'WE HAD SOMETHING GOOD AND SACRED HERE':
RESTORYING *A'SE'K* WITH PICTOU LANDING FIRST NATION

by

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The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled "'We Had Something Good and Sacred Here': ReStorying *A'se'k* with Pictou Landing First Nation" by Ella Bennett in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Studies.

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Dedication:
To the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association,
The Knowledge Holders,
And to future generations.

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ABSTRACT

For generations of Mi'kmaq from Pictou Landing First Nation, *A'se'k* (often referred to as Boat Harbour) provided cultural, recreation, and livelihood functions. For almost 50 years, this once-healthy tidal estuary has been receiving effluent from a nearby bleached kraft pulp mill. This study was carried out in partnership with the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association, and sought to collect stories of *A'se'k* from Knowledge Holders who remember it as a healthy, thriving, culturally significant community place. Using a narrative approach of restorying, the historical importance of and changes to *A'se'k* are illuminated through the voices of Mi'kmaq who have lived the experiences. Their stories further highlight the ongoing environmental, health, and social injustices faced by Indigenous peoples, shaped by the many complex dimensions of colonialism and racism in Canada. Through a reflexive examination of my experiences as a non-Indigenous graduate student navigating the research landscape, this study also highlights a process of learning to be an ally alongside Indigenous partners. Together, these findings suggest the need to restory Canada's (ongoing) colonial legacy, through community-based processes, in order to move towards ending colonial structures.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AANDC   Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

CBPR   Community-Based Participatory Research

CMM   Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

EMM   Environmental Effects Monitoring

HSREB   Health Sciences Research Ethics Board

IR   Indian Reserve

PLFN   Pictou Landing First Nation

PLNWA   Pictou Landing Native Women's Association

TEK   Traditional Environmental/Ecological Knowledge

TRC   Truth and Reconciliation Committee

UN   United Nations

UNSI   Union of Nova Scotia Indians

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

[W]e wrote knowing that none of the stories we told would change the world.
But we wrote in the hope that they would.

~Thomas King, 2003, p. 92

Pictou Landing First Nation is a small Mi'kmaw community situated on the Northumberland Strait of Nova Scotia's north shore. For generations, *A'se'k* was a culturally significant place for Pictou Landing First Nation, providing livelihood and recreation functions such as swimming, fishing, clamming, and eeling. Almost 50 years ago, *A'se'k* (often referred to as 'Boat Harbour') began receiving effluent from a nearby bleached kraft pulp mill. The ecological integrity of the once-healthy tidal estuary is now jeopardized, and as such, the community has lost the use of this land. Amidst the contentious legal, political, and economic quagmire, community concerns around compromised land, air, and water quality extend to worries about the negative effects on the health of residents. The situation faced by Pictou Landing First Nation typifies a disconcerting trend of environmental and health injustice for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The work described herein represents a process of research conducted with members of Pictou Landing First Nation, and an attempt to illuminate the stories of *A'se'k* as told by Elders[1] and Knowledge Holders from the community; by centring those Mi'kmaw voices who have lived through the experiences, the thesis presents a reconstructed understanding of what *A'sek* provided for Pictou Landing First Nation, and how the pollution from the mill has affected their community. The thesis is also an exploration into my experience,

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[1] For Indigenous communities, an Elder does not necessarily mean someone of a specific age, instead the title is given to represent those that have earned the respect of their community due to their ability to provide competent guidance and insight (Loppie, 2004; Simpson, 1999; Stiegelbauer 1996). Elders are thought to be the keepers of an Indigenous worldview, and gifted with the ability to pass vital knowledge gained through lived experience (Simpson, 1999; Wilson, 2005). Defining who is an Elder is the responsibility of Indigenous communities themselves; I rely on my community partners to determine who is an Elder in their community.

as a non-Indigenous researcher, navigating the cross-cultural research landscape and what it means to be an ally to Indigenous peoples.

It is custom in Indigenous research to introduce ourselves in our work, as positionality affects our approach (see for example Absolon & Willett, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Pualani Louis, 2007). As such, I begin with an introduction about who I am, and how I came to do this research. From there, I explain the colonial context within which academic inquiry exists. This helps to set the stage for the problem this research seeks to address, wherein I will discuss the goals and objectives of this thesis. The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of the scope and organization of the thesis.

1.1 Positionality Statement

I am a sixth generation settler in Canada, and I have British and Scottish heritage. I was raised in a white middle-class family in a small town in Ontario, situated on Georgian Bay (which is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg and Tionontati (Petun) peoples). Much of my childhood was spent among the lakes and pines of northern Ontario, where I would collect animals and critters for hours, thinking that I had an intrinsic connection to them. (My parents assumed I would be a Veterinarian, or a Marine Biologist; I don't think they envisioned me as a social science researcher). Along with my deep curiosities for the natural world, I have often been fixated on problem solving and 'being a detective' – always wanting to understand the other side to the story, assuming that there was more to it than meets the eye. With the quote placed at the outset of this thesis, Cherokee author Thomas King (2003) describes himself as a "hopeful pessimist" (p. 92), an identity to which I relate. I am critical and analytical, sometimes to a fault, however I cannot help but fall back on wanting to see what's good and beautiful in the world.

As a young adult, I continued to spend my summers in Ontario's northland, working in remote bush camps as a tree planter. Five years ago, through the tree planting company I worked for, I fell into a job working with Anishinaabe youth in Northern Ontario. Until this point, I had no relational experience with Indigenous peoples in Canada. At the time, I was completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Development at the

University of Guelph, and while my studies were fostering a critical understanding of development issues (mostly related to issues of the Third World), my lived experiences seemed to both contrast and complement my undergraduate education. Canada is a 'developed' country in every sense of the theoretical word, yet the Indigenous peoples who have lived here for thousands of years, and long before Confederation, were not afforded the same privileges I had growing up. There seemed to be some pretty pressing issues in my own backyard that I wanted to better understand, but from the voices of the actual people involved and affected. I worked briefly with Cree youth in Eeyou Istchee (traditional territory of the James Bay Cree in Northern Quebec), and with Inuit youth in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut; I was further struck by the massive environmental changes occurring on traditional Indigenous lands in the name of 'development' and 'economic prosperity' (through intensive natural resource exploitation), and wondered about the impacts on people's lives.

Upon moving to Nova Scotia for graduate studies, I immediately embarked on a community-based field course 'Indigenous perspectives on natural resource issues'. As a class, we traveled around parts of *Mi'kma'ki* (Nova Scotia), learning from Mi'kmaw people and from the land. As part of this course, we were also required to either write a research paper on a topic of our choosing or seek out a volunteer position with an Indigenous organization. I opted for the volunteering and contacted the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association; I was subsequently invited to join a meeting of women in Pictou Landing First Nation in October of 2010. Shortly thereafter, my graduate supervisor, Dr. Heather Castleden, was also invited out to meet with the women, and a collaborative research relationship began to grow and evolve with the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association (PLNWA), hinging on the women's desires to receive answers to many longstanding concerns about the impacts of pollution from the nearby bleached kraft pulp mill. When my volunteer position came to a close, I was able to continue in the evolving research relationship as a Research Assistant for Dr. Castleden.

I spent a great deal of the first year of my Masters program flip-flopping around between different potential research topics, while continuing to work with the PLNWA. Through

early engagements with literature and discussions with Dr. Castleden, I was cautioned by the general assumption that community-based research takes a long time, and that it is not always an easy road. There were times that I wanted to take an easier road (or maybe hop off the road altogether), however the myriad of other projects and topics I tried to pursue did not seem to fit. In the spring of 2011 the PLNWA said something along the lines of, 'ok Ella, you've been coming to meetings with us for months now; when are you going to figure out your research'? One member even offered me the spare room in her home. I came to understand that working with the women was a genuine chance to be involved in community-engaged research, and valued the invitation from the women to pursue my studies with them.

In June of 2011 I attended a conference, the National Gathering of Graduate Students, as an Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research-funded student. From that gathering, I have scribbled down in my notes: *when we are lost, that is when we really open up and start to listen*. I can't say for sure who said those words, but they have stuck with me. I have often felt lost, but I think it has been a necessary part of my learning journey. Given the paternalism Indigenous peoples face in their relationship with (or under) Canada's colonial policies and practices, I have come to believe that it is important for people, like me, to enter renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples; but we should begin this relationship as listeners.

We really do live in a beautiful place, Canada, but I think that we need to figure out how to live *with* the land, and better together – Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To do this, we need to address Canada's (ongoing) colonial history, a process that has shaped how we relate to the land and to one another.

1.2 Colonialism and Researching the Other

The landscapes of what are now considered Canada have undergone vast ecological change since the arrival of Europeans; with colonization came the displacement of

Indigenous[2] peoples from their traditional territories. While imperial expansion and colonialism[3] are driven by the pursuit of lands and resources, these processes of power[4] are not only about acquisition and accumulation; they are also about imposing a dominant ideology on place and peoples, justified through the assertion that the colonized require – are better off with – the colonizer's worldview[5] (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Said, 1993). Therefore, colonialism results in an implanting of settler[6] social, legal, economic – as well as ideological – regimes. In Canada, colonial policies have sought to erase Indigenous cultures through marginalization and assimilatory practices, and through policies that were even sometimes genocidal (Alfred, 2005; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Neu & Therrien, 2003; Paul, 2006).

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[2] 'Indigenous' will be used throughout this thesis in reference to those peoples who hold a historical continuity on ancestral lands, prior to imperial or colonial invasion (United Nations, 2009). I am mindful of the fact that we cannot homogenize Indigenous peoples or their experiences; however they have shared experiences with colonialism and in their distinction from the non-Indigenous societies that have claimed sovereignty over their lands (United Nations, 2009). In the Canadian context, Indigenous peoples have been homogenously categorized under the Canadian Constitution as 'Aboriginal', which in fact encompasses many distinctive First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples. As this study has been carried out in the Canadian context, and specifically concerning a particular First Nation (Mi'kmaw) community, First Nation will also be used where applicable.

[3] Colonialism is a process of "implanting settlements on distant territories", and largely results from imperialism, which involves a mindset that seeks to expand state empires (Said, 1993, p. 9). Both processes are largely driven by the desire to accumulate resources and land (capital); with colonialism, sovereignty is asserted over the new territories. Colonialism (and imperialism for that matter) inherently involves ethnocentric beliefs used to legitimize the right to exert such power over people and places (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Smith, 2012). In the context of Canada, colonialism is an ongoing process, both because settler people came, and stayed, and also on account of the continued oppression Indigenous peoples face (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kovach, 2009). Racism is suggested as inherently linked to colonialism; in Canada, this contributes negatively to the positioning of Indigenous peoples in society, characterized by long-term oppression and discrimination (see for example Czyzewski, 2011; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2001).

[4] On one hand, power is understood as possessing the ability to freely make choices; on the other hand, it may also be understood as the ability to influence others in order to further one's ends (thus constraining others) (Foucault, 1978). In Foucauldian terms, power should not be understood simply as physical force; knowledge and power are inherently linked, where the power over another is exerted through ideological means (Foucault, 1984; 1980).

[5] I employ Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear's (2000) definition of worldview, as a "philosophy about the nature of reality, the values that flow from this philosophy, and the social customs that embody these values" (p. 77). Also, following Denzin and Lincoln (2005) 'paradigm' will be understood as synonymous with worldview throughout this thesis.

[6] 'Settler' is used to refer to peoples who themselves or their ancestors immigrated to and thus came to reside in Canada, which inherently involved the displacement of Indigenous peoples who were already residing on these lands. Like Indigenous, it is understood that settler is not a homogenous group, but is used instead in reference to the dominant white social category in Canada (Alfred, 2005; Barker, 2006; Godlewski, Moore, & Badnasek, 2010; Sloan Morgan, 2012).

Imperial and colonial pursuits often began with scientifically describing the flora and fauna of new landscapes experienced, and soon the Indigenous inhabitants whom the Europeans encountered also became part of the documented explorations (Johnson & Murton, 2007; Willems-Braun, 1997). The expansionist mindset and ideological constructions Europeans brought – propped up by the intellectual theories of Enlightenment-era thinking – assumed the lands as an empty wilderness ready to be tamed, and the Indigenous peoples that inhabited the lands as 'savage' and 'primitive', not quite human and certainly not equal to European sensibilities, thus needing to be civilized (Johnson & Murton, 2007; Kalland, 2003; Neu & Therrien, 2003; Paul, 2006; Vidich & Lyman, 2000). These colonial constructions acted to further the European ideology that nature was a separate entity from culture, over which human civilization ought to dominate; also, that it was the task of the civilized, European 'expert' to study and explain the exotic Other[7] (Johnson & Murton, 2007; Kalland, 2003; Vidich & Lyman, 2000). As it were, colonial expansion coincided with the growth of the academy and Western thought; qualitative research was "born out of concern to understand the '[O]ther'" (Vidich & Lyman, 2000, p. 38; see also Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this way, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest, "[s]adly, qualitative research in many if not all of its forms… serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth (p. 1); the foundations of qualitative, 'scientific' inquiry are based on an assumption that European social scientists – through neutral, objective, and rigorous observation – held both the power and the privilege to describe the 'real' world, and to capture the 'truth' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Johnson & Murton, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As Maori[8] scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) describes, Indigenous peoples have been under the "gaze" of the West for decades, even centuries (p. 86); stories of the Other have been produced and reproduced using the terms of the colonizer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005;

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[7] The Other, or the process of Othering, refers to the constructed understandings of another person or group of peoples in contrast to oneself or the dominant group; in the context of this thesis, it refers to images of the Indigenous 'Other' constructed by Europeans (see for example Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; hooks, 1990; Kalland, 2003; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Wilson, 2003).

[8] Throughout the thesis I have attempted to draw on the scholarly contributions of Indigenous knowledge holders when possible, and pay respect by indicating the Indigenous nation to which they affiliate.

Spivak, 1988; Wilson, 2005). As Sioux author Vine Deloria Jr. argues, the researcher's agenda has "contributed substantially to the invisibility of [Indigenous] people today" (as cited in Klein & Ackerman, 1995, p. 243), and led to the colonization of knowledge itself; images of the (Indigenous) Other have been juxtaposed with "representations of Whiteness… based not in truth, but on the colonizer's preferred image" (Absolon & Willet, 2004, p. 8). Speaking about the early ethnographic tradition of qualitative inquiry, Behar (2003) describes research as something that was:

> … discovered, perfected, and institutionalized in western centers of power, for telling stories about the marginalized populations of the world. It has its origins in the flagrant colonial inequalities from which modernity was born and in the arrogant assumptions that its privileged intellectual class made about who has the right to tell stories about whom (p. 15-16).

Through these processes, Indigenous Knowledges have been misappropriated, invalidated, and de-contextualized – taken out of context from the land and people, or used only to further develop and uphold Western knowledge paradigms (Battiste, 2000; Brant-Castellano, 2004; McGregor, 2009; 2004; Pualani Louis, 2007; Smith, 2012). Indigenous Knowledge holders have been considered less valid and less reliable than Western intellectuals; they have been relegated as inferior, merely mythical, or secondary, and thus excluded from sites of power such as academic institutions (Kovach, 2009; McGregor, 2004; Pualani Louis, 2007; Simpson, 1999; Smith, 2012). These assumptions have led to an unethical legacy of research on Indigenous peoples with little regard for community or cultural protocols, without returning results to the people involved, or even explaining the purpose and significance of studies (Brant-Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012).

Acknowledging the colonial context within which research often takes place, there is a call for scholars to engage in critical and Indigenous methodologies that "dismantle, deconstruct, and decolonize [w]estern epistemologies from within" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p. ix). Qualitative research paradigms have begun to emerge that seek to replace the assumed position of the 'expert' (colonizer) reproducing 'truth', with an acknowledgement that there are in fact multiple truths and realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Johnston & Murton, 2007). Within these shifts, objective knowledge is rejected,

with recognition that knowledges are situated; they are socially located and socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Haraway, 1988; Potts & Brown, 2005). Telling stories for or about others may still bring up "thorny issues of voice, legitimacy, power, and representation in writings produced by non-[Indigenous] scholars about [Indigenous] peoples and issues" (Regan, 2010, p. 33; see also Smith, 2005). To overcome the legacy of research as a "dirty" word (Smith, 2012, p. 1), we must consider how to do research "in a good way" (Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 35; see also Kovach, 2009), *with* rather than *on* Indigenous peoples (Castleden, Sloan Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Pualani Louis, 2007).

1.3 Scope of the Thesis

This research seeks to respond to the unethical legacy of research for Indigenous peoples, which includes a history of Western researchers producing discourses *on* or *about* the Indigenous Other. The work described herein represents a process of community-based participatory research (CBPR) *with* the PLNWA[9]. The overarching goal of the thesis is to illuminate the voices of Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation who remember what *A'se'k* once provided for their people; their oral histories are set amidst a long-contentious history, shaped by the social, legal, economic, and ideological realities of colonialism in Canada. From my position as a non-Indigenous researcher, the thesis also explores how to appropriately navigate the cross-cultural research landscape, mindful of power dynamics and the risk of perpetuating the marginalization of Indigenous voices. With this in mind, two interrelated objectives guide this study:

1. Explore how Elders and Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation characterize the historical importance of *A'se'k*, and document their perspectives regarding changes to the land and to the health of their community that they attribute to the pollution at Boat Harbour.

2. Reflect on the process of learning to respectfully represent Indigenous participants in qualitative inquiry from a non-Indigenous perspective and how doing so is intricately related to how one navigates CBPR with Indigenous research partners.

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[9] The theoretical positioning and methodological application of CBPR, as well as the process of working with the PLNWA, will be described in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

In order to meet these objectives I engaged with Elders and Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation through conversational interviews, eliciting their oral histories regarding *A'se'k*. Throughout the research process, I kept a reflexive journal in order to trace my experiences of conducting CBPR with the PLNWA. Borrowing elements of a Narrative Inquiry approach, I made meaning from the research stories through a process of 'restorying': the oral histories have been reconstructed into a collective narrative, drawing together the voices of the Knowledge Holders in an attempt to centre a Mi'kmaw understanding of the issues at Boat Harbour; also, three personal vignettes allow readers to engage with my process of navigating the research landscape and how to appropriately align as an ally with Indigenous partners.

1.3.1 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has served to set the tone of the thesis, to situate myself as an individual and as a member of settler society doing CBPR with Indigenous partners on an issue that is important to them (and now me). Chapter 2 provides a background to the study and is divided into two parts: Part 1 sets the historical context surrounding the research, including a discussion on the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada, the community of Pictou Landing First Nation, and an account of how the effluent began flowing into Boat Harbour; Part 2 provides a literature review on environmental and health issues in an Indigenous context. Chapter 3 details my research design, including the methods of data collection, analysis, and presentation, as well as an introduction to the Knowledge Holders who were recruited for this study. Chapter 4 provides a presentation of my study findings, and is also presented in two parts: Part 1 is a series of story layers, drawing completely on the voices of the Knowledge Holders, restoried into a collective narrative on *A'se'k* and the changes experienced by the community; Part 2 explores my reflexive experience with navigating the research landscape through a series of three vignettes. Chapter 5 offers a broader discussion on the perpetuation of environmental injustices for Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as the potential role of non-Indigenous allies in these struggles. Finally, Chapter 6 offers some general conclusions, including research contributions, limitations, and future directions.

In order to appropriately set the stage for the thesis, Part 1 of this chapter will discuss the historical context enveloping Pictou Landing First Nation and the pollution at Boat Harbour. Part 2 will couch the experiences of Pictou Landing First Nation in the literature regarding environmental and health issues in an Indigenous context.

PART 1 – HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 *L'nu* ('the People') of *Mi'kma'ki*

The Mi'kmaq[10] are Indigenous to Eastern North America. Their traditional territory spans Canada's present-day Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and eastern New Brunswick to the St. John River), much of Eastern Quebec along the Gaspé Peninsula, and northern Maine in the United States (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). To the Mi'kmaq, these lands are called *Mi'kma'ki*. The Mi'kmaq recognize their lands as seven distinct districts, with an eighth district, Newfoundland (*Ktaqmkuk*), added in 1860 (see Figure 2.1: Map of Traditional Districts of *Mi'kma'ki*) (Sable & Francis, 2012). Archaeological records suggest inhabitance since the last ice age, some 11,000 years ago; legends, creation stories, ceremonies, and oral histories tie *L'nu* ('the People') to these lands since time immemorial (Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq [CMM], 2007a; Sable & Francis, 2012).

Mi'kmaq are members of the Eastern Algonkian language family, historically having tribal affiliations with adjacent Abanaki, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet nations. Together, these nations have been called the Wabanaki Confederacy, or 'People of the Dawn' (Berneshawi, 1997; Native Council of Nova Scotia, 1994; Paul, 2006; Hanrahan, 2003; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). While early written records of Mi'kmaw life and culture reflect an assumed European hegemony – legitimizing conquest, political domination, and cultural repression – more recent written works on Mi'kmaq have turned

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[10] The word Mi'kmaq is used for a pluralized form of the people, and is also used when referring to the Mi'kmaq nation. Mi'kmaw is the singular form, is used as an adjective, and when referring to the Mi'kmaw language (Sable & Francis, 2012)

instead (or as well) to the rich oral histories and living memories of the people, helping to express the reality of a dynamic and resilient culture that has evolved over the centuries (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). Like the other Indigenous inhabitants of North America, Mi'kmaw identity persists amidst an often-brutal colonial experience.
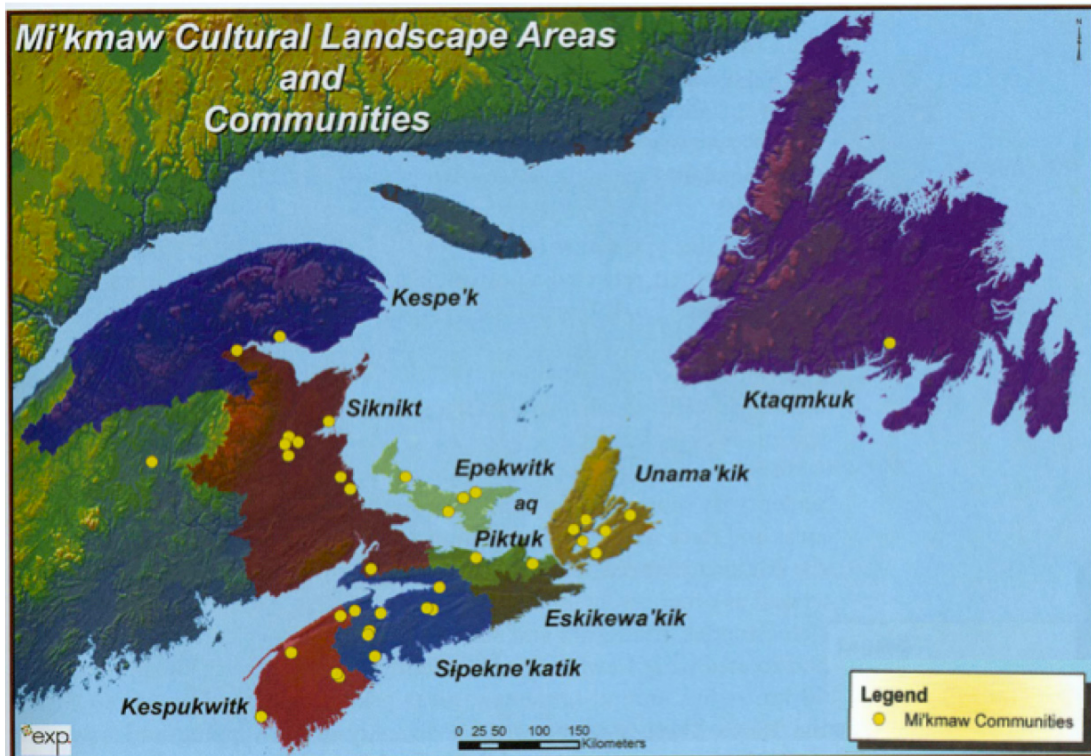
FIGURE 2.1: Map of Traditional Districts of *Mi'kma'ki*
(includes the location of present-day Mi'kmaw communities) (Sable & Francis, 2012)

2.1.1 Mi'kmaw Worldview[11]

Oral histories, legends, and storytelling express a Mi'kmaw worldview that does not seek to explain, but to transmit lessons of experience and processes of knowing (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). As Mi'kmaw Elder Murdena Marshall (2005) shares, Mi'kmaw knowledge is a living entity – held in and nurtured by the Elders of society – "not a documented collection of facts" (p.1); it is learned through experience and embedded in

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[11] With this section, it is not my intention to claim there to be one, discretely definable Mi'kmaw worldview. Further, to truly be able to express a Mi'kmaw worldview would require that I have an intimate knowledge of the language (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Rather, I have attempted to articulate my evolving understandings of Mi'kmaq culture and identity by bringing together the voices of Mi'kmaw/Indigenous scholars specifically, rather than relying on non-Indigenous representations.

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language. Systems of exchange based on the principle of sharing guide the social, cultural, and spiritual ways of the Mi'kmaq (Metallic, 2008). As Mi'kmaw scholar Fred Metallic (2008) suggests, the exchange of teachings and traditions are not for personal gain, instead should be shared with the intent of benefitting the community and the nation. Mi'kmaq peoples' values and obligations flow from strong kinship ties; *Ko'kmanaq* is an important concept to the Mi'kmaw identity, meaning "our relations", "our relatives", or "our people" (Sable & Francis, 2012). As Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (1989) articulates, women act as important keepers and transmitters of knowledge; they guide the community through continuity and change, maintaining a dialogue with both the past and future to uphold the wellbeing of the nation. However, divisive concepts of man and woman are not part of a Mi'kmaw worldview; rather, 'woman' and 'man' act as "the fulfillment of each other" (Battiste, 1989, p. 61).

Mi'kmaw Elder Margaret Johnson (1991) expresses Mi'kmaw tribal consciousness through a deep understanding of sharing, respect, and relationships; the reliance on all of Creation allows for the "inherent trait of the People to adapt and survive" (p. 24). Concepts of shared space and movement throughout the landscape are the foundations of Mi'kmaw ways of knowing; a landscape that is never at rest but always in an adaptive state of flux (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Henderson, 1995; Johnson, 1991). Mi'kmaq peoples' unique and intimate relationship to their lands and the rest of Creation is expressed through their verb-based language, and suggests reference to the biophysical characteristics of Eastern Canada (Johnson, 1991; Marshall, Marshall, & Iwama, 2010; Metallic, 2008; Sable & Francis, 2012). Stories of creation, held in oral history, express the belief that they in fact "sprouted from" the land – *weji-sqalia'tiek* (Sable & Francis, 2012, p. 17). This concept encapsulates "the Mi'kmaw understanding of the origin of its people as rooted in the landscape"; this physical landscape is where the cultural memory of the Mi'kmaq resides (Sable & Francis, 2012, p 17).

A reliance on, and integration with, the natural world has tied Mi'kmaq deeply to it with a responsibility to regulate the natural abundance of *Mi'kma'ki* (Henderson, 1995). This suggests that Mi'kmaw connections to place traditionally meant engaging with both the

"benefits and obligations" (Henderson, 1995, p. 219) or "rights and… responsibilities" (Metallic, 2008, p. 65) of the land and the rest of Creation, expressed, in part, through the concept of *Netukulimk*. Simply put, *Netukulimk* suggests "the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and community at large" (Native Council of Nova Scotia, 1994, p. 8). Chickasaw scholar James Youngblood (*Sa'ke'j*) Henderson's (1995) articulation of the concept suggests that this use was 'conditional', affirming the responsibility of the People to uphold the natural balance provided by Creation (which contrasts a Euro-western focus on the accumulation of resources).

As Mi'kmaw Elder Joe B. Marshall articulates, *Netukulimk* remained an important cultural concept for the Mi'kmaq upon entering the treaty-making process with the British; as he suggests, "the intent of the Treaties, for the Mi'kmaw signatories, was to carry on a way of life", and *Netukulimk*, as the right to provide for oneself and family, encapsulates this way of life (Kwilm'uk Maw-klusuaqn: The Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative & Martin, 2006). *Netukulimk* in the treaty context may include hunting, fishing, and gathering, attaining employment to bring money home for provision, or bringing home goods for the well-being of family; *Netukulimk* – upheld in what the Mi'kmaq understand as the true spirit and intent of the Treaties – is regarded as "the concept that describes the way of life for the Mi'kmaq back then as it does now" (Kwilm'uk Maw-klusuaqn: The Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative & Martin, 2006). Mi'kmaw scholar Kerry Prosper, with colleagues McMillan, Davis, and Moffitt (2011), explains *Netukulimk* as "a complex cultural concept that encompasses Mi'kmaw sovereign law ways and guides individual and collective beliefs and behaviours in resource protection, procurement, and management to ensure and honour sustainability and prosperity for the ancestor, present and future generations" (p. 1). This concept continues to guide Mi'kmaw lifeways, particularly in respect to natural resource use and sustainable development initiatives (Barsh, 2002; Native Council of Nova Scotia, 1994; Prosper et al., 2011; Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2011).

2.1.2 Mi'kmaw Cultural Landscape Before Colonization

Prior to European colonization[12], the organization of Mi'kmaw society stemmed from kinship ties and naturally defined harvesting areas; groups fluctuated in size and location in sync with the changing seasons and in accordance with the biophysical attributes of the varying Atlantic landscapes (Berneshawi, 1997; Prins, 2002; Sable & Francis, 2012; Wicken, 2002). During warmer months, the abundance supplied from a maritime habitat supported large extended family groups of 200 or more on the coast, through fishing, clamming, fowling, and sealing; during colder months, smaller kin groups would move inland, relying more heavily on terrestrial game and foraging (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). The districts of *Mi'kma'ki* "were most likely flexible and permeable, reflecting changing conditions and the needs of people in each area, rather than acting as geopolitical boundaries" (Sable & Francis, 2012, p. 21). Further, district boundaries appear in accordance with the natural drainage systems that form the principal river ways of the Eastern landscape, solidifying Mi'kmaq peoples' deep ties with the aquatic world; they used the river systems as their 'highways', and it was along these waterways – rich in plant and animal life – that Mi'kmaq settled (R. Lewis, personal communication, April 28, 2012; Sable & Francis, 2012).

Flowing from the Mi'kmaw worldview, the functioning of Mi'kmaw society favoured participatory decision-making, dialogue, consensus, and reciprocity over coercive control or institutionalization (Berneshawi, 1997; Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). Although having distinctive roles, egalitarian principles adhered Mi'kmaw men and women; both sexes shared the responsibility of pragmatic daily tasks that maintained the wellbeing of the community (Battiste, 1989; Loppie, 2004; Paul, 2006). Scholars have

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[12] As Paul (2006) discusses, European sailing ships beginning in the late 1400s and early 1500s were not the first time Mi'kmaq had experienced outsiders and other nations; in fact, they had been negotiating relationships since time immemorial: with Norse and Viking travelers, through inter-tribal affiliations within the Wabanaki Confederacy, and with more distant Indigenous peoples to the west. Accordingly, it is not my intention to suggest the Mi'kmaq were a completely 'untouched' society before Europeans arrived. Rather, the arrival – and subsequent colonization – of the Europeans was the most deleterious of contact to Mi'kmaw lifeways. Europeans came with the belief that Mi'kmaw were savage and primitive, and needed to be 'civilized' (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002).

noted the existence of forms of 'governance'[13] among the Mi'kmaq prior to European colonization (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). The highest Mi'kmaw political authority – the Grand Council, or *Sante' Mawio'mi* – was established to promote solidarity and deal with dispute resolution, as a contemplative decision-making body based on mutual trust and respect; *Kep'ten* ("captains") representatives from each of the seven districts formed the Council[14] (Henderson, 1995; Mi'kmaw Resource Guide, 2007; Paul, 2006). Within each district, a number of local chiefs were responsible for specific resource use areas (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Sable & Francis, 2012). While there is evidence of these local chiefs, or *saqmaq*, it is suggested that power truly remained with the collective (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002); chiefs were only thought to be "first among equals" (Prins, 2002, p. 174).

Local chiefs typically sought guidance from a Council of Elders (Berneshawi, 1997; Mi'kmaw Resource Guide, 2007; Paul, 2006), exemplifying the particularly influential role of Elders in Mi'kmaw society. Elders, held in high regard for their knowledge and ability to make decisions in the best interest of the community, had the responsibility of passing knowledge through practical teaching and stories (Paul, 2006; Wicken, 2002). As Mi'kmaw scholar Charlotte Loppie (Reading) (2004) suggests, these "processes ensured the continuity of Mi'kmaq culture, history, knowledge and language. In addition to representing a form of entertainment, story telling was considered a critical component in the development of intellectual, social and spiritual maturity" (p. 29).

2.1.3 European Encroachment

With their eastern position, the Mi'kmaq were among the first Indigenous peoples to encounter Europeans during Europe's transatlantic expansionism and what is often

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[13] While I use the term here, it is important to note that the foundations of and approaches to what may be regarded as Mi'kmaw forms of governance are vastly different than that of Euro-western conceptions, and should therefore not be considered in a comparative light (see for example Henderson, 1995; Paul, 2006).

[14] It remains unclear as to when the Grand Council was formed; some have argued it was before European contact, others that it was established in response to expanding imperial presence (Paul, 2006; Wicken, 2002). Wicken (2002) importantly reminds us to be cautious of the assumption that simply because early European accounts did not chronicle the existence of a higher Mi'kmaw political authority, does not mean it did not exist.

coined as a 'discovery' of The New World (The Americas)[15] (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Prins, 2002). In 1504, the Mi'kmaq first sighted visitor sailing ships, and soon hundreds of fishing fleets from various European countries came to "exploit the bountiful fisheries" (Prins, 2002, p. 44). At first these newcomers only maintained temporary camps throughout the summer months, establishing early systems of trade – particularly in fur – with Indigenous nations including the Mi'kmaq (Prins, 2002). However, early European contact cost many Mi'kmaq their life, as diseases were introduced to which Indigenous peoples did not have immunity (Prins, 2002; Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006)[16]. Europe became further fuelled by their desires for fish and furs to feed markets at home; by the 17th century the British and French crowns "had decided to effect their claims and establish permanent settlements to seize fully North America's economic opportunities" (Prins, 2002, p. 55).

With the Mi'kmaq still reeling from the disease mortality, intensified colonial pursuits took effect and changed dramatically Mi'kmaw ways of life: they became intricately linked to new systems of exchange, European goods were incorporated into their lifeways, and the introduction of alcohol contributed to the decimation of Mi'kmaq people[17]; with increasing European encroachment, traditional Mi'kmaw settlement

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[15] My use of "discovery of The New World" is intended to be tongue in cheek. The notion of discovery stemmed from a European view that Indigenous peoples were not 'using' their lands, since their ways of life differed from Euro-western societal structures and understandings of such things as property, labour, commerce and trade (Murphy, 2009). The English common law concept of *terra nullius* – meaning 'empty land' – was used to legitimize European sovereign claims to Indigenous lands (Asch, 2002). These assumptions portray how Eurocentrism and cultural bias held European values as inherently above or more civilized than the Indigenous peoples' they encountered, consequently justifying colonization (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Johnson & Murton, 2007; Murphy, 2009).

