Looking Forward to a Food Sovereign Future: The Role of Tradition-Informed Values
and Indigeneity in the Carcross/Tagish First Nation Community Garden


by


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## Abstract

This thesis offers an exploratory case-study of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation's (CTFN) community garden. It aims to understand the extent to which the garden can facilitate cultural preservation. Using data from interviews and observations, this thesis grapples with Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) and decolonization within food systems and research methods. This study found that the CTFN community garden is not currently fulfilling tradition-informed values, and thus not contributing to aspects of cultural preservation or IFS. Understanding such themes necessitated the use of decolonized methods, as foregrounding local voices and food system priorities was inherent in understanding tradition-informed values. Consequently, the thesis offers a reflection on my challenges and offers insight on Junior academic barriers to decolonized methodologies. Considering these two sets of findings together, this thesis recommends potential interventions for pursuing IFS in the CTFN garden and for pursuing decolonized methods in academic institutions and research on community food-related topics.

# List of Abbreviations Used

CTFN – Carcross/Tagish First Nation

IFS – Indigenous Food Sovereignty

REB – Research Ethics Board

CIHR - Canadian Institutes of Health Research

NSERC - Natural Science and Engineering Research Council

SSHRC - Social Science and Humanities Research Council

OCAP - Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession

TCPS2 - Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

FAFN – Fort Albany First Nation

NN - Nikigijavut Nunatsiavutinni

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**CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION**

**Preface**

       I am a settler. I am a white, Ukrainian-Canadian from central British Columbia. I hold a Western worldview that results in unintended but forceful prejudice. In this project, I attempt to break down my own misconceptions and those of dominant settler society in Canada to address real issues in food sovereignty and decolonization.

       My interest in food systems and Indigenous-centred topics emerged over several years during my undergraduate degree. I discovered an interest in food and the ways in which humans manage it during an international development course in my third year of my political science BA at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). I was exposed to ideas of food security, global food markets, and food sovereignty and became fascinated by the complexity of food systems. In that same year, I took a research methods course that taught primarily conventional, Western methods in quantitative and qualitative techniques. For a 'non-conventional research' segment, the class went to a healing circle in UNBC's First Nations' centre to introduce us to non-Eurocentric worldviews. The circle, which was based in Lheidli T'enneh tradition from central British Columbia, was intended to bring people in UNBC together. I was skeptical at first, as my outlook on healing circles was cynical and seated in a deeply rooted Western worldview. As the circle went on, however, the stark contrast between my worldview and realities of those who chose to share their stories was striking and emotionally jarring. Though it is hard to explain how, the experience shook the ways in which I understood my own perspective of the world. I began pursuing approaches for reconciling my own settler history and engrained assumptions with other, marginalized realms of knowledge that were different from my own. I took these interests with me when I moved to Halifax to start my Master's at Dalhousie University, but was (and remain) new to the nuances involved in both Indigenous and food system studies.

       It was not until my Master's degree that I realized that my interests in food systems and Indigenous contexts could be pursued simultaneously. When I first arrived in my Master's of Environmental Studies program, I wanted to study food systems in general and jumped between national and international contexts. I spent the first semester exploring and understanding concepts by attending different classes, and eventually

considered studying Canadian contexts in Newfoundland and Labrador or in Nunavut. Those places were the subjects of a body of literature that studies food security in First Nation and Inuit communities. Despite finding this general context and literature base in Northern Canada, it was not until Christmas, 2016 that my study fortuitously developed around the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) in the Yukon Territory.

My thesis and partnership with the CTFN developed quickly out of my happenstance introduction to Jen Herkes, a friend my mom had from her local gym, in December 2016. The three of us spoke about my interests in food systems, which led Jen to introduce me to Tami Grantham, the Lands and Resources Manager with the CTFN. Tami and I formed a relationship quickly, and by February 2017, I had begun preparations to go to Carcross, Yukon to study the CTFN community garden. Tami helped me construct a project, the purpose of which was to examine how the community garden interacted with existing traditional knowledge in the CTFN community. Matthew Schnurr and Peter Tyedmers - my supervisory committee - helped me mobilize the thesis into a proposal and ethics application. Tami wanted me to look at food security, traditional knowledge, and future options for integrating traditional knowledge into the garden. While those were helpful guiding topics for my proposals and applications, my interviews and relationships helped me refine them to the topics that are ultimately included within the thesis: Indigenous food sovereignty and decolonization.

**Terminology**

The terminology used in this thesis aims to be as specific as possible when discussing my research community. I use the abbreviation for the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) as frequently as possible when referring to their community as it stands in the Yukon Territory in my research. In Canada, when referring to the original inhabitants of our land, the appropriate legal, generalized term is "Aboriginal" (*Indian Act,* R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5). However, in most cases, I use the term "Indigenous" to represent the legally defined and self-identified original inhabitants of a geographic area (Wilson, 2008). This is in an attempt to encapsulate the diversity and heterogeneity within the various Indigenous populations both in Canada and across the globe. However, the term Indigenous does risk readers assuming that all Indigenous people are the same. In an attempt to circumvent that issue, I will state here that my intention is not to homogenize

all Indigenous people into one subset of society. Instead, when speaking generally, my intention is to identify the larger systemic issues that influence the various Indigenous peoples from all jurisdictions.

## 1.1 Contextual Information

Discussions about Indigeneity gained popularity as declarations of human rights and international labour laws evolved. In 1957, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations (UN) released the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (No. 107) to address the link between cultural, societal, and economic issues in Indigenous communities. However, the criteria that specifically outlined what it meant to be Indigenous were only clearly outlined in the ILO's 1989 *Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention* (No. 169). This convention declared that Indigenous people are:

> peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations that inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonialization or the establishment of the present state boundaries and who … retain some or all of their social, cultural, and political institutions. (I.L.O., 1989, Article 1)

As part of the ILO's push towards equitable work laws, this Convention also called for national government recognition of the Indigenous populations' right to participate in governance. Since this convention, the United Nations has released the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which also defines Indigenous peoples as those who are distinct from the dominant society due to their descent, cultures, and societal practices (UNDRIP, 2007). Definitions of 'Indigenous' formally came into place in Canadian governance in the first iteration of the *Indian Act* in 1876, which clearly distinguishes 'Indian' from 'non-Indian' people (*Indian Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5). Revised in 1985, the *Indian Act* clarifies that the Indigenous people are called the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, and collectively referred to as Aboriginal people (*Indian Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5). The *Indian Act* enables the federal government to control Aboriginal lands and communities, as well as define Aboriginal status (*Indian Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5; Kuper, 2003).

In Canada and elsewhere, clear legal definition of Indigenous people accompanied management strategies for controlling their lands, lives, and identities. As

such, the implications of defining and pursuing Indigeneity can be debated as either positive steps towards recognition or negative colonial categorizations for the purposes of control (Nadasdy, 2005; Agrawal, 1995). On one hand, Indigenous people require recognition in order to obtain legal rights to governance and cultural protection (Niezen, 2000; Kukutai, 2004; Smith, 2012). By identifying Indigenous groups as separate from dominant or colonising societies for policy and statistical purposes, groups that are suffering from particular disadvantage can be targeted for much needed research and programming (Kukutai, 2004). Furthermore, delineating cultures within society helps to highlight and problematize harmful societal norms that may oppress non-dominant cultures (Niezen, 2000; Smith, 2012). Conversely, classifying Indigenous groups can be seen as "othering": reinforcing normative distinctions between 'primitive' and 'civilized' people, which serve to cement the dichotomy between Western and non-Western thought (Agrawal, 1995; Kuper, 2003; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). Western worldviews are those that stem from colonial histories and are based in Eurocentricity (Smith, 2012). In legal and academic contexts, this indicates a set of conventions that describe the ways in which people, knowledge, and priorities are categorized (Agrawal, 1995; Wilson, 2001; Kuper, 2003; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). It can be problematic to categorize Indigeneity as 'non-Western' because that understanding has often been reflected in legislation premised on assumptions that Indigenous people are 'primitive' peoples in need of help or 'noble savages' to be romanticized (Agrawal, 1995; Nadasdy, 2005). Conversely, Western cultures and knowledge is assumed to offer solutions and appropriate interventions for non-Western cultures to advance and problem-solve (Smith, 2012). In that dichotomy, Western thought is consistently prioritized over non-Western worldviews and used as the basis for control over Indigenous peoples (Kymlicka, 1999; Smith, 2012). Though such colonial processes are ongoing and still impact society, being identified as Indigenous entitles people to rights according to national and international policy and is a step towards social equality.

Indigenous peoples ought to be recognized as separate from dominant cultures and empowered to self-govern, and decolonization offers a path to realize this empowerment. Decolonization is a concept that applies to a variety of contexts, including research (Smith, 2012), food production (Morrison, 2011), and social justice (Tejeda,

Espinoza & Gutierrez, 2003). At its core, decolonization is the process of subverting colonial power structures which actively oppress or marginalize populations that do not conform to Eurocentric cultural norms (Smith, 2012). This can come in the form of violent independence wars against colonial powers such as the West African liberation efforts (Saul, 2004) or in the form of exposing students to non-Eurocentric ideologies in education (Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). In any case, decolonization is relevant to any process where marginalized peoples are continuously oppressed or silenced by dominant cultural norms and expectations and is not limited to ethic group empowerment (Blue Swadener & Mutua, 2008; Kovach, 2009).

## 1.1.2 Food Production and Indigeneity

Food production and distribution is one realm where tensions surrounding decolonization and Indigeneity are manifest. In Canada, most food production has transitioned from 'local' to 'global', which results in most food being produced as monocultured crops and/or imported from other countries. This is a distinctly neoliberal process where dominant cultures have gained monopolies over food and its production and distribution systems (McMichael, 2012). Indigenous populations suffer cultural loss due to this transition because traditional food and the knowledge associated with hunting, gathering, and preparing those foods is becoming irrelevant as market foods become the pervasive source of nutrition (Egeland et al., 2009; Ford & Beaumier, 2011). In this way, the dominant approach to food production and acquisition contributes to the erasure and marginalization of Indigenous cultures (Kuhnlein et al., 2004; Rudolph & McLachlan, 2013). By acknowledging Indigeneity and empowering Indigenous people to self-govern and participate in their food systems, the solutions to those problems can be reoriented to include cultural preservation and sensitivity (Kovach, 2009; Rudolph, 2012; Douglas et al., 2014). This is the basis of the Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) movement, which calls for community ownership of food systems and a shift away from colonial practices towards new or traditional systems that align with local needs (Morrison, 2011). IFS, discussed at length in Chapter Two, invites individuals and societies to understand food systems in terms of social relevance and community ownership (Kamal et al., 2015). It has the potential to be an effective way to examine food system-related issues as it stresses importance of community empowerment through food production.

Reconnection with food systems can act as a pathway for Indigenous communities to reinvigorate local and traditional knowledge, prevent further cultural loss, and build towards an empowered, decolonial future. In Canada, non-governmental organizations such as "Growing North" provide greenhouses and start-up assistance to communities looking to start their own food production system (Growing North, 2017). These programs, however, are centred on food access, though there is some consideration for community ownership. The federal government program Nutrition North Canada subsidizes food on the wholesaler level to reduce the cost of food in Northern Communities (Government of Canada, 2017). This approach is also primarily focused on food access rather than food control. These distinctions between access and control are important because individual community food production endurance depends on community ownership and buy-in, volunteer support, and thus local control (Christensen, 2016; Hansen, 2011; Morrison, 2011). Consequently, research into how individual food systems can be decolonized and moved towards culturally relevant processes in Indigenous communities is necessary. IFS offers a potential solution to these issues by suggesting that systems be made relevant to community values and traditions, so food may be integrated into existing cultural fabrics (Morrison, 2011). By localizing food production, distribution, and consumption and ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with local values and traditions, community gardening may offer an avenue for Indigenous populations to decolonize their food systems and work towards sovereignty.

This thesis is an exploratory and descriptive example of IFS investigations and decolonizing methodologies. Through a case study the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Yukon Territory, I explore food system considerations of IFS and decolonization in the context of research methods in Junior academic contexts. In doing so, this thesis addresses a gap within existing Canadian efforts to improve food system control and discusses how increasing community engagement in and control over food production measures could be linked to cultural revitalization and preservation. This thesis also identifies specific barriers in the research process for Junior researchers (e.g. Master's students) that impede a departure from colonial practices. The secondary narrative highlights the ways in which conventional education, degree structures, institutional

restrictions and personal limitations may encourage problematic views of Indigenous people or contexts.

## 1.1.3 The Case Study Setting

This research took place in and around the community garden in Carcross, Yukon Territory. Carcross is one of the two communities within the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN). The CTFN became a self-governing First Nation in 2006, and their jurisdictional region lies within their 1500km$^2$ traditional territory in the Southern Lakes Region of the Yukon Territory (*The Carcross/Tagish First Nation Final Agreement*. 2005). The population of Carcross is 289 people, and the other community within the CTFN, Tagish, has a population is 391 (Government of Yukon, 2014a; Government of Yukon, 2014b). Both Carcross and Tagish are roughly made up of 61% Aboriginal people, and most of those people are part of the CTFN (Government of Yukon, 2014a). Demographically, the CTFN is a diverse nation with 882 people from six different clans (Daklaweidi, Yan Yedi, Deishetaan, Kookhittan, Ganaxtedi, Ishkahittan) who speak Tagish and Tlingit traditional language dialects (CTFN, 2018; Government of Yukon, 2014b). Those languages are preserved by the elders of the CTFN, of which there are at least 93 over the age of 60. The existing community garden is located 4km from the Carcross town centre and 30km from Tagish. This garden currently provides some fresh produce to local community members and is owned and operated by the CTFN administrative body's Lands and Natural Resources department.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine the processes and structures of the CTFN community garden using IFS as a conceptual lens, and to provide recommendations on improving community buy-in and participation in garden activities. The CTFN presents a unique case regarding both IFS and decolonization in community gardening contexts, as the existing community garden has never been studied through an IFS lens. Furthermore, research into the biological feasibility of the Yukon food system has been undertaken, and the CTFN is the only community thus far to have a community-based study on support for more localized food production (Chiu et al., 2015; Dorward, Chiu, and Mullinix, 2014). Additionally, authors such as Desmarais & Wittman (2014)

and Clapp (2014) argue that understanding what food sovereignty looks like in practice within different community dynamics is important to advancing food sovereignty efforts in general political discourse. As such, understanding the CTFN's garden processes through an IFS lens is the timely next step to advancing local food-related goals.

The current and past garden managers both cite employee burn-out and low community uptake as limitations to garden expansion and as exacerbating factors in the garden's fluctuation between activity and inactivity since 1990 (Lloyd Lintott, pers comm, 07/10/2017 ; Seki Giardino, pers comm, 08/03/2017). Despite this cycle, Dorward, Chiu, and Mullinix (2014) found in their food system analysis study that the garden is supported by both community members and the CTFN elected and appointed officials on the Executive council. Presently, the executive council is looking to encourage further community involvement in the garden, so it may continue to produce healthy food for the community. There is also a parallel goal of preserving traditional knowledge within the CTFN, and Ms.Grantham, my primary research contact, and the executive council asked me to investigate if the community participation in food production and  knowledge preservation goals could both be achieved through the garden. The intention behind these objectives is to encourage CTFN members to reconnect with their food system, access healthy food, and interact with traditional knowledge in a food system context. As a result, this thesis sets out to investigate how traditional knowledge could be incorporated into the community garden to encourage community participation and preserve existing knowledge.

While pursuing the problem associated with IFS, a second problem pertaining to the use of decolonized methods emerged. Understanding IFS in the CTFN context necessitated an understanding of local worldviews that I did not possess prior to experiential learning in the field (Wilson, 2008; Morrison, 2011). To address this issue, I utilized decolonized methodologies to guide my research process. However, in doing so, barriers relating to timelines, institutional processes, and relative inexperience impeded my capacity to engage with decolonization in my research. As such, a secondary narrative about the challenges faced by settler, Junior academics when engaging with decolonization was addressed by this thesis.

### 1.3.1 Research Questions

Chapters Two and Three present the empirical findings relating to IFS and decolonization, using primary data combined with literature review to address their respective research questions. Both chapters are intended to be revised for publication post-thesis defense, as such they contain research-question specific literature reviews and considerations separate from those above. Chapter Two presents findings related to the two original research questions concerning the CTFN community garden:

> 1) How do existing knowledge holders within the CTFN currently interact with the existing community garden infrastructure?
> 2) To what extent can the garden adapt to existing traditional food gathering practices and uses?

Chapter Three presents a reflection and analysis on my data collection experiences as a Junior academic attempting to decolonize their work. This chapter is centred on my third research question which developed while I collected data:

> 3) What limitations exist for Junior academics undertaking decolonial research?

Chapter Four discusses recommendations and future research while tying the contents of Chapter's Two and Three together in broader terms and offering concluding remarks.

## 1.4 Methods

I structured this research as a case study to focus in on a specific community *in situ*. This is a common approach to research in Indigenous communities as it allows for in-depth understanding of cultural nuances and priorities (Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Chilisa, 2012; Bryman, 2012). The methods I used were developed using common approaches to social science investigations and qualitative data. I used semi-structured interviews and participant observation to collect my data, grounded theory to identify key themes in data, and IFS and decolonization as lenses for understanding key themes.

### 1.4.1 Ethics

Though my experience with ethics is described in greater detail in Chapter Three, the key procedural points are highlighted here. All my methods, consent forms, and research materials were proposed to and approved by both the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board (REB) and the CTFN executive council. I developed the project in conjunction with Tami Grantham – the Lands and Natural Resources manager with the CTFN – and

my supervisory committee. The research questions and methods used in this study were then sent to the Dalhousie REB and the CTFN executive council simultaneously for approval. After some revisions suggested by the Dalhousie REB, this project and its methods were ultimately approved pending a letter of support from the CTFN executive council on June 9th, 2017. My letter of support from the CTFN was signed on May 15th, 2017 and delivered to the Dalhousie REB on July 12th, 2017. Once my letter of support had been submitted to the Dalhousie REB, I began my data collection.

My consent materials consisted of consent forms for interviews with elders and interviews with community gardeners, as well as a separate consent form for participant observation events (moments where a participant in my study took me on an excursion to learn about traditional food). These consent forms delineated my research questions and intentions, and also gave each participant the right to withdraw specific quotes or entirely from the interview, to decline audio recording, to review interview and event transcriptions and notes, and to maintain anonymity. The consent for participant observation events was similar to that of semi-structured interviews, except I did not request voice recording consent as it was not feasible to clearly record conversation outdoors in many cases. For participant observation at public events, in public spaces, or at the CTFN community garden, the CTFN letter of support gave me permission to take general notes.

## 1.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allow for some conversational flow, but also enable the researcher to guide discussions along a specific topic (Bryman, 2012). Interviews are highly recommended for social science research because they allow investigation into individual experiences (Chilisa, 2012). As such, I chose this method for my research because my research questions pertaining to the ways in which individuals interact with knowledge and the community garden required me to gather personal experiences on both subjects. Semi-structured interviews allow for researcher reflection while collecting data so they may adjust questions and conversation trajectories based on real-time feedback and responses from participants (Wilson, 2008). Additionally, semi-structured interviews have been used before in the Yukon to study food system and knowledge related topics (Cruikshank, 1991; McClellan & Cruikshank, 2007; Dorward, Chiu &

Mullinix, 2014; Douglas et al., 2014). It is important to note, however, that interviews have a history of being exploitative and manipulative within social science research (Smith, 2012) and so they must be broached carefully with ethics and power considerations at the forefront of their execution (Wilson, 2008; Chilisa, 2012). With this said, individual agency cannot be ignored: if a community member is comfortable with interviews and is keen to share information, their agency to consent must not be discounted (Smith, 2012).

Once I obtained individual participant consent to conduct an interview, I asked a series of questions pertaining to the community garden and traditional knowledge (see Appendix A for my question guide) but also attempted to follow the flow of conversation. In total, I conducted twelve interviews ranging from thirty minutes to three hours in duration depending on the participant's desire to continue and share information. I recorded conversations on my mobile phone's 'voice recording' application in ten cases and took notes for one case at the informant's request and for another due to outdoor circumstances that made recording impossible.

