Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

The south slave region of the Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories of Canada is the home of the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN) (Pelly, 1996). Like many Indigenous communities across Canada, the Denesoline relationships with their ancestral lands have become increasingly more vulnerable due to ecological, and sociological changes occurring in the sub-arctic regions of Canada (Holmes et al, 2016; Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Pelly 1996). Previous studies indicate how these changes affect the livelihoods of Denesoline communities but tend to ignore the contemporary spaces wherein Denesoline livelihoods are present. This study builds upon current literature by contextualising the positive and negative aspects of ecological and social change within the experiences of LKDFN representatives participating in a multi-day travel experience. This study illuminates Denesoline livelihoods in the present through the application of Northern, Indigenous, community-based research and by illuminating the knowledge through the narratives of land users, elders, and youth involved. The study's principle aim has been to work in partnership with LKDFN representatives to document how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Situating the research problem and rationale

On the south shore of the Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories is the home of the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN) (Pelly, 1996). Łutsël K'é is a geographically remote Indigenous community home to approximately 300 people (Bennet, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). The town of Łutsël K'é exists on the traditional lands of the LKDFN and is home to many Denesoline of the South Slave region (Bennet, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). It is the natural features of this region that provide its many visitors and residents with a sense of awe and inspiration. From the sweeping vistas of forested cliff faces to the turquoise blue waters of the Great Slave Lake, Łutsël K'é is a place of beauty.

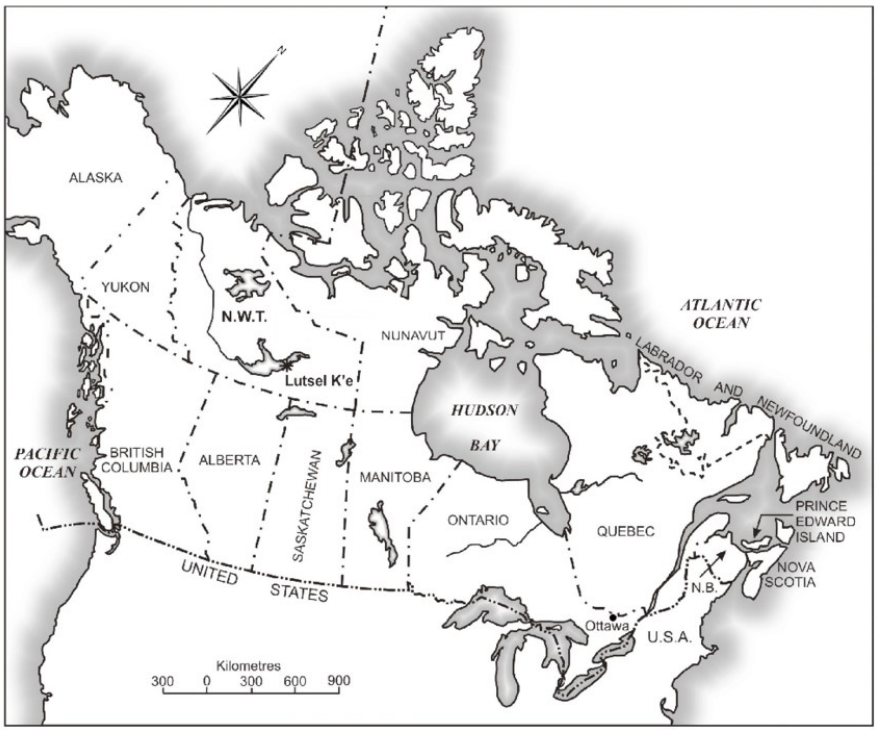

Figure 1. Map of Canada including Łutsël K'é. Soucre: Bennett (2009).

With such natural enmities, it is of no surprise that Łutsël K'é is highly visited and researched by outsiders. However, what is also on display is the changes from which the town of 300 faces due to ecological and sociological stressors. These stressors are most visible when traversing the land with LKDFN members.

As ecological and sociological change in the subarctic continue to occur cultural customs of the Denesoline are becoming more difficult to maintain as Denesoline communities are removed further from their ancestral lands (Parlee, O'Neil, & LKDFN, 2007). Like many other Indigenous communities across Canada, Denesoline relationships to the land have become increasingly more vulnerable due to ecological and social changes that have occurred in the Arctic regions (Holmes, Grimwood, King, & LKDFN, 2016; Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Pelly, 1996). Some traditional activities and lifestyles in Łutsël K'é have been removed from the entirety of their traditional lands, which spans over thousands of square kilometres of the central Canadian sub-arctic (Holmes, Grimwood, King, & LKDFN, 2016; Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Pelly, 1996). One such custom of the Denesoline of Łutsël K'é that is at risk, is that of their spiritual gathering. Desnethch'e is a spiritual gathering of the Denesoline focused on a time of healing and giving back spiritually (Bielawski & Cole, 2003; Parlee, Manseau, and Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, 2005).

The Spiritual Gathering occurs annually near the remains of the old Fort Reliance trading post (Bielawski & Cole, 2003; Parlee, Manseau, and Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, 2005), which was recently affected by massive forest fires impacting the gathering and altered a sacred landscape (Norj.ca, 2014). The damages to the land around Desnethch'e are not the first instance wherein forest fires have altered the traditional lands of the LKDFN, but the increase in frequency is a noted change by LKDFN members (Parlee, Manseau, and Łutsël K'é Dene First

Nation, 2005). Ecological changes in the north due to the effects of climate change, threaten the ecological integrity of spiritually significant areas and areas associated with the Caribou, which is fundamental to cultural survivability (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Parlee, O'neil, & LKDFN, 2007; Raffan, 1992).

The separation between Denesoline community and their ancestral lands have made cultural practices even more difficult to maintain (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Parlee, O'neil, & LKDFN, 2007; Raffan, 1992). Denesoline pedagogy and the transference of ancestral and sacred knowledge is tied directly to the land and the experiences held while on the land (Sanjayan, 2011). The loss of access to ancestral lands via ecological and or social change has thus made Denesoline pedagogy harder to maintain in its traditional practice (Sanjayan, 2011; Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Parlee, O'neil, & LKDFN, 2007; Raffan, 1992).

