

Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Applied Human Nutrition

**Remembering our Past to Influence the Future: A Photovoice Project on Access to Food
with Indigenous Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki**

By
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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Applied Human Nutrition

September 2023
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Abstract

Introduction: Food systems shape the ways we access and understand food. For Indigenous peoples, access to food and knowledge associated with food continues to be interrupted by colonialism. Those with identities that oppose colonial values and power structures have been impacted most. Namely two-spirit (queer) people and women bear the brunt of impacts, influencing vulnerability to HIV infection and food insecurity (among other outcomes, including violence). The impacts of colonialism have led to various social issues and barriers that impact Indigenous access, control, and values and food systems. The long history of colonization (e.g. since contact) in Mi'kma'ki (the Atlantic provinces and parts of Quebec) has been especially damaging to the land and to local Mi'kmaw food systems. **Aim:** This project aims to use art (photographs) to generate meaning associated with past, present, and future access to food for Indigenous peoples living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki. **Methods:** Two groups of participants were recruited: 1) Photovoice participants were Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki; 2) Service providers participants worked for an Indigenous-led organization serving Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki. Photovoice participants were invited to take photos representing past, present, and future access to food. They were then invited to a group sharing session where they shared the meaning or story behind their photos with other participants (including service provider participants). The medicine wheel was used as a guide for contextualizing photos and prompting discussion among the group to generate/share meaning. One on one sharing sessions were also offered for photovoice participants who wished to remain anonymous. Storytelling **Results/Conclusion:** Two Photovoice participants and three service provider participants were included. Participants (photovoice and service provider) identified and discussed various topics, experiences, and meanings that were generated from photos representing past, present, and future access to food. Decolonization (returning to the values of our past to reclaim our future) was a consistent theme that emerged from discussion and story sharing prompted by participant photos, using the medicine wheel as a prompt. In addition, reflections on the role of an Indigenous research paradigm are shared, contributing to the growth of Indigenous arts-based research methods.

Dedication

To past and present Indigenous people fighting to protect the land and water, our lifeblood and food source. And, to youth and future generations who will emerge from bloodlines of resistance, re-building in the face of climate disaster.

Menace to Your House (joudry, 2014) Used with permission

i've learned the careful art of silence
and retreat

like generations before me
i've learned to keep a status quo

i've left systemic creases in the blankets
covered my tracks in the snow

i am only what you need
your house forever your own

but like a storm wind surfacing
invisible still

i will shake this house
and rattle you blood-deep

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all of those who have stood alongside me through the process of completing this thesis, as well as to those Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders who have paved the way for me to be here doing this work. I first and foremost would like to thank and acknowledge the participants who have shared their voices and made this project possible. I also would not have been able to complete this work if it wasn't the support of Healing Our Nations. I am grateful for the lasting relationship I have built with them and the learning I will continue to gain from them. I am also especially thankful to my father, Jeff Purdy, and his guidance on when to confront difficult experiences I faced with either resistance or patience. I would also like to acknowledge the influence of the rest of my family and ancestors, for the hardships they have endured to pass their bloodline and culture onto me. My grandparents (Bev and Brain Purdy) have strongly shaped my passion for food, food systems, and advocacy. My grandparents, brother (Sam Purdy), and father have also fed me with food harvested from the land as I completed this work, which I am grateful for. I also want to acknowledge and thank the Indigenous friends I have made during my MSc, including Alyssa McIntyre and Emily Pictou-Roberts, who have shared their authentic selves with me, as we reflected on similar experiences, structures, relationships, and values in the university and community setting. I would also like to thank my settler partner, Nicholas Zinck, for having conversations with me, learning with me, and challenging me. Lastly, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Phillip Joy, and my committee, Dr. Tabitha Robin-Martens and Dr. Deborah Norris, for their continued support and patience. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Joy, for his humility and willingness to learn with and from me throughout this thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

HON: Healing Our Nations

PLWHA: People Living with HIV/AIDS

MSVU: Mount Saint Vincent University

UREB: University Research Ethics Board

MEW: Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch

NS: Nova Scotia

NB: New Brunswick

PEI: Prince Edward Island

CFG: Canada's Food Guide

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's

IPCA's: Indigenous Conserved and Protected Areas

PAR: Participatory Action Research

STBBI: Sexually transmitted blood borne infection

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1.0 Introduction and Positionality

1.1 Positioning communal, institutional, and personal context

In the months leading up to beginning this research project, the relationship between Mi'kmaq and local food industries reached mainstream discussion. In September 2020, Sipekne'katik First Nation launched a self-governed lobster fishery based on the 1999 Marshall Decision affirming the Treaty Right to fish for a moderate livelihood (Pannozzo & Baxter, 2020). The fishery implementation sparked severe violence against Mi'kmaw fishers; an experience that is not new and represents a centuries long struggle with violence and denial in response to Treaty implementation (Battiste, 2018). While a recent spotlight on Treaty Rights is new to some, it represents a multi-generational struggle for self-governance in our food systems and the violence associated with this pursuit. These Treaty Rights, as well as constitutional Aboriginal rights, Canadian policy, and colonialism over time have changed and impacted how me, my family, and my community access food. To me, starting here is important political, cultural, and social context for introducing L'nuk relationship with food. I start with fisheries, treaty rights, and food from the ocean, as it introduces the broader political, cultural, and social landscape of food access and food systems in Mi'kma'ki. I won't describe in detail the landscape of fisheries or unpack their roots in colonialism, as fisheries or treaty rights are not the focus of this work. However, I start here, as it captures the unique cultural and political situation in Mi'kma'ki in relation to food systems, the long impacts of colonialism, and our relationships with food from the water.

Growing up, I spent some of my summers in Digby, Nova Scotia (NS) in a trailer on the shore with my father and 4 siblings practicing our right to a Food, Social, and Ceremonial

Fishery (FSC fishery); a right granted to all Indigenous people in Canada, protected under section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. At the time, I just thought we were just lobster fishing; I didn't know then that we were practicing rights and thought everyone was weary of government surveillance while fishing. We would spend a week or so in Digby each summer lobster fishing with other Mi'kmaq and family. Figure 1 shows photographs from this time. At the time, my father worked for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) as their Aboriginal Coordinator; a role he later left due to a number of reasons, including DFO's treatment of him. My brother has continued practicing our FSC right, but has experienced his traps being cut, as is the experience of many other Mi'kmaq fishers. My father no longer works with DFO and is now working as a councillor for Acadia First Nation, though this doesn't mean that the violence and politics of implementing Treaty Rights and constitutional rights related to fisheries don't follow him and everyone else in our community.



Figure 1. Photos of my time spent in Digby FSC lobster fishing, circa 2003

I also spent significant time in the Mersey Tobeatic area growing up, hunting, trapping, and fishing alongside my father, brother, grandfather, and grandmother. My grandparents live on what was once a seasonal Mi'kmaw encampment, representing the remnants of Mi'kmaq who migrated seasonally along the Mersey River with their food system; living in land during the winter, and following the river to their seasonal encampments and life on beautiful sandy beaches in the summer. Today, there are very few Mi'kmaq living on this land (specifically around the Mersey), which has been dominated by hydroelectric dams and logging (Pannozzo, 2019). Today, my family still battles with the government about land access and protection and has a political relationship with them; a relationship I will not get into here because it is personal and complex and something I am still learning the full generational context of. It is something I mention to reiterate the impact of governance and policy on access to land and food, its change over time, and its impact on my own experiences. I am privileged to have family who have stayed here and held tightly to this land and water, while others were killed, forced to leave, or made to give up their identity. I am lucky to be able to hold this identity and be from this place. Still though, I must unpack and confront the magnitude of the loss of people, knowledge, and history that was once held on this land and water for generations, and how I have been shaped by it in both my settler and Mi'kmaq ancestry. I feel this loss when I am on this land and water, and I know it in my being – my existence is shaped by it.

Below is a recent photo from time spent around the places I am referring to, with my close friend and Anishinabek woman, Alyssa McIntyre. This photo was taken on the second ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which for us, marked a day of reflection, grief, and imagining. We spent it in this culturally, spiritually, and historically significant area, alongside

my brother and his Mi'kmaw friend, who were there for their first hunting trip of the season. Throughout the day, Alyssa and I walked on the land and floated in the water, with the local radio station playing from within the camp. It echoed intermittent pre-recorded advertisements noting the day was "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation" and acknowledgements stating that we lived in Mi'kma'ki, the "unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq". This prompted us to poke fun of the irony we felt; even in the middle of the woods we seemed to be unable to get away from the kinds of expressions that claimed support for us but didn't hold any weight. In the morning before leaving for this trip, I was asked to be used as a highlight on social media, which I denied. We unpacked the problems with how this was approached on the drive to the camp. We also saw and discussed media posts from researchers highlighting the importance of "Indigenous knowledge" in their field that seemed to come from a quick google search, with no efforts at meaningful or ongoing community engagement/relationship. We unpacked these things together in humour and frustration, discussing both our recent and present experiences, and then imagining an Indigenous future. For us, it was a day of personal reflection on Indigenous history, our recent experiences within the university, and resisting those histories and experiences with laughter and by scheming about Indigenous futures. My relationship with Alyssa has been important for recognizing, validating, unpacking, and confronting the complexity of my experiences (some of which overlap with her own). Alyssa has a good understanding of Indigenous ways of thinking, providing me with an important space to reflect and imagine. She has played an important role in the development of this thesis, especially in the context of the research paradigm used, and unpacking/supporting ways I have resisted along the way.



Figure 2. A photo I took while at my family's hunting camp with Alyssa McIntyre and my dog Alfie, on Brophy Lake circa National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2022

My embodied need to prioritize Western education and values had pulled me away from valuing the history of this land, water, food, and my ancestors who lived here, for a while. When I reflect back on my university education, I wish the opportunities presented to me within academic spaces as an Indigenous person had encouraged this kind of education, especially through food, given my undergraduate and graduate degree both focused on food. Instead, they often encouraged me to look to published articles (usually written by settlers) that described Indigenous people, usually as unhealthy or undereducated, or in comparison to non-Indigenous people in other ways. I focused a lot on settler expectations and wants, offering myself for (often unpaid) guest lectures, to take on the labour for settler learning, to make space for settlers, and to

bring Indigenous knowledges into the university, often without other Indigenous people by my side in a consistent way to reflect with me or guide me. This work was upheld as important and celebrated, but I was left feeling empty, having given all of myself to others, without ever having had the opportunity to meaningfully engage with my own generational history, family, or to personally reclaim/engage with knowledges and places that were stolen from me. That is, usually unless they could be used to create resources, write a paper, or support a settler's learning. I recall one opportunity I almost had to engage meaningfully with my family about food within an academic space I was in, however it was a side project that I created as part of a larger project; a project that never translated into anything because other work with settlers took precedent and had more support from other (mostly non-Indigenous) team members/partners. I was working alone on this, and reflecting, am glad it didn't translate into anything for the university to maintain control over once I stepped away. However, there still is other work I have done, that I no longer feel I have meaningful control and power over, despite some attempts at maintaining it. I mention all of this, because it's shaped my experience while completing this work, shaping who I have been accountable to within academic spaces, and the types of work I am expected to do while claiming Indigenous identity within the academic space. I've had to work hard to reflect, find and create my own spaces, and look beyond traditional dietetics to find spaces with people that reflected me, my experiences, and allowed me to begin to unpack and remember my history, connect to the people and places that shaped me, and to build Indigenous presence around me. It has also been incredibly important in how I personally understand the history and evolution of extractive practices within the university for Indigenous peoples, and what this feels and looks like. This thesis has helped provide a space to consolidate these experiences, and (with some changes), to maintain control and power over direction, relationships, and how

knowledges/ relationships are, especially now that I have a deeper understanding of them. Maintenance of power and control over knowledge generation and use is an important reflection for anyone working in the university setting looking to bring Indigenous people and their knowledges into their space, which is why I share it here. I am thankful for my supervisor, Dr. Joy, who has not pressured me to take my work in any specific direction, to write publications, or to benefit/draw from my community relationships. I am, however, still grateful for the unfavourable experiences I have had, as they have helped me to better recognize the kinds of relationships that extract from me, and how to navigate them with resistance or patience.

I sometimes feel angry about the responsibility and emotional labour that is introducing basic and foundational concepts about Indigenous peoples, politics, history and community relationships to almost all of those who I work and learn with in the university, while at the same time struggling to find opportunities to connect with my own community, while confronting community histories and traumas. I do this while also being pulled into supporting settler-led projects that want to have a piece of my Indigeneity, community relationships, or other forms knowledge or labour, especially as a student. Luckily, I have found other Indigenous students and people that helped validate these experiences and feelings; another reason why Indigenous presence has been important to this work (and any work in spaces dominated by settlers). They have acted as sounding boards for me; places to unpack and discuss what I am experiencing and doing, so I don't feel crazy when I give someone feedback on how they try to engage me. This has been especially important in times when I have needed to be firm with my feedback or set hard boundaries about how I am being engaged or about how my feedback is being integrated/received. Forms of engagement that exclude me from decision making but ask for my

support, input, participation, or (free) labour have still recently happened to me through Mount Saint Vincent University. This is despite now holding a leadership position outside of the university, where I work on behalf of all 13 Mi'kmaw communities in the province in community food education. This is not to say however, that all of my relationships have been negative, or that those who have caused harm should feel shame. I have built many positive and reciprocal relationships at the university. I also recognize learning as a process and am open to maintaining and building relationships with those who are willing to listen, take accountability, and to engage meaningfully with this learning process. Though, most difficult, has been the delivery of feedback to those causing me harm, that is denied or not integrated.

I have done and experienced this while also not feeling Indigenous enough and unpacking my own identity. I have a lot of privilege, and so I do this project while unpacking my own whiteness, my relationships within and outside of the Mi'kmaw community, and the overall influence colonization has had on me generationally, shaping my existence and experiences; things settlers are not forced to confront in the same way as me when they want to work with my community. Rather, settlers gain significantly from doing work or research on behalf of Indigenous communities. In doing this work, they get to pat themselves on the back without having to hold the generational loss that is Indigenous identity, and without having to live their relationships with the community in everyday life.

This project is not only embedded within the systems and structures that impact how Mi'kmaw communities experience access to food over time, but it is embedded within the system and profession that allows me to do this work and sets the foundations for it, shaping who

I am accountable to throughout it. I took a leave of absence from this project, related to the emotional labour that was being accountable to settlers. I start with sharing these experiences and the places and spaces shaping me, because it is important for unpacking and understanding the full context of this research project. It is also a way for me to force settlers reading this to reflect on some of the things I am forced to reflect on. Most importantly to me, however, is that sharing this experience is a way for me to put my voice on record for Indigenous students who may find courage, validation, or other seeds if they read this. For me, sharing this context is important for situating this project in the time period and place it is happening within. Sharing this context also helps to situate my accountability and consolidate my experience.

1.2 Relational Accountability

As I mentioned, the systems and structures I do this work in shape who I am accountable to. This is not just a legal or literal accountability through things like required learning competencies, ethics boards or MSc policy outlined in the student handbook, though these are still important tools of accountability that influence practice. Rather, the accountability I'm talking about is social. When I am surrounded by settlers, I am most accountable to them socially and ethically. I don't necessarily have to worry about how the community might be impacted or what they might think, because they are not present throughout the process with me. I don't have to be accountable to my family, to the land, to the water, or to plants or animals. I don't have to ask their consent or explain my project to them. They have no presence here. This makes Indigenous research in academic spaces difficult. I have to take it upon myself to understand/reflect on, and then create and maintain these spaces of relational accountability; a difficult task when you are consistently pulled towards prioritizing and being accountable to

settlers, especially when you are a student who is expected to take on the labour/opportunities that others give you, and when you are actively looking for opportunities to learn and grow professionally.

