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# Indigenous Knowledge and Maple Syrup: A Case Study of the Effects of Colonization in Ontario

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Hayley Moody

**Indigenous Knowledge and Maple Syrup: A Case Study of the Effects of Colonization in Ontario**

Monday, September 28, 2015

Completed in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Masters in Social Justice and Community Engagement at  
Wilfrid Laurier University

Dr. Brenda Murphy; Dr. Annette Chretien

## Abstract

For many Indigenous communities throughout the province of Ontario on Turtle Island, maple syrup (MS) practices are culturally and spiritually significant; however, since the arrival of European settlers, these MS practices have substantially declined. This research utilizes the decline of maple syrup practices and related Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as a case study to exemplify the damaging impacts colonialism has had on the culture of Indigenous peoples living within Ontario. Over a period of two months, I spoke with seven Indigenous individuals throughout Ontario about their experiences and opinions regarding the relationship between colonialism and MS practices. Accordingly, colonialism has impacted and contributed to the decline in MS practices and IK in two main interlocking ways: 1) direct colonial acts, such as residential schools, the Indian Act and the introduction of reserves; and 2) the continuing impacts of colonial processes, including settler colonialism, effects of capitalism, health ramifications and the colonized mind. However, as will be outlined in this paper, even in the face of this adversity caused by colonialism, all seven participants of this research are optimistic about the resurgence of MS practices by Indigenous populations.

## Acknowledgements

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*Maarsii poor toon taan; Ni kishchiitayhtayn.*

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## 1. Introduction

The majority of my life was spent in the middle of a maple forest. My parents cut down the trees and built a log cabin. My childhood consisted of getting lost in the bush, swimming in creeks, picking berries and listening to the life that surrounded me. I was taught to respect nature and all of its glory, living off the land in whatever ways we could. During the springtime, tapping trees and producing maple syrup became a family tradition. More than a decade after my family has moved from our log home, creating distance from the maple bush, I have found myself conducting research on maple syrup and Indigenous Knowledge; two aspects of my life that I thought had disappeared.

This story of my childhood represents many things, including the personal relationship I have with the research I have conducted. Maple syrup production vanished from my life many years ago, but has reappeared by chance through this research, demonstrating the cyclical flows of life itself. In a different sense, I also believe that the knowledge my mother passed to me and my sister encompassed the spirit of Indigenous Knowledge; regardless of her Western upbringing, the spirit of these ways of knowing remained within her and was brought out in the teachings of the natural environment that surrounded us. Colonization also has a role within my relationship with this research. As a result of colonization, there are at least two generations within my family who have been raised without our Anishinaabe-Métis culture. These three connections have brought me here today and inform the series of decisions I have made within this research project.

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have developed an intimate relationship with the environment that surrounds and sustains them. Knowledge is generated from this relationship, and is then passed down from generation to generation, utilizing traditional forms of transmission; this process can be referred to as ‘Indigenous Knowledge’ (IK). Since the arrival of European settlers, IK has been harmed as a result of colonial processes designed to assimilate and/or eradicate the Indigenous populations of this land (Belanger, 2014). It is possible that the decline in maple syrup (MS) practices is an indicator of the impact colonization has had on IK. Therefore, the central question that has been explored through this research project is:

*To what extent has colonialism impacted Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in relation to maple syrup (MS) practices amongst Indigenous populations in Ontario?*

Furthermore, the main objectives of this research project are:

- I. To speak with Indigenous individuals within Ontario to explore their understandings and experiences regarding the relationship between colonization and maple syrup production.
- II. To analyze and integrate the results to form a deeper understanding of the relationship that Indigenous individuals perceive to have between colonization and maple syrup production.

As will be discussed within this paper, since the arrival of European settlers, IK has been placed under continuous threat. This reality is not because of the stereotype of the ‘disappearing Indian,’ but is a direct result of colonization (Simpson, 2004, p. 374). Some IK has been lost as a result of colonization, but it is crucial to keep in mind that one of the main tenants of IK is the fact that it is always changing and adapting to meet current needs (Simpson, 2004, p. 374). Some knowledge is lost, while other knowledge is gained through adaptation and change. Indigenous peoples throughout Turtle Island are committed to regaining languages and knowledge to ensure



that Indigenous cultures thrive (Simpson, 2004, p. 374). This project discusses the loss of IK in relation to MS, but it should be noted that this is not a passive process. The information gained through this project will be utilized to help establish the Indigenous Maple Syrup Knowledge Network [IMSKN], which is a prime example of Indigenous resistance to colonization and the revitalization of IK. It needs to be emphasized that even though some IK has been lost as a result of colonization, the resistance amongst the Indigenous communities for regaining knowledge is alive and progressing.

The following research paper explores the relationship between maple practices and colonization as discussed by seven Indigenous producers throughout the province of Ontario on Turtle Island. To examine the findings of this research, this paper is divided into five major sections: (1) a literature review of all pertinent information relating to MS, IK and colonization; (2) a methodology section outlining the theoretical framework and method utilized to conduct this study; (3) results of the research; (4) an analysis of the results; and (5) concluding thoughts, including the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

## **2. Literature Review**

This literature review is divided into six main sections. The first section focuses on Indigenous Knowledge (IK), specifically dealing with broad characteristics. The second section explores IK in relation to colonial processes throughout Canada, which includes IK's relationship to reserves, the legislation found within the *Indian Act*, and finally the residential school system. Third, literature relating to maple production and Indigenous peoples will be presented, with emphasis on the utilization of maple products throughout history and IK related

to maple production. The fourth section will tie the previous sections together presenting information relating to IK, direct processes of colonization and MS practices. Fifth, an overview of the ongoing consequences of direct colonialism will be explored, including the colonization of the mind. In this section, emphasis is placed on how these consequences may be currently impacting MS practices. Finally, the sixth section provides pertinent literature relating to the revitalisation of Indigenous culture through the resurgence of traditional practices. This literature review is focused on providing a baseline for this research project.

Before exploring the literature relating to IK, colonization and MS, it is first necessary to provide a brief definitional framework of a couple of terms that will be extensively utilized throughout this paper. The first term that requires explanation is ‘Indigenous.’ According to the 1982 Constitution Act, the term “Aboriginal” (which can be used synonymously with ‘Indigenous’) includes Indians [First Nations], Métis and Inuit (Constitution Act, 1982, s. 35). All three groups share very similar characteristics in relation to IK and colonization; however, the Inuit do not live in areas that are able to produce MS. Therefore, throughout this paper the term ‘Indigenous’ will refer to First Nations and Métis individuals and communities.

The second term that requires an explanation regarding its utilization throughout this paper is that of ‘tradition/traditional.’ Tradition is a difficult concept to explain because the definition can vary, depending on who is providing it and in what context (Divine, 2013, p. 106). Throughout this paper, ‘tradition’ or ‘traditional’ simply refers to a “thing, custom or thought process that is passed on over time” (Graburn, 2001, p. 6). For example, in the context of MS practices, it is a tradition because it is a process and activity, both spiritually and physically, that

has been passed down from generation to generation (Thomas, 2004). Until recently, cultural practices were not thought of as traditions, but simply part of everyday life. As a result of colonial processes throughout the world, emphasis has been placed on the concept of tradition for those practices that are threatened by the overwhelming state of Western culture (Horner, 1990). Therefore, preserving these traditions has become important for many Indigenous communities.

It is crucial to point out that traditions do change and adapt over time (Horner, 1990). Western society, based on the Enlightenment, perpetuates the notion that tradition equates to practices and peoples that are “frozen in the past,” but this is an incorrect assumption that pushes the agenda of Western civilization (Graburn, 2001, p. 8). Even before settler arrival on Turtle Island, traditions changed and altered throughout history amongst Indigenous populations (Graburn, 2001, p. 8). Therefore, throughout this paper, when the terms ‘tradition’ or ‘traditional’ are utilized, it is not a suggestion that Indigenous populations return to the exact ways of life practiced by our Ancestors thousands of years ago, but rather to practice whatever variation and/or adaption of the culture/practice as the individual/community knows it to be. This is the definitional framework that I follow for the purposes of this paper, but it is important to point out that it should not be taken as the universal definition of tradition accepted by all Indigenous peoples.

## **2.1 IK: General Characteristics**

Indigenous Knowledge [IK] has countless definitions originating from many academics, government agencies, international organizations, environmentalists, non-governmental

organizations, care facilities, and of course, Indigenous peoples. In addition to these varying definitions, there are multiple different titles that all seem to be exploring similar phenomenon: Indigenous Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Indigenous Technical Knowledge, among many others. Sifting through this information, I will provide a synthesis of the core ideas and foundations of IK, but I recognize that these beliefs (and even core foundations) differ among varying individuals, groups and communities. In addition, I will attempt to do these terms justice in relation to the purpose of my MRP work. IK is a sacred and a traditional way of life that cannot be fully explored through Western academic methods (i.e. journal articles). Within Western academia and culture in general, knowledge is usually derived from a positivist stance, in which all knowledge is only considered valid if it can be ‘proven’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 40). Within Indigenous culture, knowledge is based on individual and collective experiences with not only other humans, but also with non-humans and the spiritual realm, which is in direct opposition to the Western positivist knowledge and belief system (Chilisa, 2012, p. 40). I want to recognize that this synthesis of IK is completed purely from an academic standpoint, and does not [and cannot] fully recognize the innate cultural and spiritual affiliation of how IK is actually utilized within Indigenous communities. I can explain IK, but only to the best of my own ability through the English written word and through my own understanding as an Anishinaabe-Métis individual who was raised outside of cultural practices. Accordingly, as Indigenous academic Leroy Little Bear states, “knowledge [IK] is not something contained in a book, a CD or other memory mechanism [...] from an Indigenous perspective, it is the relationships one has to ‘all my relations’” (Little Bear, 2009, p. 7). In this research, I remained mindful of this epistemological stance and the implications of conducting this research within a Western academic framework, as is discussed further within the Methods section of this

paper. With this caveat in place, in the next section I provide a synthesis of information regarding the varying definitions of IK and then proceed to explore how IK has been impacted by processes of colonization throughout the Canadian state on Turtle Island.

As previously stated, there are a multitude of definitions regarding IK from numerous different sources. For the purpose of this review, I have attempted to use information primarily from Indigenous perspectives, but this has proven to be difficult as not all authors identify their cultural affiliation/identity within the context of their work. For this reason, and to challenge the conception of Western academic systems, I have also included IK definitions/explanations from ‘non-academic’ sources, predominantly Indigenous political organizations.

According to academic Francis Akena (2012), IK is a “complex accumulation of local context-relevant knowledge that embraces the essence of Ancestral knowing as well as the legacies of diverse histories and cultures” (p. 601). In addition, Akena recognizes that IK will inevitably vary depending on the individual who is explaining it because IK is context and experience specific (2012, p. 601). Moreover, IK is a “lived world, a form of reason that informs and sustains people who make their homes in a local area” (Akena, 2012, p. 601). Similarly, in *Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge*, academics Henderson and Battiste state that IK “represents the accumulated experience, wisdom and know-how unique to nations, societies and/ or communities of people living in specific ecosystems” (Little Bear, 2009, p. 7). Furthermore, these two authors state that learning within IK is represented as “sacred and holistic [...] experiential, purposeful, relational and a life-long responsibility” (Little Bear, 2009, p. 7). According to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), there is no universally accepted definition of

Traditional [or Indigenous] Knowledge (2013). However, AFN does acknowledge that the term is commonly “understood to refer to collective knowledge traditions used by Indigenous groups to sustain and adapt themselves to their environment over time” (AFN, 2013). IK can be passed down through storytelling, ceremonies, dances, hunting/trapping, medicines and food preparation, among multiple other methods (AFN, 2013). This knowledge is usually “shared among Elders, healers or hunters and gatherers, and is passed down to the next generation” through the methods described above (AFN, 2013). Similarly, the Chiefs of Ontario recognize IK, or ATK (Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge) to be a “collective knowledge system unique to the First Peoples of Turtle Island” (2012). This political organization recognizes that there are multiple different names for this type of knowledge, proclaiming that all names (including ‘traditional knowledge,’ ‘Indigenous Knowledge,’ and ‘naturalized knowledge,’ among others) refer to “cultural practices and methodologies related to the production of knowledge based on traditional belief systems, relationships to the environment and community practices” (Chiefs of Ontario, 2012).

The definitional frameworks provided above, derived from multiple different sources, offer recognizable trends that can be considered the core characteristics of IK. First, IK is specific to each individual community and geographic location. The IK of the Western Salish will differ from the IK of the Eastern Mi’Kmaq. They both share similar core characteristics of IK, but their specific ways of knowing will differ. Second, spirituality is a guiding principle in the generation and instruction of knowledge. Third, knowledge is shared through cultural activities, like storytelling or dancing, and through participatory actions, like hunting, cooking or producing MS. Furthermore, knowledge is shared through everyday activities, ‘informally,’ on a

day-to-day basis. Fourth, knowledge production and knowledge sharing is a continuous, holistic and a life-long journey, gained through personal lived experience, or the lived experience of past generations and Ancestors. Lastly, knowledge is intrinsically based and derived from the ecology that surrounds the people. I have directly extrapolated these five points from the various definitions that were provided above. These five characteristics are based on my personal research, and is in no way exhaustive of the many characteristics of IK and various aspects from different communities and Nations.

## **2.2 IK and Colonization in Canada**

Before directly exploring information concerning IK and colonization, a brief discussion of colonization in general within the Canadian context is warranted. Turtle Island, or ‘North America,’ has been home to thousands of Indigenous Nations and communities for centuries. Before the arrival of European settlers, the Indigenous peoples of this land were completely self-sufficient with complex governing systems, treaties/alliances and ways of life to ensure that community and individual needs were met (Belanger, 2014). First contact between the Indigenous populations of North America and Europeans is widely debated (Dickason & Newbigging, 2013, p. 80). The new settlers largely relied on the Indigenous populations to survive within the new North American climate, particularly during the winter months (Jones, 2006, p. 111). Basic trade and commerce relations were formed throughout North America, signalling the relatively cooperative relationship between settlers and varying First Nation communities (Belanger, 2014, p. 80). However, the main intention of the settling nations was the colonization of the ‘new found’ land and began swiftly declaring ownership (Belanger, 2014, p. 81). Furthermore, much of the land acquisition process was based on the popular European

notion and practice of *terra nullius*; if lands were perceived to be unoccupied, it could be claimed by the nation who declared discovery (Belanger, 2014, p. 80).

European settlement throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, specifically across the land that is now called Canada, was occurring at an increasingly rapid rate, and Indigenous populations were considered to be an obstacle in the face of the progressive development in the New World. Europeans assumed superiority over Indigenous populations on the basis of their non-Christian lifestyles, and deemed it appropriate to assimilate these Nations, sometimes by force, into the expanding European population (Chartrand & McKay, 2006, p. 15). The White immigrants in Canada, seeking to expand their colonies, pursued the lands of the Indigenous Nations through numerous legislative policies and actions, three of which will be discussed here: the Indian reservation system: the *Indian Act* and residential schooling. In the following sections, a brief overview of these three particular assimilative practices will be given, followed by a synopsis of how these acts of colonization have impacted IK.

### **2.2.1 IK and the Canadian Indian Reserve System**

Within Canada (historically, British North America, and then Upper Canada/Lower Canada), Indigenous bands were ‘granted plots’ of land, commonly known as ‘reserves’ (St. Germain, 2000, p. 81). The beginning of this reserve system was sparked by the desire to secure British North America’s southern boundary from the Americans during the seventeenth century, uprooting Indigenous populations to make way for loyal settlers (St. Germain, 2000, p. 80). In turn, this forced relocation fuelled the necessity to find other lands for the dislocated populations, which happened to be within the territories of yet other Indigenous Nations (St. Germain, 2000,



p. 81). As time progressed, the Canadian reserve system was designed to not only remove Indigenous peoples from their land to make way for European settlement and secure borders, but also to prepare Indigenous communities through economic training to join the mainstream industrial and agricultural Canadian economy (Schouls, 2002, p. 18). Agents of the state frequently describe these relocations and formation of reserves as an attempt to encourage agricultural practices amongst Indigenous communities; however, many communities found themselves on lands that were/are unsuitable for agricultural initiatives, including sloping lands and rocky areas with poor soil quality (Hanson, 2009). All the while, settlers were busily securing the most fertile lands for their own uses (Hanson, 2009).