### 1.4.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation took place when a community member chose to take me out of Carcross to show me a food collection method or place. These events were participant led, and I would ask follow-up questions on shared information. I recorded observation notes from June 28th to August 28th, 2017 for additional data collection. I received executive council consent to do so, and only wrote notes on public events or in public settings. When conducting my sampling at the community garden and in the Carcross administration building, I would also write observation notes. I also participated and volunteered in larger public events including the Carcross Learning Centre grand opening ceremony on June 19th, the Adaka Cultural festival in Whitehorse on July 4th, and the Intertribal Yukon River Council meeting on August 1st.

### 1.4.4 Sampling

I used purposive sampling, the process of identifying potential participants based on their perceived relevance to research questions, followed by snowball sampling to find participants for my interviews and participant observation events (Marshall, 1996;

Bryman, 2012). I first used purposive sampling to identify community members with expertise in gardening, traditional knowledge, or both as I theorized they would have the most relevant information to my research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To sample, I made efforts to volunteer at the CTFN community garden every weekday for a minimum of two hours. This was to identify key people involved in the community and in the garden's operations. In addition, I sat in the Carcross administration building, the hub of Carcross where most people work or visit friends, every weekday morning to introduce myself to community members. During these times, I would participate in community events (when relevant) and conversation to develop a rapport with people and also identify myself as a researcher interested in the CTFN community garden. From existing participants, I then asked for referrals to other community members who may offer insight into my topics of interest during my snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012).

## 1.4.5 Analysis

All transcription, coding, and analysis was done by hand. To accomplish this, I typed each note and interview into Microsoft Word, read the documents and used a grounded theory approach to identify themes, and colour coded and organized quotes using Microsoft Excel. Grounded theory is the process of allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing predetermined categories on information (Bryman, 2012; Chilisa, 2012). I used a grounded theory approach because I wanted the key themes and findings to come from the community rather than my existing knowledge about food systems, and because it is a widely used approach to social, qualitative data (Tomaselli, Dyll & Francis 2008; Kovach, 2009; Chilisa, 2012). I coded and organized quotes and points by hand in Microsoft Word and Excel to intimately familiarize myself with the data which presented information that may or may not have been easily identified by key-words. This was also done to remind myself of the emotion and context behind each quote as I selected them.

Once coded, data was analysed through two distinct lenses. In Chapter Two, the data is analysed using IFS as a lens for highlighting key priorities for the CTFN community garden, and avenues for further research and potential growth. This lens helped me identify key quotes and stories for isolating individual values relating to the garden. In Chapter Three, experiences from data collection and key moments within the

data are presented from a reflective perspective using decolonization as a lens. This was done to understand how decolonization was fulfilled or not fulfilled in my methodological execution and analysis as a Junior academic.

# CHAPTER 2:   COMMUNITY GARDENING IN THE CARCROSS TAGISH FIRST NATION: AN INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NARRATIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to explain two things about a community garden. First, I want to share what I learned in the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) about a small community garden. I learned about how the community garden's structure, tools, and intent interact with traditions and people in the CTFN. I also learned about how the people of the CTFN envision its future. To these ends, I will talk about important values people associate with their food system and the ways in which the garden fulfills or does not fulfill those. Second, I want to explain how this small garden in a northern First Nation community fills a gap in knowledge about Indigenous food sovereignty (community ownership of food systems and the ways in which those systems interact with culture) on a larger scale. This chapter will be used as a journal article post-thesis defense. As such, it is intended to act as a stand-alone piece that examines the case study of the thesis and includes a description of the research questions and methods but is intended to be read in the context of the larger thesis.

This chapter is organized in three sections. The first section, entitled "The Lens", is mostly closely related to an academic literature review. It highlights and discusses previous academic voices on topics such as Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS), decolonization, and community gardening in order to organize the narratives and themes that emerged in my interviews. The second, "The Stories", explains what people shared with me in the context of the garden and their local food system. There are two key values that emerged from interactions and observations in Carcross: (1) intergenerational communication and community, (2) and tradition and spirituality. These values became clear when people told stories about their preferred methods of food collection that were not always directly linked to the CTFN garden. This second section outlines these values along side descriptions of current garden activity and how they align with one another. In the third section, "The Future", the garden and IFS theories are brought together to generate new knowledge and recommendations for the CTFN's food future. It also discusses how food sovereignty operates in a real-world context, and how it can be enhanced.

## 2.1 "The Lens": Research Approach and Context

This case study is part of a Master's Thesis conducted through Dalhousie University and is an exploratory analysis of the CTFN community garden's capacity to interact with existing traditional knowledge and tradition-informed values. The research objectives and questions were created through the community's primary contact's advice and insight[1]. She was working with the CTFN administration and interested community members to improve the local food system and, in particular, the community garden's role in it. Additionally, the CTFN is pursuing cultural revitalization and preservation through the use of volunteer and education programs and events that aim to connect people to various aspects of their ceremonial, artistic, and food related cultural components (e.g. CTFN, 2018). This research's objective is to conduct an exploratory case study of the CTFN community garden's potential for engaging with traditional knowledge and heritage, and thus the CTFNs cultural preservation goals, while also expanding its community engagement capacity. Two research questions were developed to achieve this objective:

> 1) How do existing knowledge holders within the CTFN currently interact with the existing community garden infrastructure?
> 2) To what extent can the garden adapt to existing traditional food gathering practices and uses?

There are cultural considerations pertaining to tradition and gardening in Indigenous communities relevant to these questions that informed the data collection tools and analysis. There is an in-depth analysis of ethical data collection and methodological considerations for this research in Chapter Three, but a short overview of the process is provided in Section 2.1.6. It is important to note at this time that working as a non-Indigenous researcher with a First Nation is complicated. 'Research' is a dirty word in many Indigenous communities (Smith, 2012) and non-Indigenous academics have a history of taking information from and failing to give back any benefit (Wilson, 2001; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). This research history coupled with existing power dynamics that have consistently marginalized and oppressed Indigenous populations has resulted in conventional academic research using extraction-based methods that ultimately exploit

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[1] All components of this study were developed with the help of Tami Grantham, the Lands Manager with the CTFN administration and the key community contact.

Indigenous communities and affirm existing, harmful power structures (Smith, 2012). These considerations and my subsequent tool choices form contextualize the ways in which data was analysed and understood.

## 2.1.1 Cultural Considerations

An absence of traditional values and practices being expressed in a society's food system can result in a loss of culture (Kuhnlein et al., 2004; Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Rudolph, 2012; Rudolph & McLachlan, 2013). This trend exists in a variety of communities (for example, Iqualuit in Ford & Beaumier's 2011 study) as climate and economic factors make traditional foods impossible to rely on for entire diets in Indigenous communities. Specifically, in the Yukon Territory, members of the Vuntut Gwitchin Nation in Old Crow described their concerns about decreasing access to traditional foods when elders identified caribou as a species that is becoming scarce due to climatic changes (Douglas et al., 2014). They further maligned the resulting transition to market foods, describing how imported food was often of poor nutritional and physical quality. These food transitions combined with the introduction of new technology, like freezers, had resulted in a loss of traditional knowledge about food acquisition and harvesting, especially among youth (Douglas et al., 2014). This loss of cultural knowledge was seen to have practical implications as it reduced people's capacity to survive on the land. It also had indirect social implications as fewer people could share food and experiences between each other and between generations. In those conversations, residents suggested gardening and food production as a method for addressing the food access issues associated with loss of traditional foods, and as an educational tool for youth about nutrition and some tradition (Douglas et al., 2014).

Decreasing intergenerational communication is often cited as a secondary problem that results when Indigenous food systems depart from traditional harvesting and sources (Douglas et al., 2014; Damman, Eide, & Kuhnlein, 2008; Khunlein, 2015). Traditional knowledge sharing is an important component of cultural survival for many Indigenous communities (Moses et al., 2017; Dombrowski et al., 2013a; Dombrowski et al., 2013b). An important aspect of this transmission is concerned with sharing stories and experiences with younger generations (Turner, 2014; McClellan & Cruikshank, 2007). However, in Igloolik, Nunavut, Ford & Beaumier found that the younger

generations were reluctant to take over the full-time hunting traditions of their elders (2011). In this case, some of the species that are hunted, including walrus, require specialized traditional knowledge that will become lost as fewer people of younger generations engage with it (Ford & Beaumier, 2011). In this example, culturally specific practices and information may be preserved or lost depending on the community's capacity to share and perpetuate knowledge. This pattern exists in other studies, and is a prominent concern in Indigenous health, nutrition, and cultural revitalization (Damman, Eide, & Kuhnlein, 2008; Khunlein, 2015; Dombrowski, Channell, Khan, Moses, & Misshula 2013a; Dombrowski, Channell, Khan, Moses, & Misshula 2013b). Consequently, it is important to pursue food system interventions that are relevant to each community's cultural needs, as it can be a method for preserving knowledge that would otherwise be lost without consistent use.

## 2.1.2 Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is a term that originated in the late 1990s as a response to the dominant food security narrative. Food security is concerned with access to food but does not dictate the ways in which that food is accessed (FAO, 2008; FAO, 2009; Iles & Montenrgro de Wit, 2015). Food sovereignty focuses more so on how food is accessed and to what extent a community has choice and control over that access, which contests the status quo of a neoliberal, market based, global food system (La Via Campensina, 2003; Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015). The components of food sovereignty are:

1) Prioritizing local food production and local access to resources;
2) Ensuring citizens have the right to decide where their food comes from and how it is produced;
3) Ensuring countries' abilities to protect themselves from imported, low cost foods;
4) Linking food prices to agricultural costs;
5) Prioritizing citizen input on agricultural decisions; and
6) Treating food as a right and a gift, not as a commodity (La Via Campensina, 2003; Food Secure Canada, n.d.).

This understanding of food sovereignty, however, is missing key components in the case of Indigenous populations. Indigenous food systems are traditionally connected to a wide variety of food sources that may not be agricultural (Turner, 2014). Each community has unique hunting and gathering practices and has unique values that attach to their food

system and that extend beyond economic value (Douglas et al., 2014; Khunlein, 2015). Researchers (e.g. Grey and Patel, 2015) and communities (e.g. Dawson City, Yukon (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, n.d.)) alike are realizing that "Westernized diet[s]… [are supplanting] the traditional in the most literal sense, with non-nutrient-dense, industrial foods deculturing people from the inside out" (Grey & Patel, 2015, p. 438). In light of this, the definition of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) has developed to include factors such as recognizing and utilizing traditional knowledge about biodiversity (e.g. Kuhnlein, 2015) or considerations of intergenerational knowledge sharing (e.g. Douglas et al., 2014) alongside the generalized food sovereignty elements. To this end, IFS occurs when a community has control over food production and access, the food system is respectful of and adheres to sacred traditions and values where relevant, and policies surrounding the food system are appropriate to each unique culture (Morrison, 2011; Kamal et al., 2015; Rudolph & McLaughlin, 2013). This does not preclude agricultural production, but merely ensures that the production is consistent with community values and needs.

IFS in northern Indigenous populations in Canada is potentially a key component to the preservation of cultures and communities as they adapt to climate change and socioeconomic issues, including poverty and food insecurity. To illustrate this point, consider Ford and Beaumier's 2011 study with the Inuit in Igloolik, Nunavut: changing environmental factors limited the ability for people to hunt and store food prices were noted as too high, and as a result, people suffered from limited food choices and availability. In this context, the loss of ability to collect food on the land and purchase culturally relevant food was thought to be connected to the loss of knowledge in that community. In a related study which compares Nunavut and Greenland, Ford et al. (2016) found that integrating food access methods with existing traditional harvests and practices (i.e. non-traditional markets for selling and trading traditionally harvested foods in Nunavut) could potentially alleviate stress on food systems. These two studies demonstrate the importance of Indigenous populations maintaining control over their food system, which is consistent with the IFS framework. As food insecurity rises and people's ability to access food is limited, solutions that return control and decisions to the hands of the community have potential for alleviating that stress (Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Ford et al., 2016).

## 2.1.3 Community Gardens

Local food production, such as expanded agriculture or crop production and gardening, are potential 'community owned' methods for improving IFS. However, such agricultural initiatives can also be seen as an extension of colonisation by communities and scholars alike (Piper & Sandlos, 2007; Rudolph and McLachlan, 2013; Alkon & Noregaard, 2009) as they are perceived as an intervention imposed by outsiders with a deep history of environmental harm (Alkon & Noregaard, 2009). Moreover, agriculture accompanied the establishment of mission schools in Canada's North (Piper & Sandlos, 2007). Children were put to work on small gardens to help provide food for themselves as they became concentrated in small geographic areas to attend school. This practice alienated students from their 'on-the-land' traditions, and further ensured that they were not connected to their heritage (Piper & Sandlos, 2007). Consequently, the tools and activities associated with agricultural development may be perceived by communities to be attached to harmful worldviews that oppress Indigenous tradition (Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Ford et al., 2016; Morrison, 2011). Gardening, though, is smaller scale and flexible, and, as a result, is often perceived by community members as more local and linked to local decision making (Piper & Sandlos, 2007; Alkon & Noregaard, 2009; Hansen, 2011; Rudolph and McLachlan, 2013). Gardening on individual and communal levels may be an effective IFS tool because they return food system control to local people and provide additional access to food (Thompson et al., 2012; Rudolph & McLaughlin, 2013; Douglas et al., 2014; Fieldhouse & Thompson, 2017).

In general, community gardens enable active participatory decision making, and greater individual and community access to, and control over, food (Hansen, 2011). Additionally, there is no rigid garden structure, so they can be adapted to fit unique contexts (Hansen, 2011). The individual goals of gardens can vary from strictly increasing quantities of fresh produce in a community, to creating locally managed sustainable food systems (Clarke & Jenerette, 2015; Furness & Gallaher, 2017). Regardless of the specific goals of any specific community garden, two general categories of benefits: (1) improved food access and (2) social inclusion and development on both individual and community levels.

Depending on setting and scale, community gardens can increase fresh food access to the larger community through donation to food banks, sharing between friends and neighbours (Kurtz, 2001; Dickinson et al., 2003; Furness & Gallaher, 2017), and through individual growing and consuming (Pearsall et al., 2017; van Holstein, 2017). Furness and Gallaher's (2017) research in Illinois found that 59% of participants got food from the community garden involved in the study. What makes that finding interesting is how respondents acknowledged that the garden provided them access to foods that were otherwise unavailable due to cost or physical distance (Furness & Gallaher, 2017). Other studies have similarly found that community gardens improve food access in neighbourhoods with varying degrees of economic stability (e.g. van Holstein, 2017; Wakefield et al., 2007). This suggests that food access can be enhanced, regardless of a community's background or socio-economic situation.

Community gardening can also increase social inclusion. Though most citizens may gain improved access to fresh produce regardless of their level of participation in a community garden, they may not gain the social benefits if they are not directly involved (Pearsall et al., 2017). Furness and Gallaher (2017) found that a disconnect between those who participated in growing and those who did not solidified an 'us vs. them' attitude of consumers versus growers. This resulted in a dichotomy between gardeners and non-gardeners and thus exacerbating social tensions. However, if the community garden connects both growers and non-growers either through events or programs, and is initiated through grassroot efforts, the tension between groups may diminish and encourage individual and communal connection to the food system (Firth, May, & Pearson, 2011; Hansen, 2011).

An additional social effect of community gardening is identity expression. Pearsall et al. (2017) found that cultural identity could be expressed through choices of herb and vegetable species in a community garden context. Similarly, Wakefield et al. (2007) found that immigrants in an urban context were able to improve their access to culturally relevant foods that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive in stores. In this case, gardening was used as a method for preserving and expressing identities that could otherwise be lost if the only source of food was a grocery store. van Holstein (2017) found that middle class people in an Australian community participated in a community

garden partially to produce food, partially to connect with nature, and partially to connect with people. Hinton (2016) also found that Bhutanese refugees growing plants from their home regions while living in Canada helped reconnect people to foods from their home, and thus to their identities. Taken together, these studies suggest that creating an identity in relation to other people and to nature in an important motivation for individuals participating in community gardens. Furthermore, these studies suggest that participating in the actual production of a garden can be an expression of individual as well as community identity. This is directly relevant to IFS, as a central component is expressing and enacting traditional through the food system to preserve culture and strengthen community.

### 2.1.4 Community Gardens and Indigenous Communities

Though numerous interventions with varying degrees of traditionality may be used in Indigenous communities, the CTFN is currently using and expanding its community garden. Consequently, this paper focuses on community gardening rather than other food system interventions. Community gardens have been used in Indigenous communities to improve access to food and help reconnect people to the land and culture. In communities such as Elsipogtog, New Brunswick, and Rigolet, Labrador, individual and community gardening is seen as a method for reclaiming some local food system control and improve the diets of community members (Thompson et al., 2012; Food First NL, n.d.; CBC, 2017; Canadian Feed the Children, 2018). An increasingly important component in this, however, is that food production methods align with traditional values and community needs. Rudolph and McLachlan (2013) set out to uncover and understand potential solutions to the northern Manitoban food crisis, which is ongoing, specifically within the Misipawistik Cree Nation and the Grand Rapids Métis community. These communities suffer from restricted food access and high rates of diet related disease, as well as a lack of control of their own food system. These confounding factors ultimately contribute to ongoing cultural identity loss. Participants in Rudolph and McLaughlin's (2013) study highlighted how community and individual gardens simultaneously improved physical access to food and local ownership over the food system by reconnecting people to local produced foods instead of market foods. Such a finding suggests that pursuing IFS through improved community participation and adherence to

local or traditionally-defined cultural values is a valuable act in food system management that contributes to overall food system success.

In their 2014 study in the Fort Albany First Nation (FAFN), Ontario, Skinner at al. analyzed the impacts and effectiveness of community greenhouses on local food security. This study is relevant to my research in the CTFN because the FAFN and CTFN have comparable climates, and latitudes, in addition to having similar population sizes and environmental and social goals for their local food systems. Furthermore, the study in FAFN used similar methods as those used in this study of the CTFN. Though the focus of the FAFN research was to understand food access rather than food sovereignty, the authors ultimately found that community gardening must be controlled by the community and have a community champion in order to succeed and earn long-term community buy-in (Skinner et al., 2014). Additionally, the authors found that participants were eager to have aspects of their traditional harvesting practices, such as berry picking or food preserving, incorporated into their home and community gardens. As such, it stands to reason that a garden ought to fulfill the requirements of IFS as it addresses any other food related goals to reflect and respond to the unique needs of the community.

Despite the importance of IFS, few studies exist that examine what food sovereignty looks like in practice for Indigenous communities; studies remain focused on narratives of food security and physical access to food (e.g. Egeland et al., 2009; Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Dombrowski et al., 2013a; Dombrowski et al., 2013b; Ford et al., 2016; Moses, Khan, Gauthier, Ponizovsky, & Dombrowski, 2017) despite acknowledging the food sovereignty narrative (Kamal et al., 2015). To illustrate this point, consider Elsipogtog's community garden in New Brunswick. Their garden is advertised to be a food security improvement measure on their website as it improves the access to food in the community (Canadian Feed the Children, 2018).  However, the garden and its role in the community is described by participants in terms of connecting community to the decision-making processes, which is distinctly connected to the IFS narrative (Canadian Feed the Children, 2018). Also consider Hinton's (2016) Master's thesis which discussed and analysed the communal control and cultural identity components of community garden in the context of refugees in Canada. The research remained centred on food security language and interpretation but was attempting to address the cultural and

community participation issues relevant to IFS. Kamal et al. (2015) highlight this pattern in both academic and non-academic literature through their meta-analysis of different studies and communities addressing food security. Ultimately, Kamal et al. stress the importance of reorienting empirical studies of food systems to incorporate IFS as a lens (2015). This, they argue, would help to redefine the necessary tools involved in food security strategies to inherently consider participatory and cultural considerations.

## 2.1.5 The CTFN Context

This case study takes place in the Carcross and Tagish Communities, with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN). The Carcross community has a population of 289 (Government of Yukon, 2014a) and the Tagish community has a population of 391 (Government of Yukon, 2014b). Roughly 61% of these communities is Indigenous, and the majority of those people belong to CTFN (Government of Yukon, 2014a). Carcross is a remote but popular tourist destination, particularly in the summer, due to its stunning views, hiking, and world class mountain biking. Tagish is an excellent hunting and fishing region that is less frequented by tourists but is popular among local residents. Together, the residents of these communities make up the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, an autonomous First Nation governance body. The CTFN jurisdictional region occupies their 1500 km$^2$ traditional territory in the Southern Lakes Region of the Yukon. This territory, and the CTFN's independent jurisdiction, was established in 2006; as such they have legal rights and exercise self-determination with regards to financial decisions, community development, and traditional land and resource management. Since regaining some of its autonomy (control over traditional lands and resources), the CTFN has been trying to become a self-sustaining community with a revived traditional culture and food system (CTFN, 2012; Andy Carvill, pers comm, 08/08/2017).