Aggravating the circumstances mentioned above are the ongoing explicit and implicit effects associated with colonialism (Parlee, O'neil, & LKDFN, 2007; Raffan, 1992). Subarctic Indigenous peoples of Canada, experienced broken promises, forced assimilation policies, external governance both socially and environmentally, the induction of residential school systems, land dispossession, and all sanctioned under the Canadian political agenda of economic gain and territory expansion (Ballantyne, 2014; Alfred, 2009; Sandlos, 2007). It is of no coincidence that state-centric sanctions have generated 'colonial relations' wherein Indigenous peoples have to face cultural, communication, conceptual, and political barriers before Indigenous voices will be heard in regards to the governance of ancestral lands and waters (Ballantyne, 2014; Alfred, 2009; Sandlos, 2007; Ellis, 2005; Henderson, 2000a; Henderson, 2000b;). However, steps to potentially rectifying this inequality have been made by subarctic Indigenous people. A few examples of communities having more traditional say can be seen in

the establishment of the Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve discussions and the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary and implementing governance strategies such as an 'Indigenized Visitor Code of Conduct' for visitors (Holmes, Grimwood, King, & LKDFN, 2016).

Tourism, although considered often as deviant culturally, socially, and environmentally, has made aware the potential it can have in rectifying unequal power dynamics (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Within tourism studies, there has been a shift of interest in the investigation in how tourism can be more ethically, socially, culturally, and environmentally just (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012), discuss the shifting power dynamics in associating Indigenous peoples as tourists under the Eurocentric definitions of tourism. The potential that sustainable tourism provides in the establishment of community governance incentives cannot be overlooked in the development for subarctic tourism within ancestral Indigenous lands such as Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary (Holmes et al., 2016). Furthermore, by challenging what Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012) call an "epistemic location" of tourism academia, one can begin to conceptualise the ideas of travel from non-western worldviews. Highlighting the present usage of the land by Indigenous communities in the battle against confining legislative terms that seek to make Indigenous land seem a thing of the past.

It is from the gaps in which ecological and social change has occurred in the subarctic that programs dedicated to knowledge transference and governance on ancestral lands and waters have been implemented within northern Indigenous communities (TrackingChange, n.d). It is from these initiatives like *Tracking Change* that this study has been contextualised. This study has been established by appointed community representatives of Łutsël K'é, the Wildlife, Lands,

and Environment Department (WLED) and Ni Hat'ni and in cooperation with Dr Bryan Grimwood and the University of Waterloo.

Within the broader objectives of the Tracking Change project there was an opportunity for LKDFN youth, land users, and elders to share knowledge amongst each other while on the Land. The journey to the annual Spiritual Gathering of the Denesoline of Lutsel K'e, known locally as Desnethch'e, has been identified by the community as a place of cultural, environmental, and spiritual significance. This route to Desnethch'e has been selected with consultation with LKDFN representatives to take participants via canoe from Łutsël K'é (62.4055° N, 110.7369° W) to Desnethche (62.776519° N, 108.910026° W).

The trip from Łutsël K'é to Desnethch'e took approximately four days via canoe, with three canoes and one motor boat (acting as a safety boat should any emergencies occur). The trip consisted of five LKDFN youth participants, one LKDFN elder, one LKDFN land user, and the researcher. The trip left from Łutsël K'é on August 4th 2017, and we had a charter flight back to Łutsël K'é with all of our gear on August 11th, 2017. During our time at Desnethch'e, August 8th until August 11th, participants spent time interacting with the festivities of this spiritual and communal gathering. As a guest to this community, I have been invited to participate and document the ancestral knowledge transference of Denesoline land user to Denesoline youth while on ancestral lands.

The purpose of this decolonial narrative study is to record and interpret Deneoline traditional knowledge (TK) and stories transmitted during a multi-day travel experience. This study engages with the principles of community-based and Indigenous research methodologies to ensure priorities and processes are determined by community representatives, and that research outcomes have direct relevance to the LKDFN. In particular, this study aims to work with

LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods. This research aims to contribute to Northern, Indigenous, community-based research by illuminating the knowledge and the narratives of land users, elders and youth from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN).

The research questions that guided this study have been devised with LKDFN representatives from Ni Hat'ni (Dene watchers of the Land) and Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department (WLED) of Łutsël K'é. The five research questions that have been devised in collaboration with LKDFN representatives' are; what TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience? What cultural, environmental, and social changes are observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives? How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience? How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands? What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture?

1.2 Theoretical and paradigmatic position

As highlighted in the purpose statement of this study, this research will be interacting with decolonial theory and in turn thinking of alternative ways of knowing that pertain to tourism that does not privilege Western epistemologies (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Participating in decolonial theory requires academics to not understand in fullness, but acknowledge the ubiquity of colonial constructs and to question how pre-existing nations were transformed once filtered through Western constructs of knowledge (Grande, 2008; Grosfugel, 2006). Grosfoguel (2007) suggests that decolonial thinking requires one to seriously consider epistemic perspectives and

insights developed from critical thinkers from subaltern spaces and bodies. Grosfoguel's (2007) suggestion is what transitions decolonial theory from that of post-colonial theory (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Grosfoguel (2007) argues that decolonisation in its visualisation has far more reach in terms of seeking to change both the terms and content of conversations about "epistemic grounding" and moving outside of Eurocentric ways of knowing (p.212).

The agenda of decolonial processes are derived by the implementation of Indigenous epistemologies shaped by Indigenous agendas to critically engage with colonialism, imperialism, and post-coloniality at all intersections (Nakata et al., 2012; Mignolo, 2011; Mignolo, 2007; Smith, 1999). By engaging with the colonial world through counterhegemonic ideas and practices disruption can occur (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Quijano, 2007; Quijano, 2000; Smith, 1999). Within the context of this research, I myself am a white student functioning within Eurocentric or Western paradigms. However, through the partnership with the representatives of Łutsël K'é, this study tries to exist in two distinct yet collaborative constructs of knowledge. This study in itself tires to exist within an Indigenous agenda as I have been invited as a guest into the community to do this study, and this study will occur with or without my presence. Regardless of my involvement or not the community of Łutsël K'é will be conducting this study, as they did last year. However, the observations and narratives highlighted throughout this study will be interpreted through a Eurocentric vessel. Within this study, I try my best to challenge my onto-epistemological tendencies to try and begin a decolonial discourse through the collaboration with LKDFN representatives, specifically with respected Elders. While also highlighting the epistemological and ontological limitations of Eurocentric ways of knowing as they pertain to the objectives of this study through my observations and discussions with participants.