Relational accountability is a core and necessary aspect of any ethical Indigenous research, and an important starting place. It is the root of an Indigenous axiology (Kovach, 2021; Moore et al., 2017; Wilson 2008), and not something always fully understood in Western research spaces from my experience. On the surface or on paper, relational accountability could simply be stating that you are partnering or collaborating with another Indigenous person, organization, or community. In the case of this project, that could be said to be Healing Our Nations, the only Indigenous HIV/AIDS service organization in the Atlantic, who I'll speak more to later. Within a Western ethic, I ensure accountability by getting a letter of support, seeking consent for participation, a research agreement, etc. through required "community engagement". This is all still none the less important to ethical accountability and outlined well in Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Government of Canada, 2019). However, relational accountability within an Indigenous axiology goes beyond a collaboration or partnership documented through a support letter and achieved through community engagement for the sole purpose of the project. It is about continued presence. It is about the relations you should be accountable to having presence throughout various aspects of your life and the project, going beyond a single individual, title, or community/organization engaged in the project. It is presence in your day-to-day, in your workspaces, in the classroom, and beyond, and continually working to create presence when you notice relations having no presence, when/if they should. It is reflection on whose voice and presence dominates the space. If I am the only Indigenous

person in a classroom or in my workspace, I have no relational accountability to anyone but the settlers around me while there. If I am doing work with an Indigenous community, and they have no presence in my life or little presence throughout the project itself, I am not truly accountable to them; I am only accountable to the specific person or organization I am engaging. I must create presence beyond this, especially if the institution, department, profession, workplace etc. is not doing the work to create this presence. The lack of Indigenous presence in the university setting, on top of increased settler interest in reconciliation efforts, shapes the context for the experience I share above. Indigenous research is rooted in relationality, not community engagement. This means Indigenous research actively works to build relationships before, throughout, and beyond a project, not only in relation to the specific group you're partnering with, but wholistically. This goes beyond just relationships with people, but with land, water, and other relations that shape decision making, relational accountability, idea generation, and consent. I will speak more to the importance of these relationships later when I introduce the research paradigm for this project.

One important space that has offered consistent relational accountability for me throughout my thesis has been through the Indigenous Youth Policy School East Coast Cohort; a program I've been facilitating for the last 2 years (2021-2023) through the Canadian Roots Exchange: an Indigenous youth led national organization. The space has allowed me to gather weekly with other Indigenous youth on the East Coast. *It is the only formal learning space I've been able to consistently gather with other Indigenous people without settler/university surveillance, or where settlers are not dominating the conversation.* It's our own space to cultivate and lead discussions about our communities and experiences, share ideas, and talk

about the things we're doing, while learning together. We visit with each other and engage in the true application of co-learning, which is rooted in individual autonomy, self-determination, and consent. This helped to create a space throughout my thesis where I was not only accountable to a project partners/collaborators, but to peers. Another important relationship has been Alyssa, who I mentioned above. Alyssa had been pursuing the undergraduate Applied Human Nutrition degree while I was doing my MSc and had worked intermittently with me on projects within the academic space (she has since left the degree to pursue other work and education as a doula). This was an important space of validation for both of us and has been crucial to the development of my own ideas, and to both of our paths in the university space.

While I do know (and therefore have some accountability to) community members from my own community of Wasoqo'paq (Acadia) First Nation, I grew up mostly off-reserve, spending weekends and summers on reserve. Working within an academic space usually asks you to leave those relationships behind, rather than fostering them (that is, unless there is an opportunity for institution to gain). I had some opportunities to build relationship with my own community and beyond through job opportunities while in my undergraduate degree, but not always in a context that aligns with my view of relational accountability now. I also struggled with my identity for a long time, which had me avoiding some community relationships because I saw myself as not Indigenous enough for those spaces. However, as I have unpacked my identity and have worked to strengthen relational accountability beyond what expectations are set by the Academy, I've realized that this (relational accountability) is what shapes my identity and Indigeneity, rather than my blood alone.

Much of the relational accountability that has supported this project has been built through what visiting I have been able to achieve, a concept that is core to Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous philosophies (Simpson, 2014). Glooscap (a character core in Mi'kmaw stories, including the creation story) did a tremendous amount of visiting, similar to characters in the stories of many other Indigenous Nations, who have recently pointed this similarity out for me. Glooscap spends time visiting communities of people, places, and with plant and animal relations, sharing, laughing, building consensual relationships with them, and building their presence throughout his life. Visiting then, is core to Mi'kmaw systems and governance, describing our ways of knowing beyond “oral tradition”; a descriptor I see as a major oversimplification. Leanne Betasomokose Simpson, an Anishanbek scholar, who has helped me to recognize this concept in my own life and within Mi'kmaw knowledge systems, describes visiting as “...the core of our political systems...our mobilization...and our education systems” (Simpson, 2014).

Healing Our Nations (HON), a collaborator on the project and the only Indigenous HIV/AIDS service organization in Atlantic Canada, has also helped to shape my understanding of visiting and relational accountability. I first met HON before I started my thesis project, when I did an internship affiliation with them (a shorter placement within a larger Dietetic Internship; a requirement for becoming a registered dietitian). To me, spending time here was about more than checking off required competencies for my internship affiliation; it was about finding an opportunity to work with an Indigenous organization, as there were no opportunities for this through the internship program I had been accepted into. On my first day of visiting HON, the value of humour in how we visited was apparent. Within the first hour of arriving at HON, we

arranged a prank on one of the staff members who hadn't known that I would be spending the week with them. Before she arrived, I went and sat in her office at her desk, appearing to be working. When she arrived and opened her office door to find me sitting at her desk, I frowned and told her that I thought Julie (the director) had informed her last week that I would be taking her position starting today. After receiving a look of pure confusion and a moment of silence, the rest of the staff in the office next to us burst into laughter, revealing our prank. HON has taught me a lot about visiting, through their humour, and through the time spent sharing and chatting over coffee or tea when I visit them, even if I'm there for a formal purpose like a meeting. Julie, the Executive director of HON and her team have been incredibly supportive in the direction of the project, offering support and space I can visit without pressure or expectation. Having the opportunity for visiting without expectation for my labour is not a common occurrence within academic spaces, except for the Indigenous student center on campus, who has been another important relational space for me.

Creating relationships with participants to foster relational accountability, however, becomes a difficult feat within western research, given the expectation to maintain distance from them in order to dissuade my influence over them and maintain objectivity. I see this expectation not just within western ethical governing bodies, but pervading into Indigenous ethics boards, evident in the feedback given in my application for this project. I don't see this as a fault of community governance, rather the lack of resources and supports, and potentially the development of these bodies within academic spaces who are engulfed with settler presence and accountability to them, rather than Indigenous accountability. While distance from participants can be a valuable ethical principle to reflect on and apply, the removal of relationship does not

mean the research is ethical. In fact, making space for relationship building within the project structure (that is, relationship building that is not rooted in extraction for the purpose of the project), supports the facilitation of co-learning and co-creation of knowledge. That is, knowledge and learning that emerges from the relationship through visiting (e.g. not having expectations to perform labor or give/exchange something). Rather than positioning myself as the expert that will identify and recruit the participants, ask the questions, and analyze who or what they are, I build their presence throughout the project, and facilitate relationship building where I am part of the conversation and spaces, not just controlling them or extracting information from them to satisfy answers to my own questions. This facilitates relational accountability. This also facilitates ongoing consent. This is in line with approaches to participatory action research, which I will share in more detail later. Because this is only an MSc level project, relationship building and building presence of participants into the project has only occurred to some degree, due to the scale of an MSc level project. Nonetheless, some opportunities for relationship building have been built into project methods, including relationship with HON.

1.3 Notes on terminology

Throughout this thesis, I use the words *Western* and *Indigenous* to distinguish one philosophical tradition from the other when comparing or contrasting the two. In this context I do not see Western Tradition or Indigenous tradition as homogenous, recognizing that both contain a range of philosophical assumptions. Western thoughts and perspectives however, stem from Western paradigms, while Indigenous perspectives from Indigenous paradigms (i.e. models or patterns of looking at or thinking about something). In explaining these paradigms, I refer to the

interrelated concepts of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Ontology referring to the philosophical question of what is true or real?; epistemology referring to the question of “how do I justify what is real?”; axiology referring to the question of “what is ethical to do in determining what is real?; and finally methodology referring to the question of how I find out more about what is real. Together, these concepts make up what I may refer to as a “knowledge system”. When speaking about a knowledge system rooted in an Indigenous paradigm, I may refer to “Indigenous Knowledges” to capture both expressions of knowledge (e.g. a drum, a recipe, or a cultural practice), as well as the paradigm that shapes the context of this knowledge, how it is understood, produced, shared, and used. In referencing Indigenous experiences (ongoing and historical), I also refer to *colonialism* to describe a practice of political, social, territorial, linguistic, cultural and/or economic domination of one group by another, occurring through continued expansion (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). Colonialism is based on assumptions of cultural hierarchy (e.g. white supremacy), influencing how populations, systems, and institutions (de)value Indigenous peoples and their systems of knowledge, or justify their subjugation. In my own words, colonialism is a process aimed at removing Indigenous peoples (or sovereign Nations) from their land, identities, knowledges to replace them (often violently) with a new system. This system is upheld through the erasure of those identities, knowledges, histories, etc. being replaced. To expand on colonialism, drawing from concepts rooted in western social theories, and to recognize cultural and social constructs that influence values, beliefs, explanations, or justifications of the populace, I also refer to *ideology*. Ideology shapes how individuals experience reality and truth. Ideologies can work to manufacture truths which can support existing structures of power, while appearing to advance the interests of a subjugated group (Brookfield, 2005). This brings me to the last concept, *hegemony*, describing

the power/dominance of one group over another, resulting from the acceptance of certain beliefs, often informed by dominant ideology (Brookfield, 2005). This will be described in more detail with examples in chapter 2.4. I will also be speaking to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (TSLGBTQIA+) communities/people and all other sexual orientations and genders. I use two-spirit as a pan-Indigenous umbrella term to describe gender and sexual variant identities, recognizing the variance in the meaning of its application by individual or Nation. I will also use the terminology queer, to capture broadly those that do not fit within a traditional gender binary or sexual orientation, and to recognize that not all Indigenous people identify with the terminology or label of two-spirit specifically. Men who have sex with men (MSM) will also be used in context of describing statistics where this is the terminology used in data collection, however this terminology is understood to be out of date. Lastly, I will be referring to Mi'kam'ki, describing the ancestral, present, and future territory of the Mi'kmaw. Today this land mass includes Nova Scotia (NS), Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island (PEI), most of New Brunswick (NB), and the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec. This land was (and is) divided into 7 Territories, governed traditionally by the Sante Mawioimi or Grand Council, made up of 7 district chiefs, record keepers (putus), specialized leaders (Keptins), as well as Elder and women's councils. I will also use the term "Atlantic Provinces", referring to NS, NB, PEI, and Newfoundland, as relevant to describing statistics or Canadian provincial governance. I use the terminology "l'nu" as a broader terminology used to describe "the people", as in Indigenous people. Interpretations of this terminology that I have heard from people in my community have varied, some saying the meaning is broadly referring to all Indigenous people, others saying it is terminology more specific to Mi'kmaw. Here, I use it to describe Indigenous identities/Nations living in the Atlantic region as part of the Wabanaki

Confederacy: this includes Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey (“Maliseet”) and Peskotomuhtaki (“Passamaquoddy”). I use Indigenous to describe Nations and peoples across Turtle Island broadly, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

1.4 Research Purpose and Question

Now that I have set the foundation for the relationships and landscapes that shape the project, the context it has transpired in, and the terminology that you will need to understand it, I'd like to introduce you to the topic of the project itself. The aim of this project is to use art (photographs) generate meaning of access to food among Indigenous peoples living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Mi'kma'ki. In doing this, I'm not aiming to identify a single or overarching issue or solution for improving access to food, rather to create opportunities for individuals to capture the essence of what food access means to them. The primary research question is “What is the meaning of past, present, and future access to food among Indigenous PLWHA in Mi'kma'ki?”

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Food insecurity and HIV/AIDS status among Indigenous people: an outcome of colonialism

Indigenous communities and PLWHA face systemic barriers to accessing adequate food and nutrition (PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research, 2020). These barriers are the result of historical and ongoing colonialism that remove(d) Indigenous peoples from their lands and governance systems, and in the same breath, attempt(ed) to erase the role and the existence of queer people/communities. The violence of this erasure has been purposeful, upholding colonial ideologies that center white supremacy and heteronormativity; systems that began and are

maintained in many ways through how food is accessed, controlled, and distributed. An outcome of a colonial food system is food insecurity, often having the highest impact on those bearing the brunt of colonialism, including Indigenous PLWHA.

While this project is not framed around food insecurity specifically, food insecurity as an outcome provides important context for the lived realities of Indigenous PLWHA. For this project, food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to food due to financial constraints (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020a). Between 2017 and 2018, 1 in 8 Canadian households were food insecure and NS had the highest prevalence of food insecurity among Canadian provinces at 15.3% (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020b). More recently, in 2021, the prevalence of food insecurity jumped to 15.9% of households among the 10 Canadian provinces, amounting to 5.8 million people or 1 in 6 households (Tarasuk et al. 2022). This does not include the Territories or people living on reserves, who are known to experience high rates of food insecurity (Tarasuk et al. 2022). In NS, the rate jumped to 17.7%, in NB 19%, and PEI 15.3% in 2021. For Indigenous people living off reserve in the 10 Canadian provinces, the rate was 30.7% (Tarasuk et al. 2022). Other research has found rates as high as 33% of urban Canadian Indigenous households experiencing food insecurity (Willows et al., 2009) and nearly 70% of Inuit preschoolers living in food insecure households (Egeland et al., 2010). NS Mi'kmaw on-reserve communities may also experience higher than average rates of household food insecurity, though currently no research specific to food insecurity for Mi'kmaw exists. A recent report on child poverty rates in NS however found that rates were highest in postal code areas where higher percentages of Indigenous and Black children live. For example, the postal code area including the Sipekne'katik First Nation reserve had some of the highest rates of child poverty in the province,

at 75% (Frank et al., 2021), which would suggest alarmingly high rates of food insecurity. For PLWHA, rates of food insecurity also seem to be higher than the general population. For example, in Ontario between 2011-2012, PLWHA were 11 times more likely to be food insecure than the general population. Among PLWHA surveyed (n=650) 69% were food insecure in the last 12 months, and those from racialized communities and women were 2 times more likely to be food insecure. Among participants in a survey of PLWHA across Canada, 67% were food insecure (n=1296) (The Ontario HIV Treatment Network, 2023). These disparities for Indigenous people and PLWHA are concerning, as food insecurity has been linked to higher rates of mortality among all causes of death except cancer, greater health care utilization, higher incidence of chronic conditions and poorer management of them (Gundersen & Seligman, 2017; Men et al., 2020; Tarasuk et al., 2015, 2018).