[16] Arguably one of the most deleterious effects of European contact was the introduction of epidemics and new diseases to the Mi'kmaq (Prins, 2002; Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006). While it is difficult to have a sure understanding of Mi'kmaq population before European colonization – Paul (2006) sets his estimate at 200,000, minimum "pre-Cabot" (p. 45) – it has been suggested that after the first century of European contact (by the 1600s) there were as few as 2,000 surviving Mi'kmaq; 75 to 90 percent had perished in what is known as the 'Great Dying' (Loppie, 2004; Prins, 2002). In effect, "the stunning losses [from the Great Dying] unhinged the traditional economic and social interdependencies of Mi'kmaqs…" (Prins, 2002, p. 54), making them more heavily dependent on Europeans but also susceptible to their impending encroachment.

[17] The introduction of alcohol is seen as playing a particularly devastating role in the decline of the Mi'kmaq population, causing issues of social dysfunction among the Mikmaq that had not before been experienced. Such early affects of alcohol on Indigenous populations in North America have remained in

patterns were altered, and they experienced a loss of access to traditional grounds for food resources; violent (often deadly) interactions with settlers unfolded, and the 17th century also saw much inter-tribal conflict, pitting Indigenous nations against each other amidst a drastically changing landscape[18] (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). By the 18th century, as the Anglo-French rivalry intensified over sovereignty to The New World, the Mi'kmaq had become politically aligned with the French (Prins, 2002); early French-Mi'kmaw relations were often quite amicable and mutually beneficial (Paul, 2006). However with the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht[19], Britain gained control over much of Maritime Canada, and the Mi'kmaq nation was told the British king was now their sovereign; European settlers began pouring in by the thousands, establishing a capitalistic economy driven by the exploitation of rich natural resources of the area (Paul, 2006; Tobin, 1999). Conflict continued to ensue and with a devastated population, the Mi'kmaq were being increasingly pushed from their coastal homes, and it was as difficult as ever to sustain their nation from the depleting resources of the land (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002).

2.1.4 Treaties of Peace and Friendship: Contrasting Interpretations

Times of war and peace interspersed the early 18th century Atlantic landscape, between settler communities and the Indigenous populations as alliances and rivalries abounded (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). In 1726, the Mi'kmaq signed their first treaty with the British. This 1726 treaty included Articles of Peace and Agreement signed by the Mi'kmaq, and Reciprocal Promises to the Mi'kmaq made by the British. This treaty would form the basis of what have come to be known as The Peace and Friendship Treaties (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 2010). Treaties of Peace and

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the minds of non-Indigenous peoples, leading to commonly held stereotypes and misconceptions; until 1985 it was a crime for any 'Registered Indian' to purchase or consume alcohol (Paul, 2006)

[18] As colonial rivalry intensified over The New World, inter-tribal warfare was common as rival European nations sought alliances with different Indigenous nations, often fuelling further or more deadly conflict (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). For example beginning in the late 17th century colonial wars, a commercial scalping industry was initiated where Europeans paid a bounty for the scalps of their enemies (Prins, 2002).

[19] The Treaty of Utrecht included peace measures signed by a number of European nations (including Britain, France, Portugal, Russia, and the Netherlands), and brought over a decade of war to a close. These wars were mostly being fought in Europe, but one small piece of the Treaty saw France surrender their claim over Atlantic Canada to Britain (Wicken, 2002). The Treaty brought peace to years of war amongst Wabanaki and European nations, but also resulted in divided Wabanaki lands and increasing British colonial practices (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002).

Friendship were renewed and reaffirmed in 1749, 1752, and 1760-61. While the British colonial government came to see themselves as the new owners of the lands, oral histories held in Mi'kmaw living memory suggest they never ceded or relinquished their lands (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002)[20]. As Mi'kmaw Elder Stephen Augustine (2008) shares:

> We come from the land… We did not have a concept of ownership of the land; we did not own the land… Therefore, how could we surrender the land when we knew it did not belong to us. Well, did you know that we did not surrender the land? We did not surrender the land. We also did not surrender ourselves to be subjects of any king… Our Mi'kmaq ancestors have told our grandparents and they have told us. (p. 46)

To the Mi'kmaq, treaty with the British would allow them to carry on their distinctive way of life (Henderson, 1995; Kwilm'uk Maw-klusuaqn: The Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative & Martin, 2006). From a non-Indigenous historian's standpoint, Wicken (2002) argues that the Treaties were *not* an exchange of land or rights, but instead served to build alliances between nations, signed at a time when the British were eager to solidify their stronghold over the French in the region (Wicken, 2002). At the same time, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2010) has come to recognize that "the Peace and Friendship Treaties did *not* involve First Nations surrendering rights to the lands and resources they had traditionally used and occupied" (para. 6; emphasis my own) and that "treaty rights [including the Peace and Friendship Treaties] are protected by Canada's Constitution" (para. 2). Interpreting the Peace and Friendship Treaties (particularly through the Canadian courts) continues to play a vital role in Mi'kmaq peoples affirming their rights to – and as such, allowing Mi'kmaq to exercise their inherent responsibilities over – *Mi'kma'ki* (CMM, 2007a; Henderson, 1995).

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[20] It has been argued that the contrasting interpretation of the spirit and intent of the Treaties was due to the vastly different conceptions of land tenure and ownership between the Mi'kmaq and their British counterparts (Henderson, 1995). The Mi'kmaq did not believe in the ownership of land as the British did; instead, they saw themselves as part of it, and with a responsibility towards its' stewardship (CMM, 2007a; Henderson, 1995; Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). Moreover, while they agreed to share the bounty of the land with the European newcomers, none should have the authority to 'own' the land (CMM, 2007a; Prins, 2002).

2.1.5 From Marginalization to Paternalism and Assimilation

By the 1760s, the French had been all but expelled from Atlantic Canada; with their allies gone, the Mi'kmaq 'buried the hatchet'[21] with the British in 1761, through the final Treaty of Peace and Friendship (Paul, 2006). However despite the treaty-making process, the British persisted to enact political subordination over the Mi'kmaq; the intrusion of European political, economic, and social influence continued to disrupt Mi'kmaw sovereign laws and fracture traditional social structures (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Tobin, 1999). The Mi'kmaq were treated as "outcasts in their own country", denied the provisions that they assumed had been promised to them in the Treaties, and surrounded by an increasing settler population (Paul, 2006, p. 179). Beginning in the late 1700s, the colonial government initiated a system of 'reserving' parcels of land for the exclusive use of the Mi'kmaq (Loppie, 2004; Prins, 2002). While masked under the assertion that reserve lands would afford Mi'kmaq their own protected space – at a time when they were being increasingly pushed aside by a growing settler majority – the scheme was more of an attempt to cease the migratory ways of the Mi'kmaq (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). A society once known to move across the landscape in tune with their environment was relegated to small parcels of – often useless and barren – land, which were still subject to encroachment by European settlers (Loppie, 2004; Prins, 2002).

As Canada entered its phase of nation-building, policies of paternalism and assimilation towards the Mi'kmaq had become the status-quo. After Confederation (1867), the *Indian Act* was enacted by the Parliament of Canada in 1876, and the federal government asserted itself as guardians over 'Indians'[22]; they became wards of the state: Indian Agents were assigned to different regions to enforce federal regulations, traditional spirituality and governance structures were further repressed, and federal rules came to

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[21] By 1761 with their French allies dispelled and rivalry with the British still ongoing, the Mi'kmaq decided to "lay down their arms permanently and seek peace" with the British; a "Burying of the Hatchet Ceremony" was held in Halifax, which was to signify a truce between parties and where British and Mi'kmaq leaders signed the last of the Treaties of Peace and Friendship (Paul, 2006, p. 163).

[22] The term 'Indians' is used here as it is entrenched in the language of the *Indian Act* and the assignment of *Indian Agents*, which were to carry out the fiduciary roles of the federal government. The term remains a symbol of incorrect European usage ('Indian' has now become First Nations; 'Eskimo', Inuit; and 'Half Breeds', Métis).

define Mi'kmaw identity[23] (Prins, 2002). It was largely assumed the Mi'kmaq – along with other Indigenous peoples of Canada – would simply die off or become enveloped by the settler society around them (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). The settler majority's treatment towards Indigenous peoples reflected largely racist attitudes, with negative stereotypes, misconceptions, and dominating assumptions about what the Mi'kmaq were and were not (Paul, 2006). Early 19th century reserve conditions were difficult as Mi'kmaq attempted to settle into a new sedentary lifestyle; traditional harvesting (while still practiced) was strained by the depleting land and resources available to Mi'kmaq, yet attaining outside employment was next to impossible (Paul, 2006). In 1941, an official policy of Centralization was initiated, with the intention of forcing all Mi'kmaq to be consolidated into one community on mainland Nova Scotia, and one community on Cape Breton Island. By 1950, the Centralization scheme had waned, but had in effect only worsened living conditions for Mi'kmaq families (Paul, 2006; Tobin, 1999). Many Mi'kmaq would leave Atlantic Canada in the mid-20th century, searching for work or the chance at a better life (Paul, 2006)[24].

A particularly damaging era for Indigenous peoples in Canada came with the introduction of Indian Residential Schools. These schools were established with the intent "to eliminate parental involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of [Indigenous] children" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2013, para. 1); simply put, the federal government wished to 'kill the Indian in the child' (AANDC, 2008). In Nova Scotia particularly, the Shubenacadie Residential School housed 200 Mi'kmaq children from 1929 to 1967, which had significant traumatic impacts (Knockwood & Thomas, 2001; Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002), and with a legacy that continues to be felt to this day, so much so that the federal government recently released a formal apology (AANDC, 2008; TRC, 2013).

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[23] Particularly, enfranchisement – under the guise 'to set free' – saw 'Indian' status taken away from many Mi'kmaq. Men and women would be striped of their ancestral ties if they "matured… to the standards of civilization (as defined by the government)" (Prins, 2002, p. 184), and women "officially" lost their Indigenous identity when they married non-Indigenous men (Loppie, 2004; Prins, 2002).

[24] Many young Mi'kmaq men and women left for the United States, and Boston in particular (Paul, 2006), during the mid-late 1900s. The history associated with this trend of leaving to Boston remains evident in contemporary Mi'kmaq identities.

2.1.6 Forging a Contemporary Mi'kmaw Identity

Mi'kmaq peoples continue to reside in communities across Eastern Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and Quebec) (See Figure 2.1) and New England in the United States; the Mi'kmaq nation has been separated by Euro-western political boundaries. As this thesis focuses on a Mi'kmaw community situated in Nova Scotia, I am focusing the remainder of this section on the contemporary situation for Mi'kmaq peoples and communities of this province. There are approximately 15,000 individuals registered to the 13 Mi'kmaw communities of Nova Scotia; of these, roughly 65 percent live on reserve (Nova Scotia, 2013). An ongoing dialogue seeks to define how the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw rights and responsibilities will be expressed in the contemporary context, a complex process amidst a myriad of social, legal, economic, and environmental considerations. The fiduciary role of the federal government and the institutionalization of control over Indigenous affairs in Canada makes for a difficult task of forging contemporary identities; this is further confounded by jurisdictional oversights and the countless injustices of the past (Paul, 2006).

In 1958, amidst efforts to further solve the 'Indian problem', Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw communities came to be organized as Bands under the *Indian Act*, replacing and institutionalizing community-based systems of governance that had until then remained remnant of ancient Mi'kmaw structures (Paul, 2006). While Mi'kmaq peoples and communities remain across Eastern North America, the operation of individual Bands (as defined by the *Indian Act*) functions as a 'divide and conquer' tactic, where funding and programs are often provided to individual communities rather than for the benefit of the whole of the Mi'kmaq nation (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002)[25]. Operating under the Indian Act is, therefore, suggested as a major contributor to the fragmentation of Mi'kmaw society (Mi'kmaw Resource Guide, 2007). Along with the many other Indigenous nations in Canada, the Mi'kmaq nation staunchly opposed the federal government's 1969 *White*

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[25] As Paul (2006) describes, further fragmentation occurs through the government referring to individual Mi'kmaq communities as First Nations, whereas the communities together in fact make up the Mi'kmaq nation.

Paper[26]; it was seen as a draconian attempt to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the white majority, and thus an action towards cultural genocide (Mi'kmaw Resource Guide, 2007; Paul, 2006; Union of Nova Scotia Indians [UNSI], 2013). In 1982 Canada repatriated its Constitution to achieve full and final political sovereignty from Britain; Aboriginal and treaty rights became entrenched under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*[27]

A renewed Wabanaki Confederacy and political voice of the Grand Council has sought to move the conversation of Mi'kmaq peoples' inherent right to self-determination (or self-government) forward (Prins, 2002). Landmark court cases have played out in the Atlantic region, moving further towards solidifying Mi'kmaw treaty rights (CMM, 2007a; Paul, 2006). In Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative (*Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn*) works alongside provincial and federal levels of government in an effort to reach consensus on the full recognition and implementation of the historic Treaties. In 1997, the Tripartite Forum established a partnership between the Mi'kmaq, the government of Nova Scotia, and the federal government – a partnership that seeks to improve the well-being of Mi'kmaq, in areas such as culture and heritage, economic development, education, health, and justice (Tripartite Forum, 2008). Two tribal councils – the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI) and the Confederation of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) – created in 1969 and 1986 respectively, are also seeking to provide a unified political voice and promote self-determination for Mi'kmaq peoples of Nova Scotia (CMM, 2007b; UNSI, 2013). Further, various other Mi'kmaw organizations work at the provincial and regional level, seeking to provide social, economic and cultural resources for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia[28].

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[26] The 1969 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, or the *White Paper*, sought to repeal the Indian Act and thus end the legal relationship between the federal government and Indigenous peoples in Canada. While the government proposed this would promote equality for Indigenous peoples, the policy caused wide outcry among Indigenous peoples as well as some of the settler population for its assimilatory propaganda (Cairns, 2000; Paul, 2006).

[27] Section 35(1) of the Canadian Constitution, 'Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada', states: "[t]he existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed" (*Constitution Act*, 1982, s 35).

[28] For example, *Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey* delivers on-reserve education (operating from a self-government agreement). Other examples include the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs, the Native

Despite the long history of assault on Mi'kmaw culture and lifeways, it is important to acknowledge that the People have resisted and accommodated to these changes. While the Mi'kmaw identity has changed and adapted, the culture continues to survive (Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002). I now turn to a discussion on the history of Mi'kmaq peoples in the district of *Piktuk*, which further sets the stage for the context of this research.

2.2 The Mi'kmaq of *Piktuk*

Navigable rivers and fish spawning sites (often chosen by the Mi'kmaq for settlement) are common features throughout what would come to be Colchester, Pictou, and Antigonish Counties on Nova Scotia's north shore; archaeological evidence suggests a vast historical presence of Mi'kmaq throughout this region prior to European arrival (Cameron, 1972; CMM, 2008; R. Lewis, personal communication, April 28, 2012; Sable & Francis, 2012). To the Mi'kmaq this landscape is traditionally known as *Piktuk*, part of the district *Epekwitk aq Piktuk* that also includes Prince Edward Island (Prins, 2002; Sable & Francis, 2012; See Figure 2.1). While the origin of the name *Piktuk* has been afforded some debate (see Cameron, 1972), Sable and Francis (2012) – who hold an intimate knowledge of the language and culture – suggest the district's name means "explosion place". *Maliko'mijk*, the lands around present-day Merigomish harbour, have particular historical importance, as it was probably here that the headquarters of the district lay and where Mi'kmaq of the region buried their deceased (CMM, 2008).

As Cameron wrote in 1972, for the Mi'kmaq of *Piktuk* "the white man brought disaster" (p. 2). Given that the first Europeans to settle in the region were French, the Mi'kmaq of *Piktuk* were – to an extent – converted to Catholicism due to the efforts of early French missionaries (Cameron, 1972). By the late 1700s, as French power in Nova Scotia was waning and Mi'kmaq leaders were signing treaties with the British, the traditional district of *Piktuk* began to receive heavy Scottish and British settlement (Cameron, 1972; Pictou Landing First Nation [PLFN], 2012). As early white settlers arrived to the region, they

Council of Nova Scotia (representing off-reserve populations), the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, to name a few (see Nova Scotia, 2013).

found Mi'kmaq were in fact making use of much of it, while to a different degree than the settlers were used to due to their seasonally transient way of life (Cameron, 1972; Paul, 2006; Prins, 2002; Wicken, 2002). The population of Mi'kmaq declined upon heavy European settlement of the region; similarly, the land-base the Mi'kmaq were able to use and occupy dwindled (PLFN, 2012). While the traditional district of *Piktuk* spans coastal and riverine environments along the Northumberland Strait – rich in plant and animal life (CMM, 2008; Davis & Brown, 1996) – the Mi'kmaq who had once lived throughout the district were separated and relegated to small parcels of land, surrounded by a growing settler majority. Thanks to the establishment of the reserve system, the Mi'kmaq in the area were pushed into one of two Mi'kmaw communities: Pictou Landing and Paqtnkek (See Figure 2.1).

2.2.1 Historical Genesis of Pictou Landing First Nation

Throughout early colonial efforts, Mi'kmaq had continued to hunt, fish, and gather livelihoods in the rivers and estuaries of the region the British would come to call Pictou County (Cameron, 1972; PLFN, 2012). Increasingly, however, Mi'kmaq of the region found difficulty in pursuing their "nomadic way of life", as "settlements on the coast and up-river crowded them off their fishing and hunting grounds" (Cameron, 1972, p. 3). By the 1820s, Mi'kmaq were petitioning the government for lands to be set aside for their exclusive use (PLFN, 2012). Finally in 1864, 50 acres of land were acquired, for the Mi'kmaq, at Fisher's Grant[29] (PLFN, 2012). Two small islands in Merigomish harbour and lands southeast of present-day Amherst (shared with the community of Paq'tnkek) were also set aside in 1865 (Cameron, 1972; Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, 2012). Census data suggests that the population of Mi'kmaq was in steady decline, largely on account of disease (Cameron, 1972): in 1775 it had been 865; when the initial reserve lands were established (1864), the population was at 159; and by 1871 there were 125 Mi'kmaq in Pictou County (Cameron, 1972; PLFN, 2012).

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[29] Fisher's Grant is also the name that was given to the area adjacent to the Mi'kmaq reserve lands. Both the reserve lands of Fisher's Grant and the adjacent non-Indigenous community of the same name came to be known as Pictou Landing. It is suggested that the original reserve lands at Fisher's Grant were placed there due to a small pre-existing Mi'kmaq encampment (Cameron, 1972; CMM, 2008). With Confederation, and the transfer of 'Indian lands' to federal control, this initial reserve became referred to as Fisher's Grant Indian Reserve (IR) No. 24 (PLFN, 2012).

By 1880, it is suggested that Mi'kmaq of the region had come to settle onto the established reserve lands at Fisher's Grant, and it is here that they built their community (IR No. 24) (Cameron, 1972; Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, 2012; PLFN, 2012). Throughout the late 1800s, small parcels were added to the lands at Fisher's Grant for further food and fuel supplies[30], suggesting their population had started to increase. While maintaining traditional food harvests, men sold handicrafts to supplement their changing lifeways and some were able to secure manual wage labour or work for lobster fishermen; women "made baskets and peddled them from door to door in the towns, and some picked and sold mayflowers, blueberries, and raspberries in season" (Cameron, 1972, p. 3). At the same time though, families became increasing dependent on the provisions of Indian Agents working for the federal government (Cameron, 1972; PLFN, 2012). In the early 1960s, 200 acres were acquired south of the established community and added to the reserve lands[31] (bringing the total lands to 691 acres[32]); by 1967, the Mi'kmaw population at Pictou Landing had risen to 235 (Cameron, 1972). As the population continued to steadily increase, in 1997 123 acres of land next to the community were acquired and added to IR No. 24 to accommodate the expanding population (Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, 2012; PLFN, 2012).

2.2.2 Pictou Landing First Nation: Contemporary Context

The community of Pictou Landing First Nation lies on the shores of the Northumberland Strait, on Nova Scotia's north shore (See Appendix A: Study Location). With roughly 640 registered members, approximately 460 (or 72%) members reside in the community (slightly higher than the provincial average for on-reserve Mi'kmaw populations) with an even distribution of men and women (AANDC, 2012). As of 2006, there was roughly a 50% rate of employment within the community (AANDC, 2012), which is congruent with the provincial average for Mi'kmaw communities (Nova Scotia, 2013). The

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[30] These included Fisher's Grant Indian Reserve No. 24A through G; in 1962, these parcels were amalgamated under the title Fisher's Grant Indian Reserve No. 24, save for IR No. 24G (which is not adjacent but located further south) (PLFN, 2012).

[31] Referred to as Boat Harbour West Indian Reserve No. 37.

[32] This total does not include the lands near Merigomish and Amherst, which are quite a distance from the actual community of Pictou Landing First Nation.

community has a young population, with a median age of around 25 (Statistics Canada, 2012); this is the same as the provincial median age for Mi'kmaq across the 13 communities, yet rather young in relation to the median age of 42 for the non-Indigenous population (Nova Scotia, 2013). While their reserve lands include a number of other parcels, the community itself is situated on the amalgamated lands of Fisher's Grant IR No. 24 (CMM, 2008; PLFN, 2012; See Appendix A: Study Location). Some of the other land parcels owned by the community operate as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified woodlots (PLFN, 2012).

Pictou Landing First Nation holds a rich history of involvement in fishing, from a reliance on traditional harvesting, to small-scale, community-based trades, through to a strong participation in commercial fishing. Members of the community couple traditional activities with wage-based labour in their own community and beyond. Throughout the summer months, many members of Pictou Landing First Nation spend their time at camps on *Maliko'kijk* (also called "Maligomish" or "Indian Island") in Merigomish Harbour. *Maliko'mijk* holds a history of particular spiritual and religious importance, for the Mi'kmaq of Pictou Landing First Nation and the Mi'kmaq nation at-large (S. Francis, personal communication, February 27, 2012). An Indian Act Band governs the community of Pictou Landing First Nation, with an elected Chief and six Council members; Pictou Landing First Nation also belongs to a tribal council, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), which provides support programs and services to five other Mi'kmaw communities (CMM, 2007b). The community has a *Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey*-controlled elementary school, and other amenities include a daycare, Band-owned gas bar, Band office, health centre, and training centre.

The County of Pictou is a landscape that has experienced particularly vast changes since European colonization due the establishment of various primary resource extraction and development industries. An explanation of that industrial history is necessary to provide a robust understanding of the context of the research upon which this thesis is based.

2.3 Pictou County: the Birthplace of Industry in Nova Scotia

Since the English and Scottish settled in the late 1700s, the County of Pictou has been largely shaped by and reliant on industrialization – fuelled by the abundant natural resources of the region – and thus characterized by boom and bust cycles (Cameron, 1972; Painter & Stewart, 1992). The early years were of lobster and ground fisheries, lumber and ship-building; coal mining was the predominant economic force for decades, followed by steel, as it has in fact been said that the "Canadian steel industry was born in the County of Pictou" (Cameron, 1972, p. 111). By 1916, the "distinctly industrial" towns of New Glasgow, Stellarton, Westville and Trenton boasted that they stood "as symbols of an industrial development and expansion" ('Nova Scotia's Industrial Centre', 1916). However as Painter & Stewart (1992) explain:

> Pictou Harbour and surrounding watersheds make up one of the most important marine-estuarine systems in Nova Scotia. Partly because of their value to trade, commerce and quality of life, the water and adjacent streams and rivers are also central to one of the oldest and most heavily industrialized parts of Nova Scotia. Human activities… have led to a gradual deterioration of environmental quality in the area. (p. 1)

A County intricately tied to the growth and maintenance of coal, steel, and lumber industries has resulted in myriad environmental repercussions, which continue to mount (Painter & Stewart, 1992). Pollution from the many historic (and continued) industrial development schemes has had significant impact on the coastal lands, waters, and air quality of Pictou County, in turn vastly implicating the natural integrity of the region (Davis & Brown, 1996). Heavy industry – coupled with waste disposal practices as well as agricultural and urban runoff – have implicated livelihood and recreational activities, with a history of shellfish contamination, beach closures, and unsafe drinking water (Painter & Stewart, 1992). For the Mi'kmaq of Pictou Landing First Nation, the impacts of this industrial pollution is evidenced most-poignantly by the effluent treatment facility adjacent the community, located there to support the activities of a nearby bleached kraft pulp mill.

2.4 The Abercrombie Mill and the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility

In 1957, amidst the many other industrial development schemes taking shape in Pictou County, Scott Paper Company Ltd. acquired lands at Abercrombie Point with the intent of establishing a bleached kraft pulp mill; construction of the mill began in 1965 and it began operating two years later (Cameron, 1972). Canso Chemicals Ltd. was built in 1970 as an "auxiliary to the pulp industry", and would make the chemicals used in the pulping process of the mill (Cameron, 1972, p. 125). It was suggested that the newly established Scott Paper mill, Canso Chemicals, and Michelin Tire plants would give the region "promise of realizing… early potential of becoming an industrial community" (Cameron, 1972, p. 267). While the Scott Paper mill was built at Abercrombie Point (situated adjacent to Pictou Harbour, close to the town of Pictou; See Appendix A: Study Location), the provincial government wanted to find a different location to expel the toxic effluent produced in the pulping process.

At the time, the Nova Scotia Water Authority (operating under the auspices of the Progressive Conservative provincial government) had control over determining the fate of water bodies in the province (Paul, 2006). The Water Authority became intrigued with the idea of using 'Boat Harbour' – a tidal inlet on the Northumberland Strait, which bordered the reserve lands of Pictou Landing First Nation (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC] & Ngui-Yen, 1990; Paul, 2006; See Appendix A: Study Location). Cameron (1972) described Boat Harbour as:

> …a small inlet, but big enough to have had schooners built on its shore in the 1830-40s... It was a quiet spot where game birds and other wildfowl nested and fished; its beaches had oysters and clams… and its waters had lobster and vertebrate fish. The lobstermen considered it a lobster breeding ground… (p. 269).

For the Mi'kmaq at Pictou Landing First Nation, the area surrounding Boat Harbour was a sacred site and an important place in the history of their ancestors (PLFN, 2012). The abundance provided by this tidal estuary supported vast livelihood practices including fishing, clamming, and eeling; its warm waters and sheltered shores served as a key place for family groups to meet and feast, swim and skate. As the community of Pictou Landing First Nation (2012) describes:

It was near this estuary that the ancestors of the Pictou Landing First Nation lived on a seasonal basis. The estuary was a bountiful source of a variety of food including fish, eels, crustaceans and shellfish. They hunted and trapped near its shores. The estuary provided a safe harbour for vessels and a sheltered recreational area. The estuary was so important to the life of the ancestors that they treated it as part of their home… (para. 2)

The area around Boat Harbour has been known to the Mi'kmaq as *A'se'k* – roughly translated to mean "the other side", "over there", or "the other room" – suggesting it was an extension of their lands, and relied upon for the wellbeing of their community (M.E. Denny, personal communication, February 14, 2012; PLFN, 2012; R. Francis & L. Francis, personal communication, March 12, 2012).

With Boat Harbour in their sights, The Water Authority devised a plan to pipe effluent from the mill to the eastern edge of IR No. 37, which were uninhabited reserve lands set aside for the Mi'kmaq of Pictou Landing. Necessary lands were expropriated from non-Indigenous residents in the area; they then needed to secure riparian rights at Boat Harbour from Pictou Landing First Nation (through the federal Department of Indian Affairs, which was responsible for managing reserve lands), which in turn required convincing the Pictou Landing First Nation Chief and Council to sign off for the plan to move ahead (Paul, 2006). At first, the Chief and Council members voiced concerns that the Treatment Facility would negatively affect their lands and people; At the same time, however, as Mi'kmaw author and activist Daniel Paul (2006) explains, the Mi'kmaq were concerned that their Indian Agent would cut them off from much-needed funding, and feared reprisals from (an already racist) society, in a region so reliant on industry[33]. It has been suggested that the Pictou Landing First Nation Chief and Council were advised by provincial authorities that the waters would no longer be suitable for fishing and

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[33] Daniel Paul worked closely with the Chief and Council of Pictou Landing First Nation after the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility began operating, researching the history of the agreement in preparation for a lawsuit that Pictou Landing First Nation launched in the 1980s. Paul's (2006) book articulates his first hand experience with the myriad political, legal, and economic issues that have amounted from the issues at Boat Harbour; this record serves as one of the only written Mi'kmaw account of the issue.

recreation, but that there would be no other adverse affects; it is unclear as to how this was truly communicated, and if at all to the community at-large[34].

To further convince Pictou Landing First Nation, representatives from the provincial government and mill owners went so far as to bring the Chief and a Council member to a newly constructed mill in New Brunswick, take a drink of water there, and assure the community leaders that the water quality at Boat Harbour would stay the same; apparently, however, that mill was not even operational at the time, and the water that the industry and government officials had them convinced was effluent, was simply a stream running nearby (Paul, 2006). It was here – convinced that there would be no adverse effects – that the Chief and one Council member of Pictou Landing First Nation signed in agreement with the plans for a Treatment Facility; the Band would receive $60,000 for the loss of fishing and hunting revenue (CBC & Ngui-Yen, 1990). The agreement also stipulated a provincial commitment to correct any adverse affects should they arise with the opening of the mill (Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, 2010). Under the regulations laid out in the *Indian Act* such an agreement should have required a community-wide referendum, which did not occur. While legal and engineering advice from both the Departments of Justice and Indian Affairs heeded warning that the plans for the Treatment Facility were not sound, the Water Authority forged ahead (Paul, 2006). And so, despite provincial and federal knowledge that the mill effluent would be highly toxic, by 1967 construction of the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility was underway, and the mill opened later that year.

In the mill's early years, effluent would be piped underground beneath the East River, carried from the mill and discharged into a naturally swampy area southwest of Boat Harbour at a rate of over 85 million litres per day (Jacques Whitford Environment &

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[34] In a 2010 Statement of Claim by the Pictou Landing Band, it is suggested that the Chief and Council was advised of the losses to fishing and recreation (Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, 2010). A 1990 CBC documentary and my personal experiences suggest that the community was in fact under the impression that the opening of the mill would not cause *any* changes at *A'se'k*; that they would be able to continue using the area (for hunting, fishing, swimming, and the like) as usual (CBC & Ngui-Yen, 1990; M.E. Denny, personal communication, February 14, 2012; S. Francis, personal communication, February 27, 2012; M. Denny, personal communication, June 13, 2012).

Beak Consultants, 1992). Effluent would then move into the main body of Boat Harbour, coined as the 'stabilization lagoon', before being discharged into the Northumberland Strait. A dam was constructed at the mouth of the estuary, which caused water levels to permanently rise. Effluent from the Canso Chemical Ltd., chlor-alkali plant (when it was operational) was also combined with the mill effluent (Jacques Whitford Environment & Beak Consultants, 1992). The original treatment system functioned until 1972, at which time new facilities were added, consisting of twin 'settling basins' and an 'aerated stabilization basin'. At present, the effluent is pumped to one of two settling basins, where it stands for a number of hours in order to allow the suspended solids to settle and be removed (Jacques Whitford Environment & Beak Consultants, 1992)[35]. The water then travels to the 'aerated stabilization basin' for biological treatment[36]. Effluent remains in this phase of the system for 5 or 6 days, before entering the 'stabilization lagoon'. It is here, in the 142-hectare body of water that effluent waters remain for 20 or 30 days before traveling out to the Northumberland Strait. Boat Harbour, as a 'stabilization lagoon', serves as the final stage in wastewater treatment in order to meet federal environmental regulations (See Appendix A: Study Location) (see section 2.5 for a discussion on changes to federal effluent regulations, to which the mill at Abercrombie Point was not subject to due to a grandfather clause).

2.4.1 A History of Changes at A'se'k

As Jacques Whitford and Beak Consultants (1992) suggest, "the location and construction of these facilities [was intended to] eliminate… potential contamination of Pictou Harbour", as well as provide jobs, attract industry, and develop the natural resources of the County (p. 7). Whatever the use of Boat Harbour did for the industrial development of the region, it left in its wake "an offensively odoriferous cesspool devoid of marine life, which discharged discoloured water into the Strait and despoiled the beaches on either side of Boat Harbour's entrance" (Cameron, 1972, p. 125). Boat Harbour came to be regarded as Nova Scotia's biggest and smelliest cesspools (Cameron,

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[35] Only one of two 'settling basins' are in operation at a time; while one is receiving effluent, the other is having accumulated 'sludge' removed from it.

[36] Oxygen, as well as nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, are added to the effluent, helping in the promotion of bacteria to oxidaze the dissolved organic materials in the effluent.

1972). Almost immediately after the mill became operational, Mi'kmaq at Pictou Landing First Nation were faced with putrid conditions in the water, a malodourous stench, mass fish deaths, and the exterior of their houses turned black from air pollution; they had lost the livelihood, spiritual, and recreational functions once provided at *A'se'k*, and anecdotal fears of ill-health caused by the mill's pollution and the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility began to circulate in news stories of the 1970s (see for example Hale, 1970; Janitch, 1971; "Next time", 1970; Soss, 1970). Upon visiting the site where the effluent was treated, leader of the National Indian Brotherhood (later to become the national Assembly of First Nations) George Manuel exclaimed, "I felt as if I was attending a funeral, because to an [Indigenous person] water, air and land provides life" (Hale, 1970, p. 1).

As Paul (2006) describes of the decades that followed, various legal actions were considered and finger pointing took place as all parties involved in the toxic mess wanted to lay the blame elsewhere. Throughout the early 1970s, Mi'kmaq from Pictou Landing First Nation staged protests over the effluent; the Union of Nova Scotia Indians and the National Indian Brotherhood became involved in an effort to force the province to take remedial action (Hale, 1970; "Next time", 1970). Despite Pictou Landing First Nation's complaints, in 1970 the province entered a 25-year agreement with the mill allowing them to discharge there until 1995, without consulting the Band. In 1986, Pictou Landing First Nation initiated a lawsuit against the federal government for failing to meet their fiduciary duty to protect the Band. Realizing the small First Nation was amassing a strong case, and after a very brief period of negotiation, the federal government settled with the Band for 35 million dollars in 1993. At the same time, the province promised that the effluent would stop by 1995, and Boat Harbour would be remediated; 1995 came and went, and instead the mill was given another 10 years (until 2005) to find an alternative place for the effluent to discharge. By 2004 it was suggested that more than 75,000 cubic metres of contaminated sediment had accumulated there (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2005), described as "a brown, gelatinous ooze" (Jacques Whitford, 2004, p. viii); that amount continues to grow daily and 2005 has long come and gone.

With high costs of replacing the Treatment Facility and no remediation plans solidified, the provincial government extended the mill's lease to operate until 2008, and once again, on a month-to-month basis after 2008. In 2008, the province said, in a letter to the Chief of Pictou Landing First Nation: "To say… [your] Band has been long suffering would be a masterful understatement of the obvious. It is our unwavering intention to end that suffering as quickly as possible. It should have been done long ago". In 2010, the Chief and Council of Pictou Landing First Nation initiated a lawsuit, this time against the provincial government, over the pollution at Boat Harbour after the province failed once again to follow through on a commitment to relocate the effluent, whilst continuing to issue the mill's license and lease to operate. There have been myriad clean-up strategies and alternative plans for the effluent proposed, yet none have materialized; all the while, tens of millions of dollars of provincial funds have contributed to upgrades at the mill, and for the purchase of further forestland. The mill continues to discharge into Boat Harbour at a rate of over 85 million litres a day, and while a multitude of consultant reports have been produced around the potential environment and health issues surrounding the pollution, a lack of clarity around the situation propels Pictou Landing First Nation to express concern for the health of their waters, lands, and air, as well as their community members.

