

**“THEY FEED ME GOOD”
RELATIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS IN SASKATOON**

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By

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Abstract

This research study examines the foodways of Saskatoon households, exploring relational food networks as a factor toward fairer health outcomes with a focus on resilience, resistance, and culture. This study uses critical ethnography to glean an accounting for trauma and an accounting for uplifting relational food networks. Data are drawn from interviews, photographs, media (animations), and participant observation. An iterative analysis is informed by intersectional and relational frameworks and follows a hybrid inductive-deductive approach. Findings are presented in representational and creative ways, with participants sharing stories that unveil the problematic of resilience in the face of colonialism and its relationship to food systems and health. The discussion considers socio-cultural factors, systemic racism, and inequality to advance a better understanding of cultural dimensions and political constraints linked to food insecurity. It contributes an accounting of variation in urban households in Saskatoon, their food choices, and their foodways, including models of governance that mitigate system failures to keep families fed. The lives of Saskatoon people in this study come together with separate stories of healing and violence, power and cultural restitutions of health, joy, and food. Participants live in different households but share similar collective histories of colonization and relentless inequity. Their stories are also connected through the negotiation of food related wellbeing in urban spaces that re-dignify connections to culture, restore relational food strategies, and reclaim the land.

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Dedication

I dedicate these efforts to:

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List of Abbreviations

BOL	Breath of Life theory
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
OACAP	The First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TCPS	Tri-Council Policy Statement
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WHO	World Health Organization

Glossary

Term	Meaning/Use
Alternative Food Networks	Alternative Food Networks encompass networks of producers, consumers and other actors (Murdoch et al., 2000). They are alternatives to the standard industrial food supply, typically accessed through conventional grocery stores that are assumed to be the dominant means of food procurement by most people. Alternative food network producers include, for example, local farmers, hunters and gatherers. Alternative Food Networks are at times involved in alternative food movements which work to create more environmentally and economically sustainable food systems, but vary widely in their advocacy for social, racial and environmental justice (Alkon et al., 2019).
Culture	Culture is “the system of meanings about the nature of experience that is shared by a people and passed on from one generation to another” (Robbins et al., 2021, p. 8) This thesis presents the term culture as an ongoing and emergent strategy. The thesis refers to the “community ontology” as a definitional finding and a specific social rhythm of a subculture.
Food Environments	Food environments broadly include any opportunity to obtain food (Townshend & Lake, 2009). This definition of the food environment can include physical, socio-cultural, economic and policy factors at both micro and macro-levels. Food environments include the accessibility and availability to food as well as marketing and advertising of food and food products (Frank et al., 2009).
Food Practices	Food practices refer to food-related behaviours in their social context, with consideration of the structural barriers (for example financial) that people face as they seek to feed their families (Engler-Stringer, 2009, 2011; Schubert, 2008). Food practices are also referred to as foodways (Alkon, 2012) and are rooted in cultural histories (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).
Food Security	Food security describes more than merely whether sufficient food is being produced, or a one-size-fits-all food-nutrition relationship and incorporates the various ways in which a food system supports health in its various biophysical, social, and ecological dimensions (Fazzino & Loring, 2009).
Food Sovereignty	Food sovereignty is defined as the right 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 systems (Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni 2007, 2009). Food sovereignty considers how the manipulation of economics and politics damages the ecosystem with negative social and cultural impacts and seeks a solution through social change action at all levels (De Molina, 2013).
Food Systems	Food systems encompass the foundations for food production, the social aspects of consumption, and relevant government and other policies, as well as the actual growing, processing, and distributing of substances that

Term	Meaning/Use
	become foods that people consume (Julier & Gillespie, 2012).
Foodways	Foodways are rooted in cultural histories (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011) and refer to food-related behaviours in their social context, with consideration of structural barriers such as poverty and racism. (Alkon, 2012). Foodways refer to various methods people employ to feed themselves. Foodways include cultural dynamics and the customs, habits and routines involved in decision making and sourcing food.
Indigenous	This thesis applies the Wellesley Institute’s definition of the word “Indigenous” as an inclusive and international term to describe individuals and collectives who consider themselves as being related to and/or having historical continuity with “First Peoples,” whose civilizations in what is now known as Canada, the United States, the Americas, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Asia, and Africa predate those of subsequent invading or colonizing populations. Globally, no universal definition of Indigenous peoples has been accepted (Allan & Smylie, 2015). Indigenous is chosen over the constitutionally defined Canadian term “Aboriginal” partly because it is commonly understood that in using the term “Indigenous,” individuals and communities will be supported in self-defining what it means to them (Bartlett et al., 2007, as cited in Allan & Smylie, 2015).
Indigenous and Country Foods	Indigenous foods or country foods are traditional foods harvested from the land, sky, or water. They are central to Indigenous peoples’ culture and self-determination and contribute to mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health (Gombay, 2010). Indigenous foods are high in nutrients such as antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids, protein, and numerous micronutrients (Egeland et al., 2009; Wesche & Chan, 2010).
Indigenous Food Sovereignty	The practice of Indigenous food sovereignty has been used by Indigenous peoples in Canada and across the globe to nurture traditional harvesting, hunting, and gathering and to respect the sovereign rights and power of each distinct nation for a very long time (Morrison, 2011, p. 98). Indigenous food sovereignty is ultimately achieved by upholding our longstanding sacred responsibilities to nurture healthy, independent relationships with the land, plants, and animals that provide us with our food (Morrison 2011, p. 100).
Political	The term “political” for this study refers not only to the formal, elected political process, but also to how people engage individually and collectively, formally and informally, to develop, shape, and resist public policy. (Beveridge, 2012, as cited in Mohanty, 2003).
Racism	Racism is powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas (Kendi, 2019). There are multiple mechanisms through which racism operates to perpetuate the uneven distribution of advantage and disadvantage and are avoidable and unfair actions (Paradies et al., 2008, p. 4.).
Racism:	Also known as relational racism, this is perhaps the most understood form

Term	Meaning/Use
Interpersonal Racism	of racism and refers to acts of racism that occur between people. This may include discriminatory treatment in employment or educational settings or in relational contact that occurs in day-to- day interactions (e.g., in stores, on public transportation, on the sidewalk), ranging in severity from being ignored, to poor treatment, to more overt and severe forms such as name-calling and physical or sexual violence (Reading, 2013).
Racism: Systemic Racism	Also known as structural or institutional racism, systemic racism is enacted through societal systems, structures and institutions in the form of “requirements, conditions, practices, policies or processes that maintain and reproduce avoidable and unfair inequalities across ethnic/racial groups” (Paradies et al., 2008). Systemic racism is not only enacted proactively in efforts that create racialized inequality, but also in the failure by those in power (e.g., policymakers, funders) to redress such inequalities (Reading, 2013). At first glance, it may be difficult to detect. It is commonly manifested in social exclusion and isolation that limits or prevents political and economic participation, or access to and participation in other social systems such as education and health (Reading, 2013). Systemic racism infects everyday decisions made by people who may not even think of themselves as racist. Systemic racism persists in schools, government offices, legal and justice systems, and police departments.
Resilience	Resilience includes activities that are adaptive, functioning, recovering, hidden, and successful resistance to adversity. Resilience can moderate contextual factors and structural constraints (Bombay et al., 2009; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Ungar, 2004).
Social Determinants of Health	Social determinants of health approaches seek to understand the social antecedents to health inequities, such as access to income security, employment, education, food and shelter (Marmot, 2007; Smylie et al., 2009). The social determinants of health mark an important departure from strictly biomedical and health behaviour paradigms (Raphael, 2007), which can further stereotype and pathologize marginalized people by implying that the health inequities they face are a matter of personal choice or poor genetics. (King et al., 2009). “Everyone agrees that there is one critical social determinant of health, the effect of colonization” (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Mowbray, 2007).
Spirit and Dreams	Expressions of spirit such as dreams can also act as motivators to challenge the dominant social discourse. This thesis acknowledges that spirituality can also be categorized, academically, as an external influence. Spirituality here is expressed as part of an interdependent worldview that incorporates a continuum of relations among living and nonliving beings, material and essence, time now and beyond, connected directly to each other (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000).

Prologue

My name is Lisanne Aimée Kossick Kouri. I am non-Indigenous. My mother Denise Kouri is Lebanese and Armenian, and my father Don Kossick is Ukrainian and Polish. Researching and writing as a woman, mother, and intersectional feminist is my way of sharing and framing my thoughts and interpretations. In this study methodology, it is important for me to be grounded in an understanding of belief systems, including my own. My family house, like many, played out in the kitchens. However, our food often told stories that were different from classmates'. On our kitchen counter, I saw oily pine nuts, salty colourful pistachios and rich cashews. Bulgar wheat would be soaking in a green bowl (that once belonged to my grandmothers), balls of lebne (thick cheesy yogurt) were suspended in olive oil with Za'atar, and there was cheesecloth tied to the kitchen sink dripping out liquid schmuzz, from thickening yogurt. We would have a green salad with nearly every supper and eat it at the end of the meal – this seemed to surprise our guests the most.

How I exist in the world, and to whom I belong, is a key element of my lens on this thesis. Who I am informs my reasoning and introducing myself in this way humanizes the lens I bring to this study. I believe in the value of the collective and that health and prosperity must be measured by those who carry the heaviest burdens. I am interested in and curious about how we *do* good relationship for meaningful social change in all health contexts.

Chapter 1: Introduction

*Trauma in a person, decontextualized over time, can look like personality.
Trauma in a family, decontextualized over time can look like family traits.
Trauma in a people, decontextualized over time, can look like culture.*

Resmaa Menakem¹

[Bread is like cake to me] It was like the one thing that you really couldn't get in residential schools. ~ It was such a delicacy, and it was so, well if you know what they did with nutrition and all that other stuff, and so... [I don't know if he connected all the dots to him but just his, "Bread is like cake to me.]

Study Participant

1.1 Background

There has been concerted energy across many disciplines calling on health researchers to look seriously and deeply at a more nuanced, complex, and critical lens for studies about Indigenous people's health. This study is about moving forward the truth of Indigenous situations and moving Indigenous health forward. Pressure has been mounting on scholars to include this kind of approach in health studies (Haskell & Randall, 2009; Jennings et al., 2018; Smylie et al., 2009; Tapsell & Woods, 2008; Tonmyr & Blackstock, 2010), including from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action #18, #19, #20, #22 (2015). To me, this approach is a step in answering that call and learning ethical accountabilities where TRC actions and research methods meet.

As a non-Indigenous researcher, this call to ground food studies in Indigenous theories of health is crucial to how I have framed this study. I looked to theorists like Cindy Blackstock, Manulani

¹ My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and Mending Our Hearts and Bodies, by Resmaa Menakem. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*, 2015, p. 9.

Aluli Meyer, and Kim Tallbear along with other non-Indigenous theorists in the health sector, to shape my approach (Meyer, 2013; Blackstock, 2019; Tallbear, 2019). Blackstock (2019) provides a particular insight into my approach, and she provides linkages between my commitment to equity, the social determinants of health, and the state of interdependence that she describes within the Breath of Life theory (BOL). A component of her theory is that survival is relational, “made by people who position their own survival as co-dependent across generations and with the universe” (Blackstock, 2019, p. 858). BOL provides an ecological positioning to discuss the implications of this study. She calls on epidemiologists to “be more explicitly set out in the breath of life theory” (Blackstock, 2019, p. 858) and aligns with the social change ethic that underpins my anti-oppressive epistemological lens.

The concept of resilience is an important feature within anti-oppressive literature, as well as in literature focusing on Indigeneity. Though resilience as a concept can contribute to powerful narratives and nuanced meanings of experiences in health and understandings of foodways, some authors argue that the term needs to be problematized, because it is embraced by the discourse of both the left and right, the former endorsing civil society and the latter holding individuals as responsible for their actions (Alkon & Mares, 2012). The latter conceptualization lends to individually focused behaviour-based solutions and notions of victim blaming versus structural supports from government agencies and policy makers (Ager, 2013; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013, p. 335). Health studies are typically focused on where to situate interventions to be most effective, however using an approach that nuances both trauma and resilience shifts the focus to where supports can enhance existing mechanisms of cultural power and care. Work in the health field must echo recommendations from other sectors to “support resilience through structural change” (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005, p. 1). As such, the term resilience needs to be carefully considered and framed within an understanding that social and structural change, and not individual adaptation to oppressive circumstances, is the goal.

1.2 Purpose

This study examines the foodways of Saskatoon households through a critical lens. Using critical ethnography, I explore relational food networks as a driver of fairer health outcomes with a focus on resilience, resistance, and culture. This study is part of a broader project on household nutritional inequities as experienced predominantly in the inner-city neighborhoods of Saskatoon (Engler-Stringer et al., 2016). The majority populations in these core neighborhoods are Indigenous peoples, refugees, and immigrants (City of Saskatoon, 2018). Qualitative methodologies add nuance to the complexities of health equity within colonizer paradigms, and despite colonial interference (Morse, 2012). Critical ethnography is a way to glean an accounting for trauma and for uplifting relational food networks (A. Simpson, 2011). Through a creative and representational approach, participants in this study shared stories that unveil the problematic of resilience in the face of colonialism and its relationship to food systems.

I chose Menakem's quote to open this thesis to ground the reader in the concept of layers of trauma as different dimensions of dispossession (Whelihan, 2018). The quote beside it is from a study participant and demonstrates Menakem's quote in action as it plays out from land and cultural dispossession all the way through to the individual. The participant quote articulates that culture and trauma are separate but connected dimensions of health equity. Building from Menakem's quote, my goal with this account of my research is to uncover for the reader how trauma on the land plays out as a dimension of cultural trauma, and on through layers of trauma in the community, on the family, and on the individual person. The layers coalesce around our ideas about the health of communities. I aspire for this thesis to help dismantle narrow, reductionist understandings of traumatized peoples and capture snapshots of power as they play out in participants' lives through their foodways.

Understanding how food changes hands in Saskatoon neighborhoods must include a critical account of the structural constraints, histories, and social dimensions that influence fair health outcomes of the colonized and dispossessed. Impacts of land dispossession as a consequence of colonialism persist in the lives of study participants and their food relationships. This study

considers socio-cultural factors, systemic racism, and inequality to advance a better understanding of cultural dimensions and political constraints linked to food insecurity. It is important and necessary to humanize poverty and the resilience experience. This study provides a clearer accounting of food choices and ways in the households of urban participants.

This study also provides deeper theorizations on the highly contextual and cultural nature of community food networks. The purpose is to illuminate the complexities of foodways in Saskatoon and rebuke conditions which are rooted in systems of domination and degradation. I point out motivations, mechanisms, compromises, and contingencies that are undertaken in response to broken systems. I make known the actions, practices, and interactions of the households in the study through a methodology that is responsive to interrelated dynamics. I call on a broad framework of analysis to highlight stories of racialized experience, with the goal of contributing to more equitable research and policy, and to level-up the circumstances of the “powerful and poor” to that of the “rich and powerful.” In this thesis, I highlight values of power and love as they operate within broken and traumatized food systems, and I encapsulate these mechanisms and strategies in such a way that rich cultural ways of being are better understood, while also recognizing that a severe lack of resources is an immense factor in hunger. The study employs an exploration of cultural dynamics to add nuance and complexity, and to deepen understanding about the impact of cultural values in mitigating the harms of poor food policy.

The study asks:

1. What is going on? What are the foodways practiced by Saskatoon households?
2. How? How do participants understand and account for their changing relationship to food in the context of their historical circumstances and contemporary contingencies?
3. So what? What are the implications of these findings for understanding and addressing food system inequities?

1.3 Study Location and Grounding

This study took place from 2015 to 2022 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The province of Saskatchewan means “swift-flowing river” (*kisiskâciwanisîpiy*) in Cree and is home to the powerful Saskatchewan River, whose southern tributary flows through Saskatoon. Located in central Saskatchewan, Saskatoon is defined by its river environment. From this city heading north, the land transforms from Prairie to Boreal Shield; moving northward there are large lakes, forests, complex river systems and smaller more remote communities. Saskatoon can be seen as a place of intersection.

The Saskatoon region is named, ᑭᓴᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ (misâskwatômin), which means the wood of a Saskatoon Berry shrub (Elders’ Cree Dictionary, 2021). Saskatoon is a mid-sized Canadian prairie city of about 282,900 residents in 2021 (City of Saskatoon, 2021) and has a significant Indigenous population and several urban Reserves. Indigenous people make up about 10% of the population. In the inner city of Saskatoon, there are seven low socioeconomic status neighborhoods, with high rates of poverty, low education attainment, a large Indigenous population (about 30-40% of the population), and a high concentration of residents who rent their homes, do not own a vehicle, are newcomers, or are seniors (Engler-Stringer et al., 2016).

As in other cities across Canada, poorer and Indigenous residents are at significantly greater risk of various adverse health outcomes compared to other Saskatoon residents. For example, they are 196% more likely to have diabetes and 118% more likely to have coronary heart disease (Lemstra & Neudorf, 2008; Lemstra et al., 2006). While some people living in Saskatoon experience a great deal of poverty and ill health, significant cultural resurgence and re-empowerment is also taking place within the area’s communities and various local institutions.

In Saskatoon, neighbourhood design factors into unjust food environments, serving as a feature ingredient for relationships to food and food experiences (Engler-Stringer et al., 2014). Consistent with the fair food access aspect of food justice, characterizations of food environments as food deserts or food swamps are examples of a trend toward supply-side

explanations that focus on the built food environment and its role in creating nutritional health inequalities (Glennie & Alkon, 2018; Alkon et al., 2013). This is already well-understood context for the core neighbourhood areas where most study participants reside (L. Kouri et al., 2020). This study takes a different approach to the supply side, looking at how participants negotiate supply in the context of relationships, culture, and historical circumstances.

Within food systems and food environments literature the term, alternative food networks, is broad and encompasses networks of producers, consumers, and other actors (Murdoch et al., 2000). These networks are alternatives to the dominant industrial food supply, typically accessed through conventional grocery stores that are the primary means of food procurement by most people. Alternative food network producers include, for example, local farmers, hunters, and gatherers. However, dimensions of culture have been underexplored within alternative food networks. In response, my study brings forward a more refined representation of cultural food systems and their roles in community food security.

Ultimately, the context and grounding of this thesis is shaped by the families in the study. Each family represents its own sphere, where self-determination is expressed and constrained within traumatized contexts in which current public health policies are not resolving health disparities. At the same time, Indigenous self-governance cannot be removed from the overarching goal of advancing the health and wellbeing of Saskatoon families (Jennings et al., 2018). My study humanizes health research by illuminating how people are not only using alternative food networks but are also drawing on “alternative” forms of governance and care that stand in contrast to current dominant narratives and neoliberal health paradigms. From the beginning of scoping this research and refining the framework for analysis, the anticipated long-term outcome has been to work for improved policy and increased self-determination to enhance health. Moving between critical theory, relationality, and participant stories, my framework explored multi-layered influences and barriers to health in relation to food and culture over the life course, across generations, over time presently and historically.

1.4 Canadian Government Policies

A critical perspective requires that foodways be framed in relation to historical policies of imperialism, with colonization at the forefront. Looking at food systems through the lens of the history of Saskatoon offers a fuller perspective on food practice, food culture, and responses to hunger and resistance on these lands. The foundations of hunger and inequitable foodways of Indigenous people involve settler occupation of land, and consequent effects on relationships with “self, families, communities, land, water, place, animals, culture, and language” (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 17). This topic requires an exploration of the meaning behind the Treaties as a governance structure to outline agreements about food, health, and resources between First Nations and the Crown.

Treaty 6 was signed in Saskatchewan on August 23rd, 1876. Treaty 6 included the promise of the Medicine Chest clause, which represented agreement to, “a free supply of Medicines” and protection from starvation. Deeply concerned about the loss of the Buffalo, Indigenous leaders' intentions through treaty relationship were to entrench protection for the long-term health of the Saskatchewan River and its people. Treaty 6 was made with a promise to provide food in case of famine. Indigenous people of this area were promised by the Crown and the Governor General that they were to “examine the feasibility of a law to preserve the Buffalo” (J.L. Taylor, 1985, p. 20). The Treaty agreements made clear the national government's responsibility to uphold First Nations health and governance.

Table 1.1 provides a list of supplemental colonial policies that undermined First Nations Treaty and impinged on the rights and freedoms of Métis peoples as well as non-Anglo-Saxon settlers. The policies in the table are described further in Appendix A Table A.1.1. Policies such as those in the table removed control and access to foodways and farming, with lasting impacts on Indigenous health on these lands (Settee P., 2007; Campbell et al., 1995).

Table 1.1 List of Policies of Control and Colonization²

Chinese Head Tax
Clearing the Plains
Indian Act
Pass System
Phenomenon of Lost Harvest
Racialized Homestead Policies
Residential Schools
Road Allowance
Scrip
Trapline Removal Policy

Colonial policies which constrain movement, food cultivation, monetary gain, and are endemically racist have impacted newcomer and other racialized groups on the Prairies as well, including Chinese and Black farming communities. Slavic and Middle eastern communities were also affected in more subtle, but systemic, ways (Oral histories; Rudling, 2011). Indeed, Allan and Smylie state, “Canada has a protracted history of racist policy practices including the enslavement of Indigenous and Black people, the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act, and the use of the War Measures Act to intern Japanese Canadians; however, only the Indian Act remains an active piece of legislation.” (Allan & Smylie, 2015, p. 6). This thesis takes a local cue and recognizes that these policies displaced and constrained populations with which the participants in this study identify, including First Nations, Métis, and racialized emplacement settlers, and their ability to farm, move, pass on food knowledge, settle, and make a living (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Morrison, 2011).

Intersecting dimensions of historical, cultural, and structural conditions accumulate and define the experiences of the families in this study. Intersecting health and economic policies at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels impact food and health in this place, and the abdication of responsibility by governments to provide food and health is characterized by ongoing poverty

² See Appendix A Table A.1.1 for policy descriptions.

and hunger (NAHO, 2008; Allan & Smylie, 2015). Tuck and Yang emphasize that decolonization is always a part of historical process specific to land and place (Tuck & Yang, 2016; Tuck et al., 2014). Cultures intersect in the city of Saskatoon because of colonial policies, movement on these lands, and the multiple cultural identities that intersect with politics of self-determination, immigration, and colonial injustice. Colonial structures intersect to perpetuate systems of inequity, and they constrain the movement, determination, and vibrancy of populations (A. Simpson, 2017). The social determinants of health of Indigenous and newcomer people in Saskatchewan are deeply impacted by colonization, but the negative impact goes beyond inequitable health outcomes. Colonial legacy also defines systems and policy-making in addition to health. The ways Canadian policies are made limit the development and maintenance of thriving food systems that influence health outcomes (Meyer, 2013).

To understand the historical context that shapes contemporary food systems in Saskatoon, it is important to recognize that racialized policies are the foundation of nation building in Canada (Sampson, 2018; L.B. Simpson, 2017). Canada has specific historical, political and colonialist histories that influence local relational food networks and community driven responses to food insecurity. As elaborated earlier, race-based policies impact members of non-Indigenous communities as well, including Black and immigrant farmers, and Chinese immigrants. In the homestead context of Saskatchewan, policies from the turn of the 20th century discriminated against these groups based on race and ethnicity. The colonial project constrains movement and advancement of many communities as a method of control and maintaining its occupation of lands. There is much more to the history of these policies and how they impact people on these lands and in these households today. By incorporating immigrant families and racialized families in addition to Indigenous families in this study, I provide a more nuanced exploration of how historical policies impact complex transcultural food systems (Eigenbrod, 2012).

When policy and systems change is framed in terms of ahistorical assumptions, the full picture can be missed. These policies are far-reaching and have obstructed rights to food sovereignty and the ability for many to express cultural pathways to good health. Thus, it is important for this

study to recognize that various forms of historical land dispossession and control underpin many features of contemporary Saskatoon. This study enters the Saskatchewan historical context in line with stories of colonial impact where texts by Black Canadian writers on the "multiplicitous story of Canada" (Eigonbrod, 2012, p. 16) constitute a counter-memory and unsettle the official version of "Canada's unwavering commitment to recognizing, promoting and celebrating human rights," (website of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights; Cariou, 2010, p. 21). This study draws on Marker's views (2006) and Beveridge's (2012) interpretation of multiculturalism as an unequal partnership between cultures with the dominant culture allowing a certain space for difference, while maintaining connotations of assimilation. An era of decolonization would therefore demand that this study stay open to "representations of transcultural travels of trauma and the power of multidirectional memory" (Eigonbrod, 2012, p. 16) and aim to underline, where possible, counternarratives of Canada's history and to make linkages in relation to food and culture.

1.5 Restitution and Reclamation

There is significance to acknowledging the history and action of where research takes place. In response to this place context, Canada has undergone a Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) process (2015), like the process in post-apartheid South Africa (Tutu, 2019). Although the official focus of the TRC was residential schools, its scope and recommendations were wider. Processes like the TRC are meant to identify systemic wrong-doing, race-based segregation, and violence. This is meant to bring light and focus to untold suffering as a means of working toward restorative justice. As part of the TRC process, victims are heard from, and stories of assault are shared so that the abuser, both systemic and individual, can be held accountable for their involvement in perpetrating pain. A major difference between Canada's and South Africa's processes was that in Canada the TRC was not tied to legal accountability. This distinction is particularly important for foodways because colonization in Saskatchewan is directly related to land theft. Reconciliation between cultures differs from reclamation of land, resources, and health pathways.

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation process did, however, produce Calls to Action which, if implemented would benefit and support Indigenous communities and the health of all Canadians. Indeed, the TRC's 94 action items go further than just actions oriented toward the legacies of the residential schools and arguably are intended to guide a complete overhaul of how Canada regards and works with Indigenous peoples. Responding to the TRC Calls to Action provides an effective framework for connecting colonial circumstances with present-day contingencies, and it presents a formal framework for community responses. This cannot be equated with justice in the legal sense, but the Calls to Action were adopted in principle government entities and organizations across Canada and could serve as the framework for accountability for all policy-making nationally and provincially. The facts documented and the stories told through the TRC process were not surprising or new but illuminated the depth and breadth of deeply painful experiences and their inter-generational outcomes. Specific Calls to Action indicate means for repair and they also provide an evidence-based framework for researchers to advance health equity, anti-racism, and decolonizing health policy. In particular, #18 and #22 are directly linked to health outcomes and health system structures:

TRC Call to Action #18: We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

TRC Call to Action #22: We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients. (TRC, 2015).

The TRC places value on equity for Indigenous Peoples and validates Indigenous culture as a major determinant of health, which includes cultural food systems. This framing is consistent with another key policy framework in Canada: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada only formalized UNDRIP in June 2021. This

Declaration specifies several articles that are key to Indigenous food sovereignty, specifically those related to practicing cultural traditions and control and protection of their territories. Of relevance to this study are articles that support Indigenous Control over their health, social services, and traditional lands. UNDRIP accordingly specifies the rights of the child to good health, the right to own their culture and the right to good food. (Article 17 #2, Article 21 number 1 and 2, Article 23 in full, and Article 24 1 and 2, Article 26).

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis work is an attempt to create space to bring knowledge forward. It is not about creating new knowledge because it has always been there. Instead, this thesis means to explicate, formalize, and emphasize the knowledge gained and revealed from this study. Morse argues that qualitative inquiry is less concerned with producing concrete proof than developing results that are explanatory, logical, and exciting (2012, p. 134). In concert with Morse, this thesis will not be generalizable to all contexts. However, one of its aims is to offer concepts that are “recognizable by others” through “shedding light on a previously confusing situation” (Morse, 2012, p. 134). This thesis emphasizes the importance of working inductively, ultimately adding descriptive and interpretive findings, strengthening the level of conceptual and theoretical development, and hopefully, broadening the scope for generalizability of the research though not to all contexts (Morse, 2012, p. 105).

There is complexity tied to framing a study around the racialization of poverty, dispossession, as well as building solutions in response to racist food systems. It requires simultaneously shining a light on systems that create powerlessness on the one hand and, on the other hand, on the cultural ways that create and sustain power for the communities, themselves. This study seeks to hold the resultant tension long enough to account for the beautiful things and to create a substantive addition to conceptualizations of culture and foodways. This is the context for deeper exploration of foodways in Saskatoon. Through the lenses of equity and interdependence I aim to advance a values-framework that is operating to orchestrate and organize food networks. It makes visible

how relational foodways are strategies for resilience, social change, and cultural cohesion/stabilization as resistance.

Food is a story of how we survive and how we thrive. We need bigger and more expansive tables where we all can feast (Packnett Cunningham, 2021).

Food is a fundamental dimension of culture and health. It functions as one of the most basic forms of communication. Food can transmit ideas, science, values, identity, and culture. I have constructed this argument so that readers will gain a strong sense of the purposefulness in this study as it is inextricably linked to values of responsibility and support. This study is organized to connect negative social determinants with historical circumstances and their influence on contemporary foodways.

Drawing from the findings, this thesis is organized to argue that:

1. Nurturance systems uncovered in this study deliver improved health outcomes. I demonstrate that foodways are vibrant, diverse, and strong, and they are mitigating the very worst impacts of poor health policy and food insecurity. Without the lengths to which these families are going to feed their households, the outcomes would be even worse and felt across the broader health system.
2. An understanding of trauma, resilience, and cultural resistance is necessary to support enhanced foodways and to lessen the severity of food insecurity. The life course approach is useful for understanding how to improve and intervene upon health outcomes, and I argue that the cultural lifecourse, the community lifecourse, and the intergenerational life course are all just as important for understanding an individual's experience of food networks. The layers need to be considered together, particularly as they inform the design of supports and stop-gaps for health.
3. Foodways, culture, and health are political. To have healthier communities, supports can be aimed at leveraging existing systems that center cultural resistance, equity, land reclamation, and self-determination. The galaxy of factors that emerge from participant

stories should be the basis of governance and policy for health. I argue that the power of these nurturance systems is well worth supporting, and that if they were scaled societally, these ways of being would benefit all Saskatoon households.

In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of the relevant literature on foodways and explore theoretical frameworks for resilience in research conducted with racialized and edged-out impoverished communities. This chapter ends with a summary of opportunities to nuance and enhance perspectives on relational food practices.

Chapter 3 outlines my methodology and provides an overview of critical ethnography. I describe the characteristics of knowledge production and rigour within critical ethnography. This chapter also details my personal background and my lens on the research. I describe my preconceptions and discuss experiences and theories that influence my analytical perspective. I explain the actions undertaken to ensure that the study was conducted ethically. I describe my three research questions and outline my research design, including the purposive sample strategy and multi-pronged data collection methods. I discuss my analytical framework and the blend of deductive, inductive, and abductive processes I employ. Key features of this framework include a commitment to equity and honouring the strengths and power of participants.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of my study findings. I begin by outlining the types of food that emerged from participant stories, as well as the locations and relationships where food is procured and exchanged. The variety of foods and the resourcefulness/innovations of households are major themes I discuss. Next, I explain how colonial disruptions to relationships with land, culture, and community are connected to family feeding practices. Participant quotes are featured alongside interpretations of some field notes and observations to underscore key themes and connection points. This chapter continues with a closer look at the relationships, values, and cultural ways of being that shape food practices and foodways within participant households. I pay particular attention to how these mechanisms constitute relational and cultural food sub-surface systems. Effectively, caregivers within these households are organizing strategies to mitigate conditions of poverty and scarcity. I finish this chapter by highlighting themes of

abundance, love, and joy that emerged consistently from participant stories, and I connect their approach to taking care of each other with the concept of good governance.