Food insecurity, poverty, and their high prevalence in Indigenous communities and among PLWHA, is rooted in colonialism. Colonialism is a historical and ongoing process that replaces Indigenous systems and their associated values with colonial systems, strategically erasing the values and philosophies that upheld these systems, replacing them with colonial ones. This strategic erasure was done forcefully and violently, targeting those people who oppose(d) or challenged colonial value systems, and upheld Indigenous ones. This was (is) justified through supremacy, with Indigenous peoples seen as a less evolved version of white settlers, destined to go extinct, justified through what has been viewed as a natural process of survival of the fittest or evolution (Wilson, 2008). Those who uphold Indigenous law, governance, and values were (are) targeted first in a colonial system, representing a barrier to a colonial hegemonic structure upheld through white supremacist and heteronormative values and structures. Namely, the roles, political, social and cultural power of women and queer people needed to be erased in order to be

replaced with a system that saw white, hetero men as superior. We see these values clearly embedded in policy and governance forced on Indigenous peoples. Some of the earliest policy reflecting these values are embedded in the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869, offering certificates of land possession to men in exchange for giving up their and their families ancestral identities, enforcing surname changes and a patriarchal hereditary naming system (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2022). It also forced women to lose their ancestral identity when marrying non-Indigenous men, who were perceived to be able to take care of them (Krawec, 2022). This paternalistic and assimilative policy, along with other similar policy that promoted erasure of Indigenous identity, kinship, and governance in exchange for participation in a new colonial society, was consolidated into the Indian act, shaping Canada, and the lives of Indigenous people today (Krawec, 2022). This strategic erasure of Indigenous peoples also impacted two-spirit identities, who had no place in a colonial gender binary, and therefore no place in within colonial policy and governance. We see the outcomes of these colonial values playing out in the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and queer people (Library of Congress, 2019).

The erasure of women and queer self-determined roles and values within a pre-colonial systems corresponds with the erasure of Indigenous governance, including governance over food. Women and especially queer people uphold the values and philosophies of Indigenous governance: diversity, consent, respect, variance, spiritual power, and reciprocity, autonomy to name a few (Simpson, 2021). These values were (are) some of the first colonizers sought to eliminate (Simpson, 2021). We see this continue to play out across Turtle Island and especially in the United States with concrete examples such as banning of gender affirming surgeries, and

other expressions outside of the gender binary (Redfield et al., 2023; Burga, 2023). These same colonial values of ownership and control over women's bodies and erasure of queer bodies are also practiced in the context of our food systems and land, enacted in colonial governance systems. Colonial policy and governance erased the voices of women and two-spirit identities, replacing them with the voice of man, just as the voice of the land and animal relations were replaced with the voice of man. This was enacted in policy over Indigenous peoples forcing a paternalistic ownership model over land, like the paternalistic system of control over women. For example, the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857, enacted before the Gradual Enfranchisement Act, saw coercion of agriculturalist settlement and relinquishment of Indigenous rights and identity, in exchange for parceling of land and voting rights for men. In essence, Indigenous people were unable to participate in the expanding colonial system of which land ownership was a basis, without giving up their identities, social, political, and cultural ways of living in relation with land and food (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2022). This was part of a forced paternalistic system of ownership and control over land, food, and women, that had no place for women's self-determined identity, let alone queer identity. The impacts of this continue today, shaping the lives of those who embody Indigenous governance and values, and who have been purposefully targeted, namely women and two-spirit people.

The practices that upheld Indigenous governance and values have been stripped from Indigenous peoples violently and forcefully, and they continue to impact the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people today. This shapes the context not only of poverty and food insecurity, but HIV/AIDS. In Canada, Indigenous people made up 18.2% of all new HIV/AIDS cases in 2020, despite only making up 5% of the population (Government of Canada, 2022). This is an increase from 2018, when 14.7% of new infections were estimated to

be among Indigenous people, and from 12.3% in 2016 (Government of Canada 2021; Government of Canada 2022). In the Atlantic, 67% of those impacted by HIV/AIDS were men who have sex with men (MSM) (e.g. those with queer identities) in 2020 (Government of Canada, 2022). High prevalence of HIV also disproportionately impacts incarcerated peoples of Indigenous decent compared to those of non-Indigenous decent, with 43% of HIV positive inmates being Indigenous in Canada in 2018 (Government of Canada, 2021). The most recent NS statistics on HIV/AIDS indicate that between 2002 and 2011, Indigenous people accounted for 3.2% of HIV cases, despite only making up 2.7% of the total Nova Scotian population (Government of Nova Scotia, 2014; Nova Scotia Health and Wellness, 2012). Statistics showing high rates of food insecurity and high rates of HIV/AIDS among Indigenous and queer bodies, is a direct result of colonialism.

2.2 Contextualizing and Conceptualizing Health for Indigenous PLWHA

Current health care governance models and health care professions are largely rooted in a biomedical model, historically informed by a positivist or post-positivist research paradigm. This is evident in many examples of medical research on Indigenous people, aiming to understand an overarching law or truth about disease, health, and the body. One example being the nutritional experimentation happening at residential schools across Canada, exploring the impacts of supplementation on already malnourished Indigenous children (Mosby, 2013). While now seen as unethical, a post-positivist approach in medical science still focuses on identifying an overriding law that can explain a phenomenon, which in health care is often translated to the individual and their disease state, and the variations of biological factors influencing this state. This is an important model for addressing disease and can maintain space for the influence of social factors and their influence on disease state. This approach to health is situated within the

medical model which views health through an individual lens of systematic assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis (Swaine, 2011). While this model is a necessary and life changing one, it holds a power over Indigenous Knowledges, and can often be used to discredit them, seeing them as secondary to disease management within a healthcare system, and therefore less important to prioritize as prevention. This project is focused on the Indigenous paradigms that could and should inform how we can improve models of health and access to food, however discussion of the medical role of food is also an important one.

Food is integral to maintaining our physical health and is an important aspect of chronic disease management. For PLWHA, Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), paired with medical treatment is important for preventing disease progression from HIV to AIDS. In the medical model, health is typically assessed and understood through measurable disease outcomes. In the case of HIV/AIDS, this is typically done by measuring CD4⁺ T cell count (a T cell responsible for adaptive immune responses that is impacted by the HIV virus and viral load (the amount of HIV genetic material in the blood) (Cachay, 2021). These indicators can reliably predict disease severity and help tailor MNT (and other medical treatment) to the individual's disease state (Cachay, 2021; Mahan & Raymond, 2017). This approach has been crucial for effectively managing HIV, now making it a livable disease, once a death sentence.

Food insecurity in PLWHA has been linked to HIV/AIDS treatment and health outcomes. A systematic review and meta-analysis found that experience with food insecurity resulted in 29% lower odds of complete HIV viral suppression, compared to those who are not food insecure (Aibibula et al., 2017). HIV viral suppression is the primary goal of HIV treatment as

no cure for HIV infection exists, and a low viral load can significantly lower the risk of secondary HIV transmission (i.e. vertical transmission through sex or use of injection drugs) and disease progression. HIV treatment aimed at lowered viral suppression typically includes anti-retroviral drugs, often referred to as anti-retroviral treatment (ART). Evidence from a qualitative study with PLHWA and food insecurity in San Francisco found lowered ART adherence to be related to disruption in daily routines due to preoccupation with finding food, the side effects of ART taken on an empty stomach, and the general chaotic nature of living on a low-income budget (Whittle et al., 2016). In the same study, food insecure PLWHA described how food insecurity led to them missing clinical appointments and check-ups for similar reasons to their low ART adherence, as well as physical exhaustion and hunger dissuading them from attending (Whittle et al., 2016).

Due to the increased metabolic requirements of PLWHA, risk of malnutrition is compounded in those who are also food insecure (Weiser et al., 2011). PLWHA may also experience malabsorption of fat and carbohydrate, and diarrhea which further heighten nutritional risks. In addition, several HIV medications (including nelfinavir and ritonavir) require food for optimal absorption, and therefore low intake due to food insecurity may have negative effects on the pharmacokinetics of medication (Mahan & Raymond, 2017). Both ART-treated and untreated PLWHA who experience weight loss, low BMI, and micronutrient deficiencies have an increased risk of opportunistic infections, immunological decline, and shorter survival time (Duggal et al., 2012; Katona & Katona-Apte, 2008; Langford et al., 2007; Tang et al., 2002). For these reasons, food security is important to both the medical management and prevention of HIV/AIDS and should be a health care priority.

While the medical model and MNT are crucial for managing HIV/AIDS, health for Indigenous PLWHA can be understood beyond chronic disease management. For Indigenous peoples, health is seen as wholistic, shaped through relationships, rather than focusing on solely on individual physical health, and contrasted against the primary focus on the individual in western health contexts. Health from an Indigenous lens is described as wholistic, considering the health of the whole system and community and the relationships that form the person, frequently drawing from cultural concepts and frameworks to understand what this means (Mary et al., 2020). A common framework for understanding health is the medicine wheel, used across Turtle Island, albeit having different teachings and interpretations between Nations, including the Mi'kmaw Nation (Doucette et al., 2004). Common among all medicine wheel representations is wholeness, balance, and change over time. These representations are often related to the natural world, conveying principles and laws of living in a “good way” to achieve individual, community, and environmental health and wellbeing (Doucette et al., 2004). Similarly, health can be seen through the lens of the ecological model, which considers the health of the individual through the lens of community and societal influences (Kilanowski, 2017). The medicine wheel has four quadrants, each associated with a distinct concept/idea. Despite each quadrant being distinct, their being part of the circle represents equal importance and interrelationships through the circle's continuity (Doucette et al., 2004). Representations range from the four seasons, the four directions, the four stages of life, the four sacred medicines, and the four colours. In the context of health, the four quadrants of the medicine wheel are often taught as mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical. While each of these representations of the medicine wheel are distinct, they are interrelated and woven together over time to come to understand medicine wheel wholistically (Doucette et al., 2004).

These outcomes and experiences that disturb balance in the medicine wheel are related to wider social and economic determinants of health (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). These determinants, constructed from a western perspective though comparable to Indigenous understandings, are constructed around racism, social and economic exclusion, and repression of self-determination, and can be thought of as being generated through colonialism (Reading & Halseth, 2013; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). In Canada, this has resulted in Indigenous status itself named as a social determinant of health. Other determinants include (but are not limited to) income, education, employment status, social exclusion, and housing (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). These determinants, which disproportionately impact Indigenous populations, influence the circumstances in which children are born, develop, and grow, learn to make healthy life choices, and adults develop acute and chronic physical and mental health conditions (Reading & Halseth, 2013).

Research clearly indicates a link between these distinct socio-economic inequities experienced by Indigenous populations and higher rates of HIV/AIDS (Negin et al., 2015; Pearce et al., 2021). Experiences of childhood abuse, domestic abuse and substance use, as well as mistrust of the health care system contribute to increased HIV risk in Indigenous populations (Negin et al., 2015; Pearce et al., 2021). Social disadvantage in some sub-populations including “men who have sex with men (MSM)”, those who are unemployed, those who have low access to health care resources (especially condoms), and those with low educational attainment have also been identified as barriers to HIV prevention in Indigenous populations (Negin et al., 2015). These barriers and experiences have led to an over-representation of Indigenous peoples in HIV and AIDS cases in Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010), shaping the health of

Indigenous PLWHA , which should be understood from both a medicalized perspective, and from within Indigenous interpretations of health.

2.3 HIV/AIDS Care for Indigenous Peoples

Prevention of HIV/AIDs for Atlantic Indigenous communities is supported primarily by Healing Our Nations (HON); the only Indigenous HIV/AIDS service organization in Atlantic Canada, serving 33 First Nation communities and the off-reserve population in all four Atlantic Canadian Provinces. HON is mandated to teach and support Indigenous populations in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and related topics such as healthy sex and relationships, hepatitis, sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBI's), and co-infection. HON provides education on various topics including substance misuse, how to talk to your kids about sex and sexuality, intergenerational trauma, harm reduction, self-esteem, and personal boundaries. Through collaborations with various service providers, they also facilitate increased access to health care services for those they serve. Further, HON hosts Elder-youth gatherings, cultural training for non-Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous clients, peer mentor training, and get tested information booths across the Atlantic provinces. An important aspect of the services provided by HON is their grounding in L'nu culture and community, which can take the form of the medicine wheel, the 7 sacred teachings, talking circles, and inclusion of Elders/Knowledge Keepers in programming (J. Thomas, Personal Communication, May 25, 2020).

Though HON supports HIV/AIDS prevention for Indigenous populations in Mi'kma'ki, access to health services and primary health care for Indigenous people in NS (and across Canada) is delivered under a complex jurisdictional patchwork of policy, legislation, and relationships divided between the province, municipalities, various First Nation

authorities/communities and federal programming (Gervais et al., 2011). The federal government's role in health care is offered by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) within Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and includes the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB). This program offers coverage for prescription drugs, dental, approved mental health therapy, and more for all status Indians/Inuit (but not Métis) regardless of where they live. This coverage includes feeding aids and medically necessary nutrition products (e.g. infant formula, oral liquid/powder supplements), however does not include MNT services from a dietitian, nor special dietary allowances to accommodate accessing therapeutic/medically necessary diets (Government of Canada, 2020). Physician and hospital care is primarily provided by provincial governments, while on-reserve health is primarily the responsibility of the federal government (Gervais et al., 2011). This patchwork has led to misalignment between various jurisdictions and a diversity of health service provisions across provinces, municipalities, and in on/off-reserve communities, leading to jurisdictional debating on who should pay for health services in particular contexts (Gervais et al., 2011). This has led to health consequences for Indigenous peoples including the death of Jordan River Anderson, a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba who died during jurisdictional disputes over his care (Assembly of First Nations, 2021).

In 2016, the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations' Chiefs Secretariat (APC) released a summary report on renewing the Atlantic Chiefs' health priorities, emphasizing collaboration as significant to the health of Indigenous communities. This finding was situated within the importance of collaboration between various sectors, jurisdictions, and levels of government in order to address social determinants of health across communities, which was identified through

input from community Health Directors and document review (Horizons Community Development Associated Inc., 2016). Findings included objectives for addressing social determinants of health outlined in the (then draft) of the Atlantic First Nation's Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Strategic Action Plan 2018-2023 (Horizons Community Development Associated Inc., 2016). The first objective in the strategic action plan highlighted addressing determinants of health through a variety of avenues including working with retailers, Elders, and other partners to develop/strengthen traditional food access programs. Examples of potential program focuses included community gardens, food preparation, and land-based activities such as harvesting traditional foods through hunting, fishing, and gathering (Robinson-Dexter, 2018).

More recently, Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia have come together under a new health governing body *Tajikeimik*, guided by the 13 chiefs and health directors in NS, as well as the Mi'kmaq grand council. The aim of the organization is to redesign health care delivery models led by Mi'kmaq and for Mi'kmaq. In April 2023, an Memorandum of Understandings was signed between the 13 chiefs, federal minister of Indigenous Services, and the NS Minister of Health and Wellness (Tajikeimik, 2023). While new governance models are promising, much work exists in the context of colonial governance structures within and outside of communities, and the work needed to remember and apply Mi'kmaw governance. Working within the confines not only of Indian Act governance and 13 different First Nation communities in NS, but also under and within federal and provincial governance systems means having an understanding of how each of these systems work, while trying to prioritize and revive Mi'kmaw governance. It also means considering the various existing Indigenous health related organizations that offer

programing across communities.