2.5 Bleached Kraft Pulp and Paper Mills: A Cause for Concern

While the pulp and paper industry has gone through many environmental performance improvements throughout its history, the impacts on the natural environment are vast; further – though not fully understood – many of the chemicals both used and produced in the pulping process are potentially hazardous to human health (Soskolne & Sieswerda, 2010). Waste from the industry may be characterized as air emissions, solid waste, and liquid effluents. Air emissions include a number of malodourous sulfur compounds, as well as particulate matter, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and fly ash (World Bank Group, 1998). The solid waste produced is usually typified as 'sludge', made up of lime, ash, and wood particulate matter (World Bank Group, 1998). Perhaps most significantly, metals, nutrients, and chlorinated and organic compounds are

discharged amongst the wastewaters – or effluent – of the industrial process (World Bank Group, 1998).

As a complex mixture of roughly 300 known chemicals (Pacheco & Santos, 1999), it has been well established that bleached kraft mill effluent is highly toxic and a major source of pollution in receiving aquatic environments (Colodey & Wells, 1992; Courtenay, Munkittrick, Dupuis, Parker, & Boyd, 2002; Kovacs, et al. 2011; Kovacs, Martel, & Voss, 2002; McMaster, Parrott, & Hewitt, 2006; 2003). There are a number of signs suggesting ecosystem stress at sites receiving such effluent, for example: reproductive and population level changes have been identified in local fish species (Bowron, Munkittrick, McMaster, Tetrault, & Hewitt, 2009; Kovacs et al., 2011; 2002; Pacheco & Santos, 1999; Pollock, Dubé, & Schryer, 2010; West, et al., 2006); harmful dioxins and furans[37] have been found in local mammalian populations (Addison, Ikonomou, & Smith, 2005; Koistinen et al., 1998; Smits, Blakley, & Wobeser, 1996); and drinking water systems adjacent to waters that receive mill effluent have been compromised (Berryman, Houde, DeBlios, & O'Shea, 2004).

Beginning in 1971, pulp and paper mill effluent was regulated under section 36-42 of the *Fisheries Act*; however when these regulations came into effect, only facilities built *after* 1971 were required to comply. It was only in 1992, when the new *Pulp and Paper Regulations* were put forth (under the *Fisheries Act*), that mills built prior to 1971 were required to meet federal effluent quality regulations (Canada, 1991). This leaves a 25-year gap – from 1967 to 1992 – whereby the effluent quality from the mill at Abercrombie Point, dispelled into Boat Harbour, was not regulated.

The 1992 *Pulp and Paper Regulations* provided a new regulatory package for industry, and also required that mills conduct Environmental Effects Monitoring (EEM) to assess

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[37] Coined as the "Darth Vader" of chemicals (Boyd, 2002, p. 348), these pollutants can show acute toxicity at high concentrations, and chronic toxicity at lower concentrations. Recent attention has focused on their ability to mimic certain hormones, leading to impairments in endocrine systems and reproductive functioning. Health Canada (2005) has also associated dioxins and furans with skin disorders, liver problems, immune system impairment, developmental effects, and certain cancers.

the potential impacts (to receiving aquatic environments) caused by their effluents (Lowell, Ring, Pastershank, Walker, Trudel, & Hedley, 2005; McMaster et al., 2003). Data from the most recent (2012) report on EEM suggests that receiving environments continue to be compromised (Environment Canada, 2012). At the same time, mills have had difficulty meeting requirements of the EEM (McMaster et al., 2003). Determining the best practice of effluent treatment methods is on-going, knowing definite cause-and-effect relationships remains extremely elusive as many of the chemicals in bleached kraft mill effluent remain uncharacterized, and while mills have changed their effluent composition over time the older sediment still remains in receiving environments (Bosker, Munkittrick, & MacLatchy, 2010; Bowron et al., 2009; Engwall, Broman, Dencker, Näf, Zebühr, & Brunström 1997; Kovacs et al., 2011; McMaster et al., 2006; 2003; Pollock et al., 2010; West et al., 2006).

It is evident that the focus of environmental health inquiry related to the performance of pulp and paper mills has been on the impacts of the effluent for receiving aquatic environments; to this end some have argued that there is need for a revised ecological framework that focuses on a more holistic ecosystem approach, rather than simplistic single measurements of ecosystem health (McMaster et al., 2006). It is also necessary to focus on the risks associated with compromised air and terrestrial quality, not to mention how these impacts may translate into risks to human health. Given the potential of increased exposure to respirable particulates, and harmful organic compounds, dioxins, and furans, it is reasonable to expect that human health is compromised (Monge-Corella et al., 2008; Pan et al., 2011; Soskolne & Sieswerda, 2010). However, determining precisely *how* these environmental contaminants may be affecting human health, through various pathways and processes such as bioaccumulation and biomagnification, remains rather elusive.

As Soskolne and Sieswerda (2010) poignantly contend:

> The importance of the pulp and paper industry in modern life is a result of the major role of… paper products in every area of human activity. However, like many industrial processes it has impacted our environment and our health. Health concerns include both occupational hazards and impacts on air, soil, and water that

affect the health of communities in the vicinity of pulp and paper mills as well as of those communities downwind or downstream from mills (p. 86).

While the pulp and paper industry continues to be relied upon for its contribution towards jobs and gross domestic product (Natural Resources Canada, 2008), this has not come without a price to the health of the lands and people nearby. In the context of this research, it is furthermore necessary to consider how health (and ill-health) is defined. While the potential of biophysical effects is of great concern for an Indigenous community such as Pictou Landing First Nation, the compromised spiritual, emotional, and cultural health need also be considered (see for example Arquette et al., 2002; Donatuto, Satterfield, & Gregory, 2011; Richmond & Ross, 2009; Richmond, Elliott, Mathews, & Elliott, 2005; Wheatley & Wheatley, 2000; Wilson & Rosenberg, 2002).

2.6 Part 1: Summary

As Part 1 of this chapter has described, the community of Pictou Landing First Nation – who are among a Mi'kmaq nation that never ceded or relinquished their inherent rights to and responsibilities over the land – have lost the use of a sacred place that provided cultural, recreation, and livelihood functions, and further face concern over the environmental and health implications from nearly 50 years of bleached kraft mill pollution. The situation surrounding Pictou Landing First Nation, the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility, and the detriment caused to *A'se'k* is not uncommon; it serves as but one example of an historical (and continuing) trend of environmental injustice on Indigenous lands (see for example Brulle & Pellow, 2006; Dhillon and Young, 2010; Mascarenhas, 2007). I now turn to a discussion of the broader implications to both health and environment for Indigenous peoples facing such injustices, and how Eurocentric social constructions inadequately represent these issues.

PART 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.7 The State of Indigenous Health in Canada

Of the data that are available concerning health in Canada, it is definitively argued that Indigenous peoples suffer from extensive health disparities when compared to the rest of

the population (Adelson, 2005; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Waldram et al., 2006; Wilson & Rosenberg, 2002); further, they have the poorest health outcomes of any ethnic minority in Canada (Battiste, 2011). While the deleterious effects of the colonial legacy are often attributed to impacting general wellbeing (Czyzewski, 2011; Loppie & Wien, 2009), we are just beginning to understand the distal (colonial) complexities of health issues facing Indigenous peoples (Waldram, et al., 2006).

To a large extent, an understanding of Indigenous health in Canada has remained reliant on the patchwork of statistical surveys issued at the federal level. And while various surveys collect data related to health, the results are often aggregated together as one Indigenous populace; these data sources do little to incorporate cultural and traditional measurements, and Indigenous peoples living on reserve are often excluded (Mi'kmaq Health Research Group [MHRG], 2007). Most recently and in a positive direction, the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey was initiated, offering promise as the only Indigenous-governed national health survey in Canada (Assembly of First Nations [AFN]/First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC], 2010). However as Masuda and colleagues (2008) argue, it is important to question the reliance on health research that focuses on quantitative approaches to understanding complex issues, as qualitative approaches may offer a window into "more critical and policy-engaged research aimed at uncovering the experiences and structural mechanisms" (p. 446) of persistent inequity. Therefore, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches may help to more wholly capture the experiences of Indigenous health in Canada.

2.8 Environmental Health, Injustice, and Indigenous Peoples

With increasing industrialization, environmental hazards and contaminants[38] have been linked to various health impacts, such as asthma, gastrointestinal illness, poisonings, cancer, developmental disorders, birth defects, and reproductive problems (Boyd, 2002; Chan, 2005). Unequal exposure to these environmental contaminants, coupled with limited access to ecosystem goods and services, means that certain populations are more

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[38] These may include exposure to heavy metals, mercury, arsenic, and/or air pollutants from activities such as mineral extraction tailings ponds, pesticide use, and/or other industrial effluents; also, forestry and hydroelectric projects can result in soil erosion and contamination of aquatic ecosystems (Chan, 2005).

afflicted with environmental health hazards than others in Canada (Masuda et al., 2008). Indigenous peoples are among those disproportionately affected; in Canada, oftentimes the rural, remote, and/or northern position of Indigenous communities contributes to their increased exposures (see for example Angel, 1991; Brulle & Pellow, 2006; Bullard, 1993; Mascarenhas, 2007; Neu & Therrien, 2003). As Dhillon and Young (2010) contend, Indigenous communities in Canada have exceeded the "saturation point" of environmental devastation, resulting in health implications such as "birth defects, illness, and disease" (para. 1), with far-reaching implications to their overall wellbeing (see also Assembly of First Nations [AFN], 2009; Keeling & Sandlos, 2009; Richmond & Ross, 2009; Richmond et al., 2005; Wheatley & Wheatley, 2000).

While definitional plurality remains, the concept of environmental justice[39] generally "focuses on identifying patterns of environmental inequity" (p. 350) stemming from asymmetrical exposure to environmental threats (Neimanis, Castleden, & Rainham, 2012). Environmental justice acknowledges how groups of people may disproportionately bear environmental costs (distributive justice), or be excluded from how environmental decisions are made (procedural justice) based on their affiliation with a particular race, class, gender, etc. (Neimanis et al., 2012). Described as a "grassroots movement, a research paradigm, a policy framework, and a political ideology" all at once (Masuda et al., 2008, p. 3), the emergence of the environmental justice movement has had far-reaching contributions from the civil rights and labour movements, to the anti-toxins movement and traditional environmentalism, as well as the struggles of Indigenous North Americans (Cole & Foster, 2001). As Egan (2002) suggests, at the heart of environmental justice is the fight for empowerment of subaltern[40] groups, and also cautions us from equating environmental justice with more traditional environmentalism.

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[39] While the concept of environmental justice seems to have a more defined body of literature surrounding it, for the purposes of this research my goal is to draw on the connections between issues of justice for Indigenous peoples related to environmental factors and health ones, as they are highly interconnected.

[40] The term 'subaltern' has been advanced largely through the work of Gramsci (1971) and Spivak (1988), with applications to oppressed peoples suffering under hegemonic domination (Habib Louai, 2012). The use of the term here by Egan (2002) represents "marginalized or subordinated groups such as peasants, urban slum and ghetto dwellers, farm workers, and groups oppressed by race, class, and gender" (p. 22).

Images of the Indigenous Other – Noble or Ignoble savages "romanticized as harmoniously intertwined" (Gaard, 2001, p. 1) in an empty wilderness ready to be tamed – contributed considerably to the construction of mainstream environmentalism by the dominant Euro-western population (Kalland, 2003; Nadasdy, 2005). This leads Egan (2002) to argue that environmentalism is a concept stratified by factors such as race, class, and gender; it remains dominated by a white middle-class conservationist agenda that does not necessarily seek to address issues of civil rights, race, social issues, or poverty alleviation. DeLuca (2007) discusses the valid criticisms of the "idea of pristine, sublime wilderness" within mainstream environmentalism, which "posits an ontological separation between humans and wilderness" under the assumption that "the very presence of humans destroys wilderness" (p. 39). At the same time, the concept of environmental justice itself has been criticized for its highly anthropocentric stance, leading to an invisibility of wilderness altogether by largely ignoring the importance that ecological integrity plays in maintaining the healthy environments on which all humans rely (see for example DeLuca, 2007; Neimanis et al., 2012). Conversely, in many Indigenous worldviews, humans are a vital component of the land, integrated with it through rights and responsibilities, benefits and obligations (see for example Henderson, 1995; Little Bear, 2000; Metallic, 2008; McGregor, 2004).

Both Dhillon and Young (2010) and Neu and Therrien (2003) review a number of cases of environmental injustice faced by Indigenous communities in Canada; they uncover examples of compromised drinking water quality, a higher brunt of industrial facility siting and resource extraction schemes, and contaminated local food systems. Further, it has been argued that the risks of (potentially toxic) health and environmental impacts are often inadequately communicated to Indigenous peoples (see for example Dhillon & Young, 2010; Donatuto, Satterfield, & Gregory, 2011; Giles, Castleden, & Baker, 2010). Due to the marginalized position of Indigenous peoples in Canada's current colonial context, Dhillon and Young (2010) bring their discussion further in order to typify injustices on Indigenous lands as, in fact, environmental *racism*. The concept of environmental racism suggests racially discriminatory policies and practices, resulting in deliberately higher rates of exposure to environmental injustices (Brulle & Pellow, 2006);

further, and of particular importance for Indigenous peoples in Canada, "environmental racism is rights-based and asserts that communities subject to this kind of racism are frequently impoverished, excluded from dominant cultures and are denied full citizenship" (Dhillon & Young, 2010, para. 4). How we conceptualize environmental injustices, therefore, is as much about rights, self-determination, and power as it is about the particular impacts to land and health (Mascarenhas, 2007). In an Indigenous context then, traditional environmental justice perspectives ought to be expanded in order to "highlight a broader range of concerns than simply environmental contamination, including concerns about the social impacts of development and the connection… to wider histories of dispossession, colonialism, and social change" (Keeling & Sandlos, 2009, p. 118).

There is ample research regarding environmental issues in a general sense, however committed policy action towards mitigating environmental injustice and environmental racism has not been initiated in Canada (Dhillon & Young, 2010). Further, there has been "relatively little policy recognition of community voices" that are most affected by these threats (Draper & Mitchell, 2001, p. 96). It is crucial that Canada recognize its distinct political, social, and geographic situations in order to move forward, and this ought to include a recognition of the inherent racism that has contributed to the frequency of environmental devastation occurring on Indigenous lands (Dhillon & Young, 2010).

2.9 Indigenous Approaches to Health and Wellbeing

> Indigenous ideologies embrace a holistic concept of health that reflects physical, spiritual, emotional and mental dimensions…. It has become widely accepted… that a "silo" approach to prevention and treatment of ill-health fails to address the complexity of most health issues. This is particularly true for [Indigenous] peoples, who have historically been collectivist in their social institutions and processes, specifically the ways in which health is perceived and addressed (Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009, p. 3).

While traditional Western conceptions of health suggest the compartmentalization of the human body, addressing the physical manifestation of illness with an emphasis on disease and treatment, Indigenous health is often expressed as more holistic, reflecting the

relational nature of Indigenous ways of being (Bartlett, 2003; Cajete, 2000; Malloch, 1989; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996; Waldram et al., 2006). Western medicine has been born out of the assertion that humans can control nature, manipulate natural variables, and use quantifiable, scientific data in order to address sickness (Malloch, 1989; RCAP, 1996). While there is great diversity in health understandings across the various Indigenous peoples of North America (Colomeda & Wenzel, 2000), Indigenous health is thought to focus on preventing illness of the mind, body, and spirit; Indigenous healers were accountable to the Creator and Elders of society, guided and governed by spiritual knowledge as well as a deep connection to the natural world that supported them (Cajete, 2000; Colomeda & Wenzel, 2000; Malloch, 1989; RACP, 1996).

The contemporary health perils of Indigenous peoples are often presented as homogenous; however just as their cultures, traditions, and customary laws vary significantly, so too have their experiences with colonialism and the subsequent lasting implications on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of the peoples (Battiste, 2011). In a general sense though, colonization has been linked to disruptions in the traditional fabric of societies and in the ability for Indigenous peoples to maintain health and wellbeing amongst their peoples (Gracey & King, 2009). Furthermore, while Indigenous-centred understandings of wellbeing have persisted, Indigenous peoples have been largely reliant on the delivery of healthcare needs from the dominant white majority; with such vast epistemological differences at a foundational level, much focus appears to have remained on simply pathologizing inequities, and describing dysfunction and discrepancies in regards to Indigenous health (Reading & Nowgesic, 2002). Approaches have, to date, lacked a critical examination of the processes that historically allowed inequities to grow, and which in fact continue to persist (Czyzewski, 2011; Masuda et al., 2008; Richmond & Ross, 2009).

Models of health based on Indigenous Knowledge foundations have emerged, providing new ways to explore health pathways and potential sites of intervention for achieving positive health outcomes among Indigenous populations (see for example AFN, 2009;

Canadian Council on Learning [CCL], 2007; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Parkes, 2010). For example, Loppie Reading and Wien (2009) have advanced a framework that considers the social determinants to health in an Indigenous context, taking into account the proximal (i.e., health behaviours, employment and income, and food insecurity), intermediate (i.e., health care and educational systems, and environmental stewardship, cultural continuity), and distal factors (i.e., racism, colonialism, and self-determination). Emergent models of Indigenous wellbeing have also articulated humans as nested in their community and environment, with a concentration on the life-course and the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual quadrants of health (see for example AFN, 2006; CCL, 2007; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009). A shifted focus from individuals as the sole unit of analysis and the physical manifestations of ill-health, towards acknowledging the importance of the collective wellbeing of Indigenous nations, perhaps more appropriately integrates Indigenous ways of knowing instead of merely relying on Western paradigms of health (AFN, 2006; CCL, 2006; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009).

2.9.1 The Land as a Health-Shaping Factor

While environmental injustices on Indigenous lands are cause for concern regarding ill-health, it is important not to limit our "view of the natural world as a source of illness rather than a basis for life" (Parkes, 2010, p. 1). Indigenous relationships to the land suggest an intricate and distinctive connection to *place*[41]; healthy connections to their land in turn manifest in the vitality of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual realms of wellbeing. The land, and place-based connections to it, is where Indigenous cultures and knowledges flow from; health and wellbeing is therefore intricately linked to cultural strength, which flows in part from connections to the land (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007; Parkes, 2010; Richmond & Ross, 2009). This has led scholars and health practitioners to explore land-based approaches to health – such as

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[41] Place is a complex socio-political construction, where embedded values and meanings are attached to localities (Bertolas, 1998; Escobar, 2001; Lefebvre, 1991). The concept of place is defined through different cultural constructions (Bertolas, 1998; Escobar, 2001), and health and place are said to be intricately connected, particularly in an Indigenous context (Wilson, 2003). Critical theories also suggest that concepts of place may be laden with social and historical power imbalances (Creswell, 2004).

ecohealth, environmental health promotion, and human ecology – in regards to their applicability in an Indigenous context (Parkes, 2010).

Declining community health and wellbeing has been linked with the loss of land and physical displacement Indigenous peoples have experienced in Canada (Richmond & Ross, 2009). Scholars have discussed compromised cultural connectedness stemming from the loss of access to traditional foods and medicines, and the therapeutic/spiritual connections to their lands that have been jeopardized (see for example Richmond & Ross, 2009; Richmond et al., 2005; Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Rosenberg, 2002). Such findings, in turn, solidify the need for Indigenous-centred approaches to health, including the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual components (Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Wilson, 2003).

2.10 Indigenous Environmental Knowledge in Western Paradigms

Acknowledging the deep connections of Indigenous peoples to their ecologies, and in light of a world increasingly concerned with the ecological degradation of virtually all natural systems, there has been a growing interest in Indigenous environmental knowledge[42] in recent decades, sought after for its practical inclusion into sound resource and environmental management (Berkes, 1999; Simpson, 1999). However, the way this knowledge is sought after and included into Western paradigms has been regarded as problematic by various Indigenous (see for example Cajete, 2000; McGregor, 2009; 2004; Simpson, 2004; 1999) and non-Indigenous thinkers (see for example Nadasdy, 2005; 2003; 1999; Natcher, Davis, & Hickey, 2005; Stevenson, 2006; 2005; White, 2006). As Anishinaabe scholar Deborah McGregor (2004) contends, the way Indigenous environmental knowledge has been collected merely represents another frontier of colonization as academics, scientists, and environmental managers seek to 'discover' this 'new' knowledge. In fact, TEK appears to be a concept largely thought of as a 'source to tap', defined and invented by non-Indigenous peoples, and therefore largely co-opted by

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[42] In an effort to define and categorize Indigenous environmental knowledge, it is often referred to as Traditional Environmental/Ecological Knowledge (TEK) (see Simpson, 2004; 1999).

the dominant white elite for application to Western disciplinary standards (McGregor, 2004; Simpson, 2004; Simpson, 1999). As McGregor (2004) further explains,

> TEK, as it is primarily practiced in Canada, is an extraction of environmental aspects from Indigenous Knowledge. The methods seek to remove knowledge from the person, its proper place (location), and the process from which it is embedded… TEK, as understood by Eurocentric scholars, can only represent a tiny piece of the whole pie; it is a fragment of what Indigenous people know and live. [Indigenous Knowledge] is a living, dynamic way of life… (p. 402).

A Euro-centric tendency to understand 'the environment' as a separated entity that humans are able to control reflects understandings of the dominant group who not only make much of the decisions around resource and environmental regulations, but also have the freedom and liberty to live away from environmental degradation (Nadasdy, 2005). It is therefore argued that Indigenous Knowledge has largely been used to further non-Indigenous agendas, "in a manner that not only misrepresents [Indigenous] cultures but also silences [Indigenous] peoples" (Wilson, 2005, p. 349). As Cajete (2000) opinions, the "story of [Indigenous] relationships to the natural world is more than can be told in one story and more than a footnote to environmentalism" (p. 82). Following Nadasdy (2005), "we must refrain altogether from using the… ideal of ecological nobility to evaluate indigenous people's actions and focus instead on the specific social relations and cultural assumptions that underlie their actions in particular circumstances" (p. 295). We must look "beyond examples from the past and engage in a process of listening to [Indigenous] peoples speak about their own connections to nature" (Wilson, 2005, p. 337).

2.11 Towards Centring Indigenous Knowledge

> The foundations of Indigeneity are these: values that privilege the interrelationships among the spiritual, the natural, and the self; a sacred orientation to place and space; a fluidity of knowledge exchange between past, present, and future; and an honouring of language and orality as an important means of knowledge transmission. (Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007, p. 50)

It is argued that Euro-western frameworks inadequately conceptualize health and environmental issues in an Indigenous context, due to their tendency to carve Indigenous Knowledge into compartmentalized pieces; instead, there is a need for the processes and

institutions that affect Indigenous lives to flow from paradigms that are Indigenous at their core (McGregor, 2004; Simpson, 2004). It is important to acknowledge that there is not one Indigenous Knowledge paradigm, as individual nations have particular understandings of their worlds. Generally though, the concept of holism is often used to describe Indigenous worldviews; knowledge is not the collection of facts and figures, but an on-going relationship with other humans, the landscape, the rest of Creation, and with the spiritual world (see examples from Indigenous scholars: Kovach, 2009; Little Bear, 2000; Marshall, 2005; Marshall et al., 2010; McGregor, 2004; Metallic, 2008; Simpson, 2004). Indigenous Knowledge is traditionally maintained and advanced by the Elders of society through oral traditions of myths, legends, and storytelling, and by practical teachings and lived experience (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Little Bear, 2000; Loppie, 2004; Paul, 2006; Simpson, 2004). As Mi'kmaw scholar Fred Metallic (2008) describes,

> In Indigenous ways of knowing, teachings and traditions (songs, prayers, stories) are not treated as "sources of information" that can be accumulated for personal gain. Rather, teachings are often shared with the intent and understanding of strengthening our family systems, communities, and our nations (p. 61).

In lieu of the historical misrepresentation and appropriation of Indigenous Knowledge, communities are keen to see their own paradigms inform the decision-making strategies that impact their lives. This requires non-Indigenous peoples working in an Indigenous context to determine the fair and equitable illumination of Indigenous voices (Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; McGregor, 2004). To be an ally to Indigenous struggles means helping to recover and promote Indigenous Knowledges, on their terms, and perhaps signifies an important movement towards decolonizing our current relationships (Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Regan, 2010; Simpson, 2004).

2.12 Part 2: Summary

Part 2 of this chapter has argued that for Indigenous peoples in Canada, their lands are important for sustaining cultural connections, which in turn shapes their holistic physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. However at the same time, the incidence of environmental injustice for Indigenous peoples suggests that the land can also be

detrimental to health. It is essential that issues related to the environment and to health, in an Indigenous context, transcend solely Euro-western constructions and instead (or as well) seek to centre Indigenous ways of knowing. These lessons are important in framing the chapter to follow, which describes the Research Design for this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I will give an overview of my research design, followed by a description of procedural ethics[43], the recruitment strategies employed, methods of data collection, as well as my approach to analyzing and interpreting the data. The final section of this chapter is where I introduce the Knowledge Holders, the individuals who participated in this study.

3.1 Guiding Framework: Community-Based Participatory Research

CBPR[44] provides the framework for this research, as its principles guide the theoretical approach to inquiry described herein. The historical roots of CBPR are most firmly grounded in revolutionary approaches to research emerging from Africa, South America, and Asia during the 1970s, that focused on locally based approaches to knowledge production with a strong commitment towards positive social change[45] (Hall, 2005; Minkler, 2005; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Paulo Freire offered significant theoretical grounding with his ideas of a dialogical method to knowledge production through co-learning, action, and reflection (Hall, 2005; Leung, Yen, & Minkler, 2004; Minkler, 2005). CBPR and related approaches achieved conceptual richness as scholars from the 'margins' – through feminist, critical social, and postcolonial thought – continued to enact alternative forms of inquiry, in opposition to the colonizing or dominant forms of inquiry that were, until then, used on marginalized societies (Hall, 2005; Minkler, 2005;

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[43] While it does not have its own discrete section, *relational* ethics is also very important in the context of the research design described herein, drawing on the work of Indigenous scholars (see for example Brant-Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). I attend to matters of relational ethics by describing my ongoing engagement with the PLNWA, as well as more explicitly in sections 3.2 (as it emerged in my research preparations), 3.4 (through my recruitment strategies employed), and 3.7 (where I introduce the participants in this study).

[44] Within the academic literature, there are a number of different names for similar approaches – such as action research, participatory action research (PAR), community-based research, and collaborative inquiry (Kauper-Brown & Seifer, 2006). Often these terms are used interchangeably with shared underlying goals (Minkler, 2005; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). For congruency throughout this research, I have used CBPR. CBPR is often described as both a philosophical and methodological approach (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003), however aligning with this theory does not provide a particular method per se (Minkler, 2004). To me, the importance lies in how the approach is enacted in individual research contexts – which remains highly variable (Castleden, et al., 2012; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

[45] CBPR is also discussed as having historical ties to the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin, where in the 1940s an action research school was established that sought to involve the people affected by inquiry in the process of research (Castleden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2008; Minkler, 2005).

Shiu-Thornton, 2003). In this way, CBPR is suggested to counter the positivistic assumptions held in much academic inquiry, which have relied on notions of objective knowledge and static truth (Israel, 1998; Leung et al., 2004).

Through a broad spectrum of techniques, CBPR integrates elements of knowledge, participation, action, and reflection in an attempt to create positive social impact (Minkler, 2005; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). The central tenets of CBPR are to: (1) facilitate collaborative partnerships throughout all phases of research, through balancing power within the process and fostering trust between partners; (2) create a mutually beneficial and co-learning process, hinged on the reciprocal transfer of knowledge, skills, capacity, and power; (3) develop culturally appropriate methodologies and culturally relevant theories, that build on the strengths and resources of the community; and (4) engage in a cyclical and iterative approach, that honours both the process and the product of research (Israel, et al., 1998; Minkler, 2005; Shiu-Thornton, 2006). At the core of CBPR is the equitable involvement of community partners in all phases of the research process; this means mutual respect and collaborative decision-making from the inception of proposed research questions, to the methodological choices of collecting data, all the way through to the way(s) in which results are disseminated (see for example Castleden, Sloan Morgan, & Neimanis, 2010; Castleden et al., 2008; deLemos, 2006; Israel et al., 1998; Minkler, 2005; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Shiu-Thornton, 2003).

Amidst a growth in the academic literature, CBPR has become recognized as an ideal way to approach research *with* (rather than *on*) Indigenous peoples and communities, in order to confront the history of unethical research practices (Castleden et al., 2008; Castleden, et al., 2012; Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012; LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009; Schnarch, 2004). Further, when pursuing research under the auspices of a CBPR framework, particular attention must be made towards cultural competence and cultural humility in methodological choices (deLemos, 2006; Minkler, 2005; Shiu-Thornton, 2006). As Absolon & Willet (2004) suggest, "community-based research and participatory action research have provided a launch pad for the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and community participation" (p. 11). Through a

commitment to do research "in a good way" (Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 33), CBPR has the potential to decolonize research relationships with Indigenous peoples (Castleden et al., 2008; Castleden et al., 2012). The ways in which CBPR is operationalized within particular Indigenous research contexts remains highly variable, and although there are a number of tensions (for both researchers and communities), this approach offers promising opportunities – more than traditional (conventional) approaches – to engage in research with Indigenous peoples (Castleden et al., 2012; Koster et al., 2012).

3.1.1 Research with the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association

Backed by a desire to engage in CBPR with Indigenous partners, I was introduced to the PLNWA in October of 2010. As described in section 1.1, my relationship with the women began through a volunteer position with the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. My early role in the emerging research partnership was largely that of a note taker, which gave me the opportunity to listen and learn from the women. I continued to play a role as a Research Assistant and through direction from the PLNWA came to establish a relevant research project that would fulfill the requirements of my graduate work. While my data collection took place over a five-month period in 2012, there was a 16-month period of developing relationships with the women in the community beforehand (see Table 3.1 for a timeline of research activities). Throughout the remainder of this chapter, these activities will be described in detail.

TABLE 3.1: RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TIMELINE

Date	Actions / Events
October 4, 2010	Attended first meeting with the PLNWA
November 1, 2010	PLNWA meeting: listened, acted as note-taker
December 1, 2010	PLNWA meeting: listened, acted as note-taker
January 31, 2010	PLNWA meeting: listened, acted as note-taker
February 2010	Planning began for the *Epitik Mawi-ta'jik*: Pictou Landing Women's Retreat
March 21, 2011	PLNWA meeting: invited by women to determine a plan for graduate work with them
April 19, 2011	PLNWA meeting: discussed my evolving, proposed research plan with the women (initially conceptualized as a youth project); discussed PLNWA issuing me a letter of support to apply for a scholarship from the Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program (AAHRP)
April 29-May 1, 2011	Attended the *Epitik Mawi-ta'jik* – Pictou Landing Women's Retreat: presented to the group regarding my proposed research ideas; received support for evolving research plans
May 8, 2011	Submitted PLNWA-supported scholarship application to the AAHRP

June 6, 2011	Submitted ethics application to the Dalhousie Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (HSREB)
June 20, 2011	PLNWA meeting: communicated a short run-down on Ethics (application contents, process, etc.); collaborative decision that I would also go through Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch; discussed establishing a Community Advisors for my work; discussed evolving plan and ultimate objectives of potential youth project
June 30, 2011	Received revision letter from HSREB (minor revisions required)
August 9, 2011	PLNWA meeting: connected with individuals regarding community advisory committee; discussed evolving plan and goals of potential youth project
September 27, 2011	PLNWA meeting: received women's direction to re-focus research on collecting oral histories
October, 2011	Confirmed three Community Advisors from within the PLNWA
October 27, 2011	Re-submitted ethics application to HSREB with renewed focus on oral histories
November 11, 2011	Received revision letter from Dalhousie ethics (minor revisions required)
November 30, 2011	Granted ethics approval from Dalhousie ethics; submitted proposal to Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch
December 13, 2011	Met with community advisors in Pictou Landing First Nation; PLNWA meeting: received further guidance and direction for gathering oral histories (who / how to approach, photographs & newspaper articles, consider members living in other communities)
January 23, 2012	Received approval from Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch
January 24, 2012	PLNWA meeting: discussed notice of CIHR operating grant funding (included oral history component)
February, 2012	Data collection - February 14 – Oral history interview #1 - February 17 – Recruitment poster (version 1) appeared in community newsletter - February 24 – Recruitment poster (version 2) appeared in community newsletter - February 27 – Oral history interview #2
February 10, 2012	Attended meeting with Pictou Landing First Nation Chief and Council: introduced myself; explained the history of my involvement with the research team; discussed plans to collect oral histories in partnership with the PLNWA; received positive feedback
February 16, 2012	Community dinner in Pictou Landing First Nation (presentation on the research partnership, goals, expectations, etc.): I spoke briefly regarding the history of my involvement with the team and intended research goals
March, 2012	Data collection - March 1 – Attended 'Elders Tea' at Health Centre (introduced myself and oral histories project) - March 2 – Recruitment poster (version 2) appeared in community newsletter - March 12 – Oral history interview #3 - March 22 – Attended 'Elders Tea' at Health Centre (introduced myself and oral histories project) - March 23 – Recruitment poster (version 3) appeared in community newsletter
March 27, 2012	PLNWA meeting: updated women on my research progress and difficulties with recruitment; received further guidance and direction on appropriate recruitment strategies
April, 2012	Data collection - April 11 – Oral history interview #4 - April 25 – Oral history interview #5
April 17, 2012	PLNWA meeting: planning and arrangements for upcoming research retreat; updated the women on my research progress

April 28-29, 2012	Participated in research team retreat (*Our Ancestors are in Our Water, Land, and Air: A Two-Eyed Seeing Approach to Researching Environmental Health Concerns with Pictou Landing First Nation*)
May, 2012	Data collection - May 3 – Ethics amendment from the HSREB for oral consent process - May 11 – Oral history interview #6
May 24, 2012	Met with Pictou Landing First Nation youth member; provided assistance on AAHRP application materials for youth to continue collecting oral histories
June, 2012	Data collection - June 10 – Oral history interview #7 and #8 - June 13 – Oral history interview #9
June 30, 2012	Returned participants' transcripts (included covering letter with contact information)
July-September, 2012	Focused on data analysis and interpretation; began thesis writing
October, 2012 +	Thesis writing
November 4-7, 2012	Preliminary results vetted with participants
November 8, 2012	Preliminary results communicated with PLNWA; feedback received
January 15, 2013	Community dinner: spoke briefly about the oral histories I had collected
March 18, 2013	Conducted oral histories training session with two Community Research Associates (for their ongoing collection)
April-June, 2013	Finalizing thesis manuscript

3.1.1.1 Negotiating a Research Focus

Under the auspices of CBPR, it is integral that the research focus remains "community driven" (Minkler, 2004, p. 687). This necessitates that researchers vet potential topics of inquiry with community partners, in order to ensure they are "high on the agenda" of the community (Minkler, 2004, pg. 688). Rather than imposing a specific topic or theory I wished to 'test', I approached my early involvement with the goal of taking direction from the PLNWA and engaging in dialogue around their research objectives, in order to frame my potential path of inquiry. The iterative process of refining a research focus was facilitated through my involvement in monthly meetings in the community, and further in my participation at the Pictou Landing Women's Retreat[46]. In March of 2011 the

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[46] From April 29 to May 1, 2011, research partners from the larger CBPR project in which my research is embedded participated in the Pictou Landing Women's Retreat – *Epitik Mawi-ta'jik*. The Retreat importantly marked the outset of the subsequent research partnership that would ensue between the PLNWA and my academic supervisor Dr. Heather Castleden. The weekend enabled the PLNWA to share and discuss concerns for their community's health, connect with a number of academics with backgrounds in environment and health-related disciplines, and set community goals, next-steps, and priorities for future research endeavours. One year later, a second Retreat was held after the research partnership successfully received grant funding. The focus of this Retreat was to establish a good heart/mind within the cross-cultural research team. My role in the Retreats was, to a degree, logistical (i.e. booking, planning, liaising as a Research Assistant to Dr. Castleden), but I was also an active participant in the unfolding dialogue throughout the weekends. The Retreats enabled time to 'get to know' each other in a comfortable and colloquial setting, where we learned together, shared meals, stories, laughs, campfires, and more.

