earth and we do not own what is here, the land, the trees, and the forest. We need to ensure its continuity.” The chant speaks to our temporary status on earth and directs us to focus beyond our own lives to make sure land and therefore Palauan Knowledge continues to exist. Palauan chants are filled with the knowledge from the past that hold true lessons for the present. While there is grounding in the past, the chapter asserts that Palauan Knowledge is not static, but that it is constantly modifying and changing.

Palau Community College is a formal place of learning that was not created by Palauans. The institution has transitioned with Palauan leadership as Palau also achieved independence from the United States. It should then, not come as a surprise that collaborators first addressed continuity that is happening outside of Palau Community College. Continuity is supported by Palauan community-oriented leadership, learning by doing, and learning from elders. The chapter then focuses on what is next, drawing ideas from additional efforts to incorporate Palauan Knowledge at Palau Community College. The conversation includes recommendation and ideas of including Indigenous Knowledge through policy and changes involving Palauan Studies program, co-curricular opportunities such as internships, (men’s club and partnership with Belau National Museum) and potential community engagement opportunities through the Cooperative Research and Extension office. In the end, I think that Elicita’s words to encourage Palauans to continue on this journey provides a good closing to the chapter: “And nothing is perfect but at least there is a consistency of continuity of what is important so that we can go on to call ourselves Palauan.”

CHAPTER 9: CONNECTIONS (CONCLUSION)

Figure 9. Rooted in Palauan Knowledge



In the last chapter of this dissertation I wanted to focus on connections. Before I wrote this chapter, I drew a picture to reflect and guide me through its completion. In it, I linked the key aspects discussed throughout the dissertation. I begin by elaborating on the overall meaning of the drawing by discussing the various images within it. Next, I return to the footprints of the scholars whose review of literature informed this study. The section will also include a discussion about the collaborators and then another about Settler, Palauan and Other Indigenous Knowledges. I end with reflections on my relationship with Palauan Knowledge.

Drawing My Conclusions

Reflecting over the story of this dissertation and all the stories within it led me to think about being rooted. The drawing is inspired from those who have imparted, instilled, and demonstrated Palauan Knowledge to me. I am rooted in a legacy of women in the *mesei*, men who know the sea, and lineage stories. Some of which I had before the study and others came while working on this dissertation. And so, the words, the stories, the knowledge that is shared are in connection to my family, mother, *mamang*, grandpa, uncles, aunts, cousins, and ancestors as well as all of my mother's friends who also shared their knowledge with me. This dissertation is rooted in the knowledge shared by collaborators: Dalton, Elicita, Grace, Hermana, Julita, Mat, Patrick, Sholeh and Thomas, whose knowledge is connected to others: their ancestors, elders, family, and friends. I was not an objective researcher gathering data to write my thoughts, I was someone who listened and learned, and I was guided and inspired by the collaborators because their words connected to our shared identity as Palauans.

The Palauan proverb "*A mesei a delal a telid*" (The taro patch is mother of our life), entails that taro is at the origin of Palau, that it is the root. Taro also represents growth. It is the "staple root plant" for Palau and its embedded in Palauan identity, customs, and practices. Taro is in the middle of the drawing just as this dissertation asserts that Palauan Knowledge is centered. The images within the drawing emerge from my reflections about the data chapters. Within the drawing are roots connecting to the words - respect, responsibility and collectivity discussed in chapters 6-8. These are Palauan values at the foundation of Palauan Knowledge, and they appear in the Indigenous places of learning where they are taught, observed and enacted. These places represented in the drawing are the *bai* (meeting house), *mesei* (taro patch), and *daob* (ocean). The dugong, turtle, fish, shark, and stingray are fundamental animals included in

the sketch of the ocean. Connecting these places are ancient stone paths that I walk each and every time I am at home in Palau. Walking on these stones, I am stepping with and alongside the footprints of those who came before me, who carried these stones to create miles of connective passageways within and around our village. The cosmos, displayed by the moon and the sun, embody knowledge of the tides, migration, weather, fishing, and wayfaring.

Figure 10. Palauan Stone Paths, Ngaraard, Babeldaob.