2.4 Exploring Dominant Narratives and Ideologies

Recent views of nutritionist/dietitians have been for Indigenous peoples to “return” to traditional diets, including hunted, gathered, fished, or trapped food from the land to improve nutritional health and food insecurity (Dawson, 2020; Health Canada, 2007). This is reflected in the current version of Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide (CFG) – First Nation’s, Inuit, and Métis, where traditional foods were simply added to the 2007 version of the guide (Health Canada, 2007). These recommendations are made without attention given to the systemic barriers Indigenous peoples face in accessing these foods, and the western systems that have and continue to shape these barriers (e.g. climate change, Indian act, etc). They are also added in the context of a western informed framework for how to eat. One example of a barrier to accessing foods is highlighted in the introduction, where Mi’kmaq struggle to benefit from their supreme court affirmed treaty right to fish for a moderate livelihood (Pannozzo & Baxter, 2020). Making recommendations that overlook these systemic barriers, help to maintain ideological assumptions and power structures that disadvantage Indigenous sovereignty, and give the appearance of change and support. Western values can be identified in the adapted version of 2007 CFG for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, which simply added traditional foods. This guide includes individual serving for various food groups presented on a single plate (individualism), and recommendations for servings that challenge some Indigenous groups views of the importance of meat (Dawson, 2020; Searles, 2002). For example, the Inuit diet sees a greater concentration of meat, fat, and fish and less grains, fruits, and vegetables (Searles, 2002). In addition, in Inuit culture, many do not wish to regulate their portions, eating to satisfy their hunger. The idea of a

“mealtime” is also challenged by Inuit ways of eating. In Inuit culture, eating may involve placing large slabs of blubber and/or meats on a cover on the floor, where anyone may take a piece with no limits on how much, when, and with who its consumed (Searles, 2002). While I don’t have evidence to cite demonstrating that Mi’kmaq ate similarly, I do know that up to 90% of our diet came from the ocean (Mcmillian, 2018), and suspect we had some overlap in the ways we ate food from the ocean. For Mi’kmaq and many other Indigenous groups, sharing of food and communal feasting are also integral to ways of life (Prosper et al., 2011). The practices associated with eating and sharing these foods are integral to maintenance of our knowledge systems: the stories, teachings, ceremonies, and other eco-social practices associated with these foods, are not captured, or acknowledged within the 2007 version of the Food Guide for Indigenous people. Rather these foods were extracted from the knowledge systems that create and maintain their meaning, putting them into a western framework and knowledge system, giving the appearance of cultural appropriateness. These extracted, decontextualized foods are then disseminated through dietitians, health care providers, and within our communities, changing their meaning and used to justify colonial approaches to food and nutrition programming and funding, re-enforcing colonial values, and continuing a process of colonization. This is an example of hegemony, where people learn to consent to and assimilate into dominant ideologies, believing that they are in their best interest (Brookfield, 2005).

In 2019, a new version of CFG was released that de-emphasized specific foods and portion sizes, and instead focused on a plate method as well as the importance of sharing food (Health Canada, 2023). While this marks a change in CFG that is more inclusive of different ways of eating and encourages eating together, CFG itself can still be seen as a tool used to place

onus of the impacts of the food system on the individual. Like in the past version, it still focuses on individuals' making healthy food choices, in the absence of national food policy or Indigenous food policy that supports improved access to healthy food. Instead, CFG could be seen as purporting that issues of food are a matter of individual choice, where the food guide is a tool used to deal with the issue of poor eating habits by educating the populace about how to make better choices. This quiets the need for meaningful policy changes within the food system that could improve and create more sustainable and ethical food systems, instead pointing to CFG as a tool for helping people make better food choices.

There could be opportunity for system change however with the recent United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan 2023-2028 (Government of Canada, 2023). Though only two legislative priorities related to food are named (86 and 87), there is hope that long term funding will become available for helping shape local Indigenous food systems. However, many gaps remain in education, governance, and policy frameworks that center Indigenous people in decision making and leadership within the food system. As a result, these new legislative priorities could also have the impact of re-enforcing existing power structures within food systems, as those already in power take advantage of opportunities to work with Indigenous communities and gain access to decision making power and influence within First Nations. Without a meaningful roadmap to guide decision making and meaningful leadership, sovereignty, and inclusion of Indigenous people within the food system, I fear existing power structures will take advantage of opportunities to work with Indigenous communities, who simply want enough to eat. A lack of a road map shaping national Indigenous food sovereignty then, could result in continued exclusion of Indigenous peoples within food

systems and food policy, as well as missed opportunities for sustainable and ethical development of actual Indigenous-led and informed local food governance structures. We know that there is a lack of inclusion of Indigenous leadership in Canadian food governance and a need for improved settler education (Robin et al. 2023). A road map that helps shape the reclamation of Indigenous food knowledge systems is needed to influence Indigenous-led decision making in relation to how legislative priorities outlined in the UNDRIP Action plan are rolled out.

2.5 Colonizing Food Systems

In addition to divorcing people from their traditional roles and systems of governance, the Indian Act also criminalized hunting and other traditional means of accessing foods. In NS, this continued into the 1980's, with charges laid for hunting "off" reserve (*Simon V. The Queen*, 1985). This, along with other forms of cultural elimination legislated by the Indian Act resulted in the interruption of the passing of traditional knowledges/practices needed for accessing traditional foods. Loss of this knowledge also worked to support hegemony, as IK was violently replaced with new foodways (defined as the eating habits and culinary practices of a people region, or historical period (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.)) One way this was done was through residential school systems, which removed children from their families, communities, and traditional foods. Children living in residential schools were forced to eat foreign, and sometimes inedible foods, with many reporting hunger, starvation, and sickness during their time in residential school (Mosby, 2013). Higher rates of hunger and starvation were directly linked to increased dependence on western foods purchased at grocery stores. In addition, researchers conducted nutritional experiments on children, where some were denied adequate nutrition, while others received nutritional supplementation (Mosby, 2013). These deliberate attempts at

assimilation into Western food systems contribute to the health issues faced by Indigenous communities today (Mary et al., 2020).

Food systems and understandings of food recommendations are also based around neoliberalism, concentrating on economic growth for societal success. This assumption leads to the belief that economic growth will naturally lead to equality and social justice, and reinforces a focus on individual self-interest, conveying that what happens to an individual is related to personal responsibility and choice (Gerlach et al., 2018). These views fail to recognize how an individual's health, occupational opportunities, culture and beyond are impacted by multifaceted societal determinants (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). Neoliberalism informs our market-based food systems, whose purpose is economic growth. We see how this impacts industries like fisheries and Mi'kmaw access to them. For example, treaty fishers has largely focused on opportunities for communities to participate in the lobster fishery only by entering through the existing structure (Government of Canada, n.d.). Training programs were offered to community members to participate in the fishery. In essence, the government took a line from the patronizing saying "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him forever". Within the current food system however, those fish aren't for community food, they are sold for profit, where much of that profit is not seen by the fisher or worker (Roberts, 2013). It's no surprise then that some Mi'kmaw turn to under the table options to sell their catch. Wayne Roberts (2013) coins a new saying about fishing and food more reflective of our modern food system saying "Why give any fish to poor people when you can give them corn dogs, and sell the lean and healthy fish protein to rich people? Teach a factory to fish and it feeds Northerners forever". A more appropriate term in this context, however, may be "settlers"

rather than Northerners, who are more likely to be able to afford the high cost of fish from the grocery store, while Mi'kmaw communities remain hungry. This remains a major issue among Mi'kmaw communities aiming to practice treaty rights, especially with the high demand for cheap fish products, which take advantage of Mi'kmaw looking to practice their right. The approach to implementing treaty fisheries made the assumption that providing the education and tools would result in improved economic conditions for communities, however under the current system, this is not possible. Instead, Mi'kmaw become food producers, who maintain little power within the food system itself, like the experiences of farmers and migrant food workers across the globe, used for the profit of larger food corporations (Roberts, 2013).

Food Sovereignty as a concept has been used in the face of similar food system issues globally. The concept was developed and promoted by La Via Campesina, representing some 200 million peasants, fisherfolk, small farmers, agricultural workers, and Indigenous people from 70 Countries. A movement in the 1990's came out of the mass impoverishment of peasants and fishers and the World Trade Organization's sudden transition to deregulation and free trade in food products. This promoted organization to protect local food systems as the foundations of community economy, culture, and food security (Roberts, 2013). Through this movement, food sovereignty was defined as "the rights of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural system" (Food Secure Canada, n.d.). Food Sovereignty frameworks have been applied in understanding hegemonic structures present in food systems, especially for Indigenous communities whose aims often align with reclaiming traditional food systems and practices (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Viewing the issues of food access through a Food

Sovereignty lens puts the aspirations and needs of those who are directly impacted by food system decisions at the centre, and defends the interests of the next generations (Wittman, 2012). Proponents of food sovereignty challenge conventional approaches to policy by emphasizing the importance of local knowledges and decision making of those participating in the food system. However, implementing the true meaning of food sovereignty locally requires reflection on the impacts of current colonial food systems, and the ideologies and power structures in place shaping them. For example, fighting for the ability to individually fish and sell the catch as a practice of treaty rights is a simplistic view of food sovereignty in practice. The food system needs to be considered: What structures and policies direct the sale of catch? Who is being fed by the catch? Who is benefiting economically? What is the impact on the environment? Are Mi'kmaw values being applied? These are difficult questions to answer and must be reflected on as a community. Simultaneously, reflection on localization of knowledges must occur in order to remember the spirit of Mi'kmaw food systems and practices that have historically been place-based, rather focused on exports.

2.6 Reclaiming Access to Food from Indigenous Perspectives

Access to food is often discussed in the context of food insecurity, defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020a). Though economic insecurity has contributed to food insecurity in Indigenous populations, understanding barriers to access to food and nutrition requires a framework that captures the unique needs of Indigenous communities and their rights, beyond economic access. Missing from a food security framework, a food sovereignty lens highlights an important aspect of food access for Indigenous peoples, namely the right to defining their food system and an emphasis on place. Similar frameworks are seen through Mi'kmaq concepts that have framed local food harvesting

(producing), preparing (processing), and sharing (distributing) for thousands of years. These concepts are rooted in the Mi'kmaq language. For Mi'kmaq, food access has been understood as interconnected with the land, the resources it provides, and the intergenerational well-being of the community for thousands of years. For Mi'kmaq peoples, the concept of Netukulimk captures this, defined as the use of natural bounty provided by the creator for the self-support and well being of the individual and community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of the environment (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2020). Another Mi'kmaq concept that captures this is Nmitknen; a concept emphasizing how the lands and waters we are connected to (i.e. the territory/land we are from) are to be harvested in a manner that respects the resources and all of our relations who live or harvest there (M. Robinson, Personal Communication, July 5, 2021). These concepts highlight values and ideas about localized, place-based food that are integral to understanding food access from a Mi'kmaq lens, that is inseparable from land. Using these concepts offers an opportunity for remembering how Mi'kmaq people access and relate to food through land (if they are not appropriated or dominated by western ideology). Bringing concepts like these and other IK into research on food access for Indigenous peoples is not only necessary for understanding how Indigenous peoples access food, but for providing an opportunity for reclaiming and healing IK.

Application of these concepts are strongly related to access to and governance of land and water. This proves difficult for Mi'kmaq, who have some of the longest relationships with colonization, and have experienced profound cultural loss and loss of land (Pannozzo, 2019). Consequently, this has led to reduced governance over land and water for the purpose of

accessing food. Systematic loss of land was achieved through reserve systems, relocation, and other oppressive policy, stripping entire populations from their ways of life and the land that was integral to it (Yellow Head Institute, 2019). Today, many of the conversations and demands of Indigenous peoples are related to protection or return of the land (i.e. “land back”) (Yellow Head Institute, 2019). Inseparable from accessing and governing land and water, is accessing food. In accessing food from the land there are opportunities for restoration of IK, economic security, and environmental protection (Plotkin & David Suzuki Foundation, 2018). Across Canada, some models have been applied in returning land governance to Indigenous peoples with these opportunities in mind. Notably, Indigenous Conservation and Protected Areas (IPCAs) are gaining popularity as a model for land governance that support ecosystems and human use through Indigenous led management (Plotkin & David Suzuki Foundation, 2018). With land being central to Indigenous led-movements, food systems, and IK, it is inseparable from conversations about food access. For this reason, access to food for Indigenous peoples should be conceptualized by centering land; an integral element of IK.

Integrating IK in understanding access to food provides an opportunity for community capacity building and personal empowerment. The opportunity for this is well documented within Participatory Action Research (PAR), including Participatory Food Costing (PFC); a research method for addressing food insecurity through inclusion of those experiencing it in the research process (Knezevic et al., 2014; Monteith et al., 2020). In essence, participatory approaches offer an opportunity for participants to think critically through the making and changing of contexts as active participants throughout the research process, with the ultimate goal of planned social change (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). Foundational to PAR is critical

pedagogy, which draws on critical dialogue with those who experience oppression to influence empowerment and action (Giroux, 2010). While existing PAR approaches like PFC may offer opportunity for critical conversations and subsequent change for Indigenous communities, they are often rooted within Western perspectives that may not capture the full context of issues for Indigenous peoples, through Indigenous methods. For example, PFC is concerned with calculating the affordability of a healthy diet through a participatory approach to costing foods in the community (Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project, 2016). This data is then used to calculate the cost of a standardized healthy diet, which is compared against various income and household scenarios, which can be used to advocate for policy changes to promote economic security, and thus food security (Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project, 2016). While this method is valuable to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations as a participatory advocacy tool for addressing food insecurity, it does not consider rights-based or land-based access to food, nor IK, which are integral to Indigenous food systems. For this reason, relying solely on PFC through a western, economic lens for understanding food access misses the opportunity for centering IK which are foundationally participatory in nature. Doing this provides an opportunity for drawing on IK (e.g. educational approaches, pedagogies) to inform research methods, while considering present-day food and health related issues experienced by Indigenous communities.

IK are some of the oldest existing models for education, however their benefits and merit have been severely undervalued. Participation is foundational to IK (e.g. pedagogies and educational approaches) in a process of coming to know. Often, this process is realized through story-telling, learning from the land (including through harvesting and gathering food), and

engaging with Elders (Archibald, 2008; Simpson, 2014). Reimagining an approach to understanding food access that draws from IK offers an opportunity for (re)generating an understanding of access to food through generation of personal meaning which has the opportunity of becoming the foundation of collective meanings and understandings (similar to the goals of western PAR). These meanings offer a foundation for theory, which from an Indigenous pedagogical standpoint, are generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice within individuals, families, communities, and generations (Simpson, 2014). This embodied practice takes the form of stories and personal narratives which propel us to re-create and re-conceptualize the circumstances of each story or narrative when they are (re)told. Similar to critical pedagogy, this approach encourages personal reflection through dialogue (Giroux, 2010). Conceptualization of methodologies that explore access to food in this way, not only offer an opportunity for understanding access to food for Indigenous peoples, but for healing Indigenous educational and research practices.

Equally important to consider in understanding access to food for Mi'kmaq people are the complex rights-based challenges associated with access to food. Most notably in Mi'kma'ki are access to rights-based fisheries including Moderate Livelihood Treaty Fisheries (MLF) and Food Social, and Ceremonial Fisheries (FSC) (Pannozzo & Baxter, 2020). The value, meaning, and application of these rights are continuously publicly debated between and within Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous communities. Rights-based access to resources pose significant challenges to food access for Mi'kmaw people and are interconnected with a complex history of access to, and governance of land, water and its resources. Consequently, conceptualizing access to food must consider various rights-based opportunities for accessing food, how they are

implemented, and how they impact communities. In approaching research on food access with this in mind, new opportunities for informing policy on rights-based food access can be imagined.

