School-Based Food Programming in the Northwest Territories: Working Towards More than
Just Food Security

By
Meagan Ann O'Hare-Gordon
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Supervisor: Dr. Michael Robidoux
Committee Member: Dr. Francois Haman
Committee Member: Dr. Eileen O'Connor

THESIS

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Abstract

There are an estimated 370 million culturally diverse Indigenous people worldwide. However, among this cultural diversity, there is one commonality that all Indigenous populations share; disparities across all dimensions of health indicators. Food access is one of primary indicators of health and despite this, Canada's Indigenous population, especially in the North, remains overrepresented in household food insecurity statistics. This research aims at telling the story of one Northern community, Fort Providence, and the experiences around a school-based wild food program. It is written in the publishable paper format and is comprised of two papers. Drawing from approximately 25 weeks of ethnographic research, the first paper uses Homi Bhabha's concept of Third Space to explain the unique way that Fort Providence youth navigate their local and global experiences. Using three tangible examples, I explain that the space where the local Dene practises interest with contemporary globalized influences creates a productive and empowering Third Space identity for youth. Drawing further on the ethnographic research, paper two gives a detailed description of the innovative land-based school programming that Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School offers their students. I explain how the food systems in this community are integral to the overall health and vitality of the people. The six primary outcomes which emerged from engaging with community members display how the programming addresses community-wide cultural continuity and individual cultural identity. Together, these papers demonstrate how food systems are deeply embedded into the overall community health and well-being and exhibit the opportunities and positive impacts that land-based food education has for youth and communities.

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SCHOOL-BASED FOOD PROGRAMMING IN THE NT

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the community of Fort Providence and staff and students at Deh Gah School for accepting me into their community. I will always cherish my memories, lessons and friendships I gained from this experience.

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PART ONE

Introduction

There are an estimated 370 million culturally diverse Indigenous people worldwide. However, among this cultural diversity, there is one commonality that all Indigenous populations share; disparities across all dimensions of health indicators (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski, Burlingame, 2013). In a prosperous country such as Canada, it can be easy to overlook cases of severe poverty, social stress and cultural change that are affecting life within our borders. Indigenous[1] peoples in Canada are a particularly vulnerable sector of the population, having faced centuries of denial of rights, ancestral knowledge theft, and a complete deconstruction of their way of life due to colonialism. Despite this dramatic change, Indigenous people have remained resilient but the impacts of colonialism are still felt today by young and old generations of Indigenous people. Food systems play an important role in Indigenous communities as they are inseparable from identity, rights to land, and self-determination. Food sovereignty is directly related to the complex determinants of health of Indigenous people which are uniquely influenced by the continued colonial legacy within Canada.

Some Indigenous communities are attempting to use programs aimed at exposing youth to local food and methods of food sovereignty as an avenue to respond to health disparities and empower their youth to connect with their cultural practises. In Fort Providence, Northwest Territories (NT), the community has developed intensive food based

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[1] From this point forward, when referring to Indigenous peoples it should be assumed to mean Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) peoples within Canada. Choosing not to refer to the community specifically as Indigenous Canadians has been strategically made because not all Indigenous peoples or Nations identify as Canadian (e.g. First Nations often identify with their own Indigenous sovereignties such as the Anishinaabeg Nation, Dene Nation etc.)

programming for Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School[2] youth. My research used

ethnographic methods to achieve my objectives. First, to understand how Homi Bhabha's

concept of Third Space is applicable and fostered by Deh Gah School's food programing;

and secondly, to detail what outcomes are being achieved by involving youth in land-based

food programs at Deh Gah School in Fort Providence. In doing this, I expanded on the

current body of literature pertaining to food systems in northern Canadian communities.

Overall, the thesis gives readers a detailed perspective of the influence of food on youth and

a community in rural Northwest Territories.

Positionality

To begin, I will explain how I came to conduct this research project and what the

research has meant to me as an outside, non-Indigenous researcher. Growing up in Northern

Ontario, I have been aware of and interested in the disparities between Indigenous and non-

Indigenous communities since I was a child. When I began to learn about Canada's colonial past

(and present) and how it directly and indirectly influences the social, physical and mental health

of Indigenous people of Canada, I knew I wanted to be a part of the solution. After I completed

my undergraduate degree in Development and Globalization, Dr. Courtney Mason invited me to

be a part of the Indigenous Health Research Group (as a student researcher) which examines how

local dietary strategies may contribute to improved health. It is here where I began my Graduate

Degree with Dr. Michael Robidoux, working with the Dene and Métis people of Fort Providence

to understand what their cultural camp programming meant to youth and the community.

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[2] Hereby referred to as Deh Gah School

Within my first week of volunteering at the school to build rapport for my research, a community leader said to me "you're helping us, sure, but really, we're helping you- we're teaching you". This playful joke made me understand the importance of my position and my research. Ethnographic approaches to research has been heavily critiqued by Indigenous scholars for perpetuating colonial power relations and proliferating a colonial subject/object lens (Dei, 2008; Moffatt, 2006). Throughout my research, I have been aware of these critiques and have actively taken steps to address my perceived power position during my time in the North. I have learned that as a researcher I need to be deeply reflective about my personal and professional research values before, during and after embarking in Indigenous research to avoid perpetuating continued harm. My approach was to always listen, show complete respect for the people and the traditional processes and to observe with humility and willingness. I was continually learning, refining and deconstructing what my research and my position as a researcher meant to me. In reflection of this process in its entirety, I have grown as a person, as a student and as an academic. I am able to look back on my experience and, while fully accepting some mistakes I made, be proud of my conduct and my research.

Fort Providence, NT

The socio-cultural context in which I conducted this study is among the Dene First Nation people of the Northwest Territories. Fort Providence (Zhahti Kue) is a Dene and Métis community situated on the northeast bank of the Mackenzie River, 233 kilometers southwest of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The latitude and longitude of the community is 61°21' N, 117°39' W. The community is accessible by the Mackenzie Highway, which is an important link between communities north and south of the Mackenzie River. It has a population of 759. Its traditional name is "Zhahti Kue," which means

"Mission House" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p.9). The main languages spoken are Dene and English. When broken down into two words, De Ne means "being from the land" (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 2003, pg.5). In other English translations, Dene means "The People" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p.7). The Dene people call the western land region of the Northwest Territories the Denendeh, meaning "The Land of the People" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p.7). In the Denendeh, the Dene consists of five distinct regional groups, each with their own traditional territory and language dialect. Collectively, the Dene share a common language, family, culture, and ancestry (Berger, 1988).

Literature Review

To understand where my research fits into the current body of knowledge, my literature review focuses on the dislocation of cultural practices and issues surrounding food sovereignty in Canada. In order to ground my objectives of examining youth's Third Space around food and examine the social health outcomes of land-based programming, I begin by discussing the concepts surrounding food security and food sovereignty in Northern Canada. I then focus on the historical significance of Euro-Canadian contact and the subsequent nutrition transition that transformed Indigenous food systems. Lastly, I discuss how these transitions led to the erosion of traditional knowledge and I critique the problematic Western concept of health.

Food Sovereignty in Canada

As defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2007) food security is a state of being where "all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (par.1). To further this definition to a northern Canadian Indigenous context, the security of traditional foods means "the continual and predictable availability and access to food, derived from northern environments through Indigenous cultural practices (Paci *et al.,* 2004). The concept of food security is important because it encompasses not only the physical but also the social and psychological aspects of food procurement and consumption. By definition, *food insecurity* is the inability to access sufficient, nutritious, quality food through normal food channels or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so (Davis & Tarasuk, 1994). The term includes not only the current

situation, but also potential vulnerabilities of the future (David & Tarasuk, 1994). Food security and food insecurity will be examined moving forward.

Despite strong economic growth in Canada over the past decade, as well as the implementation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, food security has continually been a struggle for many (Rideout, Riches, Ostry, Buckingham & MacRae, 2007). Building on this notion of food security is the idea of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty has become an increasingly popular concept for critics of Western food systems which are increasingly shaped by the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture (Gonzalez, 2002; Patel, 2009). The global peasant movement, La Via Campesina, developed this notion of food sovereignty, defining it as "the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods, respecting cultural and productive diversity" (Desmarais, 2007, p.34). In the new millennium, the "right of people to define their agricultural and food policy" was added to the definition (Desmarais, 2007, p.34). While food security and food sovereignty are two seemingly similar concepts, it is important understand the distinction between the two. While food security projects tend to work with communities who lack quantity and quality of food, there is little focus on types of food brought in and from where the food is sourced. In food security projects, the community is not necessarily part of the food procurement process. However, food sovereignty projects tend to focus on local ownership of food systems and work with communities to develop a sustainable plan of action that is independent from outside factors, such as political influence. Food sovereignty projects work towards food security; however, food security projects do not explicitly identify as food sovereignty. A variety of both types of program can be found nationally in Canada and internationally.

Canada is home to immense natural resources, boundless human potential and a tradition of helping others both within the country and in the international community. Canada is a major exporter of food and a major contributor of food aid to countries in need. However, it is important to recognize the unique vulnerabilities within Canada's own borders. It is evident that Canada has adopted a relevant version of food security reflected within national programming. Food Secure Canada (FSC) is an umbrella organization for Canada's community food security movement which advocates access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food through sustainable local food systems (Koc, MacRae, Desjardins & Roberts, 2008). Literature shows that recently FSC has seen a movement to partnerships with progressive farm organizations, anti-biotechnology activists, international solidarity organizations and others to redefine their policy direction with a goal of achieving local food security (Kneen, 2010; Koc, MacRae, Desjardins & Roberts, 2008; Wittman, 2011). As a result of these new partnerships and progressive direction, FSC has organized the People's Food Policy Project which unites the organization with their social movement partners to collaborate in open discussion about food systems in Canada (Kneen, 2010). In addition, Canada has worked with the United Nation to develop an international approach to food sovereignty on an international level. However, despite these efforts it is obvious that vulnerable Canadian populations, such as many Northern communities, are continually unable to meet their nutritional needs without compromising other basic needs (Kuhle, Willow, Veugelers, Raine, 2008). Critics argue that although Canada has signed agreements on the right to food, food sovereignty and security, the government has not fully implemented the necessary precautions domestically to ensure its own citizens access to food (Riches, 1999).

Tarasuk, Mitchell and Dachner (2013) present a 2011 study that shows while most households are consistently food secure, more than 1.6 million Canadian households found themselves to be food insecure at some point in the previous year. The highest rates of food insecurity were found in Canada's North and the Maritimes (Tarasuk, Mitchell & Dachner, 2013). The prevalence of food insecurity is common to people in the low- and lower-middle income category, those who rely on social assistance, Indigenous Canadian households and lone-parent families (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2011). Tarasuk, Mitchell and Dachner (2013) also make a point of highlighting the increased likelihood of food insecurity in households with children under the age of 18. These statistics show that there is a definite need for further investigation into the factors and barriers that cause Indigenous populations in Canada to be at risk for food insecurity and promote the shift to food sovereignty.

First People of Canada and European Contact

According to Statistics Canada (2008), Indigenous peoples in Canada made up approximately 5% of the population in 2005 and have a growth rate six times faster than the rest of Canada, making it the youngest and fastest growing portion of Canada's diverse population. Already in a vulnerable position resulting from a colonized history, the Indigenous Canadian population also experiences the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. Health Canada (2007) states that just over 9% of the overall Canadian population report to be food insecure (6.3% moderately, 2.9% severely) when in comparison, over 37% of Canadian Indigenous households reported to be food insecure (19.0% moderately, 14.4% severely). It is argued that this high rate of food insecurity is directly linked with Euro-Canadian contact and the disruption of local food systems, and the disadvantaged

environmental, social and economic positions of a high majority of the population (Willows, Hanley & Delormier, 2012).

Euro-Canadian contact with Indigenous peoples has left lasting effects on the population. Colonialism is defined by Czyzewski (2011) as "the control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory or people" (p.1) and has been a dehumanizing, oppressive and violent experience endured by Canada's Indigenous populations. In Canada, there is no one precise date that can be assigned to European contact, however, it is said that after the War of 1812 there was a decline of strategic importance of the Indigenous population as allies (Carter, 1999). This is said to mark the beginning of exploitive alterations to the British Indian policy with the Indian Department actively "taking the lead in encouraging Aboriginal people to change their way of life" (Carter, 1999, p.113). Colonization resulted in the displacement of Aboriginal peoples from their traditional lands, the impact of which has been immediate and lasting negative health effects on individuals and communities (Czyzewski, 2011; INAC, 1996; Kulchyski, 2005). In 1828, the Indian Superintendent of Upper Canada declared the Department's focus of 'civilizing' the Indigenous population by encouraging them to settle on reserves and to develop an agricultural livelihood (Carter, 1999). This new policy direction gave way to the racism and social exclusion that Canadian Indigenous people face today, but also caused tremendous restrictions to their access to food and other resources critical to health (Battiste, 2002; Burton, 1999).

From the point of European contact, there was a cascade of changes to Canada's First Peoples, including exploitation of resources, subversion of social order, social fragmentation, political domination and reorganization, the introduction of dangerous disease and persecution of resisting survivors (Childs & Williams, 1997; Waldram, Herring & Young, 2006). The extraction

of staple resources quickly became a primary goal of the European settlers. According to

Bourassa (2004), French and later British occupation of northern North American was

> characterized by a sequence of staple extractions: the Atlantic fishery beginning in the
>
> 1500s; furs rising to prominence by the 1700s; timber by the late 1700s and early 1800s;
>
> wheat, first in Canada's West in the early 1800s, then in the Canadian Prairies beginning
>
> in the late 1800s; and subsequently, industrial staples such as pulp; minerals; coal and
>
> petroleum and others. (p.212)

Over years of influence in the colonial trading lifestyle, the Indigenous Canadian population

developed a dependency on newly introduced European technologies and food systems. With the

rapid expansion of the fur trade, the Canadian Indigenous food supply was drastically reduced

(Bourassa, 2004) which allowed for greater penetration of colonial influence and assimilation

policies that persist into the contemporary era.

Government and religious intervention increased as the Indigenous peoples became

vulnerable and dependent on Euro-Canadian materials and technologies. The Indian Act of 1867

introduced a federal policy that mandated intense government surveillance and control of the

lives of Indigenous people in Canada (Carter, 1999). The Act gave British authority to the land

and its inhabitants, deeming Indigenous people as Crown wards and gave state authority to

exploit economic policy and implement abusive government practises (Carter, 1999). The Act

forced assimilation, prohibited participation in cultural traditions, and deemed the population

inferior to ensure control to the self declared 'civilized' Westerners (Carter, 1999). By

introducing the Act it was believed that Indigenous Canadian peoples "were being given an

opportunity to join a superior civilization" and if they fought the colonial control, they were

doomed to an inferior, obsolete way of life (Francis, 1992, p.55). Assimilation was apparent in

all aspects of life: economically, socially, emotionally and spiritually (Carter, 1989). Carter

details the accounts of one Canadian policy-maker who understood "the Indian as lazy" and

"parasites", and complained that they "live off the work of others" (Carter, 1989, p.145). It was

believed that coercive assimilation strategies would correct these negative attributes and help in

forming proper, respectable Canadian citizens. By dictating Indigenous peoples' rights, the

Canadian government continued their dominating reign, which resulted in decreased health and

well-being and increased the vulnerable position of the population. This vulnerability is still

apparent in a contemporary Canadian context. The Indigenous Canadian population has been

weakened politically and physically for decades through disease and attacks on tradition,

language and beliefs. These dramatic effects continue to be seen in the disadvantaged lives of the

population today through their change in lifestyle, weakened economic position and

marginalized health conditions.