PLNWA extended an invitation welcoming my continued involvement with them for the basis of my graduate work. Early conceptualizations of my research plan involved a youth project in the community, as the women had voiced their strong desire to engage their youth on the issues at Boat Harbour and processes of research. For a number of months, dialogue with the PLNWA focused on the role I could play in facilitating this potential youth project (see Table 3.1 activities until August, 2011). In another vein, the women were increasingly concerned with documenting their Elders' stories of *A'se'k*. While many members of the PLNWA had only ever experienced a polluted Boat Harbour, some PLNWA members were Elders and shared stories of the way *A'se'k* used to be as a healthy, thriving, and culturally significant community place. The women felt that as their Elders were passing so too were the memories, and they therefore expressed importance in gathering an archival record of *A'se'k*. As such, while the objectives of a youth project were ongoing, guidance from the PLNWA in September of 2011 led me to focus on Elders' oral histories in Pictou Landing First Nation.

3.1.1.2 Establishing Community Advisors

In October of 2011, three Community Advisors from within the PLNWA were established for my project (the conversation around Community Advisors had begun in June of 2011). My supervisory committee, the PLNWA, and the three individuals collectively agreed upon the Advisory Committee; together, these women had experience working with both youth and Elders in the community (one is a PLNWA Elder herself), and – equally important – I had come to establish a level of rapport with each of them[47]. Ongoing dialogue with my Advisors helped to further refine my path of inquiry. They provided suggestions on participant recruitment, guidance on how to appropriately approach data collection, as well as community and cultural protocols to be aware of. Beyond the integral research guidance, they gave me a home to stay in, coversation over

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[47] Two of three Community Advisors, Mary Ellen Denny and Mary Irene Nicholas, are introduced in section 3.7 as both were also participants in this study. The role played by my third community advisor, Rachel Francis, was more a function of introducing me to members of the community at-large. Also importantly, Rachel opened up her home to me over the course of my 5-month data collection phase (and many visits to the community beyond this). Rachel's offer of a place to stay and her experience working with youth in the community (which was my initial area of focus for research), led to the decision for her to act as Community Advisor.

meals and tea, as well as friendship and familiarity in an environment to which I was an 'outsider' (see Castleden and Kurszewski, 2000; Castleden, et al., 2012; Minkler, 2004).

3.2 Research Preparations

Following Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach's (2009) description of researcher and research preparations (pp. 49-54), amidst my evolving research relationship with the PLNWA, strategies of preparation helped to iteratively refine and reposition my approach. These strategies included: (1) an ongoing literature review; and (2) learning in place. While these strategies were especially important prior to collecting data, their usefulness has in fact been ongoing. As a non-Indigenous researcher tied to an academic institution – an institution with a history of excluding Indigenous Knowledges and peoples, and where colonial power structures remain (Kovach, 2009) – I have continued to consider what it means to honour an Indigenous (Mi'kmaw) Knowledge paradigm and have a decolonizing aim in my research approach; such commitments may not only help to create space for Indigenous voices to enter institutions and processes with inherent power imbalances, but are also integral in my own processes of re-imaging Indigenous-settler relations.

3.2.1 Ongoing Literature Review

A myriad of peer reviewed and grey literature within the fields of Indigenous health, environmental health, and environmental justice have been important to contextually locate this research. Further, I have accessed news stories, government documents, and dominant discourses that have been written over the last 40 plus years regarding the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility and Pictou Landing First Nation's involvement. However, for the purposes of wading through positions on a methodological approach to research – beyond the framework provided by CBPR as explained in section 3.1 – I have also explored an array of literature around Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies. Such scholarship seeks to critically interrogate the very nature of research in an Indigenous context, and has had important influences on my approach to research with the PLNWA.

There has been a recent surge of Indigenous methodologies in academic literature (see for example Absolon & Willett, 2004; Bishop, 2005; Crazy Bull, 2004; Greveline 2000; Kovach, 2009; Pualani Louis, 2007; Simpson, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2001), moving scholarship *on* Indigenous peoples, under the Western gaze, towards that which is done *by* Indigenous peoples themselves, stemming from their own worldviews as they apply to academic inquiry. An aligning facet of all Indigenous Methodologies is that they flow from an Indigenous Knowledge paradigm (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Pualani Louis, 2007); as Smith (2012) suggests, research ought to be "about centring our concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (p. 41). In this way, these methods emanate from the knowledge, language, Elders, ceremonies, stories, songs, and dances of those who enact them. Remaining mindful of the already "dirty" legacy of research for Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012, p. 1), it is important to acknowledge that I do not claim to be *using* an Indigenous Methodology, because to do so would necessitate my entire process of research flow from an Indigenous (in this case, Mi'kmaw) Knowledge paradigm. With this in mind, there are, however, ways in which my approach to research has been *informed* or *influenced by* Indigenous Methodologies and in turn a commitment to honouring and upholding Mi'kmaw ways of knowing.

Indigenous scholars often allude to the importance of the *relational* in research (see for example Brant-Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008); they are referring to relationships of respect with those whom are involved with us in the research journey. Métis scholar Cora Weber-Pillwax suggests that good research comes from the heart; she writes,

> The source of a research project is the heart/mind of the researcher, and "checking your heart" is a critical element in the research process... A 'good heart' guarantees a good motive, and good motives benefit everyone involved. (as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 60)

I seek to approach research with a good heart; to me this requires thoughtful consideration on how, as allies, non-Indigenous peoples can engage in research that is beneficial to our Indigenous partners. This notion of giving back is furthermore a central tenet of CBPR. I also acknowledge that Indigenous Methodologies – which flow from

Indigenous Knowledges – are holistic and place-based (see for example Bishop, 2005; Kovach, 2009; Simpson, 1999). This suggests that knowledge in an Indigenous research context ought to remain tied to the people and places to which it belongs. Rather than a concern with producing knowledge to advance theoretical ideas, we must seek to benefit those people from which the knowledge and the research emanates (Metallic, 2008; Vannini & Gladue, 2008). Although my process of research does not flow from a Mi'kmaw knowledge paradigm, it has been my attempt to learn about, honour, respect, and uphold a Mi'kmaw worldview through the process of research, to the extent that I am able.

Attempts to honour and include Indigenous Knowledges and voices in political, legal, and social institutions – such as the academic setting – are integral in moving towards decolonization (Battiste, & Henderson, 2000; Kovach, 2009). As Regan (2010) articulates for non-Indigenous researchers, engaging in decolonization requires that critical reflection go hand in hand with social action, that "settlers cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: we must experience it…" (p. 23). Cree scholar Willie Ermine (2007) suggests that there is an 'ethical space' that exists between Western and Indigenous Knowledge paradigms, and he challenges researchers to think deeply about this space with more than just an interest to 'do good' (Different Knowings Speaker Series, 2010). To Stiegman (2011) this means that "non-Indigenous researchers are charged with striving to see across radically different worldviews… a task that those of us brought up in the west are not well predisposed toward" (Stiegman, 2011, p. 28). Taking up this challenge is integral to the processes of decolonizing Indigenous-settler relationships, in research and beyond, and actively engaging in visions of renewed and respectful relationships (de Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012; Regan, 2010; Stiegman, 2011).

3.2.2 Learning in Place

Exploring literature has been an important basis for my approach to research; however I have felt a strong need to ground my academic learning in place – engaged with the people, places, and processes that we study. Upon first moving to *Mi'kma'ki*, I

immediately began a weeklong field school where I learned from Mi'kmaw teachers and took part in activities on the land – in *Kespukwitk* (at Bear River First Nation with Frank Meuse), *Sipekne'katik* (at Millbrook First Nation with Gerald Gloade, and at Blomidon – an important site in the Mi'kmaw legends of Glooscap), and in *Piktuk* (at Paq'tnkek First Nation with Kerry Prosper and PJ Prosper). I have engaged in dialogue at monthly meetings with the PLNWA, and more thoroughly at the Women's Retreat and Research Retreat, which has helped to keep my evolving lessons grounded in community-based understandings. I participated in a weeklong summer school offered through the Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program on Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies in *Piktuk*, which brought students together with Indigenous Elders and knowledge holders. I have also made efforts to attend relevant cultural events in order to gain further lessons from Indigenous Knowledge holders from *Mi'kma'ki* and beyond (for example: talks by Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall, John Borrows, Kerry Prosper, Glen Coulthard, Margaret Kovach; the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Knowledge Mobilization Circles; the National Gathering of Graduate Students in Aboriginal Health). These ongoing experiential acts of learning in place have been integral to ground, build upon, and push the boundaries of my evolving understandings, with a great influence on the approach to research described herein.

3.3 Procedural Ethics

Before data collection began, my research design and protocols were approved by the Dalhousie University Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (HSREB) and Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch (MEW) (see Appendix B: Ethics Approvals). My first submission to the HSREB was made in June 2011; after a number of iterations were refined and re-submitted – in consultation with community partners – final approval was received on November 30, 2011. Upon approval from the Dalhousie HSREB, an application was sent to MEW and approval was granted on January 23, 2012. While the Dalhousie HSREB is a standard academic institutionalized ethics process, MEW is specific to the Mi'kmaw Nation. Established by the Grand Council in 1999, MEW seeks to ensure that all research involving Mi'kmaq peoples is done in a way that is culturally appropriate and safeguards Indigenous Knowledge (Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch, 1999).

3.4 Recruitment Strategies

As my early relationships grew with members of the PLNWA, these relationships became the point of departure for recruiting participants for this study as I embarked on a five-month period of data collection enabled by extended stays in Pictou Landing First Nation[48]. From hereon I sought to use purposeful sampling, a technique to recruit participants with particular inclusion criteria that express an interest in the study (Creswell, 1998), and who hold a wealth of information relevant to the purposes of in-depth inquiry (Patton, 2002). Following guidance from the PLNWA, my criteria were loosely defined around an attempt to seek out the eldest community members who would hold the most memories of *A'se'k* before the pollution. Members of the PLNWA also suggested that it would be most appropriate to have younger community members, who were already getting to know me, introduce me to potential participants. Therefore, snowball or referral sampling techniques were also used, whereby recruitment relies on referrals from previous participants (Penrod, Preston, Cain, & Starks, 2003). I was also given a list from the Band office that included all members of Pictou Landing First Nation over the age of 55. I reviewed this list with one of my Community Advisors, and she gave her suggestions as to who would be appropriate to approach for participation in the study. Through this I was able to learn of non-Indigenous individuals who had married into the community, or members that had spent much of their time away from the community. I was also able to get an initial grasp on family connections, which aided in understanding community dynamics and the appropriate younger community members that could introduce me to potential participants. To begin, two Elders whom I had come to know from the PLNWA agreed to participate so I began the oral history interviews with them; they also provided suggestions on other individuals I could seek to recruit. Similarly, members of the PLNWA at-large offered their suggestions for recruitment at meetings in the community prior to and throughout my data collection period. I compiled a list of all the recruitment suggestions I had received, and included notes on younger

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[48] While recruiting participants and collecting data for this study, from February to June 2011, I lived with a family in the community for several days each week. Pictou Landing is roughly a two-hour drive from Halifax, where I have lived over the course of my graduate program.

members that I considered to be of potential assistance for introducing me to particular older individuals.

With guidance from the PLNWA I placed three recruitment posters in the community newsletter at four times[49] throughout February and March (see Appendix C: Recruitment Posters). This was deemed important in order to respectfully familiarize the community at-large with both myself and the research project, and further to encourage Elders' participation beyond those whom were members of the PLNWA. Recruitment posters # 1 and #2 introduced the research project and myself, including a personal photograph and my contact information, and the names of my Community Advisors. Recruitment poster #3 was written from the perspective of the PLNWA, encouraging the participation of their Elders in the study. Recruitment posters (#2 and #3) also shared where in the community I could often be found during the day, should community members wish to stop in and speak with me. In a similar vein, I attended 'Elders Tea' at the community Health Centre twice, in an effort to introduce myself and discuss the research project intentions with Elder community members at-large.

No Elders contacted me to participate independently; I relied on building rapport with potential participants through my pre-existing relationships with members of the PLNWA. My extended stays in the community over the course of five months and the close relationships I formed with younger PLNWA members, enabled casual introductions to parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles that might have an interest in participating. Much of my time during the day was spent with one of my Community Advisors, meeting people around the community and getting members more familiar with who I was and what I was doing there. It is evident that strong relations with members of the PLNWA proved invaluable for recruitment[50]; at the same time, a reliance on these informal introductions also posed challenges. I was relying on my Community Advisors and other PLNWA members whom had their own pre-existing commitments (jobs,

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[49] Recruitment poster #2 appeared on two occasions in the newsletter, 2 weeks apart.

[50] The process of participant recruitment through relational associations is further evidenced in section 3.7, where I introduce all of the participants in this study and provide a short background on how I came to know them.

families, etc.) and thus a different level of time available to invest in the project than I did. At the same time, I found it challenging to initiate rapport with community members on my own, who were outside of my relational networks from the PLNWA.

A recruitment tool (see Appendix D: Recruitment Script) was used upon my introduction to potential participants whereby I first told people a little bit about myself and then discussed what an oral history interview would entail. I would then suggest that I could come back another time to conduct the interview, which would begin by going through a (lengthy) written consent process (see Appendix E: Written Consent Form). Following substantial (and admittedly surprising) difficulties with recruitment roughly three months into data collection (May, 2011), conversations in the community revealed that my recruitment strategies and the process of written consent were not appropriate in this research context (in fact, they were most likely deterring potential participation)[51]. Around the same time, it was decided in consultation with the PLNWA and my supervisory committee that my inclusion criteria need not focus only on the eldest generation, as there were, in fact, younger members of the PLNWA that I had relations with and who held memories of a 'clean' Boat Harbour. Given my difficulties with recruitment and the guidance of my community partners, I amended my recruitment protocol so that a more streamlined oral process would be used for the remainder of the study (see Appendix F: Oral Consent Form). An amendment was applied for and approved from the Dalhousie HSREB on May 3, 2011. It was further necessary that my approach become more open and fluid in that I be prepared to conduct an oral history interview with participants upon our first introduction rather than trying to schedule a future meeting time. For the remaining two months on site in the community, I used this revised oral consent process along with a renewed approach to my engagements with potential participants, and also focused recruitment on community members that had memories of a 'clean' Boat Harbour, regardless of their age, and whom were more likely to participate due to the comfort of our pre-existing relationship.

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[51] Section 4.3.2 of the Findings further explores these difficulties.

Ten participants were recruited for this study[52]. I had a direct relationship with six of these individuals through my involvement in PLNWA meetings, and therefore these participants were familiar with the research topic when formally asked to participate in the study. The remaining four participants were recruited through relational associations, and I approached these individuals using the same recruitment tool over the phone and/or in person (see Appendix D: Recruitment Script). Irrespective of the many informal engagements I had with potential participants, two individuals declined to be interviewed after a specific date and time had been scheduled[53]. No form of honoraria was provided to participants. While participants were given the option of conducting the oral history in Mi'kmaw through a translator, all interviews were conducted in English. In a related sense, during recruitment it was offered that a younger member of the PLNWA, one of my Community Advisors, or a family member of the participant could be present for the interview to help with translation and to generate discussion[54]. Although this study did not aim to achieve a level of data saturation, recruitment eventually ceased in response to my own financial and temporal limitations.

3.4.1 Informed Consent Process

All participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study and the voluntary nature of their participation (se Appendix G: Information Sheet). While all participants received this information in print, it was also communicated orally at the outset of each interview. As section 3.4 detailed, a process of oral consent came to be used, rather than written, mid-way through data collection. As such, five participants provided written consent while five gave their oral consent to participate.

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[52] One of the interviews was carried out with two individuals (a married couple). Therefore while I suggest that ten participants were involved, section 3.5.2 refers to nine oral history interviews.

[53] This is to say that beyond two potential participants declining an oral history interview after we had established a time to meet, there are various other potential participants that I met informally and subsequently explained the project to, but we did not engage so far as setting a time to meet again and conduct an interview. I do not include all such individuals as declined interviews, as there is no way to discern between them not wishing to participate, and me not approaching them further to ask for their participation.

[54] When recruiting, there was an offer for a member of the PLNWA, a community advisor, or a potential participants' family member to join for comfort and assistance with translation. While no interviews were conducted in Mi'kmaw, participants would often use Mi'kmaw for certain words or phrases, and then explain to me in English themselves or ask another person who was present to help translate meanings into English.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

While operating within a CBPR approach allowed me to arrive at a research focus, as Minkler (2004) proposes, "CBPR is not a method per se but an orientation to research" (p. 685). This suggests that working within CBPR necessitates further decisions around the appropriate methods to be used that make sense for the research context. Borrowing from the approach of Narrative Inquiry, this research used story as method and reflexive journaling in order to explore the research goals (which are stated in Chapter 1 of this thesis).

3.5.1 Approach: Narrative Inquiry

Thomas King (2003) said that "the truth about stories is that that's all we are" (p. 2); stories are how we convey meaning in our lives (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005); and as Clandinin and Murphy (2009) suggest, "lives are lived, told, retold, and relived in storied ways on storied landscapes" (p. 598). As a response to positivist and post-positivist approaches, Narrative Inquiry[55] is "first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479); it is "a qualitative approach that uses narratives to excavate deep understanding and meaning embedded in our lives" (Barton, 2004, p. 519). Narrative Inquiry uses narratives – or stories – as the point of departure to understand and explore phenomenon through lived experience (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). As an encompassing methodology, Narrative Inquiry is mindful of the need to explore the process of research, of the relationship between researcher and researched, whereby the evolution of the research story is considered part of the data (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) brings forth the idea of a three-dimensional space within Narrative Inquiry: the personal and social (interaction);

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[55] In the literature, Narrative Inquiry remains broadly defined, as it is interpreted in multiple ways and similar methodologies exist under different terminologies. Narrative Inquiry or narrative *analysis* may also be used to focus more specifically on the techniques undertaken to analyze story (see for example Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1995; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). For the purposes of this research, my approach to using Narrative Inquiry is through its' general application as a qualitative methodology (see for example Caine & Estefan, 2011; Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Sandelowski, 1991).

past, present, and future (continuity); and place (situation). Narrative inquirers navigate this three-dimensional space throughout the process of inquiry:

> As research puzzles are framed, research fields and participants selected, as field texts are collected, written and composed, and as research texts are written and negotiated, narrative inquirers work within that space with their participants. The idea of working within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space highlights the relational dimension of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47)

Similar to the CBPR approach, Narrative Inquiry does not place emphasis on a particular method, instead it emphasizes the process of research by linking reflection and action (Barton, 2004). While stories, narratives, or conversations – gained through interviews – may be the focus of textual data, rituals and ceremonies, dreams and epiphanies, field notes or journals, pictures and metaphors may all contribute to storying the research process (Barton, 2004; Battiste, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Sandelowski, 1991). Further, it requires that researchers respect our participants by continually re-negotiating our relationships throughout the process of inquiry (Barton, 2004). As we know that storytelling is an important means by which Indigenous Knowledge is transmitted through generations, Narrative Inquiry has been considered an appropriate methodology in Indigenous research contexts as it aligns well with honouring the oral traditions of Indigenous culture (Barton, 2004; Battiste, 2011).

3.5.2 Story as Method: The Oral History Interviews

The use of story as a research method – under varying terminologies – has gained use and acceptance, particularly for research in an Indigenous context and amidst qualitative research techniques; these methods honour the process of conversation, dialogue or narrative exchange in order to value participants' voice in the research process (see for example Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2011; Cruikshank, 1998; 1994; 1990; Connelly & Candinin, 1990; Kovach, 2009; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Sandelowski, 1991). Beyond considering story as merely a form of artistic cultural expression, or as "supplementary" anthropological information, contemporary ethnographic research has become

increasingly concerned with "taking seriously what people say about their lives" (Cruikshank, 1990, p. 1). Both the insight gained from the content of narrative, as well as the choice made to illuminate voices that may often be marginalized, can act to challenge "orthodoxies" and "conventional ways of thinking" (Cruikshank, 1998, p. xiii).

As Kovach (2009) argues, "story, life history, oral history, unstructured interviews, and other processes that allow participants to share their experiences on their terms" (p. 82) are integral for research in an Indigenous context, given that orality is an important foundation of many Indigenous societies and cultures (Denzin, et al., 2008; Kovach, 2009). Given this, conversational interviewing was used when collecting oral histories in Pictou Landing First Nation. Conversational, or unstructured, interviews offer a flexible approach whereby questions flow organically from the setting, enabling the information pursued to take shape in whatever direction seems appropriate (Patton, 2002). Wilson (2005) suggests that conversational interviews are more culturally appropriate than direct questioning for research with Indigenous peoples. As Blodgett, Schinke, Smith, Peltier, and Pheasant (2011) suggest,

> Conversational interviews provide the researcher and the participants with flexibility to co-create both *what* is said and *how* things are said during the interviews. This interview approach facilitates a context in which the participants have a high degree of control over the stories that are performed, and the researcher can also respond to the participants' stories. As such, space is created where storytelling is invited rather than suppressed. (p. 524; original emphasis)

Similar to Wilson's (2005) "detailed theme areas" (p. 341) or Blodgett and colleagues (2011) "general guiding topics" (p. 525), an Oral History Guide was crafted in consultation with the PLNWA and my thesis committee, which included a number of broad themes and questions that may be addressed with participants (see Appendix H: Oral History Guide). The foundation provided by the Oral History Guide offered probes for the interview process; however, my intent was to allow participants to direct the flow of topics by sharing stories, memories, and recollections on their own terms. By letting participants direct the conversation, I sought to illuminate Mi'kmaw representations of the Boat Harbour situation, as it was nested in and intertwined with the participants' lives and history. Participants were also encouraged to share old photographs or scrapbook

material, for which an accompanying consent form was used for their release to the project (see Appendix I: Release of Photographic Material).

The oral history interviews became an unfolding dialogue with each participant. As such, the nature of the conversations varied, but always spanned a broad focus. Beyond recollections of *A'se'k* and changes to environment and health, our conversations included details of participants' lives, family, and significant moments in their history. At times - in a number of interviews, old photos, newspaper clippings, and maps became tools around which our conversation centred[56]. Given that I was engaging with Elders, I showed my respect for their knowledge sharing by bringing a gift (most often my attempt at Luskinikn[57]) to my interviews. Four interviews happened one-on-one, while five involved a member of the PLNWA and/or a participants' family member for all or part of the interview. All interviews were conducted at participants' homes. Six interviews were video recorded and two were audio recorded, with the consent of participants. One interview was conducted without recording devices, and for this I took hand-written notes. The time recorded ranged from 35 to 75 minutes; however our time together often exceeded multiple hours. For example, I stayed afterwards to visit and in some instances went for walks, had tea, a snack or a full meal, and smudged[58]. Participants with whom I formed close relations, I visited on multiple occasions. During these follow-up visits I sometimes recorded or took hand-written notes and at other times just visited. With many informal (not recorded) conversations beyond the strictly research-related queries,

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[56] These data contribute to the study as supplemental to the oral histories. Following data collection, I was able to access a map electronically that had been shared in hard copy by one of the participants. Another participant had shared various newspaper clippings saved from the 1960s and 1970s; I was later able to access copies of these (along with other related articles) through archival searches.

[57] Luskinikin, or 'Luski' is traditional Mi'kmaq bread, similar to bannock, which has historically been a staple food for Mi'kmaw. My experiences with Luski epitomize the relational elements of my research, as a point of departure for relationship building and my learning. I was first taught how to bake it by one of my Community Advisors, and it became a gift I brought to participants. Tips were shared throughout my time on how to 'perfect' my recipe and others shared their Luski with me. I also brought it back to my academic peer community to share this gift.

[58] Smudging is a ceremony used by Mi'kmaq and many other Indigenous peoples. Herbs, often sweetgrass or sage, are burned and those involved in the ceremony fan the smoke over themselves in order to cleanse and purify the heart, mind, and spirit. Smudging often takes place at the outset and/or closing of gatherings (see http://mikmaqculture.com/index.php/mikmaq_history_culture/songs).

coupled with processes of learning in place (see section 3.2.2), the scope of my data collection and research experience exceeds beyond the recorded material.

I transcribed all digitally recorded interviews, verbatim. On June 30, 2012 I hand-delivered all participants' transcripts, including a covering letter with my contact information and the opportunity to discuss changes or add more stories, should participants wish to (see Appendix J: Transcript Cover Letter). Electronic copies of all data remained stored on my password protected personal computer. Printed back-up copies of all interview data were kept in a secure cabinet in my academic supervisor's office in the School for Resource and Environmental Studies office at Dalhousie University. As per the university's policy on Research Integrity, these will be kept on file for five years, after which they will be destroyed. Given that this research is a partnership with the PLNWA, and on account of the OCAP principles – ownership, control, access, possession (Schnarch, 2004) – for research with Indigenous peoples, all recorded interview data will remain in perpetuity with the PLNWA.

3.5.3 Reflexive Journaling

Reflexivity may be understood as iteratively acknowledging one's place in and effect on the research process (England, 1994); it is a critical process of introspection, or a "deep inward gaze" into the unfolding of our experiences (Ryan, 2005). Reflexivity allows researchers to acknowledge the relationship between the Self and the Other, critically examine issues of representation, and enter thoughtful provocation into the various layers of research (Nicholls, 2009; Pillow, 2003; Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008). Reflexivity also enables researchers to both evaluate and validate their collaborative and negotiated research designs, which is indicative of participatory methodologies (Nicholls, 2009; Pillow, 2003). In this regard, there is an inherent action element in reflexivity, whereby researchers critically examine the nature of their methodological or epistemic presuppositions, and thus are able to change and adapt – be flexible – throughout the research process (England, 1994; Ryan, 2005). Alkon (2011) suggests that integrating reflexivity into community-based environmental justice scholarship can "allow academics and communities to view [research] findings in the context of the social

processes that produce them, rather than masking the ways that power dynamics can affect research" (p. 134); further she suggests that reflexivity provides a tool for researchers to critically interrogate their reciprocity, the "benefits they provide, hope to provide, and fail to provide" (p. 134). Within narrative research, it is suggested, "inquirers, too, are part of the metaphoric parade… They too live on the landscape and are [part of] the world they study" (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). Furthermore, reflexivity is an appropriate conceptual tool to help researchers understand, acknowledge, and reflect on the particular ethical environments of their research context (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Researchers are, however, cautioned about the over-use of reflexive methods, which may lead to an appearance of "navel gazing" or perpetuating the marginalization of participants' voice (England, 1994; Lawless, 1992). While cautioning researchers away from hyper-reflexivity, which they argue takes too much attention from research findings, Sandelowski & Barroso (2002) explain that:

> Reflexivity is a hallmark of excellent qualitative research and it entails the ability and willingness of researchers to acknowledge and take account of the many ways they themselves influence research findings and thus what comes to be accepted as knowledge. Reflexivity implies the ability to reflect[:] inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share. (p. 216)

Amongst the orientations to qualitative research that this study aligns with, reflexivity is used as a tool, marking a turn away from the researcher as an objective observer (see for example Alexander, 2011; England, 1994; Lawless, 1992; Nicholls, 2009). However as Pillow (2003) suggests, 'comfortable' reflexivity is becoming commonplace in qualitative inquiry; what is truly required is a movement towards *un*comfortable reflexive practices. She suggests:

> … not to situate reflexivity as a confessional act, a cure for what ails us, or a practice that renders familiarity, but rather to situate practices of reflexivity as critical to exposing the difficult and often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar. (p. 177)

Throughout my process of inquiry I kept a journal recording my thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences of navigating the research landscape. I more or less wrote[59] when I felt compelled to – after an interview had taken place, when I felt frustrated, elated, sad, hopeful, or defeated – resulting in over 90 entries. Keeping a journal was particularly useful in that I engaged in many colloquial (unrecorded) conversations throughout this process, and therefore I had a way to document my thoughts on these experiences. Journaling, or 'field notes', are said to be an important piece of narrative research, adding another layer to aid in the representation of the process (Caine & Estefan, 2011) and providing a way of "reading between the lines of [our] own lived experience…" (Alexander, 1999, p. 310). As Wilson (2008) writes: "all stories reflect the storyteller and where they are in their lives" (p. 22). Since I am the one who collected the oral histories and I am responsible for writing this story (thesis), the influence of my positionality cannot be dismissed. As I acknowledge the subjective nature of qualitative research, I therefore recognize myself as part of this research story.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

How qualitative researchers engage in the process of interpretation and analysis often remains rather elusive, yet it is a crucial phase in the research process, dictating how we make sense of our 'data' and subsequently present our 'findings' (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1995). As Aull-Davies (2008) suggests, for reflexive research there comes a time when researchers withdraw from the field, but analysis does not only begin after data collection; instead it is integrated throughout the process of collection. Thus, as Potts and Brown (2005) advise, it is important to "pay attention to… processes of interpretation, reflection, and construction of meaning as the research journey unfolds" (p. 273). Potts & Brown (2005) also remind us that meaning-making – interpreting results and presenting findings – is about power; interpretation is backed by how individuals see and approach the world, or as Kovach (2009) proposes, what knowledges we favour in our approach to research. My approach to this phase of the research remains cognizant of the "risk of 'continuing the imperialist project' of speaking for others" (Wilson, 2005, p.

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[59] As well as keeping a written journal, I took personal messages on my own recording device (my mobile phone) when it was more opportune to do so. I include these spoken entries as journal entries.

341). Writing about this research has been a difficult task, as I have attempted to appropriately ground my academic, non-Indigenous meaning-making in a way that will honour the community members with whom I spoke and a broader Mi'kmaw knowledge paradigm. The following section will provide a detailed description of the analysis techniques I employed, in preparing to share what I learned.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique used to group discrete parts of data into conceptually related categories, or themes; themes may emerge from the data itself (inductive) and/or from researchers' prior theoretical grounding (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I thematically analyzed both the oral history interviews, as well as my reflexive journal entries. Drawing on an inductive approach, I followed Boyatzis' (1998) method of 'swimming' in the data and 'seeing' what emerges, therefore combining an iterative process of reflection and interpretation. These interpretations were influenced by experiences of learning in place, and were traced through my journal entries. Beyond the themes emerging from the data, analysis was also influenced by my ongoing engagement with the relevant literature around Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies, Indigenous-centred understandings of environment and health, and issues of voice and representation in research.

3.6.1.1 Oral Histories

Analysis of the oral history interviews was an ongoing and emergent process whereby themes were established over time and in place throughout data collection. As I conducted the interviews, transcription was ongoing and done within a few days after an interview had taken place. This enabled me to become very familiar with each narrative, by listening through multiple times as I transcribed. I compiled notes on the themes that were being discussed, noting early on that the stories were broad, highly layered, and interconnected. Using a constant comparative method of emergent themes, discrete 'incidents' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or 'units' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) became evident across the interview transcripts and formed the basis of broad story layers. Early iterations of the story layers were continually re-worked and built upon throughout data collection, and laid the foundation for a more exhaustive process of thematic coding later.

Once all of the interviews had taken place, and the transcriptions were completed, I read all of the interviews together. This additional layer of analysis was important in that by this time I was fairly removed (metaphorically) from the earlier interviews. Upon re-familiarizing myself with all of the interviews, together, I wrote out reoccurring topics within the narratives and made note of links between them (similar to a network or flow-chart). From this network and the on-going establishment of story layers, I came up with a coding scheme of 8 thematic areas. These themes included: (1) personal / family stories; (2) what A'se'k provided (activities, livelihoods); (3) traditional Mi'kmaw culture / teachings; (4) changes to land and health; (5) ties to the time period; (6) racism and injustice; (7) future losses and changes / what should happen next; and (8) rights / politics / anger / blame / resentment[60]. As Ryan & Bernard (2003) have suggested, thematic qualitative analysis can involve "pawing through texts and marking them up with different coloured pens" (p. 88); I applied this technique, by colour coding sections of the narratives to fit within particular data codes. The sections of coded narrative were often quite large, encompassing long sections of conversation; however many pieces of coded narrative – while one main colour was applied – also required the application of a secondary, tertiary (or further) thematic code, as many parts of the narratives seemed to fit into multiple themes due to the data that flowed from the un-structured, conversational interview style. When all of the interview material had been thematically coded, I revisited the themes by looking at all of the material within each coded colour, in conjunction across the participants. This helped to ensure that the pieces of narrative encompassed within each theme had sensible relationships. I was also able to gain a fuller appreciation of the repetition and variation within each theme.

3.6.1.2 Reflexive Journal

As Kovach (2006) suggests, keeping a journal aids in "trac[ing our] analysis and personal discoveries… It is a tool for meaning-making" (p. 93). Journaling, for me, became just such a tool, contributing to the process of analysis described above by helping to capture

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[60] As section 3.6.2 will describe, I questioned the effectiveness of these eight thematic layers for presenting the data as findings; as such while this level of analysis did take place, the presentation of the oral histories instead relied on four broader story layers.

my ongoing interpretations. My journal entries provide contextual grounding to the particular themes that emerged from the oral history interviews, written at a time when the experience of interviewing was fresh in my mind. Beyond being a tool for meaning-making as nested within the process of inquiry, my journal entries became data alongside the other forms of data collection, and as a result I conducted a similar thematic analysis as was described above. Analyzing my journal helped to critically interrogate my experiences of navigating a CBPR project with Indigenous partners at the graduate level. As Regan (2010) discusses, highlighting our own experiences (as non-Indigenous peoples engaged in research) contributes to the decolonization process, as opposed to only a focus on producing knowledge about the 'Other'. I reviewed all journal entries (~90) and identified the main themes from each entry into one document. Throughout this process of analysis, I reflected back on my evolving experiences and made note of reoccurring themes as I went. Three particular areas of tensions and reflections became evident: (1) Searching for balance in research; (2) Building a culturally sensitive research approach; and (3) Finding an appropriate voice in the research project. These themes will be discussed later.