In Chapter 5, I begin the discussion of household foodways in Saskatoon. I highlight key themes that emerged from the data and show how every household in the thesis can be envisioned in an inverted ecosocial way through an equity lens integrated with a conceptual map of practice. I move on to discuss in turn two conceptual designs to hopefully enhance but also to make visible explanations and relationships of what I have interpreted from the data. I offer reflections on values of care and of resistance and themes of trauma and repair. Chapter 5 continues with a reflection on my abstractions from the data and discusses how my interpretations unearth practices and cultural tenets which function biosocially to create a whole picture of meaningful knowings. I offer several angles from which to connect and make meaning of the study results. Presented are ethnographic categories which highlight cultural and social dynamics that mediate how food and health are interpreted. I offer various insights in domains that include spiritual, collective, healing, nurturance, governance, and the land.

I conclude the fifth chapter with examples of working, reversing, turning, and flipping my understandings of foodways and health in Saskatoon. Finally, I conclude this chapter with an overview of theories that directly informed this study: Cindy Blackstock's Breath of Life Theory, Health Equity and Syndemics, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality and Feminist Theory, Black Girl Magic Theory, Soil Science theory, Neuropsychology theory, Manulani Meyer's theory of Indigenous Quantum Physics and Interdependence, and the Social Determinants of Health. I consider the stories participants shared as singular accounts and as constituents of a collective account greater than the sum of its parts, moving between them analytically until both the parts and the whole start to make sense in reference to each other. Based on these meanings I then consider and highlight potential policy directions (Malena-Chan, 2019 p. 36).

The thesis closes with Chapter 6 where I present key features gleaned from the analytical process and findings. Especially meaningful, I highlight prospection and Indigenized futurity through a lens of healing, time and abundance, intending to uplift from the unidimensional confines of

“trauma” and into transcultural conceptualizations of health and culture. A purpose of Chapter 6 is to cast forward the liveliness of foodways. This chapter offers metaphorical flavours, a taste, a glimpse of meaning making today, in real time, in Saskatoon. Chapter 6 aspires to interact with the reader, evoking a sense of celebration. I consider this chapter as expressing participant power, principles, and practices through time, space, and landscape. In the final pages of this thesis, perceptions of wellbeing and themes of a healthy society are conveyed through deep respect, love, and creativity, as they have been taught to and shared with me.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Food is very political – anything you need for survival is political. There is nothing more political than the food we eat... together.

Padma Lakshmi³

She'd drag out a big bag of ducks and she'd be plucking them and cinching them outside on a big fire... And all the things that I see as so beautiful about that – all my siblings see that as ugly.

Study Participant

2.1 Introduction

The two quotes above reference the role of food in our political lives and its influence on the long-term outcomes of a community. The first quote from Lakshmi is explicit about this fact, and the participant quote beside it brings forward an embodied experience of this politic. The participant describes food practices as “ugly”, in an unspoken juxtaposition to “non-ugly” food practices. However, seeing the beauty in food practices is also a political act. Lakshmi talks about being together as a means of survival, and this participant is leveraging survival techniques within their food environment. The food environment – which broadly includes any opportunity to obtain food (Townshend & Lake, 2009) – is being recognized as a critical determinant of community health (Frank et al., 2009; Kirk et al., 2010; Lake & Townshend, 2006). The literature around foodways has evolved to draw these political linkages, recognizing the variety of critical dimensions surrounding food. Much of this thesis is about the labour to live a good life with good food and “the verve and equanimity of enduring while pushing back” (A. Simpson, 2017, p. 70; 2014).

The literature attests to significant household food insecurity in Canada and its association with disparities in public health outcomes. In 2017-18, 1 in 8 households in Canada was food insecure, amounting to 4.4 million people, including more than 1.2 million children living in

³ Food the Revolution, in Podcast Undistracted, 2020

food-insecure households (1 in 5 children reside in food insecure households in Saskatchewan) (Tarasuk et al., 2020; PROOF, 2018). Tarasuk explains that responses to household food insecurity lack appropriate and effective strategies that address the complex influences of poverty, arguing that “the capacity of current initiatives to improve household food security appears limited by their inability to overcome or alter the poverty that underpins this problem” (Tarasuk, 2001, p. 494; Hutchinson & Tarasuk, 2021). Tarasuk calls for greater examination and critical framing around the effectiveness of alternative food initiatives.

Among such initiatives are “alternative food networks” (AFN). These refer to community-based programs, some of which use a charity model, or a cooperative model (Engler-Stringer, 2017). Alternative food networks point to the complexity of food acquisition and food practices (Hoey & Sponseller, 2018). The term “Alternative Food Networks’ is used in many ways. However, the term “alternative” is only in reference to colonial food systems as a baseline. Food networks need to be explored through the lens of culture and equity. For this thesis, it is important to note that food security and sustainability scholars and others use AFN to describe initiatives that change supply chains from the dominant, agribusiness model, from Community Supported Farms (CSA) and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to food hubs, direct food marketing, and exchange-economy food acquisition (Loring et al., 2013; Zhang & Barr, 2019). In food studies, the meaning of the word “alternative” in food networks implies an element of alternative economic practice within food networks. Soma brings forward the idea that effective AFNs are modelled from a political economy perspective and focus on sustainable and circular systems which account for users’ motivation, access to opportunity and ability (Soma et al., 2021). When viewed from this latter perspective, AFN definitions are reminiscent of longstanding Indigenous and egalitarian principles for health. In the context of this thesis, the term alternative was not wholly applicable and the concept of relational food network has evolved in its stead.

Supply-side approaches to food security developed as a progressive alternative to traditional health-promotion approaches that target individual-level behaviour change through education, particularly in nutrition. These entailed food shopping and preparation advice, and a move

toward addressing structural issues of equitable development and direction to health-promoting opportunities (Travers, 1997, p. 213). However, supply-side explanations have some limitations in that they do not consider complex food practices that low-income people have developed to meet their needs given their financial and other constraints (Alkon et al., 2013). For example, they may be participating in various programs within their community to access food, or they may hunt, fish, and gather or access these foods from friends or family members from outside the city (Powe et al., 2013). In Indigenous communities “trans-local” food sharing with friends and family not living in urban areas, and usually comprising foods sourced from the land, may also play a significant role (J. Brown et al., 2008; Power, 2008). For instance, urban-poor Alaskan Natives have described relying on deliveries of wild fish and game from their family members and friends still living in remote communities (Fazzino & Loring, 2009; Loring et al., 2013).

Emerging evidence in Saskatoon points to the use of community-based food interventions and other aspects of alternative food networks to access food in the inner city (Engler-Stringer & Muhajarine, 2015). Findings from a Saskatoon food survey of core neighbourhood residents showed that overall, 72% of the households reported participating in Saskatoon’s relational food networks and used anywhere from one to four different community-based food interventions (L. Kouri et al., 2020). Findings of particular interest include that 27.1% of households reported buying or being given food directly from producers, for example, rural and urban channels for accessing fish and meat from the North (Engler-Stringer & Muhajarine, 2015).

While this study responds specifically to local findings, it is also nested within policy paradigms that operate at local, provincial, and federal levels. The Medicine Chest clause explained in Chapter 1 which is particular to Treaty 6 territory, dating back to 1876, provides a framework for exploring food and health in a colonized urban environment. Treaty rights are enshrined in Canada’s constitution, including good health access and consistent medicine and supplies to care for everyone living on Treaty 6 territory. Canada’s National Medicare program was, I would argue, learned from Treaty 6. The Canadian Cooperative Federation (CCF) of the central prairies created a publicly funded health plan — a universal medicare system — and that model,

developed 65 years ago, became the template for Canada. According to Simpson, public health care, certainly provincially, seems to have been framed or at least inspired from the Medicine Chest clause (Simpson, L., 2011). The colonial bureaucracy involving tiers of government responsibility has resulted in a magnitude of failure to acknowledge Treaty rights and equally a removal of care. For many, this failure is an added assault of colonialism. The longer Treaty rights to health are withheld, the more people it affects and the clearer it becomes – the existing system of care is not working. The implications of Treaty 6 influence provincial and federal levels of policy. Throughout this thesis I further elaborate how these perspectives inform my analysis on food networks, adaptation, complex recent histories, and contemporary interactions within the system forces at play.

2.2 Food Insecurity and the Socio-Structural Determinants of Health

Negative social determinants that contribute to the poorer health of Indigenous people are the result of a whole lattice of social structures including ill-planned urbanization, poverty, and lack of land ownership, which impact on the extent and severity of food insecurity. By focusing on households within these structures, we can better understand how food networks are organized as well as the processes that leverage and enhance relational procurement strategies. Such an understanding is necessary to inform better policy responses (Blackstock, 2019; A. Simpson, 2007, 2014; Power, 2008).

This critical ethnography study is informed by literature from several disciplines. Drawing on the recommendations from diverse fields of study covered in this thesis, leaders in health equity interventions, particularly in Saskatoon are seeking ambitious clarification on the extent of food insecurity and its relational variables and conditions (Blackstock, 2019; UNDRIP 2015).

Loring et al. (2013, p. 16) summarize a perspective on food insecurity fitting for ethnographic research, wherein degrees of food insecurity including its relational and political variables are considered.

...food security describes more than merely whether sufficient food is being produced, or a one-size-fits-all food-nutrition relationship and incorporates all of the various ways in which a food system supports health in its various biophysical, social, and ecological dimensions (Loring & Gerlach, 2009). These include matters such as the importance of certain foods, food choice, local perceptions of hunger, uncertainty and worry about food safety or shortages, and any other psychosocial, sociocultural, or environmental stresses that result from the process of putting food on the table (Maxwell, 2001).

Correspondingly, Jennings et al. stated that “health interventions are inextricable from the prejudicial biases of their era” (Jennings et al., 2018, p.354). Other foodways scholars such as Cidro (2018) and Skinner (2020) also critique health promotion interventions for vulnerable populations as being dominated, as Jennings et al. (2018, p. 354) describe, by “lifestyle theory and its onus on the individual”.

Literature on food insecurity calls for studies that account for racism and colonial disruption. An important report, *First Peoples Second Class Treatment* from the Wellesley Institute concluded that the persistent health disparities impacting First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities in Canada require analysis of how the health system reinforces and reproduces these disparities (Allan & Smylie, 2015). The study emphasized that “racism, including prejudice and stereotyping, is identified as an underlying determinant in conceptual modelling of racial and ethnic disparities” (Chin et al., 2008 as cited in Allan & Smylie, 2015 p. 40.) The literature encourages enhancing the knowledge base for comparisons of provision of Indigenous care (NAHO, 2008; Allan & Smylie, 2015) and calls for the development of a national set of core competencies in Indigenous public health (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Baba & Reading, 2012, p. 123). The Wellesley study specified the need to leverage patient perspectives and experiences using safe, collaborative, and creative methods that move beyond binaries and are inclusive of Indigenous methodologies (Smylie & Allan, 2015). The report recommended critical next steps for health interventions that are also important considerations in the current study. In their report, Allan and Smylie (2015, p. 3) and echo the Truth and Reconciliation report’s calls to action in health:

- Reframe the conversation around race and health in Canada by acknowledging the foundational and ongoing realities of racism and colonialism (Lawrence & Dua, 2005), which are obscured by the official framing of the Canadian nation as a harmonious multicultural mosaic.
- Generate meaningful data to understand and address the role of racism in the health disparities experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada (Paradies et al., 2008).
- Develop or adapt effective interventions to address attitudinal, interpersonal, and systemic racism towards Indigenous peoples.
- Pursue bold and brave evaluations of existing anti-racism strategies and interventions.

Bourdieu's work also has relevance for investigation of food insecurity as a socio-structural determinant of health. Structural health determinants encompass overlapping individual and collective experiences. Bourdieu refers to the manner with which the individuals incorporate themselves into the broader context and structures of their life as *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977; 2005). The habitus encapsulates a set of dispositions toward the world (and the future) that results from occupying a particular location in social space (e.g., gender, class, race, age, etc.). An individual's logic of practice, described above, is derived from the person's habitus, or set of dispositions, along with the resources available to the individual and the context in which she finds herself. The individual's primary habitus is formed in the early years of life and through crucial junctures over the life course such as circumstances of the family of origin, including class and material resources, and socialization into gendered and racialized roles (Power, 2008, 2004). Bourdieu's theory of habitus touches on the structure of inner narratives as well as cultural subjectivities.

This concept of habitus is linked to foodways because it speaks to a form of pragmatism that is inherent to users of complex food systems. Through this lens, the focus is shifted beyond "user" of foodways and systems to include "enhancer", by doing and being. On the other hand, there is an argument to be made that Bourdieu's theory may be out of touch. By proposing habitus as something within people, it is somehow about the person more than about the things they are

coping with. However, there is another way to look at this: the habitus we establish to cope with food insecurity *is* a feature of food insecurity, not (just) a feature of people. The notion of inherent pragmatism relates to cultures of practice which is not limited to a focus on individual motivations.

Previously, studies have explored how poverty, class, and race interplay within food culture to impact this habitus. For example, pragmatism around food varies across income levels and experiences of racialization. Alkon investigates to “what end low-income communities of color are making use of local food systems” (2012, p. 9) and questions the use of certain food systems by more privileged populations. Alkon writes that there are “growing numbers of people of colour developing local food systems and challenging dominant ideas about food, agriculture and the environment in exciting ways” (2012, p. 11). Rooted in cultural histories Alkon and Agyeman (2011) refer to food-related behaviours in their social context, with consideration of the structural barriers that people face as they seek to feed their families (L. Kouri et al. 2020; Alkon, 2012; Engler-Stringer, 2009, 2011; Schubert, 2008).

2.3 Indigenous and Intersecting Lenses on Health and Health Equity

2.3.1 Importance of an Indigenous Perspective

Critical ethnographic designs focus on the researcher as the instrument of interpretation. Leading authors in genetics and Indigenous Science, Tallbear and Meyer (2016) encourage frameworks which also include the Indigenous Science of “making sense. Like the process of abductive reasoning, “making sense” is part of an informed and dynamic evidential epistemology within Indigenous Science where logic and reason intermingle and operate at the nexus of interconnection to facilitate holistic, sustainable decision-making (Nicholson et al., 2019).

In alignment with this literature, the current study seeks an interpretation within methodology which will involve linking seemingly opaque interdependent micro factors with broader cultural contexts. The scholarly reach of food liberation studies for health accentuates critical

frameworks for research. This study stresses the importance of a design which can capture and analyze unintended underlying factors and add to health scholarship through holistic representation and openness to various methodological approaches while respecting different paradigmatic views (Edwards, 2012).

There is a growing understanding of the indivisibility of humanity and nature within Indigenous worldviews (Panelli & Tipa, 2009). For many Indigenous cultures, health represents the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing of individuals, their families and communities (Mundel & Chapman, 2010). In the context of the Maori, Panelli and Tipa (2009) argue that a wider appreciation of these interconnections is central to an understanding of Indigenous environmental concerns that extend to food health agendas. Food system and decolonization literature has described Indigenous cultural relations to the land as sustaining nutritional, cultural, economic and spiritual needs (Panelli & Tipa, 2009). The literature also argues that examining issues of health within the context of culture from a post-colonial frame requires culture to be understood as “a complex network of meanings enmeshed within historical, social, economic and political processes” (Browne et al., 2005, p. 45) and as a set of signifying practices through which meanings are produced and exchanged (Browne et al., 2005, p. 45).

While it is well-recognized that Indigenous ontologies are intrinsically tied to the land, the literature also emphasizes this includes urban understandings of land practices (Tuck et al., 2014). The significance of the land and its totality is not diminished in urban settings. Food practices of Indigenous urban households transpire within the inner city as much as they do on land that is perceived to be away from urban areas (Tuck et al., 2014). Tuck et al. (2014, p.7) reinforce “making the case – to examine and experience the urban as storied Indigenous land”. Further, storied land can serve as “an important connecting node between Indigenous struggle and Black resistance” (Paperson, 2014, p.126).

Food practices are also referred to as foodways (Alkon, 2012) and are rooted in cultural histories (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). Decolonizing theory is an important means of accounting for cultural history in relation to foodways, making the case that all land be viewed as Indigenous

land. Others explain that recovery and reclamation require looking backward and accepting the darker edges of life, as well as darker outcomes in health and food insecurity (Harp, 2021; Kovach, 2009).

Indigenous economies have long and flourishing histories that have been developed, managed, and sustained over many generations, dating back well before substantial exposure to Western contact and the advent of modern research (Nicholson et al., 2019). As a non-First Nations person, I approach this history with circumspection and respect, and aim to avoid what Blackstock discusses as a decolonization style which still places the settler at the centre (Blackstock, 2018). In so doing I draw on Indigenous and non-Indigenous theorists who de-centre settlers in research and work at ontological and epistemological intersections on issues of health equity (Tuck et al., 2014; Paperson, 2013).

Within social etiology of disease literature, disease and social constructions of disease are focused on reducing health disparity. This focus is further underscored by frameworks in health which consider social production of disease related to multidimensional and dynamic perspectives. These ideas which “situate humans as one notable species among many cohabiting, evolving in and altering” dynamic ecological spaces (Krieger, 2001, p. 671) coalesce with Indigenous literature. Meyer (2003) draws in quantum physics to advance her discussion of “ancient” Hawai’ian knowledge that stresses the importance of context, “kupuna - place and pono - justice” within “causal knowings” (p. 254) where these parts connect to the whole. Similarly, Krieger’s (2001, p. 672) ecosocial lens on social epidemiological approaches to health equity describes:

- (1) embodiment, (2) pathways of embodiment, (3) cumulative interplay between exposure, susceptibility and resistance, expressed in pathways of embodiment, with each factor and its distribution conceptualized at multiple levels (individual, neighbourhood, regional or political jurisdiction, national, inter- or supra-national) and in multiple domains (e.g. home, work, school, other public settings), in relation to relevant processes, manifested in multiple scales of time and space;
- (4) accountability and agency, expressed in pathways of and knowledge about

embodiment, in relation to institutions (government, business and public sector), households and individuals, to explain social inequalities in health.

My review of literature also uncovered several important works including *Pimatisiwin* (Settee 2007), who, like Blackstock's Breath of Life theory (2019), explains that Indigenous knowledge is far more than the binary opposite of western knowledge. Settee (2007) describes Indigenous knowledge as "a benchmark to the limitations of Eurocentric theory" practice and evidence (p. 220). She reinforces and re conceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples, and underscores the importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes. Especially relevant to this study is that "Indigenous knowledge fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education, research, and scholarship" (Battiste, 2002, p. 5, as cited in Settee, 2007, p. 220) and I would argue, toward restorative healing.

2.3.2 Healing and Food Justice

Healing and restorative food justice assist in framing foodways in the context of human rights and health. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) states that social justice is fundamental in reaching health equity. The literature emphasizes that food justice is characterized as "ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten, are shared fairly" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6). Alkon and Agyeman (2011) argue that food justice is focused on two areas of concern — food access and food sovereignty. Food access is one of the primary foci of food environments research and advocacy efforts, while food sovereignty is a community's right to define their own food and agriculture systems (Wittman et al., 2010). In extending the basic concept of food sovereignty to its meanings for Indigenous communities in Canada, Morrison (2011) and others (Settee, 2007; Engler-Stringer et al., 2020) explain that Indigenous food sovereignty includes several basic principles such as self-determination which includes the freedom from dependence on dominant food sources such as grocery stores.

The literature points to terms such as food liberation, food freedom, or ecological justice when referring to structural and policy barriers to food security. As with Alkon and Cadji (2020),

Hislop (2014, p. 19) described food justice as “the struggle against racism, exploitation, and oppression taking place within the food system that addresses inequality's root causes both within and beyond the food chain”. Meyer’s (2017, 2013, 2014) work on Hawaiian food freedom and Indigenous hermeneutics is developed from value structures, her own and the Indigenous communities to which these values belong. Meyer (2017, 2013) also encourages a hermeneutic of listening in research, stating that “it is the nature of oppression and control embedded in well-meaning directives to keep volition a rare experience and expression of self a crime” (Meyer, 2013, p. 253). An ambition that drives this study is to actively work against reproducing feelings of shame, and instead create spaces where volition of expression of self is no longer rare.

2.3.3 Feminisms in Food Security

Decades of literature have established that root causes of health disparity include heteropatriarchy and racism (Crenshaw, 1989; Harris 2021). Studies from vast disciplines contend that the significance of women and caretaker experiences cannot be dismissed, “when feminism is defined in such a way that it calls attention to the diversity of women’s social and political reality, it centralizes the experience of all women, especially the women whose social conditions have been least written about, studied, or changed by political movements” (hooks, 1990, p. 52). In some studies, the literature points to a lack of ambitions for meaningful intervention or appropriate strategy implementation to protect those most at risk of severe food insecurity (Alkon, 2012). In the context of this study those most at risk would be women and children in Saskatoon who are Black, Brown and Indigenous.

In her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, L.T. Smith (2012) takes the position that the commonality of oppressive conditions can be recorded but not produced by those who are neither othered, Brown, Black nor Indigenous. L.T. Smith (2012) further attests to the contributions of feminist scholars and Black women’s writing as “useful for Maori women, legitimating, with literature, what Maori women have experienced” (p. 169). Indigenous scholar Tallbear (2016) has also noted the significance of legitimating with literature diverse experiences of cumulative reinforcing multi-systemic inequities and advancing matriarchal and systems of Indigenous

feminisms into wider public discourse. Tomlinson expresses the imperative that critical feminist efforts position themselves “to transform the terms of reading and writing to take responsibility for the ways feminist discourses can function as technologies of power” assisting in strengthening and clarifying women-centred studies underpinned by patriarchy and racism (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 994).

2.3.4 Fifth wave of public health

The literature outlined thus far aligns with observations elsewhere that community and population health studies are at an important crossroads for change (Edwards, 2012). There is much at stake. Hanlon (2011) details four waves in public health since the industrial revolution tracing alignments between the waves of public health issues and their remediation with innovations in science and society. He makes the case for a fifth wave in public health, while Edwards (2012, p. 406) speaks of a fourth generation in health to “tackle tenacious health disparities”. Edwards (2012, p. 406) further outlines “transformational thinking beyond our standard research paradigms” as a marker for better research. A proponent of incorporating and maintaining “public health critical praxis as a conceptual framework”, Edwards (2012, p.407) suggests studies should also address “structural determinants of health through comprehensive multi-level interventions, and [ensure] explicit attention to self-reflection by researchers since ‘we are all a product of the subtleties of racism’ ”. Echoing these writers, Monehu Yates (2019) suggests Indigenous more-than-human holistic and ecological cultural frameworks for wellbeing might be emplaced in public health policy and research. Moreover, Monehu Yates argues that current governance approaches, including food security interventions, quickly converge with Indigenous ethical practices of wellbeing through planning that grounds such ontologies in neighbourhoods, cities, and wider afield. The message is that a ‘fifth wave of development in science and society is now necessary with a need to “differ radically from [some] of its forerunners in order to have any chance of tackling the roots of untenable problems and health outcomes.” (Hanlon, 2011, p. 30).

2.4 Decolonizing Orientation to Resilience in Food Security

Decolonizing perspectives are especially important in a consideration of resilience, disrupted attachments, attachments to land, trauma, and intergenerational trauma. In relation to Indigenous food security, some decolonization literature emphasizes the importance of a critical examination of resilience, including an analysis of contextual factors that influence the capacity for resilience (A. Simpson, 2016). Resilience is portrayed as the confluence of community and contextual factors (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Ungar, 2004; Bombay et al., 2009). This is particularly important for this study: what is the meaning of resilience in relation to actions of resistance within Indigenous households and relational food networks?

Saskatchewan's historical context has implications for a decolonizing orientation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these are linked to cultural expressions of resilience and resistance as a response to egregious colonial abuses. Resilience can be seen as a form of complex trauma response within First Nation communities in Saskatchewan:

These communities are not traumatized as a result of previous experiences of historical wrongs which are now in the past, though this plays a significant role. Instead, they are currently traumatized as a result of contemporary social, economic and political conditions of their lives, and the ways in which individual lives are affected by ongoing complex trauma responses. (Haskell & Randall, 2009, p. 74).

D. Smith et al. (2005) suggest that understanding trauma may tap into sources of resilience that serve to transform relationships and to avert the intergenerational transmission of negative patterns. Resiliency merits research attention to identify processes that can support better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, and families (Tonmyr & Blackstock, 2010).

Resilience at the individual level is understood as a neurobiological and psychological coping mechanism in response to stress and trauma. In an editorial in the fields of psychology and anthropology, Panter-Brick and Leckman (2013) summarize the interconnected pathways of resilience toward wellbeing and offer a definition where “resilience is the process of harnessing biological, psychosocial, structural, and cultural resources to sustain wellbeing” (p. 333).

McCubbin et al., (2013) discuss the importance of expanding largely individualized conceptualizations of resilience to include resilience within the family system. This literature frames the idea of a type of inventory from which families can draw coping strategies and transmit family knowledge to respond to complex food system challenges within daily life activity. Such interactions in turn can also contribute to strengthening family identity and individual identity in relation to family. The literature indicates that, “survival of the family system operating as a unit has received limited attention in the resilience-oriented research” (McCubbin et al., 2013, p. 177).

Cicchetti and Rogosch offer a reconceptualization of resilience as a multidimensional construct. They imply that resilient functioning can be used in interdisciplinary constructs because it offers crucial insight into complex pathways and mechanisms that can identify change or ‘turning points’ for intervention (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2012; Luthar et al., 2015).

McCubbin (2007) offers a dimensional family schema structure made up of expectations and priorities. What they have termed as an Indigenous *ethnic* schema identifies specific family worldviews involving cultural and ethnic values, including family orientations of caring for the land and “valuing the meaning of dance, language and music in order to keep the culture alive for generations” (McCubbin, 2007, p. 172). McCubbin investigates the ethnic and Indigenous schema and its influence on the development of family meanings of crises and experiences through expectations, spirituality, nature and time (McCubbin, 2007). Though some gains have been made since the review by McCubbin et al. (2013), over the past many years, they point out a dearth of empirical research on the indirect effects of a family schema. Investigations focusing on functioning and wellbeing need to address this gap in the literature (McCubbin, 2007). Theory-building based on “longitudinal research focused on transformation of, and system change, in family systems as part of resilience has remained relatively uncharted” (Werner, 2010. pp. 239-252). Sociological studies have added theories to the literature on resilience by attempting to explain why some families adjust and adapt when confronted by traumatic life events while others do not. However, the significance of cultural dimensions has not been

incorporated in these analyses. Kirmayer et al. (2011) discuss the need to “understand resilience in more collective and cultural terms and to identify social-structural barriers to the expression of resilience at crucial life transitions” (p. 85). Building from this concept, a study focused on culture and context could offer insights to boost recovery from severe adversity.

Literature in other fields demonstrates that there are precedents for a multi-focal approach to cultural foodways, and a long-standing recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems. For example, anthropologists and other social scientists have identified several clusters of cultural practices among Canadian Inuit, that can be seen as resilient responses to changing food environments, and traditional and urban food provisioning (Berkes & Jolly, 2002). Two practices of particular importance in relation to resilience and relational food networks considered in this study are sharing mechanisms and social networks to provide mutual support and intercommunity trade (Berkes & Jolly, 2002).

Kirmayer et al. (2011) contend that Indigenous perspectives of resilience can circulate outside the community, refiguring the representations of Indigenous Peoples in the larger society in ways that can foster resilience through recognition, respect, and reconciliation.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Authors, storytellers, and scholars have made compelling arguments and identified, in interdisciplinary settings, the implications of reductive responses to complex health questions. Problems of severe food insecurity and disparity are not new nor inevitable. The literature is clear that humanizing health research and supporting just and fair outcomes requires a holistic approach that responds to this strong, diverse call for thoughtful and ethical food research in health. Commitment to this will take a set of competencies in relational accountability and a core belief that theory, science, and democracy do not belong solely to academia. In the next chapter I outline the methodology I employed to rise to this challenge.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I have spent enough time taking down the master's house and now I want most of my energy to go into visioning and building our new house.

Leanne B. Simpson, 2011, p. 99⁴

*That's years of telling people they can't hunt, or they can **only hunt so much**... we survived for thousands of years without European influence and when you took away our hunting, fishing, and trapping, you crippled us... **not you but the other you**...*

Study Participant

3.1 Critical Ethnography

3.1.1 Why Critical Ethnography

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the epistemological positions that guide my study design. I describe the study methodology and explain its relevance. I provide an overview of the methods employed in the study and the ethical considerations involved in the design and implementation. In keeping with critical ethnographic methodology in health, I locate my personal context and to whom I belong.

In so doing I present perspectives on ethical meaning making in the field. I include justifications for participant inclusion and for employing critical qualitative methodology to examine foodways. I discuss general reasons for applying this methodological approach in broad terms linking ontologies to social determinants of health and food insecurity, but I narrow the discussion and argue that the methods employed are particularly positioned to reveal stories, adapt to complicated data and data dynamics, and provide insights from participants themselves. The chapter ends with an introduction to my “lens” for analysis. I call it Critical Nurturance. Principles of critical nurturance bring our meanings of equity into focus.

⁴ Simpson L., *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Recreation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 2011, p. 99.

The overarching problem is that food insecurity threatens the health of Saskatoon communities, and populations around the globe. This study uses ethnographic methods for meaning-making, identifying perceptions and uncovering context-driven food practices in relation to health outcomes of these households. The purpose of using critical ethnography in this study is to move social change forward and to use available approaches to understand and to derive knowledge about food-health outcomes and local food systems.

Dr. Audra Simpson (2011, p. 29), a political anthropologist, writes:

Indigeneity is quite simply a key to critical analysis, not as a model of an alternative theoretical project or method (as interesting and valuable as this is) but simply as a case that, when considered robustly, fundamentally interrupts what is received, what is ordered, what is supposed to be settled.

Critical ethnography is a way of exploring complex cultural dimensions that characterize relational food networks (Cook, 2005; Kovach, 2021; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Loring et al., 2013; Paperson, 2014; Monehu Yates, 2021). Ethnography is the study of culture and describes how a cultural group works by exploring beliefs, language, behaviors, and issues such as power, resistance, and dominance (Creswell, 2007). In critical ethnography, critical theory is the lens by which data are interpreted. Interpretivist and constructivist frameworks are used alongside practical methods to uncover patterned social realities, providing insights into the meaning of experiences (Denzin, 2009). Citing Lather (p. 787) Denzin writes that broader frameworks of critical methodology would include a critical “counter science” to narrow definitions of truth and reflection, data and analysis, and knowledge. Critical ethnography “troubles” what policymakers take for granted (2009, p. 153).