The population of the CTFN is roughly 882 with at least 93 elders over the age of 60, though not all of those people live within the CTFN jurisdictional boundary of the Carcross and Tagish communities (CTFN, 2012). Though small, the CTFN is a diverse nation with six clans (Daklaweidi, Yan Yedi, Deishetaan, Kookhittan, Ganaxtedi, Ishkahittan) and two local First Nation language dialects descending from the Athapaskan language family (Tagish and Tlingit) that are now only spoken fluently by elders (CTFN, 2018; Government of Yukon, 2014b). The groups do not primarily

identify as "gardeners or farmers" but as "gatherers or hunters" (Kevin Bayne, pers comm, 07/20/2017). The majority of the matrilineal families have nomadic hunting and gathering roots, and moose, caribou, gopher and salmon were primary sources of food supplemented by berries and other wild plants for both medicinal and food purposes (Turner, 2014; McClellan & Cruikshank, 2007). Currently, hunting, fishing, and gathering occur regularly, but most people primarily get their food from grocery stores.

Carcross is less remote than Tagish, but both places require residents to drive at least fifty minutes to Whitehorse, the territorial capital, to access groceries and most other services including social, financial, and extended health services. The Carcross community has one store that carries produce, ready-made food, gasoline, and also acts as the office for a recreational vehicle (RV) park that attracts tourist largely through the summer season. Carcross also contains a health centre, a few seasonal tourist-centered restaurants, and a rail-line that only connects Carcross with Skagway, Alaska.

### 2.1.5.a Food in the Yukon Territory

The desire to integrate community gardens more thoroughly into the local food system and encourage active citizen participation is a Yukon-wide goal. Through the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems' report *Yukon Food System Design and Planning Project* (Dorward & Mullinix, 2015; Chiu et al., 2015), the Yukon's First Nation and non-First Nation groups have set broad goals to increase food system self-reliance and incorporate cultural and environmental sustainability (Dorward & Mullinix, 2015). To this end, the Arctic Institution for Community Based Research (AICBR) explains in their food security report that communities are seeking ways in which they can connect more closely to their locally produced food (Friendship, Pratt & Marion, 2017). AICBR and the Yukon government provide workshops for general garden growing and each community has its own approach to engaging youth in traditional harvests (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, n.d; Friendship, Pratt & Marion, 2017). Some specific goals for the entire Yukon food system have emerged from gatherings organized by organizations like AICBR and include expanding crop and livestock production to improve territorial food access (Dorward & Mullinix, 2015). Smaller scale goals include improving individual garden seedling success in Yukon's many micro-climates (Friendship, Pratt & Marion, 2017). These goals

have both stemmed from and been guided by communities such as the CTFN and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in Dawson City (n.d.) as they attempt to expand local production.

### 2.1.5.b The Community Garden

The existing community garden in Carcross, which is located roughly 30km from Tagish and 4km from the Carcross town centre and was established in 1990 to engage community members in day-to-day garden participation, as well as provide an additional supply of food (Tami Grantham, pers comm, 09/12/2018). The garden also has specific plots designated for individual use (Andy Carvill, pers comm, 08/08/2017). The operation is similar to community distribution methods (van Holstein, 2017; Food Banks Canada, n.d.) where food is grown and distributed to the community. Both the CTFN Health and Wellness department and garden employees are responsible for distributing the food to elders and those community members who may be on financial assistance (Derek Grose, pers comm, 07/17/2017). This is done through wellness boxes, which are small boxes with food and necessities created by the Health and Wellness department. Remaining produce is sold to tourists outside the Carcross tourist centre, and the proceeds are returned to the garden (Melissa Barrett James, pers comm, 07/18/2017).

The garden is organized using row planting on 20x10m plots, and is maintained with organic fertilizer to produce potatoes, mixed leafy greens, carrots, radishes, potatoes, and some berries. The garden also includes chicken coops that house egg laying hens and broiler chickens that are harvested or slaughtered and shared with the community. As part of the chicken coop management, straw bedding materials are typically brought in from offsite, and once soiled, used as fertilizer or bed covers. The whole production system spans roughly 600m$^2$ of land. Two full-time employees are employed for approximately 17 weeks over the summer, and one person is employed full time for the entire year. They tend the garden by hand and are assisted each summer by three to five paid summer high school students. In addition to the field crops and chicken coop, the garden also includes two 15 metre long greenhouses made from plastic sheets stretched over a wooden frame and are equipped with manually operated windows. The greenhouses are used to grow frost-sensitive plants including tomatoes, squash, cucumber, and herbs. This style of garden infrastructure is modeled after European-style gardens and greenhouse technology and was developed over time with advice from non-Aboriginal experts (Bob Sharpe, pers

comm, 07/10/2017). Various strategies are used to manage pests in both the outdoor and indoor garden beds including use of strategic partner planting, in which nasturtiums and other non-food plants that deter pests are planted around and intermixed with crop plantings to help limit pest damage. The garden employees learned these methods from seminars provided by Yukon government extension programs and the AICBR (Kevin Bayne, pers comm, 07/10/2017; Lloyd Lintott, pers comm, 07/10/2017).

The garden is intended to have two avenues for community participation in addition to its function as a source of food for the community: volunteer assistance with labour with all garden operations, and volunteer stewardship over individual plots designated for community use (Lloyd Lintott, pers comm, 07/10/2017). The garden began as an effort from the CTFN executive council to improve community access to healthy food and to encourage individual participation in the food system (Andy Carville, pers comm, 08/08/2017). Despite its intentions, few community members assist with day-to-day activities, and few use the individual plots designated for citizen use (Fredeen observations, 07/31/2017). The labour is primarily done by the three paid employees who champion the project, which has left them overburdened and burnt out in the past. As such, the garden has fluctuated between inactivity and activity over the past two decades, with the 2017 season being the second year of activity after the garden fell into inactivity in 2011.

As the garden is considered a local government service, its funding is derived from the annual CTFN administration budget, which stems from both territorial and federal sources. To improve community involvement and further fulfill the garden's original intent, the CTFN Chief, Andy Carvill, and the Lands Manager, Tami Grantham, want to enhance the garden's physical infrastructure and programming so that it becomes a larger part of the local food system. To do so, the employees and administrative staff want to create a garden that is more relevant to the community, consistent with other traditional knowledge-related goals, and that produces healthy food for the community (Andy Carville, pers comm, 08/08/2017).

In the CTFN, "most people are pretty happy with the garden… see it as useful when they hear me talk about it" (Fredeen observations, 07/17/2017). Despite the CTFN's traditional reliance on wild species, people have been gardening for at least two

generations, "but on this side, my other grandpa, Arthur Auston, he had a garden up in Male Haven. That was our trap line, and mom showed me the place where the garden was" (Annie Auston, pers comm, 08/09/2017). All the elders interviewed have living memory of gardens, and actively maintain private gardens themselves – which indicates that gardening has been an important part of this community for some time. Approximately one in three households in Carcross have a garden to some extent – some with full vegetable beds, others with a few berry bushes and rhubarb – and two in three households receive food from the community garden, or from their own or their neighbours' gardens (Fredeen observations, 08/01/2017). What this demonstrates is that CTFN community members are not currently limited to archetypal traditional food practices when localizing their food. Instead, gardening is an introduced but legitimate part of the CTFN food system that has been woven into the cultural fabric.

## 2.1.6 Methods

In light of the harmful research history in Indigenous communities, community-based and decolonized research methodologies provided the basis of my method choice, analysis, and discussion (Chilisa, 2012). To that end, my research questions were constructed with the help of my key contact, Tami Grantham, and I only proceeded with data collection after receiving ethical approval from both the CTFN administration and the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board. Additionally, written consent was sought with every participant to use their names and the information they shared in every interview and field trip.

The methods used in this explorative case study were semi-structured interviews, participant observation events where a willing participant took me on field trips to see a food-related place or item, and participant observation in daily CTFN activities at the community garden and in public arenas. Interviews and participant observation have been historically used in the CTFN community (e.g. Cruikshank, 1991), and most studies with Indigenous populations use some combination of those methods (e.g. McClellan & Cruikshank, 2007; Turner, 2014; Ford et al., 2016). The participant observation in public arenas occurred when I volunteered at the garden for eight weeks, between four and six times a week for a minimum of five hours; when I volunteered at the weekly elder breakfasts organized by the CTFN administration; and while I was living in the

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community between June 28th and August 28th, 2017. From those daily interactions, I used purposive sampling to identify potential participants with relevant expertise in addition to those suggested by my key contact (Bryman, 2012). From those initial people, I used a snowball sampling approach to find further participants (Marshall, 1996). As this approach resulted in participants being selected based on their relevance to my research questions, it may have limited the families, clans, and individuals that were involved in the study. However, such sampling allowed me to pursue deeper understandings of my research questions with experts.

A total of twelve interviews were conducted with elders and community members, all of whom had knowledge about traditional flora, gardening, the Carcross garden specifically, or any combination of the three. Two of the interviews were with non-Aboriginal people: the garden manager, Lloyd Lintott and a greenhouse expert, Bob Sharpe. Three people (two elders and one non-Aboriginal community member) agreed to take me on excursions to teach me about plants and other aspects of the terrain in which the CTFN resides as part of participant observation events. Consequently, there are a total of 15 specific interactions recorded (twelve interviews and three participant observation events), along with two and half months of participant observation notes.

This data was interpreted using Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) as a lens to understand how the garden fit within the values and worldviews of those who participated in the study. This approach to analysis took form as the data was analysed and the importance of the garden aligning with community values emerged. As IFS calls for food system components to adhere to local tradition and cultural values, it stands to reason that the garden must adhere to (or at least ought to) these values in order to fully contribute to the future of IFS in the CTFN. Consequently, this study acts as an empirical examination of how community gardens interact with IFS *in situ*, and also provides an exploratory description of the state of the CTFN's community garden.

## 2.2 The Stories

This research uncovered two tradition-informed or community-based values — community and intergenerational communication, and tradition and spirituality — that could be included in the management of the CTFN community garden to increase its relevance to cultural needs and encourage community participation. Though further

research into community values must be conducted, the values found here are indicative of important cultural and value driven desires for the CTFN local food system. Each of the values have been developed over generations, as demonstrated through stories of ancestors and current influences, but are applicable to present issues. This section explains those values and the ways in which they are fulfilled or not fulfilled by the garden.

## 2.2.2 Community-Togetherness and Intergenerational Communication

### 2.2.2.a The Value

The first prominent value that emerged from field work was a combination of two elements: community togetherness and intergenerational communication that play off each other in a cycle. When the community comes together, there is opportunity for elders and youth to learn from each other, and a sense of community is reinforced.

Annie Auston explained how collecting food and participating in the food system included participating in a community:

> I know when I was a kid, we used to, grandma and grandpa Patsy, Edith Henderson, my mom, and lot of the Carcross women, you know, they would go by train, up to high bridge… towards Skagway. And the train would stop and let us all off with our tents and stoves and beddings and cooking things, food and stuff. And then… you know, everybody they set up tents and everything, get the camp set up, and we go out berry picking. And we go up in the mountain in the morning after breakfast get up early… and then we're up, we're going up the mountain. And I remember grandma Patsy Edith Henderson, pack on her back, mom pack on her back with those big, big buckets... And then they had little pails, buckets that they were carrying. We'll go up the mountain, and we don't come off until those things are all full (Annie Auston, pers comm, 08/09/2017).

People would work together to collect berries and bring them to town for sale through the local store and for their own homes. Annie was not alone in sharing stories like this that directly connected communal effort to food production. Ida Calmegan also talked of going to collect berries with Annie's brother, Leslie, and how they would have fun, laugh, and learn from each other while one picked and one, jokingly, acted as "bear bait" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017). In both Annie and Ida's stories, the key theme of working together and enjoying company while collecting food is apparent. Though these were two clear and explicit examples, this value of food bringing people together

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was present in ten of the fifteen interviews. In many cases, people highlighted how important a sense of community is in the food system by expressing how they felt they were losing it: "I remember even as a kid, living here… the community was more together, like family in a way" (Melissa Barrett James, pers comm, 07/18/2017).

The idea of restoring or contributing to a sense of community proved to be a value that could be embodied in the garden. This was perhaps most explicitly described by Andy Carvill, chief of the CTFN, when he stated that he'd "like to harvest… community togetherness" from the garden to "bring the people together" (Andy Carvill, pers comm, 08/08/2017). This sentiment was reflected implicitly however in the stories shared by others, including Annie and Ida (above), that illustrated how collecting food could bring people together to experience the food system and participate in relationships. This is also the sense I got from living in Carcross and participating in the CTFN's public events such as the opening of the learning centre (Fredeen observations, 06/28/2017). In that event, volunteers prepared food for everyone, and the entire community was invited to shared meals as an extension of the celebrations and as a practice of relationship maintenance. In general, this focus on bringing people together with food production and sharing emerged in coded interviews as a key aspiration for the community and the garden alike.

Losing the sense of community was also reflected in descriptions of deteriorating connections between elders and youth. Kevin Bayne expressed this as a loss, "and then with all the technology and everything, the youth and that are less willing to learn, and because, you know, back in the day we'd always go out, we'd always make sure grandma's freezer was full. My parents' freezers were full. It's just not like that" (pers comm, 07/20/2017). Sam Smith also expressed sadness regarding the current lack of intergenerational communication:

> Elders are so important... They have all this knowledge… and us kids aren't going to get it. I'm not even going to say the kids, because it's us. I'm guilty for it, I don't try to go and spend time with them, it's like that's what I mean when I say life kind of gets in your way, whether you got kids or whatever… I guess instead of learning physically, taking them on the land and learning from them, you more have to sit down and have tea and coffee and listen to them. And really listen. Because they're getting older now, they can't just, go trekking up a mountain and teach you stuff, they're going to have to sit there and tell you, and you're going to have to listen (Sam Smith, pers comm, 08/11/2017).

In this quote, Sam is illustrating how the process of listening and absorbing information from elders is vital to the process of knowledge transmission between generations. Both Sam and Kevin explicitly identified this issue of lost knowledge and communication from the perspective of non-elders in the community. From an elder's perspective, Ida Calmegan told a funny story from when she was young about how elders used to explain appropriate dancing techniques so that women acted according to traditional and social expectations. Even though Ida found some of their comments funny, she explained that she still quietly listened and considered the elders' words because they were intended to guide her through social situations. When concluding the story, Ida commented on how the practice of listening to elders is fading: "And our culture it's just dying out the way, the young people they don't listen anymore. They got me to talk to them about culture, cultural things and stories at the school, I lasted only about two months I guess in Carcross. I couldn't hack it" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017). Here, the implied sentiment was one of bleakness; youth were not perceived to be engaging with elders, and Ida felt unable to fully share her knowledge with the new generation. Regardless of the perspective, elder or non-elder, in all ten interviews where community involvement and togetherness were discussed, missing links in intergenerational communication were seen as negative and harmful to knowledge preservation.

In two interviews with Mark Wedge and Seki Giardino, where concepts of community and knowledge transmission were not explicitly mentioned, there was still consideration of how it was necessary for new generations to reconnect with traditional and local knowledge. Mark, an elder and previous chief of CTFN, alluded to this theme when he described a story of one of his hunting excursions that left him feeling that people may be becoming increasingly unaware of the spiritual aspect of hunting which is resulting in ineffective methods (Mark Wedge, pers comm, 08/15/2017). Seki, the past garden manager and Mark's daughter, elaborated on how reconnecting people to knowledge and to each other is important when she explained how she envisioned a successful garden:

> I think it needs to come from like a couple of different perspectives to make that larger program happen. And that's traditional too, you know, like there's never one person in the community that does everything. Like there's always, different people have different strengths. But if you put all those things together, you can

really make larger things happen. So success to me, in my mind, would be people that are passionate about it, people that have interest in it. Whether it's the production like the maintenance building things, cooking things, preserving things, even just knowing a lot of people and being able to contact these people and get larger events happening… And that includes the youth, elders, adults, babies, everybody. (Seki Giardino, pers comm, 08/03/2017).

With this quote the cycle between 'community', 'knowledge sharing', and 'intergenerational communication' is apparent. Seki explains how bringing "youth, elders, adults, babies, everybody" together has both a learning implication, as people learn from each other's strengths, and a tangible community connection aspect.

Considering the various perspectives on intergenerational communication and knowledge transmission together, a desire for the garden to enable such practices emerges. Andy Carvill explicitly stressed how this was one of his goals that could be relevant to the garden when he described his desire to "start getting our people back together and spending time together, the youth and the elders" (pers comm, 08/08/2017). As such, if the garden offered space or programming to enable intergenerational communication and knowledge transmission, it could become a food system intervention that not only produces nutritious food but is also maintained in social arenas and participates in social values.

### 2.2.2.b The Garden

In its current form, the garden has not fully succeeded in mobilizing community engagement and fostering intergenerational communication. The current garden manager, Lloyd Lintott, underscores the disappointing rates of community participation:

I'm pretty disappointed in [the community plots] this year. There's eighteen, we had eighteen individual plots for anybody that wanted them. They could come up and have their own little garden and we've utilized less than half. So we really only… there's really only five people that have utilized them. (Lloyd Lintott, pers comm, 07/20/2017).

My own observations corroborate this assessment: on average, only four to five people from the community would wander through the garden to look around each week, but few would stop to assist with the work or tend to their plots (Fredeen observations, 07/2017). Three instances of volunteering labour were recorded in the two and a half months that I was present in the community and in the garden, one demolition crew from

the neighbouring mission school clean up site was paid to help build a chicken coop, and at least fifteen people regularly came to community barbeques on Fridays. This is not to say that others did not come to help when I was not there to observe them, but it seemed visitors usually came to see the garden out of curiosity rather than a desire to participate in the garden's operations.

Mobility issues and erroneous senses of ineligibility were two reasons people gave for not physically interacting with the garden. Knowledgeable elders, like Ida Calmegan, who know much about local plants and their uses are "damn near ninety" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017) and cannot get to the garden. Even for events at the garden, the attending elders either needed a vehicle with high clearance or an all terrain vehicle to get to the garden. However, not all community members who do not use the garden struggle with physical mobility. When asked why he didn't use the garden, Ralph James, an elder, shrugged and said that he supposed he could but thought others may need it more (pers comm, 08/04/2017). Sam Smith explained that she had her own plot by her home and opted not to participate in the community garden (pers comm, 08/11/2017). Ralph and Sam, like others observed, thought the garden was for other people they perceived to be in greater need of garden access, even though it was designed to provide for everyone. The actual distinction between those who needed the garden and those who did not was not made clear in interviews or observations. Regardless of the reasons, these findings taken with the low levels of community participation observed, may point to larger portions of the CTFN community that are being inadvertently excluded from or feeling irrelevant to the garden's target users.

The youth employed at the garden for the summer did not get to interact with elders or knowledge holders[2] due to the mobility issues described above, and to limited explicit opportunity for intergenerational contact. There are some opportunities for youth to learn about plants or cultivation from other people, such as excursions to agricultural demonstrations by the Yukon territorial government (Fredeen observations, 08/02/2017), but their participation is primarily small-task oriented (i.e. weeding and cleaning chicken coops). As many elders are unable to frequent the garden, and no other programming is

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[2] For this research, youth were not included in interviews or observations beyond their presence and general activities in public settings.

offered at the garden, youth working at the garden do not meet elders frequently in the context of the garden. Though the garden does not actively impede these connections, it does not explicitly enable them.

## 2.2.3 Spirituality and Tradition

### 2.2.3.a The Value

The second prominent theme that came out of field work was that of spirituality and tradition. There are no clear lines around that which is 'traditional' or not, but through published CTFN elder stories (see Cruikshank, 1991) and interviews, I understand "tradition" to be practices and beliefs tied to a fundamental worldview. Five elders, Ida Calmegan, Annie Auston, Ralph James, Mark Wedge, and Charlotte Hadden told me stories of familial lines, learning from parents and grandparents, sharing with others, and spirituality's presence in every day actions. These lessons, taken with observations, brought tangible and non-tangible dimensions of tradition and spirituality to light – they are described here as pieces that apply to the garden.

The tangible dimension of tradition and spirituality is one that includes actual physical access to items that allow the practice of traditional knowledge. The non-tangible dimension is the respectful attitude and spirit with which someone interacts with a physical item or process that may or may not be traditional. The general food system in Carcross should include these aspects to some extent partially to increase physical access to traditional food items such as berries and medicines, and partially to fulfill community values and become more relevant to the CTFN's cultural and social goals.