The next part of the story stemming from the roots reflects the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. On the right side of the drawing, "*terroi el beluu*" is the symbol for continuity that is traditionally painted on the *bai*. I adapted this symbol (see description in Chapter 8) by adding the words – past, present and future. In order for Palauan Knowledge to continue, it requires a focus throughout Palau: facing and rooted in the past, communicated and exhibited in the present, and doing all of this so that Palauan Knowledge continues to exist (future). The words around the figure connect to "*terroi el beluu"* and appear in the titles of the chapters 6-8: remember, honor, and continuity. On the other side of the drawing is an acknowledgement of the

influence of settler knowledges. Palauan Knowledge has persisted despite the impacts of colonization where new knowledge from other countries (i.e. Japan, U.S.) endeavored to marginalize and invalidate Palauan Knowledge. The flags represent both the colonial footprints that continue to impact Palauan Knowledge such as Japanese and English words mixed within Palauan language, K-12 and post-secondary schools, and the democratic government. The stalks of the taro plant capture the present-day places of learning for Palauan Knowledge. This does not represent all of the places but some that were discussed within this dissertation. The places written on the stalks include Palau Community College, *mesei*, *bai*, and the ocean. Referring back to my assertion that the continuity of Palauan Knowledge needs to be a "focus throughout Palau" the stalks then include both formal (PCC) and Indigenous places of learning.

Connecting back to Indigenous Scholars

My research study connected with footsteps from previous research by scholars as well as illuminated stories that step into new understandings for Indigenous Knowledge. The path taken was guided by the following research questions: How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated within Palau Community College and secondly, how do stories from Indigenous teachers and Indigenous learning environments inform PCC? Indigenous Knowledge was at the center of the discussions within the review of literature. This section will first review what was gleaned for each of the research questions

Guiding Questions

While I knew from my pilot study that I would find Palauan Knowledge in the Palauan Studies Program, I only had a surface level understanding of the program and that left me with so much more to uncover. Elicita, the coordinator of the Palauan Studies Program, defined the approach in developing Palauan Studies as "academia and action." It is the embodiment of

Palauan Knowledge displayed in the lives of Elicita, and the elders, Hermana, Mat, and Julita that modeled "action" within courses. Their stories of action, revealed in Chapter 6, came before they even worked or lectured within Palau Community College. They shared these stories with students and thereby modeled Palauan Knowledge in action. Elicita's story to students demonstrated action through *mesei* activism where Indigenous places of learning, taro patches were used to educate women and garner support for a vote to protect Palau from foreign nuclear interests. Language revitalization was a collective effort by Mat and Hermana (and others) to standardize Palauan language, so it could be centered across the many miles of islands impacted by previous English and Japanese language mandates. Students were able to discuss the many benefits and challenges to this standardization. Julita shared genealogy stories from her involvement in community-based projects to gather countless narratives from elders that even uncovered some unknown familial relationships to Julita. These stories are Palauan Knowledge and in Chapter 7, these narratives are then shared with and integrated in assignments for students to learn from, to enact in their own lives and to pass on (oral tradition).

The Palauan Studies Program falls within Indigenous/Aboriginal centers and programs that scholars encourage institutions to look beyond as they are often overtaxed and overemphasized in the recognition of the indigeneity of an institution (Erwin & Muzzin, 2015; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Still other ways that Palauan Knowledge is incorporated in the college came through developing relationships amongst the collaborators and with the college. Chapter 5 helped to provide context of the college's colonial legacy with Japanese and American physical and intellectual infrastructure. The colonial footprints in Chapter 5 were then juxtaposed against the representations of Palauan Knowledge in Chapters 6 and 7. Collaborators discussed renaming buildings to Palauan terms for trees and fish, an act of reclaiming land. Patrick, the

community college president, utilized storytelling to challenge U.S. accreditation colleagues to see their global responsibility in stewarding land as well as employed a map with Palau at the center to disrupt U.S. notions of supremacy with visiting faculty to PCC. Generations of knowledge about the cultivation of taro was researched and documented by Thomas and colleagues in the Cooperative Research and Extension office. The answer to the first research question then is that Palauan Knowledge is being honored within the college through the actions of Palauans who have an understanding of the knowledge that has been passed down and are able to apply that knowledge appropriately through instruction and knowledge production within the college.

The second research question explores how Indigenous teachers and places of learning inform PCC. In Chapter 6, a discussion of separation from Palauan Knowledge experienced by collaborators provides a short description of the roles of Palauan elders and Palauan places of learning (taro, women's and men's club, etc.). Their mention in this chapter was to provide background so that a better connection could be made for what was being lost as a result of Japanese and later American schools and instructors. I insist that this background helps to understand the complicated nature of reconciling Palauan Knowledge to the settler institutions that remain. This last comment leads into the topic of the continuity of Palauan Knowledge within Palau Community College that is taken up in Chapter 8.

