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<CH HEAD>Chapter 5

<CH TITLE>“Food Will Be What Brings the People Together”: Constructing Counter-Narratives from the Perspective of Indigenous Foodways

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<A>Key Terms

critical discourse analysis, counter-narrative, foodways, Indigenous well-being

<A>Learning Objectives

1. Readers will reflect on how discourse may serve the interests of the dominant colonial group while undermining the worldviews of Indigenous peoples.
2. Readers will explore the connection of different worldviews to the meanings and rituals assigned to food, eating, and mealtime.
3. Readers will relate the importance of constructing counter-narratives based in local Indigenous foodways for Indigenous well-being, identity, and food sovereignty.

<A>Introduction

Indigenous peoples in Canada suffer disproportionately from health disparities (e.g., obesity and diabetes) seen as resulting from poor diets associated with a nutrition transition and the adoption of “store foods”, or processed foods purchased from the store, as well as the food insecurity issues in many Indigenous communities. Rates of diabetes, for example, are three to five times higher among First Nations (Diabetes Canada, 2018), a situation further compounded by food insecurity. Willows and colleagues (2009) found 33% of urban Indigenous households are food

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insecure whereas Egeland and colleagues (2010) note that 70% of Inuit preschoolers reside in food insecure households. Further, up to 24% of First Nation adults living on reserve could not afford balanced meals at least some of the time (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2011). The view from nutritionists is Indigenous peoples need to “return” to their traditional diets as “traditional foods”, or foods that have been hunted, gathered, fished, or trapped on the land, have been deemed more nutritious. See figure 5.1.



<FIGURE TITLE>Figure 5.1. Arctic char, a traditional food for Arctic Indigenous peoples, drying on racks on the land (Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, 2009)

<FIGURE SOURCE>Dawson, L.

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This view of nutritional health, however, is shaped by Eurocentric values that see nutritional health as grounded in the body and framed within a behavioral model of individual compliance with dietary and lifestyle recommendations leading to nutritional, and therefore bodily, health. Non-compliance, or poor food choices, leads to poor nutritional health, as measured in the body (e.g., BMI) or within pathophysiology (e.g., insulin resistance). Although nutritionists acknowledge that the food insecurity in various Indigenous communities limits one's ability to comply with nutritional guidelines, the focus is still on addressing food (in)security for individual compliance to meet bodily health. While Dieticians of Canada (2012, p. 11) do emphasize that traditional food provides "a healthier and often more affordable alternative" to store food, they also acknowledge that traditional food is "central to [Indigenous] life and cultural identity". In contrast, food, in biomedical perspective, is narrowly defined as nutritious or non-nutritious and as a commodity to be eaten within a diet balancing key food groups with prescribed servings. Thus, biomedical discourse sees the construction of specific narratives about food, nutrition, and bodily health.

Discourse, however, is more than a narrative or discussion about a given topic. Discourse may be a product of social power and dominance (Foucault, 1972) as well as a manifestation of power that serves the interests of the dominant group (van Dijk, 1993). Through critical discourse analysis, the way societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use and the way discourse reproduces (or resists) social and political inequality, power abuse, or domination (Fairclough, 1995), including colonialism, may be revealed. Using a foodways lens, I explore how settler colonial power relations are established and reinforced through language use, and how discourse reproduces ongoing colonialism in biomedical narratives of food and nutritional health. Attempts to Indigenize the Canada Food Guide, for

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instance, sees the inclusion of “nutritious traditional foods” within the standard four food groups. Based in a critical discourse approach, I address the question, how would the Canada Food Guide change with the application of an Indigenous worldview rather than the simple inclusion of “traditional foods”? I argue there is a need to construct counter-narratives based in Indigenous Foodways, reflecting local worldviews and ways of knowing, to address the health disparities and food insecurities faced by Indigenous peoples and ultimately promote Indigenous food sovereignty, as a form of resistance to the colonial narrative.