This methodology is appropriate for studying relational food networks in Saskatoon because it focuses on power and hegemony, and will “analyze, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain” (Thomas, 1993, pp. 2-3, as cited in Myers & Young, 1997, p. 227). Two quotes open this chapter. They each speak to significant though separate parts of the methodology. They hint at the unseen and the unheard.

Carspecken (2016) compares anthropology teachings within critical qualitative research, including within ethnography. He notes that it seems easier to conduct and write about low inference descriptive fieldwork than it is to do or convey to others how to do high inference analytical theory construction. Carspecken earlier explains that the purpose of the later stages of analysis in critical ethnography is “to consider one’s findings in relation to general theories of society both to help explain what has been discovered in earlier stages of research and also to alter, challenge and refine macro sociological theories themselves”, which is a significant step associated with health equity research (Carspecken, 1996, p. 172 as cited in Cook, 2005, p. 135).

Cook (2005, p.137) argues that “the empowerment principles implicit within health promotion practice call for a research method that can be used to facilitate action among those affected but at the same time provide rigorous and convincing evidence to those in decision-making positions”. Consequently, in recent years, uptake of critical ethnography in health research has been impelled out of a pragmatic need and value orientation (L.M. Creswell, 2014). To that end, L.M. Creswell (2014) employs critical Black feminist ethnography aiming to derive effective opportunities for gender specific input to meet unique treatment needs focused on women’s emotional development, trauma, recovery, parenting and their experience of persistent and co-occurring physical and mental illnesses. L.M. Creswell’s (2014) lens on critical ethnography is important for the current study in which women, mostly Indigenous and newcomers living in the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon, are the primary actors in negotiating food security for their families.

Ethnography is a research approach that is inherently mixed method, incorporating interviews, observations, field notes, and other means for collecting additional data (Morse, 2012). Critical ethnography focuses on meaning-making, harnessing these methods to create rich data and add to the overarching goal of “sensitizing and humanizing issues in health and its provision” (Morse, 2012, p. 150). Food is a health factor and as a determinant it has been noted in the literature as a facilitator to good health, an outcome of good health, and a barrier to good health (Jennings, Little, and Johnson-Jennings, 2018). Methods are intended to illuminate participants’

lived experiences within their own food cultures, and the stories that emerge can be fascinating, heartbreaking, and surprising. Their stories have the power to potentially shift or enhance states of commensuration and compassion toward action for change.

Mixed methods aid in illuminating "hidden" ways of being and resiliencies, and includes activities that are adaptive, functioning, recovering, and may constitute resistance to adversity. Hidden resilience refers to underlying factors or strategies that are not recognized by the mainstream (Malindi & Theron, 2010; Ungar, 2004). This suggests patterns of resilience may not always fit in with main-stream theories and conceptualizations of socially appropriate behaviour (Malindi & Theron, 2010). Additionally, methods uncovering underlying patterns may not always fit into mainstream conceptualizations of health research. Cajete suggests that "one must become open to the roles of sensation, perception, imagination, emotion, symbols and spirit as well as that of concept, logic, and rational empiricism." (Cajete, 2000, as cited in Meyer 2013, p. 98)

Meyer's focus on and approach to food freedom studies (2014) is an example of what Cajete is describing. An Indigenous food scholar and philosopher from Hawai'i, her explanations on enacting the methodology of her philosophy were a key influence in how I applied my methods. When Meyer (2014, p. 99) references systems of cultivation, it is in relation to ways of knowing and ways of studying the connections between food science and Indigenous methodology:

Native Science practitioners do not separate mind from body, nor do they separate that from the quantum world. We are [not] wistful [sentimental or romantic] about their union. Sensual cues, coupled with imagination and emotional awareness sharpens one's sense of rational empiricism, it does not diminish it.

Meyer (2013) writes that Indigenous methodologies are open to other methodologies and encompass relationships with land and moon. Her philosophy aligns with other Indigenous scholars, including Blackstock's recent explicit association of Breath of Life Theory with health equity (2019), and the writing of Jennings et al. on social determinants working in combination with spirit forces (2018). This body of work in the ontological and epistemological intersections

of Indigenous and western paradigms is an important influence on methodological decisions in this study.

3.1.2 Critical Ethnography in Participatory Applied Health Research

Critical ethnography affords flexibility to be guided by and include global Indigenous ways of knowing, oral histories, and decolonizing practice into an Indigeneity-intersectional methodology.

Embodying multiple theories is challenging, but I address this by operationalizing feminist theory and Indigenous methodologies (L.T. Smith, 2012, p. 170, Nelson, 2021). By giving power to participants throughout the process of the study, I embody empowerment theory and ethical accountability with the goal of emancipation (Travers, 1997; Morse, 2012).

In participatory research, which can be a component of critical ethnography, “skills building is embedded in the research and is useful and ‘important as part of the problem-solving process” (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003, p. 213). The emphasis on mutual transformation takes form in the field, with participants engaged in negotiating findings with researchers and shaping emerging analyses (Cook, 2005). Vulnerability, sensitivity, intuition and respect are practices that facilitate reciprocity. Indeed, researchers do not carry out transformation *for* participants but *with* them (Scotland, 2012) and through reciprocity, important stories are illuminated.

Accordingly, stories can inspire action and enhance collective identity, as they communicate "who we are – our shared values, our shared experience, and why we do what we do” (Ganz, 2008, p. 7). Ganz discusses how “our individual identities are thus linked with those with whom we share stories - our families, communities, colleagues, traditions, nationalities - and with whom we enact them - cultural celebrations that institutionalize - or transform - their retelling” (2001, p. 4). He also writes that storytelling is how we access the “emotional resources for the motivation to act on those ends” (Ganz 2001, p. 5) Establishing a climate of mutuality with the participants leads to storytelling that can, as Ganz describes, “produce a change in behaviour that requires loving the good” (2001, p. 5), in contrast to deficit-based perspectives. Moreover, the

power of story to encode collective ideas about the relationship of people to the environment as well as moral and esthetic ideas about balance, harmony, peace, and friendship underpin Indigenous collective experience (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Kirmayer and colleagues add that this encoding contributes, from Indigenous perspectives, to “resilience through emotion regulation, problem-solving, social positioning, and collective solidarity” (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Indigenous perspectives on resilience, though they differ in regional and dialectic contexts, hold that resilience is also a feature of whole communities (Kirmayer et al., 2011). A driving feature of Indigenous methodology is that good ecological existence requires a values and ethical led economy regulated by ideas of co-existence. Despite these concepts being cast against formidable opposition, they resonate with visions toward health equity and thriving ecosystems. These concepts and Indigenous methodologies reflect the embedded tenets and socio-cultural purposes in the Spirit of Treaty (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

These approaches to research are underscored by social change theory, and it bears an ethical responsibility to address unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain (Soyini Madison, 2006). Ganz explains that narrative “is both a way to “frame” our experience as purposive - making things “add up”- and of “regulating our emotions - retaining confidence, keeping our anxiety under control, having a story we can believe in” (2001, p. 5). In this way, personal storytelling adds depth with purpose, advancing the transformative aims of health research: “the purpose of bearing witness is to motivate listeners to participate in the struggle against injustice” (Behar, 1996, p. 29).

3.2 Self-Location and Belonging

During the late spring and early summer, year after year, we children would accompany our mother on the weekends through the unploughed prairie land to pick wild greens - and there were innumerable types. The indigenous peoples who had inhabited the land before it was "given out" as homesteads to immigrants like us used over 60 types of these prairie edibles in their cooking.

Habeeb Salloum, 2005, p. 149⁵

Critical ethnography focuses on culture and meaning making. Tuck et al. (2014) explain how research can be potentially dangerous "positioning itself as culturally or politically neutral while perpetuating forms of European universalism" (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 13), including "appropriating narrow understandings of Indigenous peoples as repositories of static forms of cultural knowledge" (Tuck et al., 2014, p.10).

My self-location and declaration of values are important given I am focused on human exchange of shared symbolic references which convey culturally relevant meaning (Polkinghorne, 2005). I am aware that the occasion of this thesis is owed to dispossession. This is the era of health research in the context of reclamation, "reconciliation" and blood memory.

My mother's maternal grandparents were Armenian refugees in Aleppo, Syria. They were fleeing persecution and genocide. The Turks dispossessed Armenians of their lands and massacred Armenian women and babies. My Nana Aimée (whose name means loved) resisted sexist confines, she made delicious food, attended the Sorbonne, and pursued both chemistry and professional tennis. Nana Aimée and my Tatsi (Aimee's sister) lived in Paris during WWII. My mother's paternal grandparents were Lebanese and immigrated to the prairies at the turn of the last century (also fleeing persecution). My grandfather Peter hustled stories, laughs, and rabbit furs across the prairies. Peter met Aimée in Paris during the war. He wondered who had cooked

⁵ Salloum Habeeb. Arab Cooking on a Saskatchewan Homestead. Canadian Plains Research Centre. University of Regina. 2005, p. 149.

the incredible food he and the soldiers were given. It was Aimée. Grandpa Peter opened Kouri's Meat Market in the southern prairie, in a tiny francophone town. Kouri's Market welcomed customers alongside the only Chinese restaurant for kilometres. My father's paternal grandparents were Polish and Ukrainian. Their migration story crosses European terrain in every attempt to elude persecution. My Baba Emily (Emilia) was sent on her own, at age fifteen, on a boat to North America and became an indentured servant. After a few years she escaped and later grew an abundant and beautiful garden on the Prairies. My Baba Anne (Anya) was raised in the union halls of the prairies for the first half of the last century. As a child, Baba Anne fell asleep listening to discussions on labour rights, free access to universities and the benefits of social democracy. My dad's father, Frank, died working on the railroad after WWII. Alone with five kids, Baba Anne would put her hats on, with her gloves and her heels, each item serving as a piece of her beautiful armour. By herself, downtown, she resisted the bigots and their insults. She outlived all her husbands. The tenet of learning was important to both my Nana Aimée and my Baba Anne. They returned to university once their kids were grown.

My approach to research has been shaped by my varied experiences throughout my upbringing within the internationalism and social justice orientation of my parents' worldview. I was exposed to many peoples and cultures in other countries as well as my own, showing me that there are many ways of seeing and knowing the world. For example, in Mozambique as a young child, I watched pregnant women eating dirt for iron and I was claimed by Mozambican women's singing circles of joy and gossip in the barrios of Maputo. In the same moment, planes flew overhead dropping apartheid bombs on members of the African National Congress. As a teenager in New Ireland in the South Pacific, I was invited to a sacred shark calling festival and ceremony. In Papua New Guinea, I sat for days being with and learning from Maori leader Heni Wirangi: elder, scholar, warrior, mother, and grandmother. There, I also learned in a visceral way about structural and cultural impingements and violences. There, I also learned about the total removal of women's power, autonomy, and futures. I learned through watching my friends suffer, that colonization violences ensnared with cultural control and ecological extraction for profit is endured by women and grandmothers slammed under the heavy hand of the hammer. In

Port Moresby I facilitated my first gender and sexual health workshops. In the Solomon Islands, I visited and learned about sacred meanings and Hip Hop. In Canada, now in my twenties, I sat as a ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ, Oskâpêwis “helper” with the Chief of the people of the Shuswap. In Saskatchewan, I grew up learning about the cultures of First Nations and Métis peoples, the injustices they experienced from colonialism and the endemic racism in our province. I learned to question and problematize our relationships, seeking justice, respect, and love. Ultimately, the way I see the world is informed by being unsettled a lot of the time while appreciating the struggle for worth and the complexity and beauty in most things.

Based on my experiences in professional and personal worlds, I construct my understandings in relation to others, thus influencing my epistemology. Ethical space-making has been and remains a key feature of my work, relationship practice, and family way of being. As a graduate scholar, I found that who I am, my habitus, the ways I seek, construct and interpret meaning, is not objective. Rather, subjective interpretation of realities shapes my analysis, reflecting my own experiences in “coming to know”. This for me involves interpreting parts and pieces which make up a whole and drawing connection points and relationships between them. Based on other’s knowledge (knowing) of me, I came to know that my epistemology and spirit might contribute to solid grounding and serve as an asset to the study design.

My personal values join my applied practice in “in-between space making” and an ethic of relationship and accountability. My ethos is further informed by Willie Ermine’s Ethical Space (Ermine, 2005), Ruth Behar’s ethnographic musings as a vulnerable observer (1996), and by theorizations of “hybrid space” elucidated in the defining work of Jones and Jenkins (2008) of Aotearoa on the “indigene-colonizer hyphen”. Their early ideas and later refinements through critical Māori readings and global Indigenous scholarship have shaped my approach to working the hyphen. The “hyphen” is seen as character in the research and relationship becomes an object of necessary attention” (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, p. 480, p. 473).

I see the value and significance of matriarchs. I appreciate that my mother was a strong example, and I appreciate that as a child, my father insisted I honour our matriarchs, the land, and my

mother. I know my perspective is not part of the mainstream intellectual discourse in academia. However, it is a perspective that matters. Feminism and intersectionality are not things that I have had to think about in my work to date because they are part of who I am in the world and how I see the world (Gay, 2020). I know that though we are all women we are not all the same and do not have the same experiences. I know that often, how we move through the world as women is informed by our race, our gender, our bodies, our presentation and our access and proximity to power.

Finally, considering J.W. Creswell's table of Five Worldviews (2014, p. 38), my philosophical orientation to knowledge aligns with the research approaches in four of the following five paradigms, Constructivist, Interpretivist, Transformative, and Pragmatic. My principal ontological foundation aside from seeking joy and dance is interdependence, justice and integrity for peace. This grounds my epistemological orientation and drives my philosophical underpinnings in research design and application (Morse, 2012). Speaking "truth to power" (speaking what we believe to be true to someone in authority who might take it as criticism, moral attack, or offence), is vital to constructing and transforming perceptions of indignity, accountability and violences. The process of "coming to know" and "making-sense" or "adding-up", moves the discussion to interpretivist narratives within the domain of co creation. I sufficiently trust in the transformative paradigm, to embody its principles and learn from its criticisms. Finally, I am guided sufficiently by the usefulness of pragmatic, local and global approaches to embrace thoughtful theorizations and practices which work to close gaps of disparity. This study is designed to unceremoniously leave out the bits of research process that really do not work. Without adopting a purely relativistic position, I employ a perspective that assumes that human constructs and human meaning overlap with and inform physical and historical reality (Malena-Chan, 2019).

3.3 Research and Ethics

As this thesis project was embedded within a broader mixed-method and community-based initiative, it integrated a critical and cultural analysis and aimed to account for the complex

influences of poverty and hegemonic forces that impact households under study experiencing food insecurity. I worked as a research assistant on the larger initiative while at the same time pursuing an independent study within it. On the one hand, both needed a nuanced and meaningful implementation of ethical practice; on the other hand, taken together we needed a simultaneously deeper and wider focus to examine the foodways of Saskatoon households. My aim has been to conduct this research in an ethical way and to emphasize accountability and good research principles.

My supervisors applied for and received research ethics and protocol approvals institutionally and directly with participants. I consulted the relevant Tri-Council Policy Statements (TCPS) for guidance on the framework for ethical conduct in our research and considered ethical values of respect of human dignity and health research involving First Nation, Inuit, and Métis of Canada described in the TCPS and Chapter 9 in TCPS 2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014). We were also directly accountable to community, household participants, and families in the study and were guided by ethical expectations, permissions, and protocols defined by community experts, members, and knowledge keepers. In addition, this study topic has pinpointed a disruption in food security and dignities, so improving these conditions, which impact health, was a component essential to the research activities and design. Incorporating processes that focus on social context reflection, skills building, and knowledge exchange was also central. To achieve this, a focus on developing relationship was key.

Willie Ermine, an academic from the First Nations University of Canada in Regina, speaks about ethical space as a necessary guiding principle for relationships in all settings, be that in work, in research, in education, or in ceremony (2007). This is not a linear practice or checklist, but a constellation of efforts and a convergence of ontologies. S. Wilson (2008) extends and elaborates on the concept of research as ceremony. Competing frameworks or worldviews are brought into the same space for the purpose of building relationships with participants to improve health

outcomes. In this way, the work becomes ceremony, and ceremony becomes good practice (S. Wilson, 2008; Nelson, 2021).

Following Ermine, Wilson, and others described earlier, this study was grounded in training in and particular attention to ethical space-making. This includes an emphasis on seeking relational, cultural, and structural justice, critical trauma-informed relations, a fundamental respect for boundaries (personal and cultural), and prioritizing accountability, generosity and the dignity and experiences of research participants over comfort of the researcher, ease of collection, or reporting. I collected data primarily through interviews; semi-structured and unstructured interviews with individuals, family style, on-the-go, and in-depth; photographs; media; observation; and spending time, over time. Consent, permissions, confidentiality, and comfort levels were revisited, recorded, and re-established throughout. Researchers were also cognizant of non-formal lines where expectations of participant privacy were considered. Distinctive to this critical ethnographic design was its adaptive practice to respond ethically and appropriately to context and experience (L. Kouri et al., 2020).

3.4 Research Questions

A key feature of an open qualitative health research approach is an expectation that in finding the answers, our understanding of the question is shaped as well (Abonyi et al., 2017). In keeping with this, the research questions for this study have evolved. The core purpose, however, has been consistent. Initially, my research questions were linked more explicitly to the broader study and the semi-structured interviews that were used at that level of inquiry with households. Informed by what we were hearing in the surveys and the nature of the participants, my study explores cultural and decision pathways. Meaning-making crystallizes around the tensions between personal experiences and systems-level dynamics. These tensions are implied in the questions that guide this work:

Research Questions

1. What is going on? What are the foodways practiced by Saskatoon households?

2. How? How do participants understand and account for their (changing) relationship to food in the context of their historical circumstance and contemporary contingencies?
3. So what? What are the implications for addressing and understanding food system inequities?

3.5 Study Design

This thesis is an attempt to create space to bring knowledge forward. It is not about creating new knowledge because it has always been there. Instead, this thesis means to bring forward and formalize the knowledge shared by participants and offer some interpretation both attentive to the various anti-colonial, intersectional concepts highlighted earlier in this chapter and to offer fresh, potentially actionable insights into foodways in Saskatoon' neighbourhoods. Morse (2012) shares her argument that qualitative inquiry is less concerned with producing concrete proof than developing results that are explanatory, logical, and exciting. In concert with Morse, this thesis will not be generalizable to all contexts. However, one of its aims is to offer concepts that are "recognizable by others" through "shedding light on a previously confusing situation" (Morse, 2012, p. 134). This study endeavours to use language that is authentic to the participants, looking at known and trusted food networks as "relational foodways". It aims to account for the complex influences of culture, contemporary contingencies, and the social determinants of health that impact households experiencing food insecurity.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the theoretical and applied research design. The figure attends to the process of the research in broad terms and indicating the problem, the process and longer term anticipated outcomes. Figure 3.2 outlines study procedures and knowledge exchange products.

Figure 3.1 Research Design: Theoretical and Applied

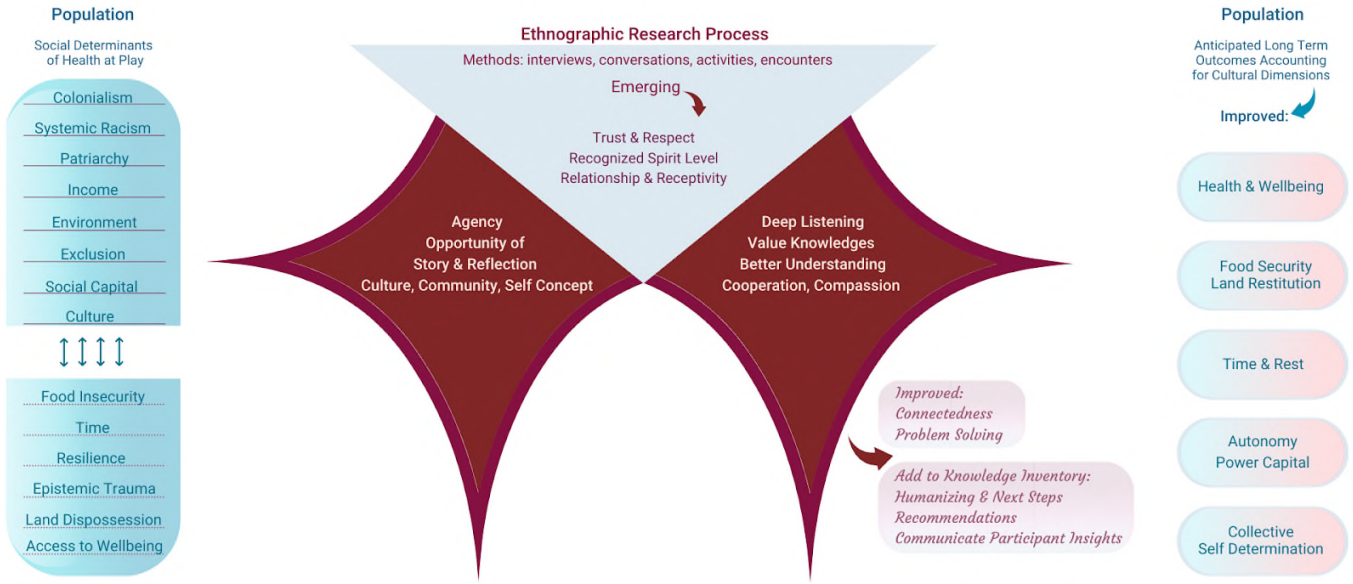
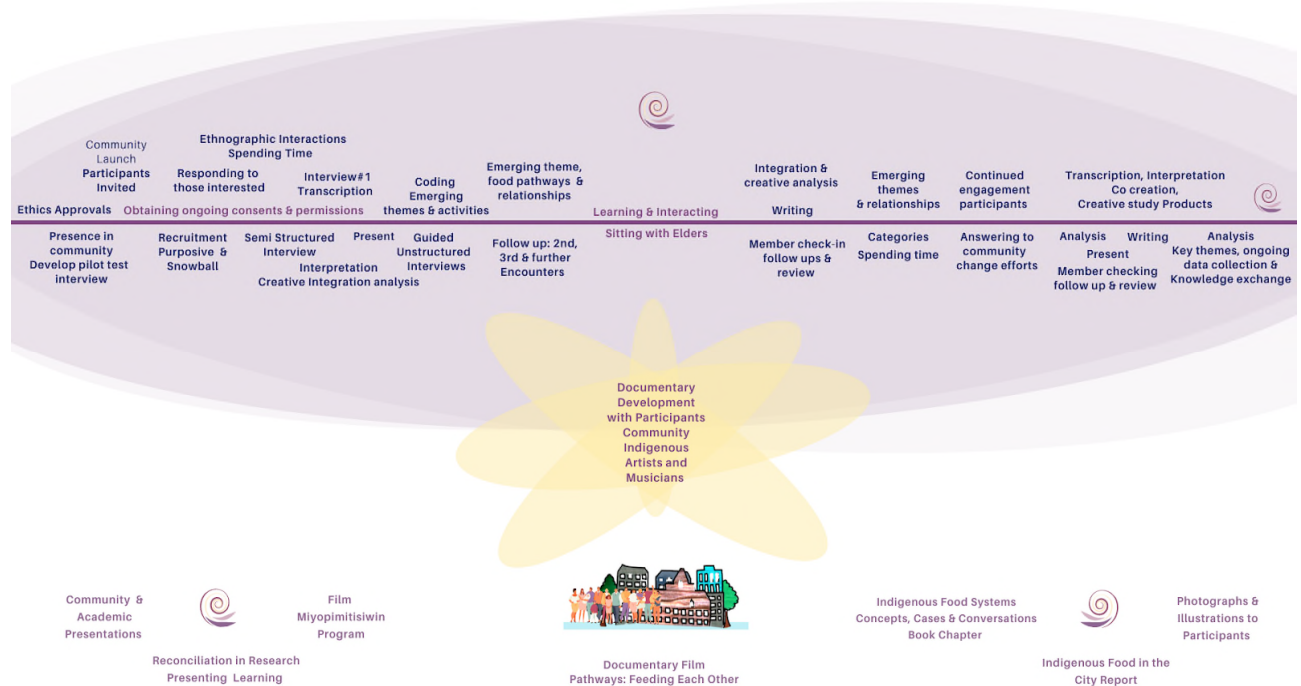


Figure 3.2 Study Procedures and Knowledge Exchange Products



3.5.1 Participant Recruitment and Characteristics

Participants were selected using purposive and snowball recruitment techniques that included identifying households in the larger study that reported via a door-to-door food procurement survey the use of the food bank once in a lifetime, or consistently up to 2 times per month, and who also participated in alternative networks to procure food (Engler-Stringer et al., 2016). Most participants demonstrated a variety of shared characteristics within the scope of the population of participants.

The recruitment aimed to include representation from Indigenous and non-Indigenous households experiencing food insecurity and/or using alternative food networks in the core low-income neighbourhoods of Saskatoon.

The individual participants who shared their household foodways experiences identified as women or Two Spirit and were mothers, grandmothers or caretakers. Participants were aged mostly in their mid-20s to late 30s with a handful either older than 50 or in their early 20s. No matter their age, participants also ventured perspectives from their children or grandmothers that had been shared with them.

Most study participants were renters with two exceptions. During the research two households purchased homes and moved out of the inner city for the first time. These new homes are multigenerational dwellings. In terms of formal education, participants described varied educational levels, including graduate and post graduate education. Oral and experiential knowledge was also varied with some describing advanced learning in these areas.

The families were predominantly Indigenous and Métis but also included one refugee household and three households of 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants. Also included were two households where mothers and their children were of mixed heritage, identifying as Indigenous and of colour. For example, one participant mother identifies as Nehiyaw and Tanzanian whereas another participant identifies her children as Cree and Trinidadian.

Ultimately, nineteen households participated in ethnographic data collection and interactions. All nineteen took part in the semi-structured interviews, in which the topics included household background including demographics and family situation, food practices including access, procurement, seasonality, and sharing, food memories and meaning, and reflections on food, culture and resilience.⁶ Twelve families participated in further ethnographic work in several ways, including formal and informal conversations, eating together, observations, skills building and in-depth qualitative conversations.

3.5.2 Data Collection and Interactions

I collected data primarily through one-on-one interviews; semi-structured, family style, on-the-go and in-depth interviews; photographs; media; observation; and spending time, over time. "Spending time" focused on relationship building. I kept field notes. I used creative and artistic methods for example: photography, videos and illustrations of concepts from participants themselves. Participant retention involved responding to participant life situations which would lengthen time between encounters. It was important to reach out for consistent member checking to loop in on representations, feelings, thoughts, power dynamics, and perceptions.

A key component of the study design was flexibility. This entailed 1) responding to change in participants' lives 2) accommodating unforeseen events that affected the unfolding of the timeline and 3) collaborating and responding to feedback from participants and the supervising team.

No matter what the format (unstructured, semi-structured), interview preparation involved coordinating the ethical space as well as the procedure. The interview settings themselves were a space to enact the theories of social change within the methodology. For example, the practice of "holding change" in an ethical space meant "attending to coordination, to conflict, to being

⁶ See Appendix B Semi-Structured Interview Instruments

humans in right relationship with each other, not as a constant ongoing state, but rather as a magnificent, ever evolving dynamic which we must involve ourselves, shape ourselves, and each other” (A.M. Brown, p. 88).

Fun and joy are also experiences which contribute to the interview process. We spent lots of time having tea and coffee. Sometimes we would spend significant amounts of time together. We would get in touch with one another over the phone or through texting. Several follow up discussions continued with 2nd and 3rd or even 4th interviews and interactions. We were oftentimes keeping good company and I was able to go along with them on walks or as participants tended to their gardens. Many challenging and sensitive themes emerged from this relationship-based approach, requiring thoughtfulness and care.

In addition to interviews and their transcripts, some participants shared social media, which linked expressions of personal, political, intimate and emotional meanings together. Transcription can never adequately account for the emotional dimensions that are expressed in images or artistic expression.

Finally, because my study was embedded in a larger program of research on food access in Saskatoon’s inner city, I was involved in additional research endeavors including a study that collected food access and other information by smartphone and a longitudinal survey on food access, nutrition, and food security. Further, my role in the larger initiative included design of open-ended components of the longitudinal survey which I also sometimes drew on as interpretive context in this study.

3.5.3 Analytical Approach

Critical ethnography aims to uncover patterned social and cultural realities and develop insights into the symbolic meanings of experiences through iterative and inductive reading of the data. Further, my analytical approach also involved building themes and concepts using a multi-level scaffolding process described in the qualitative health sciences (Morse, 2012). This analysis was informed by the intersectional and relational frameworks described earlier in this thesis, which I

coded deductively. The combined inductive-deductive approach allowed me to pursue development of terminologies, concept identification, categories, relationships, correlations, and pattern identifications (McCubbin et al., 2012).

Consistent with critical methodologies, I also based my analysis on principles of equity for all and an understanding of interconnectedness, and interdependence consistent with Breath of Life theory as described by Cindy Blackstock (2019). It was important to reveal power inequities in the diverse, unseen and sometimes hidden ways in which it takes shape in the lives of the study participants. Similarly, it was also important to reveal love, power and agency. Love and power were key themes which erupted within the data and were observed during the data collection process. I was intentional in my approach to create space to construct a counter story to the more typical pathologizing of this participant population as being overcome by system barriers. Instead, the analysis accounted for system barriers with an aim to amplify the power and autonomy of households working to feed their families. In using the term inequity instead of, or in addition to, health disparities, I aimed to entrench my analysis of fairness in terms of human rights and ethics, based on social values of care and justice (Chan, 2019; Farmer, 2005; Braveman, 2006). I sought to reveal empowering strategies that are used to not only stretch dollars but also survive, flex and flourish under oppressive circumstances.

Abductive reasoning was also drawn upon throughout the processes of sharing, relationship building, and thematic exploration. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2013) define this process of reasoning where everyday activities, ideas, or beliefs are described using participants' language and meanings (first-order concepts). A technical account is then 'abducted' from the lay accounts using the researcher's categories (second-order concepts). Farmer discusses the analytical process of "studying up", urging researchers to avoid usurpation of 'findings which have often served to help manipulate rather than aid' populations of study and close down any potential to turn interpretation of experiences to be used against them (Nader, 1972 & Bourgois, 1995, as cited in Farmer, 2005, p. 269). In these domains where power and inequity pervade, countervailing method uses "studying up" as well as "studying down" which leads the

interpreter's reasoning to ask many "common sense" questions in reverse. (Nader, 1972 & Bourgois, 1995, as cited in Farmer, 2005, p. 269). Adjacent to Nader's perspective on analysis is Cajete's theory, explaining that Indigenous science knowledge is derived using "the same methods as modern western science, the difference is Indigenous science perceives from a 'high-context' view including all relational connections in its consideration. In contrast, Western science perceives from a 'low-context' view, reducing context to a minimum" (Cajete, 2000, pp. 59–83).

Multiple embodied abductive interactions with participants allowed for layers of storytelling. Probing questions and follow up inquiry developed through a combination of interpretation and attuning to power dynamics. As participants developed trust in the ethical space we were creating, they were able to share contextual experiences that may not have come forward through other research designs.