Nutrition Transition

One of the many effects of colonization that resonates in today's Canadian Indigenous

society is what is commonly referred to as the nutrition transition. Sharma (2010) explains the

phenomenon as "characterized by a shift away from a population's traditional eating patterns to

those of another culture" due to the exhaustion of food sources (p. 6). In the case of Canadian

Indigenous people, this means conforming to the practises of Western societies, which directly

correlates to a diet higher in fat and refined carbohydrates and reduced foods from the land

(Sharma, 2010). The nutrition transition was amplified in Canadian Indigenous communities due

to the sudden depletion of food resources coupled with European assimilation policies. The

Indigenous population has gone from relative autonomic land-based subsistence prior to

European contact to dependency on market foods in a modernized world. Pressures to assimilate

to a modern lifestyle and diet can be accredited to coercive government policies and the

implementation of the residential school system. Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo (2010) discuss the

'transgeneration' consequences of cultural suppression, forced assimilation and the enduring

psychological, social and economic effects on survivors. These effects include:

> the structural effects of disrupting families and communities; the transmission of explicit
>
> models and ideologies of parenting based on experiences in punitive institutional settings;
>
> patterns of emotional responding that reflect the lack of warmth and intimacy in
>
> childhood; repetition of physical and sexual abuse; loss of knowledge, language and
>
> tradition; systematic devaluing of Indigenous identity; and, paradoxically, essentialising
>
> Indigenous identity by treating it as something intrinsic to the person, static and incapable
>
> of change. (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2010, p.18)

The dietary transition and disruption of food systems have had immeasurable impact,

stigmatizing local food practices for generations of Indigenous people. Indigenous peoples were

introduced to modern, 'civilized' food systems and punished for practicing their own cultural

traditions. As a result, many communities lost food procurement knowledge, coupled with loss of

individual and collective self-esteem, health and well-being (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo,

2010).

Waldram, Herring and Young (2007) explain that the amount of Indigenous people

within Canada who obtain their meat and fish from hunting and fishing are in the minority—

approximately 10%. Sharma, Gittelsohn, Rosol and Beck (2006) explain that this new type of

diet present in modernized Indigenous communities has been associated with sedentary

lifestyles, increased obesity and other chronic diseases. Abandoning local food procurement and

preparation has led to an increase in pre-prepared, packaged and convenience foods which are

increasingly available in even the remotest communities and require little skill to prepare.

Damman, Eide & Kuhnlein (2008) conclude that this transition is a result of the modernization of

lifestyle and diets, combining elements of traditional and urban lifestyle to Indigenous

communities across the globe. The reduced consumption of traditional foods and the subsequent

decrease in physical activity has contributed to the increase prevalence of overweight and

obesity, which is a dominant contributing factor of poverty (Damman, Eide & Kuhnlein, 2008).

Understanding the effects of colonization on local food practices is imperative when examining

how land-based food programs contribute to not only addressing food security issues, but also

reasserting the importance of culture within Indigenous communities. Canadian Indigenous

communities were historically self-sufficient while living off the land, but the series of

extraneous impositions on their way of life have deleteriously affected local food systems, and

consequently, individual and community health.

Reconnecting with the Land

According to Loring and Gerlach (2008) who study rural Alaskan foodways,

communal activities such as hunting, food-sharing, food preparation and knowledge

exchange connect community members in a shared appreciation for the land. Food systems

in traditional Indigenous communities were the primary context for relationships to be

strengthened between individuals, their household, the community and the land (Loring &

Gerlack, 2008). They gave every community member a sense of responsibility to the

community, contributing to the positive psychological and emotional well-being of the

group. Working as a group to hunt, gather or prepare food helped build and strengthen

interdependence, communication and teamwork. Egeland, Williamson-Bathory and Johnson-

Down (2011) suggests re-creating a sense of community and support systems for families

and children could mitigate the effects of food insecurity. Building a community around food

could bring positive affects to other sociocultural challenges in the community (Egeland,

Williamson-Bathory & Johnson-Down, 2011).

Hedican (2008) shares a similar perspective explaining that the land itself is seen not

only as a generator of wealth or economic resources, but also a basis of spiritual relationships

between all creatures and elements of the universe. Plant and animal life are considered

sacred in the Canadian Indigenous perspective (Hedican, 2008) and the relationship with

food is very intrinsic and personal. There is a strong-held belief that food from the land

connects one to the land, the community and to the past. Pufall (2011) explains that in

addition to the important nutrition/material provided through hunting, there are important

mental and spiritual health benefits. This reliance on the earth moves beyond basic material

need satisfaction and acknowledges the enriched spiritual connection with the land (Martin,

2011). The land is seen as vital for both the spiritual and physical survival of the people

(Hedican, 2008). During periods of food privation it was believed that there was a mutual

responsibility to share foods with others who were not as fortunate in order to ensure that

everyone was properly fed (Martin, 2011). Waldram, Herring & Young (2006) explains this

practice has physical and spiritual benefits as a central belief that one is obligated to share

with others and food is considered sacred and never wasted. Even as the economics and

value of hunting and gathering have changed in the past century, food-sharing and the

spiritual connection to the land remains an integral part of the Indigenous culture

(Dombrowski, Channell, Khan, Moses & Misshula, 2013).

The dramatic shift to wage economies in northern Canada has altered traditional

economic practices and the transmission of knowledge between generations that was fostered

by direct interaction with the land. Carter (1999) states that without having to depend on the land as the main food source for the community, it has not been as crucial for younger generations to absorb the traditional knowledge that their grandparents needed to survive. As people take wage-jobs in Indigenous communities, the time devoted to harvest becomes increasingly limited. Simpson (2000) explains that the transmission of knowledge in Indigenous cultures depends heavily on oral traditions; teachings are given through experience and oral storytelling. With increased participation in the wage economy and simultaneously increased school attendance, young people are not given substantial opportunities to learn on the land from their Elders. Myers (2000) explains that traditional knowledge and skills that were taught to children have decreased and this shift has forced many Indigenous people to abandon subsistence practices entirely. While many still choose to hunt at least part-time, increasing numbers of Canadian Indigenous people are moving more towards a wage-economy or choosing to relocate to urban centers where the transmission of knowledge through land-based activities is rare.

Despite Western influences, subsistence practises in some regions have endured as a testimony to the strength and desire of Indigenous peoples maintaining relationships with the land and resources despite the changing world (Myers, 2000; Thorton, 2011). Cultural practises have been rethought and reintegrated into the modern Indigenous lifestyle. While there are plenty of government sponsored research initiatives based on chronic health issues in northern communities, there is limited research examining the impacts of socio-economic changes on Northern Canada's subsistence practices and the corresponding impact on food security and community wellness (Thorton, 2011). The change in lifestyle has highlighted education and employment, leading to less time on the land and limited avenues to share in

traditional knowledge. Food security is one aspect of the changing life in the North and how it affects overall wellness of communities.

Health and Wellness

For years the term *health* existed operationally as an "absence of disease" (Davies, 2009; Wikman, Marklund & Alexanderson, 2005). Recently, however, many definitions of *health* have been refined to include well-being in the form of biological, personal, relational, social and political factors (Davies, 2009). While there are scores of definitions, one of the more inclusive definitions and commonly quoted in the international community comes from the World Health Organization (WHO). Notably, this definition was officially adopted by Health Canada in 1948. According to WHO, *health* is defined as "a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (2004, par. 1). When this definition was introduced in the early 1940s it was celebrated for its breadth and focus on social determinants of health. However, since its conception the definition has been rightfully criticized as being utopic and unrealistic. Using the word *complete* puts an unrealistic expectation on achieving a status of health. It raised the question of how would one measures 'completeness' within well-being. Additionally, Huber, et al. (2011) explains that this widely used definition of health needs to be updated because of medical advances that allow people to live with chronic disease. Huber et al. (2011) argues that the WHO definition "becomes counterproductive as it declares people with chronic diseases and disabilities as definitively ill" and "minimises the role of the human capacity to cope autonomously with life's ever changing physical, emotional and social challenges and to function with fulfilment and a feeling of wellbeing with a chronic disease" (p.1). There have been efforts to offer a more inclusive definition of health, most notably The Ottawa

Charter for Health Promotion in 1986. The Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion is an international agreement signed at the First International Conference of Health Promotion, organized by the WHO and held in Ottawa, Canada. The conference was in response to the international focus on public health and called on WHO and other international organizations to "advocate the promotion of health in all appropriate forums" (WHO.int, 2014). Although the conference was a success on many levels, it was one of the first unsuccessful attempts of changing WHO's definition of health to a more inclusive term.

Defining *health* and *well-being* internationally can be problematic as the concepts themselves are constructs with limited meaning outside of a western European imaginary. This is evident when applying such terms with an Indigenous context because Western models of health do not take into consideration Indigenous worldviews and the interrelatedness of all aspect of life, as opposed to a compartmentalized western view. Deiter explains that Indigenous cultures generally have a holistic approach to health, including the mind, body, spirit and heart of an individual, their community and nature (Deiter, 2001). Under this view, community well-being and a connection to the natural world is vital to overall health of individuals within a community (Deiter, 2001). When practising healthcare in Indigenous communities, it is vital to consider the unique approach to health traditionally valued by the people, rather than trying to impose some singular western approach to health and healthcare (Wilson, 2004). Despite this need, a colonized view of health prevails in Canadian institutions, unable to reach and fully benefit marginalized groups, such as Indigenous people (Wilson, 2004). According to Bent & Ross (2004),

> How we define and conceptualize terms such as health and wellness influence the
> elements we focus on when we try to reach an understanding of health and wellness

issues and therefore highly reflects and shapes the knowledge we acquire in those

areas. (p.8)

Therefore, if Canadians were to adhere to a single definition of health and wellness across all

the various populations within its borders, individual cultural beliefs contributing to an

individual's and community's well-being would be excluded, creating social strain and loss

of traditional knowledge (Deiter, 2001). Health practitioners need to acknowledge the

prominent western notion of health and consider how different populations, such as Canadian

Indigenous people, might construct meaning around their own health and well-being.

It is important to put health and wellness into an Indigenous context when examining

food systems to fully appreciate how having access to nutritious and culturally appropriate

food goes beyond the physical well-being of an individual. Waldram, Herring and Young

(2007) explain that the Indigenous view of health and wellbeing is holistic and recognizes

the interconnectedness of all living things and focuses on the spiritual connectivity to the

surrounding world. In relation to this, *health* also merits a holistic approach, with value

placed on the mind, body and soul of the individual, their community and nature (Bourassa,

McKay-McNabb, & Hampton, 2004). Similarly, the Indigenous perspective of *wellness*

refers to maintaining and enhancing the health and well-being of individuals, families,

communities and nations (Sullivan & McHardy, 2007). To achieve wellness is to have a

healthy balance of mind, body and spirit. By understanding the notion of wellness, it explains

how an issue such as sustaining an access to food is problematic to the health and well-being

of Canadian Indigenous people.

Methodology

This research has used an ethnographic, community-based research (CBR) approach focusing on the influences of land-based food programming in Fort Providence. CBR is guided by the core principles of collaboration and partnership between researchers and the community to create opportunity for social action or social change (Castleden, Garvin & Huu-ay-aht First Nation. 2008). The community of Fort Providence has identified giving youth access to wild-food procurement skills as a critical opportunity to increase the health and well-being of its residents. I worked with the community to help understand and respond to this challenge through what we believe is a mutually beneficial and meaningful research project. I utilized a CBS approach to immerse myself in the community to learn about wild-food procurement camps and local food based programming. I was successfully able to understand the socio-cultural perceptions of health through community-based participatory action, ethnography techniques and observational qualitative research methods

Community-based research can be a central vehicle for social change and local empowerment and therefore can make it a key facet in addressing health disparities in vulnerable communities. CBR framework can be applied to public health studies to "gain a better understanding of the social context in which disease outcomes occur, while involving community partners in the research process and insuring that action is part of the research process itself" (Leung, Yen & Minkler, 2004). Using CBR methods, context is given to a greater problem and researchers are forced to look beyond a solitary issue. The framework entwines the community into the research process creating a marriage between the results and the primary mission for the research of advocating for local empowerment and creating conditions in which

people can be healthy (Leung, Yen & Minkler, 2004). Participants are seen as equal partners in all phases of the research process and the findings are therefore locally relevant and can be used to enforce or change policy and practise in the community. Working closely with the participating community through the CBR process can keep the primary goal of advocating for social change and social action on behalf of the community members.

In CBR, the relationship between researcher and participants goes much deeper than a formal partnership; instead, the product of CBR is dependent on communication, understanding, participation and immersion into the community (Castleden, Garvin & Huu-ay-aht First Nation. 2008). Research ideas need to be community driven and the community needs to be involved in the direction and process of the research. For my research, this meant I immersed myself in the setting of my research and was transparent to the people with whom I was working. My research was conducted in accordance with the community protocols in Fort Providence and encompassed values of respect, responsibility, reflexivity and relevance. The community directly influenced the direction of my research and my approach to understanding the issues. I felt it was important to become a part of the community and to have the research welcomed, building concrete, genuine relationships between myself, the individual community members and the research question. This durable relationship promoted interest in the project, ensured a detailed response-rate and high-quality data collected. In CBR, researchers build relationships and gain insight that allows them to increase community trust and ownership to the project. My high level of rapport within the community allowed me to build understanding and trust, which was critical for my research to make a meaningful contribution to Fort Providence and to the larger academic community.

Consistent with my research values, CBR and the proposed research places emphasis on including community members throughout the process to help ensure the respectfulness and relevance to the community (Stewart & Draper, 2009). It was important to me that I worked directly with community leaders as equal members in the research process, sharing control over all phases of the research. Using this approach, I formed my research questions in consultation with community leaders who have been equal contributors to defining the issue played a crucial role in the research process. This is beneficial to the overall study because the issues been explored have been identified as priorities for the community. A close relationship to the community and participants also benefitted my analysis stage of the research project. By communicating with community leaders, I was able to better identify emerging themes and increase accuracy and cultural sensitivity in the interpretation of data (Minkler, Blackwell, Thompson & Tamir, 2003).

The existing relationship between Fort Providence and the Indigenous Health Research Group (IHRG), a multidisciplinary group of researchers from the University of Ottawa, further encouraged my use of CBR. Prior to this study, the IHRG had been working with First Nations communities, including Fort Providence, to develop intervention strategies based around local food procurement. As in many Northern communities, food access has been determined to be a pressing issue in Fort Providence and due to environmental, social and economic pressures access to healthy and local foods is very difficult. Working with the IHRG, I spent eight weeks living in Fort Providence in spring 2013, four weeks in spring 2014, seven weeks in fall 2014 and six weeks in winter 2015 building relationships and experiencing local food strategies. During this time, I was exposed to challenges and opportunities faced by the community. I was able to absorb the local perspectives how food programs influence identity, health and well-being

of the community. My in-depth community engagement and multiple week of involvement in the community informed my research objectives to ensure they are meaningful, relevant and carried out in a respectful manner. Since then, I have continued my attempts to involve the community in the research process and am eager to share my results with interested parties.

Ethnography

Ethnographic methods are effective in utilizing various data collection techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and participation-observation, conducted within everyday community settings (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Using a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I was able to engage in and record the daily involvement of community members involved with food programming in Fort Providence. Using these methods, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the perspective of the participant's perspectives without impeding on the experience, allowing it to play out as it would in the natural world (Babbie, 2012).

Participant Observation

Within the ethnographic component, I used participant observation to gain an understanding of the issues and opportunities surrounding access to food in Fort Providence, giving myself, as the researcher, a multi-faceted perspective (Creswall, 2009). It was important to strike a balance between being highly observational or highly participatory in the setting. Pure observation and pure participation are viewed as competing objectives; the more a researcher observes, the less they are able to participate and vice versa (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). My use of this method allowed me to find a seamless balance between participation and observation which I determined in the field based on the ever-changing setting.

Having extensively volunteered in the community in prior to my primary data collection, I was able to build relationships and rapport within the community and I felt welcomed and included in many aspects of community life. This high level of rapport and previous investment of time with Elders and community leaders complemented my intention to practise participant observation. During my data collection period, I lived and volunteered in the community for a period of seven weeks in the fall of 2014 and six weeks in winter 2015. During this time, I had a continuous involvement in school programming and held consistent dialogue with youth, community leaders, resource providers and Elders. Similar to what I had done previously, I volunteered my time on the land in addition to collecting my data. During this period, I was involved in land-based food procurement activities and spoke to community members to gain an understanding of how this type of program affected their lives and what it meant to their culture. While practising active listening, I kept field notes to record all aspects and interpretations of the activities of food procurement with youth, focussing on what was important to those I was interacting with (Bailey, 1996). I was continuously aware of the influence I had on the situation and understood the issues of reactivity due to my presence (Bernard, 2006); however, I believe my rapport with the community helped to reduce the reactivity and made participant observation a beneficial part of my research. I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation of the food programs which could only be gained through direct, first-hand experience (Brass, 2004).