<A>Food Guides and Foodways: Identifying the Colonial Narrative

Simply put, food is more than nutrition. Food is a social phenomenon and is both reflective of and informed by cultural values, social relationships, and identities. Foodways, or the intersection of food, culture, tradition, and history, are not separate from other cultural features and reflect local worldviews and ways of knowing. As foodways reflect “behaviors and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food” (Counihan, 1999, p. 6) it is not simply what we eat but how and why we eat it, and more importantly, what it means. As Anderson (2005) explains, every society uses food to communicate messages: Messages about religion, ethnicity, gender, identity, and other socially constructed regimes. Our attitudes about food, and our practices and rituals around eating, reflect our most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves. Within this view, foodways become “texts to interpret and analyze” (Anderson, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, through a foodways lens, the dichotomy of “store food” versus “traditional food” becomes more than non-nutritious foods versus nutritious foods but rather reveals contrasting Eurocentric and Indigenous worldviews; worldviews subsequently reflected in contrasting narratives of food and well-being.

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The Eurocentric foodway is evident in the Canada Food Guide. As described on the Government of Canada's (2016) website, the Canada Food Guide was born out of the food rationing environment of World War II, and the first food guide, *The Official Food Rules*, was introduced in 1942 and endeavored to prevent nutritional deficiencies and to improve the health of Canadians by maximizing nutrition in the contexts of food rationing and poverty. Although there have been a variety of revisions and restructuring to the Food Guide over the decades, informed by nutrient standards (i.e., Daily Reference Intakes) and the prevention of chronic disease, the main purpose has remained: Public health promotion guiding food selection for nutritional health. The contemporary food guide, *Eating Well with Canada Food Guide* (2011), is organized by four food groups, including recommended number of servings per day, to “meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients”, reduce your risk of chronic disease (e.g., obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease), and “contribute to your overall health and vitality”. Examples of the size of servings are provided in pictorial form as well as by grams/milliliters. Servings are further modified by age and sex as well as stage of life (e.g., pregnancy), and an example is provided how to count food servings in a meal. Therefore, the recommended number of servings from each food group, as modified by “ages and stages”, will form the basis of healthy eating, and together with being active (“energy balance”), will help you to make healthy food choices and lower your risk of chronic disease.

In addressing nutritional health concerns among Indigenous peoples in Canada, a new food guide was created to reflect “the values, traditions and food choices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis” (Government of Canada, 2016). This version of the food guide, *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: First Nations, Inuit and Métis*, includes both traditional foods and store-bought foods, and is available in Inuktitut, Ojibwe, Plains Cree, and Woods Cree. It is the same

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four food group structure with recommended servings although within each food group traditional foods have been added. For example, bannock has been added to breads and grains, wild plants to fruits and vegetables, and wild meats to the meats and alternatives group. A key question addressed on the Government of Canada's (2016) website regarding why the need for a food guide tailored to Indigenous peoples in Canada sees the Indigenized food guide as "reflecting the importance of both traditional and store-bought foods ... [and is] adapted for local foods and traditions ... for [Indigenous] individuals, families and communities to learn and share ways of eating well". However, does this adapted food guide really reflect local foods, values, and traditions? Through a foodways lens, the acknowledgement by the Dietitians of Canada (2012) that traditional foods are central to Indigenous life and cultural identity, noted above, can be further explored.

<A>Indigenous Foodways: Challenging the Dominant Narrative

As Douglas (1999) explains, everyday ordinary meals reveal a great deal about the cultural beliefs around food and eating as well as the meanings of meals as structured social events and as such "mealtime" provides "an extremely rich cultural site for examining expressions of identity and difference" (Searles, 2002, p. 70). As noted above, the dominant discourse of food and eating in Canada reflects Eurocentric cultural values and ideals. Each meal involves a recommended number of servings from each food group, presented on an individual plate (individualism), and at specific times to eat (breakfast, lunch, and supper), times set out before work, at midday break from work, and after work (i.e., the industrialized capitalist work day). It is assumed "proper meals" are those eaten at home with family and are traditionally gendered with mothers creating "home cooked" (and therefore healthy) meals (Douglas, 1999). However,