Through communications with elders there are three specific tangible actions one can take that reflect the non-tangible values and intentions. These include (1) saying a prayer before harvesting food or taking an animal, (2) giving tobacco back to the land when harvesting, and (3) using collection practices that do not harm the plants you are harvesting from. These practices are not mutually exclusive, but instead form an approach or routine for food (and traditional medicine) collection. With regards to saying prayers, Kevin Bayne talked about prayers before hunting moose: "Like there's a mountain we go up, that's where I usually always get my moose. Always, I'll go up there, call, go up the next day, I'll do a prayer at the bottom of the mountain, go up…" (pers

comm, 07/20/2017). Mark Wedge also explained how saying a prayer to welcome the moose is necessary to being able to find the moose because it demonstrates your positive attitude and respect for the life you are about to take (pers comm, 08/15/2017). Giving tobacco back to the earth or water from which you are gaining a resource was also an observed tradition and value in the CTFN community present at any large gathering of people (Fredeen observation, 08/01/2017). Furthermore, five interviewees highlighted giving tobacco to the earth during harvesting as a key to harvesting in a respectful and traditional manner. Tobacco giving was often done alongside prayers, and both emerged in interviews as potentially relevant practices the garden.

Collecting food in a way that was consistent with tradition-informed intentions presented a host of specific actions that could be relevant to the garden. For example, Annie Auston and Ida Calmegan described collection methods for items such as tree bark: "You go around, you don't go right around the tree, you just go around, about two thirds of the tree I guess, because if you go right around then you kill the tree, hey" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017). Ida also explained that the key to berry picking "was not to break the branches. On the bushes, but we picked all around a bush you know, but not to break the branches off. That's the only thing, you know" (pers comm, 08/09/2017).

The non-tangible aspects of tradition and spirituality, mindfulness, tradition adherence, and respect, are not always directly visible in specific practices or actions. These aspects were more elusive in the data, but present as underlying currents within stories. Charlotte Hadden spoke of berry picking simultaneously with lessons of how every action we take has intent behind it and cannot be done well without good intentions (pers comm, 07/17/2017). Mark Wedge told a moose hunting story to illustrate the point that one's attitude and spirit is as important (if not more so) as your skill when hunting; animals will "give themselves to you" when you are in the right spiritual space (pers comm, 08/15/2017). Perhaps Sam Smith, not an elder, but a young adult with a child of her own, best explained the implicit meaning behind mindfulness and respect:

> We were put here to be one with the land and to be respectful… I think it's very important for us to start giving back and respect that we're here for a reason. As First Nation's people, they say that we were here to be guardians of this earth, and I feel like it's important for us to start doing that again (Sam Smith, pers comm, 08/11/2017).

The ways in which people may practice that respect and mindfulness when collecting food or participating in anything 'on the land' differ depending on the person and the activity. Ralph James told a story while we were out looking for big horn sheep and mountain goats about how he used to guide hunters. He would be able to show them where animals were and offer insight on when to shoot (Ralph James, pers comm, 08/11/2017). He laughed as he told me about the one time someone did not heed his advice and shot the first bear that came running out of the woods because he was not patient enough to wait for the larger bear that Ralph knew would follow. By knowing and responding to knowledge about the land and species you are trying to take, you can practice respect and take only what you need. Seki Giardino reflected this lesson when she explained how observing wild plants' natural conditions and preferences for location and soils can inform our own planting processes (pers comm, 08/03/2017). Learning this way is not only a practical source of information when addressing environmental or climatic challenges to growing food plants but is also an act of respect and mindfulness towards the natural environment.

Having access to traditional plants, items, and practices is a way for people to engage in mindfulness and relationships. Ida Calmegan told a story about her mother's oesophageal cancer and how she lived through a number of medical procedures. Ida would offer her mother traditional medicines (Caribou leaf, specifically) to help her live out the remainder of her life comfortably (pers comm, 08/09/2017). A similar sentiment came out of a story where Annie Auston spoke of sharing her family rhubarb relish recipes with her neighbours where she would work with others and trade items and tips while sharing and working together (pers comm, 08/09/2017). It became clear to me that having access to medicinal plants or foods is only part of the picture – sharing the knowledge and benefit of those things with others is part of the value. I learned from Ralph that "food isn't just a necessity, it's a way of showing that you care for someone, it's a way of empathizing with others and demonstrating solidarity. It has a lot of cultural significance that way, and it can probably help to reclaim some of what was lost in this community." (Fredeen observations, 08/08/2017). Those values of using and perpetuating tradition through self-reflective learning and communal connections could be reinforced in the food system with the garden. It is a space where, if enabled, people could share

information, cultivate and interact with tradition (plants and values alike), and share immediate space with people.

### 2.2.3.b The Garden

The CTFN garden currently does not facilitate mindfulness or tradition-related practices within its cultivation and harvesting processes. With regards to tradition and gardening, there could be more overlap if the garden contributed to traditional food and plant access, such as medicinal plants, that may otherwise be limited by environmental or physical issues. For example, Kevin Bayne said:

> If we can make it [devil's club] here near by for the elders where they can just come up and pick some themselves, because like a lot of the stuff, like devil's club…and the closest place to get that is like on the other side of the BC border. Which, you know, you're looking at about a forty-five minute to an hour drive to get that. And then it's up on the side of the mountain (Kevin Bayne, pers comm, 07/20/2017).

However, it was bought to my attention that it may not be appropriate to actually plant traditional items in the garden because they may not be able to be physically planted: "a lot of gardeners have tried. For instance, wild flowers are a good example. If you tried to propagate or to plant like lupins and things, like you're almost never successful." (Seki Giardino, pers comm, 08/03/2017). Additionally, those who know how to use medicinal plants know where to get them on the land and "get enough" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017). Those who do not currently know how to use traditional plants may not be interested: "Like I'm just trying to think for traditional stuff if people are interested. People… don't seem to be really. A lot of the time. Sometimes in the right settings, but I'm still trying to figure out those settings myself" (Melissa Barrette James, pers comm, 07/18/2017).

Though it may not be helpful to have specific traditional plants in the garden, there is a spiritual component in the process of growing food and participating that could help reconnect people to the land and to their heritage.

> I think the garden would be extremely good especially in a spiritual way too. Like it helped me, like getting your hands [dirty], it's being part of the earth. Like you're actually getting your hands in the dirt and helping something grow and live, and it helps, it makes you feel good. Like you're helping something develop. So I think it could help in a spiritual way (Melissa Barrett James, pers comm, 07/18/2017).

If mindfulness and respect are the key values expressed as desires for the CTFN food system, then it makes sense to consider the ways in which they could move forward within the garden. Derek Grose explained this further when he said:

> How does cultural preservation fit into what we're doing in the garden, or even having a garden... I think we are providing an opportunity for our citizens to learn about different foods that we're growing. Because I think we're growing things that people know how to grow, but we're also trying to grow things that we're not sure if, we'll see how it grows. So for the people, from our community, that do go up there to participate in it in whatever capacity, they are learning what works for them that they can take home or that they can incorporate into some kind of work skill setting. That contributes to their independence. How they incorporate that knowledge into their cultural practices in the home, is totally up to them (Derek Grose, pers comm, 07/18/2017).

The garden could play a role in providing lessons to that end – reconnecting people to the aspects of heritage and local food production they want to reconnect to. When taken with considerations of physical accessibility and perceived target users of the garden, this quote completes an image of how improving the gardens capacity to engage with tradition-informed values of intergenerational communication and enabling spirituality. Providing programed opportunities for communal learning about food production, preparation, or preservation – explicitly connected to tradition or not – would help connect the garden to larger, over-arching tradition-informed intentions of preserving local and traditional knowledge. Furthermore, making the garden a more physically accessible communal space for people to share information about food would help reconnect with that aspect of their values and tradition.

## 2.3 The Future: A Discussion on Values, IFS, and the CTFN

The values outlined above do not exist in a silo. One of the significant lessons I learned in Carcross was that everything is connected through consistent intentions defined by individual experiences and tradition (Charlotte Hadden, pers comm, 07/19/2017). It is important to note here that I cannot presume to fully understand the CTFN perspective, as I am an outsider. However, community members and social-relationships helped guide my thoughts and expand my lines of questioning and contemplation throughout data collection and analysis. One particularly influential person, Charlotte, helped me understand that the values that emerged from interviews and observations were interconnected and moved beyond traditional practices or skills that

could be practiced more frequently. There cannot be a separation between values of communication and tradition because they exist in a continuum where sharing knowledge constitutes 'practicing' tradition, regardless of the content of that knowledge. Acting mindfully and respectfully through prayer or tobacco-giving is 'practicing' tradition, regardless if you are hunting moose or tending to a potato patch. This connection became apparent in interviews and observations as each story told and each experience was applicable to any number of other practices. This spectrum is not unique to the CTFN, however, and other communities have integrated multiple values into a single system. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (n.d.) farm in Dawson City, Yukon, works to share knowledge with youth, engage elders and community members in knowledge sharing, and reconnect people to the land and their food. This reconnection happens through programming that includes aspects of traditional knowledge about plants and animals and Western gardening and farming practices (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, n.d.). Authors, such as Wall-Kimmerer (2013), have written about how practicing tradition is about both active knowledge use and more passive knowledge sharing and preservation. Kovach (2009) wrote about how knowledge is developed in a circular fashion in many Indigenous communities and practicing one value often results in the practicing of another. When considering these values in the context of IFS and food production in the CTFN, ensuring that the garden enables the practice of those values is important to truly reconnecting the community to their food system and their heritage.

The components of IFS ultimately suggest that food systems ought to adhere to unique traditions and community values so that citizens feel welcome to participate fully in food production or, at minimum, participate in the decision-making process. Uncovering the values and potential physical actions that are consistent with those values contributes to overall understanding of what IFS can look like in physical form. Those interviewed did not share specific practices, beyond prayer and giving tobacco to the land, that could be integrated into the garden, which would specifically preserve traditional practices. Instead they shared specific values that are informed by tradition and have traditional practices associated with those that should inform the intent and priorities of the garden. Ultimately, intergenerational communication and practicing mindfulness while producing food and engaging in learning were the primary desires for

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the CTFN food system and community garden. Further research must be conducted to understand what types of infrastructure or programming might work as methods for fulfilling those values in the CTFN, but after my research, I now find myself in a position where I can suggest some general lines of thinking.

The value of community-togetherness and intergenerational communication appears to be a programming centred issue for the garden. Participants did not highlight specific actions or infrastructures when speaking about bringing people together. Instead they spoke of naturally occurring opportunities, such as berry picking, where people came together to share knowledge and spend time together. The garden is different because it is not a 'natural' environment in the CTFN, but it can offer some opportunities for community connection nonetheless. Altering the job description of the youth that are employed at the garden over the summer is one way that the community-togetherness and intergenerational communication value could be fulfilled. As the youth are employed at the garden currently as labourers, they are not afforded many opportunities to interact with elders in a learning capacity. This could be rectified by redefining their roles to be "knowledge collectors" who are assigned to participating and consenting elders and must learn about some plant or food related topic of the elder's choosing. This knowledge would then be brought back to the garden to share with others. This idea is consistent with existing 'culture camps' in CTFN where youth go out to trapping camps and learn from elders how to trap and hunt. However, culture camps are unpaid experiences and may not bear the same level of responsibility in terms of re-teaching others and being responsible for one topic that would be applicable in the garden. Redefining youth roles may help to reconnect them to some aspects of traditional knowledge and their elders. Making these types of opportunities available for other community members may also be an avenue worth exploring, as some young adults expressed interest in both gardening and traditional knowledge, but this would require further investigation within and between the CTFN demographic groups.

With regards to tradition and spirituality, there are some specific infrastructural changes that might help enhance citizens' interactions with those values. Improving physical access to the garden for elders, either through landscaping or shuttle or carpool services, and integrating traditional ceremonies, prayer, or tobacco components to garden

activities, such as harvesting, might help to reconnect people to the respect and kindness traditionally taught. Plants that are like (if not identical to) traditional herbs and medicines such as devil's club, caribou leaf, or balsam fir for elders and community members to access might offer an opportunity for people to learn about some tradition and engage in heritage-focused practices. Learning which plants may be suitable to cultivation in the garden could be integrated in a redefined role for the employed youth, which would contribute to both the values described herein. These suggestions were mentioned in passing observations or in casual conversations with those interviewed and friends made in Carcross.

A garden that has programming and infrastructure that allows individuals to fulfill communal values would contribute to the overall community ownership and participation by encouraging people to act in a way that is consistent with traditionally and locally defined social values. Consequently, a community garden can fulfill at least some components of IFS, despite its potential connections to colonisation in the context of Indigenous populations. The extent to which community gardening may be successful and cohesive with existing culture varies and depends, in part, on the history of each community. Some have traditionally agrarian roots (such as some of the Cree or Métis communities in the Canadian prairies) (Thompson et al., 2012; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013), and some have nomadic hunter gatherer histories with no traditional knowledge of plant or animal propagation (such as the CTFN) (McClellan & Cruikshank, 2007). As such, creating a food intervention that suits the current needs and histories of the community is key to ensuring community ownership.

This research ultimately uncovered ways in which the CTFN community garden could pursue an IFS direction by uncovering values and community desires for the local food system. This is significant both for the CTFN and for larger academic narratives because it gives a tangible example of how IFS may be manifested. As food system research in Indigenous communities currently centres on food access rather than community engagement and  ownership (Kamal et al., 2015; Power, 2008), providing this insight serves as a valuable expansion on food system discussions. For the CTFN, uncovering values and suggesting ways in which they could be achieved in the community garden offers an opportunity to improve the local food system. It also offers

an opportunity to engage more of the community in local food production, and thus to their food system.

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# CHAPTER 3:   DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES: A JUNIOR ACADEMIC'S EXPERIENCE

## 3.1 Introduction

Research with Indigenous peoples has a complex history associated with oppressive colonial practices. In Canada, colonial harm stems from legislation such as The *Indian Act* that have "allowed imperialist governments to apply European notions of property and human-nature relations" and transformed "landscapes to reflect European state systems and European cultural values of land-use" (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012, p. 161; *Indian Act*, 1985). This Western, European mentality effectively 'othered' nature and turned it into an inanimate object over which people can dominate; this same approach became ubiquitous to the extent that even people became 'others' in research (Wilson, 2008; Chochran et al., 2008; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). As a result, research has often neglected the relationship between people and land and contributed to government-driven dislocation of Aboriginal people from their territories (Wilson, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Datta, 2018). This approach to Aboriginal research in Canada and Indigenous research elsewhere has led to extraction-based work where Indigenous populations have been misled or lied to about data extraction and data use or outright denied agency or control over information (Arbour & Cook, 2006; Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). In other words, research has too frequently been done by people who parachute in, extract information without fully informed consent, and leave without properly disseminating findings (Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

Parachute researchers have been associated with conventional research for as long as Indigenous peoples have been identified as separate from dominant cultures and perceived as communities in need of saving (Arbour & Cook, 2006). Decolonization theory emerged as a response to this historical context and is now a prominent component of research with Indigenous populations. Authors such as Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Robert Chambers (1983), Dei (2001), and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) have been developing emancipatory research approaches and critiquing existing practices with marginalized populations since the 1940s. Though there are many labels for emancipatory research that seeks to subvert harmful and exploitative structures, including 'decolonization' and 'Indigenous research methodologies'. These categories have

empowered Indigenous scholars to pursue culturally relevant research and served as guidelines for settler scholars (Wilson, 2008; 2001; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). Settler scholars are rooted in colonist history; they comprise the dominant demographic in terms of political and social power (Simpson, 2004).

As a settler Junior academic embarking upon Master's level research, I needed to reconcile my heritage with my partnership with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) in Yukon. I worked with the CTFN over the summer of 2017 on the topic of Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS), which is defined as the extent to which a community owns and controls their food systems and how those systems align with traditional values and expectations (Morrison, 2011). Through interviews and participant observation, my research focused on exploring how CTFN's existing community garden could contribute to IFS. While attempts were made to structure my research according to the premises of decolonization, I quickly realized during my data analysis that I faced several challenges - some of which were associated with my heritage - that prevented me from fully decolonizing my work. Though settler heritages are always present (Smith, 2012), centering inquiry and methods on relevant and local Indigenous epistemologies can help overcome this challenge and distance research from colonial pasts (Wilson, 2008). However, in the case of many Junior academics—students in their Master's or PhD programs learning to conduct independent research and advance through academia—such reorientation is not always possible. According to Datta (2018), Junior academics are often taught positivistic approaches that empower Western perceptions of knowledge over others.

The scholarship surrounding Junior academic barriers to decolonization is sparse, but insights can be gleaned from the challenges identified in a variety of other research fields. Rimando et al. (2015) along with few other authors have published works about challenges associated with data collection by Junior, or inexperienced, researchers. Ultimately, these papers find that specific limitations exist for Junior scholars but remain focused on data collection methods in qualitative research in general (Dearnley, 2005; Nicholl, 2010; Ashton, 2014; Rimando et al., 2015). Datta is one of the few authors to publish papers regarding social-science methods training and Junior researcher responsibility in the specific context of Indigenous populations (2018). Ultimately, he

found that the positivistic assumptions in conventional education, especially in research methods, limit Junior academic capacity to engage in the reflexive and iterative processes necessary to pursue decolonization (Datta, 2018). Across all existing literature, however, limited access to resources, small social and professional networks, restricted timelines, and insufficient training are cited as the most common limitations affecting Junior academics (Dearnley, 2005; Tomaselli, Dyll & Francis, 2008; Nicholl, 2010 Mundle et al., 2014; Ashton, 2014; Rimando et al., 2015; Longhurst & Jones, 2018).

There is a small body of scholarship written by Junior academics that addresses the limitations to decolonization in Junior contexts. Nakamura (2010), Lavallée (2009) and Carlson (2017) are examples of published papers that address considerations for settler, Junior academics who undertake research with Indigenous populations. Nakamura (2010) and Carlson (2017) both discuss restricted timelines and training concerns stemming from institutional structures, along with the dissonance associated with being 'non-Indigenous' and inexperienced while working in an Indigenous context, as limitations to their overall research approach. However, neither provide explicit insight into how their Junior status influenced those challenges, the solutions they employed, or how those solutions did or did not pursue decolonization. Lavallée (2009) is an Algonquin Cree and French Metis scholar who addressed the challenges of reconciling different worldviews during research, and the barriers associated with Indigenous scholarship in a colonist setting. However, she also does not explicitly address the impact her Junior status had on the barriers she encountered or the solutions she used (2009).

Given the paucity of first-hand reflections undertaken by Junior scholars engaging in Indigenous research, other valuable insight can be gleaned from more senior scholars who have encountered similar challenges at a much later professional stage. In general, academic structures and expectations have been noted to limit researcher capacity to engage in decolonization or Indigenous methodologies by restricting timelines, funding, and physical paper formatting (Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012; Leeuw, Cameron & Greenwood, 2012; DeLyser & Sui, 2014). In response, researchers have employed several strategies, such as adjusting timelines (Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012), channelling funding through Indigenous organizations (Carlson, 2017), and publishing more narrative or poetically represented research (Graveline, 2000). However, the extent

to which Junior academics can take advantage of these approaches is limited given that they have less control over their research and less power within their institutions.

Using field experiences from my Master's research as a case study, this article will outline the methodological and institutional limitations faced by a Junior, settler academic attempting to decolonize their work. There are two types of barriers that operated in a positive feedback cycle and made it difficult for me to fully adhere to decolonization theory: institutional and Junior specific. The former includes timeline restrictions, limited methods training and guidance, ethics approval processes, and physical formatting requirements that stem from degree structures and Eurocentric expectations of research. The latter refers to my limited knowledge and networks, and limited power within my university. It is important to note that my heritage as a non-Indigenous Canadian is an ever-present reason why I was unable to fully understand certain challenges and harms in Indigenous communities or achieve decolonization in my work; it also emphasized and reinforced any Eurocentric and positivistic training I received. Though the importance of my settler heritage cannot be overstated in the context of my research with the CTFN, this paper is concerned with the specific institutionally imposed and methodological barriers I faced while engaging with decolonization theory and social research as a Junior academic.