I debriefed with participants as well as other collaborators who were invited into the project as knowledge holders or key informants. I revisited notes of observations and discussed key patterns that emerged such as helplessness or resourcefulness around food and decision-making pathways. Further along, as concept dimensions were revealed and scoped, I interpreted the data and built levels of abstraction. Additionally, emerging terminologies from the data collected were verified with participants.

3.5.4 Participant Engagement in Analysis and Interpretation

Critical research is evidence based and carries the weight of criteria for rigour, "through a self-fulfilling, self-validating process" (Denzin, 2009, p. 146). Throughout the study, my role as researcher is to identify and build themes. To ensure rigour and ethical practice, participants were engaged in negotiating findings with me and shaping emerging analyses (Cook, 2005). Though not all participant households engaged in analysis to the same degree, I was honoured to have valuable contributions by most households in this study.

For some, participating in the study and the interviews was enough of a new situation from their everyday to precipitate an element of self-reflection and discussion. For other participants, shaping analyses became some of the focus of time together. As experts in their own experience, it made further sense to include participants in skills-building opportunities and build richer impact for the study. One of the participants was invited to contribute to a book chapter based on the research (L. Kouri et al., 2020). This opportunity aligned with my commitment to rigour through a mutual process to negotiate findings. Her contribution to the analysis is invaluable.

Blackstock (2019) and Cidro (2018) assert in their work the need for studies that combine conceptualizations of the social determinants of health with holistic and cultural paradigms, Indigenous theories, ontologies/cosmologies, and research methods. The multiple methods of data collection and analysis I employed in this study provided room for data to emerge. For example, the stories in the findings chapter that follows includes instances where grandmothers were brought into participant conversations using cellular phones. Without an iterative process and conversational method for data collection, conditions for the emergence of nuanced, sensitive and sophisticated narratives would have been limited.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Summarized in Figure 3.3, my methodology is rooted in the overarching values and principles of equity and power dynamics, and focused on themes of joy, love, support, and generosity. These values provide a lens through which I engaged with and learned from participants. I designed the data gathering and analysis processes to be trauma-informed, and flexible. Trauma and violence-informed approaches underscore practices that recognize connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviours. These approaches are applied to increase safety, control and resilience for participants in relation to experiences of violence and/or have a history of experiencing violence (PHAC, 2022; Nelson 2021; Kovach, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2012; S. Wilson, 2008).

In the research context, trauma and violence-informed approaches require changes in how studies are designed and performed. Some key principles have been summarized from several sources and drawn up below (PHAC, 2022; Bruce et al., 2018, Blondeau & Forbes, 2008)

1. Realize the widespread impacts of trauma exposure and
2. Impacts on peoples' lives and behaviours
3. Create emotionally and physically safe environments
4. Foster opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection
5. Provide a capacity-building approach to support coping and resilience

Literature regarding trauma-informed practices amount to a “do no harm” principle, in general (Bruce et al., 2018). Indeed, it is important to understand the complex and lasting impacts of violence and trauma and a violence-informed approach aims to minimize harm whether or not experiences of violence are known (PHAC, 2022, Blondeau & Forbes, 2008).

I also paid particular attention to participant strengths and aimed to account for all the ways that participants were embodying power, especially if they fell outside of academic preconceptions. My process for analysis focused on deliberate attempts to create space for participants to share their stories without predefined categories and definitions. I aimed to incorporate knowledge systems into my ethnographic lens.

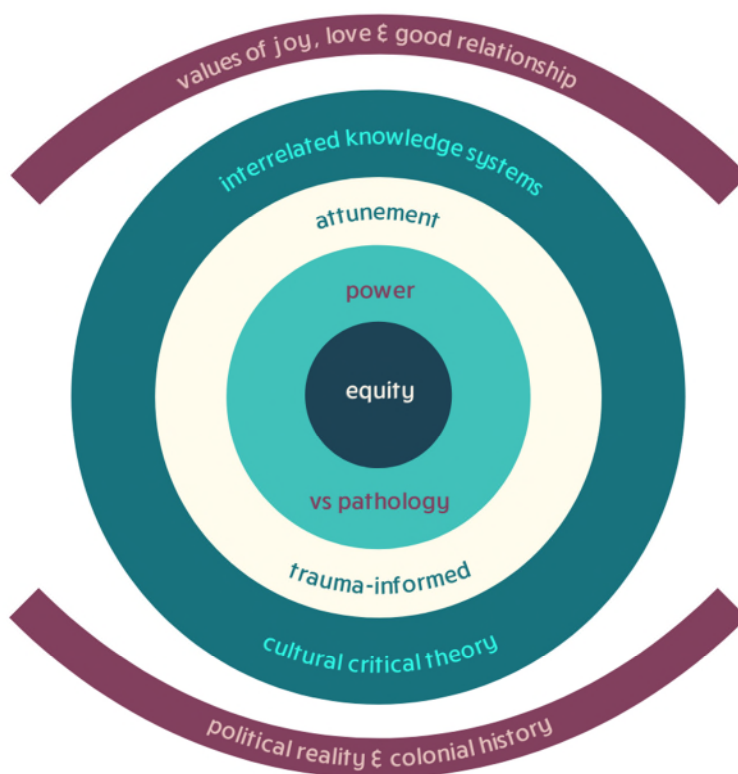
I explicitly pushed against pan-Indigenous tropes and hegemonic notions of paternalism for Indigenous and racialized participants. Instead of analyzing solely from a place of deficit and pathology, the framework I employed filtered the data through the lens of cultures that are flourishing, resourceful, and complex. Analysis was rooted in an understanding of political relationships and a desire to enliven narratives of reclamation, repair, restoration, and the nuances of nurturance. It makes room for movement between overlaps of individual, family, and community levels, and intimate, collective, and political experiences.

This study involved careful preparation and intentional framing for painful conversations. Because of the relationship-based approach, findings could be co-interpreted with participants

throughout the data collection process, and emerging themes could be explored and developed together. The flexibility allowed participants to share their stories in their own way, including sharing meaningful art and media, or recipes and dreams.

Figure 3.3, Equity Lens through Critical Nurturance, summarizes an analytical lens that attends to embedded challenges of iterative practice and abductive analysis within tricky constructions of complexity. In my process I strived to provide participants with restorative encounters.

Figure 3.3 Equity Lens through Critical Nurturance



Chapter 4: Findings

For the Lakota, the closest translation of 'resilience' is a sacred word that means 'resistance'

James Clairmont 1999⁷

I can't cross into [it] - I can't do it on my own. It's like I need to see her do it. So, I probably need to put out tobacco and ask her to come into a dream and show me that recipe so I can actually make decent bannock because I'm always messing it up.

Study Participant

4.1 Introduction to the Findings

People in the study talked about food in various ways and from many angles. Participants explained their food ways as interacting at varying levels and degrees, articulated from a lively and living place of changing dynamics and potential futures.

As captured at the end of Chapter 3 in Figure 3.3, there are layers at work here that served as a filter when I was listening to participants and analyzing findings. The focal point of the lens is the value of equity, which grounds my perspective and radiates outward across the other layers. Inequitable relationships, particularly with the health sector, are characterized by both power and pathology. In the case of this study, I purposefully leverage power as it plays out in pathological dynamics. This allows for a better conceptualization, holding space for how both power and pathology interplay.

There are acute and wide-ranging levels of traumatic experience. This thesis explores the layers of trauma, and interwoven relationships between trauma on the land, on culture, and on families. Trauma plays out across many dimensions, and I focused on remaining attuned to how trauma informs nurturance practices. Colonial trauma is not just a historical fact but is embodied within Saskatoon households in the present. I was attuned to the physicality of trauma and anticipated

⁷ James Clairmont (1999), Dakota spiritual elder, as cited in Graham (2001, p. 2)

how participants might want to choose to enter their stories. For me this meant attention to the ways in which families were talking about each other, their relationships to food, and relationships to the land. I focused on being open to interrelated knowledge systems, and combined with a critical lens, I considered participant stories to be scholarly, and worthy of informing policy and health research. Thus, this findings chapter is dedicated to sharing these stories and the contingencies in which they are located. I begin with a presentation of foodways, turning first to a consideration of food, and then to ways in which food is navigated into and through the households. The major themes of land and culture, power and connection, resistance and resilience are addressed in turn. As is usual in the presentation of qualitative findings, the voices of many women are heard in short quotations. Throughout are woven more fulsome stories that locate the thematic particularities in relation to each other.

4.2 Food and Ways

You cannot reconcile a relationship that never existed. We don't need any more "sorrys". There is no word in Cree for reconciliation. Only "kwayskahstahsoowin" which means "setting things right". Restoring what is ours would set things right. Giving our land back would set things right.

Maria Campbell, 2020⁸

"What do you mean "wild" blueberries, as opposed to "tame" ones?"

Study Participant

4.2.1 The "Food" in Foodways

This study asks: What is going on? What are the foodways practiced by Saskatoon households? The findings illuminate where non-market food comes from and what is being consumed in these

⁸ Maria Campbell, Métis elder, on social media, 2020.

households. Actions of sharing food are an inherent reminder of the kinship ties and culture that have existed in this place forever.

Language is inherent to values, culture, and governance (Daniels & Sterzu, 2020), and I actively avoided reproducing Western dominance in research. It was an attempt to step into a decolonizing space when considering food geographies, descriptions, and categories of food.

Because of the constructive design of the study, the definitions that emerged from the research participants provide a more culturally accurate representation of food and foodways than would have been collected if foods and their meanings had been organized following categories commonly described in the published literature. For example, I was cautious about locating food as country, wild or traditional because I found the naming of specific food in relation to spaces and places to be value - laden. Framing blueberries as “wild” positions these as “other” from “blueberries”. Coded words and descriptors can promulgate dominant and potentially racist meanings and impose a discourse that reproduces delineations of power over land, movement and sources, while engendering narrow and simplistic understandings of food cultures specific to Treaty 6 and Treaty 4 territory.

Tables 4.1-4.4 list foods participants identified, organized into the ways they were discussed and how commonly they came up.

Table 4.1 Types of Small Animals Consumed

Most mentioned	Least mentioned
Duck Goose Muskrat Rabbit	Ptarmigan Beaver tail Bush chicken Grouse Porcupine Gophers

Two additional wild meats that were mentioned are bear and coyote. Out of 26 households under study, only one household mentioned bear meat and one household mentioned coyote meat. I returned to a few other households to ask about their familiarity with these animals as sources of meat, but they were not familiar with them, suggesting that these foods are underground, may be new, or are simply unusual.

To articulate the significance of “wild” foods for her, the study participant uses an analogy to a mainstream cultural delicacy.

[My aunty] she’s cooking the duck over the fire. She cracks open its head and like gives it, scoops out the brain, it’s like a little paste but it was like the best thing ever! Magical... Well, when you make duck soup you boil the duck in the pot. [Those are] the kind of flavours, and then you eat the meat and [the] guest of honour whomever that may be, cracks open the head, and you pop it open and it’s like a warm vanilla ice cream.

This quote provides a description of a food that contributes to cultural norms around eating. This participant was humorously and poetically communicating to me how eating duck brain is as wonderful to her as the assumption that eating ice cream would be a treat for me or others.

Table 4.2 organizes land foods in terms of their general cultural and taste value for participants, with foods in each category.

Table 4.2 Consumables Sourced from the Land and Water

Big Game	Fish	Plants
Bison	Catfish	Dandelion greens
Caribou	Northern Pike	Fiddleheads
Deer	Pickrel	Lambs quarters
Elk	Sturgeon	Mint
Moose	Suckerfish	Mushrooms
	Trout	Nettles
	Whitefish	Poplar sap
		Rose petals
		Sage
		Spruce-tips

One participant describes not only a cultural but a family protocol for community foodways within a hierarchy of preference.

whenever [their grandmother] she wanted to give a treat to somebody... with the meat. It's my family thing. So, okay here, how does it go? Moose, number one, elk number two, caribou number three, and deer meat is on the bottom

Berries are mentioned many times in the data (Table 4.3). One participant described her love of berries as she offered me her mother's blueberry cake to eat with her during the interview. I was asking her questions about traditional food and foodways drawing on their categorizations in the literature. Food studies literature uses language like traditional vs modern food, country vs urban foods, wild vs city food, and I wanted to know how the participants identify and frame distinctions. I asked about the berries and called them "wild blueberries". She responded with "What do you mean "wild" blueberries, as opposed to "tame" ones?" and laughed, as if she was pulling me in on a joke. Then we both laughed.

Table 4.3 Berries for Ceremony and for Consumption

Berries	
Apples	Low bush Blueberries
Chokecherries	Raspberries
Cranberries	Saskatoon Berries
Currants	Wild Blueberries
Gooseberries	Wild Strawberries
Highbush Blueberries	

The ways participants discussed berries and berry activities reflect intimacy and health. The relationship to the berry foodway appears trauma free, meaning that despite colonial disruptions, this way of feeding each other remains as available as to their ancestors. I understand this as a way of linking past and present. The following story illuminates the long-standing aspect of both rural and urban as food places. It also shows a cross-cultural element, and friendship in relationship to food and feeding.

So, I do [have ways of getting food], like we buy food, and then we have friends that go hunting and my friend gets berries from the North. Well, the bush I guess, and I have one friend who, she's from here, she's a Canadian girl a Ukrainian girl. She has found all the secret spots with raspberries, strawberries, grapes, and all kinds of cool stuff in Saskatoon that are just wild. In people's back alleys and on the University campus and little spots and she goes around, she's mapped it out or whatever... she's figured it out, she knows exactly where to go so she's had like pails of berries and pails of raspberries, blueberries, things that she just picked from bushes.

This berry foodway represents relationship with the land, and with recovery and joy.

The findings illustrate how households view and value food, another indication of the role that food plays in sustaining both culture and health despite land dispossession. Table 4.4 lists culturally relevant dishes described by participants. The analysis revealed many mentions of specific foods. Each of these is linked to household and family culture. These unique food practices could be interpreted as examples of resistance for the households in the study, as they

reflect vibrancy and a deep food culture. Food practices are clearly and regularly transpiring - a cultural triumph.

Table 4.4 Food Dishes

Specialties	Bannock	Meat
Duck Brains Fried Fish Cheeks Moose Heart and Nose	Bannock dog Bannock Taco Fish bannock Grandma’s Fish egg bannock	BBQ gopher Beaver tail with garlic and lemon grass Deer jerky Dry meat Goose jerky

Throughout data collection as I worked with participants to identify and elaborate the meaning of different foods, the process became an embodiment of mutuality with participants. As a key element of this critical methodology, I approached definitions and categorizations with the goal of honouring the participant’s language. Exploring the “what” of food and foodways introduces the concept of exchange. Modern food practices are rooted in a fair “exchange economy” (Arcidiacono & Maestriperi, 2019). This type of economy sits in opposition to the dominant neo-liberal market, and instead demonstrates features of food sovereignty (Soma et al., 2021).

Taken together, Tables 4.1 to 4.4 capture opportunities for shaping food knowledge-building in urban spaces as much as rural spaces and in the exchanges between them⁹.

The exchange-based context also builds diversity across generations and between cultures. Table 4.5 shows how the interaction of New Canadian and Indigenous families brings forth a hybrid approach to eating which stems from sharing food knowledge. Some recipes were created as a way of incorporating wild meats, fish, and berries in an intergenerational context. The table

⁹ See Appendix A Figure A.4.1 Storied Menu for a visual presentation of these ideas.

shows the recipes from households that combined wild foods and recipes from family and histories with other cultures represented in the core neighbourhoods: “It’s exactly the same as beef and barley just with Moose”. One participant shared how some family members didn’t have a taste for northern wild foods, so they actively sought ways to shape their palatability with new recipes.

Table 4.5 Flavour Exchange: Tastes Mixing, Adapting, and Innovating

Foods that are Mixed, Adapted and Innovated	
Beaver Tail with Garlic and Lemongrass	Shake n’ Bake Duck Breast
Caribou Stew	Shake n’ Bake Whitefish
Deer Meat Hamburgers	Slow Cooker Elk
Deer Meat Spaghetti	Spam Fried Up With Tabasco Sauce and Egg
Dry Meat Soup	Spicy Fried Moose Sriracha on Noodles
Moose and Barley Soup	Tiny Northern Berry Pancakes
Moose Meat Spaghetti	Tiny Northern Blueberry Cake
Moose Meat the Trinidad Way	

This same participant candidly described the changing tastes of their younger family members who spent more time in urban areas than the North (Sandy Bay). This participant expressed that they had to make seemingly wilder dishes appear and taste less wild, “beaver tail and cheese and crackers.... and [I] made it with garlic. I made it so it’s really palatable for them. I did it with garlic and lemongrass flavouring.” Changing tastes within families and communities are a key function in evolving food culture.

I found that foods themselves also became mobile and embodied, growing in several places in urban areas and in rural spaces, serving several purposes, feeding bodies and culture through recipes and ceremonies. Sharing of food practices between newcomer and Indigenous people for mutual support emerged from participant stories. This includes teaching each other about their own culture’s traditional foods and food sources and, in some cases, bringing quite disparate foods together into bricolage and triaged dishes as is highlighted in Table 4.5.

The foods identified by participants are accessed and procured in multiple ways including through “alternative foodways” reported from the broader research initiative in which this study was embedded (Engler-Stringer et al., 2016). I endeavoured to identify more specific features of networks involved in foodways among participants. Tables 4.6 to 4.9 capture the diverse conventional and alternative sources of food most often mentioned, including commercial, community initiatives, interpersonal relationships, and specific locations. Together with the findings about foods described previously, the ways listed in the tables reveal overlaps and intersections in place, culture, and relationships in food insecure households.

Table 4.6 Commercial Ways

Commercial Foodway Locations and Destinations	
Coop	No Frills
Costco	Superstore
Dollar Store	Walmart
Giant Tiger	

Table 4.7 Programs and Community Initiatives

Community Response Foodways Practiced by Participants	
Chep Good Food Box	St Mary’s School
City Centre Church	St. Thomas Wesley Church
Friendship Inn	The Lighthouse
Salvation Army	White Buffalo Centre
Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre	

Table 4.8 Types of Relationships Employed for Receiving and Accessing Food

Family	Friendships	Band and Community	
Aunties Brothers Cousins Cousins, uncles and aunties of cousins Daughters Grandfathers Grandmothers Sisters Sons Uncles	Close friends Old friends Family friends Neighbours Community members New friends	Elders Community workers Friends of friends On reserve members Urban band members	St. Wesley Church WP Bate School St. Mary's School

Table 4.9 Food Access Locations

Locations for Sourcing Food	Locations for Exchanging Food
“The North” Food from the land, the sky, and the water On reserve, the boreal forest and the shield “The South” Local residence River paths within city limits On reserve	Car trunk Front lawn and parks Household specifically designated for sharing food from the band Neighbour's home Parking lot Shed

Sometimes, locations and exchanges of food may seem unconventional, as can be seen in this participant's story:

So the school also helps a lot. The jail has a big farm; an urban camp farm it's called. They donate the potatoes, the carrots, the turnips and onions to the school. And they will give it to the community, so they always come and ask me to come and help myself to get the vegetables, yeah.

4.2.2 Kesha's Story Part 1: "I'm used to that"

The findings of this study demonstrate how numerous factors influence food choices and shape experiences of resistance and resilience. Looking closer at one individual's story can shed light on how multiple themes and concepts overlap. Kesha is a single working mother. She is educated and works for a regional cultural organization. She lives with her mother and her son, and her mother has several health concerns and uses a wheelchair. Her mother is Nehiyaw from Waterhen. Her father is Tanzanian. This first part of Kesha's story allows for an understanding of barriers to food that are more subtle and harder to translate. Anti – Black and anti – Indigenous aggressions compound points of pain and create psychologically unsafe locations such as in a classroom or grocery stores. Here, she identifies pain points and talks about microaggressions based on class and race and how they relate to her food security in an urban context. Though she works and has a steady income, she and her family sometimes buy their non-perishables at Dollarama, even though they would prefer not to.

I remember I was taking the 300-level geography [class] at the U of S, and we had to do this thing on food security, in the neighbourhoods right? And the one girl was talking about access to food in Stonebridge and there was a Co-op there. There's a Walmart and then there's a Dollarama that you could get food at. Well like non-perishables. Yeah, but we didn't want to eat the food at Dollarama because we didn't want to get food poisoning and I'm like, it must be nice to live in that world where you don't have to... Where you have a choice, and I'm like I would much rather spend less money there than spend triple at Walmart for the exact same thing. But they didn't see it that way, and I'm like it must be nice to live in that world, like how does that feel? You know? And I'm lucky enough that I can shop at Walmart. I can shop at Co-op if I have to, right? But I'm not always able to, you know?

The way the interaction is described, it appears that even if the product were the exact same at either the Coop or Dollarama, the assumption is that the store with the cheaper merchandise is inherently least desirable, because it connotes poverty and implies that specific populations (undesirable ones) frequent those stores.

Kesha explains that another reason she would prefer not to shop at Walmart is because of profiling and receipt checking.

You can tell at Walmart, there are definitely feelings of exclusion. You have to make sure your receipt is there, and I do think that they profile. It's not just everybody, like some people will have items and they will be like "Okay, have a good evening". And then of course, if I'm there with my family, they will want to see my receipt, so because it's not like Costco where they will see everybody, you know?

She describes the conversation she has with herself when asked to produce her receipts,

And then the security they have there now, "can I check your receipt?" Right? And then, like, why? "Why? You just saw me come from the till."

Kesha mentions these experiences as another barrier, and she made it clear throughout our interviews that racism and mistrust in food stores is a very particular barrier faced by Indigenous people and People of Colour.

Yep, there's always like the security guard that's always like walking around following people. Shopping in the city for food for many urban Indigenous people, it is not a welcoming experience.

Kesha feels pressure to contain her reaction to always being asked to produce her receipt. Though she does not agree with what is happening, and in fact is facing a public assault on her integrity, she does the work to manage the situation, keep her truths to herself and produce her receipts for potential scrutiny.

Kesha's story shows how her food choices also act as resilience techniques. She navigates overlapping injustices, avoiding stereotypes, microaggressions, and feelings of exclusion. Indeed, needing to be resilient is in itself a kind of harm. "Ethical" food choices tend to be inferred as organic versus conventional, industrial supply vs local producer whereas Kesha may interpret the ethical choice as refusing to bring your children to a grocery store where microaggressions and racism are pervasive. She is flipping an individualistic interpretation of the

ethical choice and reframing it through cultural terms, displaying a system of nurturance that contains contingency plans rooted in historical and contemporary realities.

4.2.3 Kesha's Story Part 2: "It's a big deal"

Kesha's story also captures elements of what foods are being consumed and how relational networks operate and are organized.

Kesha's story highlights how her food network serves her, and how important that is to her.

Figure 4.1 includes a photo I took during one of our interviews. The animation layered over it is in a short documentary I co-produced and co-directed, featuring findings from this research and the larger project with which the current project is located ([Pathways, Feeding Each other](#)). Together they illustrate foodways themes from my conversations with Kesha and others that include abundance, gratitude, and doing what you can for your family.

Figure 4.1 Kesha's Kitchen



I remember this day because as Kesha spoke, she was cooking up the most delicious-looking fish. You could smell it, see it glistening and hear it sizzle. I knew that I could hint at wanting to

eat it, as I had rushed lunch to prepare what we needed for the interview, but I didn't, and I didn't have to. She offered everyone a share and it was yummy. She shared this story as well:

The last time we got fish, it was actually from my son's grandma on his dad's side. That (food from the land) is something that we grew up on. A lot of wild food, from a lot of people. They would hunt and they would find ways where they could keep their food longer, which meant drying a lot of it, which meant sharing a lot of fish with other people. Like it was just such a normal thing to go to my grandma and grandpa's house and then see fish and meat hanging on the racks. And, it was a normal thing to go to see my grandma, she'd be crushing chokecherries outside. Right?! When you get the chance for somebody to give you some (food from the land) in the city... it's a big deal.

I remember the tone in her voice when she said, "it is a big deal". She emphasized the significance of receiving food from relatives out of the city limits. Given how many worlds Kesha is straddling, and the numerous ways that young mothers carry the burden of the health of their children, having access to this source of food means that the responsibility of care is shared or relieved.

It's mostly been my son (his grandma), that's been providing us with food and she's like, she really goes out of her way... like she finds people if she can't do it herself. She'll find people to get her the fish, try to get her the meat, to bring it here. Growing up, I didn't realize that it was such a privilege, right?! To be able to eat this kind of food – to live off the land basically and made with all these things: fish, deer, moose, rabbit, duck. Like we ate it all and it is like something that, you know, it's been hundreds of years that my ancestors have lived off the stuff and I'm just blessed, is the only way I can think about it, right?! That I'm still able to eat like this and that I still have this knowledge.

The presence of these animals is part of Kesha's enactment of collective care practice. Her story reveals important linkages that create a network of care.

Over the course of the research, mothers would share their daily activities and priorities with me. I deduced from their descriptions that leisure time, rest and time in general was sparse. This is no different in Kesha's case. She has a lack of time, but in her story, instead she speaks of her

privilege in receiving food that took others' time to source and organize, including from unconventional sources.

In describing her food practices Kesha traces the labour, the points of connection and practice it takes within her kinship network to feed her family within the city limits. She tells her experience through layers of meaning and protection. It is implied that time and spirit function together too, drawing on knowledge from her ancestors and their relationship to the land. Her story demonstrates how relationships and attachment to land, as well as the capacity to move across and access resources on the land, are key to food and foodways. It is an example of how even a small amount of power in the hands of mothers is an enhancement to health in the midst of scarcity, disruption, and dispossession from the land.

Kesha offered her description of how her kinship designations are formed and organized. Her story also shows how the network of care is maintained.

...my uncle, he has his feast for his Sundance but we all have our different families right, like there's your school family, there's your kids, your family family, there's all the different relationship families that you make, your friends or whatever. And then there's like for me, then there's my Powwow family and then for my actually family, there's the Sundance family that we are in right? So my uncle helps all these people but they also help him by giving him meat like moose nose. So sometimes they will get stuff[food] from people from [that lake place] or from that lake place, [that Lake place] so it's just all these families, you make a network of different people and it's just you all help each other.

4.3 Land and Culture

As the introduction chapter states, the contemporary story of how Saskatoon households access food cannot be understood outside of the story of colonization on the Prairies. This is where the dispossession of land and livelihood begins, and participants reference this timeline in their stories.

4.3.1 "That's where the crime is"

Land dispossession associated with colonialism is understood by participants and in literature to be the root problem affecting the health of Indigenous people (Denzin et al., 2008; Morrison, 2011; TRC, 2015; Abonyi, 2016; Jennings, 2020; Tarasuk, 2021). Participants recounted many stories that conveyed their views and personal experiences of colonization. The experience of unheard suffering is a key feature in participant stories. The stories illuminate shared histories including feelings of shame among family members because of colonization. Sharon reveals the experience of shame and land theft are connected. The link she draws between current poor health outcomes and the taking of the land is clear.

There are major problems because really it comes down to the land. I've done lots and lots of research on the land and that's why we have garbage diets. That's where people are dying of diabetes. It is because our own way of life is gone. I mean it. We don't have to say it anymore. It should be so clear to people that's what the problem is, you know?

Culture is reflected in common experiences like language, food, spirituality, and moral paradigms. The quote below reveals how she connects to the value of her heritage as she shifts to telling me her story through the experience of her grandmother. Her grandmother is a significant person in her life and her memory. The memories of her grandmother inspire her hopes for the future. By quoting her grandmother, she is demonstrating the importance of female relationships in the family, and knowledge transfer as a core value. Her comments also allude to how colonial language - English - is tied to criminality and land theft.

I just wish my **grandmother** was here and she could go on. She probably didn't even speak English. Anyways, **so much English**, hey? But we need to go on the media and say like we should really be given a portion of our land back, seriously. That's where the crime is. That's where the crime is. (emphasis added)

Other participants also spoke of the persistent legacy of colonial policies:

That's years of telling people they can't hunt, or they can only hunt so much... we survived for thousands of years without European influence and when you took

away our hunting, fishing and trapping, you crippled us... **not you but the other you**... (emphasis added)

In articulating the last phrase in this quote, I believe the participant could see that I am non-Indigenous and still not “quite white”. She qualifies her reference of “you” for me and a colonizer collective “you”. Her use of the ‘collective you’ was cutting and funny, at once. These crippling effects of colonialism are at the heart of the policies which have led to the devastation of natural environments and severe food insecurity. The magic in this phrase is that there are three things happening at once: identifying the damage of colonization, proclaiming survival, and using humour to tell crucial truths. She is used to people feeling uncomfortable with this direct language, but we both shared a laugh. Participants often used humour to put themselves at ease, and to put me at ease, while also telling heavy, critical truths about how the past impacts and continues into their present.

4.3.2 "I can't get it out of my system"

Another dimension of land dispossession and its consequence for relational foodways is the legacy of the residential school system. Elaborated earlier in this document, colonial policies related to feeding children in schools affects not only survivors’ eating practices today, but also those of their families and their grandchildren, and yet it remains so often unidentified.

Dad would always stay here to just watch the house, not here but wherever we lived, and watch the dog and that kind of thing. And every time we came back, I’d open the fridge and there was like five loaves of white bread in there, five or six loaves. ...I said “what?” and he’s like “bread is like cake to me” because it was like the one thing that you really couldn’t get in residential schools, you would get one piece of bread with your [meal]. It was such a delicacy, and it was so, well if you know what they did with nutrition and all that other stuff and so the fact like I don’t know if he connected all the dots to him but just his “bread is like cake to me”. He did most of his life [spent in residential schools] from as long as you could stay in residential schools he did; and then [he] was in the 60s scoop. So, one of these habits as an adult [for him] is being able to buy it [white bread] [and] has it accessible to him and all that other stuff. So, it’s **really imprinted on him**... (emphasis added)

It is understood that this Grandfather no longer needs to fear lack of food or repercussions inflicted in residential schools, and yet the fear manifests in the present around food. The participant describes this action as "imprinting", a trauma response which will stay with his grandfather throughout the course of his life. The bread is not just for him. He buys it to protect his family and keep them safe in the here and now. As a Slavic and Middle Eastern person, this story makes me reflect on the women in my family who prepared food for me, and how white bread was considered unhealthy food. It was also "cake" to me because it was an unhealthy treat in an abundantly healthy food space. This man, who has far more claim to this land than me, also views white bread as cake, but because of scarcity, he was removed from the abundance that I was allowed.

Among the participants who mentioned residential school trauma in their lives, it was often categorized as an event that destroyed children, families and created population and generational traumatization. Participants who were interviewed mentioned these horrific events, while simultaneously linking the experiences and tying them to values of family and changing relationships to food.

Family values are created through family activity like eating and caring and in the case of many participants in this study, relating to the land. Ultimately, family and community culture along with any form of violent disruption to these connections are directly and indirectly linked to lasting impact. For those who have been conditioned to live in poverty, patterns and pathologies emerge over time for protection and survival. Several households discussed the phenomenon of moving out of poverty and how, despite having more money, they find themselves unable to reposition or change their own patterned responses.