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for the Inuit of Nunavut, this view of mealtime does not reflect Inuit values. As Searles (2002) discusses, the Inuit diet sees a greater concentration of meat, fat, and fish and less so on grains, fruits, and vegetables so the Canada Food Guide recommendations of servings from the four food groups challenges Inuit views of the importance of meat. Meat, such as walrus or seal, are considered to keep the body strong, fit, healthy, and most importantly, warm; all qualities the Inuit value (Borré, 1994). Another challenge of a Eurocentric mealtime is that the Inuit do not wish to regulate portions but rather are socialized to eat “to satisfy their own hunger according to their own biological rhythms”, a practice more approximated by the Euro-American idea of snacking (Searles, 2002, p. 71). Indeed, the idea of a “mealtime” itself is challenged by conventional Inuit ways of eating. A meal may involve placing one or more large slabs of meat, blubber, or other animal parts on a cover (e.g., plastic or cardboard) on the floor in a section of the house reserved for eating. Anyone who wishes to eat cuts off a piece. There are no obligations to join a meal and no limits on how much a person should eat (Searles, 2002). Through the meals promoted with the Canada Food Guide, and the associated construction of mealtime, Eurocentric cultural values are preformed and, thus, construct a colonial narrative of food and eating. A narrative inconsistent with Inuit ways of being and knowing.

****Worldviews, Knowledges, and Foodways

As noted above, foodways represent the intersection of food, culture, tradition, and history, are not separate from other cultural features, and reflect our basic beliefs about the world (i.e., worldviews) and ways of knowing. As Eurocentric knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing present two different worldviews and associated cultural values, each in turn inform different foodways and understandings of health and wellbeing. As Frideres (2011) explains, Eurocentric

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knowledge is based in science and sees data being collected which must be objective and empirically based (i.e., positivistic). To understand the whole it must be fragmented and reduced to minimal constituent parts (i.e., reductionism), analyzed, and then pieced back together according to the laws of cause and effect (i.e., causality). Causality, in turn, is dependent on time being linear: The cause must come before the effect. Nature is subservient to humans and humans are above all other plants, animals, and the rest of nature. This leads to a view of realism. If you can measure something (i.e., quantification) means it exists; “Alternatively, if you can’t measure it, you cannot establish a truth value about [it] ... science sees reality as being comprised of objective mathematical relationships” (Frideres, 2011, p. 45) and informs the Eurocentric worldview. Therefore, Eurocentric ways of knowing, based in scientific belief, see knowledge as equal to a justified, true belief. These key scientific understandings underlying Eurocentric knowledge which inform the Eurocentric foodway and narratives of food and bodily health with, for example, the focus on specific nutrients (reductionism) and measurable servings and measurable bodily health (quantification) as well as individual compliance to ensure bodily health (causality).

In contrast to the positivistic basis of Eurocentric knowledge, Indigenous ways of knowing are embedded in the cumulative experiences and teachings of people, transmitted orally through storytelling from generation to generation, and involve a connection to the land through ceremony (Frideres, 2011). Ways of knowing are sacred, derived from Creator and as such, all things, animate and inanimate, have a life force and are interconnected, existing in relationships to one another. As Frideres (2011) describes, “knowledge, for Indigenous people, is not a thing in the world awaiting discovery” (p. 47), Indigenous ways of knowing are shaped by human actions and goals and emphasize respectful relationships. Within this view, the individual is

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connected to the whole and “people travel through life in a relational existence” (Frideres, 2011, p. 49). As nothing can occur without a corresponding reaction one may remain in balance through reciprocity which further informs interdependency. Therefore, key cultural values inherent in Indigenous ways of knowing include; sacred and respectful relationships, reciprocity, and interdependency.