Ultimately, the reserve system served (and still serves) as a form of control in the hands of the governing powers over Indigenous populations. As found within the *Indian Act*, reserves are still under the direct ownership of the Canadian governing powers:

Subject to this Act, reserves are held by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart, and subject to this Act and to the terms of any treaty or surrender, the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which lands in a reserve are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band (*The Indian Act*, 1985).

To this day, reserve lands are still owned by the Canadian government (through the political relationship with the British Monarch), which includes the governing of how lands are used, who uses the reserve lands and what the lands are used for. This colonial technique ensured the segregation of Indigenous populations, secured the best land for settler communities and guaranteed direct control over Indigenous peoples.

Forced relocations and lack of control over reserve lands deeply impacts IK in a multitude of ways. As per the definitions provided previously, IK is often location and ecosystem-specific (Akena, 2012; Little Bear, 2009; AFN, 2013). Therefore, as a result of the forced relocations and lack of control over reserve lands, IK is negatively impacted. One of the other core components of IK is the fact that it is constantly adapting and changing with current times. However, it is still important to recognize the impacts of this colonial process on IK.

When communities and Nations are relocated as a result of colonial interference and the adoption of reserve systems, thousands of years of IK based on specific geographic ecology might be lost or degraded. Similarly, when control over resources is lost, when resource extraction does not benefit the local community or when land is contaminated, the community can lose their practices, and the associated IK (Willow, 2009, p. 44). For example, as result of a combination of colonial factors relating to land, including forced relocation to reserve land, mercury poisoning and large scale clear-cutting of traditional lands, the Anishinaabe community of Grassy Narrows is slowly losing some aspects of IK that have been compiled throughout numerous generations (Willow, 2009, p. 44). This type of phenomenon has rapidly spread throughout Turtle Island since European contact (Willow, 2009, p. 45). As a result, IK is being forced to change, shift and adapt. IK and land, with special emphasis on reserves in relation to maple practices specifically, will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections of this literature review.

### **2.2.2 IK and the *Indian Act***

The *Indian Act*, established in 1876, is federal piece of legislation that governs all matters relating to Indigenous populations in Canada, including Indian status, bands, education and reserves, among all other facets that relate to Indigenous peoples (Hanson, 2009). In 1876, one hundred sections were formally established; by the early twentieth century, this nearly doubled to one hundred and ninety-five sections (Richardson, 1994, p. 95). The *Indian Act* controls all aspect of Indigenous life, including the very definition of who could legally be considered an Indian person (Milloy, 2008, p. 8). The Act, which is an accumulation of all previous policies and legislation introduced throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarding Indigenous populations, includes rules governing land (reserves), schooling, economics, band politics, alcohol consumption, pool playing, illegalities of hiring lawyers, the ban of traditional ceremonies, among countess other rules and regulations (Richardson, 1994). To this day, the *Indian Act* remains the primary governing body that dictates the lives of Indigenous populations (Hanson, 2009).

The *Indian Act* has hundreds of different provisions that can (and do) affect IK. For example, on top of the provisions relating to land and schooling (which is discussed elsewhere), provisions relating to rules regulating speech, movement and assembly, and sections governing health, community government and enfranchisement have all had an impact on IK in some manner (Richardson, 1994). However, for the purposes of this research, only information pertaining to the suppression of cultural practices will be explored because of its direct link to maple harvest suppression, as will be discussed later.

One of the most significant aspects of the *Indian Act*, in relation to the impact of IK, was the ban on cultural ceremonies and practices from 1884 until 1951. The two most prominent practices that were explicitly outlawed were the Potlatch and Sun Dance (Richardson, 1994, p. 104). The Potlatch is an extremely important ceremony among coastal First Nations in the West, which marks special occasions and plays a significant role in the distribution of wealth throughout the community (Hanson, 2009). The Sun Dance, practiced by the Nations of the Prairies, plays a similar significant role (Richardson, 1994, p. 105). By 1914, the *Indian Act* expanded the prohibition to cover almost any cultural practice that an Indigenous person might want to attend or partake in (Richardson, 1994, p. 105). The ban of the Potlatch, Sun Dance and other practices affected Indigenous culture and knowledge as a whole (Richardson, 1994, p. 105). As Judge Alfred Scow, from the Kwicksutaineuk-ah-kwa-mish First Nation on Vancouver Island, stated, “this provision of the *Indian Act* was in place for close to 75 years and what that did was it prevented the passing down of our oral history” (Hanson, 2009). Countless communities throughout the country lost cultural practices and oral histories due to the prohibition of cultural practices (Hanson, 2009). These practices were (and are) central to Indigenous culture, and was/is a time to pass down countless pieces of knowledge to younger generations (Hanson, 2009). By banning these practices, the government was harming IK and Indigenous culture in general (Ingles, 1998, p. 353).

Regardless of the provisions, many (if not most) Indigenous communities continued to practice their ceremonies and activities, even if that meant sneaking through the tight control of their acting Indian Agents (Ingles, 1998, p. 353). In many cases, Indigenous individuals and entire communities were charged and/or arrested for practicing ceremonies, and were often

forced to give up items used for ceremony and required to sign paperwork indicating their legal obligation to give up all cultural practices (Ingles, 1998, p. 353). However, even with the defiance of these communities, IK has been impacted, and continues to be impacted from the legacy of these bans to this day (Hanson, 2009).

### **2.2.3 IK and Canadian Residential Schools**

Beginning in early nineteenth century, Indigenous children from across Canada were taken from their homes to attend church-run, government-funded residential schools (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRCC], 2012, p. 1). Throughout history, more than one hundred and fifty residential schools were in existence within Canada, with the last school closing its doors in 1996 (TRCC, 2012, p. 1). These schools were created to aid in the process of cultural assimilation and elimination by forcing Indigenous children to adopt the foundations of Western ideals and reject all aspects of their Indigenous culture (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2003). It has been said that residential schools were created to “kill the Indian in the child” (Milloy, 1999, p. XV). Children within these schools were raised in underfunded, overcrowded and unhealthy conditions, denied the right to speak their language, told their cultural beliefs were sinful and were often separated from their parents, families and communities for long periods of time (TRCC, 2012, p. 1). Tens of thousands of children were neglected and abused, with an unknown number of children dying while in the care of these institutions (TRCC, 2012, p. 1). As a result of residential schools, thousands of survivors are continuing on their healing journey, with thousands more suffering from intergenerational trauma effects (Quinn, 2007, p. 72).

Regardless of differences in language, ceremony and ecosystems, Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island share a distinct commonality in their approach to raising children, who are always placed in at the heart of the community, closely aligned with the natural and Spirit world (British Columbia Assembly of First Nations [BCAFN], et al., 2008, p. 4). The survival of Indigenous Nations and communities depends on the transmission of vast amounts of spiritual, practical and cultural knowledge from Elders to the younger generations, predominately transmitted through oral traditions (BCAFN, et al., 2008, p. 4). As a result of residential schools, multiple generations of Indigenous children were separated from their families and culture, which has had devastating impacts on teachings: “they suffered loss of their language and culture, loss of emotional security and family traditions, loss of respect for their own culture and learned violence” (BCAFN, et al., 2008, p. 4). The children, who are the centre of community, were ripped from their culture, losing the their ability to partake in the teachings required for the continuation of their Indigenous lifestyle (Hanson, 2009). Children sent to residential schools missed teachings through their childhood and adolescent years, which then impacted the next generation, and all generations that follow (Hanson, 2009). Even when children did return to their homes, they felt shame and disconnect towards their heritage, which sometimes led to the outright rejection of their Indigenous culture: children in residential schools were taught shame and rejection for everything about their heritage, including their Ancestors, their families and, especially, their spiritual practices (Chansonneuve, 2005, p. 5). Therefore, even when children did return home, they often rejected their Indigenous ways of living.

It is important to note that Indigenous communities did resist these practices as much as possible, including many parents and families hiding their children from authorities to avoid their

attendance of residential schools (Hanson, 2009). Some children continued to speak and practice their language and culture in secrecy with other students (Hanson, 2009). Regardless of the resistance efforts, it can be recognized that residential schools did create a harmful break within the transmission of IK and practices.

## 2.3 Indigenous Peoples and Maple Syrup

The following section provides pertinent information relating to MS practices and Indigenous populations. Maple products (sugar and syrup) are derived through the process of evaporation of sap collected from sugar maple trees, or *acer saccharum* (Thomas, 2004, p. 54). This maple sap can only be collected during late winter and early spring, when the day time temperature climbs to around five degrees Celsius, while the nights are just below the freezing mark (Davenport & Staats, 1998, p. 3). The processing of maple sap into sugar is predominantly credited to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, but there are numerous debates regarding this assumption, with some researchers claiming that the practice was not established until after the arrival of European settlers (Huron, 2014, p. 11). Regardless of these debates, maple production has and continues to be an integral part of many Indigenous Nations' culture and livelihood.

### 2.3.1 IK and Maple Practices

As explained previously, even though IK varies amongst different Indigenous Nations and communities, this literature review identified five core characteristics that are quite common including, 1) IK is location specific, 2) spirituality is always a guiding principle, 3) knowledge is shared through cultural activities, 4) knowledge production and sharing is a continuous, holistic and life-long journey gained through lived experience, and 5) knowledge is derived from the

ecology that surrounds the people. In direct relation to MS production, IK is crucial for the continuation of maple practices because IK is utilized as the method for transferring knowledge from one generation to the next (Huron, 2014, p. 71). For example, MS IK is passed down through storytelling and through the actual act of creating MS. As stated by Thomas (2004, p. 104), when Indigenous communities were relocated from village to village (as a result of colonization), they abandoned some of the knowledge required to produce MS and sap, which should have been passed down to the next generation. Many communities/Nations had/have knowledge regarding the location of the best maple trees to tap, when to start tapping and when to stop tapping, among other crucial components about the maple harvest (Smith, 1996). When this knowledge transmission is threatened by acts of colonialism and assimilation, the very act of creating maple products is endangered.

## **2.4 Indigenous Peoples and MS Practices**

From trade and medicine, to food and ceremony, maple products have played, and continue to play, a fairly substantial role within many Indigenous communities. Due to the variety of uses for maple products, the early spring season was/is often celebrated and considered a joyous time (Hutton, 2010, p. 18). The following paragraphs will outline the many uses of maple products, including trade/economy, food/medicine and cultural celebrations and ceremonies.

In the past, throughout the initial colonial time period, many Indigenous Nations and communities utilized maple products as a source of trade with European settlers (Keller, 1989, p. 120). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of the reasons why many of the French and English settled throughout the Upper Great Lakes region was to ensure their supply



of maple sugar throughout the year from Indigenous producers (Keller, 1989, p. 120). Indigenous communities traded maple sugar for rifles, cooking equipment and non-native food products, among others (Keller, 1989, p. 120). The popularity of the sugar products provided an extensive industry for many Indigenous communities throughout this time period (Keller, 1989, p. 120). To demonstrate the vastness of this industry, archival research conducted by Huron (2014, p. 65) has found documents indicating that during the eighteen-hundreds the Indigenous communities of Manitoulin Island exported over half a million pounds of maple sugar yearly. However, by 1890, beet and cane sugar become popular and less expensive, dissolving the mass demand for trade of maple products (Keller, 1989, p. 120). This change boosted the reputation of MS as a luxury item (Keller, 1989, p. 120). To this day, many Indigenous communities continue to utilize maple products as a form of economic activity, selling their products within and beyond their communities (Thomas, 2005, p. 321; Chretien, 2013).

Maple products were/are used as a food staple amongst many Indigenous communities. According to early historical accounts, there were three types of maple sugars produced, including grain sugar, cake sugar and wax sugar (Hutton, 2010, p. 18). These sugars were used for seasoning foods such as squash, pumpkin, venison or fish, and used as a sweet treat and energy-booster, especially during the winter months (Keller, 1989, p. 120). Maple sap and sugar was/is also used as a traditional medicine for numerous different ailments (Keller, 1989, p. 124). Archival research has shown that many Indigenous peoples would drink sap, sugar or syrup as a remedy for numerous body ailments, including croup, heart and digestive problems, among others (Huron, 2014, p. 63). Further, maple sap products also provided nourishment and were

thought to have healing properties that would help revive the body after harsh winters (Huron, 2014, p. 63).

Maple production was, and still is, very much engrained within the ceremonies, spirituality and culture of many Indigenous communities (Huron, 2014, p. 15). The maple harvest season was/is known for ceremony, celebration and spiritual connectedness to many Indigenous peoples, as it signalled the survival of another harsh winter and the coming of new life through the spring season (Thomas, 2004, p. 45). Oftentimes, Indigenous communities have a ‘first tap’ celebration, rejoicing the end of winter and perform sacred dances in the hope that the warmer weather would cause the maple sap to flow abundantly (Hutton, 2010, p. 18). Maple sugar and syrup are the first products to be harvested in the spring, and therefore represents new life for many Indigenous communities, signifying the importance of that particular time of year (Chretien, 2013, p.10). Some Indigenous communities give thanks by offering tobacco and a song to the trees at the beginning of the maple harvest season, and close the season in the same manner (Thomas, 2004, pg. 132). For other producers, preparation for the maple harvest season begins in the winter with prayers for new babies in the springtime (Chretien, 2013, p. 10). In addition to these ceremonies and thanksgiving, large-scale community celebrations are also held within some nations, such as “maple-sugar festivals,” and community socials (Thomas, 2004, p. 153). A concrete example of this can be seen in the Ojibwa first tap ceremony in which old sugar from the previous season and new sugar from the current season are pressed together, while a prayer of thanks is uttered by a medicine man, which is then handed out to the community members (Thomas, 2004, p. 153). To this day, celebration and ceremony continue to play an important role during the maple harvest season amongst many Indigenous communities.

## 2.5 IK, Maple Practices and Colonization

Since the arrival of settlers, maple production within Indigenous communities has rapidly declined (Huron, 2014, p. 100). It is hypothesized that one of the reasons for this decline may be due to the processes of direct colonization throughout Canada, including the implementation of reserve lands, the introduction of the colonial legislation within the *Indian Act* and the residential school system.

### 2.5.1 Land/Reserves

Throughout European settlement of North America, Indigenous communities struggled over the use and ownership of natural resources, including stands of productive sugar maples (Keller, 1989, p. 118). They pushed to ensure that sugar bushes were located on their traditional and/or reserve lands, but many Indigenous communities lost the ability to produce maple sugar and/or syrup because the forests were clear-cut for timber (Keller, 1989, p. 118). In addition, as a result of the resettlement of Indigenous populations onto reserves and the sanctions under the *Indian Act*, MS practices declined due to the increased restrictions on sugaring activities and the fact that former sugaring locations were no longer available (Thomas, 2005, p. 301). In turn, the reduction of maple harvesting appears to have contributed to the decline in culturally significant practices such as maple ceremonies and festivals (Huron, 2014, p. 99).

This project begins with the premise that because of the strong connection between land and IK, the displacement of land is detrimental to the knowledge surrounding MS practices. As explored by Chretien (2013, p. 4) “[...] land stewardship is often central to the maintenance of

traditional ways of life and to the fulfillment of spiritual responsibilities since the links between land and culture are integral to their [Indigenous] worldviews and ways of knowing.” Huron (2014, p. 70) explains that Indigenous peoples have intimate knowledge about their physical surroundings, including information pertaining to the best place to tap trees within their traditional area. This information is passed down from generation to generation, and is usually geographically specific to one given area. Based on this information, there is likely a relationship between the creation of reserves and control of forest resources, resulting in community displacement and IK related to maple harvesting.