What I learned from my conversation is that to talk about what else could be done at Palau Community College required a broader conversation of Palau and specifically within Indigenous places of learning. From Chapter 5, we learn that all of the collaborators have at least one parent from the island of Babeldaob. This island is also discussed by Dalton and Patrick as a place where people still live traditionally. It is the largest of all the islands in Palau that include a

wide variety of untouched terrain that in the past drew the interest of the U.S. military for war exercises. Babeldaob is home to one of the research sites for the Cooperative Research & Extension office (Ngaremlengui state) and it is also the site of resurgence of knowledge of building a *bai* (Melekeok state) described by Dalton and Patrick. The lesson gained from the discussion on Indigenous places of learning and teachers within Babeldaob, points to this island as integral for the continuity of Palauan Knowledge. I also recognize that the voices of people from Palauan islands far from the urban center of Koror including Kayangel, Sonsorol, and Hatohobei were not represented. Future research could focus on Palau Community College stakeholders from these islands and/or interviews with community members on these islands. Lastly, collaborators emphasized experiential learning and a sustained relationship with land as vital in maintaining important practices and skills while also finding ways to innovate and adapt to the changing environment.

Collaborators

As I look over the collaborator profiles and stories, it is clear that their diverse identities and experiences provided a richness of information. Collaborators varied in roles, age, and access to Indigenous places of learning. Much of the literature covered institutions in larger nation-states and also focused on individual populations of students, faculty, staff, elders and administrators or a mixture of these roles (Botha, 2007; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hart et al, 2012; Minnabarriet, 2012; Pidgeon, 2008; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). What was different with my study is that collaborators came from all of the roles listed with an additional role of alumni. Furthermore, previous research did not illuminate any collaborators who had multiple roles. Dalton is an alum, current student (lifelong learner), and employee of Palau Community College and Patrick is an alumnus of Micronesian Occupation Center (previous name of PCC) and the

current president of the college. I suggest responsibility is in part why Patrick and Dalton are connected to PCC across various roles. Dalton works within the Cooperative Research and Extension office and spoke highly about his supervisor Thomas, who he admires as an expert in Palauan Knowledge. Dalton wanted to learn more about Palau and enrolled in Palauan Studies courses. Patrick, on the other hand, is obligated by lineage, a responsibility of his clan to take care of people. This role is done with several projects to build and maintain traditional meeting houses (*bais*). It is not only a responsibility to keep the practice alive but to provide a space for young men to learn. Patrick likens his coming into leadership at PCC as aligned with his role as a builder. Through his leadership he has incorporated Palauan Knowledge through the renaming and painting of colonial buildings to center Palauan terminology and stories.

Palauan Knowledge reveals more of itself through a deepening relationship over time and experience in traditional practices and places. An important consideration for the Palauan context in particular were the collaborator's access to Indigenous places of learning. Dalton and Patrick discussed extensively, their experiences in Palauan places of learning, *bai* and men's club due to leadership and community action to keep Palauan Knowledge alive. Elicita in her full time position, spoke about retirement as a time to get back to the land while Sholeh was challenged by her work hours and the responsibilities of her kids education and upbringing that has kept her from traveling to Babeldaob to spend time with family and land. While not in Indigenous places of learning, I would argue that both Sholeh and Elicita are engaging in Palauan Knowledge in ways that demonstrate its dynamic nature and supports its continuity. Sholeh is preserving stories about traditional villages and Palauan plants in her job at Belau National Museum. Elicita shares Palauan history in her classes, invites elders to class to share knowledge and leads the Palauan Studies Programs.

Settler, Indigenous and Palauan Knowledges

Wright & Balutski (2016) insisted that there exists unique geo-political, colonial, and historical characteristics for former U.S. territories in the Pacific. Palau's colonial history involved multiple colonizers (Spain, Germany, Japan, and the United States) and it is important to acknowledge these different eras in Palauan history. Chapter 5 and 6 showed the development and requirement of schooling for Palauans by Japanese and American administrations. Each world power had similar aims: to export their ways of being, knowing and doing. Schooling in particular was something that had a cumulative effect on successive Palauan generations, each forced to assimilate to two different settler knowledge systems. The end result was a fractured family, where the (current) elder generation has lingering colonial impacts from demands to assimilate to Japanese language, values and institutions. Their descendants have also experienced similar imperialistic efforts but with the English language and American values and institutions. Other research studies do not discuss such impacts by multiple colonizers.

Palau's unique colonial relationship with the United States reveals that though it is predominantly Indigenous with Indigenous leadership, that it still has similar experiences of Western notions of superiority. I argue that the American administration has had a long-lasting influence. Collaborator's schooling experience demonstrated that this colonial history discussed in Chapter 5 still has lingering impacts that separate Palauans from Palauan Knowledge. While under American Administration, Julita, Mat and Hermana experienced Western schools through secondary and post-secondary schooling abroad. Though decades later and now under Palauan rule, Sholeh and Dalton still discussed American influences through schooling, media and work. Their schooling, though in different places, abroad and in Palau, still yielded separation from Palauan Knowledge. All in all, even though Palau and the community college are majority

Indigenous, U.S. institutions that were developed and subsist, still have a presence. Another example is PCC's funding from different U.S. departments (Agriculture, Education and Interior) as well as their accreditation by a U.S. accrediting body. Each relationship (U.S. department and accrediting body) comes with guidelines steeped in American values, content and context that PCC must conform to in order to receive and maintain funding.