As a student, and to remain grounded within a contextual study and not become overwhelmed by the philosophical complexities of this study I aim to emphasise the value and reclamation of Indigenous voices of the LKDFN (Swadener & Mutua, 2008). Academics Swadener and Mutua (2008) state the reclamation and value of Indigenous voices as being vital blocks of a decolonial project. It is through the collaboration with the representatives of LKDFN that I have tried to anchor this study within decolonial theory. Within this study, I am using Thaman's (2003) definition of decolonisation to situate myself. Thaman (2003) defines decolonisation as "an attempt to reflect critically on the nature, scope, and processes of colonialism… particularly its impact on colonised people and their environments." (p.1). An important thing about Decolonialism is that it recognises that colonialism is not simply an act of the past, but a historical process that still maintains a modern-day legacy (Battell Lowman & Mayblin, 2011).

However, as a white southern academic, I recognise that my biases will have an impact on my interpretation of the data and stories shared. Chambers and Buzinde (2015) argue that it is from reflexivity and challenging our worldviews "situates us as active participants in an agenda of political resistance and liberation through which a decolonial project can be imagined and realised" (2015, p.12; Nakata et al., 2012). Chambers and Buzinde (2015) identify the relationship between post-colonial theory and decolonial theory as follows:

> "Decolonial theory, a view we have come to acknowledge is based on the premise that postcolonial theory has done much to open up our understanding of the normalising effects of Western ways of thinking, being and knowing. However, decolonial theorists argue that while many key postcolonial theorists have their origins in the South, they have nevertheless privileged Western epistemologies, such as postmodernism and post-structuralism, as central theoretical frameworks." (p. 6)

Through the objectives of this study and with the collaboration between the LKDFN representatives and their agenda it seemed natural to pursue a decolonial project. Furthermore, a decolonial perspective will allow me to start to unpack the colonial underpinnings enabling current struggles, but also remain aware of my potential to marginalise through research as "other". During my time within the community, the power dynamic as white outsider became quite uncomfortable. To alleviate this discomfort I relied on the wisdom of local Elders I had developed bonds with to challenge my biases. Without their knowledge this study would not be possible. To navigate this struggle, I decided that a "participatory paradigm" would work best in facilitating collaborative and transformative research.

Paradigmatically this study reflects what can be described as a participatory paradigm (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Participatory paradigm refers to the collaborative processes of multiple ways of knowing, and the co-creation of outcomes are prioritised through a participatory democratic process (Lincoln et al., 2011). This study is also inspired paradigmatically by an "Indigenist paradigm" as identified by Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) and Wilson (2008). An Indigenist paradigm focuses on collaboration with Indigenous communities in which the benefits, control, expertise, and priorities of research are geared towards the needs of Indigenous people and their communities (Tuck & Yang, 2014; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Getty, 2009; Wilson, 2008). This study has been undertaken for the agenda of the community of Łutsël K'é as opposed to being "on" or "for" them; it has been developed in partnership with LKDFN representatives. Engaging with indigenous perspectives I have focused on methodologies like narrative inquiry and CBPR that are congruent with Indigenous epistemologies that are founded in the sharing of oral narratives (Josselson, 2011; Wilson, 2008). Within a participatory paradigm, I feel my methodological approaches are well interconnected – CBPR with an

emphasis on Indigenous-driven research and narrative inquiry (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). These methodologies aid in the effort to decolonise more conventional research practices that have dominated non-Indigenous academics (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). Such conventional methodologies encourage Western academics to conduct research on rather than with Indigenous communities (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). I have tried to ensure that my guiding principles within this study focus on engaging with Indigenous perspectives, empowerment through co-learning and capacity building, collaborating with communities as equal research partners, to ensure that the Denesoline of Łutsël K'é guide and benefit from the outcomes of this study (Wilson, 2008).

This thesis presents narratives shared by LKDFN community members. I have then synthesised these narratives that hope to illuminate the contexts of ecological and sociological change, the conflict and or problems associated with change, legacies of colonialism, the systems that perpetuate the legacies of colonialism, and the prospect of challenging Eurocentric definitions of travel and tourism within a decolonial lens. This research will be used by the community to continue to fund future research opportunities (like this) focused on the broader objectives of the Tracking Change project. Overall, the process and final product of this thesis contribute to several Northern contemporary social and scholarly texts.

1.3 Thesis Overview

With a brief outline of the academic and social contexts, the theoretical and methodological approaches, and the potential contributions of this study; I will now outline this thesis by providing a chapter by chapter overview. The second chapter of this thesis will review the literature as it relates to the social and scholarly context of this study. Chapter two will provide the reader with a literary history of the study space, discuss the ecological and sociological changes NWT communities currently face, define and discuss colonialism,

decolonialism, and tourism. Finally, this section will discuss the effects of tourism and its academia in perpetuating and combating Eurocentric legacies followed by an overview of the "Tracking Change" project. Chapter three will discuss the methodological structure of this study, outlining narrative inquiry, community-based participatory research, Indigenist research principles, and how each of these practices informed my data collection and analysis. Chapter four will then provide a detailed outline of the methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter five will preface the travel experience itself from my perspective, outlining my reflection on the process of the data collection experience for this research project while in the field. Chapter six will outline the results of this study. This section includes a synthesis of analysis of narrative from the data collected in the field. The final chapter discusses the results of this study as they pertain to the broader social and scholarly contexts outlined within the previous sections. This chapter will conclude the thesis discussing the limitations of this study and identifying potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Łutsël K'é Within the Literature

On the south shore on the east arm of the Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories is where the town of Łutsël K'é is located (Pelly, 1996). Łutsël K'é is now known as the place of residence for the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN), who identify as Denesoline, and was originally known as 'Snowdrift' (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010). The naming of the town 'Snowdrift' was due to the cultural significance and geographical closeness of the Snowdrift River (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Bielawski, 1993). The name of Snowdrift remained until around 1992 when the name of the community changed it to Łutsël K'é (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Bielawski, 1993). Łutsël K'é refers to the place where the 'Lutsel' lives, which is a fish (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010; Bielawski, 1993).

Before the establishment of the Snowdrift community, the Denesoline people were a nomadic society that was known to travel the boreal and tundra ecozones of what is now known as the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (Smith, 1981). The Denesoline travelled vast distances to hunt, gather, and fish (Smith, 1981). The Snowdrift River was, and still is, a route in which is travelled for hunting, gathering, and fishing (Asfeldt & Henderson, 2010). Routes like the Snowdrift River (the river from which the community was named) and Desnethch'e were associated with the livelihood practices of the Denesoline that required the Denesoline to track the migratory paths of caribou which lead them further into the central Canadian subarctic (Smith, 1981; Gordon, 1996). The indigenous people who inhabit Łutsël K'é are the LKDFN who are the 'Denesoline' or 'Łutsël K'é Dene' (Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). Throughout this paper, I will be referring to the individuals of the LKDFN as 'Denesoline' or 'Dene' when discussing the broader context of the community. Dene is also an appropriate term (Lendrick,

Lyver, & LKDFN, 2005). However, Dene generally refers to the larger population of indigenous people differentiated by language (Lendrick, Lyver, & LKDFN, 2005).