In addition to a researcher, my role was to help with the facilitation and delivery of the food procurement programs at Deh Gah School. Through my volunteer position, I collected data through observation during a four week fish camp in fall, a four week hunt in the winter and multiple short-term food procurement trips. Because of my previous relationship with the school

and community members, the students and adults were very receptive and inclusive to me being

in their environment. As part of my methodology, I disclosed my motivation for my presence,

personally and for research purposes, each time I visited the community and each camp I

participated in. Community members were eager for me to fully understand the importance of

food procurement to their physical and cultural survival. They were extremely proud to display

their successes and willing to confide in me the hardships of the lifestyle for themselves and their

forefathers.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To complement participation/observation methods, semi-structured interviews were

conducted with program organizers, adult participants and key community members to learn

about what is involved in organizing programs, the outcomes of providing these opportunities to

youth and the general benefits to the community. Louise Barriball & While (1994) explain that

semi-structured interviews are "well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of

respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more

information and clarification of answers" (p.330). Semi-structured interviews are generally

organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions with questions that are developed

to probe for clarification or further explanation through dialogue between interviewer and

interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Open-ended probing questions are crucial to

the interview process because they elicit further dialogue and help the interviewer gain a more

detailed understanding (Whiting, 2008). Knowing this, I ensured I presented a very flexible

interview guide and the resulting content was largely based on participation and response.

I created the interview guide based on the phases outlined by Whiting. According to

Whiting (2008), the initial interview stage will be 'apprehension' where the researcher feels out

the respondent and their word choices in the interview; second, there is by an 'exploration' phase where the respondent feels able to give more detail; next, the 'cooperative' phase where there is potential for more free discussion and the interviewer can touch on sensitive questions; next, the 'participation' phase is achieved when the interviewee guides and teaches the interviewer and the greatest level of rapport is achieved; finally, the 'conclusion' phase should make both parties comfortable with the conclusion of the interview and possibly end on a positive note, if appropriate (pg. 37). I found that this guideline this enabled me to anticipate how the interviews would unfold, allowed me to adapt appropriately and achieve the most detailed results.

To ensure timely collection of data, participants were recruited using a snowball sample based on previous relationships I had developed within the community. Interviews were conducted where ever participants felt most comfortable and where conversation was natural. For example, many were held around a campfire on the land or at Deh Gah School. I conducted a total of twelve interviews with community members ranging from community leaders, Elders, teachers and resource providers. I used Morse's guide to identifying qualities of a 'good informant': "knowledge about the topic- an expert by virtue of involvement in specific life events; able to reflect and provide detailed experiential information about the area under investigation, and; willingness to talk" (1991, p. 130). Interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder.

Barriball & While (1994) explain that semi-structured interviews gives the researcher the opportunity to change the wording, but not the meaning, of questions in order to adapt to the various vocabularies of participants. In this particular type of interview, "validity and reliability depend, not on the repeated use of the same words in ach question, but upon conveying equivalence of meaning" (Barriball & While, 1994, p.330). The equivalence of meaning is what

standardizes semi-structured interviews and allows for function comparison. This instrument allowed myself, as the researcher, to guide the quality and quantity of responses from a wide range of respondents to ensure usable data.

Analysis

The data collected though the described ethnographic methods was best understood through a thematic analysis focusing on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour (Aronson, 1994). This type of analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data through minimal organization. This method of analysis is optimal to capture and represent the meaning of the respondents because it provides a flexible research tool which can potentially provide a "rich, detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.83). The data for this thesis was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested six-step guide to inductive thematic analysis because of its suitability to uncover recurring messages that the respondents in the study were expressing. Step 1 suggests familiarizing yourself with your data. This was achieved through the transcription process and early reflection on the data. Step 2 suggests generating initial codes from the data. This was done manually and with the assistance of a qualitative data analysis software. Step 3 involves searching for themes. This phase involved the sorting of different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within identified themes. Step 4 involves reviewing and refinement of the themes. At this stage, relevant and meaningfully relationships were identified to form themes with clear and identifiable distinctions. Step 4 will take this further, defining, naming and further analyzing the data within the identified themes. Each theme was individually analyzed and refined. Step 6 is to produce the report and present the complex data with merit and validity (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is reflected in the two articles within this thesis.

Participants

Based on consultation with community leadership, participants who were interviewed were community resource providers, leaders, Deh Gah School parents and local Elders. Subjects of my participant-observation included all land-based program participants, including staff, students, parents, Elders and local service providers. Special action was taken to inform parents of the involvement of their children at camp and verbal permission from school administration was sought. An example of the activities which were of particular interest to my research were the student's interaction with their Elders during the land-based food procurement process. I successfully obtained data reflecting the benefits of youth's land-based involvement and, how these influences affected the lives of Deh Gah School students. I was able to analyze the lived experiences of community members and understand the importance of this type of cultural programming involving food.

Theoretical Framework

This research project is largely informed by a postcolonial perspective to give the reader an understanding of the importance of exposure to land-based food procurement practises within the community of Fort Providence. This perspective is dedicated to recognizing, being sensitive to and redress the marginalization put on Canadian Indigenous communities during colonial rule. In order to understand postcolonial theory and examine the influence that land-based food programming has on Deh Gah School youth, it is necessary to deconstruct colonialism and the assumed 'post' colonialism. Postcolonial theory has developed in response of the concern and recognition of past events through many disciplines, such as cultural studies, political science, literary criticism and sociology (Browne, Smye & Varcoe, 2005; Loomba, 1998). Understanding the effects that colonialism has had on Canadian history and how the effects continue to resonate in society has been acknowledged across all levels of academia. Framing this project within this theoretical lens has enabled me to view the Fort Providence program as more than a food access program, but also as steps towards achieving greater social and physical health status within a contemporary colonial matrix.

Postcolonial theory gives a unique perspective on understanding and critiquing how people conceive relations based on colonial tensions. McEwan (2009) suggests that the theoretical perspective addresses issues such as gender, race, ethnicity, and identity and the relationships between power and knowledge. Postcolonial critics are interested in perspectives produced by the colonial powers and those who have been colonized. It seeks to expose issues of power relations surrounding those affected by colonization. Before discussing ways I will be using postcolonial theory for my research it is necessary to examine is what meant by the term

'postcolonial.' Considering 'post' is a prefix implying 'subsequent to', it is essential to consider what is mean by post-colonialism and all that it entails.

Colonialism, as previously defined by Czyzewski (2011), is the act of "control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory or people" (p.1). This expansion of colonies resulted in major exploitation and political domination of people and their resources. The subsequent concept of postcolonialism has been highly debated and difficult to define. The prefix, post, implies 'after' colonization which is highly problematic in a Canadian context because western European occupation of Indigenous peoples continues today. McEwan (2009) argues that the term minimizes the critical aftermath that can be seen in the wake of colonization. In a Canadian context, Indigenous peoples have not regained sovereignty and are under direct control of the state. Within this colonial relationship Indigenous people are experiencing disproportionately high rates of poverty and chronic disease and are ranked lowest in Canada in terms of social standings such as health, education, and employment (Shohat, 1992; Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006). As such the term postcolonial in a literal sense poorly reflects the situation in Canada, yet the term and theoretical tradition surrounding it does have important value if its prefix can refer instead to the events which have happened since (post) the initial period of first contact (Shwarz & Ray, 2000). In the following paragraphs I offer a brief overview of key theoretical elements and explain how this theory is employed in my research.

One of the leading authors in the postcolonial theory is Edward Said. His concept of *Orientalism* can be indirectly linked to colonization in Canada in that he aims to understand the social relations between colonial powers, those they rule over and the implications of such in the production of knowledge. Said (1978) criticises the work of western modern scholarship that views the colonized other based on a fabricated sense of western superiority. In *Orientalism*,

Said (1978) speaks to the manipulative agenda of the West that constructed its own superiority on the inverse portrayal of the Orient (or non-western colonized Other) as primitive, irrational and substandard. This perspective in part gave justification for Imperial conquest and the subsequent colonization of peoples in foreign lands. From their assumed superior position, western nations asserted their duty to civilize the uncivilized world through methods of forced assimilation. (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). Part of their modernizing mission was to Christianize the savage and take their resources based on a false sense of entitlement (McEwan, 2008). The European representation of the inferior Other became so dominant that the suppressed populations perceived themselves in such a state of uncivilized (Moore-Gilbert, 1997) allowing for further oppression from the dominating western ideals (Shwartz & Raw, 2000). Said's (1978) work contributed to postcolonial theory by articulating of linkages between western perspectives of developing societies and the oppressive impact of colonization and imperialism. Said's work calls for a critical rethinking of the Orient (the occidental antithesis), through self-representation and voice given to those who were previously silenced through colonization (Moore- Gilbert, 1997; Said, 1978). In using this framework, the subjugated position of Indigenous peoples in Canada can be examined, exposing the artificial hierarchies of western superiority over the non-westernized Other.

My research uses postcolonial theory and decolonization to examine the influences of land-based food programming on Dene and Métis youth in in the Northwest Territories. According to Pieterse and Parekh (1995), decolonization involves "not the restoration of a historically continuous and allegedly pure pre-colonial heritage, but an imaginative creation of a new form of consciousness and way of life" (p.3). This resonates with the Canadian Indigenous population's experience of moving past colonial discourse because the act of colonialism is a

complex, multifaceted ongoing series of events; therefore, decolonization will not be achieved

simply through their denial and reversal (McEwan, 2003). Further, Pieterse and Parekh (1995)

explain that decolonization "involves an engagement with global times that is no longer

premised either on Eurocentrism, modernization theory or other forms of Western ethnocentrism

passing for universal, or on Third Worldism, nativism or parochially anti-Western views" (p.4).

Decolonization, instead, relies on attempting to understand and challenge how colonization

effects popular discourse (McEwan, 2003), in my case, in relation to food.

Based on what I have presented on postcolonial theory and, previously, the impact that

colonialism has had food systems in northern Canada, I will explain how this theoretical

approach has informed the direction of my research. Through acts of colonization and the

introduction of an oppressive European assimilation agenda, there has been a long tradition of

attempting to remove Indigenous people from their traditional beliefs and lifestyles. Generations

of young Indigenous children were taken from their parents and forced into state-sanctioned

residential schools where they were forced to live lifestyles deemed appropriate by the European

colonists. Among many cultural practises, food systems were altered and traditional skills were

lost. Succumbing to the position of the Other, Indigenous hunting and gathering practises were

deemed savage in comparison to the superior Western colonizers. Under the influence of the

colonizers, Indigenous people were meant to feel shame for practising traditional subsistence

skills that provided food, nutrition and culture for generations for their forefathers.

Acknowledging this history through a postcolonial lens enabled me to use decolonization theory

to analyse the influence of contemporary land-based food programming in Fort Providence and

the efforts to restore a culturally meaningful and sustainable food system. I examined the

transition from a disparaged history to now valorizing the importance of traditional practises and

returning a sense of pride to food procurement. I examined the Eurocentric perception of health in Canada and, by using a land-based food program, analyzed colonialism's impact on Indigenous health. Through the lens of decolonization, I explored the health outcomes of establishing a positive space around traditional food procurement and cultural camp programs for youth. As a non-Indigenous researcher using postcolonial theory, I was constantly be aware of my position as a researcher and am mindful of the history of colonization. I used this opportunity to collaborate directly with the Dene and Métis people of Fort Providence ensure that my research reflected their perspectives.

Thesis Format

This thesis is written using the publishable paper format. Paper one will address my first research objective: To use postcolonial scholars to understand how Deh Gah School youth develop a Third Space identity based on their cultural and contemporary influences of food. Paper two will address my second research objective: To examine how land-based food programming which focuses on food procurement has wider health (social and physical) outcomes for Dene and Métis youth and the greater Fort Providence community. Through these two papers I hope that my research will make a strong contribution to understanding the gaps in current literature regarding the importance of Indigenous food sovereignty in Canada and the continual negotiation of contemporary and cultural influences for youth in northern Indigenous communities. Finally, I hope that my findings can be used to promote land-based learning and describe how connecting youth to cultural activities, such as those surrounding food, can have vast positive impacts Indigenous societies.

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PART TWO

Article One

Food in Fort Providence: A Third Space Experience

Abstract

Post-colonial theorist, such as Edward Said, have examined the way in which colonial discourse operated as an instrument of power and explored the effects of colonialism through analyzing discourse and language. Using this theory, it is well documented how colonization has influenced present social, physical and spiritual conditions of Indigenous people. Homi Bhabha uses this theory to describe the process of hybridity, which focuses on the 'in-betweenness' of cultures to explain that cultures are extremely fluid and constantly adapting; creating new cultural identities within the Third Space. This paper uses the influence of food systems to devolve deep into the work of Said and Bhabha to uncover the unique process of creating a Third Space identity by Fort Providence youth. Using a postcolonial lens, this paper examine the influences of both contemporary, Western Canadian society and the traditional food procurement skills taught to youth. Using the ethnographic methods, this paper uses three examples of how youth negotiate cultural influences and use food to assert a unique and empowering Third Space identity.

Introduction

The late Nak`oda Chief John Snow (1977/2005) advocated that Indigenous societies' future success requires the combined knowledge of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. In Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, the administration of Deh Gah School (from this point forward referred to as Deh Gah School) hone a similar outlook by offering diverse experiences in order for their students to excel in the modern, changing world. Deh Gah School takes an active role in connecting youth to their roots and traditions, but the teachers and school administration recognize the importance of helping students distinguish themselves in *both worlds*: the global and the local. Deh Gah School also takes a globalized approach to delivering the core curriculum to students. Through advanced learning technologies, the school plays an important role in helping youth develop a globalized identity and understanding of self in a globalized world. However, the school also directly facilitates the development of a student's local Dene culture by offering land-based educational experiences taught in large part by local Elders. By implementing a curriculum focusing on traditional Dene teaching methods, skills, and values, the school is able to teach the students meaningful cultural lessons as part of the formal education system. Deh Gah School provides a space and an opportunity for students to bridge these two worlds and understand their position in a contemporary northern community and globalized society.

Drawing on over seven months of ethnographic field research, this article employs postcolonial theory to analyze the complexities of local food practices that youth are exposed to on a daily basis. On four separate trips to Fort Providence during the harvest seasons of 2013–

2015, I worked in the school and on the land facilitating a local, community-driven wild food program as a means of addressing food security. In the North, the environment around food has changed drastically in the last decades from traditional land-based diets to diets that are heavily influenced by market foods shipped from southern Canada. During my time working with students in the community, I experienced the complex cross-cultural relationship that youth have with food, and I began to understand the empowering space in which these different identities intersect.

Borrowing from Homi Bhabha's concept of Third Space — which appreciates how histories and cultures collide in the present and demands the understanding of cross-cultural relations—I describe how youth contextualize experiences surrounding food and give meaning to the merger of their global and local cultures. My research shows that youth in Fort Providence develop a Third Space where they can successfully interpret both Western food influences and local cultural food values. This newly negotiated culture provides a place for youth's Western, Dene, and other cultural beliefs, knowledge, and values to intersect, ultimately allowing youth to succeed in *both worlds.*

Postcolonial Theory for a Not-So-Postcolonial North

One of the leading authors in postcolonial theory is Edward Said (1935–2003). Born in Jerusalem, Said contributed to the field of postcolonial studies in his attempt to expose the Palestinian side of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. He was a decorated academic who made an impact in the postcolonial field as a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. Said became internationally renowned after publishing the influential *Orientalism* in 1978, which called for the reevaluation of the relationship between the Western civilizations (the Occident) and the non-Western civilizations (the Orient). The book gave scholars a new

perspective surrounding 'Othering' and his work continues to be relevant yet highly

controversial. Said's depiction of the East–West relationship is commonly used as a more

general exploration of the way in which representation has been used by European colonizers in

relation to their colonized 'Others' (Richardson, 1990). Said argued that there is a detrimental

power-knowledge nexus in Western discourses concerning the Orient. This ultimately called for

a re-examination of all literature, histories, colonial transcripts, and narratives written from a

Western, colonized perspective.