The cultural values inherent in Indigenous ways of knowing inform Indigenous foodways. In subarctic Quebec, for example, Cree cosmology informs views of animals and food. As Adelson (2000) explains, animals that are trapped, hunted, or fished for are *iyimiichim* (Cree food), but “more specifically they are *iyimiichim* because they are part of a complex spiritual network involving Cree people, animal spirits, and higher beings” (Adelson, 2000, p. 67). As spirit beings can help bring about successful, or unsuccessful, hunts, proper respect must be shown to animals so as not to anger the spirits of the animals. Although the spirit exists within each of the animals it does not die with the animal but rather is a fluid force or vitality. The spirit, or *mischinaakw*, “dwells simultaneously within all of its species and that also has the potential to live within a human being ... dissolving any boundary between person and the animal and between the natural and spiritual worlds” (Adelson, 2000, p. 68). Animals are not simply killed for food, they are gifts given to hunters who have acted respectfully. Once the animal has given itself to the hunter a cycle of reciprocity is established: “To the animal that has given its life so that the humans may live, the hunter can only offer respect for its soul, proper use of its body, and sharing the gift of food with others” (Feit, 1991, p. 237 as cited in Adelson, 2000). The nutritional value of *Iyimiichim*, therefore, is not described as nutrients, as in Eurocentric perspective, but rather “is connected to the significance of the animal powers or

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spirits. The larger more powerful animals [e.g., caribou] have a greater nutritional value and are thus viewed as stronger foods” (Adelson, 2000, p. 80).

Another difference between Eurocentric and Indigenous ways of knowing is a blurring of the boundary between the body and the spiritual. In Eurocentric perspective, nutritional health is grounded in the individual physical body which is considered bounded and separate from other bodies. However, nourishing the physical body is only part fulfilling Indigenous holistic views of well-being. To be healthy in the Cree sense is *miyupimaatisiun*, or “being alive well”, and as Adelson (2000) describes, has “everything to do with life on the land, and more broadly with ‘being Cree’ ... [and] can only be fully understood within the context of the connections between land, health, and identity. [Cree] discussions of *miyupimaatisiun* moves discourses on health beyond the boundaries of the physical body by connecting physiological wellness to social and political well-being” (p. 60). There is no word in Cree that translates into English as “health”.

Therefore, Indigenous views on being healthy are better described as well-being and provide a holistic view of the person rather than the biomedical view of an individual physiological body. A common symbol of Indigenous well-being is the Medicine Wheel which encompasses not only physical well-being but also emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life (Frideres, 2011). For Indigenous well-being all four dimensions of life are interconnected and must be in balance for one to be well. If one area is out of balance all other areas are affected. For the Anishinabeck, for example, *Mnobmaadis* sees well-being as a balance between physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental spheres which relate to the spirit, family, and community worlds. Disease or illness is imbalance of one’s worlds (Gracey et al., 2009). Similarly, the Kahnawà:ke idea of well-being, *Onkwehon:we*, involves the interconnectedness,

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relationships, responsibilities, and roles as well as knowing oneself as whole in spirit (Hovey et al., 2014).

Further, part of well-being sees respectful, reciprocal relationships with family and community as well as the land. For instance, the Kanien'kehá:ka value of working together for collective community benefit is represented in the concept *Ska'nikon:ra entewatste*, “being of one mind” (Hovey et al., 2014, p. 46). The connection of family and community to well-being is also evident in Indigenous foodways. Among the Whapmagoostui Cree, for example, when a larger animal, such as a caribou or a bear is killed, it is offered to an older man (e.g., often one's father or grandfather) as a mark of respect to the Elder as well as the animal (Adelson, 2000). The Elder will then decide how the meat is to be distributed (to the family and/or wider community). Thus, through redistribution Cree hunters make their food available to the community and maintain strong bonds of reciprocity.

Traditional foods are, therefore, much more than nutritious. Traditional foods and their procurement symbolize sacred, respectful interrelationships and reciprocity between humans, animals, plants, and the land, as well as between the physical and the spiritual. Food is shared between families and communities as part of a “relational journey through life”. Through food and eating cultural values and identities are expressed and balance for well-being is achieved. However, the forced assimilationist policies of colonialism would sever Indigenous ways of knowing and ultimately disrupt Indigenous foodways with staggering effects on well-being and identity.