3.0 Research Paradigm

Traditionally, the research paradigm (whether recognized or not) informing research with/about Indigenous communities has been the authority of non-Indigenous researchers. Once the use of these paradigms and the knowledge generated from them are accepted, it strengthens existing power structures, influencing decision making related to future research (Brookfield, 2005). In this way, power and knowledge are interconnected in that knowledge generation is an exercise of power, while power is a function of knowledge. Historically, the authority of positivist or post-positivist a research lens has informed research practices and understandings of Indigenous communities. These include nutritional experimentations in malnourished residential school children (Mosby Ref), and views of Indigenous peoples seeing their dwindling as a natural occurrence, justified through theories of “evolution”, and based in theories of “survival of the fittest” (Wilson, 2008). While post-positivism still holds significant power as a standard in research, social theories have challenged their underlying assumptions, and clarifying research paradigms that see reality as having more than a single overriding law that explains a phenomenon (ontology). These theories (in the case of this thesis, critical theory) have their own set of assumptions that are contextualized through their research paradigm, consisting of 4 interrelated concepts: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. Together, these set the foundations for guiding knowledge generation, translation, and dissemination. While these dominant social theories are compatible with an Indigenous Research paradigm, they, like post-positivism, can hold power over Indigenous knowledge systems. For example, the foundations of

this project were originally focused primarily on western research paradigms (e.g. critical theory). Historical and ongoing power relationships informed this, where the dominant paradigms and theories related to photovoice and arts-based research have not drawn from Indigenous research paradigms. These theoretical foundations that inform these areas of research are not created and maintained without the function of a dominant discourse which function to establish truth through the distribution, production, and circulation of values, ideas, and statements that guide decision making within research. As a result, knowledge can be seen as a social product (Brookfield, 2005), guided by dominant assumptions, values, and ideologies. The research paradigm informing this project aims to both challenge and to demonstrate congruency with the western foundations of arts-based research. While an Indigenous paradigm can stand alone in informing research, it is worthwhile to draw comparisons, especially as a tool to demonstrate the validity of an Indigenous research paradigm to western-informed audiences, and to demonstrate its depth and difference in comparison to other social theories that have been accepted as the standard.

3.1 Ontology

When I first wrote my thesis proposal, I drew from the turtle as a way to frame ontology. The turtle, representing truth as one of the 7 sacred teachings, recognizes truth as an ongoing process based in past, present, and future. This is represented by the inner scales representing the 13 phases of the moon over a year, while the outer 28 scales represent the 28-day moon cycle. Since then, I have built a deeper relationship with the concept of the turtle and the turtle as informing truth and knowledge generation in my own life personally. I've done this by learning stories of Glooscap visiting communities with Mikjij (turtle) and looking to my own personal experience to interpret and be guided by Mikjij. I've come to understand Mikjij in a different

way, which I won't recount here. The turtle however, and my relationship to him, still provides context for Indigenous ontology: the turtle is a personal and generational theoretical anchor, who encourages the interpretation of concepts, metaphors, and ideas embedded within the stories. The turtle, their stories, the way they live on the land/water, and their various teachings encourages me to translate and embody the meaning I generate from my relationship with the turtle. This relationship is personal, based on where I am from, my family, my community, and myself. The turtle is a theoretical anchor guiding knowledge generation and application based on my relationship with ideas/concepts, and informed by my relationships with place, kin, community, and land.

Ontology is an important starting place in situating a research project, helping position what is understood as a form of truth. In an Indigenous research paradigm, ontology is conceptualized through relationship, where there are multiple and evolving truths, rather than a single overriding and stagnant truth (positivism). The turtle for example then, is used as a theoretical anchor guiding me to an individual truth, whose values, ideas, and concepts I interpret in the context of my relationships. These relationships are personal, familial, generational, learned through time on the land, etc. The turtle itself then isn't what is true, rather the conceptual embodiment and theoretical interpretation of the turtle is what is true. This view of ontology is in line with most qualitative theories, where multiple truths exist rather than a single overriding truth commonly seen in traditional sciences (e.g. positivism and post-positivism). The turtle for example, is all of their relations (Msiit No'kmaq), including the plant and animal ancestors shaping the turtle, the places the turtle lives (land and water). The turtle is shaped by its relationships over time with the land and water, with seasons, with other plants, and animals, and

with all of its relations. You can start to see how an Indigenous knowledge system is wholistic: unable to look at the truth as singular, and instead looking through the lens of relationality. This is to say that reality is the relationships or set of relationships that shapes us over time (Wilson, 2008). This is embedded within Mi'kmaw language and other Indigenous languages, seen through words that do not name the object themselves, but describe their use or our relationships to them, with the frequent use of verbs rather than nouns. This is contrasted with English language, which names and classifies objects, frequently using nouns. The turtle for example, is interpreted at the individual level, encouraging conceptual embodiment, drawing from observation, stories passed on about the turtle, dreams, ceremony, clan, and various other ways of engaging with the teachings (values and ideas) of the turtle. This ontology is rooted in autonomy, placing authority over generation of meaning in the hands of each individual, and making truth emergent and evolving through each generation.

3.2 Epistemology

While ontology helps us situate *what* is classified as truth (multiple vs singular truths), epistemology situates how we justify what truth is. Within an Indigenous research paradigm, epistemology is relational. This means I justify truth through relationships, where interpretations and meaning are generated through relationships. Those are individual relationships with ideas, places, people, and other living and non-living things. This makes ontology and epistemology closely related, or even the same, *as reality is the relationship that one builds with the truth* (Wilson, 2008). That relationship with the truth is guided through stories, ceremony, observations of the land, plants, animals etc. This process encourages conceptual embodied of ideas, values, and metaphor, using the relationship as a theoretical anchor.

3.3 Comparing Indigenous with Western Epistemology and Ontology

The ontology and epistemology adopted within western social theories are in line with an Indigenous research paradigm in many ways, including an ontology that is situated in multiple rather than singular truths. Many social theories, such as critical theory, are rooted in understanding systems and social structures that shape the experience of the individual, often through the lens of power relations and systems of oppression. We see this in the work of those who've shaped the tradition of these fields such as Paulo Freire and Michael Foucault. These theories compliment (but are not necessary for) an Indigenous research paradigm, helping to situate and interpret the embodiment of social values, generated by social and political structures that maintain oppressive systems. From a critical theoretical perspective, truths are contingent on power relations and social norms, typically informed and sustained by dominant ideologies (Giroux, 2010). Being informed by this theory in research, means encouraging community participation in knowledge production, promoting critical reflection and dialogue related to social systems and power relations as a way to encourage social change. Notably, the integration of community education within these forms of Western research are conceptualized through critical pedagogy, encouraging reflection on social systems and how those systems and the values that uphold them, are embodied within the community. This is often captured within PAR, which encourages community participation throughout research, and therefore reflection on the systems and structures that shape the circumstances of the community. Ultimately, this approach aims to encourage a “critical consciousness” and therefore increased social and political participation within the community, prioritizing dialogue as important to knowledge generation and dissemination. The traditions of arts-based research methods, including

photovoice, draw from these ideas to encourage participants to reflect on their communities' strengths and concerns, and to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about the social circumstances/values impacting and shaping the experiences of the community. This dialogue is seen as occurring within the group of participants but also going beyond to reach policy makers and leaders (C. Wang & Burris, 1997).

These western research traditions, however, do not conceptualize ontology and epistemology in the same way as an Indigenous research paradigm. For example, western social tradition does not conceptualize truth as also emerging through relationship with relations beyond human centric social systems. They do not draw from plants, animals, land, ancestors, dreams, stories, imagery etc. as ways that encourage social participation and critical self-reflection. While they encourage reflection on social systems and their impact on the individual through discussion and participation in systems, they don't conceptualize this as relationship, rather as "dialogue" (Freire, 1970). That is, they don't conceptualize the approach as encouraging ongoing relationship, not only with each other, but with all of our relations (Msit No'kmaq). Instead, is it the dialogue and reflection on social issues and systems seen as important to critical pedagogy. An Indigenous paradigm, however, draws from critical reflection through relationship not only with people, but with ideas embedded in story, dreams, ceremony, spiritual practices, etc. These interpretations are made in the context of relationships in the community, specific to place, and consider past (ancestors) and future. The turtle then, is a theoretical anchor, guiding the individual to observe, interpret, and embody the turtle through multiple ways of coming to understand him, autonomously, while in relationship with others.

This can be done through observation in nature, stories passed down over generations, in dreams, as offerings, prayers, and various eco-social practices.

An Indigenous research paradigm then offers an approach that is rooted in relationship with the community and land, while promoting the autonomy of the individual in the generation and interpretation of meaning. These ways of knowing and have been generated and re-generated since time immemorial, embedding personal critical reflection and knowledge generation within the core of Indigenous social structures. Clan systems, stories, ceremonies, etc all represent ways this was/is done, and explain Indigenous Knowledge systems beyond descriptors of “oral communication”. This goes beyond what is offered by western theories such as critical theories, drawing from generations of knowledge production passed on in families and communities, through thousands of stories, ideas, ceremonies, images, practices and their interconnection between Nations across Turtle Island. This makes knowledge of the turtle localized, personal, and emergent. This doesn’t mean however, that I don’t draw from the ideas or interpretation of other Nations or places, rather it highlights the relations that have presence in my life, rooted in place and time, shaping my interpretations. Leanne Betasomokose Simpson refers to this as Nishnaabeg internationalism (2017), emphasizing the sharing and passing of ideas between Nations.

3.4 Methodology

Indigenous methodologies are those that encourage relationship building, prioritizing relationship with something over the thing itself. Returning to the turtle as an example, I am encouraged to build a personal understanding and interpretation of the turtle through the

relationship I build with them as a concept. One way this is done is through repetition. I listen to or read stories about the turtle, I observe how the turtle lives and where they live, I have a dream about the turtle, I talk about the turtle with other Indigenous people to learn their interpretations, I create art with the turtle's shell and use it, I reflect on my family's relationship and interpretations of the turtle. Repeated and ongoing relationship building with the turtle as a living and ancestral relation and metaphor provides a theoretical anchor, guiding the emergence of new ideas, re-lived, and re-interpreted through centuries old teachings and stories. The turtle, and other relations are theoretical anchors, re-lived and re-interpreted in the context of time, place, and people, passed on as concepts over generations. This means interpreting turtle as a theory not only happens in the context of your individual relationship with the turtle in a vacuum, but in the context of all of your relations that you draw from to help understand the turtle. This knowledge therefore emerges in the context of place and time, where I have autonomy in generating meaning, leaning on relationships for guidance.

The methodology informing this project, based in the epistemology and ontology described above, therefore sees truth and knowledge production as being generated through the individual, based on their relationships and that fosters autonomous emergence of ideas, concepts, and metaphor. For this reason, there is no single truth that can be produced through an Indigenous lens, and a methodology aims to encourage the generation of meaning through encouragement of ongoing relationship with ideas and each other. This means then that the methodology for this project encourages participants to engage in relationship building with ideas, to generate autonomous personal meaning, interpretations, and understanding of phenomenon.

3.5 Art-based Methodologies

In this project, art is used as a tool for encouraging participants to build a relationship with the meaning of access to food over time (past, present, future). This research question is purposefully broad, aiming to promote autonomy in the direction of interpretation, and personal meaning. Art (photographs in the case of this project), like stories, ceremony, etc. capture a value, idea, or experience and can be used as a tool for dissemination. Art also represents something that is translated and interpreted differently based on the viewer, encouraging engagement with the values and ideas that are captured in the image (Wang, 1998). This is in line with an Indigenous paradigm, where truth and meaning are re-generated through each person, depending on their autonomous personal interpretation, based on their own relationships and experiences. This makes art about more than simply capturing and disseminating a single message, theme, knowledge, or truth to be known to the public, but to generate and pass on values and ideas for others to engage with and generate their own meaning from. Storywork, offered by Archibald (2008), provides insight into how this transmission occurs. The structure of a story gives place for fluidity of metaphor, symbolism, and interpretive communication (Kovach, 2021). This form of knowledge exchange requires the involvement of the listener (or viewer in the case of photographs), asking them to interpret and take their own learning from the story (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2021). These stories can take different forms, including life experience stories, historical stories, naming stories, origin stories, or trickier stories, and may have multiple versions or parts that are told incrementally over time, or told differently based on the teller or listener (Archibald, 2008). When told, the listener may be expected to unfold the story's meaning in the context of their own life, acting as a philosophical guide for change

(Archibald, 2008). In this way, listeners (viewers) take responsibility for their learning, developing meaning relevant to their lives that may change over time and be applied to different experiences/stories (Archibald, 2008). Through this approach, underlying values and meanings are demonstrated, which can be applied to new contexts, acting as a guide for what to do in life, acting as a sort of catalyst (Archibald, 2008). In a similar manner to storywork, art can act as an avenue for storytelling, where the participant has autonomy in the generation of a “story” or idea through photographs, that is used to teach the viewer, through the viewers interpretation.

For these reasons, I find the approach of thematic analysis across participant data/photographs or having a required number of participants to be difficult to grapple with as an expectation of this research. I see participant photographs not like data to be compiled into themes across experiences, rather I see their photographs like I see the turtle; as a single participant generated theoretical anchor that encourages continual interpretation dependant on the observers relationship with it. I therefore have a difficult time seeing it as my role to try to interpret and analyze the photographs as on the participants behalf, based on how I personally generate meaning from their anchor. Rather, I see the project offering opportunity to generate transmission of ideas embedded within photos, with autonomy of the viewer and photographer in how/with who they share their photos. Similarly, stories are often told or gifted by an Elder or storyteller as a teaching tool, asking the listener to take and interpret their own meaning from it. Those stories can be personal experience stories, legends, or sacred stories. How stories are told is often dependant on who is listening, with details changing or evolving with the listener. Similarly, a participant should have autonomy in how they share the context of a photo, with who they wish to share it with to support generation of meaning from it.

Within Indigenous literature, generation of meaning through this means often described through a process of *coming too know*, developed through personal reflection drawing from experiences, senses, and instincts (Cajete, 1999; Hart, 2007). The resultant knowledge has been coined as “*self-knowledge*” (Cajete, 1999; Hart, 2007). A major aspect of this *self-knowledge* is a deep understanding of the web relationships between people, their ecosystem, and other living beings and spirits that share the land (Hart, 2007). Similar to *self-knowledge*, and more commonly used in Western academic research, is *critical consciousness* proposed by Paulo Freire, which focuses on achieving a deeper understanding of how political, social, and economic factors can impact a person’s place within the world (Freire, 1970). Freire understood critical consciousness as promoting action by allowing people to recognize the possibilities of response, suggesting that psychological factors influence civic and political behaviors. That is, people may recognize structural inequalities but do not feel compelled to act on their insights unless they believe their efforts will yield a desired outcome (Freire, 1970; Watts et al., 2011). Through both lenses people gain awareness and agency through dialogue and personal generation of knowledge. This project draws from both self-knowledge and critical consciousness, encouraging dialogue related to working with and living as a person living with HIV/AIDS and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is encouraged through the photo taking process, as well as through the individual meaning making that is generated from conversation and relationship building with the photograph.

Based in the traditions of critical theory and an Indigenous research paradigm, I challenge the need for expert data analysis, such as thematic analysis, as a requirement for

knowledge production within the context of this project. To me, this project is about the resurgence of Mi'kmaw ways of knowledge production which are generated and interpreted individually, in the context of time, place, community, and land. It is not my role to determine the final meaning or interpretation of someone's story, but to facilitate opportunity for that story to be (re)generated and (if wanted) passed on so that others can generate meaning from it in the ways intended. This is rooted in participant autonomy, both in the generation of ideas captured through photos and how those ideas are shared for others to gain new knowledge from.