I can't do it. Having had to budget over the years and having been, like, low income and all those things, **I can't get it out of my system**. So even when we go into the store I say to my husband, he's like just go get whatever you like, I'm like what's the limit? ...don't just say get whatever you like **'cause I can't**. (emphasis added)

The response to poverty induced trauma has developed into this participant's habitus. The fear of not having enough food is part of her memory, her experience forms the context for her present situation. She goes on to explain a concept in her life that she calls "food trauma", which she defines as a type of heavy persistence of poverty knowledge. She describes this knowing, this habitus, exactly: down to the salt crystal, every single item in the fridge and its expiry as always on her mind. The fear of running out of food with no money to buy more never leaves her...

I know what's there and what we need and what's in the cupboards and stuff. That's like **food trauma**... I say like when my husband comes home it is like a holiday right? Cause when he comes home, I can just get whatever I like. ...I just focus on the kids and like what they like, what they need and things like that but when my husband comes home, he gets things that I like and what I need so I can just relax... (emphasis added)

My interpretation of this participant's experience is that poverty is her first language or the habitus she developed to cope with it. She knows it intimately. She is an expert in what it takes to maneuver within these structures. She knows all the details of nurturing bodies. She knows the components and nuances of this knowledge system and feels the space and time and energy it takes for her to be an expert in it and respond. She is also aware of the messaging around reducing stress to be healthy. The language of prosperity is not a privilege she can absorb. She mentions that she can only relax when her husband is there to relieve the burden.

This observation is further exemplified by another participant who discussed it in relation to her ability to love and care. She stated that this love and care was reflected in her desire to provide food from her garden to family and friends. However, poverty takes away her time and energy. It impinges her capacity to follow through on her desire to engage in gardening and feed her family.

I always wanted to have a garden and that sort of thing. So, then this year I bought a raspberry [plant]. And I bought a tomato plant. And I ended up forgetting about them. I was so caught up working all the time and stuff like that and they ended up dying.

What is revealed in these participant stories, is that the linkages between trauma and food practices, stolen land and stolen time, past and present, negatively reinforce each other adding complexity to access pathways for cultural wellbeing.

To guide us from one end of this section to the other is a portion of Kesha's story that fits the theme of land and culture.

So for me, I am lucky, [having lived on the Reserve] not everybody gets that experience right? ... I don't mean this in a bragging way but I've been going to feast since I was little... But in the city, it's kind of a little different because they (cultural foods) got to travel this way [from water to city] so you got to make sure it doesn't get spoiled before you come. So like if it's my son's grandma on his mom's side then she will get a big cooler and then she will like freeze bottles so there's ice and it's all packed and prepared really good and then you got to meet somebody. Meet them at the [hotel located on city limits]...

Kesha talks about being visible and Black, her father being Tanzanian. She interprets and identifies some of her expressions to be as characteristics which belong to Black North American culture. The running joke is that she is called Keyoncée, which is a play on Beyoncé, a well-known Black American entertainer. Additionally, she is claimed by, and belongs to, the people of Waterhen First Nation. She routinely accesses the rural urban corridor between her First Nation and Saskatoon discussed earlier in this thesis as a cultural and nutritional lifeline. In fact, one of her favourite visual representations of herself is crystallized in a photo of beautiful dry meat and a "double double" take-out coffee.

Like me, I don't know if it's like the African in me, I like spicy foods right? So I like to season my chicken and all that, but to my mom, she's like, "back in my day, all we used was salt, I don't know why people make these things blah blah blah when all you have to do is roast it and use some salt" right?

Kesha draws on both ethnicities and attendant cultural markers to feed her family and sustain cultural knowledge systems which in turn generates zest and continuity. Many participants exemplify similarly pragmatic and meaningful reasoning, connecting household habitus with community habitus, and cultural healing.

4.3.3 "I do all that stuff because there's nothing else"

Land theft contributes to the burden that participants experience. One of the worst effects of colonial disruption is the state of poverty and hunger affecting the families in the study. Participants drew meaningful connections between present day shortcomings of social assistance programs and colonial food arrangements:

And the food bank because, I mean we need to; people go there because they have to. Not because they want to. It's a last resort. I don't like having to go to the food bank because it makes me feel like I can't support my family. I'm on assistance, social assistance but at least the money I get for basic allowance does go for food but that's still not enough for a month. We are making pay cheque to pay cheque on social assistance. Then even with that we still have to go to the food bank. It takes me back to when our ancestors had to go and ask the government for rations. I feel upset and hurt because without settlers, we hunted for our food. We were never hungry, and we never had to go begging for food. And when rations were given, you were only given so much. So, nothing's really changed.

The sparse food ration allotments referred to by this participant were managed by the department of Indian Affairs under the control of Indian Agents during the 1880's until the 1940's (Weidman 2012).

Today the policy landscape surrounding food and social support is dominated by tension between provinces and the federal system over responsibility. This participant explained the persistence of poverty in the context of the existing social safety net:

Sometimes I go to the Food Bank, if I really need to. When I don't have any bread or milk, and I don't have any money. [I go] before my child tax, or social services come in. Or just before Child Tax, because it's like mid-month.

The "mid-month" phenomenon refers to the common experience among some participants of running low on money and thereby low on food at the stage in the month just before their Canada Child Benefit income is provided. By "mid-month" funds are low or non-existent, causing

families to make difficult choices. Families are squeezed so tightly they are forced to decide to forgo certain meals or healthier foods. They need to fill in the gaps and can no longer choose the foods they want. They turn to the food bank and other charitable food. This dilemma emerged as a major pressure for mothers many times during interviews.

I know for a fact a lot of our people, not just from my reserve but from different areas, always run out of food. I mean, on the twentieth of each month, they jack up their prices. It's like being penalized for having extra food.

When she says, "I mean, on the twentieth of each month, they jack up their prices," she is touching on a common understanding among the households in this study (and a view that is held widely among low income people) – that grocery stores take advantage of the restricted windows during which there is some money for food coupled with pent up need and raise their prices in response. In this way, the “mid-month” phenomenon affects both working families and those who rely solely on social assistance programs.

Material conditions surrounding these families are inescapable as they make food choices. Participants talk about feeling stigmatized and judged because of their race, and their appearance of poverty as they are forced to make use of these inadequate arrangements:

And so, when you're walking in the Food Bank you feel embarrassed. You feel embarrassed. And so, then you don't wanna go there because you might see people that you knew growing up and stuff like that and they see you and you're like, "Oh I'm not doing well. I'm struggling." And it's embarrassing to feel like you can't provide for yourself or your family, right, and so then you don't want to go there and utilize it. So, I think that's a big thing for the Food Bank specifically. And I do feel like even though I do get the food hamper and stuff like that I still feel embarrassed. I try and go really early in the morning before everybody – like I try and be one of the very first people to go there to pick it up because I do feel shame. I don't feel empowerment from being a person advocating – fighting to make sure I provide for my child. Like I don't feel proud. It's like always a sense of shame involved with that. So, I think that's another reason why some people don't want to utilize the services. Because of that.

Participants experiencing poverty also are acutely aware of the futility in food banks. But for those who are hungry and need to feed their families, options are severely limited.

When they do these band-aid solutions, like the food bank and this and that... and this and that, I get so frustrated cause like I am an advocate and I do all that stuff **because there's nothing else.** (emphasis added)

The participant goes on to say:

Like I can't go and pay that much money at a farmers' market for some fruit and veggies. I could never afford an assortment, you know? Like it's just not feasible for me right now. And it's not right for me to demand or to expect that people that own businesses to lower their prices because they have to be considerate of like all those – all that effort and time and everything that gets put into it. You wanna pay them accordingly. You wanna support them but I mean you can't when you're low income. That's the only downfall to it [farmers' market].

Many participants recognized their own strength in being able to navigate these unfair systems, but they are also aware of being pathologized. This participant is explaining the truth matter-of-factly, that any family in another community would have a hard time in this context:

People don't realize how much energy and effort it takes to feed our kids. There is a lot here that needs to be said for the cost of poverty. To live in extreme situations like that, you have to be very adept. Me and the kids, we definitely do everything we can.

Participants discussed being seen as a drain on systems, even as they know they are working hard in extreme situations and that the current system is insufficient. The story they want shared is not one of stigma but one of love and nurturance, of energy and effort. Ultimately, lasting impacts on foodways and health are linked to historical and contemporary cultural rupture. In particular, the burden for contingency planning is not borne by social safety nets, but by families and communities.

4.3.4 Betsy's Story: "I would take my books with me"

There are 32 members in Betsy's immediate family. She was the last of five kids to be taken away from her mother and forced into residential school when she was five years old. She has memories of the land, her mother, her family, and food from before residential school, as well as during and after residential school.

There's something I want to share with you. When I was in university, I rented a house from the Métis society. I was separated from my husband. I'd had enough. I had a lot of relatives and the guys, people from my reserve, would bring some meat. But I used to go snare rabbits out in the bushes (at the end of the city) out by ___ Crescent. And I could tell different types of rabbits. You can't use the Jackrabbits; they were no good. Their skin was too tough, and the meat was too tough. I would take my books with me, and I would study, out there, with my truck sitting out there, and after a while I'd go check my snares. Later, the kids would come and say, did you get a rabbit? Did you get a rabbit?

In this one excerpt from her story, several themes emerge that contribute to a deeper understanding of how complex trauma responses, kinship networks, and adaptive resilience interact. The idea of hidden resilience emerges. Hidden resilience refers to underlying factors or strategies that are not recognized by the mainstream (Malindi & Theron, 2010; Ungar, 2004). Adaptive to her circumstances, she is a mother, student, and food provider. Revealed here is also Betsy's skill with and depth of knowledge of the land that endures in spite of residential school trauma. Betsy could be understood as both a "user" and "enhancer" in her food network.

"Enhancer" refers to a household or person that makes valuable contributions to social and family networks, within varying and intersecting food-related strategies and places (DeVault, 1994). This term is linked to feminist and critical theory. In this context, a food network enhancer is an individual whose typical work and activities benefit families and communities but may be neither recognized as such by the enhancer nor commonly seen and valued by the rest of society (DeVault, 1991, p. 3). For example, some are using their own homes for cleaning, butchering, and redistributing wild meat while they may be receiving food from charitable organizations and community-based self-help food sources.

By sharing this story with me, Betsy was able to make her complex reality make sense, clarifying how the sequence of events and overlapping factors were linked to her present situation. Though she lives in conditions of poverty, is a residential school survivor, and is living in a colonized food environment, she is educated. She has left an unhealthy relationship. She counts on her kinship network for food as well as her own inventory of resilience to draw food for her household. There is excitement and vibrancy too.

My experiences speaking with Betsy were some of the most impactful of the research experience. I brought her tobacco and she offered me jam. Her story helped me understand the complexity of foodways. Betsy's story points to families living in difficult financial situations going to significant lengths to feed themselves. Betsy's story captures this subculture of resilience, illustrating the efforts being undertaken to adapt and claim an urban environment that appears on the surface to be devoid of traditional food practices.

4.4 Power and Connection

This study looks both at what is going on in these households as well as how it is happening. The participants' practices can be considered a bandage as well as a value-driven mechanism of care. Their responses to food insecurity are pathways to health, and participants explicitly identify them as culturally grounded. These responses are not just covering a wound, they are also expressions of love and meaning. While relational foodways are disrupted by colonialism, as one participant put it, "*food is also a grounder for kinship.*" There is trauma but also deep cultural knowledge and care.

Through multiple interviews, participants shared stories that touched on future hopes, revealing also polychronic notions of time and space in understanding memory and ancestors. Making meaning of their world and their foodways is inextricable from ancestral knowledge, generational transfer of knowledge, and blood memory. Participants talked often about ceremony as it relates to foodways and sharing across generations. The information and stories that were shared with me through interviews made the work and cultural meaning underlying these mechanisms clear.

4.4.1 "My mom was a hunter"

Through participants' stories, the "how" of relational mechanisms and cultural dynamics in foodways becomes clearer, and the women emerge as powerful forces for food security. Motherhood reflects a habitus that carries forward from generation to generation. In the quote

below, the participant explains how her mother drew on unexpected relationships to support their family food network

My mom was a hunter. She hunted all the time. And she had us, you know as little kids. This is what I was telling the little kids was I had my own snares at eleven, I think. I was out there doing it myself at eleven, hey. And I know how to do that kind of thing. I know how to go out and hunt on the land. I know how to get rabbits. And the things that she could access with the kids right. And she'd always get - RCMP would get a deer on the highway, they'd have to shoot - they'd bring it to her. So, we'd be skinning a deer in the middle of the night. But we learned how to do it. We learned how to take everything that we could from the animal.

This type of relationship between an Indigenous woman and an RCMP agent is an outlier, and when asked, other participants described the RCMP in terms of violence. To me, this story is not about the RCMP but about the mother as a hunter, as a resourceful provider, with a deep inventory of resilience working within power structures and creating a pathway to feed her children.

Despite land and cultural dispossession, knowledge transfer continues from mother to daughter. Through this example, and others like it throughout the data, the notion of the whole animal as a resource, nothing wasted, was reiterated. There is love and admiration along this relational pathway.

My mom, yeah, she was pretty amazing when I think about that. Because she taught us to get - at a certain time in the year just before the little ducks are ready to start flying, they have a period of time where they're big, but they can't fly yet. And what they do is go under the water - like if they see a threat. They go under the water like a little bowling pin and only the tip of their beak where they can breathe is sticking out. And she would teach us how to go and grab them and wring their necks, so we had food. That was our food.

These specific food practices are part of a rooted knowledge exchange. She is sharing an orchestrated pathway that creates habitus: repeated practices forming a pattern related directly to food. There is responsibility to maintain these practices in their details, a form of maintenance that cascades positively across generations.

Notably, the labour of taking care of children and other family members falls to women. Grandmothers, often relatively young themselves and having lived through traumatic experiences, have an important role in keeping children with their families.

So, I have four of her children. And then I have one that my youngest daughter – she was a teen mom and she just threw her hands up, wouldn't deal with her. And so, I have [had] her since birth. So, I went right from my kids to you know caring for the grandkids, so yeah...

The important goal of keeping children with their families and out of the contemporary child welfare system, which has been described as simply a new and more insidious version of residential schools and the 60s scoop (Sinclair, 2008), is another level of burden on these women. Caring for grandchildren and keeping them fed is common and filled with relational complexity. Tensions between parents and their mothers are not often explicit and can present in several ways. In practice, for example, tension can look like rules associated with food and forms of illness, or it can appear idiomatically as protection from starvation as seen in practice of filling fridges with “unhealthy” bread as evoked in the quote opening the thesis. The value of nurturance and the value of the child are prioritized. Practical and logistical concerns such as physical ability, cost, time, patience, and food preferences compete with the typical needs and challenges of childrearing, including kids' school programs. Some participants mentioned the need to keep children and grandmothers in relationship despite the worry of either person's experiences negatively impacting the children.

Intergenerational caregiving is conveyed both as a cultural value and paradigm of responsibility, for the most part. The data reveal that community care tactics (within, at times, deeply uprooted and inconsistent physical presence) work on the edges of colonial injustices and cultural disparity as a method of harm reduction, softening these edges for the child.

Moving between these dimensions are views in relation to food and foodways which are in contrast. For instance, modern views on food and wellness are influenced by violent experiences in residential school. On the other hand, as heard in the data, survivors' children (now parents)

appear to have been kept from traditional or nutritional understandings of food due to childhood poverty and separation from their parents. These complex relational tensions reverberate throughout many households where ideas of shame, anger, big love and wellbeing are interspersed with good and bad practice in domestic and community domains. Moreover, reflecting how contemporary contingency is negotiated, grandchildren in turn, provide nurturance and food knowledge for their parents and grandparents too, particularly in the “post-residential school” era. In the midst of this complexity is loving practice that reflects a commitment to family connections as well as a pragmatic response to disrupted relations.

The burdens of intergenerational caregiving in the context of poverty includes not just of children, but also older adults.

Like my mom is diabetic [in a wheelchair], which, like because she’s staying with me because of her disability right now, right? So, I do – like I do try and add meat like protein, right? It’s just the cost of it is a little bit [steep]...

The setting is different in each household, but the food and wellbeing burden is absorbed by women. Through daughters taking care of mothers, mothers taking care of children, and grandmothers taking care of daughters’ children, the burden of care extends. This burden is a manifestation of trauma and of care.

4.4.2 "Suck it up and deal with it"

Another participant is a young grandmother who cares for five grandchildren. At the time of our interviews, she had recently undergone a necessary and urgent back surgery. She was in recuperation for a year and could not work. With five children under 12 living in her home, she found a way to meet with me at Station 20 West (a community enterprise building in the inner city). She explains the nuances of her situation revealing the complex mental labour of sorting it out and responding to unexpected contingencies that upset the delicate balance of securing a steady supply of healthy food:

We break it up now. Fresh fruits and vegetables I try and get at least once a week. I always try and keep money aside so I can do that. Sometimes we don't have that depending on what the bills look like. And sometimes if the unexpected comes up then they might not have fruit the last week before child tax. So, it's that kind of thing. And yeah, we don't always have the means to put money away, which is really hard. Whereas when I was working there was always money put away, right? So yeah, now it's a whole different experience. You have to be prepared and kind of suck it up and deal with it.

The idea of sucking it up is offensive, an offence by a social system that does not work to support but instead works against grandmothers and mothers attempting to live in a good way. Hers are detailed movements of practice. She leverages her knowledge to strategize and to flex in the context of her own compromised health.

The concept of "sucking it up and dealing with it" was a major theme across participants navigating the insufficiencies of systems of social support for themselves and others they encountered slipping through the gaps. Relational networks of care regularly and invisibly mitigate these gaps in the social safety net, serving as a type of kinship as the following interview excerpt illustrates

...there was a young girl that came here, she was entitled to get a gift certificate for Christmas from our reserve, \$75 and she wasn't feeling well. But she came to my house yesterday, so I gave her the card and then she tells me she hasn't eaten in two days. So, I gave her something to eat and I gave an apple to her and \$10. "On your way to Wal-Mart, go to McDonalds or something and eat something, don't want you falling over". I said, "I can't give you a ride because my granddaughter is getting her car fixed," because I usually get my granddaughter to drive me. I felt so sad just hearing her saying that how she hadn't eaten in two days and she was thin as a rail. So, I said, "keep in touch with me, I can help you in any way I can," you know? And I said, "did you try social services?" and she said, "they gave me a food voucher, but it was only \$25." \$25 I said, "What are you going to eat?" Next day she had her child at her mom's because she was having trouble feeding the baby too. So, I told her, I said, "call me back," I gave her my number, I said, "keep in touch with me and I'll see what I can do for you." And it just floored me, like she didn't know anybody, people in Saskatoon. She just moved in about four months ago.

It was common for participants to mention children as a motivator to persist within challenging and unfair circumstances. Another participant explains very clearly how this motivated both individual and collective care.

I mean it's – it is what it is. And no matter where I go now it's like I've gotta do what I have to do; the rest of my life has to be for those kids... You're gonna see somebody who's going to fight for their life. You're going to see somebody who's going to oppose these systems and take their life back and say no I'm going to do it this way. And I'm gonna go out there in the community and I'm gonna lift other people too. So, this is what I want them to see.

She is working to secure a future for her children. She is practicing the role of provider and transferring food practices across generations. She is demonstrating power in the face of conditions of powerlessness, and her love is made clear. It exemplifies how strong relationships and building alliances are mechanisms of care and drivers of change.

4.4.3 "When I had too much moose meat, I gave some to everybody"

In addition to relationships serving as a core mechanism within foodways, values play a key role. Values of equity and cooperation come through clearly as a mechanism for feeding each other. For example, the principle of sharing is understood for most of these households as a moral tenet of living in a good way. The strongest cultural norm that emerged is that food should be shared. It is an ethos of reciprocity. When folks have too much, it is shared, not thrown away or stored when others have need. This is a purposeful practice among family, friends, and those they know, and is a form of power.

Yeah, because when I had too much moose meat, I gave some to everybody, cause I had lots, A LOT!

These people would drop off geese for me. And my nephew dropped off moose meat. Well to be honest with you, ... I gave it to this one parent who was struggling. So, I ended up, I ended up giving it away thinking that someone needed it more although I wanted to eat it. Yeah, but that's alright.

She elaborates:

Yeah, it always gets passed to everyone and anyone who needs it. They'll just drop off moose roast or whatever it is. And, actually, my dad buys like a cow and then like I'm pretty sure that all of us mooch off of him. I'm like "do you guys have any ground beef still left?"

Practices are repeated over time and cement procurement strategies on the land, indefinitely.

My mother, when we were young, would take us, and we would set snares. My mom and my dad and myself. We would set snares... for rabbits. We caught a rabbit and she took it home and skinned it, cleaned it, and we ate it.

Participants mentioned that folks are hunting more to provide more and better for their households and others that they are aware are experiencing food insecurity. Wild foods are a preferred source of food, meeting cultural tastes and preferences, and sustaining families in urban centres.

Yeah, if it wasn't for the wild meat there would probably be more times of going to the food bank than I would have liked. I'm not one for the food bank, I try and keep that for the people who need it the most, who really absolutely need it. If I have other ways of getting food, I will use those ways before taking away something from people that could use it more...

That's why this year we like to go get, either have two deer in the house this year or if we can three and help out some other people. [As it gets more expensive to live] I stockpile. Right now, money is, we're trying to think of how we can save some more money by bringing in some more wild meat into the house. We already talk about it, we're like, yeah, we need to go get more, if we can get more meat in the house then that's going to save us some more money which we could put away for something or use it where we need it.

The sharing of food and the organization of its networks create and reinforce strong ties of belonging and kinship to the land, across generations, and between inner city and impoverished neighbours. This is exemplified in each of the following quotes from four participants.

When they went North, they brought back a whole bunch of moose meat for me. So, it's just a way that, it's just a way to show that we are family.

When I moved here about six years ago, my neighbour...he will always bring me some food. Regardless of- you know, he'll ask me, "do you need anything?" he'll just bring a pot of soup or wings or something he made, or someone got some

wild meat and he'll cook it and bring me some... I'm always like, "I'm going to get fat if you keep this up," and he says, "that's okay, you're too skinny anyway."

A lot of the time(s), a lot of the people I know, this community in particular, when they know I'm making bannock. In the summertime and in the fall, I have my door wide-open, kids come and knock on my door and ask for some bannock and I give it to them. They call me kokum, that's what they call me around this community.

4.4.4 Tracey and Jean's Story. "so, you take your little ones there?"

Households are drawing on diverse and innovative resilience strategies to withstand system forces and cultural stereotypes. A participant explained that her family needed to get berries for ceremony, but they lived in the city. She described an exchange she had with her mother-in-law. She had suggested getting some berries from a local berry farm, a practice for which she had been critiqued but was central to balancing life and cultural location in the city for herself and her children.

We went to the Berry Barn and at first, I was teasing my mother-in-law and said, "this is so 'bougie' of you to get berries here" and then she stopped me in my tracks, because she'd been questioned and criticized before for using the Berry Barn. My mother-in-law would have to respond to her relatives too. She said that this was a way for her to be urban, be in school, have children and still do the things in the city that connected her to the land.

The mother-in-law responded:

I used to go berry picking with my grandmother. She used to always can the berries that we would pick and that kind of stuff. It was always something that I really enjoyed doing. When I moved to Saskatoon and had my little ones, I heard about this Saskatoon berry farm. There's an importance of berry picking. I used to take my kids berry picking there. People would always ask me, so you take your little ones there? And the kids would pick [them] and they would eat [them] and everything else just like I remember doing when I was a kid. It was a way for my kids to do that growing up too. That was a way to teach my kids on the importance of berry picking because it was something traditional when I was growing up. So, I was adapting, living in the city and carrying on something cultural that was really important to me.... I remember when my mom came to visit me in the city after I had been doing that for a few years and my mom made

a comment about me berry picking and being in the city, you know? And I said, that's what's available and it is something that was really important for me and I wanted my kids to experience that. And that was why we did it. Then we tried it in Saskatoon a few weeks ago—to take my grandkids there. This is just that whole adaptation of something that is traditional.

This household is creating a complex procurement strategy of essential elements for cultural ceremony, shared story, and knowledge. Other participants explained that they procured frozen, canned, and fresh berries from a variety of locations: the land, a grocery store, and the backyard. This is an example of how intergenerational transmission of knowledge can play out and in innovative ways. Adaptive resilience emerges to maintain cultural and ceremonial practice in urban settings.

When policy and systems change is framed in terms of ahistorical assumptions, they miss the full picture. The following participant discusses her Métis identity and her connection to the history of colonial violence. She explains, in a few sentences, the implications within her own family of selling their scrip¹⁰, a policy that amounted to land theft from Métis peoples

I gravitated a lot towards Métis to honour the struggles that my family has gone through whether they realize part of it was a colonial attack or not, because a lot of them really aren't even in the know of how our family was affected, who we sold scrip for? For \$19 because we were poor.

I understood at the time that she was making meaning about her family's intergenerational poverty history and its relationship to food. I noted a longing in her voice about a lost connection to generational knowledge in terms of food ways and the land. To share in a reckoning of barriers to her contemporary "food freedom", she referenced past colonial interference. She

¹⁰ Scrip was given to Métis people living in the West in exchange for their land rights. The scrip process was legally complex and disorganized; this made it difficult for Métis people to acquire land, yet simultaneously created room for fraud. Robinson, A. (2019). Métis Scrip in Canada. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis-scrip-in-canada>

articulates a type of pride in her family's strength at the time and pride that her Métis family did what they could to survive.

4.5 Resistance and Resilience

This analysis of foodways in Saskatoon focuses interpretation on the pressure points that are shaping health for the future. Participant stories reveal food practices in response to trauma, strategies to help navigate various levels of trauma on the land, on people, on relationships, and on communities. When analysed as organizing structures, they emerge as cultural advancements toward health. The implication of these stories is that if these organized mechanisms and strategies could play out without the interference of the colonial government, then wellbeing could be measured at the collective level, and all populations would benefit. These ideas are revisited in Chapter 5, section 4.5.2.

What was understood from interviews is an effort to feed everyone within unjust structures. Where these practices exist, they serve as levers for change. This is cultural self-determination at work and illuminates the adaptive nature of these systems even in the face of colonizer systems and oppressions.

4.5.1 "A conscious effort now. We're resisting."

As introduced in Chapter 2, resilience is a complex term with different meanings to different people. Participants shared stories of resilience rooted in long-evolved systems of cultivation and care that stretch back generations. The findings speak to how these systems are expressed within contemporary contexts. Bringing a critical lens to food practices creates a space to express this generational knowledge and honour its roots in community and culture. These are ways of care and power that have existed for ages and by bringing these stories forward we can understand them as health promoting.

The connection to “the North”, as it is colloquially described, plays an important role for participants whose ancestral lands are located there. Cabins, reserves, specific hunting locations and family members still in these places, form part of their support network.

Sometimes, we have a cabin up north and around there, there’s good hunting spots and places to pick berries, sweet grass, but then there’s places around the reserve too.

Family members from the reserve would bring it up [hunted meat].

They go to the Reserve and they visit, like when the boys were older, they used to go to Loon Lake, the older boys and now the little ones go to Duck Lake or their dad has family on different reserves like in Saskatchewan and then they go visiting there....

When participants referenced the North, it evoked a whole system that includes food and foodways, as well as relationships with kin and ancestors. Some participants would say “from my auntie” or “from my uncle” or “from the reserve” instead of “the North” but the meaning draws on similar themes. It reflects the essence of culture and the constellation of cultural practices that are called upon for sustenance from the land.

One of the key mechanisms within this procurement constellation is the exchange economy. The quote below discusses how bartering and trading underpins this relational food economy.

We never have to pay for it. Sometimes my mom would like to go, like, to the Dollar store, and they have their cheap laundry soap and stuff like that or, like, even dish soap. She’ll buy all that stuff and send it back up there.

Informal food exchange can be seen through multiple lenses. Cultural values of equity shape self-determined practices, some of which fall outside of dominant capitalist economies. Another lens of informal food exchange is the constraint around public health enforcement regulating food safety. Control over cultural food practices is rooted in the Indian Act, and modern public health rules and bylaws do not accommodate family-to-family food corridors. Another example illuminates friendship ties and the rural urban corridor to feed those in urban centres.

I have friends up North who sometimes when they come in, they will bring me food. Like wild meat, there was a moose killed or. And they still do it. They have been doing it for like three, four years now.

Households living in poverty count on their kin and social networks to be informed about food news. They figure out how much and what to barter in exchange for that food and cook and prepare it for a small household unit or share in this form with others. Word of mouth is important.

Depends on how much you have, right? If you have a lot, then I will make a supper and invite people, but it depends on how much. My son just loves his dried fish, so it all depends on quantity. Usually if I give it to my friends and they have something it is usually like their uncle or their dad who's out hunting and they brought it in for them or the friend of a friend, or I heard about this so its word of mouth mostly.

Ad hoc collective kitchens also play an important role in urban Indigenous household food security and build social capital.

We do participate in... in our own little collective kitchens. So, we want to bulk cook. So, one time we did Empanadas, we did Russian dumplings, we did some kind of like a casserole thing, a little casserole dish thing. And we get together as a group on Sunday, usually it's a Sunday and it's like an all-day cooking party. Yeah, but a collective kitchen that involves wine and...And gossip.... Lots of gossip and sometimes work collaborations happen. Out of there too, people talk about projects they are doing and their work, and can you help me with this project? Oh, I need someone on this committee, can you go on this committee for a while for me.

As this quote illustrates, socializing over food and trying new recipes together leads to various benefits that include building connections in other areas of their lives. These small groups of neighbourhood women interacting in this way are essential components of a “cultural habitus”, a way of life. This recognition of the collective kitchen as always having been about more than food is illustrated here:

I think it's just because the kitchen has always been, it's not even the food it's the kitchen. Has always been the centre of our home. There are cleaner rooms and bigger rooms and cooler rooms, but the kitchen is where we gather to sit and chat

and talk and eat. Food has always been a big part of that. Even if it's just bannock or burnt toast or bologna sandwiches, it's more about the preparation and the community that takes place in there. That's why food never tastes the same here [in the city].

Adapting and adopting food from other cultures is not new. Bannock for example, is now seen as culturally synonymous with First Nations culture, as this participant humorously points out.

Well, you know the funny thing is that bannock is really a European thing. But... We made it what it is.

She goes on to talk about food and learning cultural foodways from both sides of her family, Trinidadian and Cree. She is clear that the ways in which she puts effort into understanding food and its meaning and transfers this actively to her children. She says that it is just one of the elements that make up resistance.

That [food] has become part of it[resistance]. It has evolved into that, sort of, effort to make sure that they know that this is just one way and that there are other ways. There are other ways for food too. Yeah, it's definitely more of a conscious effort now. We're resisting.

Initiating spaces to feel grounded and explore identity is a practice of resistance. Exploring food and foodways through this study allowed for an examination of multiple mechanisms of resistance. Some participants are aware of their motives and principles and made them explicit in the interviews. They are framing their practices in terms of change-making.