3.6.2 Restorying

Holistic-content analysis is a technique of narrative research, whereby the function of analysis moves towards a process of 'restorying' the data (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). As Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) articulate,

> [r]estorying is the process of gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements… and then rewriting the story… [B]y restorying, the researcher provides a causal link among ideas. In the restorying… and the telling of the themes, the narrative researcher includes rich detail about the setting or context of the participant's experiences…. (p. 332)

What results is an attempt to provide an account of participants' lived experience (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Given the research goals/objectives, this form of analysis was a natural fit for this study. As a result, once my thematic analysis was complete, I began a holistic-content analysis in order to restory A'se'k and my experiences with the process of research.

3.6.2.1 Oral Histories

The process of restorying the oral history interviews offers a method of presentation that honours a holistic narrative of *A'se'k*, from a combined perspective of the participants. While the earlier process of coding the data served as an important level of analysis, to present findings along the lines of these eight discrete themes would risk taking elements of the participants' stories out of context from their place in the broader collective narrative. Instead, iterations of four broad story layers – which were continually renegotiated throughout processes of data collection and analysis – emerged as a basis on which to restory the oral histories, shifting the focus to how the narratives all fit together and formed a whole. These story layers are: (1) what *A'se'k* provided; (2) historical / cultural context; (3) changes to land and health; (4) looking back, looking ahead. Pieces of narrative from across the participants were then weaved together in order to reconstruct each story layer (presented in Chapter 4, Part 1).

3.6.2.2 Reflexive Journal

The process of restorying my experiences with research was enabled through a critical interrogation of my journal entries. Confessional tales or autoethnographic/personal vignettes are methods of presentation in qualitative research that allow researchers to characterize their processes of reflexivity (Blodgett, et al., 2011; Humphreys, 2005), and have been suggested as a worthy tool in community-based environmental justice scholarship (Alkon, 2011). As such, the thematic assessment of my journaling that uncovered tensions and reflections on my experiences within the processes of research (described above in section 3.6.1.2), enabled me to move towards restorying my journals into three vignettes (presented in Chapter 4, Part 2).

3.6.3 Making Meaning from the Research Stories

Operating within an inductive approach to analyzing qualitative data suggests that the intent of analysis is to summarize information into main findings, and then move towards establishing theoretical models inherent in the data (Thomas, 2006). At the same time Vannini and Gladue (2010) suggest – in regards to research with Indigenous partners – that the focus of research should *not* be on theoretical knowledge production, but instead

should privilege the voice of the research participants. It has been a difficult process of coming to know how best to present research findings so as to honour those that shared their stories with me. From within a Narrative Inquiry framework, Clandinin (2006) discusses some of these tensions researchers face, upon leaving the field and composing research texts:

> Some tensions are created by the concerns about audiences; others are created by concerns about our participants; still others by issues of form… These tensions emerge and re-emerge as narrative inquirers attend to their experiences of moving from the close relational work with participants to beginning to represent their inquiries for a larger audience. (p. 48)

I am mindful of the cautions about writing down or sharing sacred stories out of place, as there is a history of misrepresentation and misuse of Indigenous Knowledge (Simpson, 1999). Further, I have worried that the compartmentalization of knowledge inherent in the process of thematic coding would extract pieces of data from the larger whole, and that would be incongruent with a holistic Mi'kmaw worldview (Marshall, 2005). At the same time, acknowledging an interpretive Indigenous oral tradition in the process of analysis suggests that it is the responsibility of the listener to take away meaning from the stories we are told (Kovach, 2009); or as Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson (1999) suggests, "with the acquisition of knowledge comes responsibility" (p. 43). This is often evident in the structure of Indigenous storytelling, whereby repetition is common or meanings may not appear to be explicit (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Cruickshank, 1994). I have heard Mi'kmaw Elders Murdena Marshall and Sadie Francis both suggest that knowledge is not ours to keep; it is our responsibility to pass it on in meaningful ways. I am attentive to my responsibility as the listener to make-meaning from, and share, the stories. As a secondary process of restorying, researchers move outward from the data/stories, to question themes, tensions, or patterns to ask "what it means" or the "social significance" of the stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). This process of looking outward forms Chapter 5 of this thesis.

3.6.4 Validating Analysis and Interpretations

Throughout my phase of data collection, regular communication was maintained with my Community Advisors and the PLNWA at-large; I gave updates on my research process

and also continued to receive guidance on how to approach recruitment. Further, many informal discussions were had – with individual participants whom I formed close relations with and visited on multiple occasions – regarding my evolving understandings of the oral history interview data. By November 2012, I had determined the preliminary findings for this research, and vetted these with the PLNWA and individual participants: between November 4-7, 2012 I made attempts to hand-deliver preliminary findings to individual participants: one participant received preliminary findings but did not wish to comment on them further; three participants received preliminary findings and provided further feedback, for which I took hand-written notes; on November 8, 2012 I communicated these preliminary findings at the PLNWA meeting, at which two other participants were present. Therefore, a total of six participants received preliminary findings, giving them an opportunity to comment and clarify items. Vetting my analysis and interpretations of the oral history interviews with the PLNWA and individual participants was an important function of operating with a CBPR framework; moreover, the feedback helped to ground my interpretations in community-based understandings, as well as Mi'kmaw concepts and ways of knowing.

3.7 The Knowledge Holders[61]

In the following section, I introduce the participants involved in this study. In Article 15 of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) *Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (2007), it is suggested that the contributions of community members involved in research should be given due credit. As everyone involved in this study consented to being identified, it is appropriate to give proper respect to his or her participation and the knowledge they shared. As this section will show, building strong relationships with members of the PLNWA played an integral role in coming to (begin to) know the Knowledge Holders.

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[61] At a PLNWA meeting on November 8, 2012, I asked the women how I should refer to the participants as the term Elder has different constructions for each Indigenous community and/or nation. At the same time, I have learned through conversation with community members that not all individuals would be comfortable being identified with such esteem. Further, since my recruitment protocol was opened up to younger generations partway through data collection (see section 3.4), I decided, in consultation with my research partners, to use the term Knowledge Holders. Regardless of the terminology used, the knowledge shared by the individuals who participated in this study has been treated with the utmost respect.

Mary Ellen Denny

Elder Mary Ellen, or Molly, is the Elder that I have spent the most time with in Pictou Landing First Nation. Our conversations and visits have extended well beyond the recorded interview, and Molly has acted as one of my Community Advisors. She has been actively involved in the PLNWA Boat Harbour project, and is often turned to for her guidance on research-related decisions. She has lived in Pictou Landing First Nation her whole life – with some brief time away for school in Cape Breton, and for work in Boston. Molly now has 33 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She has memories of spending the winter months in a tarpaper shack with her grandparents near present day Alma, Nova Scotia. Molly was my first interviewee, as she had agreed to participate during our exchange at PLNWA meetings. After our conversation we had tea and a snack, and she also shared some relevant news articles saved from the 1970s – when the issues of Boat Harbour pollution faced by Pictou Landing First Nation were already beginning to be vocalized.

Sarah Francis

Sarah, or Sadie, is a well-known and highly regarded Mi'kmaw Elder from Pictou Landing First Nation, whom has also been an important part of the PLNWA's research endeavours; this is how I came to know her and she agreed to be part of my research. I have been fortunate enough to have a number of discussions and visits with Sadie, whom has a keen knowledge of Mi'kmaw history, culture, and spirituality. When she was young, Sadie spent a lot of time with her Elders, learning from them. She spent a brief time in Boston, and much longer with the church traveling throughout remote areas of Canada. On the day of our interview, Sadie, Mary Irene (a Community Advisor) and I had lunch together. Sadie got out an old map of the area, which included Boat Harbour before the pollution, and she used it to show me specific places – particularly those that would have been used to collect berries and other foods/medicines. Since that time, I have returned many times to visit with Sadie, gaining more knowledge and stories about *A'se'k* and historical insight from a Mi'kmaw perspective.

Ralph Francis & Lorraine Francis

Ralph and Lorraine are the parents of a friend, Kim, from the PLNWA and I have spent a great deal of time with their family; in the summer I had the chance to visit their camp at *Mali'komijk* – a culturally, historically, and spiritually important island for Mi'kmaq. Lorraine is also a member of the PLNWA. Lorraine is a life-long learner, and also makes beautiful crafts, particularly quill baskets. Ralph is one of the community's male Elders, working with youth at the school and doing other outreach activities (and he has a great sense of humour!). On the day of our interview, we first looked at old photographs – many of which were taken at *Mali'komijk*. Afterwards, I went for a walk with Lorraine and two of their grandchildren around different parts of the Boat Harbour Treatment Facility.

Diane Denny

While Diane is of the younger generation that grew up during the time period that Boat Harbour began receiving the polluting mill effluent, her family was often suggested as important knowledge holders due to the fact that they have always lived very close to *A'se'k*, and thus relied heavily on it for its provisions prior to the pollution. I first met Diane while I was visiting her mother and father, Martha and Frank Denny. Diane displayed an interest in participating too, and thus we determined that I would contact her at a later time. I spoke with Diane on a number of occasions over the next weeks until we were able to determine a time that worked for me to visit her and conduct an interview. Diane was born and raised in Pictou Landing First Nation; she spent a number of years away from the community, but Pictou Landing First Nation is her home and where many of her relations are. Diane shared with me many vivid memories of her time spent with other kids and family members down around *A'se'k*.

Donald Francis

During my five-month data collection period, I lived with Rachel, a young mother of three (and one of my Community Advisors). This family, as well as the extended relations – including Don – have become like a second family to me. There are no words to describe my gratitude for the welcoming I have received from them. Don was born in Pictou Landing First Nation and spent his formative years there, moving to Boston when he was a young man in order to find work. While he was back and forth a bit, Boston would be where he would settle and begin raising a family. There, Don came to be a very reputable Porsche mechanic for many years, before moving back to Pictou Landing First Nation. He is now usually found down in his workshop, where he makes beautiful pieces of woodwork. As an Elder, Don serves as the *Keptin* for Pictou Landing First Nation as part of the *Sante Mawiomi* (Grand Council). On the evening of our interview, I sat with Don in his shop, along with his son Dennis. He is a humble man of few words, but I have learned a lot from him. (He also makes some of the best Luski and Four Cents.)

Caroline Martin

I came to know Caroline through her involvement with the PLNWA. She is an Elder that the women's group often turns to for guidance and direction on research decisions. Caroline was born and raised in Pictou Landing First Nation. She has 3 sons and 8 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On the day of our interview, Caroline and I had tea together while she shared her oral history. She offered her perspectives on the legacy of *A'se'k*, and shared many fond memories of time spent at *Maliko'mijk*. She recalled the way things were in the past, and spoke to memories she has of women from her community always visiting with each other, and also collecting plants and medicines from the areas around their community.

Mary Irene Nicholas

I first met Mary Irene at the women's retreat, in April of 2011, and thereafter formed a relationship with her at PLNWA meetings. With keenness in the research, experience working with youth in the community and connections to older members of the community – Mary Irene agreed to act as a Community Advisor to me. I came to spend much time with Mary Irene. We shared countless meals together, in her home or at diners around the County. She introduced me to other members of the community and helped to explain the research project to community members. Although born and raised in Pictou Landing First Nation – which is where her extended family are – Mary Irene lived and worked for many years in British Columbia. Mary Irene has a real 'green thumb', a passion for gardening. She can sometimes be found on a nearby vegetable farm, and often brings along grand nieces and nephews. While Mary Irene recalls her family as more *Sitmug* people (another area of livelihood provision for Pictou Landing First Nation), she also has memories of spending time at *A'se'k* and offered important insight into the changes her community has experienced. On the day of the interview, Mary Irene and I worked in her garden while we spoke.

Louise Sapier

I met Louise through her involvement with the PLNWA, and had a chance to get to know her more at the Women's Retreat and Research Retreat; I have a vivid memory of Louise and I enjoying the campfire together, watching the flames dance. Though of a younger generation, Louise holds memories of spending time at *A'se'k* with family and other youngsters from her community. As such, I asked her to share her oral history later in the process of participant recruitment. On the day of our interview, Louise helped me to further refine my Luskinikn-baking skills as I helped her bake a loaf. We shared a meal together, and she also brought out some old photographs and newspaper articles to show me.

Martha Denny

I first met Martha (and her husband Frank) in mid-March, when their niece Crystal – whom I had come to know through her involvement with the PLNWA – introduced me. I returned to interview Martha in June, when Darlene – Martha's daughter, also an active member of the PLNWA and from whom I have received important guidance on matters of research – brought me by to speak to her mother (Frank was not able to join us on this occasion). Darlene stayed for some of the interview, helping to initiate conversation and also translate Mi'kmaw words and phrases. Martha is a very spiritual Elder whom is often sought for healing. After our interview, Martha did a smudge with me, then we had tea together and ate some of the Luskinikn I had brought over (a batch that could have used a little more salt!).

The findings I am presenting offer a glimpse into what was learned and gained. The full content of the stories and the experience cannot all shine through, since writing is only one medium of representing knowledge or learning (Loppie, 2004; Vannini & Gladue, 2008). Writing is also inherently linear, which makes it problematic to represent the process and content of a research journey that have been anything but linear. Nevertheless, the following chapter serves as my way of presenting what I have learned, from the stories of the Knowledge Holders and from my experiences with navigating the process of CBPR. The findings are, therefore, presented in two parts. Part 1 presents four distinct – yet highly interrelated – story layers, fashioned into a collective narrative. These voices from the Knowledge Holders explore the historical importance of and changes to *A'se'k*, grounded in a particular cultural context. Part 2 explores the use of 'confessional tales' (see Foley, 2002; Humphreys, 2005; Vannini & Gladue, 2009), or personal vignettes (Alkon, 2011), in order to reflexively analyze my experiences with the process of conducting research with the PLNWA and their community. By presenting the findings as stories, my goal is to honour the oral tradition of Mi'kmaw culture and enact interpretive responsibilities for the listener (or reader).

4.1 The Story Layers

In considering the process of making meaning from my conversations with the Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation, I was intent to find a method of presentation that would honour a holistic narrative regarding *A'se'k*, but would also pay respect to the individual Knowledge Holders. While initially aided by thematic coding, I was cautious of reducing their narratives to separated codes and themes; I wanted to avoid compartmentalizing pieces of the story and thus detaching the voices from the people and places that it belongs. Accordingly, a process of collective restorying began to take shape, which instead shifted the focus to how the stories all fit together and formed a whole. Part 1 of the findings, therefore, presents a free-flowing narrative, written from the position of the Knowledge Holders. All of the voices of the Knowledge Holders are interwoven to create this reconstructed, collective narrative. In some places specific

stories have been highlighted to allow for individual expression to shine through. While I heed the warning of continuing the colonial project of speaking for others (Spivak, 1988; Wilson, 2005), my goal has been to illuminate the voices of the community members with whom I spoke. As Kovach (2006) suggests, "a part of presenting the data within Indigenous research must pay respect, in some way, to the stories and conversations of the people who have shared their knowledge with the researcher" (p. 115). In this way, the focus of Part 1 is on the story in its entirety, through the voices of the Knowledge Holders; not on individual themes picked out from the narratives.

Story layer 1 looks at the abundance once offered by *A'se'k*, in the natural bounty of the area but also in the myriad activities that once took place along those shores. Story layer 2 allows readers to appreciate the broader historical and cultural context that enveloped Pictou Landing First Nation prior to the pollution at *A'se'k*. Story layer 3 explores the changes noticed after the pollution began – to both the health of the land and the health of the people. Finally, story layer 4 explores the legacy of the pollution at Boat Harbour, *A'se'k*, through the eyes of the Knowledge Holders.

We always called it A'se'k…

It doesn't mean harbour or anything, it was just always known as *A'se'k* – before it was
called Boat Harbour – and that was that. You would use the word to say, 'out in the
back', 'the other side', or 'in the other room'. But remember, that Mi'kmaw word was
being used long before our people lived in houses. People think *A'se'k* is all of it; that
body of water they now call Boat Harbour that they use for their treatment lagoon. But
A'se'k isn't where the bridge (*Asoqmkaqn*) is and all that other stuff. It's like: we had
Sitmug, the shore down by the beach… so *A'se'k* was over there – the other side from
Sitmug. And *A'se'k* was like – a part of the reserve eh? So depending on what side of the
reserve you lived on, it was kind of like families were either *Sitmug* people, or *A'se'k*
people. It was a recreational place for us too, but also our livelihood; a playground and a
work area. There was something to do with every season, like an all-purpose place, I
guess.

> *"I heard one [Elder] say it was thought of as the other room, where you get food; or*
> *where food is stored. Like – nature was storing the food there, cause it was there all year*
> *round…"*
>
> ~Mary Irene Nicholas

There was a time when most of our food was from there…

You had people from every family hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. We ate
healthier then. Never went hungry. The salmon and smelts ran in the streams at *A'se'k* –
at nighttime we'd go collect them. So many smelts, the streams were packed with them;
smelts would be going by and you could just reach in and catch them by hand. We'd take
home buckets and buckets of them. And back then we didn't have flashlights – we used
old bottles wrapped in cloth and soaked with kerosene oil.

And there were lots of eels around *A'se'k*, with all of that eelgrass and the salty
[brackish] water. So we would go eeling there, especially in the wintertime. Break a hole

through the ice, making it bigger and bigger as you go around with your spear, feeling for eels along the bottom. The men could go out in the morning, and come back in the afternoon with eels for supper. Careful in the springtime though: one time the men were eeling on the ice in the morning, and by afternoon it had all melted away! In the summer, when the tide was down, we could walk along the shore and look for little holes in the sand, or a small squirt of water. Then we know there's a clam there! So we'd go down with our shovels and buckets and dig up clams; cook them right there on the shore and eat them with tea that the older folks had made in a can over the fire.

"You know, that was safe haven for all of us. It was recreation, it was… well everything that we needed was there eh? There was all kinds of food. Not just in the water, but out of the water too… Now, I asked my grandmother at one point, I said 'Giju what did you guys eat in between seasons?' and she said there was always something there. You know, there was all kinds of animals coming around there to get their water, so they were a regular supply in the food line. Rabbits, porcupines, deer, they'd come in for a drink. And, of course we would hunt them and that would be our survival…"

~Sadie Francis

Everything that we needed was there, the many different things that our people had employed. We hunted animals that would come by to get a drink of water – porcupines, beaver, deer. I bet you didn't know how tasty porcupine is? There's a certain way to prepare it. And the kids would snare rabbits, too. Men would cut wood, haul it across the ice in the wintertime; that's how we kept our houses warm. We even used to get our Christmas Trees there! We did *lots* of berry picking – blueberries, strawberries, bayberries, fox berries, black berries, raspberries… And all those swampy areas were good land for cranberries [see figure 4.1]. Tea berries too, and they have medicine in them that helps with cholesterol. You eat them and build up a base for old age.

Indicates Swamp

FIGURE 4.1: 1879 Map of Pictou Landing, Nova Scotia, Canada (J.H. Meacham and Company, 1879)[62]

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[62] This map was used during Sadie Francis' oral history (which was accompanied by my Community Advisor, Mary Irene Nicholas). As Sadie and Mary Irene explained, the areas around Boat Harbour that are delineated with the symbol for swamp (indicated in the bottom left corner), would have been accessed by Pictou Landing First Nation for the various berries the Knowledge Holders spoke about. It is also important to note that by 1879 Boat Harbour had been named by European settlers (it is suggested that Boat Harbour was named so – sometime in the 1830s or 1840s – for the fact that boat's were built along its' shores (Cullen, Aikens, & Forbes, 1984)); this exemplifies the colonial power to construct and assign place-names (Alderman, 2008) and further how maps can act as a representation of power (Harley, 1989).

We gathered other plants and medicines at *A'se'k*, too. Like sweet grass that grows by the shores; golden thread, found under moss; Lion's Paw, to make wreaths. And that special wood [Black Ash] to make flowers and baskets. Women would collect mayflowers and blueberries – sell them in town for a little extra pin money. We'd pick apples in the forest on our way down to the shore, then dip them into that salty water. Or we'd collect them and bring them home; apples for pies and sauces and foods like that. Oh, and the hazelnuts too! We'd collect them all up and put them in a potato sack. You have to leave them there for a few days, they're drying out you see. Then find a rock to beat the sack against, or use a hammer, to help open them up out of their shell. Those were the nuts that we ate!

Going to A'se'k was like a family outing for us…

We'd go down with our grandparents or parents, and later in life, with other kids. We'd all go down to fish and swim and skate. We loved to swim there in the summertime! Lots of privacy, kind of like a place just for us. Plus it was warm and sheltered there, compared to the other beach [Lighthouse Beach]. You could lie out on your blanket where the sand was. Sometimes a bunch of families would gather there, almost like a beach party and we'd cook up our food right there on the shore. The kids would be playing games with each other, see who could collect the most smelts or dig up the most clams. As youngsters, we would play in the woods with our brothers and sisters, cousins and other kids from the community. And as teenagers we'd go for long walks all the way 'round the waters edge. Almost every Sunday, we'd be seen walking. And if you'd say to your friends, we'll meet you at White Rock – everyone would know what we mean. Rocks big enough we could jump off into the water. We would be out there all day, until it was time to go home for supper in the evening. When it was wintertime we'd go skating. We'd all sit on logs and lace up our skates. Sometimes we'd even have our sleds with us. Our people would go across the ice to Trenton in the wintertime too; walk all the way across there on Sundays for church, before we had a church down here.

"As kids, when the ice was thawing, we'd play tag on the icebergs! One time, a girl came – she had just moved from New Brunswick – and she had a beautiful pair of rubber boots.

There was a spring down near *A'se'k* that was very important, too. They'd say the water was blessed; holy water, we would use it to cleanse ourselves. On Good Friday morning we would wake up real early, even before the sun was up. We would walk down to that spring and say our prayers, drink the water, and even bring some home with us. And the fishermen, some would keep their boats at *A'se'k*; boats for lobster and other fish, or to row across the water for going into town [Trenton]. Or they'd row across and hunt for whatever fur at the time. As kids, we would sometimes stand on the shore as the men went by in their boats, and they'd toss out the fresh catch. We also used to go swimming at the bridge – *Asoqmkaqn*. And Lighthouse Beach was beautiful back then too. Lots of folks used to come for swimming here in the summertime. A mile and a half of beautiful sand, and there was even a canteen, changing rooms, and picnic tables. But at times that beach would be so packed with non-Natives, that there was no room for us! So then we'd just go to *A'se'k*. It was more fun there anyways! And sometimes non-Natives would come down to *A'se'k* too. Everybody was welcome.

4.1.2 Story Layer 2 – 'A'se'k was a refuge': Historical / Cultural Context

Back then…

Our people hunted because they had to. That was how they got their food, how they survived. Every time our people ate, it came from the land around us. It's what kept you alive, and its what kept the people around you alive. They went hunting near *A'se'k*, but they went all over really, all different parts of the County. And back then, when you caught a deer, or a moose or whatever, you share it amongst your community; you gave a piece to every household. Back then it was expected. It doesn't belong to you, it belongs to the community. So the men would be in charge of making the kills and they would cut up all the meat to divvy out to the community. Then people would come by and ask for their portion; the hunter would ask how big the family was, and they would give them a share of the meat. Or sometimes the youngsters were responsible for running it around to each family in the community, making sure everyone got some. Everything was always divided out accordingly, equally, amongst all members of the community. And every part of that moose would be used, for different things. Way, way back, all the fur-bearing animals would supply for us what we needed to survive, things like clothing and bedding.

"*My father was one of the principal suppliers. Every camp had a main supplier, you know who was responsible for the whole community – not just your immediate family. Here, we had three principal hunters; my father would be one of them. I don't know what title we would give him, but he was obviously a leader. And he would tell the guys, 'the community is low on food, now you guys go out and hunt moose, or deer' – big game eh? So, they would go out early in the morning and my people knew the woods so well, so the forest was just like going to town and saying turn at George Street, continue on to Mary's Avenue, whatever eh? That's how familiar they were with it. And if they were successful*

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with the hunt, they'll hang the kill to let it bleed out. They'd head back to the community and tell granddad 'we got a moose, and it's at John's Avenue'. Well grandpa would know exactly where John's Avenue is eh? So he would take 6 teenagers or young men, and their responsibility was to bring out the kill. And grandfather would carve the meat, and for each family he'd make sure they have enough meat there for 3 or 4 meals. The meat was divided accordingly; nobody was left behind. And they always made sure that the Elders were looked after first, and the widows and orphans. I remember, he'd be up all night carving the meat, and people would be coming and going all night long, you know, picking up their supplies and whatnot. The warriors were the hunters – in non-Native society when we say warrior you're thinking of guys running around with guns and shooting people…that's not it. It's the people that are looking after the community. That's our way of looking at it eh? They'll be the last ones to be fed. So they make sure there's enough food there to feed the community if they're going to eat!"

~Sadie Francis

We never used to settle into one spot; we were forced into this, just staying put on this reserve. Before, we would travel quite a bit. Different places we would go to for different seasons. Around Alma, Pictou, Barney's River; New Glasgow and Tatamagouche. We traveled around all these places, and we had camps there. And we could just live off the land wherever we went; we didn't have to ask – there was no business about land claims and things like there is now! Way back, we relied on the rivers and waterways for travel; they were our highways. A place that has been very important to us is Indian Island, or *Maliko'mijk*; our people have been going there for thousands of years. We would gather there for around 2 weeks in summertime; some people would stay much longer. And this place has been important for Mi'kmaq from all over – Cape Breton, Truro, even parts of New Brunswick. It was shared. The *Keptins* would oversee that everything that needs to be done would happen accordingly. *Maliko'mijk* is a spiritual place, but we would also get our smelts, clams, and salmon there, and eels by boat in the summertime. We also collected plants there, for ceremonies and medicines.

"My grandparents, they would move away from here in the wintertime, and they'd go where there's food and material to make baskets and things. We'd go over near Alma. In the woods, we'd have a camp, and we'd stay there most of the winter. We stayed in a shack, a tar paper shack, all winter. With just a tiny little tin stove, and there was one little window. That's where we spent our winters. My half brother and me, we helped with the work, going out for firewood, and bringing it back to the camp. We'd take an axe or a hammer down to the spring, and we'd break the ice to get our water. We were always outside, did a lot of our work outside. But it was fun. And my grandparents went out selling baskets and flowers. They'd pick berries and sell them to the restaurants in town, they'll even sell smelts. I can remember my grandmother, she'd be out there all day through the ice fishing, and then she'll bring them home and clean them, and the next day she'll take them to town to sell them. Bring home groceries. Yup, that's how they lived!"

~Mary Ellen Denny

So back then, we were hunting, fishing, and collecting many things. We did these things at *A'se'k*, but in so many other areas too. We never believed in the ownership of land, that's never been part of our lifestyle. We share it. I got my little spot, you got your little spot, there's no need to fight over it. You don't need *all that space* to feel comfortable.

"When our people started learning about the white man's way we thought it was so funny – why would someone want to own a piece of dirt? … and back then, in non-Native communities, the women were not allowed to participate in any of the deals or decision-making, you know. We're not supposed to know anything. We're supposed to be barefoot and pregnant I guess"

~Sadie Francis

And people used to grow their own food, too. A lot of people had big gardens or potato fields. We could grow our own corn, carrots, and tomatoes; raised chickens, turkeys, horses, and pigs. It seems like everyone was closer in those days. The houses were all further apart, but we were closer. Everyone helped each other out. On Sundays, all the older women would be visiting together; visits were part of the tradition. And folks knew

about the Indian medicines that came from the woods. We used to get it. We used to have a lot. The women were the leaders of our community, in lots of different ways. They decided when to establish a family here or there, when to move on. Our way of life was a partnership; if an issue needed to be discussed, it was the whole community that was involved. Issues were brought to the floor and discussed as a community. We have a connection to these places; our ancestors have occupied this space for thousands and thousands of years. The spirit of our people is here. We feel connected to our ancestors in this way.

Hard times too…

There were hard times too, or – just different times altogether. We hunted for our food, because that's all we knew I guess. Collecting firewood for warmth. Going out to get our water, for drinking and cooking. Eventually we'd start getting electric stoves, and then running water. We didn't have running water 'til about 44 years ago. Didn't go to Sobey's much – cause nobody had money for that. Our people would be going into town selling their baskets, mayflowers or berries – that's how they got their little bit of money. And that money you'd get wasn't a lot. Sometimes we did things on barter; get things like milk or eggs in exchange. You'd bake your own bread, Lusknikn. Always baking Lusknikn, sometimes more than once a day. Seems like a lot of folks were gone around that time, too. Gone down to the States for work. Or maybe looking for a better life, I guess. Blueberry raking, potato picking. Quick money, but lousy money. Some of the men could find odd jobs around the area, as labourers mostly; cutting pulp wood, working at Trenton Works or the sawmill, that sort of thing. It would help get us by. And they used to send those 'pre-fab' [pre-fabricated] houses down for us; but they weren't made very well. Wintertime, and the snow would come right through the joints in the walls.

"Back then they were mostly… trying to survive. Summertime, they go to Maliko'mijk, or over here and get crab, scallops, you know, by hand. Trapping lobster and all that kind of stuff. Three or four people worked the power plant – Trenton Works. Ok, back track a little bit. When I was a small boy, you know where the water tower is, behind the bridge?

Used to be a sawmill there. And they did pine trees. I remember taking lunch to my dad, and to his father – my grandfather. I was small. And I remember seeing a whole bunch of saw dust, as high as two houses. Obviously somebody was making money. Not us. We're just the labourers. They were using us! Same thing with fishing, they were using us… We coulda fished for all kinds of stuff but nobody would tell them. White people were doing it. And our people didn't know it. They did! We didn't. So, who's wrong? We had the right. We didn't get it. I don't know how you explain that. I saw my dad working so hard, to get so little. And he was good at what he was doing. You know, maybe I learned from him. Not maybe – I learned from him. Work harder. You know, to get respect. As a human being…"

~Don Francis

That's how they treated us, I guess…

Back then, our kids were being taken away to Residential School. They would come down to our community, and just take them. But *A'se'k*, that was like a refuge, a safe place for all of us that the Indian Agents wouldn't venture out to. Our people were always down there, using that place, so our parents knew we'd be safe there. Those Indian Agents, they were supposed to be working for us. But they were never really fair. They weren't really working for us. And back then, Native people weren't even allowed to sit in the bottom at the Roseland movie theatre in town. Native people and Black people, we had to sit up top. On trains too, we were only allowed in the one coach, which was nothing fancy. Don't even know what all the other ones looked like, that the non-Native folks were allowed to move around throughout. Then when they decided they wanted to dump that effluent into *A'se'k*, everything was supposed to be 'ok' there. The water was supposed to stay good, we were told we could still swim there. In fact, they told us about all the wonderful things we could do with that area. There was no newsletters or anything going out, it was really the Chief and the Councilors that looked after whatever had to be done. Back then, our experience with our Chiefs, our leaders, was always honesty. We had no reason to assume otherwise, until we learned of the White man's way – *aklasie'wey*. Some people came down and talked to Chief and Council, took them to a place somewhere in New Brunswick where they had another mill set up. They took them

down to that lagoon or whatever, and one guy even took a cup and drank water out of it saying, 'look, there's nothing wrong with the water'. There was all kinds of fish there and good drinking water still, so our people said, 'oh – if that's the case, we can handle that'. But that mill wasn't even running yet. Of course the water was good, 'cause they weren't dumping anything there! And why dump here? Why not the East River, Pictou Harbour? There was probably less monies involved, or they thought 'let's just give them a dollar, and they'll go for it'. So I guess the Chief got duped really; forced into signing that agreement. Some crooked people. Dishonest people. I guess they'll do anything to lie, eh? But that's how the Indian Affairs and the non-Native society has been, you know. Their main goal was to get rid of the Indians. If they wanted to do it this way, they would do it this way. It's all about the mighty dollar for them.

> *"We'll never know… well, I guess they didn't want to put it anywhere else in town. Lets put it near the Indians – Native people close by, we'll dump it on them! Give them some money, and let them deal with it. But it's always us that got dumped on. Years ago we had – you know that street, Eagle Road? Right across from that street, that's where they had their dump. And everybody from Pictou County came and dumped in there! And we had rats a foot long! Ya, that's where they had their local dump. Everybody, stores and everything, dumped all their junk in there. Close to the Native reserve. It wasn't our land at the time, but it was close by. And then they moved it to New Glasgow, near where the Black people are. That's where they had their next garbage site! Ya… so… that's how they treated us I guess…"*
>
> ~Mary Ellen Denny

4.1.3 Story Layer 3 – 'After the mill went in…': Changes to Land and Health

It seemed like after only a few days, and everything was ruined…
At first, there was nothing to it really. Just a mill. Until we started noticing the changes, and it got worse and worse. Shortly after the effluent started flowing in, we went down to see the effects. We saw all the fish with their heads sticking up out of that water.

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Trying to survive. But it was just eating them alive. Eels too, it was like they were trying to swim out all the streams, get away from that pollution. Not sure where they were going, but they wanted to get away from that place. So many fish died soon after it opened, so we know it was once full of them. What a pitiful, heartbreaking sight it was. The rabbits and the deer – they seemed to almost disappear. And if they did hunt one when they'd clean them, they had lumps. We've heard tell of people that have seen animals with lumps, deer with such large cysts on their faces that they could hardly see. People have said that if an animal tried to go in there for a drink, it wasn't coming out. One fella's dog was even said to be taken. It's like something just kills them right away, smothers them. So we knew, that something was going on over there. And where there used to be a nice shore at *A'se'k* that we could walk along, there isn't anything now, because that place was flooded when they dammed it. The water used to go in and out with the tides, but not anymore. So it looks very different there now. All those swampy areas that we used to get our cranberries, all that's under water now. There are a lot of people that have said they lost a lot of land because of that, non-Native people too. Within just a few years, all that water would start turning brown. And the kids that would swim at *A'se'k*, they noticed the water starting to get warmer. They swam there right until the end, but started to come home with these little red lumps on them. And as the months went on, the water just got dirtier and dirtier. All those woods around there that used to be clean, today it's like it's all dead. You can see dead trees along the shoreline, and it seems to be spreading. Where we used to know about Indian medicines around there, we don't even know if those are good either because everything is settling on to the leaves, and we don't know how much damage is down under the ground. At first, we were still getting our clams at *Sitmug*, until people starting saying it can't be safe there anymore either. And the water at the beach, people started to say it wasn't safe to swim there either 'cause that brown water would come in there as it flows out from Boat Harbour. And there's a strange foam that gathers there, too. For a while we tried to swim there still. Couple years after, kids went down there to swim, but when they came out they were all full of a rash, they'd come out with little red bumps all over them, too. If youngsters are going to swim at the Lighthouse Beach now, we'll say 'you better go take a shower right away'.