Despite the previous discussion of the presence of settler knowledge through legacy and neocolonial relationships, Palau has been able to center Indigenous Knowledge. In my pilot study, I was very interested in the non-Instrumental navigational course at PCC. It was a course that was taught by Sesario who is from the neighboring island Yap. The course for me complicated what an academic course looks like. I remember Patrick telling me that it was a course without books, binders or papers, and while pointing to his head and to his heart, he asserted that pedagogical tools would come from an embodiment with land, spirit and cosmos. I later learned within this study from Julita that the knowledge from the non-instrumental navigational course uncovered Palauan Knowledge of traditional place names for docks. I believe that this is a powerful outcome from a collective of Indigenous people coming together to share knowledge and maintain Indigenous Knowledge. I reflected on this as mirroring my experience through this dissertation journey. I am so fortunate to have many Indigenous scholars help me conceptualize and carry out this study. From the Indigenous scholars in the literature to talking story with Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Tongan, Maori and Chamorro scholars. I have so many stories of being challenged and supported, but I will only tell one now. As I was starting to transcribe the interviews with collaborators, I was able to have a conversation with *Onondaga, Turtle clan* scholar Stephanie Waterman about my preliminary notes. I spoke to her about PCC's Cooperative Research and Extension office and how they were focused on solving issues related

to food security. Once I finished talking, Dr. Waterman looked at me and softly responded that the story I shared with her was not about food security but what the college and the Palauan collaborators were doing was better described as food sovereignty. I agreed, sovereignty indeed was a better way to showcase the agency of Palauan Knowledge that Thomas and others asserted. Educating Palauans about cultivating staple foods is advancing self-sufficiency and nutrition as opposed to a dependency on shipping imports of processed foods. It is a return to a knowledge of and a relationship with land.

As Patrick mentioned, the college is the nation's sole higher education institution and so there is immense pressure on it to deliver academic and vocational opportunities for Palau. Chapter 6 discusses the differing value systems between settler and Palauan culture experienced by collaborators. I would argue that a key takeaway from my study for higher education leaders is to seriously consider whose values are being elevated and maintained through institutional policies and practices as well as identify whose values are being marginalized. Higher education leaders can also look to the depictions of leadership within my study as an example of how to elevate and sustain Indigenous Knowledges. Patrick's stories within this dissertation should compel others to listen and reach towards reciprocal relationships with community leaders who are grounded in Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. Even more, Patrick took advantage of time spent with colleagues across the world within the higher education community to challenge leaders to center the Indigenous Knowledges that the academy has relegated to be inferior, invalid and stuck in the past. Patrick shows other leaders how to unearth the colonial histories as well as reclaim spaces within the college to remind us all of the Indigenous stories and land that many institutions have ignored and have benefited from.

Elicita, another leader within Palau Community College asserts that higher education should take a stance towards activism within the academy that "re-right[s] and re-write[s]" (Smith, 2012) the stories suppressed and marginalized by colonialism and imperialism. Her message is reflected in hers and other collaborators' effort to go beyond words and take action to center Palauan values, histories and identity. The same actions are needed to center those stories from Indigenous people and lands that institutions around the world are built upon. It is in this recognition that we may be able to move towards meaningful efforts to see that Indigenous Knowledge has always been present and is necessary in the process of knowledge production.

Lastly, PCC does not neatly fit within the mold of a community college. It instead, offers a vision for how these institutions should embody the essence of "community" within its name. What I found through my study were people who worked or attended Palau Community College that were also active members in the community – women's organizations, *mesei*, *bai*, Palau Conservation Society and men's club. It is from their relationships in and outside of the college that allowed for so many community efforts and collaborations to be shared and taught with Palau Community College. At the foundation of the community-oriented mindset was a responsibility to uplift Palauan history and values, and this is showcased in many ways throughout the college. PCC elevates Indigenous Knowledge by setting aside space, the Micronesia-Pacific Collection, within its library, to preserve Palauan and other Indigenous Knowledges within Oceania. Also, through the Cooperative Research and Extension office education and resources are brought to the community to recognize the value in the traditional practices of our ancestors (i.e. land cultivation and fishing). CRE also elevates and preserves Indigenous knowledge that continues to be passed on and generated as well as utilized in new innovations within Palauan traditional places of learning.