    Said further argued that the uncivilized depiction of the East, in comparison to the

supremacy of the West, was partly designed as an ideological foundation for Western

imperialism. Said effectively used the term "orientalism" to depict the process in which the

Orient has been discursively constituted in opposition to a hegemonic West (Said, 1978). This

relationship allowed the Western self-perception of superiority to contrast and build the inferior,

imagined 'other' of the East. In other words, Western peoples used contrasting non-Western

civilizations to validate their own perceptions of superiority. Said (1978) argued that the Western

knowledge about the East is not generated from facts or reality, but rather based on assumed

imaginaries of Eastern civilization; therefore, the West effectively, according to Said,

orientalizes the East. Said (1978) defined orientalism as "a distribution of geopolitical awareness

into aesthetic, scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape

and sociological description … about what 'we' do and what 'they' cannot do" (p. 12). In this

process of orientalizing Eastern civilizations, the West declares itself superior in comparison

(Said, 1978). What was written about the East was no more than false expectations upon which

the Western attitudes toward the East were structured. This encouraged and justified the

European and American colonial domination towards Eastern peoples and their cultures. Said

(1978) faulted the Occident for classifying all Eastern societies as conceptually similar to one another and fundamentally dissimilar, and therefore inferior, to Western societies. In order to suit its colonial interest in domination and power, the West constructed its own superiority based on its primitive, irrational, and uncivilized imaginaries of the Orient. This vision fosters the "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudices" (Said, 1978, p.9) that had been imposed on Eastern civilizations for centuries, resulting in their vulnerable position in the global society.

The process of orientalizing the East, based on the self-perceived superiority of the West can be damaging if Western literature is accepted without critically acknowledging the Western bias. Said (1978) explained, "as a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient, Orientalism thus comes to exert a three-way force, on the Orient, on the Orientalist, and on the Western 'consumer' of Orientalism" (p. 67). In other words, knowledge is produced by the Occident with a biased perception of the Orient based on their fundamental differences and the unwavering belief in the West's own superiority. The Occident then shares this false knowledge based solely on their self-serving belief of supremacy, beginning a destructive process that is as damaging to the West as it is to the East. With this knowledge, the West further develops its false, superior sense of self and its false, inferior sense of the East, nurturing a continuous cycle of ill-informed perceptions. This cycle perpetuates the Occident's belief in their own superiority based on decades of privileging their own falsely constructed assumptions and understandings.

Said's use of orientalism examines how ideologies are formed in literature and perpetuate Western perception of superiority. Although Said's discussions focus primarily on Western representation of Middle Eastern, African, and Asian civilizations in literature, they prove to have many useful corollaries in understanding the modern, global colonized agenda. While the

dialectic relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a half-millennium-old concept that

has systematically evolved, Said (1978) suggested that one common aspect is the idea that there

is an "'us' and a 'them', each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident" (pg.xxv). While

much of Said's work was not necessarily intended to examine nineteenth-century colonialism in

North America, the concept is useful when considering the actions of European colonists. In

Said's (1978) words, "Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension

of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does

'our' world" (p.12). While this passage is derived from the actions of the European Occident and

the resolute sense of self in response to the Orient, it demonstrates its applications beyond Said's

intended populations.

Said's (1978) criticisms of modern Western discourses have been subject to scrutiny.

Critics of Said object to his affluent Western lifestyle and corresponding privileges while arguing

on the Orient's behalf (Lewis, 1982; Hourani, 1993). Critics argue that Said's work is

"manifestly idealist" (Richardson, 1990, p.15), ignorant to other forms of resistance (Child and

Williams, 1997; Huddart, 2006), further perpetuates colonial discourse by focusing on

colonizer/colonized binaries (McLeod, 2000; Porter, 1994; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Halliday,

1993; Bhabha, 1994), and profoundly misinformed (Warraq, 2007). Of particular importance,

Huddart (2006) and Child and Williams (1997) state that Said's theory of orientalism and

postcolonial discourse fails to accept that colonialism is not the only major influence over

subjugated Oriental scholarship produced by the West. These criticisms expose other levels of

hegemonic points of resistance that extend beyond an East–West or Occident–Orient dichotomy.

They consider the implications of gender, racial equality, democracy, and other characteristics

that greatly shape the postcolonial landscape of the modern world. In *The Location of Culture,*

Homi Bhabha (1994) furthers this critique by suggesting that, when focusing on a static

colonizer–colonized binary, colonial discourse is preserved due to the cultural connotations

attached to the separate identities. Bhabha argues that the shared histories of the East and the

West (or the Orient and the Occident) have become intertwined and dialectical, and that

identifying mutually exclusive elements from the other is impracticable. Instead, Bhabha

highlights the importance of focusing on the process of hybridity, which can be conceptualised

as complementary to Said's work rather than as mutually exclusive.

Living in Both Worlds: Understanding (but Moving Past) Hybridity

Building on Said's 1978 work, while addressing the limitations of the Occidental–

Oriental binary critique, Bhabha (1994) focused on the complex relationships that emerged and

continue to emerge between the colonized and the colonizer. Bhabha, a Harvard University

professor and an important figure in contemporary postcolonial studies, argued that the

construction of identity does not always conform to a fixed binary of East–West or Orient–

Occident. Instead, the construction takes place in a third, 'in-between', space. Bhabha's (1994)

idea suggests that Said's arguments have often been complicit with long-standing perceptions of

self, based on the understanding of others; therefore, when the West has a static sense of identity,

it can be easy to define other cultures as different, 'other', inferior, or threatening to Western

identity and interests (Hubbart, 2006). Bhabha (1994) argued against the rigid binary positions of

the colonizers and the colonized and instead focused on the interdependence and interrelations

between these presumed binaries. In *The Location of Culture,* Bhabha (1994) developed a series

of discourses challenging the simple polarization of the world into binaries and instead focused

on the 'in-betweenness' of cultures. Bhabha's notion of hybridity did not seek to lessen the

complex power relations between the colonizer and the colonized, and did not attempt the

syncretism of cultures. In fact, power is a vital component of hybridity and often threatens the

colonizer's position (Stoler, 1995). Bhabha's concept of hybridity offers the opportunity to

merge and negotiate cultures in a Third Space, which can be productive and empowering. This

section will use the work of Bhabha to examine the conceptual framework of process of

constructing a unique identity in the Third Space and explain how it can be used to frame the

postcolonial experience of food access in Northern Canada.

　　Hybridity can be used as a theoretical perspective to explain diversity, multiculturalism,

and the phenomenon that no culture has been left untouched by global forces. This is particularly

relevant to the work of Bhabha whose central ideas are rooted in the work of Edward Said.

According to Bhabha (1994), hybridity refers to the mixing of culture that occurs because of

imperial conquest and colonization. For Bhabha, cultures are not pure or isolated but rather

dynamic and constantly interacting with other cultures, which leads to a unique and fluid blend

of cultures. He wrote, "The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original

moments from which the third emerges, rather, hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables

other positions to emerge" (1990, p. 211). In this way, cultures are hybrid, fluid, and ever-

changing and as such create a 'Third Space' for those involved. Third Space acts as an

ambiguous area that develops when two or multiple cultures collide and interact with each other.

It is a space for negotiation, resistance, and expressions of new cultural meanings. On this,

Bhabha (1990) contended that Third Space is an important feature of hybridity as it "displaces

the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives

which are inadequately understood through received wisdoms" (p. 211). In other words,

according to Bhabha, hybridity is a blending and combining of elements originating from

different traditions in an interstitial space between cultures.

Bhabha argued that the ongoing process of hybridization is not produced by individual, fixed cultures that come together and lead to a singular hybrid form. Rather, he believed that cultures are the direct result of attempts to cease the continual flux of cultural hybridities. Instead of looking at how two supposedly pure cultures interact to develop a third hybrid culture, Bhabha (1994) argued that attention should be brought to what happens on the borders of cultures. Bhabha (1994) described this important space between cultures by adapting Arnold van Gennep's (1960) and later Victor Turner's (1969) notion of liminality. For Gennep and Turner, liminality is explained by the ambiguous stage in the middle of a ritual transition when the participant no longer identifies with the pre-ritual status and does not identify with the post-ritual identity. Liminality has evolved from the ritual concept in which it was first conceived and used to describe many different phenomena as a stage of "inbetwix and between" (Turner, 1969) two states of being. Liminality for Bhabha is the space where fixed cultural forms/identities (such as self /other, East/West) interact and create new cultural meanings. Bhabha called the space where new identities are negotiated the "Third Space of Enunciation" (Bhabha, 1995, p. 209). He suggested that cultural differences are not fixed but instead continually negotiated in the moment of enunciation. Enunciation is the act of expression of a culture within a Third Space, and it is through enunciation that cultural difference is revealed. In Bhabha's (1994) words, the enunciation process

> introduces a split in the performative present, of cultural identification; a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference—and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meanings, strategies in the political present, as a practice of domination, or resistance. (p. 35)

Therefore, the process of Third Space enunciation takes place when new cultural systems are created through the "encountering, challenging, interpreting, absorbing, juxtaposing, transposing, reformulating, forgetting, inventing, imagining" (Bassnett, 2013, p. 342) negotiations of divergent cultures. Bhabha (1994) problematized the influence of colonial representation where the conflicting forces of the colonizer and the colonized are rearticulated and the oppressed groups challenge the colonial authority in the in-between spaces of culture. Therefore, the assertion of authority, such as in the case of colonialism where violence was used to take land, is only decided in the moment of enunciation. This concept challenges postcolonial theory that focuses on a dominator–dominated relationship and instead acknowledges multifaceted, unexpected, hybrid, and accidental cultural identities and the space that these identities negotiate.

While Bhabha's conceptual model is useful in understanding cultural negotiations and the emergence of culture, it proves to be problematic and does not go without criticism and contention. Historically, the concept of hybridity has been considered problematic and offensive. Colonial discourse uses the term with an abusive connotation, representing the product of miscegenation from a nineteenth-century scientific-racial perspective (Young, 1995). Two main critiques suggest that hybridity is the problematic term used by elitists and that the term is so obsolete that it is theoretically meaningless. Critiques of Bhabha (Chow, 1993; Friedman, 1997; Hutnyk, 2005) argued that the concept of hybridity uses an elitist, cosmopolitan approach of mixing humanity, which ultimately benefits those within power. Chow (1993) stated that instead of "deconstructing anti-imperialism," Bhabha's concept of hybridity "is an old functionalist notion of what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining its own equilibrium" (p. 35). She sees hybridity as a hegemonic construction profiting the interest of dominant groups in society. Growing from this critique, Friedman (1997), Gómez-Peña (1996), and Werbner (1997)

argued that privileged and powerful intellectuals in Western society promote the use of hybridity

for self-celebration because only they can exploit the potentials of the transgressional

boundedness of culture it holds. Vulnerable, lower-class members of society, he argued, do not

heed the benefits of hybridity and transcultural exchange. Friedman (1997) is also critical of the

notion of mixing or blending cultures because he believes that you cannot readily mix culture;

there is no such *pure* culture in a globalized existence, so mixing these already impure cultures

tells us nothing. According to Werbner (1997), hybridity is a meaningless description of culture

because "culture as an analytic concept is always hybrid . . . since it can be understood properly

only as the historically negotiated creation of more or less coherent symbolic and social worlds"

(Werbner, 1997, p. 15). In this argument, the extreme fluid nature of hybridity is in fact a

limitation and can be conveniently repositioned to benefit certain groups.

While there is validity to the critiques of the pliable nature of hybridity, the concept also

contains definite value when considering the strategic interaction of cultures which has taken

place in the years since European's first contact. Bhabha's concept of hybridity does not suggest

a purity of culture, as Friedman (1997), Gómez-Peña (1996), and Werbner (1997) suggest, but

rather:

> Cultures come to be represented by virtue of the process of iteration and translation
>
> through which their meanings are vicariously addressed through an Other. This erases
>
> any essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures that, when
>
> inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness, frequently become political
>
> arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 83)

This suggests that culture is an on-going process and dismisses any critique of a blending of static, pure cultures. Bhabha's focus was on the interactive outcomes that are produced as a result of cultural interplay and the new forms of cultural identity that are expressed. For Pieterse (2001), the critiques of Bhabha's use of hybridity seek not to understand hybrid culture, but what room and legitimacy there is for boundary-crossing identities in a world of boundaries. Bhabha's use of hybridity and Third Space is meant to gain understanding how colonial power relations continue to exist and the way they continuously influence worldviews in contemporary society. Understanding how cultures merge and blend gives understanding, meaning, and acceptance to the development of new hybrid identities.

The history of 'hybridity' and its relationship with colonization make using the concept in a respectful and efficient manner problematic and, to some, even offensive. The term is plagued by historical ties to colonial stigma, racial purity, degradation of humanity, and 'miscegenation' through interracial breeding (Young, 1995). 'Hybridity' and being deemed a hybrid can have particularly damaging effects to victims of colonization in Canada as the term was once motivated by white racial superiority and warned against the 'contamination' of Europeans and the races they colonized. Although Bhabha did not intend for the term to be damaging when he reframed hybridity in the wake of decolonization movements, the continued negative connotations call for a change of language. It is possible, however, to utilize the concept and examine the process of cultural negotiation in the Third Space without being tied to the nomenclature. By focusing on the process of cultural negotiation through the Third Space, it is possible to examine what occurs on the borderlines of cultures. Bhabha explained that hybridity "is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the Third Space which enables other positions to emerge" (Huddart, 2005 p. 126). For this

reason, the focus here will be on understanding conditions of Third Space enunciation in Fort

Providence, where youth negotiate cultural influences and create new cultural meanings.

The Third Space Reality of Canada's Indigenous Peoples

The process of negotiating a Third Space is useful in understanding modern Indigenous

cultures because similar to all cultural identities, Indigenous peoples in Canada are made up of a

diverse array of cultures resulting from generations of convergence between historical and

contemporary forces (Kirmayer, Simpson, and Cargo, 2003). Contemporary Indigenous

identities are rooted in familial and community influences but also directly influenced by global

cultural forces. Daschuk (2013) explained that due to the historical migratory lifestyles of

Indigenous communities, ethnic mixing is not a result of only colonization. Travelling and

interactions between cultural groups were part of Indigenous history hundreds of years prior to

European contact (Daschuk, 2013). However, there is no question that European contact and the

introduction of the trade economy led to a more dramatic, intense, and globalized wave of

interactions between cultural groups. With European contact and the fur trade era of 1730–1870,

came hordes of sickness and disease to the Indigenous populations, who had no such immunity,

marking the beginning of centuries of marginalization in mainstream Canada (Daschuk, 2013).

Euro-Canadian contact with Indigenous peoples has left lasting effects on the population.

Colonialism is defined by Czyzewski (2011) as "the control or governing influence of a nation

over a dependent country, territory or people" (p. 1), and has been a dehumanizing, oppressive,

and violent experience endured by Canada's Indigenous populations. For decades, they have

been subject to harsh assimilation practices and systematic attacks on their traditions, beliefs, and

customs. Although decades removed from initial colonial contact, the legacy of colonization is

still felt in Canada while many families and communities continue to struggle with the social,

mental, physical, and spiritual repercussions of past and continued colonial rule. Colonization and methods of forced assimilation are demonstrated in every day lives of contemporary Indigenous societies through the Indian Act and broader structures of colonialism (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005). Colonial laws and institutions exists at the expense of Indigenous sovereignties and governance, languages and territory. However, recent Indigenous movements are accompanied by powerful acts of resistance that, while tested by brutal histories of assimilation, attest to the resilience of Indigenous peoples.