4.0 Methods

The overarching research question is: What does past, present, and future access to food mean to PLWHA? To answer this question, two groups participated:

1. Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki (Atlantic Provinces)
2. Service providers serving Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki

Data collection was done using photovoice, where participants took photos representing past, present, and future access to food for their communities. *Only participants living with HIV/AIDS (the first group of participants) participated in the photo taking aspect of the project.* Later, a sharing circle provided opportunity for contextualizing photos taken, and for participatory thematic analysis, where service provider participants offered how they generated personal and group meaning ("themes") from photos taken by participants, based on their experience and relationships working with Indigenous communities across the Atlantic. Only Healing Our Nations (HON) staff were invited to participate in this aspect of the project, as the only Indigenous HIV/AIDS service organization serving the 33 First Nation communities and the off-reserve population in the Atlantic. In particular, this supported generation of meaning that was

able to draw from relationships with those living with HIV/AIDS across Mi'kma'ki. HON is also a collaborator on the project, supporting participant recruitment and providing resources/support throughout.

4.1 Participants and Recruitment

Indigenous PLWHA over the age of 18 in Mi'kma'ki were invited to participate in the photovoice aspect of the project. For this project, an Indigenous person was defined as any person self-identifying as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit. Participants could identify as either status or non-status Indigenous peoples. PLWHA were defined as any person self-identifying as living with either HIV or AIDS for any time period. Participants also needed to have access to a cell phone with a camera or a personal camera for taking photographs. Participants were recruited primarily in collaboration with HON through posters, snowballing, and word of mouth. The recruitment poster can be found in Appendix A. This poster was circulated to a variety of HIV/AIDS and related service organizations including the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, the Feast Centre for STBBI Research, the Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre, Mainline Needle Exchange, Halifax Sexual Health Center, the Canadian Aboriginal Aids Network, North Grove, One Vision – Many Paths, Community Based Research Centre, Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'kmaw Confederacy of PEI, and PEERS Alliance. HON also supported with recruitment, sending the poster to their networks. In addition, a short video was made about the project as a submission for the SSHRC storytellers competition, which was circulated on social media, as a tool for sharing information about the project. HON staff were also invited to participate in the sharing session aspect of the project but did not take photos.

Incentives were provided to participants who decide to join the study. For each session that a participant joined (three max) were be provided with an honorarium (\$250.00 over the course of the study). In addition, some participants who wished to share their mailing address, were sent a small gift including a tobacco tie; a custom Mi'kmaq offering used as a respectful way of asking for help and signifying gratitude for someone's support. Some other small gifts were also provided including an Indigenous made soap, land lotion, and smudge kit.

Two information sessions with potential participants were held online using Microsoft teams, to support recruitment and to ensure potential participants were informed of the project before committing, and to ensure they met criteria for the project. The main purpose of the information session was to provide participants with an opportunity to learn more about the project, to review options for taking photos, to review meaning of photographs/art with examples, and to review ethical considerations for taking photographs. In addition, the information session included a discussion about the medicine wheel with an Elder for one session that the Elder was available for, and from me for the other session. The purpose of this discussion was not to collect data, but to prompt participants to think about food access in their community and to ensure participants were provided with teachings of the medicine wheel, which would be relevant to them later.

4.2 Data Collection

Indigenous PLWHA in this research were be asked to use photos to “voice” or represent their ideas, experiences, or understandings of past, present, and future access to food. Therefore, photovoice was the primary means of data collection for this project. In addition, HON staff (service providers serving Indigenous PLWHA in the Atlantic) participated in “participatory analysis”, where they were including in a sharing session and discussed meaning they generated

from photos, based on their experiences, relationships, and knowledge. Below includes the data collection process for this project.

1. A period for participants to take photographs

Photovoice participants (Indigenous PLWHA) were asked to take (with their cell phones or personal cameras) photos representing food access for their communities in the past, present, and future (minimum 3 photos). Participants shared their photos, which were uploaded to a secure onedrive folder accessible only by the research team and the participant and hosted through MSVU's Microsoft 365 shared drive. Participants were asked to number their photos using the file name, or support with numbering was provided.

2. Contextualizing photos and Sharing Sessions (data collection and analysis)

After taking photographs, participants were invited to an online or in person sharing circle where they had the opportunity to share context and meaning behind their chosen photos. Participants had the option of participating in the sharing circle with HON staff, where they had the opportunity to have discussion about the meaning that HON generated from their photos and the story/context they shared about them, or to have one on one sharing session, where they could remain anonymous, without the need for interpretation with HON. The acronym SHOWeD: What do you **See** here? Whats really **Happening** here? How does this relate to **Our** lives? **Why** does this problem or strength exist? What can we **Do** about it? (Wang et al., 1998) was shared with participants as an optional way for sharing context of their photos, however participants were not asked to conform to this framework if they did not wish to. Sharing occurred in a sharing-circle style discussion, where participants each had a chance to speak without interruption, which occurred three times. In one-on-one sessions, prompts were asked (including those above) which supported sharing of context. The first round aimed to allow participants to

share their general experiences or initial thoughts. This is in line with Mi'kmaq approaches to sharing circles, where the first-round acts as a way to gather initial thoughts without prompts or guides. The second round asked participants to describe their photos (using SHOWeD as an optional guide). The final round of the talking circle allowed participants to share any final thoughts. Responses were be recorded for quotes (not analysis).

4.3 Participatory “Data Analysis” and Meaning Making

Following the talking circle, a discussion guided by the medicine wheel served as a participatory approach to “data analysis”. While I don’t consider this to be a traditional form of data analysis, the wheel served to guide discussion and offered deductive anchors for generating meaning. This was an opportunity for HON staff in conjunction with participants, to generate and share personal meaning and experiences from photographs. I refer to the emerging ideas, experiences, and thoughts shared by participants as “themes”, but do not use this word in the traditional since, as formal analysis to identify themes was not completed. Participants did however, use the medicine wheel as a guide for generating and sharing interpretations, similar to an approach to data analysis, where issues, themes, or theories are codified deductively (C. Wang & Burris, 1997). Before doing so, figure 1. showing the medicine wheel was shared on the screen (for online individual interviews) or on a white board (in person) and reviewed with participants. Participants were also invited to share or draw from their own understandings/teachings of the medicine wheel. Additionally, the Elder who had provided support during the information sessions (and who supports service provision with HON) was invited to join, especially to support medicine wheel teachings, however unfortunately had health related challenges that prevented continued support with the project. Participants were reminded

of the meaning of each quadrant and its meaning (mental, physical, spiritual, emotional) and then asked to share their ideas related to “themes” or meaning of access to food within each quadrant. Prompts such as “what meaning from photos could fit within the physical quadrant of the medicine wheel?” A blank version of the medicine wheel was used, where participants could write their themes in the medicine wheel live or share them orally for them to be captured. Indigenous PWLHA also provided their own themes and meanings, and had opportunity to share before service provider staff, who then added themes based on their own experiences and interpretations working within communities in the Atlantic. This session was also recorded for quotes (not for the purpose of data analysis).

Use of the medicine wheel as a guide to thematic analysis has been previously developed by Latimer et al. (2018), used as a guide for analyzing a photovoice project with Mi’kmaq youth on the topic of chronic pain. For this project, the medicine wheel was used as a guide to generate meaning from the photos, and to guide conversation. Figure 1 shows the medicine wheel and each category that was drawn from to categorize understandings of food access. For this project, this framework has been adapted to understand food access specifically. While interpretation of the medicine wheel can be fluid, it was still described to participants within the context of food, to provide a general foundations for how each quadrant might be interpreted. The mental or mind quadrant was described to participants as cognitive behaviors used to access food, such as coping with lack of food, decisions surrounding cooking, hunting/harvesting, preparing, or purchasing food, etc. The emotional quadrant was described as feelings associated with accessing foods (i.e., hope, longing, fear, happiness). Physical or “body” quadrant was described as being associated with physical symptoms and health outcomes related to accessing food (i.e., hunger, side effects of medications/certain foods, medical outcomes). Finally, spirit or values was described as being

associated with cultural beliefs (ie, higher purpose, cultural values, spiritual values). This includes representations/understandings of cultural teachings (e.g. 7 teachings) for example or symbols in the context of food access. For further examples of interpretation of this model, refer to section 2.1, *Contextualizing Health for Indigenous PLWHA*. While these descriptors for each quadrant were provided, many have their own interpretations and teachings related to the meaning of these quadrants of the medicine wheel, which were not corrected or denied if they contrasted with the descriptors above, supporting autonomy in meaning making and idea sharing.

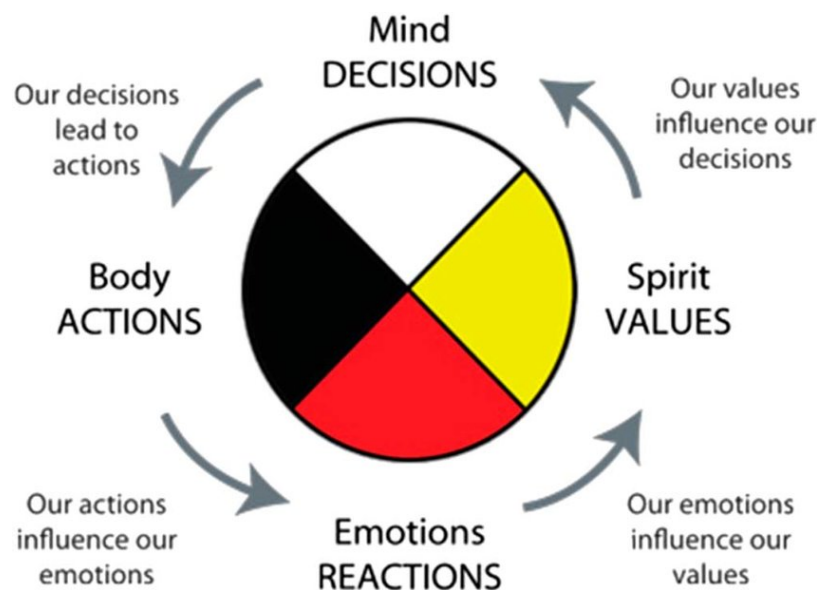


Figure 3. Medicine Wheel Used to Guide Analysis (Latimer et al., 2018)

5.0 Ethical Considerations

5.1 Consent

Participants were deemed capable of consenting if they were able to understand information relevant to making a decision about their participation in the project and are able to appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of either making or not making a decision.

Participants were introduced to the consent process during the information session, before they are asked to sign the consent form. Participants were also reminded before beginning the sharing session of the consent process and asked if they would like to proceed. In addition, consent was obtained again following the sharing session for the release of creative materials. Consent was signed and included the following:

1. **Signed consent to participate in the research:** Each participant was required to review and sign an informed consent form to participate in the study. This included aims, risks, benefits, and rights of the participants (see appendix B).
2. **Consent for non-participants to photographed:** Participants were required to obtain signed consent from any person that is photographed and identifiable in their photos (aside from themselves). In addition, participants had to obtain signed consent from owners of private dwellings or businesses if they were to be photographed. (See Appendix C)
3. **Signed consent for release of creative materials:** Participants were required to sign further consent for the release of their photographs. This provided them with the option to participate in the study, without release of their photos, as well as options for how their photos could be used (See Appendix D).

5.2 Participant Risk and Risk Mitigation

Photovoice has the potential to elicit psychological or emotional discomfort through the retelling of stories that bring up painful memories or distress for participants. It has been found however, that for many the process of photovoice has been therapeutic because for some it can be emotionally freeing to talk about previous experiences (Creighton et al., 2018). An often-unanticipated challenge to emotional/psychological discomfort is the burden on researchers as

repositories of participant experiences. For this reason, there was not only risk for emotional/psychological distress for participants, but for researchers engaging with participant experiences (Creighton et al., 2018).

The risk for participant emotional/psychological stress was managed through supports with HON, including their existing connections with various service providers and Elders. An Elder who works regularly with HON was also involved throughout the project, however needed to step away towards the end of the project due to declining health. Following the project, participants were able to be referred to an appropriate service provider through HON or connect with HON directly. This ensured culturally appropriate supports were in place for participants who may have needed them during/following their participation in the project. In addition, the project supervisors (Dr. Joy) monitored researcher distress/fatigue through periodic check-ins and encouraged debriefs, breaks or further supports as they were necessary (e.g. through the Elder or counselling services available through MSVU). In addition, duration of the sharing session (to avoid researcher and participant fatigue) the PI (Chelsey) was coached on facilitation strategies to remind participants of timelines gently and persuasively and to stay on topic.

Photovoice does not allow for strict anonymity or confidentiality due to the nature of the method. For example, participants may choose to photograph themselves or images that may identify them. For this reason, participants may have had fears about their images being in the public domain to their personal lives, careers, or families which may result in social repercussions. If participants consent to the sharing of their photos publicly, it is possible that these images may have negative consequences for participants, or that they be reproduced online through screen shots (even when mechanisms for preventing images from being reproduced are in place). For this reason, it was not guaranteed that photos would not be copied and used outside of the original agreed upon purposes

(Creighton et al., 2018). Though there is the risk that participants may reveal their identities in photographs and therefore may be identifiable, restricting what participants do/do not photograph is not in line with photovoice methodologies. For this reason, what participants photographed was at their discretion and was reviewed in the initial consent process. The risk for reproduction of photographs was mitigated through a second consent process where participants had the option to participate in sharing of their photographs beyond the research process (e.g. inclusion in publication or as part of an art-gallery). Participants were made aware of the potential for photographs to be used beyond the purpose of their agreed upon use, as there is the risk for photographs to be screen shot and shared online, if they consented to having them used online.

Less risky methods have not been chosen, as photovoice and accompanying methods of data collection (e.g. sharing session and participatory analysis) are in line with culturally appropriate research methods that support story telling, oral communication, and centering participant voices. These ethical concerns have also been previously explored, with benefits outweighing risks (Creighton et al., 2018).

6.0 Results

6.1 Participants

A total of 2 participants were recruited to participate in the photovoice aspect of the project. Both held queer identities and identified as both Indigenous and living with HIV/AIDS. Both also lived in Nova Scotia. A total of 3 participants were recruited as service providers working with HON to participate in the sharing circle, all of whom also had Indigenous identity. Service providers served the 33 Atlantic First Nation communities and the off-reserve population

in the Atlantic and have combined extensive experience working across communities in the area of STBBI prevention, including HIV/AIDS.

6.2 Photos

Two sharing sessions took place during the end of March 2023, where photovoice participants had the opportunity to describe their photos. One session was held online with a photovoice participant (n=1) (without HON staff). A second session was held in person in HON's conference room, with HON participants (n=3) and a photovoice participant (n=1). During both, photovoice participants shared photos and their context, followed by a discussion of themes using the medicine wheel as a guide, where HON participated and supported the generation of meaning based on their own experiences in the second sharing session (details included in section 6.3).

Below are the photos taken by the 2 photovoice participants. Photos are prefaced by quotes from participants presenting and describing their photos. No changes have been made to how participants presented and described their photographs, and no analysis is presented here (or later). It is recommended that the reader generate their own understanding and meaning from each participant's story, experience, knowledge, or imagery. The reader may also choose to return to the medicine wheel to guide generation of connections between the participants images, stories, experiences, and knowledges and their own. In particular, it is recommended that the reader consider how participant voice and imagery influences your own knowledge and understanding of the topic of access to food for Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS (or access to food in ways relevant to you), while also drawing also from the other context, stories, literature, and ideas presented thus far.