Today, the community of Łutsël K'é is far more accessible than it once was by either boat (in the summer), snow machine (in the winter), and by air (Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). Łutsël K'é while being in a geographically remote location has a population of approximately 300 individuals (Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). Although the community may be small the size of the land the Denesoline travel, reciprocate with and learn from is vast (Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010; Ballantyne, 2014). The land of the Denesoline is sacred and essential to Dene pedagogy (Ballantyne, 2014; Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010). While the traditional lands of the Denesoline are vast, it has also begun to see changes both ecologically and socially that many members of Łutsël K'é have observed (Bennett, Lemelin, and Ellis, 2010).

Figure 2 Aerial view of Łutsël K'é. Source: www.spectacularnorthwestterritories.ca (2018).

2.2 Changes within Sub-arctic regions

It is important to note that while the Arctic and Antarctica are considered 'polar regions', there lacks a clear definition of what the Arctic or polar refer to (Viken, 2013). The term polar as we know it today is an ambiguous term referring to the southern end of the earth and the northern end of the earth (Viken, 2013; Enzenbacher, 2011). Viken (2013) argues that the term Arctic is often used as a broad generalisation to define a geographic area consisting of a large area with many communities, people, and regions. Environmental changes within sub-arctic regions have become increasingly monitored, due in part to the fragility of tundra/taiga ecozones (McBean, Alekseev, Chen, Forland, Fyfe, Groisman, King, Melling, Vose, & Whitfield, 2005). Some changes to the tundra/taiga ecozones within academia include; decreasing ice levels affecting hunting patterns of certain species, concerns of increases in methane emissions from polar ice melt, and lastly temperature increases attributed to anthropocentric climate change (McBean et al, 2005; Johannessen et al., 2004; Ford, 2004; Watson, Zinyowera, Moss, and Dokken, 1998). What tends to be overlooked within the literature is how these changes affect the populations residing in these areas, such as the Denesoline (Ford, Smit, & Wandel, 2006; Krupnik & Jolly, 2002). This section of the literature review looks at what current ecological and sociological changes are affecting the communities residing within sub-arctic regions with a specific context towards the Denesoline of Łutsël K'é.

2.2.1 Changes in wildlife distribution

Ruttan (2012) highlights during his time working in the Northwest Territories that the Caribou are special to the indigenous people. The caribou are regarded by the Dene "as gifts from the creator, which offered themselves to people as long as the hunter obeyed several spiritual and practical laws, among which respectful hunting practices and sharing of the gift were paramount" (p.92). Ruttan (2012) notes that estimated declines in migratory caribou are a

change in which many communities within the Northwest Territories are facing with grave concern. In 2009 it was documented that the Bathurst herd which was estimated to contain 100, 000 caribou in 2006 has since declined to 32, 000 as of 2009 (NWT Environment and Natural Resources, 2009). Ruttan (2012) describes the annual migration of barren ground caribou (like the Bathurst & Beverly herd) to "occupy a staggeringly large range" (p. 90) wherein they access numerous ecological regions and food sources.

Changes in the distribution of barren ground caribou and moose have been noted within the Łutsël K'é community (Parlee, Goddard, Łutsël K'é First Nation, and Smith, 2014). Parlee (2014) and colleagues highlighted changes in traditional migratory paths of barren ground caribou. Caribou have been observed moving further east from key hunting areas identified in 2000 (Parlee et al., 2014; Ruttan, 2012). While other species begin to encroach upon previous southern caribou habitat, like the white-tailed deer and moose (Parlee et al., 2014; Cluff, 2005). Furthermore, many community representatives from the LKDFN highlighted a "significant decline" in caribou populations in 2010 (Parlee et al., 2014). This phenomena is further supported by Parlee (2014) and colleagues who compare this observed decline in caribou to previous caribou harvest and meat consumption data collected in previous studies. While this portion of the paper focuses heavily on caribou, that is because caribou herds have been well documented for quite some time within the NWT. There have been noted changes in other prominent fauna of the NWT such as moose (Cluff, 2005). Moose have been identified as moving into newer northern regions and establishing themselves within these areas (Cluff, 2005).

Ruttan (2012) argues that changes to the population of caribou are associated to a multitude of anthropocentric activities like over-harvesting during the 1960's by prominent fur trading companies, growing mining practices removing winter habitat, and expanding northern

transportation corridors (ice roads like the one from Contwoyto Lake to Yellowknife) to name a few. While not all this decline can be attributed to one exact indicator either sociological or physiological, Parlee (2014) and colleagues suggest that "it seems indicative of an ecological change" (p. 57). Climate change and mineral resource extraction are two of the most common environmental concerns raised by northern communities when discussing changes in their communities and the caribou (Parlee et al., 2014; Parlee et al., 2005). Watson and colleagues (1998) note that "current bio-geographic model projections suggest that tundra and taiga/tundra ecosystems may be reduced by as much as two-thirds of their present size" (p. 7) due to increased temperatures associated with climate change. Climate change will continue to severely affect the migratory paths of caribou, and another fauna of the NWT regions as less habitat becomes available (Watson et al., 1998).

2.2.2 Climate change within sub-arctic regions of Canada

There is evidence indicating that within higher latitudes' climate change is already occurring (McBean et al., 2005). One such issue associated with climate change within sub-arctic regions of Canada is species, like white-tailed deer, venturing further into other habitats (Dawe, 2011). Deer historically have been limited in their distribution within the NWT. However, it is predicted this will change due to some variances associated to climate change (Conner, Ebinger, Blanchong, & Cross, 2008). Some of these variances, like increasing temperatures, allows species to venture further into regions associated with caribou (Conner et al., 2008). Increasing temperatures are leading to less severe winters, dispersals of many floral species via linear features, and rising deer populations in Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan (Conner et al., 2008).

Furthermore, increased temperatures associated with climate change could reduce sub-arctic ecosystems like tundra and taiga severely (Watson et al., 1998). It was projected in 1998 that loss of migratory wildfowl, mammal breeding, and forage habitats might occur within tundra/taiga regions as these ecosystems begin to disappear (Watson et al, 1998). These projections continue to affect caribou within the sub-arctic regions. Parlee (2014) and colleagues identified changes in migratory patterns, severe decreases in population size, and changes in the health of caribou (i.e. being visibly skinny) within the NWT (Parlee et al., 2014).