Today in Canadian society, the paradigm is shifting. A new constitutional order is in place that respects Indigenous rights and the Supreme Court of Canada is refusing to ignore the plagued histories of the Indigenous peoples and the colonizing powers. Indigenous communities and individuals are achieving independence through processes of decolonization and self-determination. Decolonization efforts can be seen in many acts of resistance to colonial rule. There is not one single definition of what decolonization looks like; however, as Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) explained, Indigenous knowledge and decolonization efforts are so deeply embedded into the daily lives of individuals and communities that they cannot be defined or codified. In addition, the desired outcomes of decolonization are "diverse and located at multiple sites in multiple forms, represented by and reflected in Indigenous sovereignty over land and sea, as well as over ideas and epistemologies (Sium, Desai, and Ritskes, 2012, p. ii). Resistance to colonization and decolonization efforts create a critical space for cultural exchange. Now, more than ever, understanding and celebrating the Third Space where Canada's Indigenous population's cultural forces are negotiated in a colonial society is imperative to understanding identity. In Canada, Indigenous Third Space identities are produced by the multiple and competing cultural forces that individuals identify with. This is signified by the

culturally fluid aspects of Indigenous identities that are connected to contemporary realities yet still identify with traditional culture. Examples of these newly negotiated identities can be found in all facets of everyday lives of Canada's Indigenous populations, but they are particularly apparent in the lives of youth.

Bhabha's concept of Third Space is beneficial by explaining how new expressions of fluid culture are created in Canada's Indigenous youth population and the influence that mainstream culture has on traditional activities. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are tensions within the Third Space, as various generations negotiate their own meanings as global and local forces intersect. According to Dallaire (2003, 2006), youth are sometimes less invested in parts of an identity and subsequently have more potential to refuse it. When they refuse parts of their identity, opportunities are created to produce new negotiations of identity. Western and traditional cultural realities interact and are negotiated, resisted, and adopted to create a Third Space for new cultural identities to emerge. Various cultural practices are mixed, creating a new sense of self within borders of their cultures. This continually negotiated youth identity includes cultural activities, the use of Indigenous languages, and influences from the West, such as Internet, telecommunication systems, and mainstream media. In many cases, this new Third Space identity is positive and benefits the interests of both original groups.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, during the residential school era, students were subjected to colonized agendas where missionaries used methods of forced assimilation on Indigenous youth. Although now decades removed from the closing of the last residential school in Canada, the current education system continues to use Eurocentric approaches to the way students are taught (Case, 2002; Battiste, 2000; Neeganagwedgin, 2013). The education system,

coupled with an increased access to and use of the Internet and other communication

technologies (Mignone and Henley, 2009; Sevean, Dampier, Spadoni, Strickland, Pilatzke,

2009), and the relative ease of domestic and international travel from the North continue to

connect young generations of Northern Indigenous people to the globalized world they live in.

These young people develop a global identity "that gives them a sense of belonging to a

worldwide culture and includes an awareness of the events, practices, styles, and information that

are part of the global culture" (Arnett, 2002, p. 777). With the strong influence of Indigenous

traditions and culture in Northern communities, it is important to consider how these cultural

features are negotiated in a modern, globalized cultural context. Kirmayer, Simpson, and Cargo

(2003) explained that Canada's indigenous people are "engaged in an ongoing process of re-

articulating themselves in the modern world in ways that honour their ancestors, maintain links

with crucial values, and creatively respond to the exigencies of a world simultaneously woven

together by electronic media and driven apart by conflicts of culture and value" (p. S19). This

emphasises the importance of understanding the cultural interactions that influence that youth in

the crucial years.

Identity, like culture, is unstable and constantly transforming. Contemporary existence

involves a multiplicity of subject positions and potential identities. In addition to the global

cultural forces that Canada's Northern Indigenous youth negotiate, young people develop and

maintain a local identity, which is based on their local traditions, circumstances, environments,

and other influences that their lives in the North have instilled in them (Arnett, 2002). They have

been developing this identity from birth and continue to use this sense of self in their daily lives

when they interact with Elders, family, community members, and peers. These local identities

are nurtured and developed by experiences that are distinctly part of their culture, such as the

procurement and processing of wild foods. Identity is inscribed in their histories and language and passed down through the stories told by their parents and grandparents. A strong sense of a local cultural identity is directly correlated to higher levels of psychological health for Indigenous youth (Wexler, 2009). Developing this local identity involves recognizing cultural attributes, such as beliefs, values, practises, norms, traditions and heritage. Local cultural identities are shaped by the cultural forces in a young person's life; however, these identities are also modified by global forces that influence youth from the youngest of ages. Part of having a strong sense of local identity means understanding how cultural attributes are reflected as part of a global identity.

Utilizing Bhabha's notion of Third Space assists in understanding how Indigenous youth interact with their indigeneity (local identity) and globalized forces (global identity). The concept of Third Space is useful when describing the ongoing interaction between groups, cultural flows, and the power relations that are embedded within them. Information and communication technologies and the affordability of travel have created opportunities to make cultural connections globally and, in result, have challenged Northern Indigenous youth's sense of identity. According to Arnett (2005), multiple aspects of identity are important to youth's transition to a globalized world. First, youth are being raised with 'bicultural identities', meaning youth render a local identity based on local circumstances but also a global identity that relates them to worldwide cultures and practises, connecting them through television and the Internet (Arnett, 2005). Although it has been established that identities are not binary in nature, but continually evolving, the idea of local and global cultures merging are similar to what Bhabha has theorized. Second, youth are having 'identity confusion' where global influences cause them struggle to connect with their local and global culture (Arnett, 2005). Third, faced with the

changing facets of globalization, some youth will defy the global identity and assume an identity untainted by the global culture (Arnett, 2005). Although Arnett defined these terms in relation to youth in developing countries, they are applicable to the processes of globalization seen in Northern youth in Canada. Indigenous youth are exposed to differing cultural forces, heightened by the new ease of access to information and communication technologies in rural, remote Canada. These cultural identities bring an opportunity for the merging and mixing of cultures from which a Third Space is established and new cultural identities flourish. By examining youth's involvement in wild-food procurement activities at Deh Gah School, it can be understood how cultures fuse together within the Third Space and unique identities are negotiated and emerge.

The Fort Providence Experience

Methods

This project is grounded in ethnography and participant-focused methods in order to obtain a greater understanding of the contemporary reality of Canada's Indigenous peoples. Ethnographic methods involve participating/observing, interviewing participants, and collecting field notes from informal conversations conducted within everyday community settings (Della Porta and Keating, 2008). The aim of ethnography is to "provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews" (Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges, 2008). When combined with investigative methods, such as participant observation and/or interviews, ethnographers can generate rich and detailed accounts of the lived experiences of participants. For the purpose of this study, I conducted meaningful fieldwork that was grounded in building and maintaining meaningful relationships with research participants. I lived in Fort Providence and immersed myself in the community and cultural camp experience for over seven months between spring 2013 and winter 2015. Because I was directly engaged in the cultural practises and social experiences of cultural camps organized by Deh Gah School, ethnographic methods allowed me to assess the unique experiences youth have with food in the Third Space.

During my seven months in the community, I conducted detailed participant observation during land-based, cultural camps and held semi-structured interviews with thirteen people, including school staff, administration, parents, and community leaders. Participant observation allowed me to be simultaneously a participant and an observer who took part in the "daily activities, rituals, interaction, and events of the people being studied as a means of learning the

explicit and tacit aspects of their culture" (Dewalt, Dewalt, Wayland, 1998, p. 259). This method

of data collection is relatively unstructured and takes place in a naturalistic setting of the people

being studied. In the field, I was able to strike a balance between pure observation and pure

participation based on my experience in the setting. With the high level of rapport I built in the

community and school, I was able to gain insight into and collect detailed field notes on the

intricacies of the Dene youth experience. I furthered my data collection using semi-structured

interviews to complement my observations and gain insight into specific aspects of the

experiences. My semi-structured interviews were organized around a set of predetermined open-

ended questions that were developed to probe for clarification or further explanation through

dialogue between interviewee and I (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Open-ended probing

questions are crucial to the interview process because they elicit further dialogue and help the

interviewer gain more detailed understanding (Whiting, 2008). Through months of participant

observation and semi-structured and informal discussions with community members, I was able

to gain an understanding of the global and local forces surrounding food that Deh Gah students

are exposed to and understand how this relates to postcolonial theory and Bhabha's concept of

Third Space.

Community Profile

Fort Providence (Zhahti Kue; population: 759) is a Dene and Métis community

situated on the northeast bank of the Mackenzie River, 233 kilometres southwest of

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The latitude and longitude of the community are N

61°21', W 117°39'. The community is accessible by the Mackenzie Highway, which is an

important link between communities north and south of the Deh Cho, also known as the

Mackenzie River. The community's traditional name, Zhahti Kue, means "Mission House"

(The Dene Nation, 1984, p. 9). The main languages spoken are Dene and English. When broken down into two words, De Ne means "being from the land" (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 2003, p. 5). In other English translations, Dene means "The People" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p. 7). The Dene people call the western land region of the Northwest Territories the Denendeh, meaning "The Land of the People" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p. 7). In the Denendeh, the Dene consists of five distinct regional groups, each with their own traditional territory and language dialect. Collectively, the Dene share a common language, family, culture, and ancestry (Berger, 1988).

Deh Gah School is a central hub for activities and leadership in the community. It has an enrollment of approximately 190 students from kindergarten to senior high school and employs many adults in the community as full-time staff and in cultural guidance roles.

The Deh Gah Experience: Third Space Around Food

Education system

Deh Gah School's administration takes a unique approach to education by understanding the individual needs (academic and beyond) of each student. Despite their rural and remote geographic location, the school shares many characteristics with those in Southern Canada. The school follows the Northwest Territory Education, Culture and Employment regulated curriculum, which borrows from the Alberta Education system for core subjects, providing students with an opportunity to succeed in modern academics. Deh Gah students gain in-school experiences that prepare them academically and socially for post-secondary education and work experiences in Southern Canada. The school helps to foster youth's understanding of global culture through progressive learning technology that allows students to learn and communicate with people outside their community through media technology. Through the use of high-speed Internet, the school connects youth with students, professionals, and experts in Southern Canada to exchange knowledge and facilitate learning. Using the computer lab, which is stocked with fifteen Apple desktop computers, students can do unlimited independent research for academic and personal enjoyment. Like in other parts of Canada, youth are very connected to social media and popular culture through the Internet, which allows students to learn about global culture in the classroom. The school also provides many opportunities for students to raise funds to leave the community and travel nationally and internationally as part of exchange programs, educational field trips, and sports competitions. Providing the opportunity for and support in leaving the community equips students for success in the global world and helps to affirm their globalized identity. The school administration explains that students "need to know how to live in both worlds. Ideally youth will leave and go away and then come back with a greater sense of

who they are and the greater sense of how this place defines them" (Taillefer, personal

communication, February 3, 2015). The school enables students to thrive in education and

professional ventures outside of the community by following a standardized curriculum,

exposing them to the technology, and giving them the socio-economic skills needed to succeed

in contemporary Canadian society.

While core curriculum at Deh Gah School is similar to schools across Canada, the

dedicated integration of the Dene Kede curriculum makes the school unique. Dene Kede is one

of two integrated curricula (the other being Innuqatigit, developed for the Inuit culture)

developed in the Northwest Territories that respects the worldview and languages of the land of

Canada's Indigenous people. Dene Kede focuses on the core concepts of the Dene culture and

tradition, including the importance of language and the traditions of lifelong learning. The

purpose statement of the Dene Kede curriculum is for cultural survival through youth, so they

can "establish good relationships with the land, spiritual world, other people and themselves"

(Dene Kede, 1993, p. xiv). As part of the Dene Kede curriculum, Deh Gah School's kindergarten

to grade three is Dene Language Immersion in order to promote the continuance of the Dene

language. The school hires local residents to lead land-based and school-based cultural lessons

and teach students valuable cultural skills. Students have the opportunity to attend land-based

cultural camps during the summer/fall, winter, and spring harvesting seasons with local leaders

and school staff. These outdoor, cultural camps, in conjunction with other spiritual sites along

the Deh Cho, provide a place where youth are able to disconnect from town and connect with

nature.

Deh Gah School's unique use of curricula provides opportunity for students to develop

and negotiate the cultural forces that influence their identity. Providing students the opportunity

to learn cultural skills is a priority for Deh Gah School as it supports the development of the student's local identity. For many families in Fort Providence, this local identity is developed through interactions with grandparents and Elders where youth learn hunting, fishing, and other land-based skills. These skills are passed down from generation to generation and are a valued part of the Dene identity. Outside of the family, the local school allows the youth a space to develop their local identity inside the classroom and on the land. Additionally, Deh Gah School values Western education systems and strives to provide every opportunity for students to succeed in the academic world. Educators support students in their understanding and negotiation of Western cultural flows as a part of their Northern, Dene/ Métis life. By using a standardized core curriculum, Deh Gah School graduates are equipped with the knowledge and ability to pursue post-secondary education. By helping students to interpret global and local forces, Deh Gah School prepares students academically, physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially to succeed in contemporary Canadian society, whether the student chooses to reside in Fort Providence or in a busy urban centre.

The Wild Food Snack Program

Through the Deh Gah School Wild Food Snack Program, which procures food during seasonal cultural camps, students are able to merge their local Dene culture with the contemporary, globalized society. By bringing food from the land into the school as part of a snack-distribution program, students are effectively merging their cultural experiences. As part of the Deh Gah School cultural camp programming, students have the opportunity to assist in wild-food procurement for the snack program. Being located on the Deh Cho, local food is an important part of the Dene identity. Throughout the school year, students are invited onto the land to participate in cultural camps with parents, Elders, school staff, and local resource

providers. In each of the main harvesting seasons (winter, spring, and fall), students travel to

different sites along the Deh Cho. From senior kindergarten to grade twelve, students of all ages

are given the opportunity to experience land-based learning. In the spring, the cultural camp is

located approximately ten kilometres east of the community along the river at the mouth of Great

Slave Lake, accessible by road. During May and June, students and educators spend time outside

of the classroom learning skills, participating in crafts, and experiencing nature. It is in the warm

spring months that fish begin to run in the river, allowing youth to be involved in the catching,

cleaning, and smoking of hundreds of fish a week. After school commences in January, primary

school students and educators travel ten kilometres west down the Deh Cho by skidoo to a

property named Talamia, which is owned by the community. Talamia has multiple sleeping

cabins, a central meeting cabin, and a cookhouse. During this camp, students participate in

beaver-trapping and ice-fishing expeditions and learn how to set rabbit snares. Additionally, the

youth spend time focusing on physical activity and are taught lessons in the heated cabins. High

school students and their educators travel further west down the Deh Cho to cabins owned by the

school. The activities during these camps are similar to those taught at Talamia, but the camps

are week-long overnight trips that focus on teamwork and winter survival skills. In August and

September, primary classes again travel to Talamia (by boat) and participate in camp skills and

learning. High school students, educators, and Elders partake in multiple-week canoe excursions

where they visit sites along the Deh Cho that have significant cultural importance, and collect

medicine and learn vital parts of the Dene culture.

     While the camp activities vary slightly between the seasons and the students in

attendance, there is a consistent emphasis on creating an environment to facilitate a traditional

knowledge exchange with students and wild-food procurement activities. Students work with

teacher and Elders to learn the processes involved in fishing, hunting and gathering from the land. If the students are successful in their hunts, the adults attending camp demonstrate the process of cleaning and cooking their harvest. Students as young as five years old learn the skills necessary to prepare meals from wild foods and show immense eagerness to assist in the meal preparation. Youth build the fires to smoke the fish, collect the wild mint to steep in tea, and hoist fishnets from the icy Deh Cho. The camps facilitate a place for students to experience the land with local Elders who teach students how to identify and collect wild medicines, such as low- and high-bush cranberries and spruce gum. The students learn the importance of the medicines and how to prepare and consume them. Elders and cultural educators recite oral histories around a fire or during activities. These stories educate students about their culture, their family's history, and Dene values. With the students' help, an Elder will lead a prayer, and all camp participants join together and feast. During meals, students get the opportunity to consume land-based food that they helped prepare. For many of students, these camps serve as an opportunity to learn skills and develop a taste for traditionally prepared foods they would otherwise not experience. With their parents being involved in local wage economy in Fort Providence, often the youth do not travel to the land and hunt with their families. The cultural camps at Deh Gah School create an opportunity for Elders to share knowledge with the youth that they will be able to continue to pass down to future generations.