The Impact of Colonial Histories on Indigenous Foodways

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The impact of colonization on Indigenous foodways has been calculated and devastating. With the arrival of Christian missionaries in the sub-Arctic, for instance, Indigenous views of animal and plant spirits were deemed heathen and banned thereby eroding Cree cosmology (Adelson, 2000). Similarly, traditional ceremonies on the land and feasting were prohibited. For example, the potlatch, a common feasting event for the Haida, Tlingit, Kwakwaka'wakw, among others on the northwest coast, involved the redistribution of food and other items between different communities and through reciprocity allowed for a regional interdependence as a safety net against potential food shortages. However, the potlatch was banned under the Indian Act as it was seen, from a Eurocentric perspective, as wasteful of personal property. Through the creation of the reserve system, Indigenous peoples were confined to reserves thereby severing connections to the land and traditional hunting grounds eroding traditional ecological knowledge with agriculture promoted on reserves to end their nomadic and “barbaric” ways (Frideres, 2011). And finally, the loss of language, and therefore culture, through the residential school system which removed children from their families and communities severing of the intergenerational transfer of ways of knowing and traditional knowledge, including food knowledge.

The biomedical narrative of Indigenous peoples undergoing a nutrition transition emphasizing a “return to a traditional diet” erase these colonial histories and their legacies. By simply adding “traditional foods” to the diet a Eurocentric worldview is maintained, and Indigenous worldviews are subsumed, through the view of food and nutritional health based in a Eurocentric foodway and associated knowledge. Indigenous foodways based in local worldviews and ways of knowing need to be reclaimed as part of the healing from the traumas of colonialism and to provide a foundation for cultural revitalization and Indigenous food sovereignty. As

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Winona Laduke, Anishinaabekwe activist, environmentalist, economist, and writer states “the recovery of the people is tied to the recovery of food, since food itself is medicine: not only for the body, but for the soul, for the spiritual connection to history, ancestors, and the land” (Food Secure Canada, 2013, p. 8). See figure 5.2.



<FIGURE TITLE>Figure 5.2. Labrador Tea. This is a medicine commonly used among the Tlicho (Treaty 11 territory), as well as other Indigenous peoples in Canada, for a variety of health concerns (Whati, NWT, 2013).

<FIGURE SOURCE>Dawson, L.

<A>“Food Will Be What Brings the People Together”: Constructing Counter Narratives for Indigenous Food Sovereignty

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As noted above, Indigenous peoples face health disparities, such as diabetes, compounded by food insecurities, and a return to a traditional diet involving traditional foods is promoted.

However, as a form of resistance to the colonial narrative of food and bodily health, a new narrative must be created that positions traditional food as central to Indigenous life and cultural identity as well as endorses long term food security and Indigenous food sovereignty. While it is a positive outcome, food sovereignty involves more than long term food security. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food as well as a right to define their own food systems. Although there are attempts to document Indigenous food systems globally, to highlight the role of traditional foods in well-being, and to promote food sovereignty, they are presented in a Eurocentric view of food (i.e., traditional foods have key nutrients) reinforcing the idea of nutritional health as bodily health. Within *Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems* (2009), for instance, the recurrent theme of a “return to a traditional diet” is couched within the broader discussions of a nutrition transition which focuses on a shift to different food choices with little or no reference to the local ways of knowing inherent in Indigenous foodways.

Similarly, there have been attempts to acknowledge the impact of colonial histories on Indigenous foodways. Soloway (2015), for example, describes the effects of the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Mushkegowuk Cree foodway leading to a loss of Indigenous plant food knowledge which must be recovered. Though Soloway (2015) does acknowledge the harmful impact of colonialism on Indigenous foodways and emphasizes the importance of Indigenous foods for overall health and well-being, the focus is still on diet and nutrition (i.e., the physical body rather than the holistic view of Indigenous well-being) instead of the broader view of how foodways reflect Indigenous worldviews and cultural values. As the loss of food

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knowledge and the disruption of local foodways are the direct result of colonialism and the imposition of a Eurocentric worldview on Indigenous peoples, I argue that to reclaim Indigenous foodways and promote Indigenous food sovereignty, local counter-narratives, as a form of resistance to the dominant biomedical narrative of food and nutritional health, must be developed.