In my study, I also found that contributions are not only from the community college outward, but that the community is also involved in directing the college. The Palauan Studies Program was birthed through the recommendation of a women's group that wanted Palauan Knowledge to be included in all sectors of education within Palau. Community elders are instrumental in the teaching of the Palauan Studies courses, sharing their knowledge through guest lectures. Community members from community-based organizations and Palauan state offices joined with Palau Community College to put on a summer camp to teach youth Palauan stories, traditions and skills. All in all, Palauan Knowledge is held intact through the responsibility carried out by Palauans internal and external to the college to hold onto and pass on the knowledge of our ancestors. The responsibility is one that stewards that knowledge and holds vessels of that knowledge, elders and land, in high esteem in ways that Palauan Knowledge will continue to exist for generations to come.

My Relationship to Palauan Knowledge

I have definitely grown in my knowledge about Palau through the many people mentioned earlier in this chapter. The process has also been a collective one as I am encouraged that this journey more closely connected my mom, dad, sister and brother to Palauan Knowledge. My *mamang* shared Palauan stories, showed us how to cook Palauan dishes and demonstrated how to make a plate out of a fallen sheath from the betelnut tree. I accompanied my aunt to the taro patch and another aunt in clearing land to develop a garden. I learned how to weave a basket the Yapese way (my uncle is from Yap). After venturing in the ocean at night, my uncle retuned with fish enough for our family and still more to be given to others in the village. I observed how to make coconut oil and went crab hunting after a full moon. I walked with my aunt far-off into the ocean during low tide, learning how to search for, retrieve, and prepare sea urchin for our

dinner. There is nothing that can emulate the knowledge that is learned from being present in Palau and interfacing with the land.

This dissertation story also included pain and healing. Pain in the stories of violence and separation from what my ancestors/family experienced because of imperial pursuits. Palau was caught in a war that was not their own. As I read the stories and visited the places where battles took place, I was sad to see land littered with rusted tanks, buildings and weapons. It was also tough to read the stories of the fear of planes dropping bombs and Palauans (my ancestors) running to avoid them (Mita, 2009).

I had many personal challenges that came up during this journey. I made a decision to slow down and at times step away from writing the dissertation. I had already been in a journey fighting with my mom's health at the beginning of my doctoral program and then as I travelled to Palau to carry out this study, I was doing so after we received news my mom would be fighting cancer a second time. Traveling to Palau for my dissertation study would be the last time my mom was in Palau as she would pass away later that year. Writing a dissertation that has my mom's footprints all over it has been met with moments of laughter, tears, pain and healing. My mom has come to me in visions and dreams to help me connect and process the narratives surrounding this dissertation. There is so much more that I can say about my mom, but I will leave that to stories for my son, and for my nieces and nephew.

There is one possibility that stood out to me when I reflected on the stories from collaborators and it was about Palauan language. This is a topic that is important to me because I am not fluent in Palauan. Before I started this dissertation, my goal was to learn how to speak Palauan well. I received grammar books from my aunt and then purchased a dictionary and a

conversational Palauan book. My mom also helped as well. With work and school, it was more difficult to stay committed to my goal.

Mat discussed the process for standardization as a way to create a unified way to spell and pronounce Palauan words. When he said this, I thought about one of my many summer visits in Palau. I remember my cousin telling me that my mom spoke Palauan differently. At the time I thought it might be a result of living in the United States, away from Palau, and this still may hold some truth. However, my dream connected the conversation I had with my cousin and my conversation with Mat about standardizing Palauan language. Standardization happened well after my mother graduated from high school and it was implemented when my cousins attended elementary school. So, my mom learned Palauan at a time when as the collaborators said you spelled Palauan how you speak it and pronounced it within the dialect of the area you lived. At this time there also was no road that connected all of the states so there was less interaction between people across Palau. Kovach (2005) described Indigenous languages as fluid, non-linear and relation as opposed to has rigid rules of standardization.

The Palau Language Commission has office space in Palau Community College and this provides an opportunity for a connection to be made between Palauan Studies and the commission. After talking with Mat, there is so much that can be taught within Palauan history and language based on the regional differences in the Palauan language as well as the (non-official) languages of Tobi and Sonsorolese, from the farthest southwest islands of Palau. I also suggest picking up from the original standardization process to assert multiple standards of the Palauan language that will recognize the distinctive pronunciations, spelling and words.