The Wild Food Snack Program, which has been successfully run in the school for multiple years (2013–2015), complements the food-procurement objective of the land-based learning experiences. During the seasonal cultural camp programming in winter, spring, and summer/fall, the students, camp staff, and educators work diligently to process an excess of wild food. This takes form in smoking fish, making jerky, freezing fresh fillets, and collecting an

abundance of medicine. Not only does this allow the youth greater opportunities to practice the skills required to process wild food, it also allows staff to bring the surplus food back to the school to be vacuum-sealed and frozen for a later date. The snack program extends the benefits of the camps' food-procurement efforts into the season between camp sessions, so that the school staff are able to offer land-based foods to their pupils within the school setting throughout the year. Not only are students excited for a wild food snack, they are also able to display to the rest of the school the hard work they put into processing food in the previous seasons. There is a noticeable excitement of staff and students in the school when dry fish or jerky is being offered as snacks.

By bringing these snacks into Deh Gah School—a modern education center—the program allows youth to merge their local and global identities around food: foods that are important to the Dene culture are accessible to students in a Western education setting. This effectively gives way to the emergence of Third Space cultural affinities that blend the borders between the local Dene culture and the students' position in contemporary Canadian society. In a classroom where students build an identity with globalized influences, they are given the opportunity to include local Dene values into their negotiations of how they interpret their culture.

#DryFish

Although living in Northern, rural and remote community, youth in Fort Providence are irrefutably influenced by the many global forces that inform who they are as Dene youth in a contemporary and interconnected world. Not unlike most youth in Canada, Deh Gah School students are exposed to global forces through the exchange of goods at the local grocery store, the computer labs in the school, and the cellular network coverage in the community. Like in

other parts of Canada, it is common to see students browsing YouTube channels, playing online

video games, or posting on social media from their portable devices. At most times, youth in Fort

Providence are connected with the world beyond the town limits. In addition to their local

identities, they have a global understanding of themselves, which gives them a sense of

belonging to a global culture. By nurturing these experiences, Deh Gah School is giving students

the best opportunity to reach their potential and succeed in the new, changing globalized North.

However, youth use these opportunities to build an identity unique to the increasingly connected

lifestyle in the North. Students blend their local and global forces within the Third Space when

they use social media to proudly promote their Dene culture, such as using the hashtag

"#DryFish."

Although using phones and other technology are not encouraged during land-based cultural

camps, youth often use their cell phones to record video and take photos of their experiences.

Regularly, I would hear students ask their peers to record them as they attempt a new or difficult

task, such as their first time "fixing a fish" (cleaning and preparing it to be smoked over the fire).

This, for example, is a skill that takes copious practice, so youth pride themselves in attempting

the feat and being successful. They associate this skill with that of an experienced hunter or

teacher because it involves practicing on many fish. The result of their work is the delicious,

local delicacy of dry fish. Students have a visual record of the different aspects of land-based

learning, and they use social media to share these experiences with their friends and followers

across the world. By creating hashtags and tagging their friends in posts, unique parts of the

Dene/ Métis culture is shared with global audiences. Contemporary technology is used in to

share and promote their local cultural traditions. The high level of connectivity in the North and

students' access to technology and social media empower them to reach anyone and to be

reached by anyone. This effectively blends the borders of very unique cultures: the local Dene

culture, informed by traditional practices, and global flows that are informed by youth's

exposure to the larger Canadian and global societies.

The Third Space Connection

Understanding interactions between food, postcolonial theory, and Bhabha's concept of developing identity in the Third Space has enabled me to understand how Deh Gah School students identify and negotiate their unique identities. This Third Space can be viewed as a space of cultural and social change in which the competing knowledge of different spaces are brought together to challenge and reshape the contemporary lives of Deh Gah students. By examining the contemporary expressions of food, an important and ever-changing liminal expression of culture is understood. Youth in Fort Providence have definite cultural connections with local and global forces in relation to their food culture. The progressive education systems and learning opportunities at Deh Gah School ensure that youth have a well-established and heightened understanding of their part within a global society. However, under similar circumstances, Deh Gah School fosters the development of strong local identities through camps and cultural lessons that ensure they teach lessons that are inherently Dene. Youth learn about and are exposed to Western market foods while hunting and gathering on the land with their Elders. These very different cultural experiences are constantly changing and evolving while simultaneously interacting and merging. I argue that by offering students unique experiences surrounding food, both local and global, Deh Gah School ultimately creates a Third Space that allows for a negotiation of new cultural identities. Bringing together the knowledge of the local and the global in a Third Space is a productive scaffold that allows youth to benefit from the experiences of both worlds.

According to Gibbens (1991), children and youth have "phenomenal worlds [that are] for the most part truly global" (p. 187). In this sense, Fort Providence's youth are similar to youth in urban Canada. Although located in the North with unique challenges to food access, youth in Fort Providence are influenced heavily by television, the Internet, and other media connections, which cultivate a Western identity around food. Youth develop expectations for food based on Western influences, such as those advertised on television and seen in movies. Deh Gah School students are encouraged to leave the community to attain higher levels of education and gain valuable work experience. For this reason, Deh Gah School's administration recognizes the importance of exposing youth to Western influences that they will encounter in other parts of Canada. This includes assisting youth in making informed decisions about market food consumption and understanding their identity surrounding food. All of these experiences foster students' perceptions and identities around food as they build expectations for food that is foreign to Dene culture. However, Deh Gah School also actively gives youth the opportunity to be involved with food procurement and offers students land-based snacks in order to help develop their local identity. School staff and administration encourage youth to develop connections with Elders and learn the skills that were once vital to survival. While actively developing students' understanding of the Western world, educators are offering spiritual experiences that are vital to students' understanding of local identity. These experiences, which are encouraged by Deh Gah School, prepare students from a young age to be comfortable within the contemporary Canadian food culture, but they also encourage children and youth to identify with local food customs.

Using food to explain the negotiation of a Third Space identity shows how the global and local cultures can create an empowering identity for youth, but it can also explain some of the frustrations between generations around cultural negotiations. As explained by Bhabha (1994) local and global forces have been fostered since childhood and do not coexist or retain with each other, but they merge into a new Third Space identity. This globalized Dene identity is negotiated in places where youth can appreciate their global food systems and understand what their food influences mean to them, but they also understand their local traditions around food procurement. Youth connect in this Third Space when they spend time on the land learning from their Elders and then share their experiences with their peers on social media. Elders have voiced frustrations that Western food influences have drastically and negatively influenced the health and well-being of the Indigenous people. This can complicate and create tensions in youth's navigation of different cultural forces. However, having the school directly involved in shaping youths' global experiences and working with Elders to understand the importance of global exposure to Dene youth has proven to alleviate many of these tensions.

As students, they are very involved and invested in the cultural camps offered by Deh Gah School. They engage and interact with their teachers and Elders in ways that show their dedication to their language, but they also learn core math and science taught in a classroom setting. By being active participants in the food-procurement process and being exposed to different food systems, they are merging what they know about food through their global identity and making sense of it from a local perspective. This coincides with Bhabha's (1994) concept of Third Space as this new identity is produced by the merge of competing subject positions that, in the example of Fort Providence, students

simultaneously occupy. The newly negotiated identity is a productive space where youth

can excel in their contemporary cultural reality and feel empowered about their Dene

identity within a globalized society.

Conclusion

While the language and historical connotations surrounding hybridity can be

damaging, the process of developing identity within the Third Space can be extremely

influential in understanding the experience of contemporary Dene youth. According to

Bhabha (1994), identities developed within the Third Space draw on the ambivalence of

the colonial rule to build a capacity for resistance. An identity created within the Third

Space is a powerful vehicle in deconstructing barriers and labels that contribute to social

inequalities, and in deconstruct boundaries. With a Third Space identity that encompasses

both Western and traditional Dene ideals, Deh Gah School students are able to negotiate

and navigate the contemporary Dene identity within a globalized society. With a unique

school curriculum that focuses on both globalized and local content, by offering wild food

as snacks, and by using technology to share land-based knowledge, Deh Gah School offers

their students valuable opportunities to negotiate a distinct identity between fluid cultures.

Using food as an avenue to explore this unique experience, I have been able to show how

Bhabha's postcolonial concept of Third Space accurately describes the framework that Deh

Gah School enforces on its students. The complex relationship with food that Fort

Providence youth develop can give meaning to the unique experience of Dene youth

reacting to contemporary colonialism and empowering new Third Space identities to strive

for resistance and meaning in *both worlds.*

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Article Two

Food in Fort Providence: (Un)Obvious Outcomes of a Community-Driven Food Procurement
Program for Youth

Abstract

Deh Gah School in Fort Providence, NT, has created an innovative and meaningful educational program for Indigenous youth that exposes them to traditional activities and connects them to their Elders. This article gives a descriptive perspective surrounding what community members perceive as the central outcomes of Deh Gah School's land-based food programming. Twenty-five weeks of ethnographic research was utilized to fully understand how the food procurement programming is about *more than just food.* Indigenous food systems are integral to overall community health and vitality, and the outcomes from Deh Gah School's land-based program directly support the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth. Six primary outcomes emerged from conversations with community members: removing barriers to wild food procurement, promoting intergenerational knowledge exchange, building social cohesion, connections with the land, promoting local food sovereignty and meeting curriculum objectives. These outcomes are discussed on a broader scale as a vehicle to address community-wide cultural continuity and individual level cultural identity. Many Indigenous communities in northern Canada are faced with major health disparities; Deh Gah School is actively taking steps to address health disparities through programming that connects youth to their culture. The outcomes identified by community members prove that Deh Gah School's food programming has wider influences on the greater community and is in fact about *more than just food*.

Introduction

At Deh Gah School in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, the most cherished classroom does not have a chalkboard, desks, computers, four walls or beanbag chairs for reading. In this primary and secondary school, everyone's favourite classroom is Talamia; a camp accessible only by boat or skidoo, with cabins and a cooking shelter, three outhouses and endless amounts of fun and learning to be shared. Deh Gah School provides unique opportunities for their 188 students, primarily of Dene and Métis descent, to learn and experience cultural activities on the land. As a student researcher within the Indigenous Health Research Group (IHRG) I was provided with the opportunity to study and volunteer with various land-based programs offered by the school. During my initial visit in May 2013, I was introduced to the land-based programming which was primarily structured around teaching youth wild food procurement skills, however, school administration continually insisted it was about *more than just food.* As I began to work on the land with staff and students, I was able to unfold what this meant. For multiple weeks during the harvest seasons of spring, summer, fall and winter, I worked with community educators and students on the land to learn cultural skills and lessons. These experiences allowed me to understand how the food systems in Fort Providence worked, and how the cultural camp programming influenced cultural development and health within the community.

This paper will show that with extensive community consultation, it became clear that the outcomes of Deh Gah School's land-based programming extended further than food procurement; the programming functioned in an interdependent relationship with overall

community health and wellbeing. In the most basic of explanations, the land-based food programming's objective was to provide students at Deh Gah School, kindergarten to grade 12, with access to wild-food snacks and meals. However, the small-scale, locally run land-based food procurement program far exceeded what it originally intended. I will show the most prominent and important outcomes of the programming based identified by community leaders, educators, Elders and involved parents. The paper will show that the program diminishes barriers students face in practising food procurement methods, promotes intergenerational knowledge exchange, creates social cohesion, fosters youth's connection with the land, and promotes local sovereignty while simultaneously achieving education objectives. Indigenous food systems are integral to overall community vitality, and the outcomes from Deh Gah School's land-based program directly support the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth. I began to understand that while responding to an issue identified by the community (food access), the land-based food program were a vehicle to address help foster community cultural continuity and individual cultural development.

Community

Fort Providence (Zhahti Kue) is a Dene and Métis community situated on the northeast bank of the Mackenzie River, 233 kilometers southwest of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The latitude and longitude of the community is 61°21' N, 117°39' W. The community is accessible by the Mackenzie Highway, which is a vital link between communities north and south of the Mackenzie River. It has a population of 759. The traditional name of the community is "Zhahti Kue," which means "Mission House" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p.9). The main languages spoken are Dene and English. When broken down into two words, De Ne means "being from the land" (Canadian Parks and Wilderness

Society, 2003, pg.5). In other English translations, Dene means "The People" (The Dene

Nation, 1984, p.7). The Dene people call the western land region of the Northwest Territories

the Denendeh, meaning "The Land of the People" (The Dene Nation, 1984, p.7). In the

Denendeh, the Dene consists of five distinct regional groups, each with their own traditional

territory and language dialect. Collectively, the Dene share a common language, family,

culture, and ancestry (Berger, 1988).

In the community, Deh Gah School is a central hub for activities and leadership for

youth. At the time of this study, the school enrollment was approximately 190 students from

grade level kindergarten through to senior high school. The school employs many adults in the

community as full-time staff and in cultural guidance roles. The community has two main

grocery stores, one which is The Northern Store, a chain of grocery retail stores in Northern

Canada. The other is a locally owned and operated Aurora Cooperative Market which sells

groceries as well as camping, hunting and fishing equipment. Although wild foods are an

important part of the people of Fort Providence's diet, the majority of dietary intake is store

bought, market foods. However, community members are still actively involved in traditional

food procurement activities, such as trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering, to supplement their

market food diets.

In recent decades, the dependence on wild food acquisition has declined and therefore the

popularity of traditional food procurement activities have declined, especially among young

people in the community. Certain barriers also limit wild food procurement in the community,

including financial constraints of gas and ammunition, time commitments due to participation in

the wage economy and the need to increasingly travel further from the community to have a

successful harvest. Because the yield from a harvest can vary substantially, wild food

consumption is often seen as a hobby which supplements market foods, rather than as a primary food source on its own. Local wild foods which are commonly harvested and consumed are fish (ex. whitefish, trout, suckers), waterfowl (ex. duck, geese), small land-based game (ex. rabbit, beaver), large land-based game (ex. buffalo, caribou) berries (ex. low-bush and high-bush cranberries), and land-based medicine (ex. wild mint, Labrador leaves).

Fort Providence was an ideal location to complete this study because the IHRG had previous ties to the community from working with leaders to develop and fund programs which provided youth access to wild foods. As the main researcher for this project, I was able to build rapport in the community based on the previous relationships of other IHRG researchers. To further this, the programs have high levels of local ownership due to the high levels of community representation developing and facilitating the land-based program. Similarly, the community leaders were continuously consulted in the development of the objectives of this research project. Staff was assigned to assist with the research and the land-based program which ensured maintenance of both relevance and direction of both initiatives.

Methods

This study was part of a larger project to examine wild-food access issues for youth in the community and understand the community-driven approaches to heighten student's access to land-based education. The research project was grounded in ethnographic and participant-focused methods in order to obtain a greater understanding of the contemporary reality of Canada's Indigenous peoples. The ethnographic methods involved participating/observing, interviewing participants and collecting field notes from informal conversations conducted within everyday community settings (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). The aim of ethnography is to "provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature of the

location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews" (Reeves, Kuper & Hodges, 2008). When combined with investigative methods, such as participant observation and/or interviews, ethnographers can generate rich and detailed accounts of the lived experiences of participants. For the purpose of this study, I conducted fieldwork grounded in building and maintaining meaningful relationships with research participants. I lived in Fort Providence and immersed myself in the community and cultural camp experience for just under seven months between spring 2013 and winter 2015. Having been directly engaged in the cultural practises and social experiences of cultural camps organized by Deh Gah School, ethnographic methods allowed me to observe and comprehensively understand the outcomes and benefits of a cultural camp program that focused on wild-food procurement.