As a dominant narrative can outline a widely accepted belief as truth, a counter-narrative can dispute the belief of the dominant narrative and give people a voice who otherwise may not have one. As discussed above, the dominant biomedical narrative of food and nutritional health reflects a Eurocentric foodway and associated worldview. As the dominant narrative subsumes Indigenous foodways and ways of knowing, it is therefore a colonial narrative. A counter-narrative based in local Indigenous foodways, reflecting local ways of knowing and the cultural values of sacred, respectful relationships, reciprocity, and interdependency, can resist the dominant narrative and form the foundation for Indigenous food sovereignty. As Indigenous peoples are diverse across Canada, through adaptation over millennia to specific environments and local ecologies, they have developed local ways of knowing and sacred, respectful relationships with the animals, plants, and the land reflecting local cosmologies. Therefore, one Indigenous counter-narrative will not suffice. A counter-narrative of food and well-being for the Inuit reflecting the “healing power of seal” (Borré, 1994), for example, will differ from a counter-narrative of the Iroquois emphasizing the Three Sisters, the spirits of maize, beans, and squash. Local counter-narratives based in local foodways and ways of knowing - guided by Indigenous leaders, Elders, and knowledge keepers – rather than one narrative for all Indigenous peoples, must be constructed.

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Constructing counter-narratives of food and well-being based in Indigenous foodways and local ways of knowing can end the sterile colonial narrative and form the foundation of Indigenous food sovereignty. Indigenous food sovereignty can be envisioned as the right of Indigenous peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food as well as a right to define their own food systems. But it is not only based in Indigenous food related knowledge, but also the values and wisdom built up over thousands of years as evident in the guiding principles of the Indigenous food sovereignty movement (Indigenous Food Systems Network, n.d., para. 3–6):

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- * It is based in sacred or divine sovereignty as food is a gift from Creator and reflects sacred, respectful, and interdependent relationships with the land, plants, and animals;
- * It is participatory in the day to day practice of maintaining cultural harvesting strategies at the individual, family, community, and regional levels;
- * It reflects self-determination in the ability to respond to the peoples' own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods;
- * And it seeks policy to reconcile Indigenous food and cultural values with colonial laws and policies, and mainstream economic activities.

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Indigenous food sovereignty, therefore, must be imagined as more than long term food security but rather as reflecting local Indigenous foodways and associated worldviews. As foodways reflect our most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves, the construction of counter-narratives based in Indigenous foodways not only provides the basis for Indigenous food

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sovereignty but also a restorative framework for healing from the legacies of colonization and revitalization of ways of knowing, cultural practices, and social structures and relations. As Secwepemc Elder, Jones Ignace states, “Food will be what brings the people together” (Indigenous Food Systems Network website, n.d., para. 5).

The New Brazilian Food Guide: An Example of a Culturally Inclusive Counter Narrative

In contrast to the Canada Food Guide, and an example of dietary guidelines not based within a Eurocentric view, is the new *Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population* (Ministry of Health of Brazil, 2014). Brazil does not use a food guide with food groups arranged in charts or pyramids but instead has outlined ten steps to healthy eating. Rather than focus on servings and nutrients Brazil’s recommendations emphasize meals and the social contexts of eating. Although Brazil’s dietary guidelines reflect the aim of Canada’s Food Guide to use public health promotion of healthy eating to reduce chronic diseases, Brazil contextualizes food and eating within their foodways emphasizing the broader social, political, and economic contexts rather than the individual compliant body. Recognizing “adequate and healthy diet as a basic human right”, the Brazilian dietary guidelines emphasize permanent and regular access, in a “socially fair manner”, to food and ways of eating that satisfy the “social and biological requirement of everybody” in culturally appropriate ways that allows for differences in gender, race and ethnicity. An adequate and healthy diet should be accessible both physically and financially, and “harmonious in both quantity and quality meeting the needs of variety, balance, moderation, and pleasure ... and it should derive from sustainable practices of production and distribution”. The aim of these dietary guidelines is to give everyone ways – personally, socially, and collectively –

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to eat well in biological, social, cultural, economic and political aspects while also emphasizing environmental sustainability (Ministry of Health of Brazil, 2014, p. 8).