Participant 1: Photos representing past access to food

“As a kid in a small town my family was big into growing our own food. Partially necessity with money and part as way to keep connection to land and one another. What we didn't grow, we traded or shared with family and neighbors and had big cookouts. We did offerings to ancestors as well. Food meant more than just fuel, it was soul nourishment and a love language”

***Placeholder while waiting on release of creative materials consent**

Figure 4. Participant 1 photos representing past access to food

Participant 1: Photos representing present access to food

“A lot has happened between my childhood and now. Coming out as indigiqueer and being HIV + damaged a lot of connections I had with family and therefore food. I developed an eating disorder, dealt with chronic pain, being on my own often times homeless, struggled with transportation and money and discrimination trying to access foods. I had a hard time connecting to community and dollar store staples became my go to and I fell into making comfort food from it. Often, I eat alone and sit in the garden area to at least have my feet touch the grass. For a few weeks I couldn't even feed myself which was hard. Physically, I couldn't use my hand or eat properly so something as simple as a pancake made up with a strawberry can feel like a luxury. It's why I didn't filter the photo and left the background because it speaks to my struggle. I felt like a burden.”

***Placeholder while waiting on release of creative materials consent**

Figure 5. Participant 1 photo representing present access to food

Participant 1: Photos representing future access to food

“The last two photos are really speaking to my wish to bring everything from my past and present into future. I want to be able to cook big comfort meals for chosen family since I did enjoy cooking and I think that would be healing. I'd like to be able to afford better ingredients or go back to doing community garden sharing. Back to land, back to connecting with culture and offering food as a love language to so many others who likely could use it.”

***place holder while waiting on release of creative materials consent**

Figure 6. Participant 1 photos representing future access to food

Participant 2: Photos representing past access to food

“These three photos represent what I think were important to how we accessed food in the past. A lot of our diet came from the ocean, rivers, and lakes which is represented in the first two photos. Food was also accessed through gifting, sharing, and feasting so we could rely on each other to get what we needed. We shared responsibilities for food and we all had different roles that helped to give us purpose and meaning. I imagine even those with queer or two-spirit identities would have held important roles and responsibilities related to food. We had autonomy in who we were and how we supported our communities. Food was an important part of this”



Figure 7. Sharing food from the ocean



Figure 8. Gifted smelts



Figure 9. Sharing food and responsibility

Participant 2: Photos representing present access to food

“ These photos represent foods convenient and cheap to access from the store. Today, we often eat alone and don’t really get to hold much responsibility or autonomy over how we access our food as a community. We can get all of our food from the grocery store and we rely on convenience foods and comfort foods because they are easy to make or because they are cheapest. We also live busy lives where so much value is put on working and that leaves little time for growing, hunting, fishing, and preparing food together or getting food in the ways we used to. We no longer have the time to access foods in the ways we did in the past and there is not the community connections needed to work together to share responsibility over food. We access food somewhat individually and independently. Our communities have also been broken apart and removed from the land, which has disrupted how we build community around food. I think this is especially relevant for queer communities and for people living with HIV, because

we can become even more isolated from community, making shared responsibility over access to food something that can feel impossible to achieve. I think that isolation can be related to stigma, whether that's actually enacted, or just anticipated or internalized."



Figure 10. Chicken noodle soup



Figure 11. Quick meal for one

Participant 2: Photos representing future access to food

“The first photo captures a place where community members were able to come together and share food in a place that was safe. It also has images on the wall that represent cultural teachings that are important to how we understand access to food as a community. This photo represents the importance of coming together to share food, as well as the importance of reclaiming traditional cultural values in how we understand access to food for the future.”



Figure 12. The future of feasting

“The next photo kind of represents how our foods can evolve. Cultural foods are not just the things we ate in the past, but they change and evolve with us. This photo is of strawberry rhubarb pies with custard. Pie is something we often share or gift, which helps to build community and spreads love. I think gifting and sharing of food can be important for rebuilding

connections between communities, especially within the queer and HIV+ community and is something I hope to see more of in the future.”



Figure 13. Evolving cultural foods

“This next photo is of preserved food. To me it represents the importance of shared responsibility and the different roles we can have in access to food. Preservation is just one way we can reclaim ownership and responsibility over how we access foods within our communities. To me the future of access to food means going back to the things of the past, but changing them a bit.”



Figure 14. Preserving community foods

6.3 Sharing Sessions

As discussed above, two sharing sessions were hosted in March 2023. One session was held online one on one with a single photovoice participant and the other was done with a photovoice participant (n=1) and HON staff (n=3). During both sessions photovoice participants were invited to share the meaning they personally generated in their photos, using the medicine wheel as a guide. In the second session, HON staff were also invited to share the ideas/meaning they generated from engagement with participant photos. During both sessions, participants shared overlapping and individual/personal ideas, experiences, and thoughts, based on their own autonomous meaning and experience of access to food. These were both their personal meaning of photos taken themselves (photovoice participants) and meaning that HON staff was able to generate from engagement with participant photos and stories. Ideas, concepts, and meaning generated was broad, covered various areas and experiences, and ultimately seemed to draw on the broad impacts of colonialism on access to food overall. Participants captured a large range of ideas and thoughts that were based on their own autonomous meanings and understandings generated with the photos and the participants context as an anchor. Because of this, the sharing session, especially the session with HON, quickly generated a significant amount of fluid ideas and “themes”, many of which were embedded in changing food systems and the broad and wide reaching impacts of colonization on food, both personally and in the context of PLWHA in the Atlantic. These wide-ranging ideas and thoughts emerged not only from the photos themselves, but from the ideas shared by others and each participants individual experience working/living in the community for differing amounts of time and in different capacities. As mentioned before, the sharing sessions were not transcribed and analyzed, but were seen as a space for generating autonomous participant meaning, self-knowledge, and critical consciousness

Despite the breadth of personal meaning, experiences, and ideas that were generated across participants, a common idea between both sharing sessions and among all participants was decolonization, interpreted as the need to return to the values and practices of the past as we move into the future. This was captured in a variety of ways and through individual autonomous and personal meanings about what decolonizing access to food meant. Some described spiritual practices that should be revived, others described community roles, some described the impacts of colonized food systems on the individual and the need to bring relationship building and community into access to food. The ideas about what returning to the past meant were far reaching, which is not surprising given the breadth of ways that food interacts with us, our communities, systems, environment, and beyond. The meaning of decolonizing food systems then took on different meaning for each, based on experiences and relationships and how they interpreted and understood them, and which areas of access to food were most important.

In the session with HON staff, this over-arching theme of decolonization occurred as an “ah-ha” moment as discussions evolved. We began with describing and placing ideas within a “past” version of the medicine wheel, then moved into placing themes in the “present” version. While discussing ideas representing present access to food, a participant pointed out how many themes/ideas were being generated and placed in the physical quadrant, and representing the individual, quickly pointing out how unbalanced the wheel had become. As we took a step back from conversation, prompted by a participant saying they had a meeting in 20 minutes, we looked to the wheel, and a participant said: *“Holy shit, its even formed more like *gestures to physical quadrant*. Did you notice looking at that, or? Its so unbalanced... Well... there you*

have it...” Another participant then jumped in saying “*Well of course for future we want to balance this back out... so for future I think we really want to bring back food as ceremony. We want to feed each other*”. Unintentionally, the focus of the discussion that was prompted had been on physical and individual aspects access to food in the present. Some of the ideas discussed revolved around isolation, commodification of food, body image, impacts of covid, relying on the grocery store, cost of food, ability to get to the grocery store, and impacts on physical health (chronic disease and disease management). From here, the group purposefully decided to return to the ideas from the past, to redistribute them as new “themes” and ideas in a future representation of the medicine wheel. Reflecting on this, one participant said:

“In the past, everything was so balanced, then when we came closer to the present, we fucked it all up. Now even if we look at kinds of programming, we’re going back to the past. Its full circle. Indigenous ways! We’re working in circles, as it always is!”.

In particular, the spiritual quadrant was identified as important to informing the rest of the wheel and an important area to return to. A participant described this saying: “*We were working more from the spirit of everything in the past. The spirit of the vessel that’s eating the food, the spirit of like knowing what you need, and working with like grandma turtle, teachings, whatever is it*”.

Similarly, in the one-on-one session, when describing their ideas from photos within the context of the medicine wheel, the participant identified need to return to past spiritual values moving into the future, describing this by saying “*for future, I think it all comes back to spirit.*”. What spirit meant to this participant had differences and overlaps with the ideas generated by the group with HON participants but nonetheless identified the importance of their version of spiritual values and connectedness as an important place they wanted to be able to return to for

the future. There were also some similarities in ideas representing the present, including the idea and experience of isolation and cooking alone.

7.0 Discussion

This project aimed to explore meaning of past, present, and future access to food for Indigenous PLWHA in Mi'kma'ki. In doing so, I drew from Indigenous knowledge systems to inform how knowledge was produced. Simultaneously, this project challenged and built on the traditional western foundations of arts-based research. Additionally, it recognized the importance role of queer identities as foundational within Indigenous food governance, and the importance of relational accountability and dominant paradigms in shaping the direction of a project. Throughout this process, I have reflected different lenses informing research, aiming to satisfy expectations and justify my own approaches based on the various relationships, experiences, and reflections on knowledge systems I have engaged in through the process. Largely, this project and the work I had done within the academy alongside of it, has represented a journey of personal decolonization and resistance. This resistance has resulted in both the uplifting of my ideas and their oppression. This has fostered some relationships that gain from my identity and ideas without their meaningful translation or inclusion in decision making, but also some relationships that generate meaningful space for them. I continue to navigate these relationships, now with a role outside of the university setting. I of course won't get into the details of what this evolving experience and associated relationships look like, however I will connect this back to the overarching theme generated across this project: decolonization.

7.1 Decolonizing Methods

This project prompted decolonization of research methods. This was done through resistance to the need for thematic analysis to identify common themes across participants, resistance to the need to have more than 2 photovoice participants for validity, engagement with literature on Indigenous research paradigms, and trust in myself related to translation in this project. This project focused on what is inherent in Indigenous knowledge systems: individual autonomy over the generation of knowledge, and the creation and use of theoretical/conceptual anchors to guide the generation of that meaning. These anchors were created by photovoice participants (Indigenous PLWHA) using photographs representing past, present, and future access to food. These photos were then shared at the discretion of the participants, providing the opportunity for either a private journey of generating and interpreting ideas, or for the sharing of those anchors (photos) to support generation of personal meaning among others (i.e. with HON staff). This is not new approach to knowledge generation, but is the core of Indigenous knowledge systems, representing the importance of individual autonomy in deriving meaning from conceptual or theoretical anchors, through relationships. These anchors can be generated individually, through observation of plants, animals, the land, dreams etc. They can also be existing anchors, passed through stories, ceremonies, and eco-social practices that encourage us to interpreted and embody meaning that we create. Important to this, is the relationship we build individually with these ideas, people, places, and things. Relationship is needed as part of this process for knowledge as something that continuous, emergent, and constantly evolving process, and not something that can be categorized or stagnant, through data analysis that creates themes.

Early on, I had a difficult time wrapping my head around whether my project was more in line with a pedagogical approaches and teaching, rather than it being research (i.e. generating new knowledge). This is because much of my focus had been on the knowledge and meaning generated at the level individual, not on the aggregation of the data into themes, assembled neatly into different quadrants the medicine wheel, representing deductive approach to thematic analysis. Indigenous knowledge systems, however, don't fit neatly and separately into research vs teaching; also congruent with western (Freirean) perspectives. Indigenous knowledge generation, translation, and dissemination are interconnected and difficult to separate in the ways they are within dominant western conceptions. From dominant western perspectives, knowledge is seen as something to be generated through the accumulation of multiple data sources, translated and packaged by the expert as a representation of a phenomenon, and then later fed back to the individual as teaching/learning. This is not the case with Indigenous research. Knowledge production, translation, and dissemination is packaged within things like stories and art, which do not represent a singular or stagnant idea or phenomenon. Research is about generating new ideas and knowledge. Pedagogy is about how the ideas and knowledge are delivered to the individual or community. Story and art within an Indigenous paradigm do both of these things and they do it without extracting data from the individual to be compiled into a narrative and later fed back as new knowledge. Autonomy is centered in the generation, translation, and dissemination of knowledge within an Indigenous paradigm, putting power in the hands of the community to maintain power over a fluid and emergent way of knowing. The generation, translation, and dissemination of knowledge within the community in this way is ceremony and is sacred, at the individual and communal level. This is the foundation of Indigenous governance and sustained communities for a minimum of 13,000 years and will be

what can sustain Mi'kmaw communities into the future. Without Indigenous presence and leadership in generation and use of ideas, expressions, and knowledges, they become appropriated. They are no longer living and breathing in the community; instead living in settler dominated spaces, who maintain power and control over meaning, using a western lens that reduces them to a stagnant expression, and divorcing them from the oxygen from the land and community that they need to breath. This is why engagement with Indigenous Knowledge requires relational accountability, meaning Indigenous presence, which cannot be achieved by a few Indigenous people within a space that is settler dominated.

7.2 Decolonizing access to food: Returning to our past to reclaim our future

The meaning and ideas that emerged from this project were broad and ignited realizations and descriptions about what access to food means individually and across communities in Mi'kma'ki over time. The impacts of colonialism were apparent throughout discussions, capturing a wide range of stories, experiences, thoughts, and ideas that emerged through sharing individual experiences, relationships, and teachings (e.g. through use of the medicine wheel and beyond). I could have recorded and transcribed these sessions, and then generated my own theoretical/conceptual anchor from these discussions, however, this would have overridden the anchors that the participants themselves individually created as photos. Instead, participant photos set the foundation for the emergence of new ideas. They provided space for relationship building among participants. They provided opportunity for participants themselves to conceptualize and generate their own “themes” and meaning autonomously. This highlights autonomy as core to this process, and to Indigenous knowledge systems.

While ideas were generated for each quadrant of the medicine wheel, they were not recorded as specific, traditional “themes” (though I think this word could still be used to describe some of the phenomenon that were described, just not in a traditional sense as ideas were not packaged neatly). This is partially due to the breadth of ideas that emerged, but mainly because of the importance of individual, autonomous emergence of meaning, that evolves (e.g. it does not stay the same, and is dependent on relationships). This means, that the purpose of the knowledge generated within this project was not to create a stagnant and singular truth about the reality of access to food for Indigenous PLWHA in Mi’kma’ki. Rather, it was for participants (Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS) to have power over generating conceptual or theoretical anchors through their own photos (art) that could generate and re-generate autonomous meaning among other participants and/or the public, at their discretion. Analysis that captured specific themes or created a theory would contradict this purpose, generating a singular theory or themes about the meaning of access to food for Indigenous PLWHA in Mi’kma’ki, which was not the goal. Rather the goal was for photovoice participants to generate and interpret anchors using art, similar to other modes of knowing within Indigenous knowledge systems. I think back to the turtle, who guides me in reflection and conceptual embodiment, and the emergence of personal, autonomous meaning generated from this relationship. I am also reminded that every person who engages with the turtle as an anchor will generate their own personal meaning in relation with the turtle’s spirit, maybe using similar or the same teachings, stories, etc. In some ways, I see thematic analysis of participant photographs to be in some ways equivalent to overriding the meaning someone else generates from the spirit of the turtle, with my own meaning.

Despite not conforming to traditional thematic analysis or participatory analysis to capture the various themes that may have emerged through the medicine wheel, decolonization was evident as an overarching experience or “theme” across participants and sessions. This was not labeled as decolonization specifically throughout, however participants captured the essence of decolonizing. Broadly the meaning making process that individuals took, and the breadth of ideas, stories, and experiences shared, captured a need to return to Indigenous values, ways of knowing, and being in relation to food. Like my process of decolonizing methods, participants ended up reflecting on what decolonizing systems meant to them individually and collectively. Ultimately, this was related to returning to spiritual values that guide us, and ultimately this looks and feels differently for each of us. Foundational to this, was the fact that ideas and conversations were generated through photovoice participants, representing those whose experiences, values, and stories have been suppressed.