The pollution isn't just in the water; it's in the air too…

There's this fog, or a mist, that seems to settle in certain areas. Especially in the evening. It's like a wall. And it's not like a normal fog, 'cause it comes with that stink. Sometimes it can be so bad, summertime we can't even sit out on our patios. And of course that mist, that fog, it has to settle down somewhere. That pollution turned all our houses black. Looked like they were all covered in soot. The church was really bad, and the old schoolhouse. They told us it was the sulphur in the air, it was drawing the lead out of the paint and turning our houses black. Back when there was lead in paint, that sulphur would be sucking the lead to the surface, and turning all the buildings black. And so they gave us money to repaint our houses, with paint that didn't have lead in it. If we hang up our clothes outside, we'd have to be sure to bring them in before a certain time, or else that stink would get in them; and you'd have to do your wash again, just to get that smell out. And then all those mosquitoes – you used to see clouds of them! There was too much standing water there, before they put the aeration system in, so it was just breeding mosquitoes.

"I had this white woolen blanket that I took real good care of, 'cause it was a nice blanket. And I would wash it by hand and make sure to hang it to dry outside. One night, I had to leave it outside over night 'cause it was still wet. But it was foggy that night. Next morning, that blanket had turned yellow. And it stayed yellow! Couldn't get it out. So I don't think it was just the fog, it was something from Boat Harbour…"

~Mary Ellen Denny

So now everything's dead over there, from the pulp mill…

Everything's changed. Things don't grow there, animals don't run around anymore because they've got no place to drink. Few places there might be apples, but they are right small. Or blackberries, but they're no good anymore. And the flowers or shrubs that we plant, seems like they don't grow well, or last that long, compared to up town. Even tomato plants, seems like that mist settles on them and gives them bad spots. People have said, 'its in the air, its in our land, it's everywhere'. It's like a dust, a mist. And every

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time you go outside you breath that in, you step on it, you sit on it. It's like there's no getting away from it.

> *"We're surrounded by so much pollution in Pictou County in the first place. You got your place where they're making the tires, Michelin; you got you're place in New Glasgow where they're making steel; you got your pulp and paper mill; you got your power plant there in Trenton. I mean this is only Pictou County! And these are all pollutants! So, it's like Pictou County's just one big polluted area. In such a small place. And for us, here, it's like we're sitting on an island, surrounded by pollution. One day when the stink was real bad, I turned around and I said, 'our air is polluted, our water is polluted, our land is polluted…might as well say our minds are polluted!' So I ended up with those four. And they're all connected, really. Water is polluted, air is polluted, and the land is polluted. And [we] are polluted. Somewhere in our beings [we are] polluted"*
>
> ~Diane Denny

When the land went, so did our health…

With the pollution at *A'se'k*, our people were forced into a different lifestyle with different foods, unlike the ones we had relied on all our lives. And it's not just the rabbits getting those lumps, its like our people are now too. A lot of kids have breathing problems, asthma, nosebleeds, sinus headaches; and it's like that stink does something to your nose. And there seems to be a lot more cancer; growing up, we never knew what cancer was. But all of a sudden there's so many different kinds of cancer down here. When it first came up, we wondered 'where did it come from?', 'cause nobody ever had cancer here before. Now there's leukemia, and breast cancer, lung cancer, and brain cancer, ovarian cancer and stomach cancer – that we never seemed to have before. Looking at all these health problems, we can't help but wonder if that pollution is weakening our immune systems. There's not many elderly people left, and it seems like no one passes away from natural causes anymore. There's not one healthy Elder left, it seems.

"I would say one of the things that [has changed] would be the diet. Of course that's been changed eh? Because there's no more fishing and hunting, cause that was also a hunting area too eh, all around it. You know all that is gone, its not available to us anymore. So we had to change our diet. The things that we were accustomed to, thousands and thousands of years, those were all of a sudden not available to us anymore. We had to resort to another way of life. And now we have people that have diabetes, that's the main one! There's also the heart disease, all the heart conditions…"

~Sadie Francis

4.1.4 Story Layer 4 – 'Lost, gone, and changed': Looking Back, Looking Ahead

It's too bad what happened there; such a beautiful place…

So now nobody goes down there to hunt or trap, get eels or smelts or anything. They don't snare rabbits, or fish down there. There's no place for kids to walk along the shore, or swim in the summertime. Nothing grows there or lives there anymore, and if it did – we wouldn't trust it anyway, from all that pollution that's settled. Our community has lost their trust in that food. If someone offered fish from around there, there's no way I would be sharing a meal with them. So the trust is gone, but also our connection seems to have suffered.

"Blueberries, there was so many blueberries; and of course all this stuff was clean! If you went up the other way, there was more apple trees – we had so many apple trees! But today, now ever since they put the Boat Harbour [pollution] in, you can hardly see any apples anymore on this reserve. And everything now has been left and dropped. You don't see men running around anymore, like one time there would be men doing carpentry, going around chopping down trees, you know looking after the landscape and stuff. Seems to me like when they put that Boat Harbour [pollution] in, they just totally forgot about the landscape and everything; our apple trees are dying, or are just about gone. There's no more cranberries, there's no more blackberries, there's no more

They go elsewhere now; it's like all those things that our people used to do at *A'se'k* and *Sitmug*, they have had to replace with other parts of Pictou County, or up in Cape Breton. They go further away to get those things now. And we begin to wonder if it has changed the way we treat the land. Look at the litter on the road. And after the pollution, when the water was going bad, and we had that smell coming in, and it was staining peoples laundry – there was anger, there was blame, and that divided families, divided our community. It became hard for our people to have decent conversations with each other anymore.

Food from the land was like a safety net. Back then, when the pollution started affecting things, that's when we really felt the impact. Back then, *A'se'k* was something our people could fall back on; when the groceries were running low, we always knew we could get food from there. But when the pollution came, we didn't have that anymore. Now we go to Sobeys for all those things, whereas years ago we had tons of it right here. So our diets changed, there's no more hunting, no more fishing down there. We've lost all those things at *A'se'k*. And the Indian medicines, it's like no one knows about them anymore. People don't know about the trees, about the things we would use to make medicines. After the pollution came, we just consider everything down there as no good. We don't hear people talking about them anymore, see them going out to collect them. And the young people, our youth, aren't out there learning in the woods from their Elders. Learning to get firewood, collect food, how to make tools, and things like that. It's like the interest is gone.

Most of our kids don't know how to hunt or trap; survive off the woods like we used to know. In Eskasoni [Mi'kmaw community in Cape Breton], they still fish outside their yards, 'cause they're right next to water. They can just go down the bank and fish; go up the mountain to get their berries and whatnot. But here, we can't get anything anymore. Everything is gone. And its like, we're getting poorer while Scott paper, that mill, is getting richer.

We have those lands back there, but we don't use them either, because it's too polluted. And we can't even cut our own wood from there. That's the government way, we've been told we can't even use our land for the things that we need. Wood back there is just going rotten, because they say we can't cut it. Our beach that was so often visited in the summertime, where we had a canteen and change rooms and all that potential. It all had to be given up because that beach was spoiled too. We wonder what could have been there. And around *A'se'k*, just think of all the beautiful things we could have done down there. That area would be sought after now, as waterfront property. Summer cottages. There could have been lots of things developed there. Our kids would have had lots of fun down there. Just imagine all the things we could've done down there with the kids, like nature walks and all that. But now it's like there's no place for the young people to go anymore. The non-Native community too, from up the road there, they lost out as well. Whereas we can sue the government, they can't. But they're in the same boat as us, eh? They can smell it over there, too. They used to go down the water too and fish

through the ice and all that, but they don't do that anymore either. So it's not just us that lost out. Everybody, all around here to Trenton lost out.

> *"Everything they used to do, they can't do; what they were brought up on, it's been taken away from them"*
>
> ~Don Francis

We had something good and sacred here[63]**…**

It's hard to imagine, the many generations before and how they lived. How much they enjoyed that place, and relied on it for their livelihoods. And it's sad how the stories are being lost in the older generations. There are older people with all those memories, but they're not around anymore. Wonder if they are being kept alive in the younger generations? For those of us that remember a clean *A'se'k*, it's getting harder and harder to talk about it. As the older generations pass on, there are less people around that have these memories. It's hard to explain to people who didn't live when *A'se'k* was clean, just what that place was like. You had to live it to know. But we can tell the younger generations about these things. Share our stories and share our knowledge, so that the memory of a clean *A'se'k* can be preserved. People were spending more time outside then, out on the land. You had to get your own water, your own wood for the fire. Nowadays its like everyone spends their time inside, on their computers and phones. It's hard to even speak to the youth. Are they listening? They're more concerned about their gadgets. But they need to hear these stories, hear from the older generation.

History is not meant to be kept in a closet; it's not doing any good there. It is meant to be shared. It is important for people to know about it. Everybody in the community should know. And the younger generation would be interested in hearing about all the things we used to do down at Boat Harbour, at *A'se'k*. And we need a way to *show* them, too.

> *"I had a dream once. I was only young, but I dreamt about Boat Harbour, actually. I dreamt it was clean, and our community became rich from it. And everybody worked*

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[63] As these words are also drawn upon for the title of this thesis, I wish to pay respect to Sadie Francis for sharing them with me.

together, in my dream. It was a wintery scene, and it was a summery scene. And nobody owned cottages there 'cause it was like a business. You could rent them out for the year, or the summer, or whatever. They would have summer cottages there and you could go boating and do whatever. But also in the wintertime, because you could do cross country skiing, and ice fishing… So people were working all year round, making a living. There wasn't that much of, you know what I mean, like people weren't home just Facebooking or whatever right? They were busy 'cause people could also be at home – be a working mom and home or a working dad at home doing their crafts…"

~Louise Sapier

There hasn't been any real research done on it. We know [the pollution is] there, they know its there, but it's almost like we need a doctor to confirm it is harmful. It needs to be put down on paper. That's the white man's way, the government's way – *aklasie'wey* – of proving what we've been saying all these years. Positive changes can be done. And they should be. It might take forever, but it can be done. Maybe someone coming in with a different style, looking at it from a different angle, can piece things together. Maybe it's all correctable. Maybe if someone looked at the treaties properly, we could find a way to shut this place down. It's time that mill is shut down. Or at least, they should be dealing with their own mess, not dumping it on us anymore. Leaving it for us to deal with. There have been many plans to clean it up, but nothing ever seems to happen. It's hard to think that things will be cleaned up anytime soon. Not in our lifetime. Just think about all that junk that has accumulated there. Where are they going to put it? It'll take forever for it to come back the way it was. And I wonder if our community could ever get that connection back, with the land and with that place. Our people have become very cautious about that place. There is so much mistrust, it would take a lot to change. It would take an awful lot of convincing. But wouldn't that be wonderful? Maybe years down the road, generations after us; maybe they will see things cleaned up.

4.2 Navigating CBPR as a Graduate Student: Three Vignettes

I came to Dalhousie University to undertake graduate studies with Dr. Heather Castleden, having identified a desire to work with her on something of mutual interest but without ties to any particular research project, relationship, or issue. I had a vague idea of the desire to work with Indigenous peoples through a participatory approach related to natural resources or environmental issues. As fate would have it, I became involved with the PLNWA just a few months into my new academic pursuit. Upon beginning my course of study with Heather, I was keen to operate within a CBPR approach to research (see section 3.1.1 for a description of this approach). Heather also encouraged me to keep a journal throughout my process.

I have already committed some of this thesis to the story of how my particular research project came to be, which was important context for framing my research design (see Section 1.1; 3.1.1). The remainder of this chapter seeks to further engage with my experiences of navigating a CBPR project, articulated through a critically reflexive interrogation of my journaling over 30 months. As Alkon (2011) used reflexivity to create personal vignettes on the process of cross-cultural environmental justice research, this section attempts to recreate my experiences with the research journey through a series of three vignettes. The first vignette looks into issues of balance in research, and where I struggled to find it in various dimensions of my research process. In the second vignette, I reflect on the difficulties of building rapport with participants and the need to better align my approach in a culturally sensitive manner. I close this chapter with my third vignette, where I explore my realizations of the perhaps lofty goals I had for CBPR and what it means to me to work *with* an Indigenous community.

4.2.1 Vignette 1 – 'When I'm here I want to be there; when I'm there I want to be here': Searching for Balance in Research

Determining my particular research focus was an evolutionary process with the PLNWA. On account of my previous experience working with Indigenous youth, I had initially conceptualized an arts-based, environment and health project that would engage Pictou

Landing First Nation youth on the issues at Boat Harbour, including an element of seeking out the historical importance of the area before the pollution began. Bringing together youth from the community to talk about the issues seemed an important pursuit; the PLNWA were (and continue to be) keen on bringing awareness to their youth about the issues associated with Boat Harbour and getting their youth involved. As my relationships grew with the PLNWA, I attempted to align my potential research with community momentum; a modest attempt was made in the community for youth to begin gathering historical stories from *A'se'k* in the summer of 2011, and so I thought there might be an opportunity to continue this work through a youth project that would form the basis of my graduate research.

…the idea of community based research is so hard still…their questions about why will this information be helpful to these women… (June 20, 2011)

…good to get to the community as much as possible – building stronger relationships – getting good leads on who to talk to about my project…the big thing I'm realizing here is that it seems like it's going to be important to align myself with community momentum… (August, 2011)

I tried to stress that I would love to be able to give my time and resources to carry out some of these community goals further… (August, 2011)

Issues of feasibility and usefulness of my envisioned research plan were, however, called into question through the guidance and direction I received from the women (sometimes explicitly but also sometimes in present but unexpressed ways) and my early experiences in the community. There was an apparent divide between an academic-based research pursuit coming from the outside, and what it could offer 'on-the-ground' for the community. At an early PLNWA meeting, one of the women rightly questioned how I planned to teach their youth about Boat Harbour, as an outsider, when the research team was still unaware of all the issues at play. Further, the women wanted to know what a youth project would seek to accomplish. The idea of developing a curriculum piece so that the participants may get high school credit was suggested, or that youth involvement

would result in the transfer of tangible research skills to help with future employment or educational pursuits. However, my ability to deliver such things remained a looming question. While the idea seemed 'neat' to me, sitting around and recording the perspectives of Pictou Landing First Nation youth on environment and health issues, this did not hold value – or perhaps pertinence – at the community level, and was, therefore, not somewhere the women were ready, willing, and able to direct their own resources. In essence, though not outright saying it, the women were politely saying 'no' to my initial ideas of research.

With further direction from the PLNWA, my research focus shifted towards oral histories. As their Elders were passing, the women were concerned with collecting stories of *A'se'k* from the generations who remembered it as a healthy tidal estuary and a culturally important community place. With a refined research focus, I had a renewed sense of enthusiasm for gaining community support to conduct research. Still, when I would speak about my research intentions with community members, I admittedly struggled with articulating the simple question of what *exactly* my research intended to *do*. This in turn presented a challenge for maintaining momentum. It is not accurate to suggest there was disinterest at the community level; it is unwaveringly clear that the PLNWA see importance in the historical memories of *A'se'k*. However, garnering and maintaining momentum for my personal involvement in the process of collecting these memories, being that I was coming at it as an academic pursuit, was difficult. Perhaps I came with unrealistic ideals that I would be working alongside community members, with their unwavering support and guidance – unrealistic in that these women had their own jobs and many other important responsibilities and commitments. I was hyper-conscious of ensuring every research choice I made was supported by the women, afraid that I may come across as one of 'those researchers' who co-opt the process of collecting Indigenous Knowledge without understanding context or lived realities.

Really need to be clearer about my research. But I struggle with this, because I feel like I am always worried about making sure it is CBPR, trying to be so flexible and open to

changing my research. Should I be more hard-lined? Can research actually be beneficial for the communities we work with? (February 6, 2012)

The thing is – I need direction from the community, but don't want to take away too much of their time… (February 6, 2012)

As I struggled with not having clearly articulated research goals and intentions, coupled with uncertainty about how to build rapport with potential Knowledge Holders, personal tensions also mounted.

This week I have been feeling very BLAH! I didn't go up to Pictou Landing on Monday, was going to go Tuesday, then switched it to Wednesday morning. Its like an internal battle – I don't feel at home there, feel out of place, like I'm not getting much done when I'm there, so I want to just be able to be at home – but at the same time, I know that I have to be THERE to get interviews scheduled, to get people comfortable with the idea of talking to me… Maybe I am trying to move too quickly. I like to think that things are just going to fall into place…. roll out quicker, but it doesn't seem to happen like that for the community… It's that whole dichotomy between the project being research for my thesis, and it being a community venture, that isn't going to just end when my thesis ends. So how do I reconcile these things? (March 6, 2012)

As my research continued to unfold though, my relationships with members in Pictou Landing First Nation also grew and my personal tensions with being 'away' began to involve being away from the community.

Saturday night 'Facebooking' and all I seem to care about is what's going on with the PLNWA ladies / in Pictou Landing. When I'm here, I want to be there; when I'm there, I want to be here… (May 19, 2012)

I have developed friendships with people in Pictou Landing First Nation that extend beyond my strictly research-related endeavours. While the literature tells us there is a

time for researchers to'withdraw from the field', this doesn't align with withdrawing from friendships. A conversation with a friend in Pictou Landing First Nation brought these tensions to the fore early on; she seemed to be checking that I wasn't just going to leave once I graduated, that I would maintain friendships. I seem to recall her talking about another researcher that had once been in the community…

Getting funny feelings about 'leaving'; what kind of taste of me will they have in their mouths? How am I / this research perceived? Am I going to be viewed as someone (another someone) that just came, got what they needed, and then left? What about the conversations I had with people that weren't recorded; aren't considered 'data'; stories I've been told that aren't exactly about Boat Harbour? […] How can I explain myself to the whole community – thank them for letting me stay here, sharing their knowledge, present my 'findings' in a valuable, safe, and useful way? And what about the kids, the family I have been living with? How do I come back, just visit, just be a friend and not a researcher? (June 19, 2012)

Pressures of academic obligations, while working in a community setting, increasingly grew as an area of tension in my research journey. While my academic colleagues had projects that seemed to be very clearly defined and articulated, I struggled to find the same clarity. I can remember being at one of my first interviews, and the participant suggested, 'you don't have to get it all at once; you know you can come back for a chat with me whenever'. As I asked about where I could go for other interviews, she suggested that I 'would get bits and pieces of the story here and there'. It seemed that a community-based conceptualization of how to understand something like the historical importance of *A'se'k* happened in a very unstructured way, yet the researcher in me was concerned with conducting 'enough' interviews that adhered to an 'ethical research protocol', so that when it came time to textually represent what I had done, a certain degree of academic legitimacy would be evident. I knew that issues such as 'rigour' or 'validity' did not weigh heavily on the PLNWA – whose desire was (among many other things) to build a repository of their community's oral histories – and why should they care about those academic things?

I got to thinking about morals, goals, why I am doing this research, why I (as a white middle-class researcher) should be doing this kind of research… (January 18, 2012)

I think that the women themselves should be collecting stories from their own Elders. Visiting their mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts – and recording their conversations themselves (June 8, 2012)

In myriad ways, I struggled with understanding the role I should be playing in research with Pictou Landing First Nation. Given the nature of my unfolding research – engaging with historical knowledge in the community and with members of the older generation – I oftentimes questioned whether I should be the one undertaking this research. I had to balance my understandings, perhaps quixotic notions of traditional knowledge – that were, in fact, grounded in my own outsider understandings and biases – and how the community chooses to engage with this knowledge. Further, I sometimes envisioned ideals of how I thought their intergenerational knowledge transfer could (or should?) be happening in Pictou Landing First Nation, but was unsure how I could (or should?) engage in such movements, always recognizing my own values spilling into my thinking on the matter – how can one really disentangle their own values anyway?

I can remember when I thought I wasn't getting 'enough' from my interviews. The more I read and listen to the chats I had, I learn more, see more, feel more out of them. Its like an understanding of why Elders tell stories many times, sometimes in little different ways (like Thomas King says)… so that over time, you gain a message, you take your message away from there, and then it is your duty to keep telling the story, or share what you've learned. Need to be at peace with what I did, what I 'got' from these people. Think, meaningfully, about what a conversation is. What it means to ask for someone to tell you what they know, lived, experienced, remember… (March 21, 2013)

As the larger research project has unfolded, community members *have* become involved in continuing the collection of oral histories in Pictou Landing First Nation. As my data collection was wrapping up, movements were being made for a youth from Pictou Landing First Nation to be supported through an Aboriginal health research scholarship to conduct oral histories. My journaling signals an excitement, almost a level of relief, that this would be happening. Later in my research process, once I had completed my phase of data collection, I came to a deeper understanding that while it was not my place to decide how community members interact with their knowledge, it is instead my responsibility to share what I have learned. Key Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation and other Mi'kmaw teachers have helped me come to a deeper understanding of the intent of Indigenous storytelling and the nature of knowledge itself; that knowledge is not ours to keep, and once we hear a story or gain a lesson, it is our responsibility to continue telling that story for the benefit of the community[64].

4.2.2 Vignette 2 – 'They don't know the ways of our people': Building a Culturally Sensitive Research Approach

Early on in my process of negotiating a program of research with the PLNWA, I had come to realize the importance of face-to-face interaction with community partners. Once I had received their direction to collect oral histories in Pictou Landing First Nation, with my renewed sense of enthusiasm in tow, I was keen that all the pieces of my graduate research would easily fall into place. I assumed that since the women wanted this work to be done, older generations from the community at-large would be ready and willing to invite me into their homes, and share their historical knowledge with me as I recorded them speaking about a long-contentious issue in their community. The truth of the matter was that I had a very difficult time recruiting Knowledge Holders. Surely confounded by innumerable factors, my difficulty with recruitment stemmed to a degree from a level of my own personal discomfort with building rapport amongst a group of older community

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[64] The work of authors and academics has also been important in coming to these understandings, suggesting that the focus of Indigenous storytelling / knowledge sharing should not be to *get* something before its too late or all gone; instead, the intent is to pass the knowledge on to younger generations (see for example McGregor, 2004; Nadasdy, 1999; Tempest Williams, 1984)

members whom did not know me at all. While I had growing personal networks through my relationships with members of the PLNWA, it was not as 'easy' as I had imagined it would be to breach new and comfortable relationships.

Had a thought about the speed at which I would like things to fall into place now. Can't try to force interviews to happen (but also can't just sit back and think things will happen for me). Boat Harbour is an issue that has been going on for decades – an Elder jumping at the chance to do an interview isn't going to just come the day after they hear about me. So how do I balance these things? (February 15 2012)

Exacerbated by a perhaps hyper-cautious approach towards meeting new people in Pictou Landing First Nation, I was concerned with sufficiently explaining the premise of the project, my history of relationship-building with the women's group, and the respectful partnership approach involved in the pursuit of their knowledge. Perhaps I should have simply tried harder? Just gone to people's homes myself? But if things didn't feel right, and I didn't feel there was a very explicit invitation and willingness to participate, I did not want to 'pry' any further.

…need to make those first connections and introduce myself and the project and commit to it (like how Ralph said 'well you haven't come by' – it was up to me at that point to follow up with him). The newsletter pieces are great, but they are not going to contact me and set up a time to do an interview. I need to be more proactive myself. Can't be so worried all the time about trying to tip-toe around… (March 9, 2012)

I really need to be more pro-active. For some reason I feel stuck and scared to just go out there, but this is what I need to do. I need to ask for it more, and just go out at the beginning of every day, with my focus on doing interviews, and figure out who can take me where. Think about what happened with [name omitted]…I need to be ready to do interviews on the fly – it doesn't perhaps work to try to schedule a precise day and time, come back all ready and prepared. It is going to be more haphazard and informal – I know this really and I need to just do that! Perhaps I think about how all my other

student colleagues are doing their interviews – planned and scheduled, wearing nice clothes and being prepared for them. Emailing to set up a time… with profs, professionals, etc… But I need to remember that I am not working in the same context. Go with the flow here, don't try to put my lens on everything… (April 5, 2012)

On a few occasions, people I had set up times with to hold an interview decided they did not wish to proceed with the interview, connections fell through with people whom suggested they would introduce me to an older generation, and I – at times – grew discouraged about finding 'enough' people to interview. Following one such particular circumstance, a conversation with community members brought issues regarding my engagement strategies and the consent process to the fore in terms of being identified as a barrier. Given that participants were going to be audio/video recorded and could offer photographic/scrapbook material, that there was the prospect of having a group conversation, and that all copies of the 'data' were to remain with the community, my consent process – which went through three sets of revisions with Dalhousie HSREB – consisted of multiple pages of explanation and five different signature lines. It made me uneasy from the beginning, but since I was operating from within an academic institution I was cognizant of the procedures I needed to follow. Further, given the complex ethical situation surrounding Indigenous research, I did not want to appear to be 'skirting' any ethical checks and balances. The institutional requirements of our research ethics boards meant that in order to gain ethical approval, the intentions of the study – including how and what we plan to ask participants – must be *very* clearly articulated before any data are collected.

Talking to Lorraine and Ralph about how [name omitted*] interview didn't work out; they were basically saying it's because I was trying to schedule it too much. I was saying how I was told that I should do the initial meeting first, familiarize people with me, and ask to come back [at another convenient time]. But what Ralph was really enunciating was that, "they don't know the way of our people" – he said that. I was saying that my ethics board says that we have to get written consent before we have those conversations, and he was saying, "well that needs to change because that's not the way we work. You need*

to just have chats: talk about the weather, ask about their family, get to know them first, get them comfortable talking to you – and then that sort of 'important' conversation will start to happen. And then at the end you can ask them to sign something, for their release…". Basically he was completely corroborating all of the ethical concerns that have been talked about… with Indigenous research… the consent process is awkward and really doesn't fit with cultural protocols… (April 24, 2012)

On another occasion, a younger community member warned me about asking older folks to sign papers – that it may instigate uneasiness and represent mistrust. It was clear that my structured institutional protocols did not correspond well with community protocols. As Ralph and Lorraine suggested, if an Elder was willing to speak with me, share stories and knowledge, they would say so and be ready when they were ready. If they were comfortable being recorded, they would tell me so. My trepidation with adhering to institutional ethics had compromised my ability to engage in relational ethics. With direction from my community advisors and after a discussion with my supervisor, I received approval from the HSREB – albeit with the need for further explanation – to streamline my consent process to an oral approach for the remainder of my data collection.

Over time, as I collected oral histories in Pictou Landing First Nation, I began to realize important lessons from the interviewing process. While I was approaching my interactions as 'conversational interviews' for their assumed cultural relevancy, it took more personal realizations – a learning process – to see the effects of how I conducted interviews. While I had a number of potential questions to ask, outlined in the Oral History Guide (Appendix H), I realized that bringing them out during my conversations, even looking down at the page or having the papers out, stifled some of the discussion. It seemed as though it created an atmosphere of awkwardness, that there were particular questions that I wanted to 'get out' of the Knowledge Holders. Given that the interviews were conversational, not using the guide during the interview was fine, and once I started doing so, I actually preferred it. But even more significant was my learning process around the *way* I asked questions, and the effect on how it initiated the sharing of stories

and memories. Outright questions such as 'do you remember what year the pollution began?', or 'what changes have you noticed for your community because of the pollution?' – did not yield the answers I had expected, or perhaps hoped for. Conversely, Knowledge Holders would share stories about their youngest child being born just before the pollution began, or that the community did not have a sewer system until just after; changes in the community were often discussed (evident in section 4.1.3) – they just came out in indirect ways. While I now realize I was not always exceptionally 'good' at conducting interviews with Knowledge Holders – even after my data collection had finished and I listened to my interviews, I commented in one journal entry about how "I sounded like such a Western person when I interview" (June 28, 2012) – reflecting on my experiences has allowed me to understand the importance of what it means to engage in genuine dialogue for interviews of this nature.

On a few occasions I experienced a level of wariness or hesitancy – sometimes negativity – towards my project and the intentions of the research. As one member made clear, I could not 'just run off with their knowledge and their stories'. In a conversation with some residents I did not know well one poked at me, 'what kind of stories do you want to hear, Indian stories?' Later in my phase of data collection, two members of the community spoke to me about how some people had assumed I was gathering up their stories to publish them, that I would make money off of their knowledge and they would get nothing. I did my best to respectfully explain myself and the partnership with the PLNWA, however it was both interesting and defeating to know that those opinions existed; being aware of the unethical legacy of research on Indigenous peoples – and Canada's continued colonial injustices – I was not all that surprised but it hurt just the same[65].

As I learned how important the *relational* was in my research, it became clear that important opportunities to speak with Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation would come through the networks and friendships that I had previously established

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[65] Simpson (1999) discusses the history (and continued risks) of knowledge being mis-used or mis-represented, which makes some Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders reluctant to share their knowledge with non-Indigenous outsiders.

through my associations with women of the PLNWA. This meant seeking out Knowledge Holders who were perhaps not the oldest of the older generation – because they too held important historical memories – and would be comfortable speaking to me due to our pre-existing relations. My approach needed to be one of genuine dialogue, free of the formality that may be more commonplace in academia. Near the end of my data collection, I had the opportunity to speak with a respected member of the Mi'kmaq Nation. As I told him about some of the difficulties I had had, his lessons reminded me of the tensions associated with cross-cultural CBPR; researchers need to establish approaches to inquiry that are not only viable in the academy, but more importantly that work on the ground in the community.

Tuma talked about triggering memory. 'Don't ask them what they know, or what it was like back then'. He used the example of asking me what was it like before there was internet, then proceeded to show how this is a difficult question to answer, but that you could get rich information about it just by changing your approach. He said, 'initiate a story, ask about who they were with at the time'. He spoke about how very few Elders were comfortable with speaking on behalf of the knowledge base. Having others there to begin bouncing the stories off one another helps. Because of the history of colonialism, they may feel intimidated… The younger generations become the knowledge holders as it is passed on to them… they are using 'living memory'… (May 30, 2012)

I came to this project as an ally, with a keenness to do research with and for an Indigenous community. I assumed that I had a relatively good degree of relational experience with Indigenous peoples in Canada from my work with Indigenous youth in northern Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut. However, I know that every community is different and that I am included in the 'they' in the title of this vignette. I was admittedly naïve, and I have also gained so much – from the PLNWA, friends, and older members in Pictou Landing First Nation – in terms of learning to work, 'in a good way'[66], with this community.

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[66] Ball and Janyst (2008) write about doing research 'in a good way' with Indigenous partners.

4.2.3 Vignette 3 – 'But what can CBPR actually do?': Finding an Appropriate Voice in the Research Project

I want the whole process, if that can happen… If the focus is just to pump out a thesis, then I don't know… I want to be able to give back to the community – and not make it about the knowledge base that I have extracted, but make it relevant to them, something that they needed… (September 2010)

As Chapter 1 introduced and Chapter 3 described, my relationship with the PLNWA began in October of 2010. In the beginning, I was unsure whether these experiences would form the impetus towards my thesis research. I knew that conducting CBPR was a lengthy process, and the research endeavours with the PLNWA were just in their infancy. Aware of the usual two-year timeframe for a Masters project, I hesitated about proceeding in this direction, regularly entertaining other options for my potential research project. Nevertheless, all other avenues that I considered seemed to be lacking or I lacked the motivation to take them on; with the PLNWA, I had been present since the beginning and I began to see that there was a genuine opportunity to work with this community, on issues that were important to them. As the research partnership evolved between the PLNWA and researchers at Dalhousie University, the important question the community wanted answered was, 'Are we getting sick from Boat Harbour?' (S. Francis, personal communication, August 19, 2011). The question for me became what could I bring to this research relationship? I wondered whether my research focus would be of use to the women, their community, and their desires to undertake research regarding the issues at Boat Harbour.

Starting to feel uneasy about my direction again. As [name omitted] *said tonight, what they really want to know is "is Boat Harbour making us sick?" I don't have the skills to answer this question… [but] I can take the time to listen to people?… it will need to become not just about me doing these interviews, writing up a report that no one reads, and my thesis, and saying 'see ya later'…* (February 6, 2012)

While I was operating within a CBPR approach and I had received direction from the PLNWA to collect oral histories from Knowledge Holders, I found myself questioning why *I* was doing this research many times throughout the journey. I am sure members of Pictou Landing First Nation have wondered the same thing. I have also found myself wondering what could this research actually *do*? How would what I was involving myself in actually be useful to the community, and in particular help the PLNWA answer the question about whether Boat Harbour was making their community sick? The issues at Boat Harbour have been plaguing Pictou Landing First Nation for decades. Throughout that history, a number of people have come and gone who have an interest in the plight of Pictou Landing First Nation residents. News stories have been written throughout the years, two lawsuits have been filed (one with success; one ongoing), and community members have told me about other 'do-gooders' that have come in with the hopes of 'fixing the problem'. Yet the issues remain, and the effluent has continued to flow into Boat Harbour. How was I any different? In the time frame of a Masters project, usually two years, I would be coming and going; extracting knowledge and using it to populate my Masters thesis. In my reading of the CBPR literature I had come to understand that one of CBPR's cornerstones is a commitment to social change. However, I have often wondered to what extent I am truly committing myself to this endeavour. How, then, would I prove myself any different from the history of past researchers, who have parachuted into Indigenous communities, got what they needed, and left without making any important changes for the community in question?[67]

…going through the whole genuine relationship building phase – before priorities have even been established, before a research agreement has been met between parties, still really just at the phase of saying, 'ok – I think we do want to do some research together, so what will this look like? And could research even be?' It's such a foreign concept… bridging the divide of what a university can offer and what communities need / want. I guess that is sort of a piece on stepping out of the ivory tower. Research to a large degree

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[67] Jacklin and Kinoshameg (2008) discuss the need for participatory researchers working with Indigenous communities, to develop research protocols that are both ethical and effective; in response to being "researched to death", Indigenous communities are interested in research "only if it's going to mean something" (p. 53).

is only done to perpetuate the status quo. Just like the duty to consult, or the reserve system, or the fiduciary responsibility to Aboriginal peoples; we don't really bother trying to genuinely engage with changing things, because it's much easier to just continue on the status quo, and pretend that we are doing our moral obligations… (April 10, 2012)

How can my project really commit to that social change aspect that CBPR desires…? Why / how is it emancipatory? How is it helping Indigenous struggles, contributing to health research, environmental justice? […] I have also just been questioning a lot… how is this going to change anything? Why is this really important or meaningful? Or am I just 'advancing my career' by getting the letters beside my name… (April 23, 2012)

Trying to be a part of this 'social change' research or whatever you wanna call it; sometimes I just feel like it would be easier to do research that I'm just interested in; I guess that's why they say there is so much research just for the sake of research; upholding the ivory tower; publish or perish. I think it would be really hard to be a part of something when you are trying to see change… (May 4, 2012)

A level of cynicism set in at times throughout my research journey. Looking back, I was very concerned with a desire to 'produce' something to show for my research; something tangible that I was going to give back to the community to be able to acknowledge it had been 'a job well done'. I knew that much of the impetus behind the PLNWA's research pursuits was around getting answers to whether Boat Harbour was making their community sick. While I knew that the bigger research program was going to take a long time – multiple years – I could not help but want to be a part of answering this question. In retrospect, these 'high hopes' were much too lofty for the duration of a Masters program. Further, understanding the dimensions and possibilities of my research, being from the more 'social science' perspective, I came to realize that I was not in a position to answer these questions. Still, even as recent as a journal entry on March 18, 2013, I was wishing that I possessed different skills – like 'science skills' – that could contribute in ways that I envisioned to be more meaningful. These feelings of defeat were often

exacerbated by my personal struggles to recruit participants, or feeling overwhelmed with my position in the community. Working, too, as part of the larger program of research with the PLNWA (through a Research Assistantship with my supervisor) made me sometimes feel like I needed to understand the issues from all different angles, or that I had the weight of the academic side of the project on my shoulders while in the community. These struggles sometimes turned into frustration that my research assistantship took precedence over my own research at a time when I was already struggling to get what I thought to be 'enough' interview material. I began to think of myself as the 'logistics girl', and downplayed the role this had in terms of making any meaningful contribution to the research team.