### 2.5.2 The *Indian Act*

Legislation related to the colonization and assimilation of Indigenous peoples of Canada has been frequent the past couple of centuries. While no legislation has been introduced regarding maple production explicitly, the literature review and some previous research has presented a few tantalizing examples of how legislation has directly impacted IK in relation to maple production (Huron, 2014; Chretien, 2013). The very nature of the *Indian Act* (and preceding legislation) was/is to eliminate Indigenous social and cultural practices, which can be considered to include MS practices (Huron, 2014, p. 102). The *Indian Act* explicitly outlawed cultural ceremonies in 1884, which has been interpreted to include MS ceremonies and festivals (Chretien, 2013). An interviewee from research reported by Chretien (2013) told a story about how their community was outlawed from having ceremonies by the Indian Agent, to the point in which longhouses were locked to prevent community members from gathering sap for the maple season. The interviewee claims that individuals were forced to sneak around to tap trees and

collect sap to avoid prison time (Chretien, 2013). This is one of the reasons why knowledge was not passed down openly, and possibly a reason for why knowledge was lost (Chretien, 2013).

This research project surmises that the *Indian Act* did a great deal of damage to the IK associated with maple production, not unlike the impacts experienced with Potlatch and Sun Dance. Further research, particularly narratives, is required to better understand this relationship. Narratives and personal accounts are crucial in relation to this topic because Indigenous perspectives are under-represented in the documents of the archival records and because oral accounts allow Indigenous peoples to articulate their perspectives about this colonial legacy.

### **2.5.3 Residential Schools**

Some evidence exists to support the hypothesis that residential schools contributed to the decline of maple production amongst Indigenous communities. Thomas (2004, p. 51), who researched the history of numerous maple-producing Indigenous communities, found that during the nineteenth century, many children were forced to leave their homes to attend residential schools during important cultural activities, such as maple sugaring. Maple sugaring declined significantly in the 1930s and 1940s in Western Great Lake communities, which signifies a time when younger generations who had been forced to attend residential schools would have been carrying on this traditional practice with their own young families (Thomas, 2004, p. 51). It is not surprising that the first few generations of Indigenous peoples who were forced to attend residential schools no longer participated in the traditional activity of tapping trees by adulthood (Thomas, 2004, p. 51).

Based on the information provided above, there is reason to believe that MS practices have been impacted by direct acts of colonialism, including the introduction of reserve lands, the legislation found within the *Indian Act* and the assimilative nature of residential schools. The research results and discussion sections of this MRP further explore these themes. However, as presented in the following section of this literature review, direct colonial acts are not the only components of colonialism that is hypothesized as having an effect on MS practices amongst Indigenous populations.

## 2.6 Ongoing Impacts of Colonialism

While direct acts of colonialism, such as the ones discussed in length above, are important to discuss in terms of damaging actions by the Canadian state, it is also crucial that we acknowledge the ongoing impacts of these direct actions in the present day. The ongoing effects of colonialism are sometimes overlooked in the literature, as most academics focus on the tangible, outright discriminatory and assimilative actions, but the consequences of these direct acts in the present day have also had an extensive impact on the culture of Indigenous peoples. As stated by Taiaiake Alfred (2009, p. 42), “the colonially-generated cultural disruption affecting First Nations compounds the effects of dispossession to create near total psychological, physical and financial dependency on the state.” To this end, the following section will describe the main impacts of colonialism that continue to affect Indigenous culture and lifestyle to this day, including settler racism, the introduction of capitalism, health implications and the physiological ramifications known as the ‘colonization of the mind.’ The ongoing impacts of colonization may be a contributing factor in the decline of MS IK and practices.

### 2.6.1 Settler Racism

Settler racism is an ongoing consequence of colonialism affecting the Indigenous populations of Turtle Island. According to the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO, 2001), there is a critical link between racism and colonialism:

Racism is one of the characteristics of colonization and as such it has a negative influence on how Indigenous peoples are positioned in Canadian society. Because they have endured rather invisible and long-term oppression and discrimination, they have fared worse in economic, political, cultural and social terms (p. 13).

The state continues to maintain notions of settler racism because it provides a sense of entitlement for settler communities to this land (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 2). As succinctly stated by Ghosh (2010, p. 27), “racism is not a matter of culture differences and misunderstandings; it is the implementation of classifications which – directly or indirectly – work to preserve power structures and privileges.” In the case of the Canadian state, settler racism is maintained because it allows for the continued subjugation of Indigenous populations, and the privilege of settler inhabitants. Settler racism, as a direct ongoing impact of colonialism, may be a contributing factor in the decline of MS IK and practices.

### 2.6.2 Capitalism

Capitalism is another ongoing consequence of colonialism that continues to impact Indigenous peoples to this day. In the most basic sense, capitalism is an economic system predicated on the need for continuous growth and consumption in order to maintain order and ‘progress’ (Klein, 2014, p. 7). The success of capitalism is determined by growth of the economy; when growth is stagnant or declining, the system is considered to be in state of recession, or simply failing (Klein, 2015). When the economy is growing, the system is considered to be stable, thus successful (Klein, 2014). This ‘growth’ is based on the incessant

exploitation of the natural environment and the continuous surplus work of human beings (Klein, 2014). Indigenous peoples were not subject to this form of political organization until the colonization of Turtle Island by Western Nations.

When Europeans first began to settle throughout Turtle Island, Indigenous peoples willingly participated in economic endeavours with settlers, predominantly through the trade of fish, furs and other material goods (Mann, 2000, p. 46). This was an equally beneficial relationship as the Indigenous populations were able to reap the economic/trade benefits from continuing to practice their traditional ways of life, and settlers were able to survive the harsh climatic conditions of Turtle Island (Mann, 2000, p. 46). However, after the War of 1812, the economic interests of the settlers changed: the fur trade began to decline and an increasing number of settlers sought private land ownership for agricultural purposes (Mann, 2000, p. 46). Therefore, the newly-formed practice of capitalism on Turtle Island not only necessitated that land be available to settlers, but that the land must become private property, which is in complete opposition to the values and systems practiced by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years (Mann, 2000, p. 46). As a result, the original peoples of this land were forced into the capitalist system with the introduction of private property, reserves and the wage economy (Mann, 2000, p. 46).

Capitalism is in direct contrast to the values of Indigenous society, as capitalism enforces individualism, while Indigenous ways of life value the communal and collectiveness of all living things (Mann, 2000, p. 48). Consequently, settler capitalism uprooted the communal way of life that has been practiced by our communities for thousands of years on Turtle Island (Mann, 2000,



p. 48). This reality is exemplified through the changes to subsistence activities; the capitalist system benefits from reducing and/or eliminating the extent of Indigenous rights to hunt, fish, trap and gather, among other subsistence practices, forcing many Indigenous peoples to participate in alternative systems of production for monetary gain (Mann, 2000, p. 49). Through the introduction of private property and state-issued licenses, subsistence activities are effectively transformed into capital (Mann, 2000, p. 49). As a result, participation in these activities decline (Mann, 2000, p. 49). The decline is further exacerbated by the fact that many Indigenous peoples are forced to partake in other capitalist means of production for financial support, which reduces the amount of available time to practice subsistence activities (Kirmayor, Tait & Simpson, 2009, p. 13). Based on this information, it is possible that the changes created by the capitalist system has/is impacting MS IK practices.

Capitalism, as a direct byproduct of colonialism, is also affecting the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples throughout Turtle Island. As stated previously, capitalism is based on the continuous expansion of the market, which necessitates constant resource development (Klein, 2014, p. 7). Accordingly, much of the natural resource sector within Canada is on the lands of Indigenous peoples, thus creating the state's economic dependency on the resources of Indigenous populations (West, 1995, p. 281). This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of dependency theory, which dictates that the development of wealthy nations is dependent on the work and/or resources of impoverished/developing nations (West, 1995, p. 281). Consequently, the nation of Canada is dependent on the resources of Indigenous communities within national borders (West, 1995, p. 281). These resources can include timber, oil and gas, among others (West, 1995, p. 281). The exploitation of traditional lands can affect the ability of

Indigenous peoples to maintain cultural practices as the natural environment that we once lived harmoniously with is changed, altered and sometimes destroyed in the name of further advancing the capitalistic enterprise of the Canadian state (West, 1995, p. 281). This has devastating impacts for those who are trying to maintain subsistence activities (Kulchyski, 1995, p. 4). Based on this information, it is possible that resource exploitation based on capitalism is affecting the ability for some Indigenous peoples to maintain MS practices.

### 2.6.3 Health Implications

There are and have been numerous direct impacts of colonialism on Indigenous health, such as the introduction of contagious disease, the extinction of the Beothuk and the extensive health ramifications suffered by attendees of residential schools, among countless others (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 3). There are also numerous ongoing health concerns affecting Indigenous peoples today as a result of direct colonial acts. Land dispossession, lack of access to traditional economies, physical separation from mainstream monetary economies and the inability to participate in cultural activities, amongst others, are all ongoing impacts of direct colonial processes that contribute to the unprecedented health concerns of Indigenous populations (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 3). As a result, the physical and mental health of Indigenous peoples is considered to be substantially worse than that of the non-Indigenous populations living on Turtle Island (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 3). Statistics dictate that twenty percent of the Indigenous population has diabetes, which equates to rates three to five times greater than non-Indigenous peoples (CDA, 2010). While Indigenous peoples only comprise 3.8% of the Canadian population, they represent 7.8% of all AIDS cases (Health Canada, 2010). Moreover, the rates of suicide on First Nation reserves are three times greater than communities located off reserve (Health Canada,

2010). In addition, Indigenous peoples in Canada have a life-expectancy rate of 5-8 years less than those who are non-Indigenous (Health Canada, 2010). These are only a couple of statistics that represent the dire health conditions of Indigenous populations living within the settler nation of Canada. All of these health concerns, among others, can be linked to the ongoing affects of colonization (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 5). It is possible that health concerns are contributing to the decline in MS IK and practices.

#### **2.6.4 Psychological Ramifications: The Colonized Mind**

As a result of the hundreds of years of colonial oppression and forced assimilation tactics, Indigenous peoples are now facing a form of colonization that is difficult to categorize or measure in scope: the internalized colonization of the mind (Duran & Duran, 1995). Many Indigenous populations throughout Turtle Island have begun internalizing colonial attitudes, habits and lifestyles, which is contributing to the overall loss of culture, which may include MS practices (Duran & Duran, 1995). While extensive literature is available regarding this phenomenon in general, there is no direct research that has been conducted in relation to Indigenous peoples and MS practices specifically.

Marcelo Dascal, from Tel Aviv University, provides a definitional framework of the colonization of the mind, stating that the phrase is utilized as a metaphor to highlight the following characteristics:

- a) the intervention of an external source – the ‘colonizer’ – in the mental sphere of a subject or group of subjects – the ‘colonized’;
- (b) this intervention affects central aspects of the mind’s structure, mode of operation, and contents;
- (c) its effects are long-lasting and not easily removable;
- (d) there is a marked asymmetry of power between the parties involved;
- (e) the parties can be aware or unaware of their role of colonizer or colonized;
- and (f) both can participate in the process voluntarily or involuntarily (Dascal, 2009).

Mind colonization takes place outside of the realm of what individuals typically perceive of as colonization, for it is usually only thought of in terms of physical and legal efforts, like residential schools and the *Indian Act*. Mind colonization is attributed to the transmission of “mental habits and contents by means of social systems other than the colonial structure” (Dascal, 2009). Consequently, mind colonization occurs subtly through social systems such as adaptation to language, fashion, media and education, among others (Dascal, 2009). This phenomenon can also be considered in terms of hegemonic power, as extensively described by Foucault and Gramsci (Stoddart, 2007). Stoddart (2007, p. 201) explains the idea of hegemony presented by Foucault and Gramsci, stating that hegemony “appears to be the common sense that guides our everyday, mundane understanding of the world, and becomes known as ‘common sense’” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 201). It is believed by many that power is maintained through the coercive power of the state, but *hegemonic power* is maintained by the colonizers through the social actions of everyday life (Stoddart, 2007, p. 201). Accordingly, in relation to Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, our minds are trained to believe that Western culture and lifestyle is ‘normal’ and should be participated in (Duran & Duran, 1995). Ultimately, hegemony and colonization of the mind are inherently describing the same phenomenon: Western colonial attitudes and habits have become internalized within the minds of many Indigenous peoples, resulting in conformity to a Westernized lifestyle. It is suspected that this conformity may be contributing to the decline in MS practices amongst Indigenous populations.

The colonized mind is a result of direct actions of colonialism, as was described in the first section of this literature review. Duran and Duran (1995) highlight the psychological ramifications of these direct colonial acts, stating that the complete loss of power suffered by

Indigenous populations caused a sense of despair (p. 29). In reaction to this despair, the psyche internalizes what “appears to be genuine power,” which is in fact the power of the oppressor (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 29). Indigenous peoples internalize the power of the oppressor (settler society), and the sense of self-worth plummets to “a level of despair tantamount to self hatred” (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 29). Indigenous peoples, plagued by this despair and self-hatred, begin to take on the attitudes and lifestyles of the perceived ‘superior’ settlers, vis-à-vis, colonization of the mind. As succinctly stated by Green and Thomas (2007), “as a result of Eurocentric indoctrination, Indigenous people began to forego their ways of life in order to be more like the ‘superior’ others” (p. 95). Linda Tuhawai Smith (2002) echoes this statement, emphasizing that the agenda of the oppressors (European settlers) is to make Indigenous populations believe that their way of life is inferior, and thus willing to change (p. 11). As further stated by Lisa Poupart (2003), “as Western constructions of abject difference are both forced upon and accepted by American Indians, we define ourselves through these constructions and subsequently participate in the reproduction of these codes” (p. 88). Consequently, we begin participating more in Western society (Pourpart, 2003, p. 88). Therefore, Indigenous practices and overall lifestyles are not only being suppressed by direct colonial acts (i.e. residential schools, *Indian Act*, etc.) but are also being suppressed by Indigenous peoples themselves as a result of colonized mindsets and hegemonic colonial power. For this reason, it is likely that the colonized mindset has impacted MS practices.

As stated previously, as a result of the colonized mindset, many Indigenous peoples are not only adopting Western ways of life and thought, but are also trained to believe that their Indigenous identity is, and will always be, inferior to that of the colonizers. Consequently, some

Indigenous peoples feel a sense of shame, embarrassment or hatred towards their Indigenous culture. Maracle (1996) has coined this phenomenon as “systemic rage” (p. 12). Maracle notes that the self-hate towards Indigenous lifestyle displayed by Indigenous peoples is of no fault of their own, and is actually a cover up for the systemic rage caused by colonialism (Maracle, 1996, p. 12). She states that “we fight against each other with a fierceness we have not shown since our forefathers’ early resistance; the anger inside has accumulated generation by generation, and because it was left to decay, it has become hatred” (Maracle, 1996, p. 12). The colonization of our minds and hegemonic colonial powers have left many of us with hatred and anger towards ourselves and our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and subsequently, a hatred towards the practice of our culture. Monture-Angus (1999) reiterates this conclusion, claiming that the most recent form of colonization is enacted internally as individuals and as a collective (p. 75). She claims that this is the most damaging aspect of colonialism because of the “invisibility of the colonizer,” which makes it even more difficult to eradicate (Monture-Angus, 1999, p. 75) She notes that there are very few individuals who have succeeded in overcoming the colonization that lives in our minds (Monture-Angus, 1999, p. 75). Consequently, Monture-Angus points out that the bickering and hatred amongst Indigenous peoples is not a fault of our own, but a fault of the Canadian political system that created this hatred intentionally for “it is much too easy to control a people divided” (1999, p. 75). Both Maracle and Monture-Angus agree that this is a central strategy for the success of complete colonization (1996, p. 12; 1999, p. 75).

It is suspected that colonization of the mind may play a role in the decline of MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. As stated, many Indigenous peoples have adopted Western culture, rejecting some Indigenous practices as a result of colonial mindsets dictating

the superiority of Western ways of life. Consequently, the colonial mindset may lead to people refraining from participating in MS practices because of its association with Indigenous culture.