As I look back on this journey, I must highlight the strength of Palauan women that served as motivation for me to start, persist and finish this dissertation story. While women's

club was not explicitly discussed in narratives by women collaborators, the spirit of women's clubs are all over this dissertation. One such example is the narrative of resistance shared by Elicita where women worked together to assert their right for self-determination in the stewardship of land, a long-held responsibility of Palauan women. I was so deeply honored to speak with Elicita, one of the women involved what I call *mesei* activism. Julita shared so many stories to protect Palauan Knowledge from co-founding Palau Conservation Society to participating in and co-authoring a chapter about taro. Much of my drawing (see Appendix J) is from her stories about taro. She repeated to me several times during the interview that she felt so strongly about taro because of all the lessons that it teaches. She described the information-sharing amongst women in the village, the cooperative work (*mengerakl*) to distribute labor across a group of women, and the skills necessary to develop and maintain adequate flowing water systems as well as adapt to disease and drought. I now have a better appreciation of mesei and for my grandmother who worked tirelessly into your 70s within our family's taro patch. My mamang and my mother were at the beginning of this journey, connecting me to family members at Palau Community College to initiate my study. Both my mother and grandmother poured story after story into my sister and I along this dissertation journey. Their guidance and the women within this dissertation study have served as my own women's club.

I know that whatever is next I am indefinitely to be rooted in the past, in the values of Palau, and in a connection to land. This research is in the past. I leave it for others to see the footprints within this story and take steps towards the new paths that research within Palau and with Palauan Knowledge may lead. My journey with Palauan Knowledge is going to take a different path. I was at my parents' home, the month that marked a year from my mother's passing. I was fortunate to spend time there to heal and to work on my dissertation. As I packed

to leave, my sister gave me some left-over sunflower seeds that were my mom's. She wanted my brother and I to plant it in our home. As I think of closing this dissertation, I see this as a reminder for me to get back to the land wherever I am because that is Palauan Knowledge. Planting these seeds is to honor of our mother and the knowledge she has passed on to us about cultivating land. I have been connected to a computer, paper, notebooks, pens long enough and look forward to getting back to the ocean, lake, or river.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Glossary of Terms

Belau	The indigenous name of the Republic of Palau. Palau is most commonly used, however the letter "P" does not appear in its alphabet. For this study Palau and *Belau* will be used interchangeably.
Bai	Palauan word for traditional meeting house.
Compact of Free Association (CoFA)	An agreement between the U.S. and Palau that provides Palauan citizens with legal provisions such as the ability to immigrate freely to, take residence, accept employment in and attend school in the United States. The agreement also provides millions of dollars for Palau's infrastructure, alternative energy, health care, education, etc. The monies are in exchange for full authority by the U.S. over security and defense matters. The acceptance of aid generally means that U.S. occupation continues to exist as the U.S. maintains military control over native lands and seas. (Wright & Baluski, 2013).
Freely Associated States	Collectively, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Palau (ROP) are sometimes referred to as "Freely Associated States, due to their respective Compacts of Free Association with the United States (USCIS, 2017).
Indigenous	The following is articulated by *Tongan* scholar, Konai Helu Thaman (2003): "Although the United Nations definition of "indigenous" clearly leaves out most of the indigenous peoples of Oceania (because most are not minorities in their own lands), I do include them in my consideration of "indigenous" for two reasons. First, with the exception of the 'Atenisi Institute in Tonga, formal educational institutions, particularly those of higher education, have not regarded Oceanic cultural knowledge, skills, and values as worthy of inclusion in academic study. Second, the expansion of the global market economy is actually destroying rather than promoting Oceanic economic and social development."
Mechas	Palauan word for elder female
Mesei	Palauan word for taro patch.
Rubak	Palauan word for elder male

APPENDIX B:

Participant Solicitation

Greetings,

My name is Joy Hannibal and I am graduate student in the Higher Adult Lifelong Education (HALE) program. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in a research study to understand how Indigenous Knowledge is incorporated within Palau Community College. Your participation in this study will help me to better understand how Indigenous knowledge (Palauan knowledge) is integrated within various aspects of the college including curriculum, policy, and practice. The research will also seek for ideas and approaches for further opportunities to incorporate Indigenous knowledge in the institution.

Participation will include one individual interview. Interviews will be in person and will accommodate your schedule. My goal is to conduct interviews between March 12-22, 2018. If you are willing to participate, please send me an email at hanniba2@msu.edu with all of the days and times that you are available for a one-hour interview as well as the location you would like to meet (Palau Community College or other space you determine).

I appreciate your willingness to consider participating in this research study. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

I look forward to meeting with you in person.

Sincerely,

Joy Hannibal
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Administration
Higher Adult, and Lifelong Education
Michigan State University

APPENDIX C:

Participant Consent Form for Study

Dear Participant:

This research study is intended to explore Indigenous knowledge generally in Palau and specifically within Palau Community College. Your participation in this study will help me to deepen our understanding on how Indigenous Knowledge lives in practice in Palau Community College. The information will help to center Indigenous/Palauan knowledge as integral to Palau as well as to the world as a legitimate source of knowledge. I hope that through this research there also might be conversations regarding additional or expanded efforts to integrate Indigenous knowledge within Palau Community College.