This type of reflection on settler academic research with Indigenous communities has been published before in a small, but growing body of literature. McLennan & Woods published a paper in 2018 critically reflecting on their experience as settler scholars in Indigenous communities to shed light on specific barriers that prevent Junior academics from pursuing research with Indigenous communities. Datta also presented on his experiences as a non-Indigenous scholar working with Indigenous topics and used a critical analysis of his own challenges to identify barriers pertaining to methodological training and scientific research expectations (2018). Ultimately, these authors conclude that addressing the reasons why settler academics are challenged in designing projects around non-Western epistemologies is key to uncovering solutions to ongoing tensions between scientific research and Indigenous communities (McLennan & Woods 2018; Datta, 2018). As such, this paper is timely and relevant to some of the most recent discussions surrounding settler scholar research with Indigenous communities.

## 3.2 Positionality

This paper is part of my larger thesis which is focused on IFS and primarily serves as a reflection on my experiences as a non-Aboriginal Junior scholar working in the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) in Carcross, Yukon. Indigenous food sovereignty examines how a community owns and connects with their food system, and my project investigates how tradition-informed values and knowledge interact with the CTFN community garden. To collect information about that topic, I lived in Carcross from June 28th to August 28th, 2017, volunteered in public events, and conducted interviews and observations throughout my time there. The project was developed by me and Tami Grantham – the Lands and Natural Resources Director with the CTFN administration – who ensured that my project aligned with the needs of the community. Though my research questions and tools were developed with Tami's advice, I worried about the fact that I am non-Indigenous, or settler, and sought guidance on how to navigate my research with the CTFN. My need for guidance stemmed from two places; (1) my own inexperience necessitated that I reach out and seek both methodological and proposal related help from a variety of people, and (2) IFS called for research conducted in a way that was consistent with community values and respected non-Western worldviews. Both of these processes led me to investigate decolonization theory and Indigenous methodologies in academic literature, which served as my guides for navigating the complicated waters of my Master's thesis.

Decolonization theory helped me understand the ways in which my biases were present despite my efforts to rely on and respond to the desires of the CTFN executive council and Tami. My heritage and educational background are continuous influences on my tools, word choices, and information priorities (Blue Swadener & Mutua, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). Decolonization literature such as *Indigenous Methodologies* by Margaret Kovach (2009) and *Decolonizing Methodologies* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) highlighted how my unearned privileges and settler-Canadian heritage could, and did, influence my work. Decolonization's guidelines, developed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, helped me minimize my biases and inspired me to reflect on my experiences. By reflecting on the ways in which my education was at odds with the decolonization literature combined with the needs of the community, the

challenges I faced while conducting my research became clear. Those reflections are manifested in this article which discusses Junior-related limitations to decolonization. By presenting the ways in which my tools developed, and my research did or did not fulfill decolonization guidelines, this article offers unique insight into limitations such as Eurocentric training, limited timelines, and limited funding which, though not unique in the academic world, manifest differently in Junior contexts.

While I begin with a brief outline of decolonization theory, the remainder of this paper is structured in chronological order in line with my research process. First, I discuss the challenges associated with approval and execution of ethics in the field. Second, I use notes and examples from my field experience to highlight challenges associated with timeline, funding, and training. Third, I highlight physical manifestations of decolonization within the data analysis and writing stages of the thesis.

## 3.3 Decolonization Theory: An Overview

Decolonization dates back to the African independence struggles, West Indian liberation efforts, and the American Revolution (amongst others) when those living in the New World or in long-standing colonies of a European empire fought for liberation from their colonists (McMichael, 2012). The times after these liberation efforts were labeled the post-colonial period as if colonization had ceased to exist (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996). However, academics and activists have pushed against the notion that colonization ended with violent liberation struggles and posited that colonization was ongoing through Eurocentric patriarchal power structures that continued to shape the global order in important ways (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996; Chilisa, 2012). Academically speaking, decolonization is a theory that emerged as other emancipatory theorists (notably, feminists) began to address those power structures and critique ongoing research, governance, and socio-economics (Chilisa, 2012).

In the academic realm, decolonization emerged as an approach in multiple fields including social research (Kovach, 2009), criminal justice (McCaslin & Breton, 2008), and social services (Cole, 2002). For Indigenous populations, "decolonization is about the process in both research and performance of valuing, reclaiming, and foregrounding Indigenous voices and epistemologies", and reframing research to have those epistemologies at the centre of questions – as opposed to settler worldviews (Blue

Swadener & Mutua, 2008, p. 31). In her landmark book, Smith (2012) introduces decolonization first in theory, and then by demonstrating and discussing the ways in which she decolonized her work. By writing full transcriptions, Smith was able to portray the information she received from people as accurately as possible – her critique of conventional data reporting and collection methods was embedded in a book that was itself structured in a decolonized way (2012). Kovach (2009) employed a similar approach but also included a detailed analysis of her own position as well as different, relevant cultural values in several chapters in her book *Indigenous Methodologies*. She then centred her work on those relevant values by constantly revisiting them and fulfilling them explicitly and in spirit through data collection, analysis, and portrayal. Both Smith and Kovach are Indigenous women, and their work empowered and enabled others like them as well as settler scholars like me, to pursue research in a way that makes space for marginalized voices. Their works led by example and by critiquing existing power structures – decolonization evolved to embody the methods they suggested and approaches they used and guide other researchers towards innovative and ethical work.

From the evolution of ethical guidelines and literature alike, five basic guidelines for decolonization have been distilled:

1. Allow sustained time for building relationships;
2. Collaborate at all stages of research;
3. Compensate and/or benefit the community in an appropriate and agreed upon manner;
4. Acknowledge the ways in which Western approaches to research and Western cultures have systematically and consistently marginalized Indigenous ways of knowing;
5. Acknowledge that knowledge holds the values and cultural aspects of those who create and live it (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

The fifth guideline is the backbone of the other criteria because it helps to centre research around culturally appropriate methods and information and to identify and manage our own biases (Chochran et al., 2008). Using community centred methods that elevate the value of cultural knowledge within methodological procedures and data can help overcome the challenges associated with decolonization, and subvert the injustice historically exacted by research on minorities (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous research methodologies emerged as ways of operationalizing the intent behind decolonization's guidelines (Wilson, 2001; 2008; Brown & Strega 2005; Smith, 2012; Chilisa, 2012). The specific tools that can be used within the decolonization framework range from participatory action research and interviews, to storytelling and observation (Wilson, 2008; Meyer, 2008; Tomaselli, Dyll & Francis, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Chilisa, 2012). However, if not executed properly, these tools can be as harmful as any others. For example, interviews have a history of being exploitative (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2011), and observation has a history of being disguised and misleading participants (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, like Kovach (2009) and Smith (2012), embodying the intent behind decolonization guidelines through accurate portrayal and fulfilling them in spirit is as important as methodological integrity.

## 3.4 Research Ethics

How researchers achieve ethical behaviour has been debated in academia, especially in health and social science scholarship, but sets of acceptable guidelines have been developed at institutional and national levels to prevent harmful research (Matthews & Venables, 1998; Neuman, 2006; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003). In Canada, harmful research histories are being gradually acknowledged through the evolution of ethical research procedures first developed in 1982 by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) as guidelines for research in northern Indigenous communities. In 2004, the *Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Self Determination Applied to Research* report was developed and eventually used as the basis for the current standards in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2014), known as the TCPS2. Compliance with these guidelines is compulsory in Canada. Chapter 9 is specifically for research with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people of Canada and its intent is to prioritize consultation and Indigenous ownership of information in research (Schnarch, 2004; Chochran et al., 2008; CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, 2014). These guidelines ensure that fully informed consent is obtained for any data collection and use, and that the social, cultural, demographic, and economic contexts of Indigenous communities are respected and considered in research questions and methods (Chochran et al., 2008). Ultimately, the purpose of the ethical guidelines is to protect the Indigenous populations of Canada from

exploitative practices (Matthews & Venables, 1998; Neuman, 2006; Bryman, 2012; CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, 2014) and to encourage coherence between the needs of research and individual communities.

Each Aboriginal community in Canada has unique values and circumstances that are considered in their ethics approval processes. Though the TCPS2 has some generalized policies for research with Indigenous peoples, "it is not intended to override or replace ethical guidance offered by Aboriginal peoples themselves" (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2014). In the Yukon, individual First Nations have varying levels of financial, governance, and judicial autonomy, and thus varying individual research ethics processes. Approval from the community governance structures is mandatory to obtain a Scientists and Explorers license from the Yukon Territorial government, and both processes must be completed prior to data collection (Yukon Government, n.d.). The CTFN requires a letter of approval from the executive council, which consists of elected and appointed people and elders, but there are no formal review processes or forms. Thus, a researcher must present to the CTFN executive council and demonstrate that they have ethics approval from their institution.

These local and national protocols require researchers to include considerations for community owned information and mutually beneficial research in Indigenous contexts, but institutional ethics protocols still prove to be problematic due to their universalism and standardization (Ermine, Sinclair & Jeffery, 2004; Menzies, 2004; Tauri, 2017). Ethics procedures within research institutions are adapted from pre-existing Western approaches and may not reflect the needs of Indigenous communities (Kelley, Belcourt-Dittloff, Belcourt & Belcourt, 2013; Tauri, 2017). The implications of Western-based procedures are described by both Tauri (2017) and Menzies (2004) as a function of universalism. Universalism is operationalized in ethics procedures when the small, culturally responsive adjustments made to Western social science research methods are assumed to make those methods applicable to any community context (Tauri, 2017). Furthermore, standardization, or formulism, in ethics approval procedures reduces the complexity of those social-contexts to a series of general questions that "confines Indigenous philosophies and practices to a narrow sub-set of standardised, heavily proscribed protocols" (Tauri, 2017, p. 5; Hammersley, 2006). In this way, the procedures

themselves, though flexible, require research to be described in Eurocentric terms and prioritize conventional approaches to inquiry (Menzies, 2004; Hammersley, 2006; Tauri, 2017).

It is important to address the institutional ethics protocols as opposed to the local community process because, in my case, my application to the Dalhousie REB defined my proposal to the CTFN community. Reflecting on my experiences as a settler, Junior academic engaging with an Indigenous community, I noticed how the problematic universalism and standardization aspects of research ethics described by Menzies (2004), Hammersley (2006), and Tauri (2017) was present in my ethics and consent protocols. I also noted how those issues impeded my capacity to pursue decolonization in my project and ethics development, despite having been supported by the community. Using those experiences and observations, I identify how standardized and universalized ethics protocols can impede decolonization in research and consent in Section 4.1.

### 3.4.1 Junior Experiences with Research Ethics

I found myself unable to fulfill the fifth element of decolonization, both explicitly and in spirit, within my ethics approval processes. To understand why this was true, it is necessary to understand the importance of iterative research in decolonization. As is discussed further in section 5.2 of this paper, iterative research and collaborative project development are necessary to decolonization (Wilson, 2008). Specifically in Indigenous contexts, knowledge is not often seen as static or discoverable, but as an evolving and circular entity that is tightly wound with ongoing communal and individual experiences (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009). In research, this translates to research questions changing according to values uncovered in data collection, and constantly moulding research priorities to fit within community needs (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). This highly iterative process means that data collection, consent, relationship building, and results blend together as key themes and lessons-learned in the field shape the tools and lenses used (Tauri, 2017; Datta, 2018). Consequently, the separation between research phases such as consent, data collection, and analysis imposed by institutional processes, including ethics approval, may be driven by the Western assumption that research is linear and that it conforms to Eurocentric expectations of knowledge discovery (Smith, 2012; Datta, 2018).

The research ethics process is not exempt from the problems associated with categorization and presents a host of challenges associated with Eurocentricity in research. Battiste (2008) discusses how ethics ought to enable Indigenous control over "information relating to their knowledge" and how that requires that they are given credence in the development of protocols and approaches (p. 503). When taken with the assumption that ongoing iteration is necessary for investigative protocols to properly reflect collaborative definitions within research, this necessitates a departure from the universal and standardized approach to research and consent methods (Battiste, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Tauri, 2017). Though seeking informed and continuous consent can help ensure that information is ethically collected and represented, the pervasive issue of systematic institutional prioritization of Eurocentric thought remains intrinsic within ethics systems (Tauri, 2017; Hammersley, 2006). Institutional ethics approval given to research centred on Eurocentric categories and approaches to consent without due consideration of underlying epistemologies in research design can obstruct the inclusion of decolonization-based conceptions of knowledge.

I felt this limitation acutely in my research with the CTFN - my shortened timeline necessitated Dalhousie REB approval prior to iterative community engagement and thus enabled my use of Eurocentric research and consent tools. The Dalhousie Research Ethics Board (REB) has a form that all researchers must submit, and revise based on REB feedback to ensure that data collection processes adhere to Chapter 9 in the TCPS2. This was an important process for me because I had to recognize and mitigate the ways in which I could harm others through my research prior to starting my work in the field (Bryman, 2012; CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2014). This entire process happened before I had developed my relationships within the CTFN community for two reasons: restricted timelines and limited budgets (common among Junior academics), and my limited capacity to conceptualize a non-Western approach to research that reflected the CTFN cultural and social context (Tisdell, 1998; Datta, 2018; McLennan & Woods, 2018). The Yukon is over 6000 km away from Halifax, I was working full time, and I had spring and fall course requirements. As such, despite being invited to visit Carcross in January 2017, I only went between June 28th and August 28th, 2017 and I needed to collect all my data in that time as I would not be able to return. Therefore, my ethics

approval came prior to my travel and necessitated my reliance on my community contact, Tami, within the CTFN administration to develop a project that was relevant to the CTFN community. Though Tami was in a strong position to provide feedback on my research questions and priorities, as she is heavily involved in the community and in the community garden, my project was largely based on my existing knowledge and experiences. Consequently, my tools and protocols were centred on familiar Western approaches to knowledge and positivistic research rather than on the paradigms present within the CTFN. Though my ethics application process helped me critically evaluate the impact and trajectory of my research, the proposal that was ultimately approved by the REB did not embody collaboratively developed expectations of my ethical behaviour. Instead, it confirmed my Eurocentrically focused assumptions about knowledge discovery and consent, which eventually contributed to the method-execution based challenges I faced which are discussed in Section 5.1 and 5.2.

My experience with a recruitment script provides a specific example of how my ethics approval process at Dalhousie University was problematic. My recruitment script was designed from existing templates from the REB and, using feedback from my supervisory committee and Tami, I adjusted it to include considerations of the CTFN context. The script explained the purpose of my research, my affiliations with Dalhousie University, participant rights, and the information I was expecting to collect from individuals. Though the intention of this script was to ensure each participant was giving fully informed consent and was approved by the CTFN executive council, the phrasing was inappropriate for most situations and fell-flat in the field. To illustrate this point, consider an interaction with an elder who had come to sit with me on the couch in the administration building daily. The elder and I talked casually about gardens and hobbies, and slowly started to develop a friendship over a series of days. As the elder was voluntarily sharing information relevant to my study, I had the impression they wanted to help me and might like to participate in my research. When I asked them if I could interview them, they initially agreed and started volunteering information, but my ethics protocol at that time required that I get written consent before we talk about anything relevant to my study. I then asked if they would wait to share their stories until I had officially ensured they had given informed consent, and I began reciting my script. While

doing so it became apparent that they were offended by what I was saying, and they ultimately declined and left quickly before I had formally asked if they would consent to participate. Friendship foundations were seemingly discarded, as the elder did not speak to me again.

Though I could not follow up with this elder to clarify which pieces of the script were offensive because I felt uncomfortable and did not want to press the issue, there is reason to believe that my approach to obtaining consent was not appropriate due to its standardization and universalism. Tauri (2017) explains how a formulaic ethics processes, and their normalization in institutional bodies, may direct researchers towards individual consent processes that are inappropriate to relevant social contexts. Tauri describes how, in his REB application, the formulaic expectations excluded collaborative and iterative definitions of ethical behaviour developed with the community, and instead funneled him towards a consent process that excluded relationship building as part of trust building (2017). This, he argues, fundamentally prioritized the conventional Western approach to research within consent, and did not enable or facilitate collaboration (Tauri, 2017). In his case, he was able to circumvent the formulas by developing a two-tiered consent process with his research committee and community. This custom process essentially gave participants a chance to confirm that they individually and collectively trusted the researcher before agreeing to sign any consent papers (Tauri, 2017). I, however, was unable to collaboratively develop a consent process and relied heavily on the conventional forms and protocols offered by my REB and institution. I need to accept my own responsibility and lack of tact in my encounter with that elder as I pursued what I thought was appropriate ethical behaviour rather than responding to social cues. Regardless of my personal shortcomings, the moment still illustrates how a process that was approved and encouraged by my institution funneled me towards a universalised consent process that did not reflect the cultural realities of the CTFN.

My interviews and experiences highlighted how an approach similar to Tauri's may have been more appropriate had it been known to me prior to my ethics application. Most of my interactions were casual, and word of mouth travelled quickly in Carcross; most people knew who I was and what I was trying to do. Repeating that information in a

formal, standardized script, though well intentioned, could seem awkward or, at worst, dismissive of social expectations. This sentiment of awkwardness and potential rudeness while using consent or ethics materials has been noted when Junior researchers struggle to stay on formal scripts when empathetic or other, more casual social responses seemed circumstantially appropriate (Dearnley, 2005; Ashton, 2013; Bennett, 2013; Rimando et al., 2015). In my case, my script repeated information that someone may have already known or that was included in previous, casual conversations, and as such may have seemed to presume that my approach to consent was paramount or pretentious. After the failed interaction with an elder, I opted to discard the speech and begin all interactions with an off-script conversation. This was to encourage questions about my research and make it possible to broach the topic of consent more tactfully, but also acted as an extension of relationship building and made it possible to include individual contexts in my research process. This did not replace signed consent forms but allowed me more space to respond to social cues. Reflecting back on my failed attempt to use my recruitment script followed by the relative success of my off-script efforts, it is clear that my consent materials ought to have been iteratively developed within the community or that my consent protocols included relationship building as part of process. Though alternative outcomes to my early, scripted interactions are merely speculation, the experience nonetheless demonstrates how a formulaic approach to informed consent can inadvertently prioritize Eurocentric approaches to research (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007; Tauri, 2017). Without epistemological considerations or iterative and collaborative efforts to define ethical behaviour, the ethics approval process normalized my pre-existing assumptions about consent and ethics and funneled me towards Eurocentrically focused protocols. This offers insight into a larger epistemic issue of normalizing Western approaches to ethical behaviour over iterative and collaborative definitions of ethics within study communities.

In Junior contexts where budgets and courses limit time available for travel, ethics, along with other project development processes, ought to include some consideration for continuous tool amendment in the field (Rimando et al., 2015; Tauri, 2017; McLennan & Woods, 2018). A study of military hierarchies by White (1999) found that rigid power structures that restricted autonomous behaviour in low-ranking

people also restricted the moral growth of those low-ranked individuals. Ultimately, those with little capacity to react autonomously and learn in the field had less opportunity to expand their capacity to manage complex moral issues. Kelley, Belcourt-Dittloff, Belcourt & Belcourt (2013) highlight how current ethics protocols require that knowledge be generalizable and in general adherence to positivistic research expectations. This demonstrates an epistemic issue within ethics approval processes, despite their good intentions. Such restrictions on research content and trajectory can, and sometimes do, undermine Indigenous approaches to knowledge creation as they divert from the protocol's expected trajectory (Kelley et al., 2013). Taken together, White (1999) and Kelley et al. (2013) demonstrate how hierarchical systems based in Eurocentric assumptions about knowledge creation can normalize, or at least discourage divergence from, problematic assumptions or behaviours. Such a conclusion is present in Tauri (2017) and in McLennan & Woods (2018) where they argue that existing conventional ethics protocols normalize the dominant approach to inquiry and knowledge and expect it to be followed. As such, researchers seeking to divert their research from Eurocentric assumptions are faced with an upward battle where each form and process declines or challenges alternative approaches at every stage (Tauri, 2017; McLennan & Woods, 2018). This is not to say that ethics ought to be removed. It is a vital component of research that is necessary for research to be beneficial rather than harmful. Instead, such a conclusion suggests that, in addition to existing protocols, there ought to be a method through which formal ethics institutions encourage relationship building within consent processes to foster contextually-relevant, ethical research.