## 2.7 Cultural Resurgence

In spite of the aforementioned colonial destruction of culture and identity of many Indigenous populations by the hands of the Canadian state, Indigenous peoples are continuing to resist colonial structures and impacts, and are involved in the resurgence of traditional ways of living and culture. Consequently, it may be a possibility that some Indigenous peoples are returning to MS traditions, continuing to pass on MS related IK to younger generations.

Numerous authors have stated that there has been resurgence in traditional Indigenous culture and practices, particularly to solve contemporary problems induced by colonialism (Simpson, 2001; Alfred, 1999; Gone, 2013; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Simpson (2005) notes that Indigenous Nations throughout Turtle Island have been utilizing IK and cultural practices to live sustainably for thousands of years, stating that it is understandable that many peoples are returning to this way of life to combat contemporary problems affecting Indigenous communities (p. 143). Furthermore, Tousignant (2013), in collaboration with the works of other authors, recognizes that the return to traditional culture, including the resurgence in practices such as the Potlatch, Sundance and Sweatlodge, is a fundamental path of healing for many Indigenous peoples, especially in the prevention of suicide and alcoholism (p. 47). Consequently, it is believed that the resurgence of Indigenous culture is necessary for the healing of Indigenous peoples. Some Indigenous academics are expressing that the only way in which our indigeneity will survive is through the resurgence of our cultural practices, rejecting the many Western ways

of living we have adopted, by choice or by force (Alfred, 1991, xi). As stated by Alfred (1991), the choices we make today will affect the ability for us to survive in the future; therefore, we must follow our ways of living now, or the future generations will be lost (xi-xii). He contends that, “this path, the opposite of the one we are on now, leads to a renewed political and social life based on our traditional values (Alfred, 1999, xi-xii).” Cultural revitalization will ensue as more and more of our people begin to look to our ways of knowing and living for guidance (Simpson, 2001, p. 144).

As stated previously, MS IK and practices are deeply engrained within the culture of many Indigenous communities throughout Ontario; it is possible that MS IK is going through a period of resurgence, similar to other traditional practices, to initiate personal, communal and cultural healing. As with many cultural activities, MS practices has declined over the years, but it possible that this practice has begun to re-emerge in an effort for some to hold onto, or reclaim, part of their identity as an Indigenous person.

Alfred & Corntassel (2005) offer identifiable steps Indigenous peoples are taking towards their decolonization from the oppressive Canadian state and the reclamation of Indigenous identity (p. 612). While they acknowledge that there “are no clear and definite steps” that can be listed “for people to check off as milestones on their march to freedom,” there are directions of movement that predicate the resistance our people are now demonstrating (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 612). Specifically, they outline five “mantras of a resurgence” within Indigenous communities:

(1) *Land is Life*: our people must reconnect with the terrain and geography of their Indigenous heritage; (2) *Language is Power*: our people must recover ways of knowing



and relating from outside the mental and ideational framework of colonialism by regenerating themselves in a conceptual universe formed through Indigenous languages; (3) *Freedom is the Other Side of Fear*: our people must transcend the controlling power of the many and varied fears that colonial powers use to dominate and manipulate us into complacency and cooperation with its authorities; (4) *Decolonize your Diet*: our people must regain the self-sufficient capacity to provide our own food, clothing, shelter and medicines; and (5) *Change Happens one Warrior at a Time*: our people must reconstitute the mentoring and learning–teaching relationships that foster real and meaningful human development and community solidarity (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 613).

Accordingly, the authors claim that these mantras will be put into action in different ways, by different peoples and communities, but they do represent a collective movement towards reclaiming our Indigenous ways of life, culture and thought (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 612). Based on these five characteristics, it is possible that MS IK and practices may be in a state of resurgence by some Indigenous peoples and communities. MS practices are deeply engrained within the culture of many Indigenous peoples; therefore, if there is an increase in MS activities, it can be considered a form of cultural resurgence. The results and discussion section will further elaborate on this ‘five mantras of resurgence’ structure.

### **3. Method**

This section, broken into three main subsections, provides an overview of the research methodology that I utilized to explore the relationship between colonization and MS practices. The first subsection outlines the theoretical and methodological approach taken for this research. Second, the chosen method, ‘talks,’ similar to the Western construct of an interview, but emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge, is explored in detail. And third, the method of analysis, or ‘making-meaning,’ is presented.

#### **3.1 An Understanding of my Theoretical and Methodological Approach**

The research I have conducted follows an Indigenous methodological approach, but this has proven to be difficult within the confines of Western academia and as a result of my own Western upbringing. Throughout this research, I have come to agree with Kovach's statement that "those who attempt to fit tribal epistemology into Western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the squirm" (2010, p. 31). Inserting Indigenous methodologies into a Western academic frame has been difficult from the start of this research project. At the beginning of this journey, I started by researching and developing a basic understanding of what Indigenous methodologies actually entail. Indigenous methodologies reject essentialism and singular objective truths, which is why there is emphasis placed on the plurality of methodologies (Louis, 2007, p. 134). There are multiple different approaches and frameworks of Indigenous methodologies that are dependent on the experiences, knowledge and relations of each individual researcher (Louis, 2007, p. 134). I have shared my relationship with this research in the introduction of this research paper, which helps to provide context for the decisions I have made throughout. Indigenous methodologies provide alternative ways of thinking for Indigenous researchers, placing emphasis on research ideals and ethical processes that derive from Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing (Louis, 2007, p. 134 & Smith, 2012). As an Indigenous researcher following an Indigenous methodological framework, my approach has been based on my own experiences and relations as an Anishinaabe-Métis woman, which has informed the series of decisions I have made regarding this research on colonization, IK and MS.

Basic assumptions surrounding ontology and epistemology has been a dominant driving force behind this research. Ontologically, based on Indigenous methodologies, I believe that reality is socially constructed through all relationships that are created with the universe, which

includes the environment, the cosmos, the living and non-living (Chilisa, 2012, p. 40). Similar to the constructivist paradigm, there are multiple realities of the world that are all dependent on these relations (Wilson, 2008, p. 73). Valid knowledge (epistemology) is directly tied to ontology: knowledge is co-created through these relationships (Chilisa, 2012, p. 40). Therefore, all knowledge that is produced throughout this research is co-constructed between not only the participants and myself, but also through all other aspects of creation (Wilson, 2008, p. 73). The point of the research I have conducted is not to uncover an objective reality or truth (which does not exist), but to better understand individual experiences related to colonialism in an effort to contribute to the revitalization of Indigenous culture regarding MS.

Within some Indigenous methodologies, IK is the guiding theoretical framework (Wilson, 2008, p. 70). However, because I was raised within a predominantly Western way of life, I do not have the adequate knowledge base to be guided by IK as the main theoretical construct. Thus, this work also draws from anti-colonial theoretical lens. Simmons & Dei (2012) state that anti-colonial theory focuses on the processes of colonialism, de-colonial strategies and cultural revitalization, which can be viewed from an IK or Western perspective; it is my understanding that my experiences and social location place me somewhere in the middle of these two perspectives. Accordingly, Simmons and Dei (2012, p. 73-74) offer twelve main components of anti-colonial theory, three of which will be discussed here. First, anti-colonial theory is “about the mechanics and operations of colonial and re-colonial relations” and those implications on “processes of knowledge productions,” Indigenous identity and the “pursuit of agency and resistance” (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p. 74). Second, anti-colonial theory places emphasis on knowledge production that is beneficial in resisting colonial processes (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p.

74). And third, “‘colonial’ is understood in the sense of not simply ‘foreign or alien,’ but more profoundly as ‘imposed and dominating’” (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p. 74). These three main tenants of anti-colonial theory have guided this research, in tandem with the theoretical and practical lens of Indigenous Knowledge.

### **3.2 Method**

I refer to the method that I utilized for this research as ‘talks,’ which has been adapted from the work of Margaret Kovach (2009, p. 52). Kovach, as an established Cree academic, questioned the idea of doing interviews because in Indigenous culture, “we have discussions and talks” (2009, p. 53). Therefore, I have utilized the framework for these ‘talks,’ which follows a dialectic approach, emphasizing the co-construction of knowledge and allows for conversation between individuals outside of the realm of what would be considered a typical qualitative interview (Chilisa, 2012, p. 206; Kovach, 2009, p. 152). For example, throughout the talks, participants were able to ask me about my own experiences and knowledge, which has contributed to development of knowledge-sharing reciprocity between participants and myself. I chose this method because it allowed participants to express their experiences and knowledges within their own words, which has been noted by some Indigenous scholars as a tool for “recovering voices of the oppressed” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 24). Due to the flexible nature of these talks, principles of Indigenous oral traditions (storytelling) have been able to shine through.

Purposive sampling<sup>1</sup> was utilized for recruitment because it was required that participants meet specific criteria, which included a) identifying as Indigenous to Turtle Island, b) living within the province of Ontario, c) being above the age of 18, and d) having some knowledge base surrounding MS.<sup>2</sup> These characteristics were necessary to look for during recruitment to ensure that the knowledge produced would address the research question of this project. As a member of the Resilient Communities Research Collaborative, I had access to a database with names, phone numbers and emails of potential participants who met all criteria that have been outlined above. This research team has developed a relationship with all participants within the database for the past seven years, which is extremely important within Indigenous methodologies (Chilisa, 2012, p. 221). Consequently, even though I was unable to develop a relationship prior to each individual talk, relationships have been established by the research team throughout the years.

To generate knowledge from a variety of diverse experiences relating to the research question, I conducted seven talks throughout the province of Ontario on Turtle Island. All participants identified as Métis, Anishinaabe or Haudenosaunee. I was able to secure talks from the Northern, Central and Southern regions of Ontario, which is a limitation that will be discussed later within this paper. Four participants were male, and three were female, all varying in age. It is interesting to point out that all seven participants varied in their maple production

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<sup>1</sup> Purposive sampling “means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions” (Mason, 2002, p. 124). Participants were recruited utilizing a purposive sampling technique to ensure that participants met the criteria necessary to answer the research question.

<sup>2</sup> I have referred to participants as having a ‘knowledge base’ surrounding MS instead of simply recruiting MS producers because some participants that I talked with are no longer producing or only produced as a ‘helper’ during childhood. However, regardless of their involvement with maple production now, participants can still have a relationship with maple in some capacity, as will be discussed in the Results section of this paper.

involvement; some participants operated large commercial productions, while others were involved on the basis of cultural/familial engagements. Each talk varied in length, with the shortest being 45 minutes and the longest being 2.5 hours. I prepared questions in advance (see Appendix 2), but they were only used as prompts for participants who wanted guidance on what to discuss. Each talk was open and fluid, allowing us to have conversations and tell stories.

At the beginning of each talk, it was important for me to share my identity and relationship to the research I conducted with each participant; I expected participants to share their knowledge and identity with me, and therefore, I am expected to reciprocate in the same way. As mentioned previously, reciprocity, relationships and connection is an extremely important foundation within an Indigenous methodological framework, which is why I shared some of my story with participants.

During each talk, I took hand-written notes and used an audio-recording device to ensure that the words of participants were recorded accurately. The audio-recordings were transcribed and utilized for analysis. Following an Indigenous methodological approach, all participants were given the option of verbal or signatory ethical consent; in this case, all participants chose signatory consent. In addition, all participants were given the agency to decide if they would like to be identified within the final research results; all participants were enthusiastic to have their names and identifying features included within the final work. The participants have been given an opportunity to review this paper and have provided approval regarding how their views are presented in the document.

### 3.3 Analysis (Making-Meaning)

As mentioned previously, an anti-colonial theoretical lens has been utilized in the process of making meaning of the knowledge shared by participants. Therefore, this research predominately takes a deductive approach, which dictates that theory is developed before research is conducted, and is then modified based on the empirical results (Mason, 2002, p. 190). This approach, in conjunction with the relationship I have with the data (knowledge) and my own experiences/knowledge, shapes the overall results of this research.

All talks have been fully transcribed and have been used to code themes through electronic qualitative software, 'NVivo' NVivo, developed by QSR International. This is a computer program designed to aid in the process of coding and analyzing data that was used in the categorization of themes from the transcripts. The coding themes, presented as subtopics in the 'Results' section of this paper, were developed through continuous referencing of the original research question, the literature review and the knowledge that was shared by participants. All of the coding themes have predominantly been read interpretively, meaning that the words of the participants are considered in a broader context relating back to the literature, trends and historical occurrences (Mason, 2002, p. 149).

The method of analysis that I have explained comes predominantly from a qualitative methodological approach. As mentioned, some Indigenous researchers believe this is necessary to ensure that the larger non-Indigenous academic population accepts the research as valid (Kovach, 2010, p. 132). Within Indigenous methodologies, it is appropriate to code and categorize knowledge, as Indigenous peoples have been doing within their daily lives for

centuries (Kovach, 2010, p. 130). However, this knowledge was location, nation and ecosystem specific and was never applied to entire populations (Kovach, 2010, p. 130). Therefore, the information I have coded and presented in the Results section is not and cannot be generalized to represent the experiences of all Indigenous peoples who have/had a relationship with MS.

## 4. Results

The following section provides a summary of the results accumulated from all seven talks. These results are broken down into four main components: (1) colonial acts affecting MS practices, including residential schools, introduction to reserve land, the *Indian Act* and modern colonial practices; (2) consequences of colonialism in relation to MS practices, including environmental destruction, health problems, racism and issues related to capitalism; (3) the impact of colonization of the mind on MS practices, which includes themes related to overall reliance on Western ways living, the capitalized mindset and shame/negativity associated with Indigeneity, and finally; (4) optimism surrounding the revitalization of MS practices within Indigenous communities.

### 4.1 Colonial Acts Affecting MS Practices

As will be explored below, direct colonial acts have had an extremely negative impact on MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. The following section provides an overview of results in relation to the impact of colonial acts on MS practices including residential schools, the introduction of reserve lands, the stipulations found within the *Indian Act* and the impact of current colonial processes.



#### 4.1.1 Residential Schools

During each talk, all seven participants shared very similar viewpoints about the ways in which residential schools impacted MS practices amongst families, communities and the Indigenous population as a whole. One of the main outcomes of residential schools in relation to MS practices is the loss of IK experienced by the children who attended. As stated by all seven participants, MS knowledge is predominantly shared through direct experience during childhood; the children that attended residential schools missed crucial years and time periods in which MS knowledge and practice is shared with the younger generations. Therefore, residential schools caused a disconnect in knowledge transmission, resulting in a decline in MS practices amongst some families and communities. As stated by Jen Mt Pleasant, from the Tuscarora Nation of the Haudenosaunee, and similarly echoed by all other participants,

[...] We did have a lot of children that attended residential schools and it wasn't a positive impact on them. Whereas, if they got to stay home, they would have been taught more traditional things, like language, and knowledge, and ways of living, like maple syrup. And when they were taken away to the schools, they were taught more how to live a Western way of life. And they lost their language, their culture, which includes maple syrup.

Most children who were raised by the residential school system were not taught the traditions and culture surrounding MS practices, which would have predominantly been shared during childhood. Mélanie Smits, a Métis resident of Northern Ontario, echoed a similar point, stating that children missed the years in which they should have been taught about MS practices by their parents and grandparents; residential schools taught only Western ways of living, not only refusing to teach Indigenous traditions, but also punishing children who displayed any connection to their heritage. As a result, Mélanie believes that MS practices, along with most other cultural practices, were lost amongst thousands of children due to the residential school system.