Whereas the Canada Food Guide emphasizes measurable servings of each food group within the diet, the Brazilian guidelines emphasize meals and eating modes, including social and cultural aspects of dietary practices. For example, “Eat regularly and carefully in appropriate environments and, whenever possible, with company” (step 5) or “Plan your time to make food and eating important in your life” (step 8). Therefore, the Brazilian guide expands beyond individual bodily health in the fight against chronic diseases to incorporate traditional eating patterns and contexts of food consumption; “Specific foods, and dishes and meals made by combining and preparing these foods, in addition to ways of eating, all are part of the culture of a society. They shape the senses of personal identity, of self-determination, of belonging within a family and society, as well as the pleasure given by food, and thus to states of wellbeing” (Ministry of Health of Brazil, 2014, p. 16).

Thus, the Brazilian dietary guidelines framed in local foodways, and emphasizing the social elements of food and eating, as well as “states of wellbeing”, are a far cry from measuring and counting nutritious servings for individual bodily health highlighted in Canada’s Food Guide. In terms of Indigenizing Canada’s food guide, how would Indigenous cultural values, rather than the Eurocentric values of the dominant narrative of food and nutritional health, shape meanings assigned to food and eating? Rather than simply adding traditional foods to the Canada Food Guide new counter narratives of food and wellbeing must be constructed based in local Indigenous foodways.

<A>Conclusion

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Through a foodways lens I reveal how the imposition of a Eurocentric foodway on understandings of food and nutritional health reflects a colonial narrative that erases Indigenous worldviews. By constructing counter-narratives based in local Indigenous foodways and associated ways of knowing the addition of traditional foods to the Canada Food Guide becomes a moot point. Culture is preformed through the meanings and rituals assigned to food and eating with cultural values inherent in what, when, why, and how we eat. Inherent in Indigenous foodways are cultural values of sacred and respectful relationships, reciprocity, and interdependency between humans, animals, plants, and the land. Therefore, reclaiming Indigenous foodways is more than the addition of nutritious foods to the diet. It forms the basis for Indigenous individual and community well-being—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual—as well as Indigenous identities. Constructing counter-narratives based in local Indigenous foodways provides a foundation for not only for cultural revitalization and Indigenous food sovereignty but also by challenging the dominant colonial narrative, the broader process of decolonization.

<A>Glossary

critical discourse analysis: The study of the way societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use and the way discourse reproduces (or resists) social and political inequality, power abuse, or domination, including colonialism.

counter-narrative: As a dominant narrative can outline a widely accepted belief as truth, a counter-narrative can dispute the belief of the dominant narrative and give people a voice who otherwise may not have one.

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foodways: The study of behaviors and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food through the intersection of food, culture, tradition, and history.

Indigenous well-being: As all four dimensions of life (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) are interconnected, to be well in Indigenous perspective, all four must be in balance for one to be well. If one area is out of balance, all other areas are affected.

<A>Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does critical discourse analysis emphasize? Accordingly, how do counter-narratives resist the dominant narrative of food and eating?
2. In your own words, describe how foodways reflect local cultural values and ways of knowing (provide examples).
3. How can Indigenous food sovereignty support the broader movements of cultural revitalization, self-determination, and decolonization?

<A>Suggested Readings and/or Resources

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<A>Author Biography

Dr. Leslie Dawson completed her PhD in medical and nutritional anthropology in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta) in 2018. Her doctoral research investigated the intersections of histories of colonization and Indigenous maternal bodies in the intergenerational developmental origins of diabetes as a health disparity among Indigenous peoples in Canada. She has worked collaboratively with the Tlicho, a Dene people of Treaty 11 Territory (Northwest Territories), collecting pregnancy and birth stories from different generations of Tlicho women to reveal the lived experiences of colonization and its impact on maternal well-being. Leslie has also worked with the Tlicho Community Action Research Team (CART) with the development of the Tlicho Health Eating and Diabetes Prevention program. She is lead of a new multi-partner, multi-year Dedats'eetsaa Research Project with the Tlicho Government based in Indigenous methodologies. The project, "Banned

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from Our Land: Cultural Survival, Identity, and Health Adaptation in the Face of Environmental Loss and Change”, investigates the impact of the decline of the caribou on Tlicho identity and wellbeing. Leslie is also one of the principle investigators on the initiative exploring Tlicho food security, food sovereignty, and nutritional wellbeing.

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