Though my discussion thus far of ethics issues have centred on the university level, it is important to note that I also experienced challenges with gaining ethics approval at the community level. As a result of my budget and timeline restrictions, I had to rely on Tami Grantham – the Lands and Natural Resources manager and my key contact –  to do all of the presentations and project development on the ground for me. Though I discuss limitations of working with one key contact in Section 5.1, it is necessary I mention that she presented my project to the executive council (the "community leader") for me to align with OCAP and TCPS2 and gain Dalhousie and community project approval (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2014, p. 118). Because I relied

on Tami as an intermediary, the number of perspectives involved in my definitions of ethical behaviour were limited (McLennan & Woods, 2018). Moreover, I relied on Tami to accurately represent the desires of the CTFN executive council, and on the executive council to accurately represent the desires of the community pertaining to my research, which may have skewed my understanding of social norms used in my consent or ethics materials (Tauri, 2017; McLennan & Woods, 2018). This exacerbated any existing issues with my materials arising from my existing Eurocentric orientation; not only did I rely on Western thought to guide my consent materials, I also did not have sufficient points of contact within the community to define ethical behaviour in the CTFN. Though I fulfilled the TCPS2 requirement through Tami and received a signed letter from the community leaders, the iterative relationship and trust building portions of the research only began after my ethics approval.

Ethical procedures and decolonization can coexist, but changes must be made to standardized ethics processes in order to advance decolonization efforts. The Dalhousie University REB applications can be amended throughout research to reflect new tools and considerations so long as no increased risk is imposed on participants (Bryman, 2012; Dalhousie University, 2015). Tauri (2017) was able to develop a two-tiered consent process that met the REB's expectations but also incorporated relationship building as part of the informed consent process. Despite these exceptions, however, conventional processes do not explicitly ask researchers to consider their own epistemological orientations and underlying assumptions in the pursuit of knowledge, and are instead expected to conform to established, Western norms (Kelley et al., 2013; Tauri, 2017; Datta, 2018). In the context of Junior academics with acutely shortened time frames, the lack of epistemological consideration in ethics forms and consent processes can result in an overreliance on Eurocentric approaches to research and consent, as was evidenced in my experiences (Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012; Datta, 2018). Ethics application processes ought to include some consideration of epistemological orientation and allow space for iterative development within consent to circumvent instances where iteration cannot occur prior to ethics application. Should these changes occur, Junior academics may be enabled to better respond to specific contexts within research communities and develop ethics processes that are founded on collaboration.

## 3.5 Project Development, Methods, and Relationships

When decolonizing research, it is the researcher's responsibility to align with the local epistemologies through relationship building and ongoing reflexivity in research execution (Wilson, 2008). The nature and extent of engagement within the community necessary to build these relationships will vary depending on both the community and the researcher, however it is a crucial step in fostering trust (Lavallée, 2009; Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012; Carlson, 2017; Datta, 2018). In the case of some senior researchers, years can be spent developing new networks and friendships or bolstering existing ones (Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012). Junior researchers tend to have less flexibility in their independent research schedules between other degree requirements such as courses and maximum degree lengths, and other extracurricular activities (Thomas, 2017; Dalhousie University, n.d.; University of Toronto, n.d.). Furthermore, conventional research methods training is often centred on Eurocentric worldviews and does not prepare students for the epistemological reorientation necessary for collaborative, decolonized research (Datta, 2018). As timelines and methods training may limit a Junior researcher's capacity to engage in decolonization, they require social and professional networks to provide methodological and personal support but do not always have access to sufficient or relevant networks (Cornelissen et al., 2015; Rimando et al., 2015). Training, timelines, and limited networks all interconnect as to create a wicked problem where Junior institutional and independent investigation into decolonization is challenging, if not impossible for Junior academics. Consequently, re-orienting research around local Indigenous paradigms is not included in the Junior toolkit and may act as a barrier to decolonizing research among early career academics (Wilson, 2008; McLennan & Woods, 2018). The implications these challenges are discussed with regards to project development and methods execution  with examples from my own research in Sections 5.1 and 5.2.

### 3.5.1 A Junior's Experience with Project Creation and Social Networks

Junior academics struggle with establishing and utilizing networks while problem-solving and developing projects. In their study of Master's students, Cornelissen et al. (2015) found that limited networks across cohort years, lack of formal networking

opportunity within schools, and untapped potential between supervisors and students resulted in students having smaller networks in early years of school. What this study demonstrated is that Juniors struggle to establish new relationships as a result of those challenges, even though students with larger networks were more academically and professionally successful. To illustrate how this may be impactful in the social research data collection, consider a reflective piece by McLennan & Woods (2008). McLennan explains how, as a Junior academic, some of her relationships within an Indigenous community were inequitable as neither she nor they were prepared or adequately trained to use and maximize her research methods for mutually beneficial investigation (McLennan & Woods, 2018). Woods responds to this sentiment and explains if Junior academics are engaging others and neither party is prepared to engage in culturally appropriate and cohesive methods, even the most well intentioned relationships can be skewed away from perspectives that are relevant to the community (2018). As Juniors are learning to navigate relationship building and drawing from only limited resources that often stem from conventional Eurocentric worldviews, they are particularly vulnerable to repeat the harmful patterns of positivistic research (McLennan & Woods, 2018; Datta, 2018). As such, Woods gives weight to the fact that equipping Junior academics with appropriate and decolonized tools is as important engaging a community that is prepared to co-conduct research (McLennan & Woods, 2018).

Junior academics may have limited access to participant populations due to inexperience, and thus have limited capacity to engage and collaborate with communities (Rimando et al., 2015; McLennan & Woods, 2018). Using senior researchers or experts to guide project development and critically develop research questions can be helpful in ensuring methods are appropriate and relevant to both the researcher and community members, especially among Junior academics with relative in-expertise (McLennan & Woods, 2018). This strategy can be seen in some Junior academic theses such as Rudolph (2012), Lavallée (2009), and Nakamura (2010), where using community contacts for on-the-ground insight and proposal guidance helped in navigating tool development. This approach of tapping expertise can help fill knowledge gaps (Cornelissen et al., 2015) and consequently minimize the challenges associated with using materials that may not resonate with community realities (Dearnley, 2005; Ashton, 2013). Despite this, the need

to engage in multiple, mutually beneficial relationships within the community remains (McLennan & Woods, 2018). Relying on a limited number of perspectives to represent larger community values limits the scope and diversity in research development, and thus oversimplifies methodological considerations of social context (Greene, 2012; Datta, 2018).

To help circumvent the challenges associated with limited networks within the CTFN community and my institution, I relied heavily on a key community contact – this both enhanced and limited the extent to which I could include community considerations during project development. In my case, I relied Tami Grantham. Tami and I met through a mutual contact and formed a relationship through e-mail and phone calls, and she invited me to the CTFN to conduct research concerning their community garden. Tami is the community champion who pushes the garden forward through administrative and volunteer efforts. Additionally, in her role as Lands manager, she is regularly exposed to multiple stakeholders within the community. Though she was in a strong position to assist me, Tami was unable to speak for the CTFN community at large when she guided my methodological choices, and I did not collaborate with additional community members when developing my project. Consequently, my tools were centred on knowledge I could glean from sources including Chilisa's *Indigenous Research Methods* (2012) and Kovach's book *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009) and my mostly Eurocentric background rather than collaboratively developed with the community.

By living in Carcross, making myself visible, and participating in public events and volunteering in the garden, I was able to build relationships with community members after my project was developed. I needed to do this because though some students may be able to build on the already established relationships of their supervisors (Cornelissen et al., 2015), I needed to develop my own connections. However, even if my supervisory committee had better-established networks with this community, there would still be a responsibility to dedicate time and energy to building trust (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009). Despite my limitations associated with limited access to community perspectives, I was fortunate in that some community members were willing to give me opportunities to ask questions about perspectives that differed from my own. Additionally, my supervisory faculty understood that I needed to take time to establish

relationships and guided me through complicated relationship dynamics. Though time constraints associated with my Master's degree limited the extent to which I could live in the community and work on relationship building, I still invested time and energy into creating and maintaining relationships and conduct my research with more community guidance than when I initially developed my project.

### 3.5.2 A Junior's Experience with Methods

I chose to build my research as a case study and use semi-structured interviews, observations, and participatory observation to allow for iterative research and experiential learning. The case study approach consisting of interviews and observation is commonly used in Indigenous fields (e.g. Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Douglas et al., 2014; Ford, 2009; Huntington et al., 2007) because it allows for an in-depth examination of a problem unique to each community. Interviews have been used in Yukon First Nation communities before (e.g. Old Crow community members in Douglas et al.'s 2014 study on traditional food consumption patterns), and some of the elders I interviewed had been interviewed previously by settler academics for their research projects (Cruikshank, 1991; Ida Calmegan and Annie Auston, pers comm, 08/09/2017). Observation and participation within the community, in conjunction with deferent mannerisms, is another key method used in community-based research whereby the researcher may learn about appropriate behaviour and language from observations and casual interactions (Chambers, 1983; Cruikshank, 1991; Kovach, 2009). Though there is precedent and rationale for using interviews and observations as a methodology, there were several instances where my methods proved ineffective because the broader community was insufficiently consulted during method development. To accommodate this limitation, I was forced to change my tools in the field, which is a common and often necessary process in social research (Greene, 2011; Wilson, 2008).

I lived in Carcross and became an active part of the community by volunteering with the elder's breakfasts events, public ceremonies, and the community garden which afforded me opportunities to reflect on my data collection tools in the CTFN context. Most notably I spent every weekday morning in the administration office (the public hub of Carcross), greeting everyone who came through the door, and every weekday afternoon volunteering in the garden. These efforts to get involved in the community

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served the dual purpose of introducing me to many members of the community, some of whom became willing study participants and as a way for me to observe typical discussions about gardening, food, and community needs. Ultimately these observations led to changes in my interview guide that reflected the terminology used by the people in Carcross. For example, one discussion I was part of in the CTFN administration building about the cultural workshops offered to the public encouraged me to revisit my interview question "How would you apply [traditional] knowledge to a community garden so others can access it?". Through the casual interaction, I learned that applying traditional knowledge was not usually seen as possible; instead it was felt to be part of every-day choices and to inform intention as much as practice. In response, I changed my original question to "how can the garden help preserve/encourage the use of traditional knowledge in your community?" so as not to presume that traditional knowledge was a set of skills or points that could be clearly separated from each other (Fredeen observations, 08/09/2017). Though my project was not collaboratively developed, I was able to use observations and social connections to guide the evolution of my methods to reflect community values. In this way I developed four separate, official iterations of my interview guide. Though this collaboration was limited to only those with whom I had built relationships, I was able to partially reflect the fifth element of decolonization and recognize the cultural and personal nature of knowledge creation in the latter half of my thesis.

My semi-structured interview guides were also improved during my data collection as a result of explicit guidance from participants. The use of interview question guides was helpful because my inexperience with interviewing meant I was uncertain about starting and directing conversations (Dearnley, 2005). Dearnley (2005) reflects specifically on their Junior academic challenges associated with semi-structured interviews and found that awkwardness due to their relative lack of expertise compared to their study participants and poorly worded questions often limited their capacity to effectively use the interview guide. I found this to be true in my research and had an additional layer of challenge associated with the ways in which my interview guides were developed. My interview templates were not developed collaboratively with the CTFN community and were consequently pointed out to be problematic by participants.

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In my interview with Derek Grosse, a member of the CTFN community, he contended that my interview question "How can traditional knowledge be incorporated into the garden", was "assumptive", but that he would help me rework it (pers comm, 07/17/2017). Ultimately, he helped me realize that assuming traditional knowledge could and ought to be moulded to fit the garden context prioritized the garden's integrity over that of traditional knowledge – he perceived this to contrast, or at least be unhelpful to the administration and community members' desire to preserve traditional knowledge. Ralph James, a kind elder with a sense of adventure, would volunteer information about traditional teas and hunting, but would correct me if I asked for information that fit more directly with my focus on the garden. He would tell me that I could adapt his knowledge about tea but then asked me what purpose that would serve and redirect my attention to a sustainable harvest practice (Ralph James, pers comm, 08/04/2017). I inappropriately assumed that traditional knowledge could fit in the garden and asked questions to that end. Through data collection though, interactions such as those with Derek and Ralph eventually helped me to understand that tradition was meant to be preserved and enacted, not adapted to European processes like the garden.

Though shifting the content of my interview questions was important, shifting the tone of interviews also became necessary in my data collection. During an interview with elder Ida Calmegan, when prompted by questions about the garden, she chose to share a story about how she used medicines on her mother when answering a question about the garden. When she had finished, I dismissed the story by asking "so, you were telling me about mushrooms?" (Ida Calmegan, pers comm, 08/09/2017). After all, I needed her to talk about food, traditional practices regarding food, and the ways in which the garden could impact that, and I saw her story as being irrelevant to those topics. I dismissed the fact that she was explaining how medicines and traditional plants are not simply 'plant mass' but were a way for her to connect with a loved one. It was only later, upon reflection, that I realized what I had done. This prioritization of my research goals and search for specific answers is something that I had learned in my Western academic background. This interview with Ida was the only instance in which I explicitly identified verbal expressions of my assumptions, though they were present in all my interviews.

I was able to be more cognizant of my assumptions and biases in specific instances of participant observation as my research progressed, particularly during excursions that took place with elders and community members to learn about traditional plants and lands. The act of 'participating' allowed me to engage more fully with an experience and allowed my emotions and thoughts to intertwine with what I was learning (Wilson, 2008; Bryman, 2012). This is a practice that has been used in anthropological approaches as well as emancipatory approaches to research since the 1950s (Chambers, 1983; Chilisa, 2012), and enabled me to learn from my surroundings and form relationships while collecting other types of data. Experience gained through previous interviews and personal reflections helped me avoid explicit dismissal of the knowledge and cultural values being shared with me. Additionally, writing about the sentiments, contexts, and gestures used while someone shared an experience helped me recognize which pieces of information demonstrated key desires or values for the Carcross garden. For example, Charlotte Hadden, a philosophical elder, took me to collect soap berries, and during this interaction she explained her recent challenges with finding a new place to live and how it was important to weigh other people's needs with your own when making decisions (Charlotte Hadden, pers comm, 07/19/2017). From this interaction, I was able to understand that Charlotte had an underlying desire to have the garden policies and programs focus on equity. I followed up with her, and we discussed how equitable elder garden access may be limited, which ultimately became a key emergent theme from my interviews (Fredeen, forthcoming, 2018). My assumption about what was 'important' information was still present, but I was able to acknowledge my biases and divert from my original line of inquiry, effectively follow up on the information shared with me.

While my participant and passive observations were ways in which I could acknowledge the cultural value of knowledge, my Western academic background served as a challenge when engaging in reflexive and respectful data collection. A recent article published by Datta (2018) highlights how current models for research training, though improving, are not always culturally appropriate. Datta discusses his own education, explaining that students were trained to neutrally and critically observe social phenomenon, but that this training was based on methodological practices rather than epistemological alignments. When researcher training centres on neutrality and tools that

are out of cultural context, the role of the researcher vacillates between 'subjective participant' and 'objective observer' while they attempt to re-orient their research around local worldviews (Datta, 2018; Battiste & Henderson, 2000). I found that this blurring was present in my research and was subsequently challenged by the prospect of reorienting my research. For example, in one interview with an elder named Mark Wedge, I recorded notes about a segment of our conversation about cake. I had shared a gluten free fruit cake with him, and I told him that it was a recipe that did not resemble a conventional cake recipe at all, but instead was something new. I went on to explain how, in baking, it is important to know when to adapt a recipe and when to use a new one altogether (Fredeen observations, 08/23/2017). He responded by saying "That's what I mean. Write that down." with much enthusiasm. The conversation went on to describe how that sentiment of adapting versus creating something new was relevant to the community garden, my research, and various other aspects of our lives. In that moment, his words presented useful data about how the garden ought to move forward but was also applicable to myself in the present moment as a researcher. The line between 'observer' and 'participant' was blurred which made that interaction difficult to categorize and code into a theme during analysis. When analyzing moments such as these, my Eurocentric assumptions made conceptualizing accurate representations of my data challenging, and the ways in which my Western expectations of research were invalidated.

I experienced another version of dissonance in my interview with Derek Grosse where my perceptions of traditional activities were challenged. When I asked him how traditional weaving techniques could be integrated into the garden's processes, he explained that "[weaving] could be useful" but it was "ceremonial" and was not intended for that purpose (Derek Grosse, pers comm, 07/18/2017). I had understood that cedar weaving was a traditional practice, but had not understood that it was for ceremonial, not daily use, purposes. Though I was able to correct myself and ask more relevant follow up questions in that moment, it illustrated how my Eurocentric perceptions of tradition and usefulness coloured my expectations and understanding of culture. I pursued a question based on my cultural understanding rather than seeking further contextual knowledge about a traditional practice. My educational background, similarly to Datta (2018) had

not prepared me for this type of epistemological challenge but instead normalized positivistic approaches to questioning.

## 3.6 Physical Manifestations and Writing

Another way for academics to pursue decolonization is through the physical form their research takes. Examples of decolonized and Indigenously centered works range from individual journal articles that use information presentation strategies that are different from traditional academic texts (Graveline, 2000; Cole, 2002; Shorty, 2016), to books about developing methodologies and navigating the conflicting worlds of Western and Indigenous worldviews (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). Alternative presentation methods include articles the likes of Graveline (2000) that had empirically supported critiques of Western methods written in the form of prose:

> Rule Three: BREVITY I am told: ''This quote is too long has too much text to it. Break it up. Comment on the content. Theorize: What do You think They mean?''
> Create Bridges it is called. I am stunned.
> In Circle Talk when a speaker has the Stone She or he talks as long as they want.
> Making their Own connections between Self and others in Circle Self and topic Self and Communities.
> My task is to Shrink stories. Cut huge chunks of now named ''extraneous'' material.
> As I struggle to Insert my own comments Intruding into Other's stories I become self-consciously Aware.
> Editing: a polite code word for Actions viewed Disrespectful Unacceptable in Traditional Circles. (Graveline, 2000, p. 367-368)

Cole (2002) also wrote an article for their thesis that critiqued the mainstream way of presenting information in academia with poetic lines: "the idea of only a fixed vocabulary being tolerated in scholarly endeavour disallowing unglossaried unannounced neologistic precipitation is culturally binding these categories are cultural prisons within" (2002, p. 449). These two quotes serve two purposes here: their physical forms are examples of decolonized research that intentionally differed from traditional academic ways of writing (prose versus scientific writing), and their content highlights some of the challenges faced by people attempting to decolonize their research. Writing in Western academic institutions is an art with manuals (e.g. APA manual) and long-standing traditions and guidelines that fundamentally require brevity and conciseness. Though there is value in

academic text styles, that style of writing fundamentally prioritizes information into things that can be cut and things that cannot (Cole, 2002; Smith, 2012), which has historically resulted in the 'cutting' of information that does not immediately lend itself to scientific or empirical Western thought.

### 3.6.1 A Junior's Experience Writing

Though the final form of my thesis largely conforms to the traditional academic structure (introduction, literature review, methods, results, conclusion), I was able to use other creative forms of data recording that helped embody the intent behind lessons. I wrote short, descriptive stories based on influential moments because I felt that capturing a mental snapshot of the sights, smells, humour, and lessons helped me process the things I had learned. I saved these stories and included them as part of my data collection. This was to preserve the non-verbal information I gathered and to remind myself of important personal lessons that would later influence my data analysis. For example, an excerpt from a short story I wrote explains an important lesson I ultimately used as a guiding principle in my research:

> I nod my agreement but say nothing. That's another thing I've learned from her - sometimes silence says more than words. Who knew I'd sit here across from a kind lady eating in the dark fluorescent light of an old gas station restaurant miles away from anyone and think it was peaceful. In another life, I'd probably yearn for the comforts of a city or a good café, but now this seems good enough. I feel good enough. Maybe, that's what it was all about. Trying to find peace in the middle of a place that's making the best of what it's got. Learning that you too can make the best of what you've got.

In this story, I was describing an encounter with Charlotte Hadden, a philosopher elder who took me under her wing. She guided me through self-reflection and relationship building in her community. This story, ultimately led to my understanding that if I stayed true to the things I learned, I would produce something that reflected them accurately. This was vital to my ability to combat imposter syndrome, a common affliction among academics (Kolligian Jr. & Sternberg, 1991), but also helped me understand the intent behind quotes and meaning in the items shared with me. Though not an empirical item, that story was important to my overall success with my thesis, and in-and-of-itself is a form of data. A more empirical example would be:

"So, you did get enough [food] though?" my voice rings through my headphones. This one bites. They have just finished telling me about their families and I had the audacity to try to 'reign in the conversation'. Jesus. (Fredeen observations, 08/12/2017).