Changes associated with climate change in the sub-arctic regions of Canada do not only affect the fauna that exists within these regions. It has been observed and recorded by Indigenous peoples and instrumental records within sub-arctic regions of Canada that associated indicators of climate change are already affecting these regions (Krupnik & Jolly, 2002; Johannessen et al., 2004; Overland et al., 2004; Ford, 2005). Over vast areas of land within the sub-arctic regions of Canada alterations in sea-ice dynamics, changes in climate variability, increased precipitation, significant warming, and the occurrence of extremes (storms, forest fires, strong winds, and warmer weather) have been recorded (Krupnik & Jolly, 2002; Johannessen et al., 2004; Overland et al., 2004; Ford, 2005). The traditional landscapes of the NWT and other sub-arctic regions of Canada are being changed rapidly due to the effects of climate change (Krupnik & Jolly, 2002). Future climate change is predicted to be more intense and experienced earlier within the polar regions (Holland & Blitz, 2003; Kattsov and Kallen, 2005). These predicted changes are to include changes to the frequency, magnitude, and geographic distribution of climate-related events (Johannessen et al., 2004; Overland et al., 2004). These climate-related events consist of increased temperature and precipitation; reduced thickness of sea ice and permafrost; and a reduction in the number of animal species (Johannessen et al., 2005; Kattsov and Kallen, 2005).

These changes not only affect the regions but are also rapidly affecting the indigenous peoples who reside within these lands (Krupnik & Jolly, 2002; Ford, Smit, & Wandel, 2006; Ford 2005). These changes are expected to impact these indigenous communities heavily, who spend a significant amount of time on the land and have relied on livelihoods being affected by climate change (Ford & Smit, 2004).

2.3 Colonization in Sub-Arctic Canada

Discussing the entirety of colonisation of Canada and the many factors at play is far beyond the scope of this literature review. Rather this portion aims to give a basic background on how state-based geopolitical power on Sub-arctic regions of Canada were obtained and enforced. It is suggested that colonisation began with the idea of "Terra Nullis" (Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002). Terra Nullis is the ideology wherein all land is empty and that by planting crops allows one to have dominion over the land, and thus lay a stake for the property (Alfred, 2009; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002). It is of importance to note that although Indigenous peoples existed before European settlers and were using the land, there were no written records of these practices (Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002).

Indigenous peoples use oral records within their pedagogy to determine who exists where and why that is (Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002). Indigenous peoples take their identity from the land in which they reside becoming a defining feature of themselves and displaying where they are from (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O'Neil & Łutsël K'é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). In 1763 a large decline in the conflict between the British and French occurred with the ending of the Seven Year's War (Andrea et al., 2011; Goebel et al., 2008; Wynn, 2007). By 1867 Canada was given dominion over four provinces, and Canada began to become autonomous from Britain (Andrea et al., 2011; Goebel et al., 2008; Wynn, 2007). Thus

the land was needed for further expansion and settlement, and this land was obtained through the dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002). “Sedentarism” occurred when Indigenous peoples were dispossessed and forced to move into communities; the state now commonly refers to as ‘reserves’ (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009).

In the Canadian Arctic and sub-arctic, Indigenous peoples existed off a heavy meat-based diet due to the large populations of caribou and fish (Ballantyne, 2014). Once the Land surrounding the state-sanctioned reserves had been hunted dry, Dene were forced to eat a primarily European diet, which is quite counter to their traditional nomadic diet (Alfred, 2009; Ballantyne, 2014). With the loss of traditional skills following the mass deaths of generations associated with disease and settler conflict, the Dene began to become dependent on the State for sustenance (Alfred, 2009; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2007). This heavy state dependence could be associated with the direct loss of traditional Indigenous skills, and values (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Battiste, 1998; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007; Ballantyne, 2014; Fanon, 1963; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Legat, 2009; Wildcat et al, 2014). It is from the effects of sedentarism that one can begin to link the association between colonisation and state dependence of Indigenous peoples in Canada (Alfred, 2009; Coulthard, 2007; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011).

Forced sedentarism from colonisation built the framework wherein the geopolitical powers of colonialism could be further imposed on Indigenous peoples (Legat, 2009). Colonialism while a close cousin to the definition of colonisation, is not the same. To understand the difference between these two terms, the “action” of colonisation suggests the action of colonising, wherein the “ism” of colonialism demonstrates the paradigmatic legacies of that action (Legat, 2009). As Escobar (1995) highlights, the domination of Eurocentric knowledge is

expressed not through privileged proximity but rather a set of historical, geographical conditions that have been intertwined with the geopolitics of power.

2.3.1 Colonialism

Colonialism is best illuminated by Indigenous academics Alfred and Corntassel (2005) who state;

> "Indigenous peoples are just that: *Indigenous to the lands they inhabit,* in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread from Europe and other centres of empire. It is this *oppositional, placed-based existence,* along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world (p. 597)."

Colonisation is a process that thrives on the perpetuation of inequality, by enabling groups of people to be suppressed under the power and control of another group of people (Palmer, 1994). Grimwood (2015c) identifies colonialism as "an enduring relational process of subjugation and dispossession usually associated with the oppression of Indigenous people by a minority of agents exercising power, self-interest, and assumed superiority in the name of a European or American empire" (p. 86). The definition above is the framework that this study will be examining the relationships exemplified between Eurocentric/westernised pedagogies contrasting with Indigenous pedagogies.

Colonialism has been highlighted as an agent in long-lasting social, political, and economic impacts affecting the level of self-governance Indigenous peoples have in their livelihoods, resources, and traditional territory (Grimwood 2015a; Chilisa, 2012). Limiting the control and ownership of Indigenous peoples has been supported by several contemporary governments through their explicit objection to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Gray, 2009). The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples states; “Indigenous Peoples have the right to own, develop, control and use the lands and territories, including the total environment of the lands” (Gray, 2009, p. 17). Gray (2009) highlights that the objection of this stems from the use of ‘territories’, from which this term was argued to be constructed from “solely a prerogative of states” (p.18). This highlights how Eurocentric/Westernized legislation undermine Indigenous territorial rights through the monopolisation of the term territory (Gray, 2009). The uses of legislative terms silence the concept of Indigenous ownership and continue to perpetuate the hegemony that favours the state over Indigenous peoples (Gray, 2009).