This serves as an invitation to participate in an interview lasting around 60-minutes. Before the interview I am requesting participants to complete a *Participant Information Sheet* where you will provide general background information. During the interview there are some questions to start the storytelling and subsequent questions may be asked based on how the story unfolds. The subsequent review of the story, field notes, and archival data (interview data) will be done by Joy Hannibal under the supervision of Dr. Riyad Shahjahan. Those who agree to participate will be assigned pseudonyms and all identifying information will be removed from transcripts before analysis. In appreciation for your time, you will receive a $25 card at the conclusion of the interview.

You may decide not to participate at all as your participation is completely voluntary. However, if you are **under the age of 18**, you cannot participate in this study. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. Additionally you may leave at any time, without consequence. You may decide not to participate at all or not answer some or all of the questions. The interview will be audio/video recorded. If you do not want your voice recorded, you may choose to have me take notes without recording and/or I can listen to your story and record my notes after we are finished. If you agree that I may record (written, voice, and/or video recorded), you can request that I turn off the recorder at any time.

I agree to allow audiotaping/videotaping of the interview.

☐ Yes ☐ No Initials_____

The recording will be stored in a secure location until three years after the study is completed. After this date the recording will be erased. Additionally, the information sheet requesting you to fill in your name, email, pseudonym and answer some supplementary questions will be maintained by the researchers in a secure location, until three years after the end of the study when it will be destroyed. The information sheet will be kept in a separate location than the voice recording. Your identity will remain confidential and I will use a pseudonym of your choice during transcription, analysis, and reporting. Due to the fact that these are in-person interviews, I

am unable to provide anonymity to participants. However, your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

It is possible that you may not feel comfortable with some discussion topics. You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Please indicate on the information form if you would like a copy of the findings of this study. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you may contact the researcher: Joy Hannibal, hanniba2@msu.edu, or my faculty sponsor, Dr. Riyad Shahjahan, Professor in Teacher Education, 428 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, by phone: 011-1-517-355-4539, or email: shahjaha@msu.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, You may talk the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 011-1-517-355-2180, Fax 011-1-517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@ora.msu.edu or regular mail at: Human Research Protection Program, Michigan States University, 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

Signature of subject	Date
Printed name of subject	
Signature of witness to consent process	Date
Printed name of person witnessing consent process	

APPENDIX D:

Participant Information Sheet

Instructions: Please provide a response for each of the following questions. All information on this form are considered confidential, and the form itself will be stored in a secure location.

Participant Name:_____

Email: _____**Phone:**_____

Date of Birth: _____ Birth Location: _____

Gender _____ Title:_____

What state/hamlet are you from:

Mother:_____ Father: _____

Affiliation to Palau Community College (Circle all that apply)

Faculty Staff Student Alumni Public official No affiliation Other:_____

Would you like a copy of the research findings? _Yes **_____**No

Select a name that will be used in the research so that you cannot be identified by readers (Pseudonym):

_____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F:

Interview Protocol

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is Indigenous Knowledge incorporated within Palau Community College (PCC)?

a. How do stories from Indigenous teachers and Indigenous learning environments inform PCC?
b. What are future opportunities to include Indigenous knowledge within Palau Community College? Note: This question is a new question discussed in proposal defense.

INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for participating in this study. Our interview conversation will be video/audio recorded today. If you do not wish to be video or audio recorded then I will continue the interview without any recording. My faculty sponsor and I will be the only people with the information from this interview, but if you become uncomfortable and want to end the interview at any time please inform me immediately and we will end the interview. Also you may choose not to answer particular questions and I will move on to the next question. Please review and sign the consent form if you give me permission to record and/or interview you. Please also fill out the participant information sheet. The information sheet and the recording will be kept in separate and secure locations.

You have been invited to talk with me today because of your experience or involvement with Palau Community College and or Indigenous/Palauan Knowledge. The interview is scheduled to last no longer than an hour, though if time permits and you are willing we can talk more than one hour. I have some questions that can initiate conversation, but I am also open to you telling stories. Again you may choose not to answer a question as well as choose to end the interview at any time.

QUESTIONS

(The questions are not in any particular order. Questions will depend on the relationship of the researcher to the source of the stories (Elder?) as well as if the storyteller initiates conversation)

- What do you consider as Indigenous Palauan knowledge?
- What are personal stories and memories that you can share regarding your experiences with Indigenous/Palauan knowledge in and outside of Palau Community College?
- What are additional opportunities for Palau Community to incorporate Indigenous/Palauan Knowledge?
- What are some challenges with integrating Indigenous knowledge in Palau community college?
- Would you like to make any closing comments?
- Are there topics that you believe are important for me to know that we have not yet discussed?