In addition to children losing the opportunities to learn about MS because of their placement within residential schools, participants also mentioned the repercussions children faced upon their return home. Five participants spoke about how children often felt ashamed, scared and/or reluctant to practice any cultural activities, including MS practices, upon the return to their community. Mélanie Smits discussed how alienated children felt when they did return home, a lot of the time not able to understand the language, customs or beliefs of their community, which included the practices surrounding MS. Chris Chomyshyn, an Anishinaabe resident of the Wasauksing First Nation Reserve, echoed this statement, asserting that children within residential schools had their Indigenous culture “beaten out of them; residential schools basically messed people up and tore them apart from their cultural traditions, which had an impact on maple syrup.” Chris went on to say that, “they [the children] probably didn’t want to have anything to do with it [MS practices] because they were basically having the Indian beat out of them.” Therefore, not only did children miss the cultural teachings of MS shared during childhood, but many also came home in a state of reluctance to practice and/or learn traditions due to the cultural shame instilled within them in residential schools and/or the sense of personal disconnect to their community. Laura Pegahmagabow, also an Anishinaabe resident of Wasauksing First Nation, pointed out that children were scared to practice their culture, which included participating in MS practices: “They’ve scared people, they’ve taken it right out of them. They’re scared to be Anishinaabe, Mohawk or Cree.” Laura spoke about how residential schools created shame amongst Indigenous children, creating disconnect with their community and with the maplebush, which is an important cultural practice amongst the Anishinaabe. As a result, even when children returned home, it was often the case that they did not want to learn or

participate in maple practices. The shame, fear and reluctance surrounding Indigenous culture will be discussed in further detail in the third theme of the Results section relating to the colonization of the mind.

Three participants pointed out the intergenerational effects of residential schools on MS practices; when survivors are grown and have their own children, they are unable to share MS knowledge and practice with them due to their own lack of experience and exposure as a result of their upbringing in residential schools. Danny Deleary, Pottawatomi-Algonquin-Anishinaabek resident of Walpole Island First Nation, questioned how parents can pass on cultural teachings and practices when they personally never had those experiences:

It plays into the fact that children who were raised in the residential school systems did not know how to be parents themselves. Why? Because they never had parents. So how would they know how to harvest? How would they know how to plant their gardens? How would they know how to make maple syrup? All those things are missing.

Moreover, even if survivors did hold the knowledge of MS practices from before their attendance in residential schools, it is unlikely that the knowledge would be shared due to the aforementioned shame, fear and reluctance to associate with Indigenous culture. Therefore, not only have MS practices been disrupted for children who attended residential school, but it has also been disrupted for their children, their children's' children, and so on. As Danny mentioned, the intergenerational effect continues to this day.

On another interesting note, Charles Restoule, Anishinaabe Elder of the Dokis First Nation, mentioned how his community was able to hold onto traditions and culture for a longer period of time after settler arrival because of their secluded geographical location. He talked about how his Mothers' reserve was targeted for sending children to residential schools because

of its proximity to the highway and railway, resulting in a quicker loss of culture: “My Moms’ reserve was on the Lake Nipissing which had a TransCanada highway, plus a rail line. So, it was a lot more accessible to the ones that were taking kids and putting them in residential schools. So, our reserve, because we are so far out, they didn’t come to pick up the kids.” Therefore, many of the children of the Dokis Reserve, including Charles himself, were spared from the experience of attending residential schools and as a direct result, Charles believes that his community was able to hold onto MS practices longer than those reserves directly targeted for residential school enrolment. However, as will be discussed later, MS practices within Charles’ community have decreased substantially for other reasons.

As presented, residential schools have had a very clear impact on MS practices in multiple different ways and continue to do so to this day through intergenerational effects. As a direct result of residential schools, many children, families and communities have not only missed the necessary IK teachings and practice surrounding MS, but many are also reluctant to continue with MS practices due to the shame associated with their Indigenous culture.

#### **4.1.2 Introduction of Reserve Lands**

The introduction of reserve land has also negatively impacted MS practices amongst Indigenous peoples throughout Ontario. Four participants spoke about how the reserve system sanctioned off parcels of land, forcing Indigenous peoples to stay within new boundaries. Oftentimes, these boundaries were outside of traditional territories, which can include sugarbushes. Chris pointed out that Indigenous peoples did not get to choose the land in which they would move to: “You’re limited to a certain amount of land which was not your choice.

They never had a choice – a lot of people must think that First Nations people picked where their reserves were. It's not like that at all.” Chris went on to say that in many situations, Indigenous communities lost access to their traditional sugarbushes with the introduction of reserves. Mélanie reiterated a similar statement, noting that maple trees are usually outside of designated reserve lands, which makes it difficult for community members to participate in maple activities. In addition, it is difficult to gain permission to go onto Public Lands to access a sugarbush. Along the same lines, Jen stated that on her home reserve, “there are many residents who do not have access to land where they could tap trees,” which causes difficulty in maintaining MS practices and traditions. Similarly, Laura mentioned that reserve lands changed the MS culture because, “they [the Canadian state] took away the concept of open air. Open fields to go and gather. The bush to make sugar.” As stated by these four participants, it is clear that the introduction of reserve lands has created difficulty in maintaining MS IK and practices due to the restricted access to sugarbushes.

Charles pointed out another way in which the introduction of reserve lands has challenged MS practices. Charles personally left his reserve community to move to a metropolitan area to pursue an education, a career and eventually, a family, noting that it was too difficult to partake in these life goals while living on the reserve. When Charles moved away, he stopped participating in MS practices, stating that the traditions “slowly faded away.” Charles pointed out that this phenomenon is quite common within reserve communities amongst youth today, which is detrimental to all cultural practices, including MS. Youth continue to move from isolated reserves to metropolitan areas to pursue education and careers, creating disconnect between youth and their Indigenous culture. It was not until Charles retired and move back home

to his reserve community that he began participating in MS practices once again. As this trend continues, an increasing number of youth from reserve lands are alienated from their ability to participate in maple practices.

#### 4.1.3 The *Indian Act*

All seven participants agreed that the *Indian Act* made MS practices difficult to maintain due to the level of control and stipulated legalities. As mentioned by numerous participants, the Act controlled every aspect of Indigenous life, affecting the transmission of knowledge and practices to younger generations. When discussing the *Indian Act* in relation to MS practices with Laura, she exclaimed, “Yeah, the *Indian Act* changed maple practices! How would anyone else like to have someone tell you what you can and can’t do? And who is this Indian Agent telling us what to do?” Laura went on to say that as an Indigenous person, you had to ask the Indian Agent for permission to do everything, and requests were often denied. Danny provided a similar viewpoint, pointing out that Indigenous peoples were, and are, forced to seek permission from the Canadian state to do anything, which did, and does, impact the ability to maintain maple practices. Charles also stated that the Act has made MS practices difficult to continue due to the numerous legalities and measures of control. Along similar lines, Chris outlined how under the *Indian Act*, almost everything was made illegal, including the sale of MS: “it seems as though anything can be illegal if you read through it thick enough.” He concluded his thoughts with pondering how that reality ever existed, stating that the decline in MS practices is understandable given the laws found within the Act. Bill Morrison, Métis resident of central Ontario and councillor of the Métis Credit River Council, reiterated parallel thoughts regarding the *Indian Act*:

Did it [*Indian Act*] interfere with maple syrup production? It interfered with every damn thing. So it wasn't just, we didn't go out and tap trees, we weren't allowed to do anything. We weren't even allowed to say, "Yeah that's who I am." We weren't allowed to speak. We weren't allowed to have any tradition. I never knew why we never went to reserve, we weren't allowed to. And you look at it, and you know, yeah colonization probably had something to do with that. And to look back now and to go "oh my god." Yes, it affected maple syrup.

MS practices were clearly impacted by the strict rules and regulations found within the *Indian Act* for these individuals and their families/communities.

Mélanie discussed how the *Indian Act* outlawed all cultural practices, which included MS practices. She stated that while making MS was not outlawed, the ceremonies surrounding MS were, creating countless decades of lost traditions amongst many families and communities:

When I think of colonization impacts altogether on many practices or traditions for Indigenous people – I think maple syrup is one of them where colonization obviously impacted it. Looking back on history, a lot of things were outlawed. Maple syrup was not outlawed, but so many things were around maple syrup practice was outlawed. In making maple syrup, when I think of my ancestors or other people's ancestors – ceremony was part of that. Because ceremony was part of everyday life, and everything you do. So ceremony was outlawed and that obviously impacted maple syrup production.

Mélanie went on to question if this is the reason why she was not taught ceremony by her grandparents when she learned to produce MS as a child. While Mélanie was taught everything she needed to know about how to physically produce MS, her grandparents left out all ceremonial aspects, which she believes may be because of their history of being forced to hide Indigenous practices due to fear and further stigmatization: "It wasn't that they hated who they were, but that society hated them, and so they had to survive. So they had to let things go, like ceremonies, to survive." Mélanie is now learning about MS ceremonies from Indigenous Elders to ensure that she has the knowledge to pass down to her children.

As stated above by multiple participants, the *Indian Act* has had a very clear impact on MS practices amongst Indigenous families and communities. The controlling laws and stipulations found within the Act made it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to continue many MS practices. As stated by Jen, the *Indian Act* created segregation, isolation and disconnect to culture, including MS, because of the laws governing all aspects of everyday life.

#### 4.1.4 Continuing Government Control

A couple of participants wanted to point out that government control did not end with amendments to the *Indian Act*, but is still continuing to this day, with impacts on MS practices. Jen pointed out that when individuals discuss colonization, they refer to it as a historical process, inferring that the period of colonization has ended. However, Jen believes that colonization is continuing to this day, undoubtedly affecting MS practices, just as it has in the past:

I would definitely say continued colonialism – when we think of colonialism or colonization, we think of the *Indian Act* or we think of residential schools; We think of things that happened in the past and how that affects Indigenous people today, when in fact colonization and colonialism is still taking place, and we don't even realize it.

Jen stated that government control of Indigenous populations has been an ongoing process, continuing to this day, which restricts the ability to maintain many traditions, including MS practices.

Danny pointed out the control that the government holds over Indigenous peoples through colonial institutions like Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada (INAC, now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC). He discussed how it is required that Indigenous peoples ask for permission for many actions, including MS production, depending on where the land is located throughout the province. To Danny, this is a continued



form of colonization: “I have become fearful because I see so many of our people engaging in that system.” Danny advocates for all Indigenous peoples to practice political autonomy by refusing to participate in the colonial structures of the Canadian state:

If someone were to say to me, did you ask for permission to make maple, I would say “what for?” I am a sovereign person, operating in a sovereign cultural practice that has been initiated for thousands of years by my people. Why and who should I ask permission to? The Creator? Sure. Anyone else? No. That would always be my response – why would I ask for permission? But because of the colonial process, many people think that way. “Did we clear that through INAC?” Why would we? Colonization of the mind, thinking that we have to ask for permission. I will never ask for permission to do a cultural practice.

Danny reiterated that ones’ ability to practice traditional culture, including MS practices, is impeded by the current Canadian colonial structure of governance. Therefore, Danny advocates for Indigenous peoples to practice sovereignty to ensure the survival and celebration of Indigenous culture.

As stated by these two individuals, continued colonization and government control remains as an important factor that impacts practices surrounding MS. According to both Jen and Danny, colonization is not just a historical phenomenon, but also an ongoing process that will continue into the future unless Indigenous peoples take a stand. Accordingly, MS practices continue to be negatively affected by the continued colonization of this land.

## **4.2 Consequences of Colonialism**

In addition to the impacts of direct acts of colonialism on MS practices, all seven participants agreed that the ongoing consequences of these direct acts are also impacting MS practices to this day. These ongoing consequences of colonialism include issues related to

capitalism, environmental degradation, racism and the overall poor health of Indigenous populations.

#### 4.2.1 Capitalism vs. Culture

According to three participants, the capitalist system that has been established on Turtle Island since colonization has impaired the ability of many Indigenous peoples to participate in cultural activities, including MS practices. Danny explained his decision of homeschooling his children, stating that it is important that they learn how to be Anishinaabe by practicing their Indigenous culture, including caring for the sugarbush and other MS activities. Danny wishes that he was able to stay home with his children fulltime to pass on traditions and teachings, but he contends that the capitalist system will not allow this type of activity:

They need to know how to be Anishinaabe. So that's our first education. And so that's what I am hoping to do, and I am doing, with my children as best as possible. But at the same time, I have to bring home the bacon, per se. I have to work, so I don't get to dedicate as much time as I would like. Which is unfortunate. The society that we live in doesn't allow for cultural enrichment. It's all about capitalism. Keep the engine driving.

Danny wants to have the ability to teach his own children, and other Anishinaabe children, about their culture and ways of living, but he is confined within the colonized system of capitalism that makes this goal extremely challenging. He expressed his concern for the many Indigenous cultures and traditions, including MS practices, that are disappearing as a result of the confines of the capitalist system, leaving minimal room for cultural survival.

Mélanie shared a similar experience, expressing her frustration with the capitalist system that confines people to work eight hours a day to survive, leaving an inadequate amount of time to participate in cultural activities, including MS practices. Mélanie expressed her frustration of

working fulltime while living a fifty-minute drive from her sugarbush, stating that it becomes difficult and tiresome to continue checking the sap buckets every night. Mélanie shares the responsibilities of the bush with her family, but still feels overwhelmed. She pointed out that this is a reality for many Indigenous peoples who are trying to maintain traditions, while also survive within the Western capitalist system. Mélanie feels fortunate that she is able to continue MS practices, but is aware that there are many others who are unable to continue working in their sugarbush as a result of their employment commitments. She shared a story about an individual she knows that can only produce MS every three years because of his employment location eight hours away from his sugarbush. While he would like to participate in MS activities every year, he simply cannot because of the necessity to work throughout the maple season in order to support his family. Mélanie shared this story to demonstrate the constraints of the capitalist system, which she believes has resulted in the decline of MS practices amongst Indigenous populations.

Charles also believes that the capitalist system has a negative impact of MS practices. As stated previously, Charles has noticed that many of the youth from his reserve are leaving to pursue education and careers, as required by the capitalist system. When they leave the reserve, they no longer have the ability to participate in MS practices. Charles noted that it becomes too costly for youth who are in school and starting careers to come home during the maple season:

March break, you don't want to come back to do sugaring – you want to do your homework and make sure everything is ready for the next semester. So you lose a lot of that. I think when people start getting into careers and other activities, they don't have the ability to come back and break it all up – it's a big cost to come back to the reserve and spend that week doing sugar. Sometimes it's more than a week, it's a couple of weeks. You can't take that out of your busy lifestyle to go back. So gradually, it's slowly faded away.

Youth are forced into the capitalist system to survive, and quickly lose their ability to maintain MS practices. This very situation happened to Charles himself, who left his community at a young age and lost touch with MS practices until he returned home after his retirement. Similar to the situations that Danny and Mélanie share, Charles has noticed that cultural practices, like MS traditions, are hard to maintain under the capitalist system.

#### 4.2.2 Environmental Degradation

Three participants spoke to the exploitation of resources, specifically timber harvesting of maple forests, as a contributing factor to the decline in MS practices. Danny stated that because all ecosystems are connected, any environmental disruption is harmful to maple forests, consequently impacting maple practices. In addition to this, Danny pointed out that many maple forests have been cut down in the name of timber harvesting and capitalistic gain: “even in our own communities, we’ve cut down all of our great trees, cut down our sugar bushes, and then end up with a few dollars in the pocket.” Danny believes that this destructive behaviour has negatively impacted MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. He contends that if these trends continue, MS practices will continue to decline. Mélanie agrees with these thoughts, pointing out that MS production is declining because maple forests are disappearing: “People stopped making MS because many of the trees were cut down.” Mélanie believes that this environmental destruction is a result of colonialism and capitalism. Furthermore, Mélanie noted that pollution has also affected trees, which she believes could also be a contributing factor to the decline in MS practices. Charles also agrees that forest depletion and the destruction of ecosystems affects the ability for individuals, families and communities to produce MS: “We are struggling with loss of forest, loss of resources [...] which affects traditions.” All three

participants agree that if these Western trends continue, practices surrounding MS will become more difficult to maintain.

In addition to the exploitation of the natural environment, Laura spoke from personal experience regarding climate change and MS production, stating that the flow of sap has drastically changed over the years: “I think there’s a decrease in maple syrup. And I am going to have to say that it is because of the weather – climate change.” As a young girl, Laura recalls large metal pails being full with sap multiple times per day; now, Laura has found that a small coffee can is sufficient. She believes that this may be a contributing factor to the decline in MS practices; trees are responding negatively to the changes in the environment, which alters and delays MS processes.