Participant Observation

Using participant observation as a foundation for research provides a platform for active engagement with community members on the land and within the community setting. With the primary objective of understanding culture, participant observation is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the naturally occurring routines, norms and interactions of a particular group of people in their natural social environments (Fossey et al., 2002). Participant observation allows researchers to be completely immersed into a distinctive part of a community's time and space, enabling close familiarity and develop intimate relationships with community members (Porta & Keating, 2008). I worked on a continuum from 'complete participant' to 'complete observer', determining in the moment the appropriate level of participation and interaction. Most often, my participation could not be planned prior to the experience as it was based largely on presented opportunities, decisions made in the field and by chance encounters and events (Porta & Keating, 2008). A considerable amount of my time was spent on the land with students, educators and

Elders where I relied on social ques and friendships to determine the appropriate level of involvement. During my time in the field, I took photos and used field notes to record significant and non-significant observations, such as behaviours, reactions and informal conversation notes (Belton, 2009). Using this method, I was able to observe the interaction between students, Elders and their environment, and discover the learning and cultural objectives of cultural camp programs that focus on wild-food procurement. I used my field notes and observations to draft questions used in the semi-structured interview process.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to my participant observation, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve participants in Fort Providence. My interview questions sought to understand participant's perceptions of the important priorities and outcomes of Deh Gah School's land-based programming. Semi-structured interviews are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions with follow-ups that are developed to probe for clarification or further explanation through dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Open-ended probing questions are crucial to the interview process because they elicit further dialogue and help the interviewer gain more detailed understanding (Whiting, 2008). I proposed questions that would elicit participant's opinions and perceptions about what they understood the programming to be achieving for youth. Questions were focused, but open-ended and I prepared possible probes to carry the conversation towards topics I wanted to discuss. Participants were eager to speak about the positive influence that the land-based programming had on youth and reflected on these influences extended to the overall community. Because I used such a flexible interview guide, the resulting content was largely based on participation and response.

Over the course of my community visits, I was able to hire three local community research assistants who assisted in data collection and participant recruitment. The local help was most valuable in enabling me to form relationships with community members who I would not have otherwise had access to. I was able to form solid relationships with important cultural camp participants because of the introduction from a local community member. I quickly developed a friendly rapport with school administration and community members and was invited into the lives of the participants, where I would otherwise have been a complete outsider. The research assistants had an understanding of the research objectives and granted me access to important conversations and events. The research assistants all had basic Dene language skills, which was helpful in conversing with Elders who felt more comfortable speaking in their Indigenous language. The assistants were also available to partake in the interview process which often brought ease to participants as it added a more natural feel and the assistant could help explain details. After the interviews, the assistants were available to debrief the session and provide missing context and explanations.

Analysis

I analyzed the data obtained from the methods using thematic analysis which attempts to describe patterns found in the data. Initially, the raw data was reduced into logical groupings by hand. Transcripts of the oral data which was collected were subsequently entered into the qualitative analysis computer software, QSR NVivo where it was further organized. The data was organized into clearly coded outcomes based on similar observations and interpretations of events (Boyatzis, 1998) and the analysis followed an inductive, data-driven approach (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is considered a simplistic approach to qualitative data analysis due to its flexibility and simplicity, however, I followed Creswell's (2009) six-step guide to thematic

analysis to avoid any shortcomings of the approach. This process ensured that I focused on the

strongest emergent outcomes identified by participants. I shared these outcomes with a selection

of my interview participants to ensure accurate representation of their perspectives.

Results

Below, I outline the interpretation of the findings based on the discussed participant

observation and semi-structured interview process. I reveal what emerged as the main outcomes

of the cultural camp food procurement program as described by participants. Although the semi-

structured interviews identified the main outcomes of the program, participant observation

helped me to contextualize and provided greater depth and context during my analysis.

Responses varied slightly between participants, but the outcomes were consistent between

observations and interviews. For the remaining Results section, the paragraph headings depict

the main outcomes identified.

Removing Barriers to Wild Food Procurement for Youth

When speaking about the perceived objectives of Deh Gah School's cultural camp

programming, the majority of participants reported that removing the barriers and increasing

youths' access to wild foods was the primary camp objective. Unanimously, participants spoke

about the cultural camp programming and the procurement of wild foods as interdependent

objectives. It was clear that bringing youth on to the land and exposing them to hunting, fishing

and gathering methods, and giving them the opportunity to develop tastes for local foods were

priorities of the program. Participants spoke about the barriers which inhibit students from

consuming wild foods on a regular basis. The two main barriers addressed were the high costs of

hunting and the lack of interest by young families in the community. The high costs were mainly

attributed the cost of fuel to travel to hunting sites, and the high costs associated with owning

necessary equipment, such as boats, skidoos, guns and ammunition. Participants explained that

even if families can afford to go out on the land, there is no guarantee that the hunt will be

successful. A respected community member explained the high cost associated with hunting in

one interview by saying:

> To go out on the land with your kids, you have to have gas. And it's really
>
> expensive. We used to set snares made out of sinew, but we no longer do that. You
>
> have to go the store and buy snares first. You have to get your food first. And some
>
> kind of shelter. And electricity. Everything about hunting is expensive. (Denise
>
> Trudeau, personal communication, February 09, 2015)

Similarly, another community member confirmed this barrier by explaining "it's cheaper to buy

junk food from the grocery store than it is to go fishing. For fishing, you have to have gas. You

can buy food from the grocery store for the price of the gas. Even though that's expensive too"

(Nancy Francis, personal communication, January 29, 2015).

While the high costs associated with hunting and gathering inhibit people from accessing

food from the land, the change in lifestyle have also altered how community members utilize

their time. Participants spoke of the time commitments families have to the wage economy and

to school as a barrier to learning the necessary skills at a young age. Participants also suggested

western influences that are now a part of the community have changed the priority of young

people. One participant explained how food procurement was a major priority for her family, but

that has changed for the younger generations. She explains:

> I don't remember ever being hungry. Back then everybody used to preserve their
>
> food and used to harvest their food. We always had so much wild meat. Now you see
>
> a lot of canned soup and stews in people's cupboards. Easy things you just heat up.

People have different priorities now. (Nancy Francis, personal communication,

January 29, 2015)

Participants explained that these priorities ranged from technology related to high-speed internet

access, such as video and computer gaming, and to more negative behaviours such as drug and

alcohol use.

Agreed upon by all participants is that the cultural camp programming focuses on giving

youth the opportunity to partake in wild food procurement. Students from kindergarten to senior

high school have the opportunity to be as involved as they desire in the hunting and gathering

practises. The programs help overcome the barriers which inhibit student involvement and

provide an opportunity to partake in a very important cultural activity. Other barriers which were

mentioned by participants included: environmental changes that made hunting trips further from

the community and more frequently unsuccessful; safety issues because of forest fires and

anthrax; and changes in food preferences due to the increased presence and variety in market

foods.

Promotes Intergenerational Knowledge Exchange

Creating a space for youth to work with Elders, parents and educators on the land was a

prevalent discussion topic throughout the interviews and was a predominant outcome across all

participants. Participants spoke about the importance of working with Elders in different

capacities, but the priority of learning and transferring knowledge to the younger generations was

very apparent. Indigenous culture is based on oral traditional and history. Deh Gah School

administration made it very clear that they believe connecting teenagers with Elders and building

a stronger connection between the school and Elders were central priorities in building a healthy

community. With this in mind, working with Elders and parents during hands-on activities or

simply observing has become an important feature of camp. Some participants explained how

traditionally, Elders were responsible for the transfer of knowledge to youth and young adults in

the community. Elders would take youth on to the land with them and teach skills and cultural

values which are integral parts of the Dene identity. This exchange ensured that the knowledge

was preserved and shared between generations. However, participants explained that since

colonization, much of the Dene traditional knowledge has been lost due to the continued legacy

of residential schooling and Elders are still healing from the effects. A highly respected Elder

from the community explained these effects, stating:

> Residential schooling is what broke the cycle. By attending the residential school
>
> there was a gap where we never practiced our culture or were forbidden to use our
>
> language. We lost a lot of sacred things. Our way of living is to pass along
>
> knowledge to youth and this is what we're [Elders] doing by teaching the children at
>
> the school. And working with them. A true Elder will do that as hard as it is, we have
>
> to do that. Because we're still healing. We're starting from scratch ourselves, after
>
> losing everything. And we're still weak from that. It is unreal how difficult it is.
>
> (Grady Canadian, personal communication, February 01, 2015)

This experience, described by an Elder who has felt the effects of residential schooling first-

hand, shows the importance of cultural healing and the power of sharing information between

generations.

Participants spoke about how when youth work with Elders who are very highly respected

within the community, they develop a sense of pride in their culture. Youth are captivated by the

lessons and stories Elders share when on the land. Students are eager to walk through the bush,

silently collecting berries and wild plants to present to their Elders who will teach them the

methods of preparation. Students, educators and camp staff all enjoy hearing stories and legends

told by Elders while partaking in various activities on the land. A member of the school

administration explained:

> A lot of times you get to sit around the fire and tell stories. That's the best way for
>
> kids to learn. From stories. These stories are more than stories, they are lessons that
>
> will stay with kids for a long time. I still remember the lessons my grandparents
>
> taught me. Those are what I am sharing now. (Denise Trudeau, personal
>
> communication, February 09, 2015)

A similar experience was detailed by another Deh Gah School educator who explained that

"traditionally, Elders were our greatest teachers. You learn by watching and mimicking. And in

those moments, you can have those conversations that allow those kids to make sense of the

world" (Lyla Taillefer, personal communication, February 03, 2015). This experience captured

the importance of promoting intergenerational relationships and creating an environment where

youth and Elders work in tandem.

In the interviews, many participants gave examples of stories that they share with youth

and explained where the stories were rooted. One participant, a respected hunter, explained that

during camp, he tells stories to the students about when he used to spend summers trapping

rabbits on the land. He describes his relationship with his Elders to the students and explains that

he learned his skills by watching and listening. He also said that the youth enjoy and are

motivated by hearing scenarios where he utilized his land-based skill and knowledge to survive.

He explained that when youth hear stories and learn skills at a young age, they will always have

the knowledge even without years of practise. He explains:

> I still remember all those things from hunting when I was just a boy. Even though I
>
> didn't use those skills for years. When I started working at the school and then

> starting working at cultural camps, it all came back to me. You remember things
>
> from way back when. That was many, many, many years ago. I still remember and
>
> still remember learning to make dry fish back then. Learn to cut up dry meat. Now
>
> I'm an expert. (Joe Marsh, personal communication, February 08, 2015)

All participants discussed the positive effects that working with Elders had on Deh Gah School

students. Many agreed that this is because Elders are the traditional teachers and the land is the

traditional classroom, so learning becomes a natural process and students absorb information

which they can eventually continue to pass down for generations.

Builds Social Cohesion among Youth and Community

Similar to the idea of the benefits from working with Elders, participants spoke about the

benefits of working as a community on the land. Participants all agreed in some capacity that the

cultural camp programming built a heightened sense of social cohesion between youth, their

educators and the greater community. When on the land, it is common practise for students,

parents, grandparents, Elders, hunters, community leaders and teachers to all work together

towards common objectives. Often, the typical relationship between student and teacher shifts;

teachers, many of whom are non-Indigenous, become the students as their charges educate them

on their unique cultural practises. Students who have been raised on Indigenous knowledges and

have cultivated land-based skills have the opportunity to display and teach their teachers skills. A

participant described this experience,

> On the land, students become the teachers. Especially the older students that have the
>
> knowledge, but even the younger students. And same thing with when we have the
>
> community people part of the camp, when we get to the camp roles change. The
>
> students who have been taught by Elders become the teachers and the teachers or the

community members become the learners. (Denise Trudeau, personal

communication, February 09, 2015)

Participants explained that these opportunities to shift the roles between the students and the

teachers creates social cohesion, empathy and shifts social interaction in other scenarios, such as

that within a classroom settings. Land-based education experiences challenge teachers, students

and community members to reach beyond the conventional ways of learning and step into the

culture of the people.

Cultural camps and land-based learning experiences also establish social cohesion

between students, which was a frequently discussed topic for participants. Administration would

periodically send high school students, approximately aged 14-19, to camp with the primary

grades, approximately aged 5-13. The high school students would generally assume leadership

roles for the younger students, and the camp staff would share responsibilities with these youth

leaders. For example, for safety reasons, only the older students were invited to use the tools

(knives, etc.) to cut and clean fish. However, the younger students were invited to watch, learn,

and ask their older peers questions. This created an informal mentor relationship where the older

students learn the responsibility of taking care of children and showcasing positive actions.

Generally, the younger students tended to be more engaged in the formal land-based learning

lessons led by their teachers. The older students were given more freedom in their land-based

learning structure, partaking or leading in different camp and hunting activities. Girls and boys

were involved in different ways, often assuming the traditional gender roles of land-based food

procurement activities. For example, the men would often bring the high school boys with them

in the boats to set fish nets, and the high school girls would often stay back at camp and make

lunch with their female Elders. However, all youth of all ages were encouraged to participate in

any activities they desired and camp led by example, fixing fish one day and setting nets the next regardless of gender.

Builds Connection with the Land

The importance of traditional food acquisition and connecting youth with the land was a prevalent discussion topic throughout the interviews. Many of the educators that were interviewed discussed the importance of bringing youth on to the land because it is the traditional learning environment for their culture. For the Dene/ Métis people of Fort Providence, the territory where their ancestors once resided and hunted continues to hold significant value and meaning. There are spiritual, physical and social connections to the land where Elders spent time with their families, hunting, gathering and preparing foods during harvest seasons. Deh Gah School honours and fosters the continuation of these familial land connections by sending students on land-based outings with Elders to visit the sacred sites. Participants explained that it is on these outings that students learn the oral histories of their ancestors and are taken to harvesting sites which were once vital to the survival of their people. Participants explained that experiences like these ensures the Dene's respect for the land is transferred between generations. With the guidance of Elders and educators, students are able to build a relationship with the land and water of their family's traditional activities. An Elder speaks about this and explains her gratitude stating,

I'm really grateful for the school to give students the time to connect to the land. Kids learn so much better on the land and are much more focused. They offer the river tobacco and then they have the time to really get connected to what they eat. They learn respect from the land and it feeds them. It feeds their spirit. (Grady Canadian, personal communication, February 01, 2015)

According to participants, building this connection to the land that their families once occupied along the Deh Cho helps students understand the history of their people. A local educator explained that being on the land "grounds students in the place where they are from and can learn from" (Lyla Taillefer, personal communication, February 03, 2015).

In addition to describing the importance of learning the practical skills involved with fishing and hunting, many interview participants explained that youth benefit from learning about where their food comes from and understanding their role in harvesting. An Elder explained that when she takes students on the land and shows them how fish is prepared, she makes sure to teach that all parts of the fish are sacred and must not go to waste. She shared stories of how her grandmother taught her to use everything from the scales to the bones, explaining

> My grandmother used to collect fish liver, smoke it a little bit and sends us to the bush to get some berries. We'd bring it back and she'd cook them and mush it with the liver. We'd also use the fish eggs in bannock. We used to do that all the time. We used all parts of the fish. (Grady Canadian, personal communication, February 01, 2015)

Youth learn methods of food procurement which were once vital to the survival of the Dene people. Through stories, they learn that life once revolved around their ancestors' connection with the land and their harvest. People spent long, hard days on the land travelling to particular harvesting grounds, setting nets or traps, travelling home and then repeating the task the next day. Students are taught the importance of showing thanks to the Creators for a successful harvest, ultimately ensuring future successes. An educator explained the importance of this, stating that "the students learn give thanks to the Creator for a good fishing trip. This is

important. If you don't, you might not be so lucky in the future. And if you don't catch any fish,

you don't eat. You had to learn quickly" (Joe Marsh, personal communication, February 08,

2015). These lessons and the time spent building youths' relationship with the land is a valuable

aspect of creating a positive land-based experience and connecting youth with Dene and Métis

values.

Promotes Local Food Sovereignty

Many participants discussed the importance of teaching students about independence and

having control over their own food systems, which is not achieved by relying on transported

foods from southern Canada. Participants agreed it is important for youth to learn the skills

which could enable them to sustain themselves from a land-based diet. Although participants

acknowledged heavy reliance on market foods purchased from the two local grocery stores, they

also acknowledged the importance of supplementing these foods with foods harvested from the

land. Many participants discussed the challenges surrounding diets which rely on market foods in

the community, such as cost, quality and selection. A single mother of four children spoke about

the challenges she faces each month to feed her family and how she relies heavily on the

generosity of her community and family to supply her with fish and wild game to supplement her

family's diet, but there is often still a steep price. She explained,

> I do most of my grocery shopping when I go South because it's too expensive here
>
> in Prov[idence]… I take the kids and we go fishing off the river bank in the spring
>
> when the fish run. And I freeze it for later when groceries are tight… There's a duck
>
> hunt in the spring and my friends will sometimes give me some. It helps. (Kathy
>
> Little, personal communication, January 27, 2015)

School administration and school leaders spoke about the land-based food procurement programs

as a response to food access issues faced by students in the community. While participants

agreed the impact of the program did not create significant change on the dependence on market

foods, it was agreed that the program promoted advocacy for food access in the community and

encouraged conversation on food sovereignty. Many participants had strong feelings of how the

land-based food programs could be furthered to make greater impact on food access in the

community. Suggestions included increased involvement of parents, increased involvement of

Band and Council, territory and federal government support which indicated a collective

movement whereby community members and stakeholders work to increase control over local

foods.