In this excerpt, I was reflecting on an interview with an elder, Annie Auston where she told me about a yellow balloon she remembered seeing as a child. Reflections such as this reminded me to stay cognizant of my biases and focus on the intention behind stories rather than their content at face value. In this case, Annie's story was about a family presence in the home told through the eyes of a child, and I had tried to divert her. By using the above reflection, I was able to identify that some quotes such as:

When I was a little kid my mom was a gardener. So, when I was little I would help her as much as I could. But I would go take peas. I was always eating out of there and she started training me, young, like what you do an what you do not eat. (Seki Giardino, pers comm, 08/03/2017)

and

like if I get two moose that'd be good. Distribute it amongst the family, one of them. And then the other one just, you know, do a lot of dry meat, smoke a bunch. Freeze a bunch (Kevin Bayne, pers comm, 07/20/2017)

were relevant to my search for tradition-informed values about intergenerational communication and sharing when analyzing data for my work on IFS.

Junior academics are not always capable of challenging Western thesis conventions through alternative writing practices. Thesis design and format templates are offered only in conventional formats, such that alternatives must be sought out by the researcher themselves. For example, the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) at Dalhousie University has a nine-page document outlining the specific physical requirements for a completed thesis with regulations ranging from writing style, headings and heading uses, to line spacing (Dalhousie University FGS, 2016). There is little flexibility for creative knowledge portrayal in such guidelines, and the FGS must be contacted directly for omissions or amendments to the final physical form of the thesis. In my experience writing my final thesis, I found that although my supervisory committee was supportive of my efforts to pursue alternative writing approaches, the required FGS formatting made it nearly impossible for me to write about my findings in any way other than the conventional academic format.

Though the FGS guidelines are fairly rigid, they were not my only limitation when investigating alternative writing and presentation approaches. My timeline near the end of my thesis was restricted primarily by my budget and resource access. By the end of my degree, I no longer had funding to extend beyond one additional semester which would have been necessary if I pursued alternative writing approaches such as Graveline's (2000). As my university only has resources to support an interdisciplinary undergraduate minor in Indigenous studies, finding resources and guides for alternative writing formats that subvert the Eurocentric organizational structures in conventional theses meant seeking insight outside of my already-small network (Dalhousie University, n.d.a). Though I had made some valuable and lifelong connections in my Master's, I had not made sufficient connections with Indigenous and decolonized academics to help me find writing resources from outside the conventional Eurocentric format. As such, my budget-limited timeline, course requirements, job needs, and existing network all limited my capacity to pursue alternative writing formats.

## 3.7 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper outlined the five key guidelines of decolonization and explained the ways in which I attempted to meet them in ethics approval, project development, and data presentation. Community and institutional ethics approval happened simultaneously, which limited my ability to truly reflect the community's needs in my Dalhousie applications. This was due to the universalism and standardization present in the REBs definitions of ethical behaviour and methods that did not consider epistemological orientation or community collaboration. Throughout my project development, I relied heavily on input from my key community contact but was unable to consult with the larger CTFN community until I arrived in Carcross and began my data collection. As relationships and experiences influenced my worldview during data collection and analysis, various components of my research questions, interview guides, and data conceptualizations changed to reflect lessons-learned. However, these changes may have been limited to perceptions that were not representative of the larger CTFN community due to my small social and professional networks. I attempted to present the written components of my thesis in a manner that was representative of my experiences and the stories shared with me, however they remain limited to conventional Western academic

formats. With these considerations in mind, it is apparent that I was unable to fulfill decolonization on multiple levels in the physical trajectory and presentation of my research.

The delineation of my challenges when specifically attempting to engage with decolonization highlights a key narrative about Junior academics missing from decolonization literature. Various authors have outlined, in different ways, how education, research training, and research design is often centred on Eurocentric thought and contributes to ongoing colonial patterns of marginalization (Kennedy, 1989; Smith, 2012; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Andrews, 2018; Datta, 2018). Many existing curriculums do not train Junior academics to depart from colonial practices while making space for marginalized voices in emerging research (Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Datta, 2018). Though I found that my Eurocentric training acted as a barrier to epistemological reorientation, it was only one of the barriers to enacting decolonization in practice and in spirit. Institutionally-imposed timelines limited social networks, and standardized writing processes all played off one-another to make iterative project development challenging. These same barriers have been shown to have negative implications for decolonization in the Junior academic context (Datta, 2018). The geographic and temporal limitations associated with course requirements prevent Junior scholars from engaging in community-based project development, which requires the physical presence of the researcher (Nakamura, 2010; Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012; Datta, 2018). Standardized writing processes require researchers to cut and orient information in such a way that conforms to scientific expectations of research which can result in the loss of the cultural implications of knowledge (Graveline, 2000). To address these limitations, senior scholars might engage with their larger social or professional networks to fill knowledge gaps, but Junior scholars may not be able to do so (Smith, 2012; Cornelissen et al., 2015; Datta, 2018). Junior academics have limited social networks and capacity to develop new relationships due to restricted time available for networking and capacity to build off of existing relations (Cornelissen et al., 2015; Datta, 2018). This paper highlights how common barriers to decolonization in academia are exacerbated by researcher inexperience, training and small networks, all of which cause Juniors to rely on normalized Eurocentric processes for problem solving.

Addressing the limitations facing Junior academics in the context of decolonization is important because "decolonizing research training creates more empathetic educators and researchers, transforming us for participants, and demonstrating how we can take responsibility for our research." (Datta, 2018, p.1). The key to academic change is to alter it at its roots – to understand decolonization and emancipatory theory as fundamental approaches to the world, not as adaptations of an existing system (Brown & Strega, 2005). This paper by no means provides a comprehensive review of all institutional processes that are problematic, nor does it offer insight into academic contexts that are adapting and decolonizing, such as the University of British Columbia's Indigenous studies program (UBC, n.d.). Instead, this paper offers insight from a settler, Junior academic's experiences and the ways in which different barriers manifested throughout a Master's degree, and how those barriers were perceived. This work contributes to existing decolonization scholarship by further problematizing existing systems in universities, in the hopes that necessary changes may be more clearly defined.

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# CHAPTER 4:   CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter presents the key findings from Chapters Two and Three and provides further discussion on the implications of those findings. In revisiting the problem statement and research questions, I attempt to draw out connections between IFS and decolonization of methods.

## 4.1 Definitions Revisited: Decolonization and IFS

This thesis was primarily concerned with applying definitions of Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) and decolonization. The definition of IFS is built upon more general understandings of food sovereignty which call for the prioritization of local authority and autonomy over food systems (La Via Campensina, 2003; Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015). Added considerations for local traditions and values, and culturally appropriate policies centred on Indigenous paradigms are what distinguish IFS from that general narrative (Morrison, 2011; Kamal et al., 2015; Rudolph & McLaughlin, 2013). This is important because acknowledging Indigeneity in food sovereignty helps to offer recognition of marginalized and oppressed food system related  practices and values within Indigenous communities (Morrison, 2011; Kamal et al., 2015). Furthermore, IFS can be seen as an act of decolonization – the departure from colonial practices (Blue Swadener & Mutua, 2008) – and as a way in which Indigenous communities can regain some autonomy and control over their governance and culture (Grey & Patel, 2015). Decolonization has multiple components relevant to research and methods, but it encompasses a larger guiding principle which is to understand that knowledge cannot be separated from subjective context (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Chilisa, 2012; Tauri, 2017). These understandings of IFS and decolonization were used as thematic lenses to understand data presented in Chapters Two and Three and to make the recommendations described below.

## 4.2 Problem Statements Revisited

This thesis addressed two related problems: the problem of community engagement and ownership of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) community garden, and the challenges faced when pursuing such a topic within a decolonized approach. The CTFN community garden is facing a problem of low community

participation in daily activities. This issue is investigated in Chapter Two of this thesis alongside an exploration into the community garden's potential to contribute to the CTFN's cultural preservation efforts. To this end, this thesis examined the cultural implications of the CTFN community garden as well as investigated reasons for relatively low-community participation through the lens of IFS. Chapter Two provides recommendations for advancing community ownership of, and participation in, the community garden, further discussed in Section 4.3.2., and provides insight into ways in which the garden could contribute to cultural preservation and IFS.

This exploration is timely for two reasons: (1) it aligns with pre-existing local and territorial goals for improving local food production (Dorward, Chiu, and Mullinix, 2014; Dorward & Mullinix, 2015), and (2) narratives of food sovereignty in academic literature are calling for detailed examinations of local food sovereignty movements within specific communities (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Clapp, 2014). Furthermore, this research specifically aimed to identify ways in which the CTFN community could be further engaged in the garden's daily activities, and whether it could contribute further to the CTFN social context by enabling cultural preservation. Consequently, the research direction centred on understanding how traditional food related practices (such as hunting or berry picking) and tradition-informed values could be relevant to the CTFN's garden's processes.

The second problem pertaining to the use of decolonized methods is best described as a narrative that emerged throughout my data collection, analysis, and thesis writing. I turned to decolonized methods when, as a Junior, settler academic, I struggled to engage with IFS authentically. In Indigenous research contexts, decolonization is the act of subverting harmful power structures rooted in colonial research, and reorienting empirical investigation to centre on Indigenous paradigms instead of conventional Eurocentric ones (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Chilisa, 2012). This manifests in the use of tools that are developed with Indigenous worldviews at their centre to prioritize Indigenous and local knowledge, and in the prioritization of Indigeneity as it emerges in the field over preconceived expectations of findings (Smith, 2012). This premise was helpful for navigating IFS questions that called for an in-depth understanding of local paradigms that I did not possess prior to project development (Morrison, 2011; Smith,

2012). While attempting to employ decolonized methods, I found that barriers associated with my Eurocentric methods training, research process, and heritage were significant impeding factors to pursuing decolonization and fully addressing IFS questions (Datta, 2018; Rimando et al., 2015). As there is a dearth of literature on Junior academic experiences engaging with decolonized research (Datta, 2018; McLennan & Woods, 2018), this thesis presents an account of barriers faced and potential solutions when engaging with decolonized research. This leads to the considerations for ethics process and curriculum changes that could help circumvent Junior limitations to decolonizing methodologies, and also advance decolonization within academia (as discussed in Section 4.3.3).

To pursue these problems, this thesis addressed three research questions:

1) How do Existing Knowledge Holders within the CTFN Currently Interact with the Existing Community Garden Infrastructure?
2) To What Extent can the Garden Adapt to Existing Traditional Food Gathering Practices and Use?
3) What Limitations Exist Between Junior academics and decolonization?

This research identified a total of five key findings pertaining to the research questions. The following sections organizes these findings first according to their respective research questions to highlight nuances and important recommendations. Then, the common threads are considered together in Section 4.4 where 'big picture' elements are discussed.

## 4.3 How do Existing Knowledge Holders within the CTFN Currently Interact with the Existing Community Garden Infrastructure?

A previous study conducted by Dorward, Chiu and Mullinix (2014) in the CTFN demonstrated that community gardening was verbally supported by community members but could not elaborate on the extent to which individuals contributed to the garden's processes. As Chapter Two explains, this lack of insight on individual contributions is due to the fact that knowledge holders in the CTFN do not interact with the garden extensively or regularly. Employee burn out and low community-member participation were noted as major barriers for the garden's long-term success. Such a finding is consistent with studies that also examined community greenhouses or gardens in Northern Canadian contexts and found that low community participation often resulted in

a struggle to maintain a garden and in some instances resulted in closure (Christensen, 2016; Douglas et al., 2014). This lack of individual and communal contributions to the garden, when examined using IFS as a lens, suggests that the garden may not fulfill more socially-oriented needs of the community and thusly does not encourage or facilitate community engagement. As an Indigenousnously sovereign food system requires community participation as well as process adherence to traditional values, IFS attributes the lack of community participation to the garden's inability to fulfill those tradition-informed values. As participants discussed their distinct desires for the CTFN food system, they highlighted needs concerning tradition-informed values intended to guide programming and management. Specifically, two key values of intergenerational knowledge transmission and cultural or spiritual fulfillment emerged as potential guiding principles and are discussed further in Section 4.4. Investigating how aspects of the CTFN's local and traditional knowledge could or could not be integrated into the garden as an act of cultural preservation uncovered higher level needs pertaining to value fulfillment in the food system.

## 4.4 To What Extent can the Garden Adapt to Existing Traditional Food Gathering Practices and Use?

This second research question yielded two key results discussed in Chapter Two that provide nuance and depth to the finding outlined above:

1) It is unlikely that specific traditional skills (such as hunting, weaving, bark collection, or medicinal herb propagation) can be integrated into the physical, daily processes of the garden;
2) Some tradition-informed community values could be integrated into the garden's management and programming to connect food production components to the larger cultural fabric of the community.

This research set out assuming that specific traditional knowledge regarding food and plants could be integrated into the garden in order to contribute to cultural preservation efforts. However, the data pointed to a different approach to improving garden cultural-relevance which excluded specific traditional practices and centred on larger-scale values that ought to be used as guiding principles in garden management and programming. Considering how IFS involves improving community access and managing food production so it adheres to tradition-informed values, uncovering values for management

or programming provides useful insight into potential improvements for the CTFN garden.

The two key, tradition-informed values that emerged from the data and inform the recommendations in Section 4.4.1 are:

1) Community and intergenerational communications;
2) Tradition and spirituality.

These values were not observed to be fulfilled by the garden, and interviews revealed them to be desires and aspirations rather than existing conditions. Though they emerged as two separate values, the essence behind each is that reconnecting people to each other and to the relevant and existing knowledge about the food system is important to the participants of this study. To answer the research question, the current CTFN garden did not, as of the summer of 2017, fulfill those values, but could potentially integrate them into programming to better adhere to, and encourage, individual pursuit of intergenerational communication and spiritual fulfillment. Uncovering these overarching values is consistent with the findings of others that found that community-defined principles used to prioritize Indigeneity in local food production ensure that relevant traditions are included in food systems in an appropriate manner (Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Rudolph, 2012; Rudolph & McLaughlin, 2013; Kamal et al., 2015). By understanding the CTFN-specific overarching themes and desires for the garden, modifications can be made to tolls, programs, and infrastructure so the  garden fulfills the community's cultural expectations and encourages community participation. How this may manifest in the CTFN's food system future is discussed below.

## 4.4.1 The Future of the CTFN Garden

Though IFS is only part of the larger issue of subverting harmful power structures present in society, it is a step towards recognizing Indigeneity in a productive manner (Morrison, 2011; Grey & Patel, 2016). Acts of IFS include community food systems that prioritize local desires and relevant tradition-informed values when considering interventions or programming (Morrison, 2011). Though Chapter Two provides a recommendation that may make such a prioritization possible in the CTFN community garden, it is helpful to consider a program in Newfoundland and Labrador that has progressed from the identification of community food system needs to modified food

system intervention: Food First NL's *Our Food NL* initiatives. Considering the Food First NL example provides some insight into how community values and Indigeneity may manifest in local food production.

Food First NL's *Our Food NL* initiatives begin with community surveys on traditional and market food access and needs, and end with recommendations and development of relevant food system interventions (Food First NL, n.d.e.). These programs are run by Food First NL, which is a non-profit organization that draws funding from provincial and federal sources and collaborates with other non-profits to make food system improvement a reality in Newfoundland and Labrador (Food First NL, n.d.a). One project, Nikigijavut Nunatsiavutinni (NN), provides a clear example that may be helpful to guiding next-steps for the CTFN food system. The NN project was conducted in the Indigenous communities Hopedale and Rigolet of the Nunatsiavut region. The project used results from a food-priority survey completed by community members to identify key areas for local food system improvement (Food First NL, n.d.d). These results were then used to define community priorities and guide two parallel food interventions, a community garden and a traditional food freezer, that were developed by Food First NL in collaboration with the community (Food First NL, n.d.b.; Food First NL, n.d.c;  Food First NL, n.d.e). The garden's operations include community-defined needs, participation, and capacity building through mentorship programs that connect people to food growing experts within and from outside of the community (Food First NL, n.d.c). The traditional food freezer program expands on an existing community intervention to further enable traditional food sharing between community members and thus connects people to each other and to culturally relevant food (Food First NL, n.d.b). While value and need identification in NN resulted in these two separate food system interventions, both included tradition and community-informed considerations that were relevant to their respective processes. In doing so, both these initiatives facilitated community participation in the local food system while prioritizing community needs and local definitions of Indigeneity where relevant.

Though the NN program offers insight on encouraging community participation and implementation of programs based on community-defined values, it's resulting interventions are tailored to each community's survey results and locally defined needs

and cannot be transcribed to CTFN verbatim (Food First NL, n.d.e). However, the NN project illustrates an example of how to move from the identification of community needs to the implementation of a food program which may be helpful in determining future action for the CTFN food system and garden. Similarly to the NN food system surveys, this research uncovered tradition-informed values in the CTFN that are not currently being fulfilled by the community garden. This gives insight into the ways in which Indigeneity is not prioritized in the garden and also highlights infrastructural and programming-related barriers that prevent community participation. These uncovered needs in the Nikigijavut Nunatsiavutinni program resulted in two separate food system interventions, while the results from this CTFN study suggests that cultural preservation and food-related goals could potentially be embodied in a single intervention. Participants from the CTFN directly linked tradition-informed values to the community garden as potential guiding principles for programming and management. These values suggest that the garden's management and programming ought to embody the intention behind tradition-informed values and enable individual and communal pursuit of intergenerational communication and spirituality. As such, prioritizing Indigeneity in the CTFN community garden may manifest as programming within the garden that combines cultural preservation with other food-related practices.

Chapter Two offers an example of what programming could exist in the CTFN garden by referring to the existing CTFN culture camps designed to connect youth to elders in the community who are active hunters and trappers. These camps facilitate intergenerational communication about traditional hunting skills by providing a space for elders to directly teach youth through shared experiences (CTFN, 2018). A similar program in the garden could be used to connect youth to elders and experts in the context of food production in the garden, which is recommended in Chapter Two. The knowledge shared in the garden programming would be different from that shared in culture camps, as gardening is an introduced practice in the CTFN and does not have associated traditional knowledge (Cruikshank, 1991). However, if the garden provides space and logistical support for practicing intergenerational knowledge transmission in general, it may offer an avenue for individuals to pursue the intentions behind tradition-informed values (outlined above) while participating in local food production. In this way, such

programming in the garden may assist in preserving the larger-scale social traditions in the CTFN.

While Chapter Two of this thesis offers recommendations for the CTFN garden that stem from participant-identified needs, further work must be done. A larger community survey regarding food system needs ought to be conducted and my recommendations could be piloted to ensure their feasibility and relevance. Looking to programs such as NN could identify useful approaches to collecting and mobilizing community input, but ultimately the same ground-work done in the NN project must be done in the CTFN. Furthermore, such interventions and work cannot be done solely by outsiders, like myself, as we cannot fully prioritize local definitions of Indigeneity and tradition because we are not part of those definitions (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012). Individual Indigenous communities need to be empowered to take ownership of their systems and decide which values are most helpful to them, and which food production methods are most appropriate for them (Morrison, 2011; Brunger & Bull, 2011). Additionally, the findings of this thesis are based on values distilled from only fifteen participants and three months of data collection. As such, further investigation into the values found herein to determine their relevance on a larger community scale would be beneficial. Though further work must be done, using the values uncovered in Chapter Two and emulating Food First NL's approach to piloting projects and building local capacity, the CTFN can help ensure that the garden may be expanded based on local needs and values and made socially sustainable.

## 4.5 What Limitations Exist Between Junior Academics and Decolonization?

With regards to the third research question, there are two key findings discussed in Chapter Three:

1) Educational background and training prevent students from epistemologically reorienting themselves
2) Procedural limitations imposed by a university exacerbate other challenges faced by Junior academics and thus limit their capacity to engage in decolonization.

Master's students and other Junior academics often have limited access to resources and relationships, which exacerbates challenges associated with expedited timelines in degree programs, and procedural requirements like ethics approval. Through a critical reflection of my experiences, this thesis agreed with existing work by authors such as Datta (2018),

McLennan & Woods (2018), and Wall-Kimmerer (2013), in finding that a combination of patriarchal and neoliberal processes within the university combined with individual limitations made method decolonization challenging to achieve. These processes consisted of:

1) Methodological training based in Eurocentric approaches to knowledge;
2) Ethics approval procedures that did not allow sufficient space for collaborative First Nation considerations;
3) Thesis templates and guidelines that reinforce Western strategies of information organization.