#### **4.2.3 Racism**

One participant mentioned racism as a direct contributor to the decline in MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. Chris, who is a commercial producer in his communities’ sugarbush, has had a couple of instances in which he believes equipment dealers have acted in a racist manner. Chris described one situation where an equipment dealer falsely told him that an idea would be unsuccessful within his maple operation, even though Chris was positive that it would be successful. Chris believes that the dealer told him this false information in an attempt to make the community sugarbush unproductive. Chris believes that this may be a systemic issue based on settler racism towards Indigenous populations:

To this day, I don’t think many folks from the non-aboriginal population are really too keen on seeing First Nation people being successful. I kind of get that from a lot from the maple equipment suppliers. I think they really want to sell a lot of equipment, but I don’t think they want to see us do really good. I think a lot of the time, they want to see us fail.

I don't know for sure why, but I think it's engrained in culture. It is just part of the culture. But yeah, I think that's definitely what it is. So, I get the feeling that I can't totally trust the suppliers out there. I feel like they don't want to see us succeed. It might be based racism.

Chris believes that this racism is a likely contributing factor to the decline in MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. He contends that settler racism continues to be an ongoing issue, which not only has the ability to create dysfunction within current maple practices, but also has the ability to deter Indigenous peoples from producing at all. However, because Chris is the only participant who mentioned settler racism, further research into this area is required.

#### **4.2.4 Health Implications**

Mélanie pointed out that the overall health of many Indigenous peoples is very poor as a result of colonization and the introduction of unhealthy foods. Accordingly, Mélanie suggests that most individuals who are living an unhealthy lifestyle are not making healthy life choices, including MS practices: “Statistically, Indigenous health is very poor. And if you're not a healthy person, then you're not going to be practicing healthy lifestyles, like making maple syrup.” Consequently, Mélanie contends that the unhealthy lifestyle introduced by Western culture and thus, colonization, is a contributing factor to the decline in MS practices by Indigenous peoples. Jen concurs with this statement, pointing out that Indigenous peoples face high rates of obesity, diabetes and cancer, among other illnesses. Jen attributes these illnesses to the fact that Indigenous peoples are no longer practicing their traditions, including the production of MS. The situation has become a paradox: many Indigenous peoples are unhealthy because they do not practice their cultural traditions, and they do not practice their cultural traditions because they are unhealthy. Jen contends that this type of paradox is a result of colonialism and is a contributing factor as to why MS practices are declining amongst Indigenous populations.

### 4.3 Colonization of the Mind

As stated by multiple participants, colonization has also impacted the minds of Indigenous peoples, which participants often refer to as ‘colonization of the mind.’ Participants have noted that the colonization of the mind has affected MS practices in three main ways: 1) reliance on Western ways of living; 2) the repercussions of a mindset imbued with capitalist value, and 3) shame and negativity associated with Indigenous culture.

#### 4.3.1 Reliance on Western Ways of Living

Four participants pointed out that the colonization of the minds of many Indigenous peoples includes the reliance on Western ways of living, which significantly impacts MS practices within families and communities. Jen pointed out that many people within her community rely on Western food systems, creating significant changes within their culture. Jen provides an example of a family buying fast food as opposed to growing, collecting or hunting their food; this decision is less-time consuming, and is thus more appealing. Accordingly, she states that the colonized mindset is interested in instantaneous results; a predominant mindset of Western cultures. Jen points out that the colonized mindset of relying on Western foods takes “them away from learning how to do traditional cooking methods, traditional foods and stuff, like maple syrup.” She is concerned that if this colonized mind continues, more and more community members will rely on Western food systems and “a whole knowledge system around maple syrup production will be lost.” Similar to Jen’s concerns, Bill pointed out that some families and communities choose to buy MS as opposed to making it due to cheaper costs and overall ease of access. As a result, traditions are lost and knowledge transmission to younger generations halts. Many Indigenous peoples are following the Western mindset, relying on

Western production practices for instant results. Charles shared a similar concept through a personal story of his community during his youth:

When I was a kid, we used to go in the spring as soon as the water opened up, we went out to town to get supplies. We did it by boat. And then we were okay during the summertime. And then in the fall, when it started to freeze out, so we couldn't get out. The last date before the freeze up, we went out and got a huge supply of the salt and sugar and basics that we needed. So we stocked up as soon as the river started freezing up. We never had a road. Making sugar was one of the things that we did to keep going through the winter. But then we got a road. We didn't just go out in the spring and in the fall. Those big runs, you could do once a month, or a couple of times a year because we started buying the cars, and started travelling to town more and more often. It got to be a regular thing to go to town, right? So then you started buying the supplies a little more frequently. In the spring, should we make sugar this year? Well we don't really have to because we can just go to town to buy this stuff. So gradually, slowly but surely, we ended up moving away from that [making maple syrup] and that's unfortunate.

Charles' story outlines the impact of the road on his community, demonstrating the reliance that was developed on Western ways of living. His community could have continued MS practices, but the colonized mindset preferred the ease of access to the neighbouring town, now accessible through a roadway. Charles flags this as one of the many reasons as to why MS practices have substantially declined within his community.

Danny also notes that MS practices have declined as a result of the colonization of the mind in relation to reliance on Western ways of living. Danny feels that some Indigenous individuals are only interested in activities that provide instant gratification, a characteristic of Western culture. Unfortunately, MS practices require physically demanding labour over a significant amount of time; therefore, many Indigenous peoples, especially the younger generations, have stopped producing MS. Danny attributes this trend to a colonized mindset and believes that many individuals are unwilling to practice their culture of growing and collecting foods from the land because of their reliance on Western food systems. Consequently, Danny



believes that this colonized mind set, based on the reliance of Western culture, is a contributing factor in the decline of MS practices within his community, and other Indigenous communities.

#### 4.3.2 Capitalism and the Colonized Mind

According to two participants, the colonized mindset has also been imbued with capitalist values amongst some Indigenous peoples, which is detrimental to MS practices. Danny explains how in Indigenous societies, trees were only cut down when it was absolutely necessary. For example, Danny tells a story about how he wanted to make a table out of a tree on the reserve; however, he chose not to because it was not needed. He explains that this is how Anishinaabe society once functioned, which maintained the natural balance of the forest, including maple trees. However, the colonized mindset places increasing value on capitalism, dictating that the natural environment provides opportunity for economic gain: “we’ve cut down all of our great trees, cut down our sugar bushes, and then end up with a few dollars in the pocket. What is that? That’s a colonized mindset.” He goes on to say that Indigenous communities “have gone and harvested all of our good trees for MS production.” Consequently, the colonized mindset has been imbued with capitalist values amongst many Indigenous peoples, which is detrimental to MS practices.

Mélanie shares a similar viewpoint, stating that colonization has caused an altered mindset for many Indigenous peoples who now place priority on economic gains over ensuring the health of the natural environment. Similar to what Danny has said, Mélanie states that many Indigenous peoples are seeing dollar signs instead of a forest:

You shouldn’t be greedy and you shouldn’t take more than what you need. You should be grateful for what you take from nature and treat nature as your relative. Peoples minds are

colonized – I can make a profit from Mother Earth and you can't – it's sad because what are you going to do when all the trees are gone? And it's too bad that people don't understand what's right and wrong anymore. Our people's traditions and worldview are so impacted by modern day capitalist society.

Some individuals and communities have begun to make decisions that are dominated by economic interests, which can ignore other traditional values, such as maintaining the health of forests and taking only what is needed. Mélanie notes that this mindset harms MS practices because so many sugarbushes are cut down to contribute to economic gains. According to both Mélanie and Danny, this type of behavior is a strong indicator of the power of the colonized mind.

#### **4.3.3 Shame and Negativity**

According to four participants, the colonized mindset also contributes to the negativity and shame surrounding Indigenous culture, which affects MS practices. Jen discusses how sometimes the colonized mind shames those who are interested in learning about their culture: “We have that colonized mentality where we make fun of people who want to learn their language or their own culture just because we are so colonized in our own minds that we feel the need to criticize people who want to learn.” Jen points out that this type of attitude, undoubtedly created by Western ideals, impacts youth and creates shame amongst those wanting to participate in cultural activities, which can include MS practices. Another participant builds on this concept through personal experiences related to shame of Indigenous culture; while this particular participant is proud of who they are as an Indigenous person, there are some members of their family who choose to actively dismiss their Indigenous identity due to the shame associated with their culture, to the extent of falsely labeling their identity as a different ethnicity. This colonized mindset teaches Indigenous peoples to be ashamed of who they are, which deters practice in

cultural activities, including MS. Mélanie adds to this idea, mentioning that throughout her elementary school years, she refused to tell anyone of her Indigenous heritage because of embarrassment: “I never talked about being Métis in primary school because I was embarrassed because all I learned in school about my heritage was negative stereotypes, such as scalping and stuff like that. I thought to myself, I am not going to tell anybody because I didn’t associate myself with what I was taught.” The colonized mindset as a result of the Western education system made Mélanie shameful of her culture. While Mélanie continued MS practices, she fears that others may stop participating in these activities due to the shame brought on by the colonized mindset.

Laura talked about the negativity found within the minds of many that is a result of colonization, labeling this as the ‘Indian Crab Syndrome.’ Laura explained that this syndrome creates immense negativity, to the point where many Indigenous peoples can no longer be optimistic or positive with one another:

We can’t say “you’re doing a good job, I am proud of you, I am glad you are doing that.” Instead we are saying, “who got that? Where did he get that money? How did he do that? Who did he steal from?” We are so negative against each other. And I believe that’s what that colonization has done to us. Whereas before we were so open and wanting to share.

Laura stated that the Indian Crab Syndrome is a result of colonization. Accordingly, Laura has found that this syndrome has the ability to divert or discourage individuals from participating in cultural activities, such as MS practices, because of the negative energy associated with Indigenous identity.

#### **4.4 Revitalization**

Despite the topic of discussion, and the heavy implications of speaking about the effects of colonization, each participant I spoke with had a very positive outlook regarding the revitalization of MS practices. Participants conveyed optimism surrounding the resurgence of MS traditions, and are therefore keen to continue teaching youth.

#### **4.4.1 Optimism Surrounding Revitalization of MS Practices**

Throughout all seven talks, each participant mentioned their general optimism surrounding the revitalization of Indigenous culture, which includes MS practices. Even though colonization has created countless problems, hurdles and hardships, participants are optimistic about MS practices making a comeback through the reclamation by Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

Chris pointed out that his optimism surrounding MS practices is based on the influx of Indigenous peoples who want to “get back to their roots.” He said that he has noticed, “a lot of people are taking pride in their roots,” and want to return to Indigenous ways of living, which includes “sugaring and other cultural things.” He is hopeful that this resurgence in claiming identity will continue, which will contribute to an increase in MS practices. Along similar lines, Jen has also noticed reclamation of identity, which has ultimately increased MS activities within her community. She has noticed that MS workshops have been held within her community over the past couple of years, and that children have been attending sugarbushes as part of their studies. Jen noted that there is still dysfunction as a result of historical and continuing colonialism in relation to cultural practices, but she is optimistic that the current trend of discovering cultural roots and traditions will continue, resulting in the increased revitalization of

MS practices. Laura has also noticed the increased interest and participation of individuals and families within her community regarding MS. She noted that people are realizing the value of partaking in cultural practices, which has forced the “Old Indian Crab Syndrome out.” Laura is optimistic that MS activities will continue to increase within her community. Moreover, Bill is also optimistic that MS practices are continuing to increase amongst Indigenous peoples:

Am I optimistic? Yes. I guess I have become optimistic because I was one; and then I was two, and then I was six, and now I am 20 people. And now there is more coming. So, yeah I am optimistic. Just because I wasn't allowed to, because my mother and grandmother said no, doesn't mean they said no forever. They just said no then. So now, when I tell my 20 family members, yes, then yeah – there has to be an optimistic vantage. Because I was only one that was told no; And now I am telling 20 yes. And I think that's better. So yeah, I guess I live on the other side of the fence now.

Accordingly, Bill stated that his optimism surrounding an increase in MS practices is based on the simple fact that Indigenous peoples are able to participate in, and therefore teach, cultural activities without negative repercussions from the Canadian state. Essentially, Bill believes that we, as Indigenous peoples, no longer have to hide who we are and what we practice, which contributes to MS resurgence. Along similar lines, Danny is also optimistic about the resurgence of MS practices, stating that there has been an increase of MS activities within his community. He noted that this optimism is why he teaches his children: “At times, I think I can be a pessimist, but in the end I am an optimist, because that's the reason I learn these things. That's the reason why I teach my children.” Overall, Danny believes that MS production, amongst other cultural practices, will continue to increase as Indigenous peoples return to the roots of our culture. Consequently, even though colonialism has created significant declines in MS practices amongst Indigenous populations, as presented, there is much optimism shown by participants about MS cultural resurgence.

#### 4.4.2 The Importance of Teaching Youth

Based on the optimism surrounding the continuing resurgence of MS practices amongst Indigenous populations, many participants have found that teaching others is extremely important to maintain the momentum of this resurgence. During our talks, participants shared opinions, experiences and stories highlighting the importance of teaching others about MS practices. Many participants placed special emphasis on teaching youth about MS practices and culture. Charles pointed out that his job as an Elder is teaching the younger generation about cultural practices, including MS. He acknowledged that the only way these practices will survive is through the youth, which is why he is seeking youth from his community to commit to producing MS in the sugarbush located on their reserve. Similarly, Bill also believes that teaching youth is extremely important to maintain cultural practices and ceremonies. Each year, Bill has 10-20 youth come to his sugarbush to learn how to produce MS, which includes many of the spiritual components, regardless of the fact that many of the youth who come are non-Indigenous. Bill is hopeful that these youth will carry these practices onwards. Danny has also placed emphasis on the teaching of youth to ensure cultural resurgence, claiming that his focus is on the children within his family: “I will teach them what I know. And I will instil in them Anishinaabe thought, doing. That’s what I will instil in them. So at least they will have it.” Danny is hopeful that the children of his family will teach what they have learnt to their families in the future. Mélanie echoed this statement, expressing that one of the reasons she has maintained the tradition of MS practices is so she can one day teach her children: “I want this to be in my family forever. I want my (future) kids to do it, and I want their kids to teach their kids, and their kids and their kids.” Mélanie has also committed to teaching the youth within her partners’ family, who lives on a reserve in Northern Ontario and has never produced MS on a

regular basis. Mélanie believes that teaching the youth within her family will contribute to the revitalization of MS amongst Indigenous communities.

Jen and Mélanie discussed the role of formal education in regards to maintaining MS traditions. Jen pointed out that MS production and culture is included within the curriculum of some schools, including one in her community. She believes that including these practices within the formal education sector will contribute to the revitalization of MS practices because it fosters the foundation of cultural curiosity and pride within youth. Consequently, even if parents are not able to teach their children at home, they are still being taught these important practices within the education system. Jen believes that the MS curriculum should be included in all schools that have a high percentage of Indigenous children in MS producing areas to ensure that the cultural tradition of MS production continues. Mélanie echoed this sentiment, stating that:

The key lies in education. Education can be used in a very detrimental way, as we have seen with residential school, but it can be used in a good way, too. We have come a long way, education is a lot better than it was in the past. But I still think there is a long way to go. Kids need to learn hands on ways, too. Sending kids out to a maple syrup production or forests is one way to make them experience it and have those memories. It may give them the thirst to learn more, anyway. This kind of learning is holistic, which is what our children need. They will learn to respect those who make maple syrup, too.

Along the same line as Jen, Mélanie believes that MS education should be included within all education systems to ensure that youth are at least exposed to MS traditions, which may spark an interest to continue on their own and/or with their families. Mélanie has high hopes for the education system to contribute to the resurgence of MS practices.

Ultimately, as presented, it is clear that colonialism has, and is continuing to have, an impact on MS practices in an extremely negative way amongst Indigenous populations. It is

important to note that the processes that have been presented above work in tandem with one another; direct colonial acts, the impacts of direct colonial acts and the colonization of the mind are not separate occurrences, but work collaboratively to cause the damaging impacts of colonialism in general. However, this fact does not stop the dedication that these seven individuals have in relation to the resurgence of this culturally significant practice. Given the hardship, obstacles and resistance these individuals have faced, it is astounding to witness and listen to the amount of optimism and resiliency demonstrated in relation to the revitalization of MS practices. They have made it clear that MS culture is worth fighting for. As stated by Laura, “in order to know where to go in the future, you have to take some of the past with you because it helps redefine who we are; if we don’t collect that sap and share it, we’re going to lose it.” Colonialism may have created difficulties, but that will not stop these seven Indigenous people from living the way they believe they should and aiding in revitalization efforts.