4.5.2 "They feed everyone that way"

These mechanisms of resistance are part of a broader system of governance based on care and love, which stands in contrast to thinking about colonized practices as the result of trauma and disconnection. The Menakem quote that opens this thesis contextualizes trauma around culture, family, and individual. Similarly, food practices can be viewed as a system of resilience for governing relationships within households, communities, and with the land. These are elements of a governance system working to express the value of "feeding everyone". Participants

reference dynamics and protocols for food procurement, preparation, and sharing that relate to ceremony.

For example, sharing food reinforces cultural dynamics and provides a sense of cohesion and connectedness. Cultural protocols also implicitly transmit social organization. In describing the protocol surrounding a feast, this participant is showing how ceremony teaches about and reinforces cultural values and norms, and sometimes serve to galvanize social ties:

Well, that sharing, the giveaway, it's the same thing as that. That's why there's feasts with every occasion and there's a lot of protocol around that and eating with people who have left as well. So, the food has so much meaning not for only those who are still here but for those who have left us.

The endurance of social relationship with those that have passed is an essential component to how social capital is built. It is a multilayered dynamic that relies on kin networks to create ties while interacting with food. "Eating with people who have left" and "there's a lot of protocol around that" points to food ceremony and food offerings acting as a type of social glue. It enhances relationships of those living presently while linking them to those who have passed and must be honoured.

Participants illuminate how these strategies occur given land interference and dispossession. Sharing as a key feature within relational food networks can be understood as a governing structure, rooted in culture.

They look at it as the community, hey? Like they feed everyone that way. And everyone on the band, like, even like single moms and kids can't do their own hunting – they have hunters that go out for everybody. They used to have buffalo there, too. They would kill buffalo for everybody on the reserve.

Several participants are young grandmothers, and they expressed both nurturance and a sense of protection over their families and the legacy of their ancestors. I sensed urgency in their stories and a pressure to gather and carry-on knowledge about food.

A participant shares this view of her grandmother.

My grandma. She has a garden. She lives about an hour out of the city. And she brings us stuff in at the end of the season. 'Cause, she is really about organic everything and very, very, particular about it and she gets worried about any food that's like made. She does all this research about stuff like that and so she's really keen on that. So, she has a garden and it just gets bigger and bigger every year and so she bags up a whole bunch of stuff and brings it in at the end of the summer every year. Yeah so, she's lived there for a few years, and I think it's like the third summer she's done that for us.

While the above quote refers to the grandmother providing material support through food, the following illuminates nonmaterial dimensions, such as emotional and spiritual, linking generations, through memories being evoked through food.

I remember things now when I'm in the kitchen doing things, things that my mom did that I realized where in my mind that I never even realized... I started mixing up the ingredients and then I just knew what to do after... oh yea... but it had come back... then the taste, and I knew what it was supposed to taste like and I know what it's supposed to feel like, ... so now I realize for my daughter even though she won't remember the specific things about it [learning cooking with her mother] she's going to have the memory of the process of doing it. Somehow it will just be in her... It's like the traditional ecological knowledge about the foods and the medicines.

These nurturance strategies are occurring in the context of hybrid kinships. Non-Indigenous core neighbourhood households are also benefiting from Indigenous caring networks around food. The participant quoted below is part of a network because her son is Indigenous. She was gifted moose meat and she talks about how that helped during times where she was struggling to put food on the table.

I know, and so I do know in the future if I have the income to be able to do that, I feel like it will be much more of an option for me to really seek some of those better healthier choices when I have the income to do it. I remember being really grateful for it [moose meat]. I totally do because I remember I was struggling, and meat is so expensive so to be able to be given free meat is like a big deal. **And to feed your family an entire dinner, even.** I think it was big enough to have for a day or two after and I think I remember being really grateful and thankful for it because it helps. Especially when it comes to meat and things like that. (emphasis added)

Here again, is an example of making sure everyone is fed. She says “entire dinner” in a way that suggests that on other occasions, she perceives her dinners to be incomplete. It also indicates an evolving system of care that depends on income and ability to avoid charity-based food programs.

Some participants see themselves as responding to the broken food system by taking measures into their own hands.

Yeah, it makes you feel better because you’re the one who actually went out and hunted that and you’re butchering it yourself, so you get to make what you want out of that meat. So, it makes you feel better, like, I caught this, and I butchered this and now I get to prepare it how I want it. It makes you feel a lot better of how you got it. Maybe you will have some people who have the feelings, like, oh you just killed this poor animal! But it saves you money. A deer can fill up. I have an apartment-sized deep freeze for now, but we want to get a bigger one.

Key phrases in this quote stand out because they elicit a sense of scarcity. Abundance is referenced in a careful way. At the time of the interview, this participant and I talked about how she is “hardcore”; she butchers, takes care of the kids and cooks. Through their words the beauty and significance of food and its high value is illuminated, linking themes of food as connecting to social health.

4.5.3 "When we are fed and eating and laughing"

Participant stories reveal expressions of power, love, and generosity. These practices are abundant even within contexts of constraint and scarcity. These are elements of what might be considered resilience practices, but they are also ongoing restorative practices of resistance.

For me and like obviously the best food I ever have is at a feast. Because luckily for me I am part of a cultural family, like I am lucky enough to be able to still have those things, so if we have a feast, then they feed me good, right? We are having moose nose soup on a good day, or duck soup or rabbit soup and bannock of course and berries, [sighs] cookies, candy apples, oranges, like everything.

These values reflect “good governance” in this context, and when values are interpreted as “policies”, this is a governance system that takes care of everyone, where “they feed me good” applies to everyone. Participant stories demonstrate the vibrancy and abundance that result from participation. They also demonstrate a breadth of practices and a variety of cultural expressions.

There’s this thing with First Nation, what I noticed with a lot of urbanized First Nation kids, so they don’t eat the way we eat in the North. So, the ones that are like in central or plains, in my age group, a lot of them already stopped eating traditional foods like I think [partner] probably grew up eating deer meat and that’s about it. And for us, moose. But he prefers deer, but he doesn’t like fish, he doesn’t care for fish. And we grew up eating a lot of fish, so I love fish. I love, you know my relatives would always send food for my mom and she prepared [it], shed [in the] back. [The] fish shed, would always have, would make different kinds of food or sometimes she would get a chicken from a farmer, so we would have that kind of food. We had a lot of soups; a lot of the meat was stewed.

This quote demonstrates how young people within a large First Nations family are changing and adapting their family food culture. It provides an opportunity to focus on how, within one family food system, multiple cultural dynamics are at play: urban-Northern relations, and intergenerational knowledge, and family partnerships all shape the trajectory of food futures and provide grounding for evolving cultural ways. In this case, the participant is a cultural agent, in that they participate in health promoting practices, sustaining and maintaining culture.

Grandmothers emerge time and time again in various themes as critical to foodways. They are referenced as a consistent and loving influence in the lives of participants. While Grandmother memories often revolve around food their significance is much deeper, linking food to love.

I liked bannock. My grandmother always had bannock on the table. She always made sure when we went to her house there was either bannock on the table or some kind of fish. There was always something at grandma’s house to eat and it was just on the table and whenever you came you would just grab a piece.

The food practices and foodways that emerged through the study are reflective of solidarity, sharing, and connection.

That's when the community is the loudest, and the happiest, when we are fed and eating and laughing.

This quote represents a contingency response in action. The values of collectivity, family, and the future of culture are all present, and I find it powerful.

This approach to feeding everyone includes elements of ritual and ceremony. The community being loud together is what allows for connection and relationship, leading to a sense of happiness that sustains life and health that is visible and present. It is the inverse of being silenced, hiding oneself, and disappearing which is in essence the colonizer project. These stories take up space. Being loud and being fed is part of an overall sense of wellbeing and determination, which is powerful.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The findings have illuminated the extent to which household and broader community practices are mitigating the most severe forms of hunger for these families. The practices work to solidify relationships and enhance cultural food ways. They serve to feed people and as a system of care. The features and characteristics of relational food systems that operate within Saskatoon exist in direct contrast to dominant food systems. This 'alternative' system is focused on abundance as healing and reclaiming health through caring for and feeding everyone. The dominant system is the opposite, centred on scarcity and desperation.

The findings demonstrate that the burden is not only withstood by communities, but responsibility and accountability to feed families is mostly on women. Participants illuminate the level of interplay of these burdens and demonstrate a common experience between women and racialized people. The racism and colonial violence that continues to play out has a deep impact on present experiences of health. The uneasy entanglement between "enhancer" as an embodiment of love, and the experience of violence, is persistent. This is crucial for understanding health outcomes and foodways in Saskatoon, because if these women were not carrying the weight and accountability of broken social systems, the extent of suffering in the

population would be far more visible and more severe. Without enhancer households mitigating the circumstances, the health inequities in Saskatoon would widen further. They are functioning in a way that softens the severity of impact of existing policies and government structures.

There is complexity tied to framing a study around negative circumstances and the impacts of inequity. In examining the experiences of the participants, we see the racialization of poverty, webs of dispossession, and building solutions in response to racist food systems. It is complex because this is about simultaneously shining a light on systems that create powerlessness and on the inherent and engendered cultural ways that create and sustain power. This study seeks to hold that tension long enough and transparently enough to create a substantive addition to understandings of culture and foodways. It makes visible how relational foodways are strategies for resilience, social change, and cultural cohesion/stabilisation as resistance.

The discussion chapter that follows opens the space of tension to evaluate the structures involved. I explore the significance of a value framework that is organizing food networks. The ethnographic work of meaning making demands a discussion that includes communicating power in its redress of powerlessness. Chapter 5 considers ways to convey participant food practices with assertions of reclamation in its redress of colonialism and dispossession. The discussion contends with the significance of factors which complicate stories of survival and sufferance, bringing into focus and displaying elements of resistance and relationships.

Chapter 5: Re-Situating Places of Power

By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all.

Nixon, 2011, p. 19

“Suck it up and deal with it”

Study Participant

5.1 Household Foodways in Saskatoon: Forces of Agency and Structures of Constraint

In this chapter, I discuss and build theoretical propositions about foodways in Saskatoon core neighbourhood households. The discussion draws on peer-reviewed literature, as well as on excerpts from non-academic writers. I have drawn upon the multi-disciplinary theories in anti-oppression work, lessons learned from applied anti-racist theory and learnings from Indigenous and Black scholars highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as non-academic stories and works, to contextualize the findings as I presented them in Chapter 4 to provide a richer and more appropriate account of the functions of resilience.

Having found that foodways in this study are essentially systems which rely upon and underpin relations, culture, and land, I bring forward theoretical connections from the study findings. McGibbon & McPherson (2011, p. 73) explain that “information about systems may be generated by examining the relationships among all the parts of the system, and how these relationships contributed significant additional factors in the character of the whole”. In this chapter, I consider the whole and the nature of the relationships of the parts that construct it. To set the scene, I elaborate briefly on 5 truisms that I found underpin what I learned about foodways and how participants from core neighbourhood households in Saskatoon make sense of their relationships to food in a context of contemporary food insecurity:

- Account for beautiful things
- See the magnitude of colonialism

- Bear witness to the power and strategy at work
- Recognize dissonant functions of resilience
- Follow pathways of trauma ethically and critically

Account for beautiful things

The research questions for this study focus on practices and mechanisms by which participants understand and account for their relationships to food. Findings reveal hidden elements of the struggle to feed households and how participants draw on their culture to limit the severity of the problem. Mitigation strategies are not one-off practices, and they are not just playing out across relational networks and in opposition to the extractive and colonial context in which they operate. Food networks are organized according to relationships, connections, and values that are rooted in culture and long evolved knowledge systems. Food and specifically the local-ness involved is, at once mobile, in that it moves between households, and embodied, in how it holds multiple meanings across cultures (Valiente-Neighbours, 2012).

This study adds nuance to the concept of resilience and to culture as a determinant of health. Participant stories appear to reinforce visions for self-determination around relational foodways. Food practices are organized around a convergence of cultural factors, models, knowledge, and ancestral relationships, that account for the complex trauma of land dispossession and the power of collective healing.

See the magnitude of colonialism

Too often in health research, populations are pathologized, rather than the significance of colonialism being recognized. I open this chapter with a quote from Nixon that speaks to the lived reality of households and the role of collective care in the face of attritional violence and poor health outcomes. I was curious about how household foodways and elements of power were harnessed and organized within an individual and collective habitus (Power, 2008) without diminishing, undermining, or trivializing the scope of the historical and current food insecurity, and its attendant ill health impacts caused by colonialism and systemic racism.

As pointed out by Sampson (2018), scholars are calling for more representational accounting of the ways social determinants are experienced by Indigenous populations. Sampson (2018) and deLeeuw et al. (2015) assert that despite Indigenous scholars' identification of colonialism as the most important determinant of (ill) health, the research produced on social determinants fails to adequately attend to its magnitude. This study attempted to adequately attend to profound wounds caused by Canada's genocidal project and its relationship to food, culture, and health.

Bear witness to the power and strategy at work

I analyzed data to show relationships between individual and collective agency, strategy, sacrifice, self-determination, and colonial history. What emerged is that the core value of love is prevalent throughout the findings and is thus framed here as a key driver for health. What needs insightful consideration, however, is that, taken out of context, recognizing these cultural systems of care can lead to romanticizing the survival, skill, and hunger experience of participants at the sharp end of inequity.

Recognize dissonant functions of resilience

Resilience is fraught with dissonance yet surfaces as a significant asset for mitigating poor health outcomes. The findings reveal a picture of households tapping into a variety of sources for survivance. I use the term survivance rather than survival to invoke multifaceted attributions to the term survival. Zhang et al., extend the phrase "politics of existence", to that of "biopolitics of existence" in relation to contexts of food and land health. Tuhiwai (2012) describes survivance as a coming together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness (p. 145). Vizenor (2008) has called survivance, survival and resistance. Survivance itself is an embodiment of health and the attributes that drive and shape cultural and spiritual values, "an authenticity in resisting colonialism" (L.T. Smith, p. 146).

The sources for survivance are where resilience presents a response to generalized injustice of which food insecurity is just one part. However, a critical social system lens illuminates how this resilience rationalizes lack of structural action to change the underlying conditions. The system counts too much on resilience as a driver for structural equity, while at the same time maintaining the status quo. This contradiction is inherent and therefore to some extent unavoidable – the important question is how it can be dealt with to move forward (Monehu Yates, 2021). A critical cultural interpretation illuminates how resilience is used to perpetuate a lack of systemic and structural action to change the underlying conditions, conditions that *require* resilience from women in food insecure households. The system counts too much on resilience as a driver for structural equity, when in fact, it maintains inequities.

The trouble with mitigation systems being hidden or chalked up to resilience is that it perpetuates misguided presumptions. This is troubling because the entangled positive and negative features of resilience are obscured, and possible connections are overlooked. The results imply that “enduring” despite persistent disparity ‘troubles’ evaluation of chronic outcomes and interventions. Taken up in another way, the data reaffirm the literature because resilience *and* trauma appear to be the chronic condition (Harris, 2011).

Providing good food access in neighborhood “food deserts” and “swamps” to improve food security is important. However, critiquing the interventions used is part of this conversation. There are various aspects of neighborhood revitalization efforts which are well intended but also cause harm, resulting in what has been conceptualized as a “food mirage” (Kouri, Engler-Stringer, Thompson & Wood, 2020). Food mirages are described as areas within lower-income neighbourhoods where residents might live in proximity to healthy food sources but may not be able to afford them, including restaurants. For example, mainstream alternative food network initiatives I discussed earlier (e.g., Farmer’s Markets) may be ill suited for communities needing to be served. Recent discussions in the literature also raise the problem of “food mirages” where gentrification and “revitalization” in inner cities leads to food store development that is inconsistent with the needs of long-time residents (Kouri, Engler-Stringer, Thompson & Wood,

2020; Breyer & Voss-Andreae, 2013). This can lead to a social narrative that communities needs are being met and issues of food insecurity and health are improved. Participant stories reveal resilience functions in a similar way. I consider this to be a “resilience mirage”. Indeed, I argue that a resilience mirage is similar in impact to a food mirage.

“Making do” becomes the habitus within the violence of poverty and colonization. (Power, 2007). This habitus recast as resilience is given more attention in public health discussions in relation to culture than it should. On the other hand, resilience within a self-determined cultural frame where it is appropriately contextualized deserves such attention. Other scholars also call for the provision of meaningful understandings of resilience and its relationship to survivance (Kovach, 2021; Kuhnlein, 2017). My findings indicate that recognizing a multifaceted idea of resilience offers more meaning. Further, the unavoidable prism (problematic) of resilience is clear within the findings. Resilience is a component of cultural resistance and recovery and is part of a community-cultural values framework.

Follow pathways of trauma ethically and critically

Eve Tuck (2013) brought forward a reframing of urban spaces as storied Indigenous land. Though the lands and spaces of this place are colonized and traumatized, they are also rooted cultural places that have their own kin and food stories. Beautiful rural spaces, parks and forests and wilderness places for adventure and retreat are landscapes that are indeed “products of careful long-term management by Indigenous and local folks” (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 25) This study uplifts and aims to better understand storied lands in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. Today's food stories relate directly to Indigenous storied land, and the trauma that took place here, the persistence of trauma, and the elements of sustained resistance which make up a food and culture praxis of these areas.

Conceptually attending to a vision that “urban and rural land is Indigenous land” is important to locate the impact of what happened and how Indigenous food insecure core neighbourhood households are responding to their current circumstance. The significance here is that without

discussions that pay attention to the policies of starvation that took place here and were manipulated into law (Daschuk, 2015), the reckoning, dismantling, and decolonizing of systemically racist Canadian governing institutions for equitable access to food systems is not possible.

Participants offered descriptions of their foodways to express shared themes of cultural sensemaking (Nelson, 2021). They illuminated the depth, breadth, and intergenerational nature of the burden of trauma. The crippling effects of colonialism play out within Saskatoon families, and still, mothers and parents are doing the best that they can do to follow their principles and foster healthy families. A defining feature that emerged is that the burden rests with women as they feed their families. Not surprisingly, gendered burden emerged as a major theme in how households account for historical disruptions on foodways.

An example is the importance of grandmothers. Grandmothers are defined by participants and are participants. The grandmother phenomenon can be interpreted variously through the lenses of equity, intersectional feminism and matriarchs, breath of life theory, social determinants of health, and others (Blackstock, 2019). The grandmothers thus surface as full entities on their own and as cultural drivers, memory makers, dream visitors, recipe makers and knowledge transmitters.

5.2 Foodways as a Relational Lattice

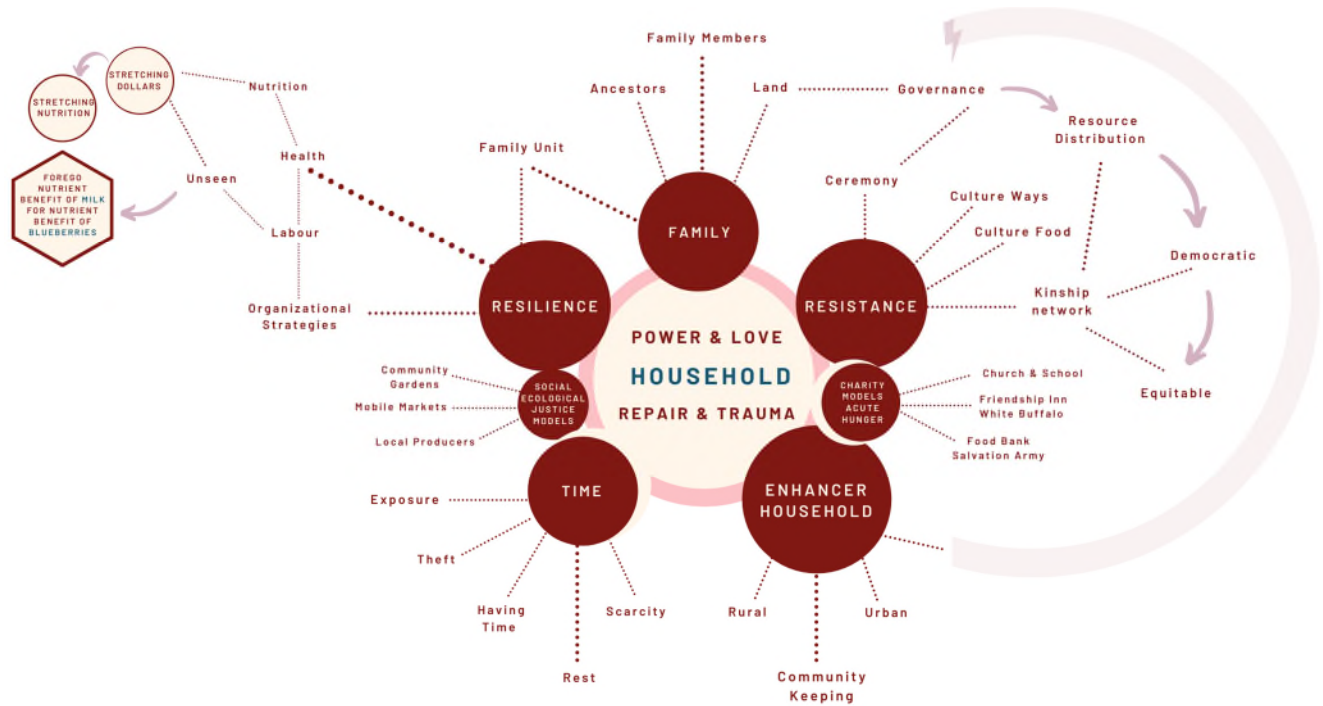
After spending time in the data, first with each household individually and afterwards with many households combined, I realized that I needed to develop a conceptual structure to organize and connect the meanings from the stories shared with me. The concept of a lattice resonated. Quantum and theoretical physics' notions of a lattice run parallel in function but also metaphorically to the one developed here (Hoser & Madsen, A. Ø (2017); Alexandrou et al., 2018; Aoki et al., 2019). Lattice dynamics in crystallization are self-organizing, have high or low frequency modes and vibrational attributes including spectra (light). Lattice models can search

for new physics and aim to construct the theoretical framework behind direct discoveries of new particles (Aoki et al., 2019).

Development of the Food Network Lattice in this discussion is conceptualized through the findings and with a much simpler approach. A lattice may be defined as an interlaced structure or pattern, sometimes consisting of strips or pieces crossed and fastened together with square or diamond-shaped spaces left between. It can be thought of as a support structure for growing organisms (like plants) or as a regular repeated three-dimensional arrangement of atoms, ions, or molecules to form a solid (Oxford Dictionary, 2021). Participant foodways may be thought of as operating both ways, as complex and varied individual paths of support and collectively as a solid and enduring structure. Figure 5.1, Food Network Lattice, maps out how food systems are organized in Saskatoon neighbourhood households, but also the meaning-making of that food and how it relates to cultural determinants.

In my research I asked: What are the foodways practiced by Saskatoon households? Where can households find pathways to good health in this context? Each household can be envisioned through this lattice. At the centre is the household, and what we see there is power and love and repair and trauma. From here the household is linked to the other domains. While endeavouring to be food secure, households are tapping into these other domains that include facilitators and barriers. Some may also be food enhancers, even as they also connect into other enhancer households around them. The lattice conveys practice and social relations. Resistance, resilience, and time are major themes intimately connected to households from which radiate numerous features at play in diverse ways to affect individual and collective foodways.

Figure 5.1 Food Network Lattice



How participants make meaning of their food pathways indicates opportunities for intervention. Food pathways have changed through dispossession and disruption, and the lattice offers a framework for looking at trauma in a different way, modelling the interplay between cultural practices, and the injustice of trauma and its impact on those practices. Trauma and colonial history cannot be separated, just as resistance and resilience cannot be separated from trauma, but they are not the same thing. Sierra Carter (2020, p. 212) writes that:

...women who appear resilient in the face of stress stemming from discrimination at the behavioral level may have less optimal outcomes at the physiological or epigenetic levels; this is as a result, in part, of the systemic experiences of chronic stress that can wear down body systems for marginalized populations despite persistence and resolve to break free from lower-quality life conditions.

Recent studies in trauma and discrimination “suggests that racism had a trauma-like effect on Black women's health; being regularly attuned to the threat of racism can tax important body-regulation tools and worsen brain health” and that “the chronic stress of racism can get under the

skin and leave a biological residue of enduring health consequences” (Carter S. 2021; Mekawi et al., 2021, p. 214). Scholars such as Roxane Gay and Tressie McMillan Cottom, call us to see cultural trauma as a burden/encumbrance/tax, instead of a cultural trait (Reese, A., et al. 2019; Gay & Cottom, 2020). This involves the whole picture. We require an epistemic understanding and accounting for colonial trauma as it plays out across food systems (Menakem, 2017).

5.2.1 Summary of Key Features of the Lattice

The lattice in Figure 5.1 provides the following perspectives:

- It captures complexity and nuances instead of reduces.
- It shows overlaps of colonial history and cultural ways of being.
- It shows the role of enhancer households.
- It shows limits on time.
- It shows social systems and cultural sub structures.

Lattice captures complexity and nuances instead of reduces

The lattice demonstrates the food and feeding strategies at play, and the efforts involved in mitigating severe food inequities. It demonstrates the creation of cultural foodways, and highlights modes of resilience at a population and household level. An ecological understanding counts on a conceptualization of households as systems, and community foodways as complex systems. “What appears to be random may in fact have an underlying orderliness to it” (Begun, et al., 2003, p. 258).

For example, participants described the sharing of food practices between newcomer and Indigenous people for mutual aid purposes. This includes teaching each other about their cultures, traditional foods, and food sources and, in some cases, bringing quite disparate foods together into a mingling of food dishes. While they may be receiving food from charitable organizations and community-based self-help food sources, some are also using their own homes for cleaning, butchering, and redistributing wild meat.

Lattice shows overlaps of colonial history and cultural ways of being

Canada has specific historical, political, and colonialist histories that impact food insecurity and relational food networks. One of the reasons I asked the question “What are the foodways practiced by Saskatoon households?” was to answer calls for more accurate conceptualizations of health and elements of food sovereignty as experienced by women, Indigenous carers, racialized families, and populations from the global majority. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Tarasuk (2016) calls for greater examination and critical framing around the effectiveness of alternative food initiatives. This study finds that formal community food programming in Saskatoon core neighbourhoods act as emergency supports that intersect with the multidimensional foodways examined. They do not appear as effective at curbing hunger or influencing better health as they should be, given they are the only formalized solutions being put forward.

In the end, findings suggest that there is more going on here. Cultural health is both the foundation and the outcome of a food system. Culturally grounded foodways provide food access but also function more wholistically than definitions of alternative food initiatives capture. The lattice depicts household practice and orientation of food as cultural tissue which acts multidimensionally, whereas formal interventions scarcely address acute hunger.

Lattice shows the role of enhancer households, community habitus

Networks that feed include “enhancer households”. “Enhancer” refers to a household or person (typically a female presenting person) that makes valuable contributions to social and family networks, within varying and intersecting food-related strategies and places (DeVault, 1994). The enhancer concept is drawn from feminist and critical theory. In this study, a food network enhancer is an individual whose typical work and activities benefit other families and communities and may not be recognized as such. The enhancer is commonly unseen and devalued by the rest of society. Further, enhancer households seem to go beyond negotiating, to staying nimble in the face of systemic lack of access to good nutritious food. The lattice illuminates the consistent and unrelenting daily practice of households employing these hidden

and unseen strategies. Rhythms of labour, care, and social interactions may seem fleeting, but they are significant and complicated in practice.

Lattice shows limits on time

Recent studies have precipitated important conversations about a lack of opportunity for practice in upskilling about cultural food practices, especially for Indigenous youth in urban areas (Robin Martens & Cidro, 2020). Consistent with Martens and Cidro, this study reveals a need for more time to focus “on the reuse and rebuilding of food skills in an urban setting” (Robin Martens & Cidro, 2020, p. 140). The lattice references time as a defining dimension within a household. This reflects a recently advanced consideration of time as a social determinant of health (Gee, et al., 2019). Located in an intersection perspective, Gee, Hing, Mohammed, Tabor, and Williams describe time as a determinant that is influenced and shaped by racism. My findings support this observation as an important theme for understanding food-related health and wellbeing. The profound but unheard character of time and racism surfaces as part of a contrast between scarcity and wellbeing over the life course. Scarcity of time to get things done, scarcity of resting time, and scarcity of time in relationships are important additional dimensions of the negative health outcomes associated with racism, gender, and colonization. All feature in foodways of participants in this study. Food and time may also be framed as resources which mitigate exposure to negative factors.

Another angle on time that reinforces its significance culturally and politically is in relation to rest and preferred food. In this way, the lattice emphasizes the role time plays in current and future imaginings of liberation and self-determination. The data point to various ways in which the domains of time are experienced. Rest, for instance, is not an afforded condition. As has been pointed out, “the trouble with being poor is that it takes up all of your time” (McGibbon & McPherson, 2011, p. 68, Willem de Kooning as cited by Herskovic, 2003).

This study traces how broken structures lead to dehumanization and perpetuation of grind culture (the hustle, output of labour and stolen time away from restful experiences) which in turn

contributes to inequitable health outcomes. Tricia Hersey writes that rest is refusal to let capitalism own women's Black, Brown and Indigenous bodies when it still owes a debt to their ancestors (Hersey, 2020). The study findings reflect an association between rest and self-determination. The persistence of exhaustive "struggle" functions as a negative social determinant of health but also a feature of habitus. The rest mechanism depicted in the lattice shows the food and rest dynamic: "rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy" (Hersey, 2020, paras. 1-4), colonialism, genocide, and trauma. A healthy society provides conditions for rest and time *to not be* strong, to be forgiven for mistakes, and find time to rest, to nurture and feed. As was poignantly expressed by one participant, "At night, I think about how many different ways I can cook duck".

Abundance around food, rest, and leisure is tied to the deeper crime of stolen time. Land theft represents deeper displacement, disruption, and disconnection, which are foundations for poor health.

5.2.2 Hidden Strategies, Unseen Systems

The design of the lattice derives from an epistemology that is open to multiple ways of knowing and being. Well established negative feedback loops are presented alongside previously unseen positive ones, such as assertion and resourcefulness. For example, the lattice identifies the exchange loop within urban and rural corridors, foods and/or wild meat for supplies. The unseen loop of resourcefulness can be seen in play in the top left area of the lattice. It transpires among labour, health and nutrition, and works in stride with degrees of compromise, stretching dollars and stretching nutrients in an implicit negotiation and benefit analysis. This practice maintains through emotional labour an accepted level of physical health which means a greater ability for resilience.

An added feature is that there appears to be opportunity for meaningful recognition of family and spirit practice. Enhancer practices maintain community keeping. Their reach taps into, and pulls into play, dynamics of resistance, such as those linked to cultural features such as democratic,

equitable resource distribution. Food and kinship networks enliven the opportunity for sustained interactions with cultural ways. Some of these are smaller, still significant, sustained relationships between urban/rural land, adding value to family resistance and resurgence, ceremony and governance. Positive by-products of enhancer households assert and present themselves in varying degrees with internal and external levels of impact. It appears some elements refer to blood memory. Community keeping is sustained through various relational factors working in strategy with an enhancer domain.