These three issues within academia work together to make the pursuit of decolonization in methods and research difficult, if not impossible for Junior academics. Methodological training in Western institutions is focused on tools and the logical flow of neutral, objective research, which proscribes the use of more iterative research that evolves in the field (Thomas, 2017; Datta, 2018; Smith, 2012; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). Similarly, ethics processes, though developed with the intention of protecting Indigenous and other marginalized populations, are fundamentally based in Eurocentric expectations of knowledge discovery and neutral science (Smith, 2012; Tsosie, 2012; Tauri, 2017). Assumptions about the ways in which ethical behaviour and consent ought to be achieved often exclude considerations of relationship building and community expectations of research conduct. Finally, academic writing formats often require cutting and streamlining of data into expected categories for information presentation (Graveline, 2000). Standard approaches to methods and discussions prioritize the objective and normative approach to knowledge creation, leaving little room for alternative approaches to data presentation that incorporate story-telling or reflect the subjective nature of knowledge (Graveline, 2000; Cole, 2002). In these ways, project development, ethics and consent, methodological choices in the field, and expression of final results are all restricted to Western norms and Eurocentric expectations of research protocols (Smith, 2012; Tauri, 2017; McLennan & Woods, 2018). As such, departing from those norms becomes an enormous undertaking that requires researchers to contest conventions at every stage, and may thusly be discouraged from the pursuit of decolonization in academia altogether.

The challenges associated with Eurocentric methodological training, ethics process, and writing formats were shown to be exacerbated by the shortened timeline of a Master's program and funding limitations. During project development and in the field in my case, my Eurocentric training, ethics processes, and standardized formats were readily available when I encountered problems or unexpected questions. While this normalized Western research conventions in my project design and execution, it also limited the need to rely on local paradigms when faced with methodological challenges. Furthermore, it was challenging to equip myself with methodological tools other than those already within my Eurocentric education because my social and professional networks were limited, and my extracurricular time was restricted due to course requirements and funding limitations. In this way, my own limitations as a new researcher when attempting to decolonize my research were reinforced and encouraged through existing processes and discouraged pursuit of alternative approaches to project execution. These issues are present in all academia (e.g. Castleden, Morgan & Lamb, 2012), but are acutely felt in Junior contexts where inexperienced researchers are faced with the contention between the Western requirements necessary to advance in their field, and decolonized methodologies that conflict with existing standards.

## 4.5.1 The Future for Decolonizing the Academy

Conclusions about systematic issues within ethics approval and general research processes do not suggest that settler researchers always consciously choose to act in harmful or colonial manners. Systematic forces beyond individual control funnel researchers towards paths of least resistance, and many are not empowered or trained to employ methods that depart from conventions (Tauri, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Identifying, acknowledging, and addressing issues within ethics systems merely directs conversation to evolve beyond adapting existing systems and towards critical evaluations of how ethical behaviour may be best achieved in Indigenous research (Brunger & Bull, 2011). In light of this, this thesis can offer some recommendations for settler, Junior academics attempting to decolonize their work in socially oriented fields:

1) When possible, undertake research in communities where your supervisory committee has pre-existing networks, so you can build on their foundations.
2) Should an opportunity arise, and you are invited somewhere new where your school or supervisor have few or no networks, integrate yourself and build

friendships outside of the research context. Though it is more difficult to start new networks than it is to build upon existing ones, this will help you understand social norms and contexts.

3) Regardless of any existing networks, build sufficient time into your research project to establish your research and non-research based relationships while you are in the community. This is important because decolonized methods require you to be more than a 'researcher' in your community – this builds trust but also helps you reorient your own perceptions and reflect on biases

4) Respond to feedback in the field and do not be afraid of blurring the line between subjective participant and objective researcher. As Wilson (2008) explains, you are there to fulfill a role in a relationship, not solely to extract information. For example: if your interview questions are met with skepticism, it is valuable to understand why they may be problematic, and to change them, as you will get more meaningful responses. Additionally, shifting your tools to reflect community feedback may highlight underlying assumptions present of which you were unaware or indicate a larger paradigm shift necessary in your data collection and analysis.

5) Write and collect data in such a way that you feel contextual information is captured. Your data will most likely help you develop your tools and offer empirical information relevant to your research questions. By acknowledging this, you can pay respects to the ways in which knowledge can be a product of one's experience, and you can begin to fulfill portions of decolonization and give voice to the cultural and political implications of knowledge creation.

These recommendations are directly mirrored in works such as Wilson's *Research is Ceremony* (2008) and Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012) but ring with a unique consideration for the limitations a Junior academic will face. Timelines will prevent full community participation and iterative research development; funding will limit the physical capacity to travel and participate in the community; and existing university procedures will reinforce any Western biases held. By acting and pursuing those five guidelines, it is possible for a Junior to pursue some aspects of decolonization regardless of their institutional context.

Identifying Junior specific actions serves the dual-purpose of giving agency to individual researchers and providing insight into necessary, larger systematic changes. This thesis can offer two major recommendations for university and research institution reform:

1) Institutions ought to centre ethics around community epistemologies and iterative development rather than positivistic, scientific approaches to investigation. Specifically for Junior academics, ethics processes ought to include guidance and space for relationship building and experiential learning in the field. This is so non-Eurocentric approaches to research become accessible, and so Junior

academics are enabled to problem-solve in a collaborative manner in the field rather than relying on their existing, and often limited, knowledge and networks.

2) Research into specific curriculum requirements and assessments that can be changed to better reflect Indigenous considerations where relevant ought to be conducted at institutional levels.

These recommendations can be illustrated considering two examples, the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch program which allows for flexible and collaborative definitions of ethical behaviour, and the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing curriculum.

Recommendations for ethics board changes have been suggested before by authors such as Battiste (2000), Smith (2012), and Tauri (2017), but most stem from the perspective of experienced researchers. Authors such as these suggest that ethics boards should amend requirements for consent to better reflect community definitions of consent and ethical behaviour, which are relevant considerations to my key findings. However, even if ethics protocols offered space for relationship building processes, Junior academics are lacking social and professional networks and must contend with restricted timelines, so they may not have support to develop community definitions in a timely fashion. As such, changes to ethics protocols must lend themselves to Junior settings and ought to include space, time, and mentorship for collaborative definitions of ethical behaviour in study communities.

Inspiration for such manifestations of flexible ethics processes can be gleaned from existing collaborative ethics boards, such as the Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch (MEW). The MEW, based at Cape Breton University (CBU), is an ethics approval process based on a set of Indigenously defined ethics protocols and guiding principles for researcher conduct (CBU, n.d.). This ethics process places the onus of learning about and adhering to local norms and traditions on the researcher, and it requires that definitions of ethical behaviour be collaboratively developed between investigators and community members (CBU, n.d.). Once this initial project development is completed with any community within the Mi'kmaq First Nation, the researcher must submit a MEW form to its governing body at CBU. Approval is given or withheld  based on their adherence to and inclusion of collaboratively defined goals and consent processes (CBU, n.d.). What this process does is add collaborative project development and consideration for local traditions to the ethics and research approval already required by the researcher's

university. In doing so, the MEW encourages decolonization as it calls for a departure from standardized processes towards tradition-informed and collaborative research (Smith, 2012; Tsosie, 2012; Tauri, 2017).

Though the MEW process is labour intensive, as it requires significant communication between investigator and communities throughout project development, it offers an official avenue for researchers to pursue decolonization in their methodologies and ethics. It requires collaboration within ethics approval processes, and includes relationship building as part of the project development trajectory, which for Junior academics, may encourage critical evaluation of research expectations (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Datta, 2018). If institutions created separate forms or review boards similar to the MEW for research with Indigenous populations, space could be made within institutional ethics for considerations of tradition and collaboratively defined ethical behaviour (Battiste, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Brunger & Bull, 2011). Junior academics would then be offered an avenue to formally prioritize Indigeneity in consent processes as relationship building and collaboration would be seen as a mandatory part of ethics approval (Smith, 2012; Tauri, 2017). This could be adapted and incorporated earlier to fit Junior researcher timelines. Conversely, such a process could be used to modify degree-lengths so that research with Indigenous populations is granted sufficient time to achieve appropriate ethics approval (Datta, 2018). This would act as a step towards decolonizing academia, as it would help subvert and problematize existing ethics-related conventions based in colonialism and prioritize alternative approaches to research.

Further research into alternative approaches to ethics approval ought to be conducted, however, because the MEW offers insight only for Mi'kmaq people and may not incorporate Junior academic considerations. The MEW stipulates that its protocols and expectations are based on input from the various Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia; though it can offer guidance for what types of information must be considered on ethics applications, it cannot be transcribed into other communities. Furthermore, it is rare that individual communities share exact protocols with one another (Smith, 2012) so standardized forms still present the issue of homogenizing community needs (Tauri, 2017). Furthermore, Junior scholar research requires further guidance than does that

conducted by Senior researchers, and Juniors are still restricted by timelines, and budgets in a manner that is unique to their inexperienced status. Even if separate ethics forms and approval boards were created to reflect relationship building and collaborative project development, doing so without implementing systematic support for decolonized methods may not address Junior impediments to decolonized approaches to consent (Rimando et al., 2015; Datta, 2018; McLennan & Woods, 2018). The ethics process must also include measures to counteract Junior academics' limited social networks and available time to engage in extracurricular investigation into decolonization. As no ethics processes include such measures to my knowledge, further research into the specific barriers between Junior academics and decolonized methods must be conducted to clearly outline necessary supportive measures.

With regards to curriculum development, including Indigenous and alternative approaches to knowledge ought to come as a major consideration within learning, rather than a treatment applied to an already-known concepts (Brunger & Bull, 2011). Current curriculums often focus on conventional approaches to research and normalize Eurocentric assumptions about how knowledge ought to be discovered (Kovach, 2009; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Datta, 2018). When considering timeline, funding, and network limitations that impede independent investigation using non-conventional methods, primarily Eurocentric training restricts a Junior's exposure to decolonized approaches (Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Datta, 2018). Curriculum changes that ensure Junior academics are equipped with tools to attempt decolonization in their methods can help redirect independent researcher away from Eurocentricity. To that end, the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing curriculum offers useful insight into incorporating Indigeneity in education.

The University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing has a mandatory Indigenous requirement in their undergraduate degree – this necessitates each student to take an Indigneous course. Furthermore, the college also has developed its curriculum to be congruent with the Aboriginal medicine wheel, so as to reflect the needs of the various Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan. To do so, evaluation of student progress within the undergraduate degree was changed to reflect the four dimensions (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) of health on the medicine wheel:

1) Students must demonstrate skill proficiency while acting with kindness and empathy, which reflects the physical dimension;
2) Students will act honesty, and they fulfill and build relationships within their communities, which reflects the emotional dimension;
3) Students must excessive wise judgment that demonstrates nurturing and accepting qualities, which reflects the mental dimension; and
4) Students must seek knowledge and value intuition while problem solving, which reflects the spiritual dimension (University of Saskatchewan, n.d.).

These guiding principles are intended to guide evaluation of student proficiency so there is room to measure student responsiveness to context and intention throughout their degrees. In essence, such guiding principles behind curriculum and student evaluation reorients rubrics to include considerations of elements that were identified as important in Saskatchewan's Indigenous communities. In this way, the program prioritizes Indigeneity by using aspects of Indigenous knowledge to evaluate students' relative success in nursing.

Though U of S's example applies to a course-based program, its general tenants could be applied to research design and methodological training. Research into how methodological approaches can be reoriented to express relevant Indigenous considerations must be further conducted but some work has already been done. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) has dissected the conventional research process and illustrated how conventional methods have been problematic in the past. She ultimately argues that research is not usually designed in a collaborative manner, and that there are few curriculums in place that teach settler scholars how to use or incorporate Indigenous paradigms and decolonize methods. Wilson (2008) takes such arguments a step further and offers examples of where settler scholars have mis-stepped and then corrected themselves in the field to better reflect decolonized methods. Wall-Kimmerer (2013) considers how the language used in curriculum that does consider Indigenous paradigms often still limits student understandings of non-Eurocentric worldviews, as Indigenous concepts are filed into conventional categories. This existing work, taken with my findings pertaining to the impacts of Eurocentric training and their relative intensity depending on timeline and budget restrictions, points to the need for processes such as U of S's Nursing curriculum for each research project.

Rather than be evaluated on their capacity to fulfill conventions, students conducting original research should be evaluated based on their capacity to conduct valid and robust investigations while developing skills and fulfilling community-defined priorities (Wilson, 2008; Datta, 2018). Redefinition of ethics protocols may assist in achieving this or serve as a starting point for evaluating students' inclusion of Indigeneity and collaborative processes (Brunger & Bull, 2011). If ethical behaviour is defined collaboratively between the researcher and the community, students will be able to create their own rubric of correct behaviour and skill use to supplement any institutional expectations of student progress. In this way, students could feasibly prioritize Indigeneity, along with any other marginalized community identity, to some extent in their research and ensure that it fulfills community needs instead of, or in addition to, conventional research expectations. By incorporating such considerations into the evaluation of student success, rubric and curriculum developers can then build support and materials around the timeline and network needs of Junior academics (McLennan & Woods, 2018). In this way, such issues highlighted in Chapter Three can be circumvented or more accurately accounted for in student education, and decolonization and Indigeneity may be given priority in research.

Though such recommendations are consistent with existing decolonization literature (e.g. Battiste, 2000; Brunger & Bull, 2011; Smith, 2012), further research into the Junior academic research process ought to be conducted before curriculum or evaluation rubrics are changed. It is important to understand where Junior academics face challenges in decolonizing their methods so adapted materials can address the realities of Junior academia. Chapter Three offers a starting point that adds to the dearth of existing Junior academic considerations (e.g. Rimando et al., 2015; Datta, 2018) and explicitly describes the impacts of timeline, budget, and inexperience-related challenges faced by a Junior, settler academic. However, this is largely reflective material and does not represent the positions and experiences of other Junior academics, so research into larger Junior academic expereinces ought to be conducted at institutional levels.

Furthermore, the scale of these recommendations ought to be limited institutional levels as each university or college will be concerned with different Indigenous populations. Homogenizing an approach to student and project evaluation through

national expectations would result in lost consideration for differences between Indigneous and student groups (Smith, 2012; Tauri, 2017). As such, changes ought not to prescribe specific actions, but instead allow flexibility for iterative development.

## 4.5 The Big Picture

A common narrative of shifting away from Eurocentricity towards locally-defined paradigms in food systems and in research emerges when considering IFS and decolonization together. Recognizing Indigeneity in food systems or in research depends entirely on locally and collaboratively-defined needs and traditions (Morrison, 2011; Smith, 2012). This necessitates that research into IFS uses decolonized methods that are centred on local paradigms so local priorities are foregrounded. This is challenging in practice, however, as eliminating researcher bias is impossible (Chambers, 1983). As such, works by Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009), and Smith (2012) recommend that research processes should embrace the fact that information is created and perceived by people with contextual lenses. To do this, relationship building and constant project evaluation against community needs must occur in both ethics and research processes (Wilson, 2008; Tauri, 2017). This also allows for findings to be highly context-specific and focused on community experiences, which gives space and voice to Indigeneity and avoids standardization in food and research interventions.

This thesis offers additional insight into the decolonization process when researching IFS through specific evaluation of the CTFN community garden. It does so by describing the ways in which institutional processes prevent Junior academic investigation into alternative and decolonized approaches to research and limit the ways in which information can be presented. Restricted timelines, budgets, social networks, and training can limit the extent to which a Junior academic can investigate decolonized possibilities within their work. Furthermore, institutional processes including ethics approval and thesis writing guidelines that normalize Western approaches to research encourage the pursuit of knowledge in conventionally Eurocentric ways (Graveline, 2000; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Tauri, 2017). Connecting these challenges specifically to methods used to understand IFS offers new insight into how research with Indigenous communities is still impacted by colonial processes. Verbalizing this also gives specific voice to the needs of Junior scholars that are seeking to decolonize but are faced with

limitations beyond their control. Pursuing iterative definitions of projects and ethics when pursuing IFS is a useful venture because it ensures that any intervention used to improve food access or community engagement in food production is based on local needs, not colonial expectations community development.

## 4.5 Audience Summary

This research provides insight on important topics to at least three audiences. First, this research provides some insight into the successes and failures of the CTFN community garden. It is important that key community values can be identified so they may be further investigated and pursued in programming and administrative support. Second, this research provides insight into the challenges surrounding decolonizing the academy from a Junior academic's perspective. This insight offers potential footholds for decolonization in the academy; by identifying barriers between new researchers and decolonized methods and making associated changed, institutions can encourage the pursuit of decolonization in research within future generations. Finally, this thesis has impacted my own outlook on research. Contending with new ideas and paradigms is ultimately the purpose of higher education, and I feel as though this has been a powerful experience in shifting my outlook on emancipatory work. Though these stakeholders ultimately benefit from this research, the project was limited.

## 4.6 Limitations

Chapter Three discusses my limitations at length, but it is important to give specific voice to the impacts of them here, as they shaped the recommendations above. I was limited by my Eurocentric worldview and educational background, as they prevented me from reorienting my research around local CTFN paradigms. This was exacerbated by my restricted timeline and funding that prevented me from including the community at all stages of research and thus limited me project creation, execution, and analysis. I did my best to mitigate the harms and impacts my assumptions would have on my work but ultimately, I was only able to include worldviews from community members I knew within my research. Though I maintain those relationships even now, any further research on this topic in the CTFN must come from someone within the community or, at least, someone planning an extended stay in the community, rather than an outsider.

## 4.6 Concluding Thoughts

I would like to end my thesis with an excerpt from a short story I wrote while collecting data. This story is featured in Chapter Two but deserves to have its own voice in the thesis as a stand-alone piece. In the story, I describe an interaction with a now-dear friend of mine, Charlotte, who has guided my learning with kindness and empathy. Though she taught me many things, this story highlights the key lesson I took away from my time in this research: adapting to your surroundings and listening to others can help you feel more at home and familiar, and thus more comfortable with your own challenges and shortcomings.

> I nod my agreement but say nothing. That's another thing I've learned from her - sometimes silence says more than words. Who knew I'd sit here across from a kind lady eating in the dark fluorescent light of an old gas station restaurant miles away from anyone and think it was peaceful. In another life, I'd probably yearn for the comforts of a city or a good café, but now this seems good enough. I feel good enough. Maybe, that's what it was all about. Trying to find peace in the middle of a place that's making the best of what it's got. Learning that you too, can make the best of what you've got.

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# APPENDIX A INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDES

**Version 1**

1. What kind of traditional foods do you like to eat?
2. How do you get those foods?
3. How did you learn about those practices and foods?
4. How do you share your knowledge at community events?
5. How do you share your knowledge on a daily basis?
6. Who do you share your knowledge with?
7. Do you find that different techniques of knowledge sharing work better for different groups of people?
8. If you could improve knowledge sharing in your community, what barriers would you remove?
9. If you could create a perfect community food garden, what would it look like?
10. If you could improve knowledge sharing in your community, what opportunities would you add?
11. Do you use any of your food collection knowledge in small, contained spaces (like your backyard)?
12. If so, how do you adapt it to work in non-wild scenarios? If not, why not?
13. How would you apply that knowledge to a community garden, so others can access it?
14. How do those practices and foods fit into the Yukon food system as a whole?
15. How do you envision Carcross/Tagish's future in terms of food?

**Version 2**

1. What is your favourite food to grow? Why?
2. How did you learn to grow that food?
3. Have you ever tried to grow food without any guidance? What challenges did you encounter when you did or did not do that?
4. How did you fill any gaps in your knowledge about gardening (did you use tools such as the internet, ask elders if they had advice, or use trial and error)?
5. Have you tried to grow foods that are more similar to the plants that grown out on the land? If so, can you explain the process?
6. Have you tried to rear animals for food that are similar to the ones out on the land? If so, can you explain the process?
7. How did you fill any gaps in your knowledge about growing and rearing foods that are similar to those out on the land (did you use tools such as the internet, ask elders if they had advice, or use trial and error)?
8. Do you incorporate any other traditional knowledge into your gardening practices? If so, how?
9. If you could create a perfect food garden, what would it look like?
10. How do you think elder knowledge can be further included into gardening in your community?
11. If you could create the perfect opportunity to grow food and include elders/knowledge holders, what would that opportunity look like?

12. How do you think a community garden should be run?
13. Where do you see communally grown food fitting into the diets of people in Carcross/Tagish?
14. What kind of food system would you like to see in Carcross/Tagish?
15. How do you envision Carcross/Tagish's future in terms of food?