APPENDIX G:

Palau Community College Programs

Table 1. Palau Community College Certificate Programs

School	Certificate Programs
School of Arts & Sciences	General Agriculture
	Horticulture
	Law Enforcement
School of Technical Education	Automotive Air Conditioning
	Automotive Engine Serving
	Automotive Under Chassis Serving
	Carpentry
	Commercial/Industrial Wiring
	Motor/Motor Control
	Consumer Electronics Technology
	Industrial Control Technology

Table 2. Palau Community College Accredited Degree Programs

School	Accredited Degree Programs
School of Arts & Sciences	Agricultural Science
	Community & Public Health
	Criminal Justice
	Education
	Environmental/Marine Science
	Liberal Arts Program
	Library and Information Services
	Nursing
	Palauan Studies
	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Disciplines
School of Business	Business Accounting
	Business Administration
	Information Technology
	Office Administration
	School of Business
	Tourism and Hospitality Program
School of Technical Education	Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
	Automotive Mechanics Technology
	Construction Technology
	Electrical Technology
	General Electronics Technology
	Small Engine and Outboard Marine Technology

APPENDIX H:

List of University Transfer Articulation Agreements

UNITED STATES

1. Brigham Young University-Hawaii
2. Chaminade University of Honolulu
3. Eastern Oregon University
4. Grand Valley State University
5. Hawaii Pacific University
6. National University
7. Occidental College
8. Pacific Islands University
9. San Diego State University
10. University of Guam
11. University of Hawaii-Hilo
12. University of Hawaii-West Oahu
13. Western Oregon University
14. Western Governors University

JAPAN

15. Japan Aviation Academy
16. University of the Ryukyus
17. Waseda University

APPENDIX I:

Renaming of Palau Community College Buildings

Table 3. Palauan Names for Palau Community College Buildings

Palauan Name for Building	**Translation (Palauan traditional uses/Palauan legends)**
Baderirt	Tree with medicinal uses [medicinal uses]
Belochel	Micronesian imperial pigeon
Biib	Palau fruit dove
Btaches	Alexandrian laurel tree [wood used for canoes]
Dadait	Tropical mangrove
Demul	Dolphin
Dort	Ironwood tree
Esuch	Marine fish; bigeye trevally
Ewatel	Palauan Proper Name
Kedam	Great frigate bird
Keskas	Marine fish; wahoo
Ksid	Flower [often used for decoration]
Laib	Nicobar pigeon
Meluis	Broadbill swordfish; blue marlin
Miich	Tropical almond tree [*Tibetibekmiich* name of legendary girl who always wanted to gather tropical almonds and who introduced use of fire to her fellow villagers]
Olik	Palau fruit bat
Rriu	Mangrove trumpet tree
Sebus	Cardinal fish; pale snapper
Smuuch	Scorpion fish
Tan Siu Lin Library	Named after a donor [fish that hardly moves in the water;; *smuuch a rengul* (person) calm or placid]
Tekrar	sail fish; Indopacific sailfish
Tekuu	yellowfin tuna
Temekai	grouper fish Serranidae
Tutau	surgeon fish [appears in the morning; *ungil e tutau* is good morning]
Ukall	A tree [good for lumber; An *ukal* tree won't become a *titimel* tree -> a child will resemble its father; human nature will not change]
Urur	Mangrove tree

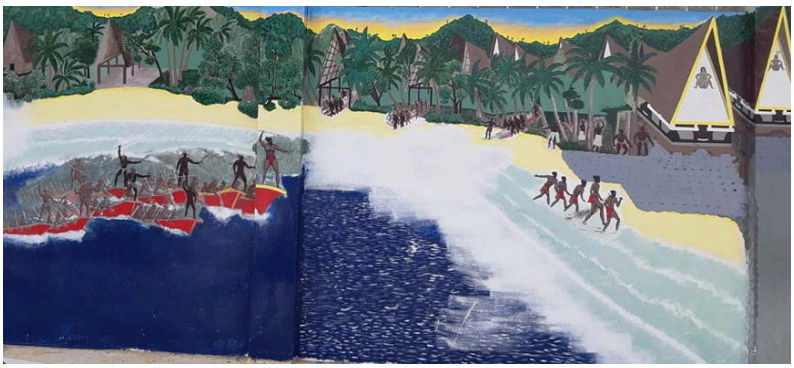
APPENDIX J:

Visual Representations of Palauan Knowledge (Buildings)

Figure 11. Pillar Showing Palauan Symbol

Figure 12. PCC Building Wall Mural of Traditional Palau

Figure 13. PCC Building Mural of Palauan Warriors



APPENDIX K:

Taro Sketch

Figure 14. Taro Sketch

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REFERENCES

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