## **5. Discussion**

The following section provides discussion and analysis of broader themes and overall trends in relation the results of the research conducted. The chapter is broken down into four main sections regarding the impact of colonialism on MS IK and practices: 1) the impact of direct colonial acts 2) the ongoing consequences of colonialism in the present day, 3) the repercussions of the colonized mind, and 4) the cultural resurgence of MS IK and overall culture.

### **5.1 Colonial Acts**

Discussion surrounding the impact of direct colonial acts of MS practices and IK received the most amount of attention from the seven participants I spoke with. Therefore, to



adequately analyze responses given by participants, this discussion section will be divided into four main subsections: residential schools, the *Indian Act*, introduction of reserve lands, and the overall impact of direct colonial acts on MS practices.

### 5.1.1 Residential Schools

Residential schools had a very obvious impact on MS practices. As stated in the literature, the survival of Indigenous Nations and communities depend on the transmission of vast amounts of spiritual, practical and cultural knowledge from Elders to the younger generations, predominately transmitted orally (BCAFN, et al., 2008, p. 4). As expected, all seven participants mentioned that residential schools caused a disruption in MS IK transmission to younger generations, which subsequently caused a decline in MS practices amongst Indigenous populations. Furthermore, the literature also indicates that children sent to residential schools missed cultural and spiritual teachings/practices, which then impacted the next generation, and all generations that follow (Hanson, 2009). Three participants pointed out this phenomenon in relation to MS practices, stating that intergenerational effects of residential schools have contributed to the decline in MS activities and overall culture. As stated by three participants, when individuals miss maple-related IK teachings during childhood, it is likely that their children will also miss these teachings. Therefore, intergenerational effects of residential schools are continuing to impact the prominence of MS practices today. Moreover, as stated in the literature, even when children did return home, it was unlikely that they would participate in cultural activities due to the disconnect and shame instilled within from residential school experiences (Chansonneuve, 2005, p. 5). A couple of participants echoed this reality in relation to MS practices, stating that it was unlikely that children subjected to the residential school system

would participate in MS practices because of the shame and disconnect felt towards their Indigenous community and culture.

To further support the aforementioned points, Charles points out that his community was able to maintain traditions, including MS practices, for a longer period of time in comparison to other communities that were impacted more heavily by residential school enrolment. Consequently, it can be suggested that communities that had less residential school attendees may have been able to hold onto MS related IK longer, and vice versa.

### **5.1.2 Indian Act**

As stated from countless literature sources and personal narratives, the *Indian Act* has impacted every aspect of Indigenous culture and lifestyle, so it is unsurprising that all seven participants stated that the Act has had a negative impact on MS practices. As stated by Hanson (2009), countless communities throughout the country lost cultural practices, traditions and oral histories due to the prohibition of cultural practices. The participants that partook in this study expressed their frustration with the legalities of the *Indian Act*, stating that all cultural practices were impacted, including MS. Furthermore, the *Indian Act* explicitly outlawed cultural ceremonies in 1884, which has been interpreted to include maple production ceremonies and festivals (Chretien, 2013). A couple of participants quoted this stipulation, noting that culture and IK related to MS has declined as a result. One participant even questioned if this legality is the reason as to why she was not taught the ceremonial IK aspects of MS practices, which suggests intergenerational effects of the *Indian Act*.

Consequently, the *Indian Act* has had tangible repercussions in relation to MS IK for all seven participants, not only because of the laws strictly prohibiting cultural activities (including MS), but the overall governing system in general. As stated by outside literature and the participants of this study, the Act controlled every aspect of Indigenous existence, which in turn impacted the lifestyles, actions and even thoughts of many Indigenous peoples. Accordingly, the *Indian Act* has had an extremely negative affect on MS IK and practices amongst all participants, which has undoubtedly contributed to the decline in MS practices overall.

### 5.1.3 Introduction of Reserve Land

The impact of the introduction of reserve lands on MS practices is fairly straightforward. As discussed in the literature review, reserves were introduced as a colonial technique to ensure the segregation of Indigenous populations and to secure the best land for settler communities (Hanson, 2009). As suggested by Thomas (2005), the relocation to reserve lands created geographical restrictions that dictated where sugaring activities could take place (p. 301). As a result, many Indigenous communities found themselves on reserve lands without access to traditional sugarbushes (Thomas, 2005, p. 301). Four participants of this study echoed this reality, claiming that MS practices were lost because reserve lands did not offer sugarbush access. Furthermore, as stated by one participant, access to public land to participate in MS practices is extremely difficult. Of course, MS practices declined for these reasons, resulting in the loss of MS IK.

Interestingly, Charles brought up an unexpected response regarding the contemporary issue of youth leaving their reserve communities to gain employment and/or find a spouse. As a

result, youth are unable to maintain MS practices because of the urban environment in which they move to. As stated in the literature, reserves were created to segregate Indigenous communities from settler populations, therefore many youth feel that they need to move from their reserves to urban centres for more opportunity (Hanson, 2009). Consequently, MS practices are either put on hold until they return to their reserve community (as Charles did), or are stopped completely if they decide to remain in an urban area. Charles notes that this is a growing trend amongst Indigenous youth, and is obviously impacting MS IK and practices.

#### **5.1.4 Continuing Government Control**

Continuing government control as a factor in the decline in MS IK and practices was an unexpected outcome of this research. Two individuals stated that colonialism through government control is still a current reality that impacts the ability of some Indigenous peoples to participate in MS practices. While there are no laws in the *Indian Act* or through AANDC that restrict the MS practices of Indigenous peoples in Ontario, it is understandable that the colonial government control in general is a barrier affecting many Indigenous customs. The participants talked about feeling restricted by government powers, which can have the ability to deter cultural practices. Currently, there is a shortage of literature and research available pertaining to the impact of current colonial structures in relation to MS IK and practices; consequently, it could be interesting to continue this study to speak to individuals about the ways in which current colonial practices are affecting IK and traditional practices.

#### **5.1.5 Overall Impact**

Overall, it is unsurprising that the results of this research have supported the hypothesis that direct colonial acts have impacted IK related to MS practices. The legalities found within the *Indian Act*, the introduction of reserve lands and the assimilative tactics of residential schools have all had a profound impact on Indigenous lifestyle in general, so it was also suspected that these acts of colonialism impacted MS IK and practices. The intent of the government in introducing these direct colonial acts was to assimilate Indigenous populations, which involves the erasure of IK and traditional practices, including MS production. Consequently, the colonial government did succeed in their efforts to diminish Indigenous culture and IK, as demonstrated through this case study of MS IK. As stated by these seven participants, MS practices substantially declined as a result of these direct colonial acts. It should be noted that while there has been decline in MS related practices and IK, the seven participants I spoke to are proud examples of individuals who have maintained this part of their culture. Furthermore, as will be analyzed in detail later, these seven individuals also expressed their optimism surrounding the revitalization of MS practices and IK, and other cultural practices in general. Therefore, the Canadian state may have altered MS culture, but they were not able to erase Indigenous culture completely.

## **5.2 Ongoing Colonialism Impacts**

Based on the responses of all seven participants, it is clear that the ongoing consequences of colonialism have also had an extremely negative impact on MS IK and practices amongst Indigenous populations in Ontario. These colonial consequences include the introduction of capitalism, including resource development, the deterioration of physical health amongst Indigenous populations and lastly, settler racism.

Based on the experiences of three participants, the introduction of capitalism has had detrimental effects on MS IK and practices. As stated by these three individuals, capitalism does not easily allow for participation in cultural practices, including MS production, because of the heavy demands of the dominant capitalist lifestyle. Two individuals expressed their frustration of trying to maintain MS traditions, while also ensuring that basic needs are met through the necessary participation in capitalist-Western activities. According to Mann (2000), the capitalist system has created changes amongst the Indigenous populations in relation to subsistence activities. While the literature is not specific to MS practices, capitalism did drastically alter the ability of Indigenous peoples to participate in subsistence practices because the introduction of wage economy demands that all individuals secure employment in exchange for money (Mann, 2000, p. 49). As a result of the time constraints introduced by capitalism, subsistence activities declined amongst Indigenous populations (Mann, 2000). Based on this information provided by Mann, and the experiences of the participants as outlined above, it is clear that capitalism has impacted MS practices in this regard.

Along similar lines, another individual shared his personal experience of leaving his home community to pursue an education and career, impacting his ability to produce MS. Evidently, this phenomenon is a trend amongst Indigenous youth who are seeking economic opportunities outside of their reserve communities (AANDC, 2015). As of 2006, more than half of the Indigenous population in Canada is living within urban areas, which is almost four-times higher than it was twenty-five years ago in some metropolitan areas (AANDC, 2015). Youth are forced to search for economic opportunities outside of isolated reserve communities, impacting

their ability to maintain some cultural practices. It is possible that this trend is impacting the ability to participate in MS practices, as was the situation for the one of the participants of this research.

Furthermore, it was stated by two participants that resource extraction in the name of capitalist gain is also impacting MS IK and practices, particularly timber harvesting. As identified in the literature, much of the resources required by the Canadian state to continue capitalist prosperity are on the lands of Indigenous peoples, including timber (West, 1995, p. 281). Therefore, environmental exploitation on traditional lands is commonplace within Canada (West, 1995, p. 281). As stated by two participants, destruction and exploitation of the natural environment is harming their ability to participate in MS practices. Consequently, environmental exploitation in the name of capitalist gain is impacting the MS IK and practices of some Indigenous populations.

As stated by two participants, poor health is also a consequence of direct colonial acts that impact MS IK and practices. These participants point to the fact that many Indigenous peoples are no longer practicing their culture, including subsistence activities like producing MS because they are unhealthy. Paradoxically, they are no longer healthy because they are not participating in these subsistence activities. According to the literature, Indigenous peoples living in Canada have substantially higher illness rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts, which can be linked back to a result of numerous processes of colonization (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 3). Land dispossession, lack of access to traditional economies and the inability to participate in cultural activities, amongst others, are all consequences of direct colonial acts that contribute to

the unprecedented health concerns of Indigenous populations (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 3). Because of the multiple health concerns plaguing Indigenous communities, some cultural practices, especially those that are physically demanding and time consuming like MS production, may be placed on the bottom of the priority list. Ultimately, as stated by two participants, it is possible that the numerous health problems affecting Indigenous peoples as a direct consequence of colonial acts is negatively affecting the ability for some individuals and communities to maintain MS IK and practices.

Lastly, based on the experience of one participant, settler racism may also be a contributing factor to the decline in MS practices. This participant experienced racism by settler MS equipment dealers, which he believes creates not only dysfunction within MS practices, but also has the ability to deter Indigenous peoples from producing at all. The literature states that settler racism is created by the Canadian state to maintain power structures and privileges in the hands of settler communities, which works to further marginalize Indigenous populations (Ghosh, 2010, p. 27). This individual experience may be an example of settler racism which was created by the Canadian state that works to preserve the power imbalance and sense of entitlement of settler-Canadians (Czyzewski, 2011, p. 2). However, further research is required to explore the relationship settler racism has to MS practices before any conclusions can be drawn on the overall impact settler racism has had on MS IK.

As presented, MS practices have clearly been impacted by the ongoing consequences of colonialism. While the introduction of capitalism, health impacts and settler racism were not designed specifically to further colonize Indigenous peoples, they still have a detrimental,



assimilative influence on our peoples because it impacts our ability to practice our way of life, including MS activities.

### 5.3 The Colonized Mind

As discussed by multiple participants, the colonization of the mind is a major factor in the decline of MS related IK. As stated in the literature, mind colonization/colonial hegemony takes place outside of the realm of what individuals typically perceive of as colonization, for it is usually only thought of in terms of physical and legal efforts; however, mind colonization/hegemony is attributed to the transmission of “mental habits and contents by means of social systems other than the colonial structure” (Dascal, 2009, p. 2). Throughout this research, it was stated by multiple participants that colonial mindsets have affected the prominence of MS practices within Indigenous communities. Accordingly, colonization has altered many mindsets to rely on Western ways of living, predominantly through capitalist gain, and has created shame and/or negativity towards Indigenous identity and culture.

As stated by four participants, the colonized mind based on hegemony has created a reliance on Western ways of living and has been detrimental to MS IK and practices. Two participants pointed out that many Indigenous peoples now rely on the Western food system, ignoring traditional teachings regarding food, which includes MS. It was also pointed out by other participants that buying MS and other types of sugar is much easier than personally producing it, which plays into the Western cultural reliance on instant gratification. It was also stated on numerous occasions that many Indigenous peoples have begun to think and act in terms of capitalist gain, which is a Western cultural construct. For example, one participant explained how many Indigenous peoples are interpreting the natural environment as a source of economic

gain, instead of a source of life. Consequently, while these changes may seem subtle, it is an indicator of the switch that many Indigenous peoples are making to become more involved within Western culture, thus, the colonized mindset. As succinctly stated by Green and Thomas (2007), “as a result of Eurocentric indoctrination, Indigenous people began to forego their ways of life in order to be more like the ‘superior’ others” (p. 95). Consequently, MS IK and practices are ignored as Western foods and practices become more appealing due to the colonized mindset and hegemonic power. As a result of this Westernized thinking, MS IK is ignored and practices decline. Consequently, the colonized mind has impacted, and continues to impact, MS practices amongst some Indigenous populations.

Based on the literature, shame and negativity regarding Indigenous identity and culture is also a strong characteristic of the colonized mind and hegemonic power that came up multiple times during the talks I conducted. The literature states that many Indigenous peoples will discard their Indigenous cultural practices in favour of Western culture because it is considered to be superior; the colonized mindset teaches Indigenous peoples to be shameful of who they are (Green & Thomas, 2007, p. 95). Participants echoed this reality in relation to MS practices, claiming that many Indigenous peoples feel shame towards their Indigenous culture, deterring them from participating in traditional practices, including MS practices. Furthermore, as stated in the literature, the colonized mind also creates negativity amongst Indigenous populations (Maracle, 1996, p. 12). This phenomenon is demonstrated through the reality Laura explained as the ‘Indian Crab Syndrome,’ that creates negativity amongst Indigenous peoples and within themselves. Subsequently, the colonization of our minds has left many of us with hatred and anger towards ourselves and our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and subsequently, hatred

towards the practice of our culture. This mindset, as stated by participants, contributes to the decline in MS IK and practices.

Ultimately, as demonstrated by multiple participants of this study, colonization of the mind is a substantial contributor to the decline in MS IK and practices. It should be noted that individuals do not choose to have a colonized mind, but rather, much like other colonial processes, these thoughts, practices and habits are subtly engrained within our minds through prevalence of Western culture now on Turtle Island through hegemonic power structures including the state (Stoddart, 2007). Unfortunately, as stated by Monture-Angus (1999), the most damaging aspect of the colonial mind and hegemonic power is the “invisibility of the colonizer,” which makes it even more difficult to eradicate (p. 75). However, it is important to note participants of this study are examples of individuals who are fighting back against the colonization of the mind by actively participating in their culture through MS IK and practices. These seven participants are optimistic about the resurgence of these cultural practices, which lends hope for the future regarding the continuation of MS IK, in spite of the impacts of the colonized mind.

#### **5.4 Cultural Resurgence**

As pointed out by multiple participants, many Indigenous peoples are beginning to return to their roots, partaking more in traditions and sparking a period of cultural revitalization. Accordingly, as stated within the Results section of this paper, MS IK and related practices are part of this revitalization. All participants of this study expressed their optimism surrounding the resurgence of MS practices, claiming that more individuals, families and communities are

becoming increasingly interested and/or involved in sugaring practices. Indigenous peoples are looking to their cultural practices to reclaim their identity, including MS production, amongst other cultural activities.