The above instance is not the only way in which confining terms have been used to undermine Indigenous knowledge and land rights (Gray, 2009; Cameron, 2012). Cameron (2012) argues that the term ‘Local’ is another such confining term that restricts Indigenous peoples by geographically confining them limiting their Indigenous identity to the places in which Indigenous practices occur. This notion of ‘local’ is often resisted by Indigenous peoples as Indigenous knowledge and connections can extend far beyond the geographical bounds defining one as ‘local’ (Cameron, 2012). Indigenous peoples take their identity from the land in which they reside becoming a defining feature of themselves (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O’Neil & Łutsël K’é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). Furthermore, the perpetuation of the term ‘local’ allows for Indigenous political claims to be found as illegitimate via delimitation further enabling the dispossession of land and restricting Indigenous autonomy and governance (Cameron, 2012).

The issue that seems to be inherent when discussing colonialism is the belief that colonialism is a thing of the past, something that no longer occurs currently. As illuminated above and further emphasised by Cameron (2012); indigenous claims to territories in Canada are

under constant threat by the government and the socio-cultural discourses that perpetuate these agendas of Indigenous land transference to colonial authorities through legislation.

2.3.2 Colonialism within Sub-arctic Canada

As Kral and Idlout (2009) state ", the effects of colonialism run deep" in the Canadian Arctic (p. 315). The pervasive legacies of colonialism contribute to social issues many people in the Canadian Arctic face (Kral & Idlout, 2009; Cameron, 2012). These issues cannot be adequately addressed until their 'colonial origins' are recognised and combated (Kral & Idlout, 2009; Cameron, 2012). Colonialism within Canada's sub-arctic regions exist in many ways one of which is the constructed preservation of Western-centric or Eurocentric attitudes, and an arrogant confidence in the validity of western scientific processes and denouncing other ways of knowing (Briggs & Sharp, 2004; d'Hauteserre, 2004; McClintock, 1992; Nustad, 2001; Rattansi, 1997). One such way that these forms of pervasive state-based ideologies are what Li (2007) identifies is the 'will to improve' (p. 4). What Li (2007) is referring to is how other parties 'claim to know how others should live, knowing what is best for them, to show what they need." (p. 4). This is highlighted by the many governments, non-government, and academic institutions that still see the need to intervene and "fix" social problems that plague Northern Indigenous Peoples (Cameron, 2012). These interventions can be considered as modern-day forms of colonialism (Cameron, 2012). As Cameron argues this "will to improve" (Li, 2007) style of governance is "no less significant than more coercive, assimilative, or disciplinary modes of domination. It is an extension and modification, not a departure from, colonial forms of power" (Cameron, 2012, p.106). Many times, in which these 'interventions' cause far more harm than good, like the residential school system (Cameron, 2012).

Academia largely ignores or underrepresents the ongoing prevalence of colonialism

(Holmes et al., 2015). A large portion of current Arctic research is focused on the effects of climate change and community vulnerability, however, many of these studies fail to mention how colonialism has affected how these changes impact participants, processes, relations, and results of communities involed in these studies (Cameron, 2012). The glaring omission neglects to acknowledge the efforts of Indigenous resistance, decolonisation, and self-determination occurring in the communities of these projects (Cameron, 2012).

2.3.3 Decolonialism

Decolonisation requires us to challenge the dominant worldviews that determine our identity, and relations with others, nature, and the state to better conceptualise how colonial power perpetuates oppression (Jaramillo, 2012). Jaramillo (2012) continues that from this perspective we can begin to challenge the multitude of injustices colonialism has forced upon the dispossessed. Thaman (2003) defines decolonisation as "an attempt to reflect critically on the nature, scope, and processes of colonialism in the Pacific Islands, particularly its impact on colonised people and their environments" (p. 1). Two important things to note within Thaman's (2003) work is that the author recognises the 'Pacific" as western-defined geographic space, and the studies of the 'Pacific' are grounded in Western perspectives. Highlighting the pervasiveness of Westernized 'truths' that have become ingrained within Pacific studies, pushing Indigenous knowledge as 'other' (Thaman, 2003).

The process to begin uprooting the perverseness' of Westernized 'truths' Sunburg (2014) argues begins with decolonising geography and the definitions that perpetuate colonialism. Sunburg (2014) illuminates that by "locating the self, learning to learn and *walking with*" (p.41) we can move towards decolonising geography. The idea of "walking with" introduces the idea of taking time to reflect on our onto/epistemological assumptions, how they situate within current

power relations and begin an effort to 'unlearn' privilege (Sunberg, 2014). Sunburg (2014) notes that to "walk with" we must begin to appreciate multiplicity and begin to engage with Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies, with the intention of direct action, political engagement, and solidarity. In response to colonialism, academics begin to highlight the importance of self-determination as a reaffirmation of Indigenous rights, and resistance against the state and colonialism with the objective of autonomy (Corntassel and Bryce, 2012; de Oliveira, 2009). Of which Corntassel and Bryce (2012) identify self-determination as something that is acted upon, and not something to be negotiated or freely offered by the state. It has been noted by Corntassel and Bryce (2012) that Decolonization is an important foundation towards Indigenous autonomy and self-determination. One area of study that seems to have a muddling and complex relationship with colonialism is that of tourism.

2.4 Arctic, Indigenous, and nature-based tourism

This section aims to begin to outline the limitations of Western definitions of travel and tourism. In particular this section highlights the ways in which these terms perpetuate colonial legacies. One such term 'Arctic' tends to generalise a place that represents large areas of land in multiple countries consisting of communities, people, and regions that are unique in their way (Viken, 2013). Although there are common characteristics across Arctic environments such as extremely low temperatures, heavy snow, and phenomena like the aurora borealis and midnight sun, even these characteristics vary (Viken, 2013). These phenomena tend to attract many visitors to Arctic regions (Viken, 2013). Recently Arctic regions have become a more popular destination for travellers for several reasons (Viken, 2013; Grenier 2011). Some of the reasons for the growth of tourism consist of; improved infrastructure in the north, the economic shift from resource extraction to the service industry, and 'last chance' climate change tourism

(Grenier, 2011). Despite these variations and the uptick of popularity, Arctic tourism tends to draw on the Indigenous culture and natural dimensions for the tourism experience (Viken, 2013).