I think some of it has to do with the fact that I was very naïve about research when I first started… I was just thinking about the work I thought I would do with and for a First Nation… and wanted it to, hoped it would, make a difference or be about something important to them… Sometimes I have pretty lofty goals – and I get down when it doesn't go as I had hoped or planned (May 15, 2012)

But it is important for me to remember that my involvement in – and thus, to a degree, contributions towards – the larger research project *have* been able to extend beyond my personal work with the oral histories. My involvement with the team in regards to logistics and planning has enabled me to build stronger relationships with the women, and allowed me to be party to all phases of the research process thus far. If I had come to the research wanting to give something back, there were many ways this could be done even if it was only in the 'baby steps'.

It's sorta like a catch 22 – as much as I sometimes feel that doing the other stuff, like RA kinda work, is what is really keeping me busy and I don't focus enough on my own 'thesis' stuff… it's good 'cause that's what keeps me busy here… It's good to be a part of a bigger project with the community, have multiple reasons for being present there… Almost like I am more just learning how to work with and in the community – in whatever capacity that may be. While I thought I knew things before, because I had some

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experience with Indigenous communities/peoples…there is something more nuanced about my understanding now… (May 25, 2012)

I have worried about of the risk of continuing the marginalization of Indigenous voice by focusing on my reflexivity and crafting these vignettes[68], as I also wonder the extent that these things are helpful to the Indigenous communities that we work with. However, the truth of the matter is that the extent of my learning is not simply characterized by the recorded stories of *A'se'k*. It is difficult to represent this level of learning through conventional academic and/or textual outlets. I think about all of the casual conversations I have had with members of Pictou Landing First Nation, and the insights I gained from first-hand experiences with issues of rights and justice for Indigenous peoples and communities both now and in the past, musings on relationships, identity, and culture. I think about the important political issues that have gone on during my research process – the issues at Attawapiskat[69], the Idle No More movement, even locally when Pictou Landing First Nation voted 90% against the provincial government's proposed 3 million dollar 'capacity-building agreement' related to the issues at Boat Harbour. While Canadians are able to interact with these issues through media and other such outlets, community-based understandings of and interactions with such issues are invaluable – learning 'on-the-ground', in place, and over time. In many ways, this level of learning has had great affect on how I will approach issues and relationships into the future.

 I came to the process of CPBR research involving Indigenous peoples concerning social and environmental justice and health equity with high hopes. I'm reminded of the quote by Thomas King that is placed at the outset of this thesis: "we wrote knowing that none of the stories we told would change the world. But we wrote in the hope that they would" (King, 2003, p. 92). Despite the frustrations I sometimes felt, I have been able to reach

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[68] Some scholars have questioned the utility of reflexive writing, as it risks taking too much attention away from the findings of research, or may be misunderstood as self-indulgent, navel-gazing, or narcissistic (see for example England, 1994; Pillow, 2002; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002).
[69] In November of 2011, Attawapiskat First Nation – a Cree community on the Hudson Bay coast of Northern Ontario – declared a State of Emergency due to a severe housing and infrastructure crisis, catapulting the community into the media spotlight and also shedding light on the reality of sub-standard conditions faced by many Indigenous communities in Canada.

my 'lofty' goals: I gained a better understanding of my role in a CBPR research team, I came to recognize what is realistic to accomplish in the duration of a graduate studies project, and I have a deeper understanding of my naïvety in what role someone like me *should* be expecting to play when working *with* or *for* an Indigenous community. While I wanted to produce 'something that they needed', I have reflected on the fact that maybe *I didn't have something that the community needed*. I think this is an important "finding" in and of itself – though perhaps less tangible than the story layers – and quite possibly a personal movement toward further decolonizing research with Indigenous peoples, and one that can be shared with other allies through this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Two decades ago, environmental justice scholar Robert Bullard (1993) ardently posited that, "whether by conscious design or institutional neglect", marginalized populations – including Indigenous communities – faced some of the highest rates of environmental devastation (p. 17). Over a decade later, Brulle and Pellow (2006) discussed how the market economy, coupled with institutional racism, has shaped the ongoing social production of environmental injustices. Similarly, Mascarenhas (2007) has argued that Canada's neoliberal political agenda continues to undermine Indigenous communities in their fight against environmental injustices by hindering equitable recognition and participation in natural resource development and environmental decision-making. The case of Pictou Landing First Nation described herein is but one example of Indigenous struggles over environmental injustice in Canada; the unfortunate reality is that there are many communities facing similar situations, necessitating a critical look into the conditions that have allowed this reality to persist.

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the vote, while not unanimous, was overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the Declaration. The process of coming to the Declaration was over 20 years in the making, and involved Indigenous peoples from across the world. Only four nations – Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand – voted against it. This was the first time that Canada had asked to be exempt from a human rights agreement; the federal government suggested that the document was not compatible with Canada's constitutional framework (CBC, 2007; Martin, 2009). After three years of intense political pressure, in 2010, the Government of Canada came to officially endorse the Declaration, while maintaining particular concerns with the document (AFN, 2010). Sections of the Declaration acknowledge Indigenous rights – through their own means – to: traditional medicines, health practices, and subsistence; control of their traditional lands, resources, and economic development; and, the recognition of treaties and self-determination (United Nations, 2008).

Taking into consideration the literature in Chapters 1 and 2 and the findings in Chapter 4, the purpose of this Chapter is to discuss both in the context of the global state of Indigenous-settler relations using the UN Declaration to offer some implications for this study. I interweave pertinent sections from the Declaration as they relate to what I argue to be (some of) the root causes to environmental injustice on Indigenous lands, exploring both why injustices are perpetuated and also how a colonial mindset fails to adequately frame the issues. By drawing on the case of Pictou Landing First Nation, specific examples will be illuminated in situ. I close this Chapter with a discussion on what I have come to learn through my process of research with Pictou Landing First Nation, and how these lessons learned may contribute to the journey taken by other non-Indigenous peoples who are seeking to align as allies to Indigenous struggles.

5.1 The Health of the Land as the Health of the People

Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals [...] Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress. [...] Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

(United Nations, 2008, pp. 7-9)

A focus of environmental justice scholarship has been on the health impacts from pollution, industrial facilities, and resource extraction, known to result in significant changes to Indigenous peoples' traditional lands; however typical Euro-western approaches to both measuring and mitigating health often do not adequately account for the robust understanding of wellbeing in an Indigenous context (see for example Castleden, 2007; Chan, 2005; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Richmond & Ross, 2009;

Richmond et al., 2005; Turner, Gregory, Brooks, Failing, & Satterfield, 2008; Wilson, 2003). While the dominant approach to environmental decision-making attempts to put a price tag on the costs and benefits of resource extraction and development, many spiritual, social, and cultural functions that may become compromised cannot be monetized or measured; as such, these 'invisible losses' often go "unrecognized and unacknowledged, are seldom considered, awarded compensation, or mitigated by decision makers and resource managers" (Turner et al., 2008, p. 2), yet these functions have a profound impact on overall community health, wellbeing, and resilience (see also Gregory & Trousdale, 2008; Neu & Therrien, 2003).

A poignant example of these 'invisible losses' is with respect to the contamination of traditional food sources, most notably fish and shellfish, which have become tainted with harmful chemicals such as mercury (Wheatley & Wheatley, 2000)[70]. The response from industry and government has been to suggest that local people reduce their consumption of such foods; however for Indigenous communities, not only do traditional food sources remain a staple of their diet, they also provide cultural connectedness to their lands and knowledges (Adelson, 2000; Chan, 2005; Donatuto, Satterfield, & Gregory, 2011; Neu & Therrien, 2003). As Donatuto and colleagues (2011) suggest, some Indigenous peoples are therefore in a difficult position, having to *poison the body* in order to *nourish the soul* – facing the threat of environmental health repercussions from contaminated food sources both because they do not have other affordable food options, and also because the practice of traditional subsistence remains an important part of their socio-cultural fabric, and thus well-being (see also Arquette et al., 2002; Chan, 2005; Neu & Therrien, 2003; Mascarenhas, 2007; Shkilnyk, 1985; Wheatley & Wheatley, 2000).

In Pictou Landing First Nation, the incidence and abundance of health problems such as respiratory issues, nose bleeds, and cancers are often attributed – at least in part – to the

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[70] Specific examples of mercury poisoning include contamination from a chlor-alkali paper mill into the Wabigoon River, causing lasting impacts on the health of Grassy Narrows, the neighbouring Ojibwe community (Shkilnyk, 1985); also, massive flooding in Northern Quebec due to the La Grande hydro-electric project resulted in mercury contamination of the local Inuit and Cree population (Neu & Therrien, 2003).

nearly 50 years of bleached kraft pulp mill pollution. For this community, research (that the community has equitable control over) is only just beginning, and it may be years before conclusive results can be reached in terms of whether Boat Harbour is making them physically sick. However, while the extent of local food contamination and subsequent health impacts in Pictou Landing First Nation is both inconclusive at this time and much beyond the scope of this thesis, in considering a more robust and holistic understanding of what constitutes health in an Indigenous context, the voices of the Knowledge Holders participating in this study confirm that their health has surely been compromised.

For Indigenous communities such as Pictou Landing First Nation, local food sources historically provided a staple for survival. However, recent and rapid changes in the procurement of food from the land, coupled with an increased availability of and reliance on store bought food, has led to significant changes to Indigenous peoples relationships to food and, in turn, health (Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Martin, 2011; Richmond & Ross, 2009). For Pictou Landing First Nation, the loss of a subsistence livelihood at *A'se'k* led to an increased reliance on 'town food', which was, in turn, attributed to some of the health problems the community now faces:

> *I would say one of the things would be the diet, of course that's been changed. Because there's no more fishing, all that is gone, so it's not available to us anymore. And that was a hunting area too, all around it – deer, moose, and all those little animals I've named. That's not available to us anymore. We had to change our diet. The things that we were accustomed to, for thousands and thousands of years, those were all of a sudden not available to us anymore. So we had to resort to another way of life. And now we have people that have diabetes. Oh honestly, I bet I wouldn't be too far off if I said half of my community has diabetes. There's also the heart disease, all the heart conditions…* (Sadie Francis)

For Indigenous peoples, the ability to practice subsistence livelihoods involves more than the physical benefits of food procurement; it is also seen to facilitate connections to their local ecologies, which in turn underpins the very socio-cultural fabric of Indigenous societies. Many of the Knowledge Holders in this study discussed community sharing practices in great length, which were an important cultural function in Pictou Landing First Nation prior to the pollution at *A'se'k*. Food resources from the land were thought of

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as communally owned; when a kill was made it was the responsibility of the hunter to share a portion with each family. Such sharing practices are foundational to traditional Mi'kmaw lifeways, upholding kinship ties and connections with Mi'kmaw knowledge systems (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Henderson, 1995; Paul, 2006; Prosper et al., 2011). Members of Pictou Landing First Nation consequently spoke of the links between the pollution at *A'se'k* and community members not engaging with their landscapes as they once had. The Knowledge Holders suggested that this is especially true for the younger generation, many of whom do not hunt or fish, or know what foods and medicines are available on their lands because they do not have a place to engage in these activities. During a conversation with a young father of three in Pictou Landing First Nation, he spoke about how the losses at *A'se'k* meant that his father was not able to take him out and show him things on the land, and in turn that he was not able to do these things with his sons.

The Knowledge Holders *did* discuss the continued importance of passing on the Mi'kmaw ethic of sharing, that these practices still function in their community in a contemporary context. Moreover, some members of Pictou Landing First Nation do continue to engage in traditional harvesting activities. However it is evident that the pollution at *A'se'k* has hindered individuals from engaging in these activities on their traditional lands; as Diane Denny suggested, it seems the community is *surrounded* by pollution with the many industrial activities throughout the region. It was overwhelmingly clear from the Knowledge Holders that Pictou Landing First Nation's trust in foods and medicines from the land has been drastically compromised, and while this is particularly the case for the immediate area surrounding *A'se'k*, it is evident that the spread of pollution in the air, land, and waters throughout their territories is also of concern. Members of Pictou Landing First Nation have had to replace activities at *A'se'k* by going further afield to other parts of Pictou County or up to Cape Breton. Without the ability to practice subsistence activities at *A'se'k* and their surrounding area, it is evident that the ability for members of Pictou Landing First Nation to engage in activities that facilitate the transfer of intergenerational knowledge and skills has been jeopardized. These findings suggest how environmental injustice contributes to compromised holistic

health for an Indigenous community, and also shows a breach in Canada's commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

5.2 Same Beast, New Name[71]

> *Concerned that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of… their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests, […] Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs […] Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development…*
>
> (United Nations, 2008, pp. 2-9)

Scholars and activists, including leading Indigenous intellectuals, argue that there is an intricate relationship between contemporary capitalism and an ongoing colonial system, as Indigenous peoples struggle to negotiate their position amidst neoliberal state agendas in an increasingly globalized world (see for example Alfred, 2005; 1999; Barker & Pickerill, 2012; Battiste, 2000; Battsite & Henderson, 2000; Choudry, 2010; Coulthard, 2007; Smith, 2012). Neu and Therrien (2003) propose that, "[w]hile cultural genocide has gone hand in hand with the classical colonialism of old, a new style of colonialism has emerged with ecocide as one of its consequences" (p. 139). Given that the prosperity of neoliberal capitalism is predicated on unsustainable forms of production, which have in turn proven destructive to particular peoples, it has been argued that neoliberal expansion and environmental injustice are simply different sides of the same coin (Mascarenhas, 2007; Faber & McCarthy, 2003; Harvey, 2003).

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[71] As Choudry (2010) describes: "From land to water, from the corporate enclosure and control of nature… and in resistance to oil and gas projects, Indigenous… peoples are at the forefront of both analysis and action against neoliberal capitalism, emphasi[z]ing how neoliberal theory and practice commodifies all things, is fundamentally predicated on exploitation of people and nature, and embodies a colonial mindset. As Cree lawyer and scholar Sharon Venne succinctly puts it, neoliberal globalisation is the 'same beast, new name'" (p. 99).

A neoliberal trend in Canada – typified by mechanisms that value "self-regulating markets, privatization and governance at a distance" – has led to the rolling back of laws and regulations around resource and environmental decision-making (Mascarenhas, 2007, p. 566). Recently, the Government of Canada has stated its desire to work with Indigenous leaders "particularly in the context of removing obstacles to major economic development opportunities" (Smith, 2013). Paired with two recent omnibus bills (C38 and C45) that entail significant changes to federal environmental protections[72], and the proposed privatization of Indigenous lands[73], it seems the current political leadership in Canada is keen to push through resource extraction and development projects with more frequency and expediency. For Indigenous communities that are often in resource-rich locations, yet also struggling with economic insecurity as well as low health indicators and social ills, the promise of benefits makes them more vulnerable to these proposed projects (Mascarenhas, 2007). As Neu and Therrien (2003) suggest, "[r]esource extraction is linked to social development through numbers; the success of the exploitation of land and its resources is measured numerically in the same terms which determine standard of living", which suggests that Indigenous communities can only build capacity in a culture of capitalism, "under the camouflage of economic development" (p. 141; see also Mascarenhas, 2007).

The promise of jobs, economic growth, and thus increased wellbeing are said to have played a role in the leadership in Pictou Landing First Nation agreeing to the plans of a Treatment Facility in 1967, as they assumed it would be in the best interest of the community and the County[74]. However Mary Ellen Denny poignantly contended, "we're

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[72] Examples include recent changes to the *Fisheries Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, *Navigable Waters Act*, and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

[73] The proposed privatization of Indigenous lands in Canada is not new, but it is highly contested; some argue it marks assimilationist strategies and would open Indigenous lands up to corporate control. Most recently, Bill S-2 *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*, has been tabled and has received criticism from Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) peoples (including a recent article by Mi'kmaw lawyer and activist Pam Palmater: http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/pamela-palmater/2012/11/brief-overview-bill-s-2-family-homes-reserve-act)

[74] While this may be so, it is also important to acknowledge the deception by both levels of government, which led to the siting of the effluent treatment facility in the first place (Paul, 2006).

getting poorer [while] Scott Paper or whatever, that mill, is getting richer". Statements like these are a reaction to the tens of millions of dollars in provincial loans that mill owners have received for facility updates or to buy new forestland, while Pictou Landing First Nation has been left wondering why plans to relocate the effluent treatment facility have not gone ahead despite decades of promises that a solution would be reached. The mill at Abercrombie Point has also changed hands three times, each time involving multi-billion dollar deals. Throughout the nearly 50 year Boat Harbour saga, financial offers to Pictou Landing First Nation have been used by government and industry in order to allow the effluent to keep flowing; in the bigger picture, it is clear that these financial incentives are an insignificant price for those in power to pay in order to maintain their flow of economic gains from the mill's production.

The premise of neoliberal capitalism inherently suggests that the potential economic benefits from large resource extraction schemes are worth more than Indigenous communities' traditional uses of the land; however much of the resource extraction and industrialization on Indigenous lands have come about under false pretences: that they will bring economic growth and job creation, but instead they have led to impoverished local economies and left Indigenous communities to deal with negative social and environmental effects in the long term (Alfred, 2005; Neu & Therrien, 2003). As the Knowledge Holders in this study recall, *A'se'k* provided a subsistence livelihood during all seasons. Before the mill began piping effluent there, Mi'kmaq residents were not relying on 'town food' as much, as families had very small amounts of money coming in. Rather, they were able to fall back on subsistence livelihoods, and even trade goods from the land to barter for other necessities; clams and smelts were always in abundance at *A'se'k*, and many women collected berries and mayflowers to sell for extra money. Consequently, these losses were remembered as a difficult time for the community; when *A'se'k* was no longer able to support the food chain, community members were no longer able to fall back on the foods it had once offered. At the same time, as Don Francis

shared, finding employment as a Mi'kmaw person was difficult during this time, due to the racism of the dominant population[75].

As Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (1999) has discussed, to suggest that Indigenous communities must follow the corporate model is an attempt to separate Indigenous peoples from traditional values, whereas monetary payments may in fact lead to inadvertent social dysfunction and strained community relations – a phenomenon that was sometimes identified by the Knowledge Holders in this study. As Mary Irene Nicholas reflected:

> *I heard this a long, long time ago. If you ever wanted to separate Natives from working together, give them money, and give one group more than the other. And then they can't work together to go after the establishment like, Boat Harbour or anything, 'cause they'll be too busy fighting amongst each other. I think there's some truth to that. I think there's probably some evidence of that, if you went and talked to the family groups.*

As described in Chapter 4, Pictou Landing First Nation was offered a $3 million 'Capacity Building Agreement' from the provincial government in 2011; one of the stipulations for accepting the funding was that the First Nation would not be allowed to take any further steps in their lawsuit against the province for 24 months. In January 2012 community members overwhelmingly voted against the agreement. As a PLNWA member and mother of four said, "it's not about the money. They [the province] can't just think we can be bought out anymore". The notion that the mill's production will mean increased economic wellbeing for Pictou Landing First Nation has been superseded by a growing concern for the health of their children. As Alfred (1999) has noted, Indigenous leaders are forced to make difficult choices, and there will no doubt be some "trade-offs for practical gain, especially when it is so important to address the material deprivation of [Indigenous] communities" (pp. 118-119); however, at the heart of the matter money is not the answer for working towards decolonization, and will only act to "further entrench… colonization by embedding [Indigenous peoples] deeper in colonial structures" (p. 119). Alfred (2005) further suggests that Indigenous peoples have come to

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[75] This was suggested by Don and other Knowledge Holders as one of the main reasons many Mi'kmaq went to 'find a better life' in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. Mi'kmaw author Daniel Paul (2006) also discusses this.

realize that "capitalist economics and liberal delusions of progress" have served as the "engines of colonial aggression and injustice" itself (p. 133). As the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008) suggests, there is a need for more appropriate models of economic development in order to fulfill Indigenous Peoples "right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests" (p. 2); to deny this right suggests environmental injustices will simply be perpetuated.

5.3 Environmental Justice and the Treaty Relationship

…[C]onsidering also that treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, and the relationship they represent, are the basis for a strengthened partnership between indigenous peoples and States. […] Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements. …Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

(United Nations, 2008, pp. 3-4)

There has been much scholarship and activism around anthropogenic changes that are causing destruction to our environments; similarly, it appears that there is no shortage of evidence to suggest that environmental impacts are disproportionately affecting certain peoples more than others, in Canada this is most notable amongst Indigenous peoples living with close ties to their traditional lands. However, it is important that conceptualizing environmental injustices, and thus our approaches to dealing with these issues, recognizes the distinct position that Indigenous peoples hold in colonized countries such as Canada. As Mascarenhas (2007) suggests, "[e]nvironmental justice is as much about civil rights, self-determination and power, as it is about the questions of health and environmental quality" (p. 574). Recognizing that an injustice has occurred to an Indigenous community and likening it to just another environmental calamity to be mitigated and redressed, ignores decades of "struggle within and against the state by Indigenous peoples" (Choudry, 2010, p. 99). The unequal power relationships that have

led to the perpetuation of environmental injustices must also be considered in the context of Indigenous peoples struggles for self-determination – in the context of resource and environmental decision-making, and outward to the larger political realm.

Despite the colonial assault on Indigenous land-use patterns, Indigenous peoples across Canada continue to exercise their inherent rights to their traditional lands. Yet while a commonly held conception may be to frame Indigenous lands as defined solely by their reserve lands, this fails to address that much of Canada, now used and occupied by settler populations, was never ceded or relinquished. While a full appreciation and discussion of the complexities of Aboriginal and treaty rights is beyond the scope of this thesis, in the context of this research, a deeper consideration of the historic (and perpetual) Peace and Friendship Treaties between the Mi'kmaq nation and the British Crown is crucial. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, there exists fundamental differences between Indigenous interpretations of the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, and how the federal government has chosen to recognize them. From a Mi'kmaw perspective, the Mi'kmaq were a sovereign nation prior to European colonization; by entering the treaty-making process with the Mi'kmaq, colonial powers were acknowledging that sovereignty existed (Bernard & Prosper, 1991). Similarly, non-Indigenous historian Wicken (2002) suggests that the Treaties were not an exchange of land or rights, instead were intended to develop political relations between two nations. Chickasaw legal theorist James (*Sa'ke'j*) Youngblood Henderson (1995) has systematically articulated the fictitious claim of British sovereignty and title over Atlantic Canada, which in turn means Indigenous tenure of the lands was never extinguished, and that this is affirmed in the Treaties (which are subsequently reaffirmed by the Canadian Constitution). The Mi'kmaq saw colonist Europeans "as "guests" with a right to share the land. In their view, they had given the colonists a chance to enter into a particular kind of relationship with the land" (Henderson, 1995, p. 245).

As Henderson (1995) further articulates, vastly different understandings behind the very nature of a relationship with the land – of tenure and ownership – put non-Indigenous and

Mi'kmaw worldviews at odds. In this study, Sadie Francis articulated her understanding

of a Mi'kmaw relationship to the land:

> *Ella: You said some interesting things about ownership, and how you don't…*
>
> *Sadie: Recognize it? I don't. I can't! No, it's because we had walked that field thousands of years ago, eh? Thousands and thousands of years ago we don't know. And yet we never, I guess it's that we just don't believe in the ownership of it. We share. You know, if I decide that this is my spot, that's fine and dandy; if you want to claim that spot, that's fine and dandy! You know, it's – I got my little spot, you got your little spot so, there's no need for us to fight over it. You're comfortable, I'm comfortable. I don't need all that space to feel comfortable, eh? That's never been part of our lifestyle.*
>
> *Ella: Hmm. So do you feel a connection to this spot? Because it's where you've lived forever, and where your ancestors lived…*
>
> *Sadie: Oh ya, ya, ya…and this is probably where I'm going to be buried, hopefully anyway. Ya…my people have occupied this area for thousands and thousands of years, eh? And this is where my roots are, eh? You know, I feel that. The spirit of my people, is right here. Ya…So I feel connected. I feel connected to them this way…*

To the Mi'kmaq, the treaty-making process had invited the British as guests to share in

their particular relationship with the land (Henderson, 1995), and would in turn enable

the continuation of the Mi'kmaw way of life – encapsulated (in part) through the

Mi'kmaw concept of *Netukulimk* (Kwilm'uk Maw-klusuaqn: The Mi'kmaq Rights

Initiative & Martin, 2006). Recalling from Chapter 2, *Netukulimk* suggests the use of the

natural bounty for the wellbeing of the People; further, it encompasses the responsibility

to be mindful of that use (Henderson, 1995; Native Council of Nova Scotia, 1994). As

Henderson (1995) suggests, a Mi'kmaw ethic of sharing, encapsulated in the concept of

Netukulimk, helps to "manage demand, and serves to mitigate many of the incentives to

consume a resource" (p. 233). Mi'kmaw scholar Kerry Prosper and colleagues (2011)

also suggest, *Netukulimk,*

> …illustrat[es] the essential connection of Mi'kmaq culture and spirituality in their relations with their changing environments. […] Netukulimk provides a roadmap to meaningful expressions of rights and entitlements and shapes the governance required to generate sustainable values of interaction and livelihood. (p. 3)

In contrast, the British sovereign-claimed lands that came to be known as Canada have resulted in a patchwork of provinces, territories, and municipalities, crown land and private land, all of it is 'owned'; and as ownership of the land suggests, it is an object for exploitation (Henderson, 1995). This in turn drives much of the environmental decision-making as land and the resources it provides are fodder for profit and capital accumulation. The incongruence of these worldviews, and the weight these views come to bear on environmental injustice for Indigenous peoples, has been brought to light in this thesis, through the case of *A'se'k*/Boat Harbour. A non-Indigenous approach to attempt mitigation and compensation has played out under the premise of infringements to 'property', through monetary payments (and offers) to the community on account of Pictou Landing First Nation's loss of access to their reserve lands. Not only does this approach fail to consider the socio-cultural losses discussed previously, it fails to acknowledge how an Indigenous (in this case, Mi'kmaw) worldview understands human relationships to the land, including rights *and* responsibilities (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Henderson, 1995).

The foundation of a treaty relationship in Atlantic Canada, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous signatories, has been overshadowed by the assaults of colonialism and Euro-western hegemony; the Knowledge Holders in this study echoed this reality. A number of them recalled Indian Agents that worked for the federal government, who were meant to be helping the Mi'kmaq but never seemed to have their best interests in mind; Martha Denny reflected on the "crooked and dishonest people" that had "duped" the First Nation into allowing the effluent treatment facility to go ahead in the first place. As one Mi'kmaw Knowledg Holder shared:

> *The government had made the promise that the waters weren't going to change, so we believed them. You see for us, our experience with the Chiefs – with our leadership, spiritual leaders too – was always honesty. We assumed honesty, 'cause we had no reason not to. But our experience with the non-Native government was different… We trusted them 100%, we hadn't experienced that before, I guess we were vulnerable. You know we wondered, why would they go through all that trouble just to deceive us? I still trust my people, but I question the system… We have a word we use for the non-Native way, and it means like 'everything is mine' – it's a selfish concept. Aklasie'wey – it's the white, or non-Native way…* (Sadie Francis)

Across Canada, and in the Atlantic region particularly, the court system has been the mechanism used to affirm treaty rights – rights and responsibilities that go well beyond the confines of reserve lands[76]. As Mi'kmaw leader Joe B. Marshall (1991) and Chickasaw legal theorist James (*Sa'ke'j*) Youngblood Henderson (1995) suggest, the further away (temporally) we move from the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, the closer the Mi'kmaq nation comes to gaining recognition of the true spirit and intent of those Treaties. That spirit and intent – from a Mi'kmaw perspective – is important to consider in the context of environmental injustice for Indigenous peoples. While resource and environmental decision-making continues to function through a Euro-western worldview, Indigenous peoples in Canada are calling for equitable *recognition* and *participation* in these processes (Mascarenhas, 2007); processes that inherently impact the lands to which historical Treaties affirm Mi'kmaw as equal partners. Therefore, there is a need to move further – beyond simply recognition and participation – towards an appreciation of the treaty relationship as equal partners sharing the land[77].

While there has recently been a (justified) call for more genuine participation of Indigenous peoples and knowledges into the processes of resource and environmental decision-making, this does not come without its problems (see in particular Simpson 2004; 1999). For example, the federal government continues to falter on its 'duty to consult' (Natcher, 2001), and attempts to integrate Indigenous Knowledges into highly institutionalized/bureaucratized processes are rife with conflict due to fundamentally different value systems (Natcher, et al., 2005; White, 2006). It seems there is a need for the state – and through extension, industry – to approach Indigenous peoples as treaty partners, not simply another stakeholder group to engage with in the process of Euro-western natural resource and environmental decision-making. To do otherwise would be what Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2007) has articulated as a 'politics of recognition'[78],

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[76] As the Knowledge Holders of this study recalled, their families historically moved throughout their district, in tune with the seasons.

[77] I give credit to the work of Michael Asch, a professor at the University of Victoria, for his ideas about land partnership.

[78] Coulthard's (2007) concept uses the theories of Fanon & Hegel to show how "the contemporary politics of recognition promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that Indigenous demands

or Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred's 'Aboriginalism' (see Alfred, 2005; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Indigenous peoples are required to assert their identity *within* or *in relation to* the Canadian state, as opposed to *with* the state as an equal sovereign, treaty partners sharing the land. These concessions are seen to perpetuate the entrenchment of Indigenous peoples amidst the continued colonial set-up (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2007; Tully, 2008; 2000), and further, do not adhere to the treaty obligations articulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

5.4 Colonialism is Unfinished Business[79]

Recognizing the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources, […]

Recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment, […]

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

(United Nations, 2008, pp. 2-10)

As Indigenous scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2011) notes, the position that the four dissenting countries (US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) originally took against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples suggests how "coloni[z]ation remains unfinished business" (p. 642). Despite Canada's (and Australia and New Zealand's) later endorsement, the incidence and persistence of environmental injustices on Indigenous lands suggests that there is a long way to go before the ambitious Declaration is realized. In the current political climate of Canada, there remains a deep

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for recognition have historically sought to transcend" (p. 437).

[79] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 2011

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rift in terms of mutual understanding and trust, where the power to define Indigenous peoples' place with their local surroundings seems to remain rooted in Eurocentric constructions. This typifies the perpetual cognitive dimensions of a colonial mentality (Alfred, 1999; Battiste, 2000; Smith, 2012). Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (2000) defines *cognitive imperialism* as a form of colonization that "denies peoples their… cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only… one frame of reference" (p. 198). That frame of reference has been (and continues to be) constructed by those (non-Indigenous) who are in power. As we attempt to move beyond these perpetual cognitive dimensions of colonialism, there are non-Indigenous peoples that seek to align as allies alongside Indigenous struggles. And as Cree scholar Willie Ermine reminds us, we must come with more than just an interest to 'do good' (Different Knowings Speaker Series, 2010; Ermine, 2007).

5.5 Settlers as Allies: Locating Ourselves Alongside Indigenous Struggles

I began this thesis with a statement about how I position myself with respect to my research, and I want to come back to that as I bring this discussion to a close. I feel it is important to consider the role non-Indigenous peoples play as potential allies in environmental justice struggles – a particularly timely discussion given the recent rise of the Idle No More movement across Canada. This movement, which began in late 2012, was a response to the abuses of Indigenous rights, particularly with respect to legislative changes to environmental protections hidden amongst the federal government's omnibus budget bill(s). While the movement was initiated by four grassroots Indigenous women in Saskatchewan, it also saw many non-Indigenous allies protest alongside them in Solidarity movements across the country. Organizers of the movement issued an official 'Ally Bill of Responsibilities'[80], written by Annishinaabe scholar and activist Lynn Gehl. Some highlights from that document include that settler allies ought to be: grounded in their own ancestral realities and not enter with the "wannabe syndrome"; cognizant of their privilege and ignorance; and, willing to engage as listeners and learners. These suggestions align with Regan's (2010) insights into the need for settler peoples and non-

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[80] http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf

Indigenous researchers to engage as learners rather than experts on issues of Indigenous struggle, in order to enter into our own processes of decolonization.

Alfred (1995) contends that non-Indigenous allies cannot just celebrate culture, the arts, and folklore of Indigenous peoples without committing to more 'thorny' issues like political recognition; these commitments go beyond romantic idealism and partial support, which 'allies' sometimes struggle with. This is congruent with the assertion that while environmental issues are of concern for all Canadians, environmental injustice for Indigenous peoples must begin with a recognition of the marginalized position they occupy due to the colonial legacy (Dhillon & Young, 2010; Mascarenhas, 2007); similarly, non-Indigenous scholars and practitioners are not actually accessing Indigenous Knowledge if they are not including the people, places, language, and ceremonies that it stems from (McGregor, 2009; 2004; Simpson, 2004; 1999). These acknowledgments require a process of decolonization, of coming to honour different ways of knowing/being, and recognition of the continued cognitive dimension of colonialism that pervades the processes and institutions in Canada. As Thompkins (2002) asserts, "[f]requently members of dominant groups understand problems of inequity as being rooted in the 'oppressed group'. Less often do members of dominant groups understand their own implications in oppression" (p. 405). Engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems needs to be approached with an awareness that there is a history of devaluing, exploiting, and/or distilling it (McGregor, 2004; Nadasdy, 1999; Simpson, 2004) and that non-Indigenous peoples play a role in this history and current lived reality. While Indigenous perspectives are increasingly looked to for answers in terms of overcoming our degrading environmental systems (Berkes, 1999), Indigenous peoples are aware of tokenism and are, instead, seeking allies that work in ways that do not simply move forward on the colonizer's terms (Alfred, 2005; Barker & Pickerill, 2012; Nadasdy, 2005; Simpson, 2004; 1999).

With these lessons in mind, I came to see the process of research not as a collection of getting *enough* participants, or *enough* stories; it was a process of building a partnership with the PLNWA and of building a relationship and dialogue with each individual

Knowledge Holder. As a listener, I needed to be ready to hear stories and knowledge, and be ready to do something good with them. In the Atlantic region, there is growing concern about the loss of Elders' knowledge as older generations pass on without having shared their knowledge[81] (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat, 2011). The PLNWA echoed that concern, and participants in this study indicated that they wanted their knowledge and experiences to be shared with the younger generations. Elder Sadie Francis noted that historical knowledge "is not meant to be put in the closet. It isn't doing any good there". At the same time, it is not my place to determine how the community should or will continue to engage with their Elders' knowledge. My process of research has attempted to illuminate the voices of the Knowledge Holders through the stories that they shared with me, and in turn, explore how a colonial system has acted to marginalize these voices.