Kin-foodscapes of resilience and cascades of collective health

This study looked at food practices and relationships, highlighting how love and cumulative adversity, as biosocial experiences, are woven into visions of individual and collective health. Working toward food health and recovery is a political action against violence. The findings in my work highlight various ways households do this through “generative relations” that illuminate kin-making as protective and sociopolitical and also as “creative processes of fashioning care and reciprocity” (Hersey, 2021).

In theoretical alignment with current decolonizing and Indigenizing scholars in genetics and other disciplines (Tallbear, 2015, 2019; Kuhnlein, 2007, Reading & Wien, 2009, Kovach 2009), kinship is understood as a concept that carries interpersonal relations and relational supports, just as any other structural necessity (Strathern, 2019). Some kin are born, some come in other ways (Tallbear, 2019). For example, one participant butchers elk in her shed and shares with her neighbours, because this action also creates a future resource rooted in reciprocity. The nuance within processes that fashion care, meaning, and identity command a strong and complex understanding of foodways.

Kinship, as Johnson and Paul (2015, p. 5) discuss, are a way of thinking about kinship as a multiscale dimension of social identity and can “crystallize complex conceptions of relatedness with diverse types of data” to gain nuanced perspectives on family-based social organization. From this perspective, as illuminated in the data, food practices include aspects of blood memory

(Martens & Cidro, 2020). Relational food networks, as explored in this study, serve as a bulwark against alienation (not belonging) and operate as what I call kin-foodscapes, a multiscale family-based organization of food networks that also build resistance (Johnson & Paul, 2015). The lattice suggests kin-oriented distribution and household connections that point to clusters of factors potentially constituting a *kin food-scape* definition. Many households and people depend on and benefit from a wide range of social ties and interactions – “making kin, not only *beyond* biological relatives, but also *with* the materially dead/spiritually alive ancestors in our midst” (Strathern et al. 2010, p. 163, italics in original).

The lattice contains lively elements which participants, personally and collectively, construct and call upon as context-driven structures. Findings suggest that households may operate as clusters of people that both emphasize familial relationships and move beyond the biological, beyond family to indirect kin, all forming a household’s kin-foodscape. In this study, kin terms are broadly applied by participants: to band members, a pregnant woman who is unknown, varying dimensions of friends, common experience, neighbourhoods, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th cousins, common expressions of grandmother, to the rivers, non-humans, animals, and extending to ancestors and members of international and racialized populations, where relational links exist despite arbitrary borders and arbitrary senses of time. The multidimensional and lateral practice of this cultural feature helps to “expand the web of family relations well beyond the nuclear unit—stretching backward and forward in time, and into the realm of the Eternal Grandmothers” (Sampson, 2019; McCall, 2020).

A potentially helpful concept from the psychology literature to help explain the positive impact of kin-foodscape-ship is “cascading” in relation to resilient behaviours. Introduced in Chapter 2, cascading involves identifying progressive effects and indicators of adaptation and resilience across multiple domains and across time (Cicchetti, 2016; Masten, 2011). A cascade can also be interpreted as a pattern of negative factors. What should be noted here is that the literature implies that a negative cascade can be disrupted and intervened upon by positive cascades. Some elements within a cascade are assets, resources, and potential protective elements constituting

components of resilience. Masten (2011) found that a pattern of supportive interactions provides a boost, spurring recovery and increasing protection, sometimes reducing vulnerability. A kin-forescape relationship might also operate this way and take on similar attributes.

Part of this positive cascade includes values which flow as positive relational and cultural feedback loops and intimacy, support (no matter how big or microscopic) internal and physical proximity to health and foodways. Like negative determinants, which can play out in feedback loops, positive cascades can have lasting effects that spread to other domains, such as the democratic loop around equitable distribution affecting the household domain of improved food access and nourishment.

Enhancers viewed as resilient, and culture viewed as unwell and traumatized

This study yielded both anticipated and unanticipated results. What was unexpected is the extent of mitigation operating to bolster systemic disparity, and how invisible it remains. Betsy, for instance, put herself at great risk and would snare rabbits in city spots to ensure her children were fed. This study illuminates the extent of mitigating strategies, and the unavoidable circumstance of pressure and stress. Complicated patterns play out, and not always in a way where re-traumatization can be avoided.

The prevention of trauma, however, is a priority. Studies, including this one, point to prevention of trauma as the closest and shortest distance to improved population health. Singer (2017), Gee (2019) and Blackstock (2019) amongst others, present analyses of how attritional violence and cumulative adversity influence population health. Food systems are sites where harm and healing intertwine. For example, foodways author Harris (2011, 2020) discusses the complex phenomenon between how food and the lifeways histories of Indigenous and formerly enslaved African people mix to create fundamental cultural markers such as southern BBQ in the USA. In contrast, the painful reach of these complicated patterns involves understanding attritional violence in all contexts. Foodways generally exist to sustain life and reinforce food joy, but as Twitty posits (2017) foodways also function in more sinister ways and in America rely on the

Black woman's wounds. The responsibilities in the food realm rest with enhancer women. Love rests there too.

In the context of this study, the weight of enduring is woven throughout biosocial and cultural elements of foodways. Over time, clusters of food trauma factors and culture are burdens as well as sources of creative wisdom. Often unaccounted for, this tension unfolds as cumulative factors which influence epigenetic and physiological adaptations (Twitty, 2017). As one participant pointed out, "Food is a grounder for kinship", but the data tell us that it is also bound in trauma – found in the data are elemental markers of cultural celebration and persistence which in turn are social indicators and markers of a larger dynamic health and a type of biosocial "morphing" of foodways' "DNA". (Twitty, 2017). Cultural resilience, though necessary, complicates analysis between connection points and cultural healing, reclamation, and the brilliance of Southern BBQ or as in this study, siracha noodles with moose meat (Twitty, 2012).

As I continue to understand the significance of the work of survivance (Vizenor, 2008) and cultural knowledge-systems at play, I realize it is impossible to encapsulate the extent of their influence. For example, Betsy's story pinpoints far-reaching and extensive impacts of protective elements transforming the weight and the experience of severely negative outcomes. Her stories deserve a reverent and dynamic analysis. Betsy's patterns of lived experience spiritually and physically (materially and non-materially) exhibit features of:

- An Enhancer Household (lattice)
- Kin-foodscape (models of organization and healthy society)
- Positive Cascade (autonomous positive forces which carry on despite structural adversity and unrelenting trauma of dispossessions and cultural genocide)

5.3 Cultural Processes as a Determinant of Health

Earlier, I identify the critique that public health literature does not go far enough to provide meaningful interpretations and solutions for racialized populations. What is needed, arguably, is

a more representative picture of interdependent and socio-cultural-ecological systems that affect health, including a societal and spirit lens on trauma (Jennings, 2018)

From a dynamic view, participant reflections on food insecurity and their experiences with it, can be interpreted as unfolding, complementing each other, and enriching our understanding of relational and cultural processes. In addition, the cultural process involved insists upon an increasing complexity that results from social organizing connected to the integration of society and experience over time, including biosocial and epistemological frames/theories (Palombo, 2017).

Furthermore, from a dynamic perspective, I argue that social organization and determination is defined as a system constituting an ontological dimension that delineates strengths, and introspective domains for cultural considerations and values.

The data indicate that a sub-surface culture of relationality/making kin is at work in this community network, facilitating care, food, and shelter. When households find themselves hungry and in urgent need for food and shelter, it is family, friends, and relational networks of support that mechanize and offer relief.

Neighborhood and family concepts place value on the presence of others and their kin in intimate spaces such as kitchens. The data have shown that typical cultural divisions of private and public space feature differently in collectively driven cultures. Children tap into these similar social and cultural keys too. The role children play in foodways takes place in a variety of emotional, social, and cultural contexts. Through participant data, the analysis tuned into the ways in which body language, words and embodied ontologies were attendant to children. In this place, a tenet of community ontology is that children are creative and competent social actors in the foodway paradigm. A preliminary data category centred on dimensions of children, cultural pressure points and food, aligned with ethnographic concepts developed by Caputo (2001) in which young people “create spaces in which they are able to ‘play’ with, resist, accommodate, refuse and create alternatives”, in this case, to parents and grandparents in the adult sphere of the

household and the complex relationships therein, extending to neighborhood and cultural configurations in relation to food, food arguments and cultural tipping points involving food (p. 180). Expanding on this conceptual pathway, the thesis data were not only in-step with the idea that children are more than passive vessels into whom culture is poured, but are active agents of culture and can be mobilizers for change and for foodways. Hopefully, greater integration of medical anthropology, and critical social change theory with childhood studies will yield insights “by addressing the processes by which ‘truths’ about children's lives are revealed,” including their experience with foodways (Caputo, 2001, p. 181).

The data show hidden strategies at the community level and the individual level, providing a window into the participants’ community culture of cooperation and care. They connote the emergence of something new within something old, and a progression in which a succession of changes occurs in a rhythmic way. Participant stories draw culture and agency together. The data taken together hint at emergent organization and cooperation recursively reworking the “old” or “before”, providing continuity and cohesion in the succession of organizational states, such as the purposeful patterns of food practice illuminated in the lattice in Figure 5.1.

Earlier, I also discuss functions of resilience. By revealing the components of harm that accompany the care through which relational food systems keep bellies filled, this study challenges the concept of resilience as romantic, skill or capacity. Resilience, here, is harm reduction. At first glance, colonial narratives of Indigenous resilience do not seem to match up with colonial frameworks. Scholar and social analyst Kim Tallbear proclaims that resilience “embodies much more than the notion of one particular definition out of which came the cultural character out of whole groups of people” (2020). Colonial frameworks tend to encapsulate in the form of a narrow and tired receptacle, romantic totality of indigenous authority, land rights and Indigenous cultures being “othered” or fundamentally different, whether as a culture of weakness or of perfect resilience (Tallbear, 2013; Mudimba, 2020).

This positive impact is demonstrated in Chapter 4 with Kesha, a single mother of Cree and Tanzanian descent who is visibly Black but linguistically and culturally Nehiyaw. Kesha benefits

students in her human geography class because she educates them while vulnerably challenging the system that requires her strategies to maintain a collected class discussion. This situation magnifies the various contradictions she dodges in what is perceived to be a straightforward discussion about feeding her family and how that's done. She had to endure stress from others in explaining it to them, in teaching the other students what they needed to know. She did not learn anything new, she was the teacher, as vulnerable as it made her.

Studies on populations and food do not often look at resilience as represented by Kesha as a cultural determinant of health. Resilience is not enough, nor does it reflect Kesha's reality. Resilience is a key finding in her story, yes, but within the context of survivance. Simply praising her resilience undermines accounting for the system that requires her resilience. Her story exemplifies the power of her culture. Her culture is a leverage point for her, but she exists in a racist system that neither recognizes nor rewards her strengths. Rooted in her community ontology, she possesses a nimbleness to sidestep contradictions and duck and weave colonial constructs.

Drawing from an inventory of resilience for existence and survival, it becomes clearer that resilience depletes and is problematic if considered a cultural trait, rather than strategies and techniques for mitigating the extent of trauma. As described in Chapter 4, the practice of resilience can serve as a smokescreen which diverts attention away from calls of material and structural forms of policy change. Restitutions, including access to land, resources, public health reform and access to good housing are stratagems which contribute to material proximities to pathways to good food. Answering a call, as this study intends to do, to reclaim for households a "material history" affords one path toward accountability (Tallbear et al., 2019, p. 160).

There are components of culture, possibly invisible to outsiders, representing as I have described earlier in this paper, strategies for resilience. These parts of Kesha's culture are embodied in the way she eats food, the way she teaches others, and is not able to be regulated, standing directly in opposition to material-theft history. The lessons I have learned from Kesha portray a story, a claiming of a different outcome, one of endurance, yes but also of a cultural material history.

This next section of the discussion considers implications of study findings for intervention, offering a way to reframe the approach through a the attributes of survivance in relation to tangible relationships to her ancestors and their foodways. This is followed by mapping out specific opportunities for intervention.

5.4 Food Policy from a Lens of Vibrancy, Strength, Culture

Health promotion requires that we learn to better understand where to intervene, how to draw links, and how to identify where support is needed (WHO, 1986). My findings support movement in this direction. For a long time now, trajectories for fair outcomes have been thwarted by fabricated and misplaced accountability (Fletcher et al., 2021; Lipsett, 1980, 2004). Consequently, systems leaders are often absolved of accountability, which leads to a popular belief about health that "things are reasonable because people are resilient".

Saskatoon neighbourhood households are responding to modern neoliberal paradigms and policy within enduring colonial structures. It is difficult to change our lens on food systems because it is difficult to reframe our thinking from within dominant paradigms. If a cultural and relational lens can be centred, interventions designed for supporting *collective* resilience could be considered. Findings reveal that enhancer households are calling on themes of strength, culture and vibrancy as well as contributing to them. Perhaps it is possible to move health policy forward in the same way.

5.4.1 Strategies that Confront Colonial Systems

This study shows that households enact food security actions in concert with cultural resistance. Interventions which centre resiliency as a form of healing from systemically imposed trauma, a concept that has been problematized as rationalizing the status quo, may be missing the opportunity and ethical responsibility of supporting resistance as well.

The study findings point to contributive practice more so than entrepreneurial or capitalistic practice as the mechanism for healthy foodways. The strategy of exchange economies, for

instance, are underscored by relational and contributive goals, rather than exploitation. Exchange economies function from long evolved and persistent cultural knowledge and practice, that buttress habitus, extending our understanding of culture as a determinant of health.

The hidden systems explored through this study offered opportunities for rethinking research concepts. For example, I did not anticipate the amount of kinship at work within relational food networks and the extent to which the value of relationship is animated. Based on values of creating close families and sharing food, it follows that kinship networks appear to play a strong role in food procurement, food distribution and food exchange economies. Participant stories highlight principles and indicate that they play an integral role. There are levels of relationality that households count on and create to enact practices of pragmatism and usefulness. These dynamic elements take shape as contingencies playing out within the context of cultural connection, located in a values framework that differs entirely from systems of domination and denigration.

As an example, Tracey's family history touched on themes of dislocation and disconnection of the Métis. In one interview, she linked her family experience with a refugee family experience. She discussed the governance model of egalitarianism and fair access to resources in her Métis history and told me how her family set up settlements which allowed for every kin and community member to have shelter and direct access to the Saskatchewan and Red River waterways. Her description indicates that the way to govern for health is to ensure fair river access. The Métis settlement infrastructure was depicted in a painting she pointed to as she spoke¹¹. The painting, she explained over several in person and text conversations, is of the Red River settlements before the Indian Agent agenda dispossessed the Métis Nations of their economies and cultures. Another participant explains that culturally, "you would never kill a

¹¹ The painting is provided in Appendix A Figure A.5.1 Métis River Community Before Road Allowance.

buffalo and keep it to yourself, right?’. A society which provides for everyone in the community is in stark contrast with the current system comprised largely of barriers to equity.

Participant values are centered in this study because they not only influence individual choices about food procurement, they also underpin a cultural framework for governing food distribution. Understanding the “how” of foodways is key because it points to opportunities for intervention that amplify and support principles and strategies that feed people.

Honouring and supporting unseen food systems - potential for policy change

The integrity and relational elements identified in this study complicate academic assumptions about excluded populations. Multidimensional and pragmatic elements of survivance in relation to food accentuate and trouble the dominant narrative about how and why foodways are designed the way they are. This study suggests that foodways look and function differently among the people that use them. Mechanisms of survival stem from the circumstances of colonial history, and as such, they are generationally minded, culturally driven, and deeply focused on food. That is why, through my interpretive lens of this study, participant foodways appear more like a system than a network. Cultural values and principles are driving kin-based community foodways and likewise participant practice embodied within foodways is based on cultural epistemologies and health systems of wellbeing. Undoubtedly, it is a testament to the strength of culture to have these collective norms persist over generations of colonial disruption, but how does this interplay with poverty and manufactured scarcity as it continues to impact households and dispossessed populations? Canadian society is wealthy but not generous, ensuring a mirage of abundant possibilities. Meanwhile, profound experiences of foodways continue and still transpire here.

Meyer (2004, p. 59) states that:

We will heal and we will be educated by “aina” (land). This is key. We will, once again, be fed by the tides, rains and stories of a place and people made buoyant because this is how culture survives. ~ This is how we all will survive. We will survive because excellence of being is found in the practice of aloha [love,

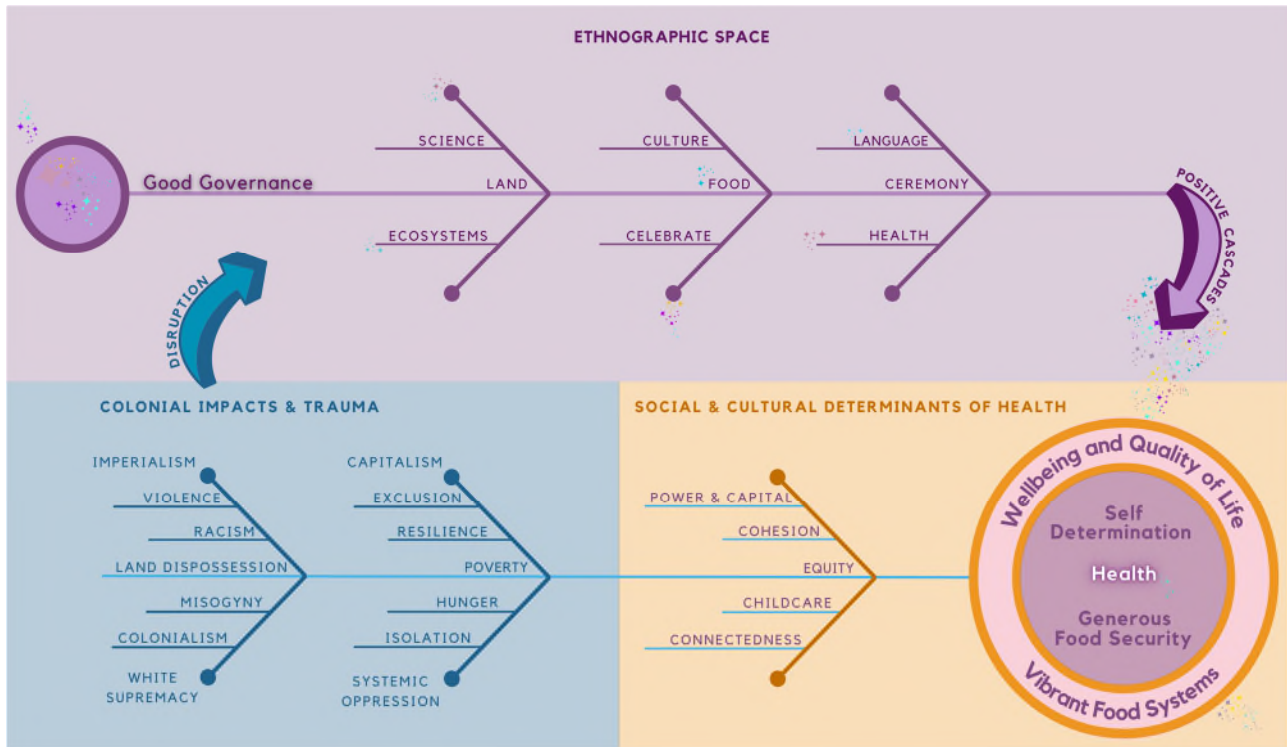
reciprocity, learning from ancestors, physics and accountability] and that, believe it or not, is an epistemological point. So let us shape ~ lessons by this ideal and let us shape our lives accordingly.

5.4.2 Opportunities to Interact and Support

In this concluding section, I walk through opportunities to intervene informed by study findings. Figure 5.2 summarizes community food habitus and cultural domains of health, overlaid with the real-world context. It is a conceptualization which includes recognition of colonial impact, trauma, social and cultural determinants of health, and accounts for and locates as interrupters some of the beautiful bits: namely, cultural resistance and positive cascades.

Figure 5.2 helps to answer the final research question asked in this study: What are the implications of these findings for addressing and understanding food system inequities? The introduction of a syndemics orientation is important here because poverty and colonization operate in this way in associations with poor health outcomes. Furthermore, proposing syndemics-based interventions seems possible as this study revealed more (and different) spaces that may support health promotion and mitigate the effects of disrupted foodways.

Figure 5.2 Culture, Forces and Positive Cascades



Singer (2017) explains that to prevent syndemic outcomes, every associated affliction should be controlled or prevented, however, the forces that tie each affliction together should also be controlled or prevented. In the context of colonialism and health outcomes, syndemic consequences of genocide and imperialism have occasioned a growing body of literature on the consequences of mutually reinforcing health conditions (Singer et al., 2017). Syndemics thinking could be seen reductively if framed solely through disease comorbidities, but it can also be deployed in a strengths-based way that would enhance each of the individual forces that may independently lead to a positive health outcome, and especially target for support the ties that bring them together

Although it is true that poverty and colonization are syndemic associations to poor health outcomes, perhaps cultural vibrancy and self-governance constitute a positive syndemic link with

lively foodways for good health outcomes. This indicates the direction we can go, where everything comes together, offering a broader view and a deeper understanding of where to intervene and how to support.

Shifting an interpretation from negative to positive can feel strange and uncomfortable as it is not part of the dominant paradigm, which has tended to overly focus on deficits. Nevertheless, a key theme of this chapter is making sense of a convergence of multiple negative and positive generating forces working in combination. Legacies which define cultural insurgence, maintenance, and health intersect positively, too. In fact, they lead to the problematic of resilience. Furthermore, by applying a syndemics approach to a cascade conceptualization, positive outcomes may be realized because this frame accounts for beautiful intersections and convergences of recovery. It demands a paradigm shift in health and culture for which this study provides ample evidence.

For example, study participants tend to organize their foodways, as much as they are able, around relations to ancestor ties, kin teams and sharing networks. However, they are also forced to address acute food insecurity by accessing ‘formal’ services. Asking for this kind of support means identifying a need within an untrustworthy unsafe system which can be turned against them and put their household at risk. In this way, government manufactured co-dependence relies on negative feedback loops and removes agency and dignity. By contrast, the findings suggest that when co-dependence rests with one another, it sustains interdependence and serves to support, keep, and feed the community. In keeping with this concept of negative and positive, this study pinpoints positive effects when a functioning cascade is co-dependent on relations.

Following a flipped syndemic strategy, rather than identifying where we intervene (e.g., foodbanks) instead, there is an opportunity to reframe focus around where we add more support (relational food networks). In this study, this place is where values and tastes have acquired meaning and function as cultural dimensions but appear to be largely individualistic in expression and experience. Taken together, these can, however, point to effective or meaningful opportunities for intervention. Betsy’s story speaks to intersecting and dynamic synergies of food

tastes and inhumane traumas. She saw her brother being forced to eat maggots in residential school. Her voice and the way she told her experiences communicated the multi-faceted theme of enduring. She loved her grandmothers and the land with everything she had in her soul, and she created her contemporary culturally based system in the city to trap rabbits in the city limits while educating herself and feeding her children. Jean too, was brutalized by trauma and she lifted herself and her children out of violent spaces and into care structures which included linking locations and meaning to where she found power, incorporating the meanings of picking berries from the land. Her story uncovered the emerging significance of taste and pleasure as she spoke of flavour and “plopping berries in your mouth” in the face of deep pain as her backdrop. In Betsy's story and in Jean's story, the land serves as a proxy for their longing for family and kin. They have both made babies and lost kin on this land and they both endure, and importantly, they liberate themselves through food, art, education and wellbeing.

These examples highlight democratic matriarchal organization, fair distribution, and cultural mobilization and ambition (impetus) as important features and levers to support our local food systems. The analysis found and brought together evidence that suggests kinship “might be realigned for a world that needs not only the gritty mutuality and interconnectedness among beings, human or otherwise, but to reproduce what supports these relations” (Strathern et al., p. 161, 2019).

The discussion in Section 4.4 about caring for grandchildren also has relevance here. Elements of relational complexity are tied to emotions and their meanings: contradictory emotions and expectations of grandmother behaviour carve through already complicated relational domains. The data point to groups of emotion and feeling states at a high level of inference, including longing and acceptance, anger and understanding, aversion and compassion, embarrassment and grief, shame and pride, humility and uncertainty, unease and joy, amazement and weakness, tenderness and indifference, worry and care, suspicion and triumph, dread and courage, apprehension and hope.

What seems clear is that feeding, food and children function like an anchor for adults, drawing in unavoidable complex relational dynamics in intersection with chronic emotional fallout experience and distress attributed to chronic dispossession and chronic trauma. Colonial and residential school outcomes in health deeply affect the current emotional sphere of relationships. Emotions at play within a child-food relational dynamic with grandmothers and their adult children in relation to nurturance and foodways are undercurrents which shape and set tones in the data. In critical and medical anthropology, this complexity is interpreted as a characteristic of multidimensional emotionality in interplay with typical family dynamics (Caputo, 2021). These dynamics are very high-stakes, involving empty bellies or homelessness, for example, affecting the degree of trauma, and having an impact on culture and health. A positive syndemics lens is meaningful here. No matter how muddled and tricky, participant experience and complicated family dynamics seem tethered to emotions that are either useful for survivance or emotions that can be controlled in such a way that they are helpful for the household (Trnka, 2020). This thesis brings forward a deeper curiosity about this emotional realm.

Deep understanding would require mapping out emotion and its impact on culture and adaptive food systems. While my study reinforces considerations of relational and emotional complexity, future studies may include mapping out complex emotions in combination, in interplay and convergence where dimensions of vigilance, rage, grief, loathing, terror, amazement, ecstasy and admiration can be grasped whether in low or high energy-positivity or high or low energy-negativity (Trnka et al., 2016). As proposed in this thesis, considering a strengths-oriented syndemic within an elaborated contextual framework of emotional and physiological outcomes related to food is likely a worthwhile undertaking.

Participants' experiences offer a shift in perspective on where cultural and food links ought to be drawn. When families and kin networks practice ceremonies in city backyards, when berries and tobacco are placed as offerings to grandmothers and fathers passed; these actions represent more than values of love or power, they predict deep and inner spiritual worlds. Spirit then leads upward, downward, and outward and integrates with spheres of governance models underpinned

by nurturance and long evolved biosocial and cultural food systems. It is in this realm that Blackstock (2019) frames her breath of life theory, anchoring it in interdependent understandings and linking these to social determinants of health.

Centering culture as a determinant for positive health seems complicated to enact in a research setting, particularly when accounting for and considering the weighty confounding influence of colonialism and trauma among the participants, and even more specifically, when linked to foodways and health in relation to food and racism. However, countering the problematic of simplified data with complex and rich understandings of populations who make up the global majority is key to good health research. Tallbear points out that there is a tendency to frame Indigenous culture around *narrow notions of connectedness and to privilege relatedness* (2016). If the lattice of relatedness and connectedness cannot be understood as a primary and principal cultural tenet of governance then “culture” will not be understood as a determinant of health, especially within privileged and dominant domains of academia, health sciences, sciences, and policy (Tallbear, 2021). Social determinant theories, when considered alongside historical harms and contemporary contingencies, are frameworks that allow us to explore complexity about the determinants of an individual’s health and where theories of culture can be supported to improve proximal outcomes beyond the individual.

When it comes to foodways, while community-driven responses exist, there are deeper relational-cultural forces at play. A healthy foodway looks like better policy and urban planning but these are invisibly underpinned and contoured by enhancer household experiences.

A few cultural factors that this study identifies are listed below. The list depicts some categories and mechanisms grounded in the data. Cultural distinctions and expressions influence the health of communities. This thesis provides data that uplift key elements of foodways. The data illuminate culture and self-governance as levers for good health. Culture is not only an outcome involving social determinants but is a strong driver for food secure systems.

The list below highlights several relational elements found in the data:

- Mapping care tactics in relation to foodways
- Sharing as a practice of governance locally and in the global majority
- Webs of strength are community care
- Vibrancy and resiliency understood as a collective resource
- Shared principles and urban understandings, various cultural expressions of healing

This study broadens our considerations of resistance and of nuances in culture, its relation to land and its influence on foodways. “Researchers have long been aware that cultural understanding involves making sense of the means by which others make meaning” (Settee, 2007, p. 194). In this vein, the study introduces a brief political and cultural picture of land management and conservation techniques. Even though, anchored within a cultural history, these techniques may seem evanescent in nature but are in fact rooted in powerful local knowledge of care techniques required for shaping and framing landscapes in Treaty 6 and the homelands of the Métis.

Fletcher, Hall, and Alexandra (2021) describe the Australian landscape as a heavily constructed one, by the Indigenous people from those lands. This suggests that collecting similar information in a Saskatchewan context could link other forms of cultural land cultivation with healthier and sound ancestral strategies to avert rapid loss of ecosystems like the grasslands and support secure foodways. Anthropogenic ecosystems exist in Saskatchewan. Some of the consequences of their loss are devastating and described in this thesis.

Recovering and sustainable management of ecosystems and sociological infrastructure are presently perceived to be disappeared, but they are not. Indigenous peoples actively maintained, constructed, and modified prairie, boreal and shield landscapes in this region. Land and geography modification manifested under very different climates that have ascended over the most recent millennia (Fletcher et al., 2021). These geographies, crossing urban scapes too, operate unseen in the present, colonized, Saskatchewan wherein contributive histories are maligned while landscape modified by cultural foodways quietly absorb the impacts of climate change, land grabs, and negative effects on poorer population health (Settee, 2020; Fletcher et al., 2021; Fletcher & Thomas, 2010). The significance of land relations and configurations in

urban spaces cannot be overlooked. Participant stories suggest that sites in urban spots and parks are opportunities for meaning making, including spending time with ancestors, and are motivating. This contributes to survivance.

The data likewise testify that existence in a colonial paradigm, without access to food sovereignty, invariably compounds negative health outcomes and the structural conditions that affect them. Intergenerational trauma, trauma adaptation, and adaptations for recovery overlap within habitus. In this way, the study has brought forward for me a deeper way to think about how biological markers, structural barriers, and relational and cultural indicators connect formative tissue literally from the inside of one's body for a person's health and culturally/socially for population's wellbeing over the lifecourse.

5.4.2.1 Governance and self-determination

Conventional food policy can be blind to the many realities of lived household food insecurity and the amount of work that is executed day and night to orchestrate food systems within colonial land lines of limits and property laws. As discussed above, this orchestration is essential to the system at large, and yet often overlooked or even criminalized. Hidden strategies are hidden because they operate in situations that demand resourcefulness, quick-thinking, and even sourcing food outside of what might be considered legal or acceptable by the mainstream.

For example, the language that dominates public health regulations and government certifications for food processing and food producers, as enforced by Canadian law and the Indian Act, is devoid of responsibility and accountability on the part of colonial powers and breaks Treaty where these exist. Laws are also dismissive of any kind of agency towards survival on the part of Indigenous people and obscures, "the right to hunt [which] is an existential practice" (Harp. in conversation with Tallbear, 2020).

Hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations have generally been written with recreation and conservation purposes in mind, rather than with subsistence or ensuring intergenerational cultural survival (Norgaard, et al., 2011). Public health regulations were primarily designed for large

producers rather than individuals acquiring wild foods for distribution among kinship networks (D.A. Taylor, 2008). If we are to move toward food justice, especially in an urban Indigenous context but also more broadly, regulations must consider the importance of traditional foods for community health (Haman et al., 2017; Kuhnlein, 1996) and facilitate and support country food consumption in the city, rather than hinder it. In addition, initiatives that contribute to relationships to the land, while also providing healthy food in an urban context, should be supported (L. Kouri et al., 2020). Canadian laws and provincial and municipal governments do not have frameworks or tools to understand long standing relations with people and non-humans nor the function of sharing of the lands and the rivers (L. Simpson, 2017).

Findings about the foods that are hunted and trapped, presented in Chapter 4, capture how context-driven opportunities for food sharing and knowledge-building shape urban spaces as much as rural spaces. The stories provide a picture of exchange-based contexts that build diversity across generations and between cultures. The relationships and function of hunting, trapping, foraging, and sharing need more consideration as to how they play a role in curbing/softening the severity of hunger. A coalescence of principles, values and practices that drive Indigenous food ways needs to be supported on a larger, macro, scale to mediate outdated and ineffective public food health and safety rules.

Looking at food system interventions with culture and governance at the forefront, instead of individual choices and behaviour, allows for a reframing of food policy. The concept of social exchange economies, elevation of resistance-resilience and equity building through food programs and producers has been adopted on a citizen scale by some social leaders, scholars and thinkers from many fields and have supported a food sovereignty model for decades. (Alkon, Cadji, & Moore, 2019; Settee & Shukla, 2020). Proposals have been developed to fairly deliver good food and access to it and have been recommended to governments at various levels.

Examples include:

- The greatest impact on health outcomes and food insecurity will be produced by entering into land restitution policies such as “land back”.

- Call in Grandmothers and Aunties to help shape food policy grounded in nurturing ecosocial expertise.
- Encourage embedding paid capacity support structures and mentors for female and transgendered Indigenous, Black, Brown and racialized staff in any food-related program and policy shifting work.
- Preserve water and land for the future.
- Before engaging with municipalities, researchers, and community service groups, bring forward training on ethical and anti-oppressive strategy.
- Implement the Saskatoon Food Strategy (D. Kouri, 2013) including the Saskatoon Food Charter, adopted in Principle in 2009.
 - Support regional food systems.
 - Feed the children: substantially increase school meals and snacks: such as adopting universal food programs in schools.
 - Increase ways to obtain local food products and cooperative models for good food and local foods, from farmers, trappers, hunters and artisanal food or food-related producers.
 - Replicate Muskeg Lake Cree Nation food forest concept and replicate Flying Dust Nation gardens and greenhouses.
- Support land-based education such as the Miyo Pimatsiwin program in Thunderchild (Thunderchild First Nation, 2022) and Indigenous health service models, such as the Sturgeon Lake Traditional Health Program (ICAD, 2022). Implement in neighborhoods, community hubs, enhancer households, and schools, programs for urban youth to link with activities on reserves to connect with land and traditions.
- Link evidenced-based and longtime Tipi Teachings directly to social determinants of health and regional Indigenous culture and methods (RQHR, 2008).
- Seek out culture “foodies” within tribes and communities to present Indigenous cooking shows per region for Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and other social media platforms.

- Hire Indigenous creatives to support animation and digital storytelling of experience, culture and food, communicating creatively with engagement principles, recipes, dreams, medicines and how to's, e.g., Mawmaw Sachweezin - Mom's Kitchen - Episode One - Neckbones

There are also many policies that address socio-economic determinants. Making swift gains toward food security and improved health will count on affordable housing, fair taxation, better social assistance, universal basic income, and access to good jobs (Raphael, 2007, Men & Tarasuk, 2021).

The report Towards Improving Traditional Food Access for Urban Indigenous People (Ermine et al., 2020) had detailed and comprehensive recommendations oriented to various sectors, including communities, municipalities and regions, and provincial and national governments. Many of the issues raised in this thesis resonate with the discussion and recommendations in the report, including the hope for generous food policies.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Cultural foundations for good health include a sense of place, a sense of connectedness, and a sense of self determination. Analyzing these stories through a decolonized lens means interpreting land theft through multiple dimensions. Colonization did not just result in conditions of poverty but removed pathways to cultural wellbeing.

Foodways, systems, and their dimensions as characterized in this thesis bring forward important worldviews and frameworks of relational governance. The methodology offered an opportunity to look at these systems in action, from the community to the individual and on through to the more-than-human domain. They flip the script on resilience. Foodways of racialized households in Saskatoon express meaning through lively, vibrant, and relational elements of resilience and resistance through patterns of their historical circumstances that are bound to contemporary contingencies. Feeding hungry bellies in this place starts pragmatically with community and land. Framing how it is accomplished is integral to improving sociocultural quality of life and

equity for peoples and populations. In the end, dynamic cultural cascades sustain any pathway toward secure food systems, self-governance, and regenerative forces.

This study opens space to think critically about relationships between poor health outcomes and foodways. Identifying locations of cultural food health within society is not straightforward. We remember and honour how food has been used as a weapon of genocide. Cultural food is also the regenerative force that with innovative support might improve food systems and improve access to foodways geographically, politically and spiritually.

One key feature of the study was to centre women's experiences, and the findings suggest it is to them where we look for direction (without counting on their labour). This is also espoused by health equity authors such as Men & Tarasuk (2021) and (Patel, 2012). A gender component is also integral to food sovereignty. Food sovereignty organization *La Via Campesina* (2018) campaigns included a focus on ending violence against women, for example, connecting this to the role of women as food providers" (Wittman et al., 2010). It is through food sovereignty's commitment to labour rights of women that production is linked to consumption.

Findings point not just to trauma but themes of reclamation and restitution, and strategies of resistance. Remove poverty and injustice and the capacity to rest is increased, which augments processes of care in the face of violence and demonstrates nurturance as the way to govern.

This thesis illustrates how embodied culture and resilience function as processes of resistance within relational foodways and serve as an overall mitigator of poor health outcomes. Avoiding trivialization or oversimplification of culture and resilience, and their relationship to trauma, requires a shift in focus. Future opportunities for intervention will be transcultural and will increase support for collective capacity and recovery. Participants face adverse conditions and orchestrate functioning foodways; hopefully appropriate and complementary policy will follow.

Chapter 6: “The food has so much meaning”

*You’ve got to learn to leave the
table when love is no longer
being served.*

Nina Simone¹²

*“You found me in the North syrup dripping
and fingers greasy with frybread my laugh
you said called you home*

Tenille Campbell¹³

6.1 Food is Political

... it’s been hundreds of years that my ancestors have lived off the stuff and I’m just blessed, is the only way I can think about it, right?! That I’m still able to eat like this and that I still have this knowledge.

Study participant

Food is political, and my critical lens influenced the theoretical reasoning underpinning the study. Foodways that existed prior to colonization were part of a sociopolitical system that included governance, “laws”, and practices. There were thriving democratic governance structures operating across these lands and rivers before the colonial system violently imposed itself.

Foodways are platforms of resistance. In this critical ethnographic study, I learned this methodology lends itself well to a goal of explicitly uncovering entanglements of the individual, the household, and the practice of habitus. These entanglements play out in diverse settings. The households in this study share distinct and parallel experiences with food. Findings show that ancestral, historical, and cultural links predicate healthful experiences, foodways, and social patterns. The politics of trauma at each of these intersections and the culture of power within these complex foodways appear to co-exist, and they look different for each household. What is

¹² From song You Gotta Learn, album, I Put a Spell on You, by Nina Simone, 1965.

¹³ Campbell, T. (2021). *nedi nezu/Good Medicine*. Arsenal Pulp Press.

illuminated is that various entanglements, some deeply ensnared, play out in foodways where embodied cultural memory and value systems nurture resistance.

This study traces colonization as a determinant of health, offers some response to the TRC Calls to Action (2015), and is aligned with some Indigenous scholars, theorists, and knowledge producers. For decades, it has been difficult to articulate frameworks for Indigenous issues that are outside of the mainstream of Canadian laws and policy. There has been a call for descriptive *and* comprehensive studies to support a set of core competencies for Indigenous health including theorization and ecosocial frameworks for health promotion (Monehu Yates, 2019).

My approach to understanding participant foodways, reflects Julier and Gillespie's (2012, p. 362) description that "as a concept, [food systems] emerged through multiple social scientific perspectives, related to other "systems" approaches in fields as diverse as engineering, physics, planning and organizational theory" and they are complex.

The findings do identify lively features of participant foodways that are in:

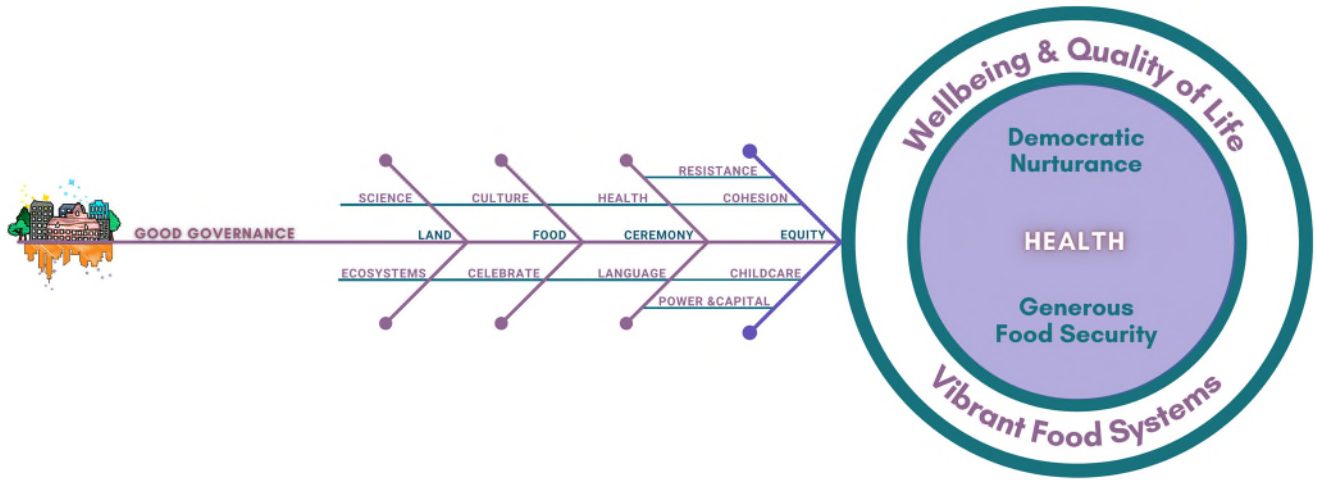
- a dynamic state with constant interacting forces;
- relationships that are entangled;
- emergent, self-organizing behaviour with extensive communication that can spread norms; and
- a robust adaptation mechanism and an ability to alter themselves in response to feedback, which helps them to survive a variety of environmental conditions (Begun, et al., 2003).

This study thoughtfully considered entangled relationships and meanings. The extent and meanings of these entanglements, in real settings that felt at times distant from the literature and theory I read in preparation, however, was not expected. The iterative reasoning in the inductive process of interpretations involved many moving parts which seemed at times to be heading in different directions.

For future studies in foodways, I suggest that there is a continued need to stay sensitive to diversities of meaning along dimensions of autonomy of culture, gender, ethnicity, race and power. Moreover, “without explicit attention to complex adaptive systems, it is unlikely that social problems such as persistent” poverty and trauma in any food context will be ameliorated (McGibbon & McPherson, 2011, p. 75). The study results reinforce the urgency to cast understandings beyond adaptive descriptions toward contributive elements and formalized practices of autonomy, knowledge and culture.

Figure 6.1 represents a food system as envisioned by the participants, without the disruptions of colonialism and land dispossession. It also represents a vision of governance and health outcomes for all if Treaty had been respected.

Figure 6.1 Health without Disruption: Food System Vitality and Cultural Continuity



6.2 Honouring Participants

There is a multitude of ways these study findings can be read and interpreted but, no matter how one chooses to engage with this study, my personal hope is that the work honours and communicates the deep meaning of food experiences and, at some points, does so in “unexpected but original ways” (Gay & Cottom, 2020). From before the start of this thesis, I knew that collecting stories to document food and health experiences of Indigenous and racialized people in Treaty 6 territory and Homeland of the Métis People would present a conflict and struggle within me, and a desire to reconcile resulting tensions. What I have learned and hope to contribute is to bring forward the profound food inequities faced by households in the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon, people I deeply care for and respect. I will work towards a culture of good health, for systemic change, and for beautiful food systems.

The study foregrounds principles of decolonial foodways and multi theoretical application. Theory-informed and important ethnographic considerations and meaningful discussions were brought forward into the realm of health, seeking effective responses to social system disparities and Indigenous and newcomer women’s health inequities. I hope this thesis honoured and meaningfully uplifted the craftwork and the grind, the brilliance and the truth of participant experience.

Further, I hope this study brings forward a meaningful account of participant relationships to one another and to the land. It is important to me to create a socio-cultural political space, and a conceptual space, where refined understanding of the collective can be crafted and directed toward better health for all. It is important to keep dreaming up new policy maps, drawing on visions of foodways as recovery tactics, and supporting frames for analysis that uplift cultural regenerative forces.

6.3 Imagination and Curiosity

Oppression is when the culture has stolen your energy and ability to imagine and dream a new way. Hopelessness is what we are resisting. Imagination is a powerful tool.

Tricia Hersey, 2020

I want them to kind of understand that that time that they put into their food, they can love that part of their life, hey?

Study participant

The lives of Saskatoon people in this study are bound together with separate experiences of healing and violence, power and cultural restitutions of health, joy and food. Although they live in different households, they share similar collective histories of colonization, persistent poverty and little rest. Their stories are also connected through an insistence for themselves in food related wellbeing, and in urban spaces that re-dignify sources of cultural strength/knowledge, restore relational food strategies and reclaim the land. Contributing to rich and contoured representation, the study found that rooted in social and cultural practice, political relationships are food relationships with their own rhythm. I am accountable to the humanity of participants and entreated to enliven their stories of reclamation, repair, restoration, and the nuances of nurturance which are driving relational foodways in Saskatoon.

Vibrant, nutritious, and lively elements of healthy societies transpire in this place, and they are practical and powerful. The study showed how foodways operate outside of what is typically thought of as the “normal” or “typical” of an urban Canadian household. It challenged the assumption that excluded populations, in particular Indigenous and racialized households in Saskatoon, reside where only trauma exists as an element or feature of the foodway. Rather, power also lives alongside trauma and recovery. This study suggests that there could be more attention and value focused on the pragmatism and creative wisdom borne from intergenerational memory.

As a way of walking out of this study, I connect the ending of this thesis with its first steps (the beginning). I opened the study with the following quote from Resmaa Menakem:

Trauma in a person, decontextualized over time, can look like personality.
Trauma in a family, decontextualized over time. can look like family traits.
Trauma in a people, decontextualized over time, can look like culture.

Through the process of this study and in writing this thesis, my perspective on the quote changed. I re-read it side by side with the stories of the amazing women and people from various communities, neighborhoods, and incomes that were part of this study. One day I was in conversation with a participant (we are now good friends) and we discussed the unseen-ness of healing in relation to trauma. We pointed out to one another this same misperception of culture and health that Menakem captures so well. The quote reframes the whole story, for everyone.

After this conversation and as I was writing, I began to think more about whether the results of the study might still fit the intention of the quote. I wondered what Menakem's quote might look like if it were re-interpreted through study findings. The study illuminated several themes in the context of trauma. The meaning of resilience from trauma features more than one function within regenerative contingencies. The implication is that participant experiences are connected through attempts and successes to assert themselves in food related wellbeing.

In keeping with these ideas, the following are my re-imaginings of Menakem's quote, evoked by the participant comment against which it is juxtaposed:

Resilience in a person,
decontextualized over time,
can look like personality.

Resilience in a family,
decontextualized over time,
can look like family traits.
Resilience in a people,
decontextualized over time,
can look like **culture**.

residential school... so I
was there from the time I
was five years old till I was
about eighteen

They just refuse to eat wild
meat.

In the city, it's not even
welcoming I feel invisible

I'm just gonna **keep on going**

if the unexpected comes up then they might **not have fruit** the last week before child tax

Scarcity in a person,
decontextualized over time,
can look like personality.
Scarcity in a family,
decontextualized over time,
can look like family traits.
Scarcity in a people,
decontextualized over time,
can look like **culture**.

I always felt guilty going to
the Food Bank,

You feel kind of like a loss

“the luxury of an apple”
it's like a luxury yo. we
would only get them on
paydays

I miss having a garden

Abundance in a person,
contextualized over time can
look like personality.

Abundance in a family,
contextualized over time can
look like family traits.

Abundance in a people,
contextualized over time, can
look like culture.

... had a bunch of **berries**... let
us just come in and pick berries

I recently found out we, **treaty
people**, can **hunt in parks**... I
was like “**ahh**” ... mind
blown, **counting all the moose**
I could have had

it's fun to get out and do fun things... maybe now that we have a home

Resistance in a person contextualized
over time can look like personality
Resistance in a family contextualized over
time can look like family traits **Resistance**
in a people, contextualized over time, can
look like culture.

I'm cutting wild
meat – and I'm
saying moose –
[great grandkids]
kinda **look at me**...
mhmm

dad does cook and

I don't like saying **wild blueberry** because to me **it's just blueberry**

going on the **fire** and there's **that smell** there's **fish frying** and fish being **baked**, and there's **that smell**

food memories are **tied** with **being** taught something **not just eatin**

he **cooks** the **traditional** stuff for sure

read them lots of books, Cree books about berries and traditional teachings, connection...ways of living

A **fancy** dancer

I make regalia. You know, the pow wow.

but **mom nurtured**...with her **food**, it was **nurturing**

Healing in a person, contextualized over time, can look like personality. **Healing** in a family, contextualized over time, can look like family traits. Healing in a people, contextualized over time, can look like **culture**.

"Bread is like cake to me" It was like the one thing that **you really couldn't get** in residential schools. ~ It was such a **delicacy**, and it was so, well if you know what they did with nutrition and all that other stuff, and so... I don't know if he **connected** all the dots to him but just his, "**Bread is like cake to me**".

Food has always been a big part of that, even if it's just bannock or burnt toast or bologna sandwiches, it's more about the preparation and the **community** that **takes place** in there... the kitchen is where we gather.

Healing in a culture contextualized over time looks like character of power, **liberation**, governance.

Good governance is **good food**.

Land is Food, is Ceremony, is Language, is Governance

Participant stories reveal expressions of love and generosity. These values are abundant within contexts of constraint and scarcity. Their interactions are elements of what might be considered resilience practices, but they are also ongoing restorative practices of resistance. Because food is an element of cultural resistance, food is political. Critical ethnography involves moving from individual stories of the intimate to the collective experience, the cultural tissue, and the shared analysis of communities, the politic. Participant stories show that the methods and practices which appear invisible are driving forces of care, for better health and better food. It appears that some foodways are operating as trusted models of governance.

*I want to make Dene babies with you. He said.
And bring Moose meat home to you. He said.*

Tenille Campbell, 2021

Land is power
Land is food liberation
Land restitution is lively foodways and secure ecosystems



Appendix A

Table A.1.1 Background Table Summarizing Policies of Control and Colonization

Policy	Summary of Policy
Chinese Head Tax	The Chinese head tax was a colonial tool of the Canadian government intended to document and control Chinese workers and immigrants. Canada's long history of racism and surveillance is a legacy of colonial control enacted through sweeping policy and intensive documentation, removing access to land, title and citizenship (Cho, L., 2018).
Clearing the Plains	Policies which include starvation tactics and purposeful removal of the great herds of buffalo, have been referred to on the Prairies as “clearing the plains” (Daschuk, 2015).
Indian Act	The Indian Act (1876) and related policies and processes, served to: 1) dispossess Indigenous peoples of land and disrupt traditional economies thereby cutting off sources of food and manufacturing food dependence on colonial authorities (e.g., restricting hunting and gathering practices by restricting mobility) (Anderson & Smylie, 2009); 2) give colonial authorities the power to determine who could be an “Indian”; 3) impede the transmission of identity and traditional knowledge (Anderson & Smylie, 2009); and 4) undermine the roles and responsibilities of women in previously matriarchal and/or matrilineal societies (Stevenson, 2011; Blair, 1997).
Pass System	Post 1885, the federal government imposed a “pass system” in order to control Indigenous and Metis movement across the prairies. The pass was a document that needed to be presented in order for Indigenous families to leave or return to reserve land. Authorized by an Indian Agent, the pass system was used in conjunction with other colonial policies including the Indian Act and residential schools. The pass system aimed to support white settlers and the Canadian nation project. The outcome of manufactured borders and required documentation for movement was intended to better control the possibility of Indigenous people gathering in groups which was a perceived threat by the government and settlers. (Nestor, 2018)
Phenomenon of Lost Harvest	“In Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy”, Carter (1993) has documented in detail how representatives

Policy	Summary of Policy
	<p>from Indian Affairs first introduced farming to Aboriginal groups, usually at the request of the Native peoples after they had been relocated to reserves, and then proceeded to set up a series of rules which made farming on the reserves an activity destined to fail. (Flynn & Syms, 1996)</p>
Residential Schools	<p>Under the residential school system, children were intentionally placed at a distance from their home communities in order to facilitate assimilation into the broader Canadian society. The system attempted to achieve this objective by disrupting the parenting process and limiting opportunities for children to be exposed to their Indigenous language and culture. Corporal punishment and other forms of abuse were widespread. The residential school system subjected generations of children to sexual, emotional, physical, mental, spiritual and cultural abuse. Historical and current child welfare processes have and continue to separate substantial numbers of children from their families and communities. Aside from genocidal impacts, multigenerational impacts of residential schools include “poverty, poor health and education outcomes, economic disadvantage, domestic abuse, addiction and high rates of youth suicide” (Regan, 2010, p. 11).</p>
Road Allowance	<p>From the late 1800s until the mid-1900s, road allowances were used by the Métis as new home communities after experiencing relocations, migrations and dispossession from their homelands. The road allowance communities were built upon unused portions of land that were typically on the border of a larger non-Indigenous community, a First Nations Reserve or in less populated rural areas. But they were not taxable or connected to municipalities, and therefore not connected to services and support. Nevertheless, Métis families share memories of feeling safe and provided for even in the face of discrimination or forced migrations. The Road Allowance period ended between the 1930s and 1960s in most locations in Western Canada. Force was used to push the Métis off the land in many communities. Homes were burned down and families were removed to make space for “co-op” pastures. (Logan, 2021)</p>
Scrip	<p>Scrip was given to Métis people living in the West in exchange for their land rights. The scrip process was legally complex and disorganized; this made it difficult for Métis people to acquire land, yet simultaneously created room for fraud (A. Robinson, 2019). The Métis peoples originated in the 17th century with the intermarriage of the early waves of European (mainly French and Scottish) men and First Nations</p>

Policy	Summary of Policy
	<p>women in the western provinces (Anderson & Smylie, 2009). In the following two centuries the Métis nation birthed a distinct language (Michif) and culture and occupied a key economic role in the fur trade (Anderson & Smylie, 2009).</p>
<p>Trapline Removal Policy</p>	<p>The Trapline policy is not the Trapline system. The policy was implemented in 1944 by the CCF provincial government, imposing economic control specifically over resources which directly affected, economic, socio-cultural, and sustenance of the Métis. The trapline system reflects a Metis worldview based upon extended family networks and kinship ties. The trapline policy was met with resistance by Metis trappers who wished to maintain their traditional trapping practices. Trapping for the Metis was not only a source of income, it was also a livelihood inseparable from their socio-cultural identities and worldview (Raymond, 2014). The CCF conservation and social policy which divided trapline resources and forced settlement, acted in direct opposition to the Métis people's socio-cultural identity, defined by traditional trapping practices, livelihoods and Métis way of life. The Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) in 1930, transferred ownership of public lands and resources to the Prairie provinces from federal control (Raymond, D., 2014: U of S). The conservation policy with Saskatchewan's creation of the Northern Fur Conservation Agreement (1946), allowed the CCF to impose a land block system encompassing all lands north (into the Boreal forests and rivers of SK) directly and instantly reformatting access to the northern Métis traplines (Raymond, 2014).</p>

Figure A.4.1 Storied Menu



STORIED LAND SPECIAL MENU

DELIGHTS
Seasonal Offers

TO START

Grandma's Fish Egg bannock	\$\$
Fried fish cheeks	\$\$\$
Sturgeon Eggs	\$\$\$
BBQ Gophers	\$
Dry Meat soup	\$\$

COURSES

Beaver tail with garlic and lemon grass	\$\$
Sturgeon heads	\$\$\$\$
Duck brains	\$\$\$\$
Moose heart and nose	
Rabbit Cooked many ways	
Spicy fried Moose Sriracha on Noodles	\$\$
Slow Cooker Elk	\$\$\$
Deer meat Hamburgers and Spaghetti	\$\$
Moose Meat the Trinidad way	\$\$\$
Shake n' Bake Whitefish	\$\$
Shake n' Bake Duck breast	\$&

SWEETEST ENDINGS

Tiny Northernberry Pancakes	\$\$
Wild Blueberry Cake	\$\$

Figure A.5.1 Métis River Community Before Road Allowance. University of Saskatchewan Archives



Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Instruments

Overview

- 2 interviews per household, for all households in sample, 1 additional for subset of 10-12.
- Semi-structured interview format

First interview

Focus of questions and purpose:

1. **Consent:** to clarify consent and processes and to establish a comfort level/trust with participant
2. **Demographic and household characteristics;** to get a good picture of context and social capital/resources of the household and to begin the interview with factual questions that are easier to answer
3. **Food access:** Characterize the networks from which households draw food. Questions are divided into 3 categories:
 - a. Food access and procurement
 - b. Seasonality
 - c. Sharing (can be probed for deeper meaning perhaps in 2nd interview)

Second interview:

Food Meaning and Knowledge is the main focus for the second interview. It also includes the transmission of knowledge about food.

The overall purpose is to identify the extent to which food provides strength, weakness, barriers, power and to what extent social networks enhance food procurement strategies. The interview will seek sources of meaning with the respondent's children and their food experiences, connecting self to past (in later interview).

Specifically, the interview will attempt to:

- a) examine how cultural dimensions and other factors impact food and knowledge exchange.
- b) identify daily activities and common practices in relation to food that could be considered actions of resilience and resistance in response to dominant structures and effects of colonialism.
- c) identify extent of being enhancers/contributors or takers/users of AFNs.

We will be seeking cues of what makes people strong (children eating, sharing meals, creating traditions); learning about how people understand food and its impact and looking for power and

ability to act on circumstances, intellectual understanding about food and how they feel about it (individual power, community power, cultural power (AFN)).

Subset Interviews

I performed additional interviews with 10 to 12 of the participants to explore more deeply.

First Interview

This will be a one to one interview conducted by _____.

Introductions. Comfort levels check in: is this still a good time, how are you today? Revisit consent and confidentiality (procedure to be discussed). Explain that we will be voice recording and that it is confirmed with participant.

Preamble:

Thanks for making the time to meet with us today and for your agreement to be interviewed. The purpose of the interview today is to explore your view on how you get food and your ideas (what you think, feel) about it. We are doing this because we think that there are lots of different ways that people are getting food and sharing it. We're going to talk about things like your family background, where you learned about food, and how you get food.

Questions

Household Background/Environment/Characteristics

Can you tell me a bit about your family situation? (relationship building convo)

How long have you lived in Saskatoon?

- Where did you grow up?
- Where do you live now?
- Who lives with you now?

Relationship/age, Living circumstances/situation –

How old are you? Do you have children? Are you at home with your kids? Where do you work? Are you thinking about school? What do you do?

Probe: Are you settled here? Would you tell me about it?

Food access, procurement and sharing

Are you the primary food shopper?

Do you do most of the food buying in the house?

Who else gets food in your house?

How do you get your food? Can you tell me a bit about where and how you get your food?

Probes

- Can you give some examples?
- Locations
- Transportation
- How long have you been going to this place?
- Frequency
- Time of week/month
- Garden?
- Specific programs – Friendship Inn, Food Bank, Good Food Box, Fresh Food Markets, Collective Kitchens, Community Gardening, Other?

Can you tell me your reasons behind getting food at...?(interview 2/3)

Seasonality (potential for concept tool/map)

Can you tell me a bit about how the seasons affect your food habits – even if it seems obvious?

Do the seasons/weather affect how you get your food?

Favourite time(s) of the year to get food?

- Which foods?
- Why? How Come?

Are there specific food activities that you do or don't do in certain seasons?

Can you give some examples?

- Stores you only use at certain times of month/year
- Gardening
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Trapping
- Berry picking

Are there specific places that you go in certain seasons to get food?

Can you give some examples?

- Lake?
- Farm?
- The North?
- Farmer's markets?

Sharing

- Do you share food with people outside of your home?
- What are the kinds of food that you share?
- Can you give some examples?
- Do others share food with you?

- When?
- How/when did this start?

Concluding the interview: Before we go, do you have any questions for us? Would you like us to do anything differently? Do you have anything you want to add to our discussion here today? This has been great and we have learned a great deal. Thank you very much for your time. We will contact you about the second interview in the next few weeks. If you find that you want to add anything to what we've talked about today or if any questions come up, we can revisit it in the second interview or you can call us.

-

Interview 2

Introduction: Revisit interview 1: anything to change? Reflections?

Questions:

Feelings – perceptions - meaning

Where is your favourite place to get food?

- Least favourite?
- Why?
- Feelings of welcome/exclusion?

Early food memories and meaning

Can you tell me about significant food memories you might have of when you were growing up?

Probes:

- Did you have a favourite food growing up?
- Foods you didn't like?
- Where there rules around food?
- Did you help in the kitchen?
- Did you go grocery shopping?
- What other kinds of food memories?
- Tastes
- Smells
- Textures
- Dishes
- Likes/dislikes

Mealtimes

Were there specific mealtimes, meals or rules?

- With whom?
- Who prepared?
- Certain times?
- Responsibilities?

Who/where did you learn about food?

- Cooking with family
- Recipes? (oral/written)
- Other food preparation with family (gardening, hunting, gathering, fishing)

Do you do things the same/different with food than when you were growing up?

- Different foods?
- Different ways of preparing food?
- Different ways of getting food?

Do you ever talk about food with other people?

- With whom?
- Family/friends/people of other backgrounds
- Recipes
- Food sales
- Gardening
- Hunting, fishing, gathering

Did/do you have any food traditions? Can you tell me about some of these food traditions?

- Are there specific meals you eat on certain days?
- With whom?
- Do you know how this started? Can you think back to how this started?

Have you had good or bad experiences with food? Can you tell me about them?

Subsequent Interviews or deeper into interview 2

Hidden Resilience

Purpose: reveal and examine underlying factors or strategies that are not recognized by the mainstream as “hidden resilience”. Develop mutuality - co create KTE graphic.

Are there any ways that you get food that you may think other people might think is unusual or different? Could you tell me about it? Could you give me some examples?

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