The literature is supportive of these findings, as many Indigenous scholars also point out that we are in a period of cultural resurgence; an increased number of Indigenous individuals and collective communities are returning their Indigenous ways of living (Simpson, 2001; Alfred, 1999; Gone, 2013; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Tousignant, 2013). While no literature exists directly pertaining to the resurgence of MS IK and practices, there are studies that exist outlining the return of other Indigenous identity components, for example, languages and healing traditions (Tousignant, 2013). According to the results of this research, MS IK and practices can be included as an activity contributing to the resurgence of Indigenous culture. It should also be pointed out that the emphasis that participants placed on the transmission of MS IK to youth is an important value of Indigenous lifestyle, and therefore can be considered as another example of cultural resurgence (Belanger, 2014).

As stated previously in the literature review, Alfred & Corntassel (2005) offer five identifiable steps many Indigenous peoples are taking towards the reclamation of Indigenous identity (p. 612). While they acknowledge that there “are no clear and definite steps” that can be listed “for people to check off as milestones on their march to freedom,” there are directions of movement that predicate the resistance our people are now demonstrating (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 612). A couple of these movements are exhibited through the actions being taken by all seven participants in relation to MS resurgence. The increase in MS practices involve, (a) the

reconnection of Indigenous peoples with the traditional lands that sustain them, as outlined by the first mantra; b) the decolonization of our diets, the fourth mantra; and c) as demonstrated by the actions of all seven participants, it is clear that MS resurgence is based on smaller acts of reclamation by individuals and families; therefore, MS revitalization supports the fifth mantra that change happens one warrior at a time (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 612). Conclusively, these seven participants are partaking in a journey of strong resistance against the processes of colonization through the reclamation of MS practices. The other two mantras discussed by Alfred and Corntassel ('resurgence of language' and 'freedom is the other side of fear') may be included in the resurgence process of MS practices, but no participants discussed these two additional concepts; further research into these ideas may be an interesting follow-up study.

Consequently, the increased interest and participation in MS IK and practices is a good example of cultural resurgence. As stated throughout this entire research paper, colonialism has had a devastating impact on MS practices and IK, but even in the face of this adversity, many Indigenous peoples are continuing to reclaim their identity through the practice of this culturally significant activity. Colonialism has created immense difficulty and hardship, but it is clear through all seven of the participants I spoke with, along with the immense amount of supporting literature by Indigenous academics, that cultural revitalization is occurring now through the increased interest and involvement of MS practices, amongst other cultural processes.

## **6. Conclusions**

The objectives of this research were:

- III. To participate in talks (similar to interviews) with Indigenous individuals to explore their understandings and experiences regarding the relationship between colonization and MS

practices.

- IV. To analyze and integrate the results to form a comprehensive understanding of the relationship that Indigenous individuals perceive to be between colonization and MS practices.

Both objectives were achieved. The research utilized MS IK and practices as a case study to demonstrate the damaging affects of colonization on Indigenous culture in Ontario. According to the seven individuals I spoke with, the decline in MS IK and practices has a very strong correlation to the colonial acts and consequences initiated by the settler nation of Canada. The knowledge and experiences that participants shared with me demonstrates that colonialism has impacted MS IK and practice in three interlocking ways: (1) through direct colonial acts, including the introduction of reserves lands, the legislation found within the *Indian Act* and the assimilate nature of residential schools; (2) the consequences of direct colonial acts, which includes the introduction of capitalism, the deterioration of the physical and mental health of many Indigenous peoples, settler racism and environmental degradation; and (3) the colonization of the minds of many Indigenous peoples, which includes reliance on Western ways of living, capitalized mindset and shame and/or negativity associated with Indigenous identity and culture. In spite of these hardships caused by colonialism, all seven participants are optimistic and are actively involved in the revitalization of MS IK and practices.

## 6.1 Limitations

The following section provides a brief description of the limitations associated with this research, including pragmatic constraints and issues related to the dominant Western framework required by post-secondary institutions. Both of these limitations undoubtedly impact the proceedings and results of this research.

### **6.1.1 Pragmatic Constraints**

Due to time and resource constraints, I was only able to speak to seven participants, all within the province of Ontario. Ideally, this research would have extended beyond settler provincial and national borders to include Indigenous communities from all MS producing areas. Furthermore, even within the confines of the province of Ontario, I was unable to secure any participants from Eastern Ontario. These geographical constraints can be considered a limitation of this research because it is likely that different locations and communities have experienced the impacts of colonialism in different ways, especially communities outside of Canada due to the different rules and legalities established within another settler nation. In addition, all seven participants I talked with were from one of three Nations: Anishinaabe, Métis or Tuscarora. Expanding the geographical reach of this research would create further opportunity for differing perspectives and experiences from numerous other Nations and communities. It should be noted that even if the parameters are expanded within future research, the experiences of each individual will always be unique, and can never be applied to the Indigenous population as a whole.

### **6.1.2 Western Framework & Personal Social Location**

Conducting research through an Indigenous methodological framework was extremely difficult to do within the confines of the expectations found within the Western academic institution from which I am working. It was challenging to categorize the knowledge that was shared by participants to fit into the stringent boxes considered to be ‘results.’ Throughout the analysis of the talks, I took note of how difficult it was to utilize quotes to provide support of an argument because participants predominantly shared their experience through more

contextualized stories, rather than more factual information. This reality rung particularly true through the knowledge shared by the Elders I had the privilege of speaking with. Therefore, the categorization of knowledge (data) through an Indigenous methodological frame can be considered as problematic and a limitation of this research. If time and space had permitted, a more appropriate strategy may have been to provide their stories in full throughout the paper, and then conclude with analysis.

As an Indigenous person who was predominantly raised within Western ways of knowing, it was difficult to navigate the realm of IK within this research. I can only speak from my own personal experience and understandings of reality, which is inherently limited in scope due to my upbringing. However, it is also important to note that regardless of who is conducting the research, different perspectives will always arise based on social location.

## **6.2 Future Research & Action**

The following paragraphs outline suggested future research and action to further advance the ideas and findings developed through this study, including the expansion of geographic limits, the further investigation of health related implications of MS resurgence, the impact of colonization on other traditional practices and the further contribution of research to the Indigenous Maple Syrup Knowledge Network (IMSKN).

### **6.2.1 Expansion of Geographic Limits**

As stated in the limitations section, it would be beneficial to conduct similar research, but expand the geographic limits to locations outside of the province of Ontario, exceeding



provincial and national borders. Experiences relating to MS IK and practices may differ depending on geographic location, especially when crossing settler national borders into the USA. This would allow for exploration of experiences and opinions of Indigenous Nations and communities outside of the province of Ontario, which may bring differing perspectives.

### **6.2.2 Health Implications of MS Resurgence**

A couple of participants within this study have outlined the health implications of producing MS, stating that those who participate in MS are inherently healthier, physically and culturally. The literature also points to the fact that Indigenous practices are being utilized for healing purposes, and have been highly successful. A continuation of this study could seek answers surrounding how MS IK and practice can be a source of healing for Indigenous peoples. Afterwards, perhaps a physical plan of action could be developed to establish a cultural healing program based on the practices surrounding MS production.

### **6.2.3 The Impact of Colonization on Other Traditional Practices**

It would be interesting to continue this study to determine the impact of colonization on other traditional food sources and activities of Indigenous peoples. For example, conduct a similar study on the impact colonization has had on the subsistence activities of trapping, hunting, fishing or the gathering of wild foods. Have these practices been impacted in a similar way? Does the capitalist system interfere with these traditions? Is the colonized mind a factor in any changes that have occurred to these practices? It can be hypothesized that colonization has had some kind of impact on these cultural traditions as it has had on MS practices, which would provide further case studies demonstrating the impact of colonial processes in general. It would

be interesting to determine if these activities are also going through a period of resurgence, similar to MS practices.

#### **6.2.4 Indigenous Maple Syrup Knowledge Network [IMSKN]**

The Resilient Communities Research Collaborative of Wilfrid Laurier University has begun the work needed to develop the ‘Indigenous Maple Syrup Knowledge Network’ (IMSKN). This network, while still in the initial planning stage, is being designed to facilitate the sharing of MS knowledge and practices amongst Indigenous populations, in hopes of further revitalization. The knowledge that has been generated throughout this research project will aid in the revitalization efforts of IMSKN, providing needed context as to why MS practices have declined throughout the years. Therefore, the research that has been conducted could be used for the planning and implementation of IMSKN.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

Overall, this research has contributed the understanding of the impacts colonization has had on Indigenous lifestyle and culture, specifically through the utilization of MS practices as a case study. As presented throughout this paper, colonization has impacted MS practices in numerous ways, but it is clear that there is an increasing resurgence in these practices, and Indigenous culture in general. The revitalization of MS IK and practices is one very powerful example of how we are beginning to resist colonial norms, rejecting Western lifestyle and rediscovering our roots. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the revitalization of MS practices by giving historical and contemporary context as to why this cultural process originally began declining amongst our people. As beautifully stated by Laura, “in order to get to the

future, we must first know our past.” I, along with the seven participants I had the privilege of speaking with, are optimistic about the resurgence of MS practices, which contributes to the overall revitalization of our cultures and our people.

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## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix 1 – Ethics Forms

#### WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FORM

##### Indigenous Knowledge and Maple Syrup: A Case Study of the Effects of Colonization in Ontario

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You are invited to participate in a research study that examines the impact of colonization on maple syrup production within Ontario.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Since the early 1900s, maple syrup production amongst Indigenous populations in Ontario have declined substantially. This study seeks to understand the reasons for this decline, particularly in relation to colonial processes.

You will be asked to participate in an interview-like-talk with the PRINCIPAL 5 investigator, Hayley Moody. This talk is very similar to an open-ended interview, except there is no set script of questions. You will simply be asked to share your opinion and experiences about the relationship (if any) between maple syrup and colonization. This talk is intended to be an open dialogue, which means Hayley Moody (researcher) will share her experiences and knowledge with you as well. In addition, you are welcome to ask Hayley any questions you may have. This talk will take approximately 2-3 hours, depending on how long you wish to speak and what you like to share.

The information you share will be collaborated with the knowledge gathered from 6-10 talks and eventually generated into a final research paper. This paper will be utilized to fulfill the requirements of Hayley Moody's graduate degree and may be published and/or presented in academic journals and/or conferences. Once the data collection and analysis is complete (Sept. 2015), a short executive summary of research findings will be mailed/emailed to you. If desired, we can send you a copy of the full report or other publications.

#### RISKS & DISCOMFORTS

There are very few foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this talk. However, experiences and knowledge relating to colonial processes such as residential schooling and assimilative legislation may arise, which can be emotionally or psychologically triggering to

some. You are encouraged to only share experiences and knowledge that you are comfortable with. In addition, you are free to discuss these topics in broad or general terms, rather than sharing personal experiences or stories. Keep in mind that you are able to stop the talk at any time.

## **BENEFITS**

The findings of this research will add to the existing literature regarding the impacts of colonization throughout Turtle Island and will hopefully aid in the process of reconciliation through the further recognition of the damage of colonial practices throughout history, and today. More specifically, the final research paper that is derived from the knowledge from the talks *may* be used as a foundation for the development of the Indigenous Maple Syrup Knowledge Network; a sharing network dedicated to the revitalization of maple syrup amongst Indigenous populations in Ontario.

## **ANONYMITY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

Unless otherwise stated, all information you provide will remain anonymous. All identifying characteristics, including your name, community affiliation and age, among others, will be omitted from the final paper. If desired, you may request that your personal identifiers (including name) be included within the final paper upon completion of the talk.

All information that you provide will remain confidential. The only individuals who will have access to all information you provide is the principle investigator, Hayley Moody, and academic advisor, Dr. Brenda Murphy. All information will be kept within Hayley Moody's locked office and drawer. All digital material will be kept on Hayley Moody's personal locked computer, within a locked file. Four months after the completion of this study (Dec. 31, 2015), all transcripts, research notes and consent forms will be thoroughly shredded to ensure your privacy. Furthermore, all audio-recordings and digital files will be securely and permanently deleted by this date.

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. You may decline to answer any questions during the talk without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of the honorarium in which you are entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any information that you have shared at any point during the talk or research process.

## **ANY QUESTIONS?**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher, Hayley Moody, at mood6240@mylaurier.ca or 519 216-2858, OR Dr. Brenda Murphy at [bmurphy@wlu.ca](mailto:bmurphy@wlu.ca) or

519.756.8228 ext.5718. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca.

**COMPENSATION**

As gratitude for your participation in this research, you will receive an honorarium of 100 dollars.

**CONSENT**

You would like the option of potentially having your direct quotes used in the final write-up. We have tentative permission to use your quotations in the final write up, subject to your prior review. \_\_\_\_\_

With your permission, we can audio-record this talk \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**UPON COMPLETION OF THE TALK:**

You would like the option of having your comments and quotations attributed to you, once you have reviewed and approved your contribution in the final write up.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY  
QUOTATION RELEASE FORM**

**Indigenous Knowledge and Maple Syrup: A Case Study of the Effects of Colonization in Ontario**

**Hayley Moody – MA Candidate**

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify participant

Re: Insert quote(s) here.....

We desire to use this/these \_\_\_\_\_ quotes for  
publication in \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify number of quotes

the following forum(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify publication(s)

\*All identifying information will be removed from the quote to protect your anonymity. The research team will not use any other quotes, without seeking additional consent. You will receive a copy of the final version of the publication.

**Consent - A**

I have reviewed the publication(s) mentioned above and consent to your use of the specified quote(s). I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Alternative Consent - B**

In the above specified publication, I wish to have my identity revealed by having my quotes attributed to me. I have reviewed the way in which my quote(s) are used in the publication(s) mentioned above and consent to your use of the specified quotes(s). I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 8.2 Appendix 2 – Prompting Question Guide

### WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY PROMPTING QUESTION GUIDE

#### **Indigenous Knowledge and Maple Syrup: A Case Study of the Effects of Colonization in Ontario**

**Hayley Moody – MA Candidate**

These questions will be used as prompts during each talk with participants. These talks closely resemble an open-ended style interview, but there is more emphasis placed on dialogue between each participant and myself. I will share my connection to the research and my own identity before each talk begins and will encourage participants to ask me questions throughout. The following questions will only be asked if the participant would like guidance on topics to discuss.

Main Research Question: To what extent has colonization impacted Indigenous Knowledge in relation to maple syrup production amongst Indigenous communities in Ontario?

#### Introductory Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself...
  - What nation/community do you affiliate yourself with?
  - Where do you live?

#### Content Questions

2. Tell me about your relationship with maple syrup production...
  - Do you collect maple sap or produce maple syrup?
    - o Why do you produce sap and syrup?
    - o Does your family produce maple syrup?
    - o How did you learn to produce maple syrup?
      - How was this knowledge passed to you?
    - o Where did you learn to produce maple syrup?
    - o Who taught you to produce maple syrup?
    - o Have you taught anyone how to produce maple syrup?
    - o What practices are important to you when producing sap and syrup?
      - Are there any ceremonies you practice in relation to sap and syrup production?
  - Who do you know that produces maple syrup?
    - o Did past generations of your family produce maple syrup?
    - o Do others in your community produce maple syrup?
  - Is there any information or knowledge that you would like to help support your maple practices?

3. To your knowledge, has sap collection and maple syrup production increased, decreased or changed over the years? (Within your family? Within your community?)
- If yes, please explain the changes
  - Why do you think these changes have occurred?
4. For the following questions feel free to talk about personal experiences OR in general terms...
- Do you think residential schools have led to changes in syrup and sap production?
  - Do you think the Indian Act has played a role in the changes in syrup and sap production and practices?
  - Do you think land displacement and/or the development of reserves have led to the changes in sap and syrup production and practices?
  - What else do you think could have had, or is having an impact on sap and syrup production?
5. Are there changes that you would like to see with sap and syrup production in the future? If yes:
- What do those changes look like?
  - What do you think would need to happen to make those changes a reality?
6. Before we close, is there anything else that you would like to discuss that we have not already covered?