A predominant attraction of the Northwest Territories is that of the natural environment, the midnight sun, and the aurora borealis (Grenier, 2011; Hinch and Butler, 2009). While the use of natural resources is a component of the definition of nature-based tourism, the actual definition of nature-based tourism is quite contested (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). The reasoning for the contested definition of nature-based tourism lies in the sustainability of an activity (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Wherein Nature-based tourism does not necessarily need to be sustainable, but sustainable nature-based tourism, is defined as eco-tourism (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Regardless, nature-based tourists visit natural areas and participate in various outdoor activities relying on the natural resources to support the demand and expectations of tourists (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010; Wall and Mathieson, 2006). The natural resources consumed by nature-based tourists are part of the community's environment, and within Indigenous communities, their local culture is often part of the experience (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Which begins to illuminate how these definitions begin to blur as Indigenous tourism is not considered a part of the defining criteria of nature-based tourism. Indigenous tourism as defined by Hinch and Butler (2009) is "tourism activities in which Indigenous peoples are directly involved, either through control and by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction" (p.17).

Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) coined the term 'Indigenous cultural-ecological tourism' in an attempt to capture the importance of culture and environment with communities participating in nature-based tourism. 'Indigenous cultural-ecological tourism' is a comprehensive term that recognises that Indigenous peoples, their culture, and physical environment are a holistic entities

(Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). This term also illuminates the separation from westernised perspectives of compartmentalisation through accepting a holistic entity rather than separate terms (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). It also illuminates how western definitions blur and contrast when trying to envelop deeply complex nature-based relationships.

2.4.1 Tourism and colonialism

Modern tourism in itself is a perceived expression of neo-colonialism due to power disparity detailed above (Kabbani, 1986). Tourism and tourism research display power over other people and place since travel within itself is a demonstration of privilege (Grimwood 2015a; Kabbani, 1986). This idea proposed is further emphasised by those leading within tourism industries who are typically wealthy countries taking control of tourism opportunities at the expense of local communities (Brown, 2013; Wall and Mathieson, 2006). Brown (2013) argues that the exploitative similarities between tourism and colonialism are not coincidental. Brown (2013) argues that while settlers historically took over the territory and 'space' through the marginalisation of Indigenous peoples, tourists consume 'otherness' forcing tourist spaces to be designated as such and no longer available for productive use of host communities.

Through the desire for authenticity and 'otherness' tourism begins to perpetuate stereotypes associated with colonial historical understands of indigenous peoples of the host region (Palmer, 1994; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). These stereotypes and unrealistic expectations of these locations are further perpetuated through marketing promotional tools, and colonial ideologies (Palmer, 1994), further influencing the "Tourist Gaze". Urry's (1990) Tourist Gaze is the collection of pre-conceived notions that build the expectations of tourists, who then place these expectations upon the local populations when they participate in their endeavours. The Tourist Gaze emphasises how Indigenous populations are subjugated through tourism through a

hierarchy of signs and then distributes them within that hierarchy (Urry, 1990). Tourism has an association with characteristics that allude to empowerment (Urry, 1990). These characteristics identified by Urry (1990) include: tourism is an activity of leisure; to partake in tourism means one must move outside their 'normal' location with the intention to return home; things that are out of the ordinary are directly featured to the tourist gaze; and the tourist gaze creates a hierarchy through signs, and then distributes them within that hierarchy. The characteristics identified by Urry exemplify the unequal power dynamic between tourist and host, wherein Indigenous peoples are mostly recognized (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012).

Stedman (1982) recollects the legacies of these perceptions of Indigenous people that persist today. Stedman (1982) in his study of the Indigenous stereotype found first-hand accounts of Indigenous peoples defined as naked, childlike, willing to share their possessions, aloof to religion, and unconcerned about laws and personal properties. These stereotypes and expectations further influence not only the perceptions of tourists but also the host community's perception of self (Palmer, 1994). When Indigenous peoples are seen as commodities of the tourism industry through either the production of physical goods such as souvenirs, or through performing of cultural practices for monetary gains, the legacies of colonialism only seek to gain traction and continue to perpetuate the ways in which we see tourism and those seen as objects of gaze (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012; d'Hauteserre, 2011).

2.4.2 Colonialism and tourism academia

The unequal power dynamic perpetuated by the 'common' definitions and pre-conceived notions Indigenous peoples and tourism can also be further identified through the works of tourism scholars Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles (2012). Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012) discuss the impacts of tourism on Indigenous groups by not recognising Indigenous peoples as

potential tourists themselves. Within academia, Hollinshead (2012) argues that tourism studies are still colonised within two respects (As cited in Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p.5). The first respect that Hollinshead (2012) highlights is the tendency for tourism academia to be produced through the disciplines that have fed the traditional ways in which we think about tourism (As cited in Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p.5). The second being how we conceptualise tourism tends to exist within the societies that tourism scholars come from – which often is the Western world (Hollinshead, 2012 as cited in Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p.5). Chambers and Buzinde (2015) identify this phenomenon as an "epistemic location" (p. 5).

Epistemic location highlights the tendency from which some tourism scholars tend to, in their thirst for knowledge, privilege critical theoretical approaches from a Western descent to better understand tourism phenomena (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Fitznor et al., 2000). Western perspectives do indeed have a value, and that in its self is not the issue, the issue lies in the ways in which we privilege these Western perspectives and consequently hamper the legitimacy of other knowledge (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grimwood, 2015a). As Holmes (2015) and colleagues note that being mindful of the colonizing nature of tourism and the way in which the industry perpetuates unequal relations and aiming towards 'good' travel opportunities that combat against the perpetuation of unequal relations between host and traveller are an important part of being a respectful and responsible traveller. I also feel this sentiment would do well to serve researchers as well, who have their own biasis.

Definitions of "tourism" and in general the term "tourist" were developed through western paradigms. This is outlined by Viken (2013) who notes that Arctic tourism has a colonial basis in large part to the Anglo-American hegemony that has dominated the field of study since its conception. Arctic tourism tends to be characterised as 'periphery' and 'other', perpetuating

negative and patronising normative descriptions like ‘wild’ and ‘marginal’ (Viken, 2013). This unequal power dynamic can also be further identified through the works of tourism scholars, identified by Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012), as discussing the impacts of tourism on Indigenous groups but not recognising Indigenous peoples as potential tourists themselves.

As mentioned by Tucker and Akama (2009) and an important part of combating colonial legacies is through reflexivity. Engaging with reflexivity as a researcher you could enhance the meaning-making process when interacting as the researcher with your participants (Tucker & Akama, 2009). Much like many activists, scholars aiming to gather an understanding of the roles in which decolonial ways of thinking could impact academia, tourism scholars must commit themselves ideologically towards personal and social change (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Askins, 2009). It is the intent to create a different logic in the context of knowledge production in tourism rather than to seek the transformation from within the existing Westernised tourism paradigms that one can begin to decolonise tourism studies (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Escobar, 2007). For decolonisation of tourism studies to begin there needs to be a focus on cross-cultural relations, particularly subject-to-subject relationships occurring within Indigenous tourism encounters that embrace relations between stakeholders and the tourism system and move away from the commodification of cultural “others” (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; d’Hauteserre, 2014).