The irony that the academy – which remains an institution that is seen to perpetuate colonial structures (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012) – has been the site through which I came to engage with Pictou Landing First Nation has not been lost upon me. And while previous research and literature provides important grounding for allies to approach Indigenous issues, I feel strongly that we need to be rooted in place, listening to and learning from those that our research ultimately acts to describe. As Vannini & Gladue (2008) say:

> As researchers, we are not writing to give voice to theoretical ideas hidden in the cracks of "reality " or even to give voice to the marginalised. Rather, we are writing to allow their voice to be heard. With this in mind, crosscultural research must begin with the people and end with the people and everything in between (p. 157).

This reminds me of something an academic peer and Mi'kmaw woman, shalan joudry, shared with me. It came in response to a conversation around the nature of CBPR and whether it was an inherently emancipatory[82] research tool, and around issues of voice and

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[81] Thanks due, in large part, to the impacts of the residential school system.

[82] Some of the literature on CBPR suggests it as an emancipatory framework, particularly due to its drawing on critical theory (see for example Jacklin & Kinoshameg, 2008; Pain & Francis, 2003; Wallerstein, 1999). As a concept that means 'to set free', the idea of research leading to 'emancipation' is a loaded topic, particularly in the context of cross-cultural research (Coombes, 2012; Heyd, 1995; Kendall et al., 2011; McCabe & Holmes, 2009).

representation in research. She shared a meaningful analogy: that our research is not about *giving* voice to our participants. They have always, and will always, have a voice. However to a large degree, Indigenous voice – specifically in the context of my research, the voices of Knowledge Holders from Pictou Landing First Nation who are intimately familiar with the Boat Harbour legacy – has been dismissed; there have been a circle of people passing the talking stick[83], but it did not make its way to those Mi'kmaw voices most affected by the pollution at *A'se'k*. My experiences throughout this process of research leads to my assertion that the research itself does not lead to emancipation, however CBPR could be seen as a form of passing the talking stick. In this way, the academy may also be an institution with great possibility for renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, a necessary movement towards decolonization.

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[83] Indigenous peoples, including the Mi'kmaq, sometimes use a talking stick (or another object of importance, such as an eagle feather) in the context of a group sharing circle. When a person is holding the 'talking stick' it is their chance to speak, while others listen; the talking stick is passed around the circle so that everyone has a chance to share.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

This study has sought to illuminate the voices of Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation, reconstructing stories of *A'se'k* from Mi'kmaq that remember it as a healthy, thriving, culturally-significant place. For generations, *A'se'k* had provided livelihoods and facilitated the transfer of intergenerational Indigenous Knowledge and skills, an extension of Pictou Landing First Nation's home and traditional territories. Since the effluent began flowing into Boat Harbour, the area has become a source of environmental and health concern; not only is it attributed to the manifestations of various physical illnesses, but, as demonstrated from the findings, it has compromised wholistic health in Pictou Landing First Nation. The stories of the Knowledge Holders are about *A'se'k*, but they are about far more; they highlight the ongoing health inequities and environmental and social injustices faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada, shaped by the social, economic, legal, and ideological dimensions of colonialism and racism.

Through a critical examination of my experiences as a non-Indigenous graduate student navigating the research landscape, this study also highlights the importance of entering such relationships with Indigenous partners as listeners (Regan, 2010), backed by a good heart (Wilson, 2008) and a commitment to do research "in a good way" (Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 35). The use of reflexivity brings about a level of vulnerability for allies, and in turn forces us to continually check our approaches and acknowledge that, at times, we will make mistakes in how we engage with Indigenous partners. The mentorship of those who have done this before, and the friends and Knowledge Holders that are part of the research journey, may be better ethical police than any institutional research ethics board (de Leeuw, et al., 2010). These conclusions highlight the important relational work within research of this nature, and are necessary movements towards ending colonial structures.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will highlight the study contributions, outline the study limitations, and identify how this study aligns with future directions – of research with the PLNWA and for the continued sharing of stories from Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation. I will then conclude the thesis with some final thoughts.

6.1 Study Contributions

The research presented in this study makes a number of substantive and methodological contributions. Substantively, Chapter 4, Part 1 of this thesis offers a Mi'kmaw perspective on the Boat Harbour issue, from Knowledge Holders that have lived through the experiences. For an issue that has often been framed through the media in regards to the economic, legal, and environmental quagmire that surrounds it, these stories illuminate a more 'on-the-ground', community-based, Mi'kmaw perspective. The interview process that I employed, with gentle guidance from the PLNWA, my Community Advisors, and my supervisor, enabled organic processes of inter-generational knowledge sharing, whereby younger family members of participants or members of the PLNWA were often present. In regards to the raw data – universities have a history of destroying data after 5-7 years; in this case, however, the recorded interviews that were conducted with the Knowledge Holders for this study will remain in perpetuity with the PLNWA, allowing future generations to have the opportunity to engage with their Elders' memories and perspectives.

Methodologically, this study provides a detailed description of how a CBPR framework was applied to research with Indigenous partners; the process of relationship building with the PLNWA offers an example of working towards CBPR's aspirations of balancing power and fostering trust between research partners, and also aligns well with the calls made by Indigenous intellectuals, Indigenous leaders, and Indigenous community members at the grassroots level, to further decolonize the research landscape. The unstructured oral history interview style facilitated a co-creation of knowledge, as participants were able to guide the research conversations. This thesis also provides an example of the Narrative Inquiry approach to 'restorying' qualitative research data; this method was applied in order to meet my goal of centring the voices from Pictou Landing First Nation, by drawing entirely on the narratives of participants and crafting collective story layers, thus maintaining a holistic representation. Lastly, the use of reflexive journaling was employed as a critical methodological tool that other non-Indigenous

researchers might consider in order to trace our experiences and learn from our own mistakes and shortcomings.

6.2 Study Limitations

Within any study there are of course limitations, and this thesis is no exception. First, it is important to acknowledge that these findings only represent the voices of 10 participants; there are other Elders and Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation that I was not able to engage with due to relational, financial, and temporal limitations. As it were, a youth in Pictou Landing First Nation and two community researchers who are involved in the larger program of research on the issue of health impacts stemming from Boat Harbour, have continued the process of collecting the oral histories of their Elders; the involvement of community members allows greater access to those people whom I did not have relationships with and/or whom I found it difficult to initiate such a relationship. Also, this study involved more female than male participants (only 2 men were involved in the study), suggesting a potential knowledge gap of male Knowledge Holders from Pictou Landing First Nation who, for example, spent a lot of time hunting and trapping around *A'se'k*. While this is perhaps a study limitation, it is evident that the living memory[84] of Mi'kmaw men hunting and trapping at *A'se'k* was still illuminated through the voices of many of the Knowledge Holders in this study.

Within the CBPR approach there exists great diversity in the ways in which this philosophy/methodology is operationalized; that is to say, while there exists general guidelines for researchers that wish to use CBPR, individual applications remain variable (Castleden et al., 2012). For this study, CBPR with the PLNWA was particularly important for the process of framing the topic of study, and I continued to enact a CBPR methodology throughout the process. I gave regular updates to the PLNWA on my research progress, and requested guidance from them on research decisions. Also, preliminary findings were discussed with the PLNWA and individual participants to

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[84] I have heard Mi'kmaw thinkers Kerry Prosper and Tuma Young both speak about 'living memory' in regards to the stories and knowledge of Mi'kmaw ancestors that become held in and nurtured by the present and future generations.

ground my interpretation of the data in community-based understandings. And while the conversational interview process proved effective in allowing participants to direct the flow of conversation, and thus co-create the knowledge generated, the process of dissemination inherently involves choices around what will be included and how findings are presented (Castleden, 2007). In this vein, analysis and writing were not co-created processes with research partners; rather, I made subjective decisions – guided by my interactions with the PLNWA and the Knowledge Holders – that I believed to fit within the research context. This reality requires that I subjectively acknowledge my personal bias of positionality, which is inherently embedded (and embraced) within qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Rose, 1997).

6.3 Future Directions

As previously noted, this study is part of a larger program of research that is being carried out in partnership between the PLNWA and researchers at Dalhousie University: as research with the PLNWA continues to unfold, it will be important to consider the qualitative data from this study alongside the quantitative findings set to emerge. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, within this larger research partnership community members from Pictou Landing First Nation have been continuing with the collection of oral histories from Knowledge Holders in their community. Continuing to facilitate these processes, done *by* and *with* community members, will help to ensure that ownership of the process remains with the community, and that intergenerational knowledge transfer can occur between community members themselves.

While there has been a degree of community engagement with my study findings, through interviews that were attended by younger family members and my ongoing updates and discussions with the PLNWA, the stories from the Knowledge Holders have not yet been shared with the community at-large. In an effort to give back and share what I have learned, my thesis defense (a process that typically takes place in the academy) will be held in Pictou Landing First Nation, allowing the community at-large to hear of the stories and lessons that I have learned throughout the process of conducting research with their community. Into the future, with the PLNWA maintaining guidance and

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ownership of the process, I am confident that the stories will continue to be shared in ways that are meaningful to them.

The Knowledge Holders in this study spoke to the need for their stories to be used for practical purposes, suggesting that they could be shared with their youth and perhaps other communities (some spoke to the idea of creating a book). It makes sense to me that any such endeavour should remain rooted to a CBPR framework, where guidance of the process and ownership of the data remains with the community. On a related note, the stories from the Knowledge Holders could provide an important cultural teaching tool or curriculum piece for youth in Pictou Landing First Nation, grounded in (and helping to revive) Mi'kmaw concepts and connections to their lands. In their study on literature in youth environmental education, Korteweg, Gonzalez, & Guillet (2010) describe how Indigenous environmental knowledge and land-based values systems may help to decolonize environmental consciousness. Finally, sharing stories from Knowledge Holders in Pictou Landing First Nation with the wider public – regarding their experiences with the issues at Boat Harbour – could provide community-based insight to other Indigenous communities that are facing similar struggles of environmental and health injustice.

6.4 Final Thoughts

Throughout this process of research, I have remained mindful that non-Indigenous researchers are operating "on tricky ground" (Smith, 2005, p. 85), whereby we must carefully consider issues of voice and representation in research with Indigenous partners (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Regan, 2010). This research does not assume a position of presenting the 'true' or 'final statement' on *A'se'k* from the voices of the Knowledge Holders; instead it is "one move in a continuing dialogue" (Frank, 2005, p. 967). The story of *A'se'k* for Pictou Landing First Nation will continue to evolve and be shared, long after the conclusion of this study.

The utility of stories is their ability to be passed on to future generations, to teach, and to effect positive change. The stories of *A'se'k* are not mine; they belong to the Mi'kmaq of

Pictou Landing First Nation. But their voices have influenced me, and they have even become a part of me; they will be woven into the stories that I will share about my process of doing research with partners in Pictou Landing First Nation.

One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves… If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives.

~ Ben Okri, as cited by Thomas King, 2003, p. 153

Appendix A: Study Location

Pictou Landing First Nation and Boat Harbour Treatment Facility

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
Inspiring Minds

Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Board
Letter of Approval

Date: December 1,2011.

To: Ella Bennett, School for Resource and Environmental Studies
Dr. Heather Castleden, School for Resource and Environmental Studies

The Health Sciences Research Ethics Board has examined the following application for research involving humans:

Project # 2011-2483 (v3) (R# 1008330)

Title: Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities: Exploring Generational Perspectives on Community Health and Wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation

and found the proposed research involving human participants to be in accordance with Dalhousie Guidelines and the Tricouncil Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct in Research Using Humans* . This approval will be in effect for 12 months from the date indicated below and is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the expiry date of this approval an annual report must be submitted and approved.
2. Any significant changes to either the research methodology, or the consent form used, must be submitted for ethics review and approval *prior to their implementation.*
3. You must also notify Research Ethics when the project is completed or terminated, at which time a final report should be completed.
4. Any adverse events involving study participants are reported immediately to the REB

Effective Date: November 30,2011.   signed: _____
Expiry Date: November 30,2012.   Dr. Brenda Beagan (Chair HSHREB)

IMPORTANT FUNDING INFORMATION - *Do not ignore*

To ensure that funding for this project is available for use, you <u>must</u> provide the following information and <u>FAX</u> this page to RESEARCH SERVICES at 494-1595

Name of grant /contract holder _____ Dept. _____
Signature of grant / contract holder _____
Funding agency _____
Award Number _____ Dal Account # (if known) _____

CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY | **Unama'ki College**

January 23, 2012

█████████
█████████
█████████
█████████

Dear Ms. Bennett,

I wish to inform you that the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch committee has reviewed and approved *"Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities: Exploring Generational Perspectives on Community Health and Wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation."*

As your project moves forward with the approval of the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch, I must note that individual communities have their own perspective on research projects and it is your responsibility to consult them to ensure that you meet any further ethical requirements. Governments, universities, granting agencies, and the like also have ethical processes to which you might have to conform.

When your project is completed, the Mi'kmaq Resource Centre at Unama'ki College would be pleased to accept the results in a form that could be made available to students and other researchers (if it is appropriate to disseminate them). Our common goal is to foster a better understanding of the Indigenous knowledges.

If you have any questions concerning the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch review of your project please do not hesitate to contact me and I will forward them to the committee members.

Sincerely,

Rod Nicholls, PhD
Dean of Arts & Social Sciences
Acting Principal, Unama'ki College
Cape Breton University

P.O. Box 5300, 1250 Grand Lake Road, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada B1P 6L2
www.capebretonu.ca

Tel: (902) 563-1871 Fax: (902) 563-1693 Email: lindsay_marshall@cbu.ca | P.O. Box 5300, 1250 Grand Lake Road, Sydney, NS Canada B1P 6L2 | www.cbu.ca

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[Recruitment Poster #1]

Elders Oral History Project
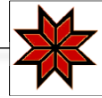
In partnership with the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association (PLNWA), there will be an Oral History research project with Elders in Pictou Landing First Nation. We are asking any community Elders that are willing to sit down with a student researcher (information below) and talk about health and the environment in your community, from an Elders perspective.

Why this research project…
Elders have important historical knowledge. We would like to find out more about what activities used to take place around Boat Harbour before the pulp mill went in, how did these activities change over time, and what do Elders in the community think about these changes. As the women's group begins to embark on collaborative research projects, they feel it is very important to understand what Elders in the community have to say.

Some of the topics we can cover:
- Family History (childhood, family, traditional activities, life in Pictou Landing)
- Health & Wellbeing (personal health, community health)
- Memories of Boat Harbour (swimming, fishing, eeling, etc.)
- Next Steps / Positive Visions for the Future

For interested Elders…
I am flexible. The interview will be a place and time to talk about what **you** think is important to discuss. The interview can be as long (or as short) as you would like. We can sit down in your home, or make arrangements to meet at another location in your community if you would prefer that.

With your permission, the interview will be recorded. This way, the community can always have a record of the Elders knowledge. We are also thinking about having an Elders Sharing Circle to discuss some of these topics with youth in your community.

Some information about me…
My name is Ella Bennett. I have been meeting with the women's group in Pictou Landing since the Fall of 2010. I am a university student currently doing a Master of Environmental Studies program at Dalhousie University in Halifax. I grew up in Ontario, and moved to Nova Scotia in 2010. I have worked with Aboriginal groups before in Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut.

Rachel Francis and Mary Irene Nicholas are my community advisors. They will be helping me to meet Elders who are willing to do an interview. They will also make sure that I am conducting research in a good way with and for your community. I have also been receiving guidance and direction from Mary Ellen Denny, an Elder in your community.

Please feel free to contact the community advisors, or me, if you have any questions.
My email address is ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

[Recruitment Poster #2]

Elders Oral History Project

As part of the research being done by the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association and Dalhousie researchers, there is an Elders oral history project happening in PLFN.

Elders will be given the chance to sit down and tell their stories about what Boat Harbour (and other important community places) used to be like before the mill went in, and also to give an Elders' perspective on the changes they have seen. Ella Bennett, from Dalhousie University, will be working with the women's group to collect these stories.

These chats can take place in your home, or somewhere else in the community. Other members of your family (daughters, husbands, etc.) or a member of the Native women's group from PLFN are welcome to join in to help with Mi'kmaw translation and to help bring up discussions / memories.

If anyone has old photographs, scrapbooks, or newspaper clippings to share related to Boat Harbour or leisure activities from the past it would be interesting to add them to the project!

Ella will be staying in the community a number of days a week – feel free to speak to her directly or contact her through phone/email. She can often be found above the daycare. Phone #: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉. Email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

You can also contact one of her community advisors, Rachel Francis or Mary Irene Nicholas, if you are interested in participating or for more information.

We look forward to hearing these important stories and memories!

[Recruitment Poster #3]

From the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association:

As part of our research on Boat Harbour, we want to remind Elders of the oral histories project that Ella Bennett is helping to work on. We want to video record them so we will have a copy for future generations to learn from. Ella is usually here from Monday-Thursday, and will continue to spend time here into the spring months! To make things most comfortable, we want to let you know that you can speak in English or in Mi'kmaq! Sharing some of the stories in Mi'kmaq will be helpful and important to the younger generations. Since we know Ella doesn't speak Mi'kmaq, a younger family member or member of the Native Women's group can sit in on the interview as well and do some translating. Remember – these are not interviews like for a reporter or to the news; as a community we are trying to collect the Elders' memories of Boat Harbour because it is a key to our community's identity and they will be important for the research that we will be undertaking in the coming years. We want to reconstruct the history and learn about the activities at *a'se'k* before the mill went in. Contact Ella (▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ - she can often be found above the daycare), or a member of the Native Women's group for more information or if you would like to share your stories!

[this script serves as a guide and will be elaborated on when necessary]

Hello, my name is _____ [member of research team doing recruiting]. I am part of the research team doing on study with Pictou Landing First Nation on community perspectives of health and wellbeing. ██████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████ You were suggested by _____ as a potential Elder candidate for this study.

The purpose of this research is to explore generational perspectives on community health and wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation, and Ella Bennett will be writing a thesis from this work as part of the requirements for her Master's degree that she is doing at Dalhousie University. She has been working with the community of Pictou Landing First Nation since the Fall of 2010.

We are asking Elder participants to share their Oral Histories with Ella, a student from Dalhousie University. The interview will take around 2 hours. ████████████████ ███ We hope to video-record the interviews so that we can give them to the community archive. If you join the project, you will be offering your community important historical knowledge to strengthen and enhance their learning.

Are you interested in taking part in this study?

[If yes, provide information sheet. Discuss mutually agreed about time to discuss signing the consent form. Provide contact details for the lead researcher.]

[If no, thank them for their time. Ask if there is another potential Elder they think would be a good fit.]

Consent Form for Elder Participants

Research Project
Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities: Exploring Generational Perspectives on
Community Health and Wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation

The Research Team
Researcher: Ella Bennett – School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie
University
Supervisor: Dr. Heather Castleden – School for Resource and Environmental Studies,
Dalhousie University
Community Advisory Committee: Rachel Francis; Mary Irene Nicholas

Where: Pictou Landing First Nation
When: September 2011+

Summary points to which the participant is agreeing:

1. You feel you have received sufficient information to participate in this research study.

2. You have received and read a copy of the Information Sheet portion of the Consent
Form.

3. You understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study.

4. You had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study with a member of the
research team.

5. You understand that you are free to stop participation or withdraw from the study at
any time. You do not have to give a reason and it will not affect you. Any data or
information provided prior to this point will be discarded at this time.

6. The issue of confidentiality been explained to you. You understand that your identity
will not remain confidential.

7. You understand that with your permission, the oral history interview and sharing
circle will be videotaped.

8. You understand who will have access to (i) the photographs/scrapbook material you
provide, (ii) transcripts of your interview, and (iii) the videotapes of the interviews.

9. Would you like to review and confirm the accuracy of your interview transcripts?
Yes   No

_____ (If answered 'Yes', please sign)

10. Would you like to receive a summary of the preliminary findings to comment on them? Yes No

_____ (If answered 'Yes', please sign)

11. Would you like to give the research team permission to photocopy photographs and/or   Yes No
scrapbook material you provided during your oral history interview (for use in community
reports, presentations, and other publications)?
(If answered 'Yes', please fill out corresponding consent form, Release of Photographic Material)

12. Do you give permission for the researcher to quote specific things that you say during the study, in the dissemination of results?
Yes No

_____ (If answered 'Yes', please sign)

Contact Information (If you circled 'Yes' for # 9, 10 and/or 12 please provide your electronic or postal address.

If you have any concerns about this research please contact ███████████
██.

I agree to take part in this study.

Participant Printed Name: _____

Signature of Research Participant: _____

I give permission to be video-taped during the sharing circles for the purposes of this research.

Signature of Research Participant: _____

I give permission for this video-tape to be released to the community archive of Pictou Landing First Nation as a record of my perspectives on the health and well being of our

community. I realize that the researchers will have no control over its dissemination once it becomes part of the archive.

Signature of Research Participant: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:
_____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

PICTOU LANDING FIRST NATION: **Elders Oral History Research Project – Oral Consent Form**

Name of the participant: _____

Date: _____

Now that we have gone over the Information Sheet and you have heard about the purposes of this research study, I need to know if you want to participate; this is called oral consent.

As I said [*in the information sheet and verbally*], sharing your stories about Boat Harbour [*a'se'k*] for this research project is completely voluntary.

Remember, you have several rights as a participant, including the right to ask questions and discuss this study with me, my university supervisor, or my community advisory committee [*provide names*]. You can refuse to answer any question at any time. You can withdraw from the research project at any time. If you chose to withdraw from the study later [*before the results have been finalized*], you can e-mail or phone me or my university supervisor or the community advisory committee members using the contact details provided on the Information Sheet I just gave you, and in doing so remove your interview from the study.

I want to make sure that you:

  - Feel you have received sufficient information to take part in this study.
  - Feel that you have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
  - Have received and read a copy of the Information Sheet
  - Understand the benefits and risks of participating.
  - Understand the issue of confidentiality, and that your participation in this study will not be confidential.
  - Agree to be audio recorded [   ] and video recorded [   ]
  - Understand that the information shared during these Oral Histories will contribute to my Masters thesis
  - Understand that copies of the audio and/or video Oral Histories will be given to the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association [*the community partner on this study*], meaning that I (*Ella*) will not have control over your stories once they become part of the community's archives.

Do you have any questions about your rights as a participant or anything else before we begin? Do you consent to participating in this Oral History interview?

Verbal consent secured: ☐ Thank you very much. Ok, let's get started…

[*After the interview*]

Would you like to:

  - Review and confirm the accuracy of your interview transcripts? Yes [   ]; No [   ]
  - Receive a copy of the preliminary research findings to comment on them? Yes [   ]; No [   ]

- Give me permission to quote specific things that you say in publications, presentations, and other dissemination strategies? Yes [   ]; No [   ]
- Allow me to use your given name [   ]; or you can chose the use of a pseudonym [   ]

Contact information of participant [*if answered yes to previous questions*]:

Information Sheet for Elder Participants

<u>**Research Project**</u>
Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities: Exploring Generational Perspectives on Community Health and Wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation

Where: Pictou Landing First Nation
When: November 2011+

<u>**The Research Team**</u>
Researcher: *Ella Bennett – School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University*
This study will contribute to Ella's Masters thesis. She has been and will continue to work directly with the community advisory committee to plan and carry out the study, meaning she will be present during all sharing circles and interviews.

Supervisor: *Dr. Heather Castleden – School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University*
As Ella's supervisor, Dr Castleden will oversee the study, meaning that she will look over any decisions that are made by the student researcher to make sure they appropriate. She has been working with Pictou Landing First Nation since the fall of 2010. Heather has and will continue provide guidance throughout all phases of this research project.

Community Advisory Committee: *Rachel Francis; Mary Irene Nicholas*
The community advisory committee (CAC) is made up of members from your community. They will help to plan the study, and make sure that the researchers are following important cultural and community protocols. They are available to support participants during the study.

<u>**Purpose of the Research**</u>
The purpose of this project is to collect Oral Histories from Elders in Pictou Landing First Nation, and also to explore how Pictou Landing First Nation youth feel about their community's health and wellbeing in relation to local surroundings. <u>Community Elders hold important historical knowledge, which can be shared with the youth, about Mi'kmaq perceptions of land and health.</u> Allowing youth to learn from their Elders can strengthen and enhance their ideas about your community; in the past and for the future.

<u>**What will happen?**</u>
First, Ella Bennett will meet with you to collect your oral history, discussing your views on Mi'kmaq health and how it relates to community wellbeing, as well as changes to the environment and local landscapes that you have experienced. Sharing your knowledge will give the opportunity to discuss your memories of important community places, such as Boat Harbour. If you have any old photos or scrapbooks you would like to share during the interview you will be encouraged to do so.

We will also invite all participating Elders to a sharing circle with the youth participants. This will allow youth a firsthand experience to gain knowledge from their Elders, ask questions, and allow an opportunity for you to share your memories of your community with the younger generation.

The meetings will take place at a mutually agreed upon location, that is most convenient for you (such as your home; the community centre). The time and date will be decided through discussions with a member of the research team. They will ensure that the scheduling is communicated to you properly.

Permission

If you choose to be in the study, a member of the research team will meet with you to get your written consent for participation in the study. The researcher will explain that taking part in the study involves sharing your oral history with Ella (which will take about 2.5 hours) and participating in a youth interview (which will take about 2 hours). With your permission, these discussions will be videotaped.

Who Will Know?

Your oral history interview and sharing circle with the youth will be shared with the research team (including the researcher, her supervisor, and the CAC). Members of the research team will know who is participating in the study, so your participation will not be anonymous. Also, since Pictou Landing is a small community, there is a high chance that community members will know the participants involved in the study. Beyond the research team and other participants, what you say will remain confidential. Your community may also keep a copy of the photos you provide during the oral history interview, and videotapes of what is said during the oral histories and sharing circles for their records. Findings from this study will be shared in papers and/or presentations, so you may be quoted in the final paper or presentations, however this will only take place with your written permission and none of your personal information will be shared.

You will have the choice to read over a written out copy of what you said (a "transcript") during the oral history. If there is anything you do not want to be quoted saying or you don't think is accurate, the researcher will simply take that sentence out. You will have 2 weeks to read this over, and then return your transcript to the researcher. Any photos or scrapbook material you provide will be shared with members of the research team. If you would like to give the research team permission to use the photos for other presentations and/or publications, you can make note of this when filling out your consent form. After your oral history, you have the option of looking over a summary of the main findings that Ella has found, and can comment on this if you'd like. Also, you can indicate if you would like Ella to discuss with you how your direct quotations (things that you say) will be used for papers, presentations, and/or reports.

All information collected during this study will be stored in a locked cabinet inside the researcher's office at Dalhousie University for 5 years [*May be extended to include a copy of data stored in the community archive*]. Only members of the research team will see copies of what is discussed during the study. For this study, we would like to audio and video record the oral histories and sharing circle. This will contribute to a community archive of information about the health and wellbeing in Pictou Landing First Nation. By recording, it also means that the research team can listen to you and talk to you without having to write everything that you say down. We can hear the ideas you and other participants talk about again and make sure we fully understand. There are no wrong or right answers and if anything comes up that you would not want written down then we can just take it out.

If you decide that you do not want to be a part of the study any more, your oral history interview will be destroyed and will not be used. Your voice on the pre-recorded sharing circle will stay there, however when writing up the transcripts we can take out all the phrases that you said during the circle and they will not be used any longer (even though the recording will stay). A member of the research team will be the ones to transcribe the recordings, and all research team members will have signed confidentiality agreements.

It's Your Choice!

It is your choice to participate. You may stop being in the study at any time. You may ask questions at any time. If there are issues that are upsetting for you, please feel free to speak to a member of the community advisory committee. We want to thank you for participating in this study!

Risks

There are minimal risks to being in this study. Your discussion with the youth may bring up sensitive subjects. If you feel uncomfortable throughout the process in any way, members of the research team will be there to support you. Ella will be staying in the community throughout the course of the research project, so you can contact her at any time. Also, if you would like to talk to one of the community advisory members, they are: Rachel Francis and Mary Irene Nicholas.

Compensation

As a thank-you for participating in this study you will be given a small token of appreciation on behalf of the youth.

Costs

It will not cost you anything to participate in this study, only a commitment of your time.

Questions

If you have questions you can contact a member of the community advisory committee, Rachel Francis and Mary Irene Nicholas. You can contact Ella Bennett at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ or through email at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇, or Ella's supervisor (Heather Castleden) at ▇▇▇▇▇▇ or ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇. If you have any concerns about this project, you may also call the Director of the Dalhousie Office of Research Ethics Administration at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇. The Director is not linked to this project.

This study has been reviewed by the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board and Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch.

*** *This instrument is a draft; it may be modified where appropriate as the PI continues ongoing dialogue and collaboration with the CAC and the PLNWA* ***
*** *Before the start of the oral history interview(s), the interview team will hold a pre-interview session with the participant to raise the comfort level with the participant regarding what to expect, discuss ethical considerations, address logistical issues, and build rapport.* ***

Preamble:

Thank you for agreeing to share your life history for this study about Boat Harbour. Before I start recording, I want to tell you a little bit about how our conversation will go. Today we will talk for about an hour or two and our conversation will be about what you remember about Boat Harbour before the mill went in.

I just wanted to remind you that I will record our conversation (with audio or video recorder). There are no right or wrong answers; I am just interested in your perspective and recollections. If there are things you don't want to talk about that's ok. We'll just move on. If you say something that you don't want recorded, just say so, and it can be removed, even after you have completed the interview.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

General Information
Tell me a little bit about you and your family. When/where were you born? Where did you grow up?

Family Heritage
Can we talk about your parents and grandparents and even further back? Did they also grow up here (or wherever the participant indicated)? Were there other relatives or Elders who were important to you when you were growing up? Do you remember what they used to talk about? Do you remember your Elders telling you about what they did (work/leisure on the land) and where they went? Do you remember them talking about Boat Harbour? What did they call it back then?

Health & Wellbeing
What do you think of when you hear the term 'health'? What does your Mi'kmaq heritage bring to your perspectives on health? What sorts of things are important to you in order to feel healthy? In your opinion, what is important in order for your community to be well? Have you experienced changes in the health and wellbeing of your community? Why? Please comment on different dimensions of health from the medicine wheel (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). Are these important to you?

Childhood/Youth
What do you remember about your first home? Who lived with you? What did you do when you were a kid? Can you describe the places you went around your community/territory to me? Where did you go in your leisure time? How/did your childhood differ from (opposite sex)? Did you have a favourite place to meet with your friends? Were there differences between these and other gathering places? Were there

places that you avoided? Why? Do you speak to youth in your community about issues that you feel are important to your community? What sorts of things do you talk about? Do you think there should be more opportunities for Elders to share their stories with youth from your community? What do think is important to share with young people in your community?

Community
What do you remember about your community? How would you compare it with other (white) communities in the area? What were relationships like between here and other communities? Who did you interact with most easily with? Were there any tensions (racism)? Did you ever work at the mill? Do you know anybody who did? What was that like?

Boat Harbour
What do you think of when you hear the words "Boat Harbour"? What do you remember about what was alive in Boat Harbour? What sorts of fish were caught? What sorts of animals were hunted or trapped? What sorts of berries and plants grew in the area? Do these relations all still thrive here? What has changed? Do you or anyone you know still use the medicines (plants) in the area? Are you worried about the quality being compromised because of contaminants?

Family and Future
Are you in a relationship? Do you have children/grand-children? When you were bringing them up, what did you think was most important to give them? How much did you talk to them about Boat Harbour? Who did you talk to if you were worried about them? Did you bring them up to believe that certain things are important in life? What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations for your children?

Reasons for Leaving
Have you always lived here? Where else have you lived? Why did you leave? Why did you return?
Do you remember if Boat Harbour created divisions within the community? What did you think about the government policies and industry decisions to dump there at the time? Did you ever feel unsafe? Why?
How did others in the community respond to Boat Harbour? How do you think your experiences of these events differed from those of men/women? Can you tell me about how it felt to leave your community? Who do you feel you left behind? Where do you feel most comfortable? Do your children/grandchildren like it here/there? Do you think your children/grandchildren feel more comfortable here than you do? Are you worried about your health/their health? Do these worries relate to Boat Harbour or something else?

Going Back
Have you been back to Pictou Landing? If no, why not? If yes, how long did you stay and what did you do while you where there? How did you feel about being back? What were your feeling about the changes in Pictou County? Have you thought about moving back

permanently? What are some of the reasons you would like to? What are some of the reasons you would prefer to stay here/not go back? Have others left and never come back? Have other left and moved back? What have you heard from/about them?

Memories/Looking Back
How do acknowledged storytellers in your community talk about the past? How do they talk about Boat Harbour? How do these stories relate to your own? Is there anything that isn't being said? What do you tell your children/grandchildren about Boat Harbour? Do you talk about your reasons for leaving? How do you talk about pollution with your children? How do you put it into words? What do you think of government and industry responses to the Boat Harbour issue? Do you think the causes of the health problems in Pictou County have been explained? What would you most like others within your community/outside of your community to know about your experiences?

Thank you very much for talking with me. At this point, I am finished with all of my questions but I wonder if there might be something that you wanted to say that I haven't asked you? Thank you.

CONSENT FORM: Release of Photographic Material

I, _____ , allow my photos for the study *Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities: Exploring Generational Perspectives on Community Health and Wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation* to be used in future posters, presentations, and/or publications. This permission includes allowing members of the community advisory committee and Pictou Landing First Nation to use my photos in community publications, and the leader researcher (Ella Bennett) to use them for academic posters and/or publications. I understand that the purpose of this research has been to explore generational perspectives on community health and wellbeing with Pictou Landing First Nation, and that Ella Bennett will be writing a thesis from this work as part of the requirements for her Master's degree.

Please place an "X" next to your response:

_____ My photographs may be used for publication and/or as part of the research project.

_____ I want my real name to be used in relations to my photos in future posters and/or publications (thesis, community presentations, conference presentations, publications, media releases, etc.).

_____ I do not want my real name to be used in relations to my photos under any circumstance.

_____ I only want my name to be used under the following circumstances (please identify):

Participant/Photographer (print name): _____

Participant/Photographer (signature): _____

Date: _____

(For Participants under the age of 18)
I have read and understand this consent form, and give my son/daughter permission to release their photographic material
Signature of Parent/Guardian (if Research Participant is under the age of 18):
_____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian (if Research Participant is under the age of 18):
_____

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

This study has been approved by the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board and Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch.

June 30th, 2012

Dear _____

Here is a written record of the conversation we had on _____

If you'd like, have a look at what we spoke about.

I would like to come back to speak with you again in a few weeks time. If there are any changes you would like to make or concerns you have, please let me know. Also, if there is anything you have to add – like more stories or memories from *a'se'k* (Boat Harbour), we can have another chat.

I want to thank you again, very much, for speaking with me. Your thoughts on this subject have helped me learn about what it used to be like at *a'se'k* and also about how to be a good researcher and work with your community.

I have learned so much while in Pictou Landing First Nation. The stories I have heard from the elders are an important perspective on the legacy of *a'se'k*, for future generations!

This information, and my involvement with the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association, will help me to write my thesis. I will also work with community partners to decide how the information I have been gathering will be presented back to your community.

Thanks again, and see you soon!

Ella Bennett

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