The methods and associated paradigm used in this thesis itself could be understood as one approach to promoting decolonization of food systems. The impacts of colonialism within Indigenous communities have resulted in oppression of Indigenous women and queer identities, resulting in the loss of knowledge, ideas, and values held within these bodies. This project centered the voices of those whose voices, values, teachings, and stories have been stolen. This is an important starting place for decolonization: re-building the teachings held by these groups, by centering them. Autonomy is at the center of this. Namely, the autonomy and self-determination of queer identities (those most impacted by HIV/AIDS in the Atlantic) represent the core of this project. To me, this represents an approach that can foster community led decolonization, through re-building anchors (teachings) that exist within the stories, ceremonies, practices,

experiences and relations of queer people and women. Many Indigenous anchors and their associated teachings incorporate food and values associated with accessing food. Guided engagement with and incorporation of story, ceremony, art, in the context of food, through the voice of women and queer people provides opportunity for autonomy in making meaning in how we engage with and access food as a community. They can support us in remembering how we re-build a new food system; systems that will be required to be re-built if we are to survive climate disaster.

Reflecting on food systems through the lens of past, present, and future is also inherently an engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing. In many Indigenous ways of thinking, we are drawing from our past to understand our present and to make decisions for the future. It is necessary then, to think about our ancestors, where we have come from, and what has shaped us. This is conceptualized as continuous, rather than separate, which we see represented in the circle. It was clear within discussions, that this way of thinking in past, present, and future, prompted critical reflection on where we've come from, where we are, and where we need to go. This was also a theme throughout my own learning process, requiring me to engage with my past and present, to imagine a future.

8.0 Conclusion

In the beginning of this thesis, I opened with the evolution of the treaty fishery in Mi'kma'ki and the various personal experiences and relationships that have shaped my own access to food and my experience through the completion of this project. These represent, to me, some of the impacts of colonization. In my literature review, I described food insecurity as an outcomes of colonialism, and its impacts on those identities most impacted in a colonial system

(namely queer identities and women). These identities and the associated values they carry, were described as foundational to Indigenous governance and knowledge systems, and connected to land and food. Before introducing methods, an Indigenous research paradigm was presented, and compared and contrasted with the foundations of western arts-based research (namely participatory action research). Later, methods were introduced, establishing a foundation for how participants would engage in the project, where photovoice participants were asked to take photos representing self-determined, theoretical, or conceptual anchors, later used to generate meaning making guided by the medicine wheel and with other participants (and later in results, the reader). Various topics, stories, meanings, and ideas were explored through group sharing, with an evident theme of decolonization (remembering the values of the past to influence a future) emerging.

This project emphasizes the process that is decolonizing, and the personal, relational, and theoretical agents that support it. Decolonization is not an easy process. It requires confronting its impacts on our personal identity, our relationships in the community, the voices who hold power, generational losses, and history. It requires sitting with and confronting the histories shaping us individually and collectively. It requires recognizing those impacts in the present, and being willing to name and confront those impacts within ourselves, our communities, and within institutions. It is being accountable to and centering (not using or extracting from) historically oppressed voices, in the generation and application of values and knowledges. Decolonization is also a process of hope. It is imaging and rebuilding for a future. It is resisting a colonial process that is extracting from and killing us. It is re-building a world.

I would like to encourage the reader to continue building on the self-knowledge they generated through engagement with this thesis and in particular, remembering participant voice and photos. Notably, readers should continue to build a relationship with the core message of this thesis: personal, relational, institutional, and system-level decolonization, especially in the context of access to food/food systems. I encourage doing this by engaging with your own past/history, exploring what has shaped access to food for your community, considering who benefits and who is disadvantaged within this system. I encourage you to also consider the evolving impacts in the present and especially the impact that climate disaster will have on food access, and how this will translate not only in your own life, but in the lives of those most disadvantaged. Prioritize listening to and building relationships with those who have been absent or silent in your life and work, including the plant and animal relations who are our food. Use participant voice as a catalyst to understand the and confront the present, knowing that you, too, will be harmed significantly by colonialism (if you haven't already been), if changes are not made.

In closing, I would like to share the song “Native Drums (Still Echo in My Mind)” created by members of from my Mi'kmaw and settler community (David Dobson, Brain Purdy, Barry Francis, Judy Dobson and Ella Stevens) with lyrics originally written as a poem by my Grandfather (Brain Purdy), for my Grandmother (Bev Purdy):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryjK9MFg1L4> . I end with this song to convey the sense of loss that is felt within Indigenous communities and the continued hope for change. For settlers listening to this song, I hope the feelings of loss conveyed here will translate beyond past and present Indigenous experience, as a realization that similar loss will be felt by all if we do not radically change the current colonial system.

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INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES & IDEAS ABOUT ACCESSING FOOD?

We're inviting Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Nova Scotia to share their experiences through photos

Participants will take **photographs** that represent past, present, and future access to food for their community. These photos will be displayed in an **art gallery** planned with participants for public viewing.

This project is a
collaboration
Healing Our Nations
& Mount Saint
Vincent University

For more information or to
participate please contact
chelsey.purdy@msvu.ca

Appendix B

Consent to Participate

Full Project Title: Exploring Food Access for Indigenous Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nova Scotia: A Photovoice Project

Short Study: Food Access for Indigenous PLWHA

Principal Investigator: Chelsey Purdy, BSc
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Introduction

You are being invited to participate in our project titled “Exploring Food Access for Indigenous Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nova Scotia Photovoice Project”. Photovoice is a participatory research method that involves participants in taking photographs that represent their perspectives and lived experiences. These pictures are then shared back with other project participants and discussed to pull out connecting themes. The purpose of this project is to learn about and share understandings of past, present, and future access to food from the perspective of Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Nova Scotia. Participants will have the option of sharing their pictures more widely through an art show. It is important to note that while this project may lead to improved food access and food programming for Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS, no actual changes can be guaranteed.

Who is conducting this research?

This project is a collaboration between Mount Saint Vincent University and Healing Our Nations (HON). Chelsey Purdy is a graduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University and

will be conducting this research. Chelsey is a Mi'kmaw woman from Acadia First Nation, currently living in Halifax. HON is the only HIV/AIDS service organization serving 33 First Nation communities and the off-reserve population in all four Atlantic Canadian Provinces. This project will be co-supervised by Dr. Shannan Grant (Department of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU) and Dr. Phillip Joy (Department of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU). Together, Chelsey, HON, project supervisors, and participants will carry out this project.

Who can participate in the study?

You may participate in this study if you identify as Indigenous (status or non-status), as living with HIV/AIDS, and are currently live in Nova Scotia. You must also be over the age of 18 years, be able to speak and understand English, and be comfortable sharing your ideas and experiences/ideas about food access for your community. In order to participate, you must also have access to a camera or cell phone that can take pictures on.

What does my participation involve?

Participation for this project is expected to take place during fall 2021 and into winter 2022. Participation will involve the following:

1. A 1.5 hour online introductory workshop
2. A 2–3-week period for taking photos
3. A 3-hour recorded group sharing session held at Healing Our Nations (31 Gloster Crt, Dartmouth, NS B3B 1X9).
4. Participation in an art show to display photographs to the community (co-planned with participants, further consent required)

What are the Possible Risk Factors and Benefits?

Benefits: Participants in this project will be able to contribute to understandings of accessing food in Indigenous communities, specifically for those living with HIV/AIDS. This knowledge has the potential to reach policy makers, decision makers, community members, and beyond to effect change and inform new programs or policy surrounding access to food for Indigenous communities, specifically Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS. Through this project, you will be directly involved in sharing Indigenous perspectives on food access. This could include rights-based access (e.g. moderate

livelihood fishery), land-based access, economic access, and beyond. If participants consent to sharing their photos at an art gallery later, they will also have the opportunity to co-plan the event and share their pictures representing food access publicly.

Risks: Photovoice has the potential to provoke emotional discomfort through the re-telling of stories that bring up painful memories or distress for participants. It has been found however, that for many the process of photovoice has been therapeutic. This is because for some it can be emotionally freeing to talk about previous experiences, however we cannot guarantee this to be the case for everyone involved. To ensure you feel supported throughout the duration of this project, an Elder will be available for you to connect with should you feel the need to discuss your experiences. There will also be contact information for support services provided during the introductory workshop that you may connect with at any point during or after the project. HON will also be available to help connect you with relevant service providers in your community. Due to the photographic nature of this project, your identity might be known to others who view your pictures. Please be aware of this if you decide to take photos of yourself that show your face or body. You are under no obligation to take pictures that include your face, body, or other images that could be connected to your identity. Photos may also reveal people, places, or life events that can be connected to you and therefore may not provide full confidentiality and anonymity. Efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality among research participants and researchers. Your name (if you choose) will be changed in all public forms resulting from this project in effort to protect your identity.

How will my information be protected?

You may choose to use your real name for this project, or a fake name to maintain anonymity. The name you choose will be used in all reporting, publications, and art shows. You can indicate your chosen name below on the signature page. All information that you provide will be kept private to the best of our abilities. This means all your identifying information included in this consent form will be securely locked in a cabinet at Mount Saint Vincent University. Only the research team will have access to your original information. All those who work with us have an obligation to keep all research information private. All electronic files will be kept secured in an encrypted file on the

researcher's password protected computer. This will include all audio files, which will be destroyed 5 years after the research. Research findings (using the name you provide) will be shared and described in public presentations, journal articles, community reports, and community art shows.

How will my photographs be used?

Participants will have the option to sign additional consent for the release of their pictures. You will have the option to indicate which photos you would like to release and how they are to be used by the research team. This means that use of your pictures in online publications and in art shows is optional. More information about release of creative materials (e.g. your pictures) can be found in an additional consent form that you can sign after taking your photographs.

Compensation/Reimbursement

To thank you for your time, a small honorarium will be provided for each component of this project. This will include a \$15 gift card for a local grocery store (e.g. sobeys or superstore) for participation in each component of the project (\$60 total per participant over the course of the project). In addition, lunch will be provided for in-person sessions (i.e. the group sharing session at HON). The cost of photo printing and the art show will also be covered by the project if you choose to participate.

What if I Choose to Leave the Project?

You can choose to end your participation at any time. If you decide to stop participating, please connect with us at chelsey.purdy@msvu.ca. If you choose to leave the project by providing notice to the research team, your decision will have no negative consequences. You will be informed again at the beginning of the focus group that if you do not feel comfortable at any time, you are able to leave. Following the group sharing session however, themes and concepts that have been developed with the group of other participants cannot be withdrawn. If a participant decides to withdraw following participation in the group sharing session, no quotes from their participation will be used,

any hard copies of their pictures will be returned (or shredded at participant request), and digital copies securely deleted.

How do I obtain the results of the project?

We will provide you with a short summary the findings from the group sharing session when the study is complete. No individual results will be developed in this project. You can obtain these results by providing your email address on the signature page.

What if I have further questions or concerns?

For further information about the project you may contact the student researcher (Chelsey) or project supervisors at anytime. Their contact information is listed below.

Student researcher: Chelsey Purdy

Email: chelsey.purdy@msvu.ca

Phone: 902-740-4016

Supervisor: Dr. Phillip Joy

Email: phillip.joy@msvu.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Shannan Grant

Email: shannan.grant2@msvu.ca

Your Rights as a Participant

You have the right to all information that could help you make a decision about participating in this project. You also have the right to ask questions about this project, your rights as a participant, and to have them answered to your satisfaction before you make any decision. If you would like to discuss this project further, please contact project coordinator/student, Chelsey Purdy.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or ethical concerns about this project, please contact Brenda Gagné at (902) 457-6788 or ethics@msvu.ca.

In the next part you will be asked if you agree (consent) to join this study. If the answer is “yes”, please sign the form.

Consent Form Signature Page

I have reviewed all of the information in this consent form related to the study called:

Exploring Food Access for Indigenous Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nova Scotia:

A Photovoice Project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I have been asked to participate in several components of this project including workshops, taking photos, and a group sharing session. I am aware that some of these sessions (e.g. the sharing session) will be recorded and analyzed. I understand that direct quotes may be used (with my permission) and that any photos I take of myself may be identifiable to others. This signature on this consent form means that I agree to take part in this study. My participation is voluntary, and I understand that I am free to withdraw my permission at any time without negative consequences.

How will I be identified?

☐ I want to be identified as the creator of these materials by my first name in any project reports, publications, websites, or art shows/exhibitions.

☐ I want to be identified by the following fake name in any project reports, publications, websites, or art shows/exhibitions _____

_____/_____
/ ____

Signature of Participant Name (Printed) Year Month Day

☐ Please check here if you are signing this form electronically

_____/_____
/ ____

Signature of Researcher Name (Printed) Year Month Date

☐ Please check here if you are signing this form electronically

Contact information for scheduling and sharing of project results

Email:_____ Phone:_____ (optional)

Mailing address:_____ (optional)

Appendix C

Photovoice Photography Subject Consent Form

I, _____ give permission for _____ (name of photographer/project participant), acting on behalf of the *“Exploring Food Access for Indigenous Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nova Scotia Photovoice Project”* to take my photograph or photograph my property.

By signing my name below, I understand and agree that unless otherwise stated in writing, Mount Saint Vincent University and Healing Our Nations assumes that permission is granted to use these photographs for project related reports, exhibits, online publications, and presentations that are likely to result from this project. I understand that researchers, policy makers, students, and possibly people from my community will see the photo. I understand that once published in these forms, these photographs cannot be retracted. I also acknowledge that I am over the age of 18.

____ / ____
Signature of person photographed Name (Printed) Year Month Day
(non-project participant)

____ / ____
Signature of project participant Name (Printed) Year Month Day

____ / ____
Signature of researcher Name (Printed) Year Month Day

Appendix D

Photovoice Photography General Release Form

I, _____ give permission for Mount Saint Vincent University and Healing Our Nations acting on behalf of the *“Exploring Food Access for Indigenous Peoples*

Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nova Scotia Photovoice Project” to use my photographs and captions from my time as a project participant for the following:

- ☐ Published academic papers on this topic (books and journal articles)
- ☐ Non-academic publications and books
- ☐ National and international conferences
- ☐ National and international photography exhibits
- ☐ Public presentations on this topic (talks, online and in person exhibits, conferences)
- ☐ Content for the project’s webpage (including through Healing our Nations)
- ☐ Content for the project’s facebook page (including the Healing our Nations facebook page)
- ☐ Content for teaching purposes
- ☐ Promotional materials for the project (brochures, posters, press releases, media articles, blog posts)
- ☐ Content for public art galleries/exhibitions

OR

- ☐ DO NOT use any of my photographs publicly for anything other than the research study (i.e., share them only with members of the research team).

OR

- ☐ I give the research team permission to use all of the photos for the purposes I’ve specified above, except for the following photos:

Photo number or identifier

Example: 2, 4, 6

Special Instructions

Example: Don’t use any photos that show my face

*These photos will not be used beyond the research study and will not be used publicly in any other way.

Consent and Signature

By signing my name below, I understand and agree that unless otherwise stated in writing, Mount Saint Vincent University and Healing Our Nations assumes that permission is granted to use my photographs and captions for project related purposes as specified in page 1. I understand that researchers, policy makers, students, and possibly people from

my community will see my photos. I also understand that while the research team will make efforts at preventing use of your photos outside of what is specified in this agreement, they cannot guarantee that photographs will not be reproduced (e.g. through screenshotting and use by those outside of this agreement beyond what has been specified here). I acknowledge that once photographs are published online or in publications, photographs/quotes cannot be removed.

_____	_____	_____ /
_____ / _____		
Signature of participant	Name (Printed)	Year Month Day

_____	_____	_____ /
_____ / _____		
Signature of researcher	Name (Printed)	Year Month Day