A participant explained that the land based food programming also promotes a culture of

food-sharing, which was once a vital aspect of Dene culture which has changed drastically since

the shift to wage-economies. When school groups go out and hunt large game, they bring it back

to the community and ensure that the food is equally distributed between Elders, single parent

families and other community members in need. However, due to environmental stressors, such

as forest fires and anthrax, hunting large game is not always a viable option for the school. One

participant spoke about a successful hunt they had in 2012, stating

> We got a bison a couple years ago. We brought it in and every kid got to take some
>
> of the meat home. Some kids were here from other communities and we sent them
>
> home with bison too. We had made it into bison jerky, ground bison. All the ladies
>
> just spent the day in the kitchen chopping up the meat. The kids were all wandering
>
> through the halls into the kitchen and they'd help chop the meat apart. It was a lot of
>
> meat! (Hugh Sharpe, personal communication, January 25, 2015)

Similar experiences of large game harvesting and sharing within the community were told by

multiple interview participants. However, it was also observed that this food sharing was present

on a small scale nearly every day at camp. Staff and students would spend time daily processing

wild foods at camp to smoke over the fire which would be return to the school to be frozen and

distributed among the school population throughout the year. Although the food was shared in

the form of a snack which was often immediately consumed, this was still an example of

distributing food within the community and was a primary outcome of camp.

Meets Deh Gah School Curriculum Outcomes

According to participants and observed by the researcher, an important part of the

cultural camp programming was to follow the Deh Gah School curriculum objectives. While on

the land, the teachers prepared lessons which covered topics from language and cultural lessons,

to science, math and visual arts. The learning objectives differed depending on which grade level

or class was attending camp and what their individual teacher had prepared for the students.

School administration explains that students respond extremely well to learning standard

curriculum while on the land because they are more focused, relaxed and generally described as

happier.

Because the time spent on the land is very intensive, learning objectives were often

achieved through informal lessons. For example, one teacher had spent the week prior to camp

teaching primary aged students about pond ecosystems. During the time on the land, the teacher

made an effort to bring her students to observe various ponds around the camp while

simultaneously collecting wild mint. Another example was a secondary school class that was

studying local aquatic species and spent time examining and identifying the anatomy of fish

while the students helped to prepare the fish to be smoked over the fire. While these students

were learning a hands-on science lesson, a different group of senior high school students who

were studying photography attended camp and took photos of the youth involved in the food

procurement methods. They displayed their artistic creations at a parent-teacher interview night.

A final example was a group of grade four/five students who spent a significant amount of

discussing the different winter hibernation techniques that local animals used to survive the harsh

northern winters. The class loaded into skidoo sleds with their teachers and camp staff and

visited multiple beaver dams along the Deh Cho to help check beaver traps. Not only did they get

to experience how to set and check beaver traps, but they learned about the dam and how the

beaver survives the winter.

Discussion

There is no question that Canada's Indigenous people are living in a state of health crisis

and are subject to major health and wellness disparities (Frolich, Ross and Richmond, 2006).

Nearly one million people in Canada self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis)

in Canada and they are drastically overrepresented in a wide range of health disparities compared

to other Canadians (Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo, 2003; Waldram, Herring, and Young, 2006).

Proximal determinants of health which are the root of much ill health among Indigenous

Canadians are rampant in northern, rural remote communities. These proximal determinants

include conditions that have a direct impact on physical, emotional, mental or spiritual health.

These are the determinants that need to be addressed immediately because they are leading to

unhealthy people which results in unhealthy communities. According to Reading and Wien on

behalf of the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2013), "unfavourable

proximal determinants can contribute to stressors that in turn can generate or exacerbate health

problems" (p.11). These stressors include health behaviours (ex. smoking, poor prenatal care),

physical environments (ex. disposition of traditional territories, current reserve structures),

employment and income (ex. poor housing, poverty) and education (ex. poor literacy, social

exclusion) (Reading and Wien, 2013). The recent publication of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada's (2015) Final Report recognizes that the various levels of government must acknowledge the current state of Indigenous health in Canada and establish goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This calls for action addressing economic and social conditions that influence the individual and community health status of Indigenous communities in Canada. By creating innovative and meaningful educational programming for Indigenous youth that exposes them to traditional activities and connects them to their Elders and sacred lands, Deh Gah School is taking an important step towards creating healthy youth and thereby contributing to a healthy community.

Deh Gah School created their cultural camp programming primarily to expose their students to land-based learning and wild-foods, but the benefits of the camps extended well beyond what was originally intended. Youth had the opportunity to work with and learn from their Elders, learn valuable lessons about social cohesion and community, and were able to connect with the lands which hold historical importance to their heritage. Indigenous people and ideologies embrace a holistic concept of health that reflects physical, spiritual, emotional and mental dimensions which are interconnected and interrelated (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006). It is important to consider these unique issues and promote programs, such as Deh Gah School's cultural camp programming, which positively influences these determinants of health. There is limited research available on the specific determinants of health for northern Indigenous people but by examining the outcomes of the Deh Gah School's food procurement camps, it is clear that this type of innovative educational program positively influences the social health of youth.

One of the prominent outcomes to emerge from Deh Gah School's wild food procurement camp programming was that of community level cultural continuity and sovereignty. Cultural continuity can have many methods but can be described generally as the degree of cultural and social integration and sovereignty within a community. In recovering from a history plagued with disparities which can be traced to colonization, it is known that the health of Indigenous people thrives on independent governance and the ability to have a voice in the programs and services offered within their community (Waldram, Herring, Young, 2006). Unlike western notions, Indigenous notions of health are often not individual, but encompass the health of the whole community (Stephens, Nettleton, Porter, Willis and Clark, 2005). Chandler and Lalonde (1998) published a landmark study which revealed that among First Nations people in British Colombia, youth suicide rates were associated with youths' ability to construct and defend their cultural identity despite dramatic individual and cultural change. According to the study, communities with low or absent rates of suicide have control over land titles, self-governance, education, security, cultural facilities, social and health programming (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998). This cultural continuity informs decisions made on behalf of the community, and ensures that local voices are being heard and represented in decision making. While supported by outside stakeholders, Deh Gah School's land-based food procurement programming was developed and facilitated by local community leaders and school administration. This ensured that the programming was developed with local Indigenous worldviews and was an active step by the community to preserve and rehabilitate their own culture. Communities which take an active role in connecting their youth to cultural preservation activities, such as Deh Gah School, result in healthier communities with active participants.

Similarly to the outcome of community level cultural continuity, is the priority of

individual level cultural awareness and identity which was present in Deh Gah School cultural

camp programming's outcomes. According to Wexler (2009), "a historical understanding of and

affiliation with one's culture can provide Indigenous youth with a perspective that transcends the

self, incorporates a larger temporal and social dimension into individual experiences, and offers

young people a collective pathway forward" (pg. 273). Having a distinct identity based on

cultural awareness and understanding personal sense of purpose are key elements in healthy

youth development (Hunter and Csiksentmihalyi, 2003). For Indigenous people, the sense of

cultural identity extends further than understanding of self and community belonging, it includes

one's inherent relationship with the land and its natural environment (King, Smith, Gracey,

2009). Over the last two centuries, key aspects of Indigenous identity have been disrupted due to

effects of colonization, residential schooling and globalization. The significant changes to the

lifestyle of Indigenous people (in particular to Indigenous youth) has made interventions which

promote individual identity and self-esteem vital to the overcoming health disparities (Kirmayer,

Simpson, Cargo, 2003). Programs which help youth rearticulate their cultural identity and efforts

which help to forge Indigenous youths' identities are necessary for creating a healthy sense of

identity which leads to increased overall health. By working with Fort Providence students from

a young age and inviting them on the land to learn traditional knowledge from their Elders, Deh

Gah School is creating an environment for an important knowledge transition and helping youth

determine their cultural identity surrounding food. For primary school students, aged 5-13, it

creates a natural space for them to use the Slavey language they are learning in their immersion

cirriculum which fosters their Dene cultural development as they are developing their individual

sense of self. For high school aged students, 14-19, it reinforces these experiences, their language

and aids in cultural endorsement within a contemporary institution, which is imperative in promoting the health of Canada's indigenous people (King, Smith and Gracey, 2009). By connecting both girls and boys with cultural leaders and Elders who share with them important lessons on the land, students are able to take ownership over their individual identity and what their Indigenous culture means to them. These lived experiences working with wild foods and in conjunction with their Elders builds a community surrounding food which connects them back to their traditional cultures which were once oppressed by colonization.

Conclusion

Using ethnographic research, this article gives a detailed description of the main outcomes of land-based food programming in Fort Providence, NT, as identified by interview participants. While the simple objective of the program is to involve youth in the food procurement process to provide access to land-based food, the health implications far exceed this intended objective. As such, interviews with community leaders and adults involved in the program show that there are themes which extend to removing barriers to wild food procurement, promoting intergenerational knowledge exchange, building social cohesion, connections with the land, promoting local food sovereignty and meeting curriculum objectives. Further, this article shows that these outcomes contribute to community wide cultural continuity and individual level cultural awareness. Indigenous food systems are integral to overall community health and vitality, and the outcomes from Deh Gah School's land-based program directly support the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth. The community uses food programming as an avenue to challenge health disparities of being a rural, northern Indigenous community.

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PART THREE

Thesis Conclusion

More than just food. While this phrase was repeatedly said to me during my Master's of Arts research in Fort Providence, NT, I did not fully understand what it meant until I began forming my papers. When I formed my initial research questions, I focused on understanding the food procurement programming that takes place at Deh Gah School and how it related to food security in the community. When I began my interviews and during informal conversations with community members, I had difficulty understanding how their emphasis was not on procuring high yields of food. I understood the programs to be a supplementary source of nutrition for community members, especially for school children. But time and time again, people said to me the programs are about *more than just food.* It took me months of reflection, discussion, rereading my transcripts and field notes and reliving my months of fieldwork through my photos and videos to understand what this meant. While there is no question that Indigenous societies in Canada face higher levels of food insecurity (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2010; Willows, Veugelers, Raine, & Kuhle, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014), for Deh Gah School, the cultural programming which brought land-based foods into the school focused more on food sovereignty as a social influence on health and using food to empower youth.

Having "the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (Jones, Shapiro & Wilson, 2015, p.263) looks different across the globe. Internationally, there are several conceptual frameworks which have proposed linking food sovereignty to human health (Kadiyala, Harris, Headey, Yosef, & Gillespie, 2014; Hawkes & Ruel, 2006; Weiler, Hergesheimer, Brisbois, Wittman, Yassi, & Speigel, 2014), including gender relations, agricultural livelihoods, impacts of labour, control of resources and the impact on the local

natural environment. However, achieving control over local food systems means something

unique to Indigenous people in Canada. Colonization and a contemporary legacy of treaty

processes have resulted in the widespread loss of traditional lands and abilities to hunt, gather,

fish and limited the trading activities associated with it (Desmarais, & Wittman, 2014; Turner &

Turner, 2008) The ability to access land-based food and activities is key to physical, social and

spiritual health of Indigenous people. Physically, wild meat and country foods are more

nutritious than processed, market foods which have high levels of salt, sugar and fats which lead

to chronic disease and other health aliment that did not exist in traditional Indigenous societies.

Socially, food systems and wild food procurement are a vital part of Indigenous society,

inseparable and functioning in interdependent relationships with community vitality (People's

Food Policy Project, 2011). Spiritually, because food is sacred to Indigenous society and country

foods retain a symbolic and spiritual value essential to cultural identity (Power, 2008). Food

systems are an integral part of the Indigenous identity and the traditional practises around

hunting, gathering and fishing hold significant cultural significance. By creating space for food

sovereignty through programming, such as that offered by Deh Gah School, my research shows

links to improved health outcomes through complex determinants of health.

During my fieldwork in Fort Providence, I was provided the unique opportunity to

submerge myself in the daily lives of a community which took the social health and well-being

of their youth as a very serious priority. During the weeks I spent in the community, I learned

more about the importance of Indigenous food systems than I ever could from reading literature.

I experienced the challenges that youth face in a rural, remote and northern community and

watched youth navigate western influences and traditional practises. I was empowered listening

to school administration speak about how they strive to help youth understand their cultural

connections so that they can succeed in contemporary society. I was humbled by how willing

community members were to teach me cultural skills and include me in traditional practises. I

gained a wealth of knowledge about the people of Fort Providence and how the colonial legacy is

still felt today. I greatly respect the Elders welcomed me into their homes to share stories and the

ladies who spoke to me about the lives of their families while we fixed fish to be smoked over

the fire. The underlying message I received was the deep sense of concern for Deh Gah School

students to have a sense of cultural connection in order to succeed in the contemporary Canadian

society.

In my first article, my objective was to explain how youth create a unique, Third Space

identity as they constantly negotiate cultural and Western influences surrounding food at Deh

Gah School. I used Edward Said's concept of Orientalism to explain the problems imposed by

colonialism and Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity to explain the continuous interaction and

merging of cultures. By living in the community and participating in school-centred activities, I

was able to witness the different influences youth were constantly exposed to. I explain how Deh

Gah School takes an active role in connecting youth to their roots and traditions, but the teachers

and school administration recognize the importance of helping students distinguish themselves in

both worlds: the global and the local. Using examples surrounding the land-based food

procurement programs, I show the reader that students use food to negotiate their different

cultural influences. I give tangible examples, such as the popular social media hashtag

"#DryFish" to explain how youth are empowered through their Third Space identities.

The second article focused on a more detailed approach drawing from my participant

observation, field notes and semi-structured interviews. The goal of this article was to show the

extended social health outcomes of Deh Gah School's land-based, cultural food programming.

For Indigenous people in Canada, social determinants of health are unique because of the endless legacy of colonialism. By living in the community and speaking with community leaders, I understood that the programming offered much more than increased access to land-based food. It creates a place for youth to connect with their Elders and to grow their cultural identity. It facilitates a place for learning to extend outside of the four walls of a classroom. On the land, youth have to work together to achieve common goals building social cohesion. They build a connection to the territories that their ancestors once hunted and travelled. All of these outcomes of the Deh Gah School land-based food procurement programming directly influence the complex social determinants of health of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

During my research, I learned there are many factors to consider regarding my position as a non-Indigenous researcher, researching Indigenous people. I learned the importance of being reflective and locating myself within my research to make my arguments strengthened and more relevant to Indigenous people. As my research progressed, I became increasingly critical of my role as a member of the dominant group: A young, white, relatively privileged, woman from a middle-class family with an undergraduate degree from a Western university. As I worked in the community of Fort Providence, I became increasingly aware of what my background meant and how this influenced my volunteer work and my research. I realized that much research on Indigenous populations has served to further colonize and oppress Indigenous people. I struggled with this initially as I became increasingly critical of dominant research approaches in Indigenous societies and I questioned if I, too, was further perpetuating a harmful colonial image. By discussing these feelings with friends and colleagues, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, I began to reaffirm my position as an ally to Indigenous people; working with and for Indigenous people. While completing my fieldwork, I took the position as a student and made those I was

working with aware that I was learning from them. I was not in the community as an expert

researcher, but as someone who wanted to learn and borrow knowledge about the challenges and

opportunities faced by youth in the community. I listened more than I spoke and I always

showed gratitude, either in the form of gifts (tobacco) or verbal thanks. This process of

completing my Master's of Arts research and working with the community of Fort Providence

has been an incredibly humbling experience and as I continue to reflect on my experience, I feel

great pride in my work.

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