2.4.3 Decolonialism and tourism

Programs that focus on restoring traditional skills and values shift the meanings of being Indigenous back to an Indigenous paradigm as opposed to being compared to the white discourse (Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007). It is of importance to outline these commonly accepted descriptions of Indigenous peoples as it is within contemporary affairs that indigenous power and

presence can be contested (Alfred, 2009; Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012). In the instance of this research it feels unjust to call Indigenous peoples "tourists", however, there is justification in the discussion of shifting the power dynamic from Indigenous peoples being seen as "other" to active participants of tourism in its many confines (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Urry, 1990). Indigenous academics highlight that in restoring traditional skills and knowledge, a spiritually grounded battle against the constructs of colonisation can occur and Indigenous resurgence can begin (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard 2007).

Programs like 'Tracking Change' generate spaces where an Indigenous paradigm can be practised and with Indigenous or rather Dene pedagogy being directly counter to themes of Eurocentric ideologies power constructs associated with colonisation can be challenged (Ballantyne, 2014). It is within these spaces where Indigenous pedagogy is at the heart that Indigenous resurgence can exist (Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007; Wildcat et al., 2014). This difference between colonialism versus decolonialism lies in the difference between colonial tendencies of taking space and decolonial struggles to make space.

Indigenous resurgence as discussed by Corntassel and Bryce (2011) is "about reconnecting with homelands, cultural practices, and communities, and is centred on reclaiming, restoring, and regenerating homeland relationships" (p. 153). It is within these spaces that 'Zones of Refuge' are established and protect the Indigenous paradigm (Alfred, 2009). It is within these 'Zones of Refuge' where Indigenous pedagogy is regarded highest that these approaches towards decolonisation can be practised and engaged (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Battiste, 1998; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Zones of Refuge highlight

decolonisation through action by making space. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) argue that Indigenous pathways toward authentic actions and the struggle for freedom begin on an individual basis with people pushing back and transcending colonialism. This strength then soon reverberates through the self onto the family, the clan, community and the many relationships that form an Indigenous existence (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005).

The end goal of Indigenous resurgence is decolonisation (Alfred, 2009; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011). It is uncommon for Indigenous peoples to seek succession from the state (Corntassel & Bryce, 2011). This can be attributed to a hegemonic discourse highlighted in Coulthard's (2007) work. Indigenous academic Coulthard (2007) applied Fanon's (1963) critique of Hegel's Master-slave dialectic to highlight this discourse. Coulthard (2007) using Fanon's (1963) and Hegel's works challenges the assumption that the structure of domination that currently shapes the Indigenous-state relation in Canada can be remedied through a liberal political recognition. To de-link Eurocentric epistemologies and decolonise knowledge requires an approach outside existing disciplinary boundaries (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

Work completed by Holmes, Grimwood, King, and the LKDFN (2016) has shown steps towards what decolonial processes established in Indigenous-driven research could look. Their work aimed to incorporate the LKDFN community in establishing a "code of conduct" to be made available for tourists who are travelling along with Denesoline traditional land (Holmes et al., 2016). The code of conduct serves to "encourage tourism (and other forms of visitation) on Denesoline lands that are informed, respectful, and based on community ideals of appropriate land use practices" (Holmes et al., 2016, p.13). Although not perfect, as highlighted by the authors in highlighting the privilege in which the outside researchers (themselves) were given in decisions about the narratives and their interpretations and representation, this paper displays the

ways in which decolonial Indigenous-driven research could begin to gain footing for other academics and community governance strategies (Holmes et al., 2016). Within the context of self-governance of ancestral lands through the development of Thaidene Nene and the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, incentives like this study display how discourses that render Indigenous peoples invisible can be illuminated.

2.5 The value of traditional knowledge

In recent literature, many scholars have highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge (TK) to local livelihoods, sustainable resource management, and ecosystem conservation incentives (Berkes et al., 2000; LaRochelle & Berkes, 2003; Houde, 2007; deFreitas et al., 2015). As identified by Cámara-Leret (2014) and colleagues, Traditional knowledge consists of the past and present beliefs, traditions, practices, and views developed by Indigenous and local communities. TK is diverse, dynamic, and geographically specific typically to ancestral lands (Cámara-Leret et al., 2014). However, TK can also vary among individuals and communities (Byg & Balslev, 2004). Phillips (1994) and colleagues argue that the surrounding ecosystems determine the levels of TK as it pertains to the classification, ecology, and management of natural resources. Traditional knowledge is fundamental to the management of local resources and in providing local models of sustainable living (Turner et al., 2000).

Traditional knowledge can provide information into studying local ecological systems important to populations, and important processes that occur in spaces conventional scientific research cannot easily access (de Freitas et al., 2015). Peloquin and Berkes (2009) highlighted that Indigenous groups deploed practices that allow them to maintain complex ecological relationships with their livelihoods that are often missed by Western science-based. They attribute this to the way in wich Western science-based approaches tend to simplify and

generalize ecosystems (Peloquin & Berkes, 2009). TK is often under utilized and pushed to the fringes in favour of more western focused approaches of scientific inquiry (Cámara-Leret et al., 2014; Peloquin & Berkes, 2009).

However, recognition of TK within academic circles suggest measures to incorporate TK into sustainability science to provide a more holistic approach to sustainable management structures (Pert et al., 2015; Whyte et al., 2015). Sutherland (2014) and colleagues advocate for greater use of TK along side conventional knowledge when making decisions about biodiversity and managing natural resources. Cummings and Read (2016) further echo this sentiment in their report outlining the importance of TK in dealing with the many challenges that surround sustainable management. In particular, they note that TK is impactful in the decision making process and aids in the protecting of Indigenous livlihoods and ecological systems that humanity depend upon (Cummings & Read, 2016).

2.6 Tracking Change Project

This project and others previously mentioned are built of the work of Dr Parlee and the LKDFN community in establishing the Tracking Change project. The aim of this project outlined on the website is as follows; “The broad goal is to collaboratively document and mobilise local and traditional knowledge (LTK) about social-ecological change in the Mackenzie, Mekong and Amazon and determine its’ role in watershed governance.” (Trackingchange.ca, 2017). The partnership with the Indigenous communities of these areas has four outlined goals. They are; “to build a multi-scale, multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural network for social science research that is meaningful locally and globally”, “to build research capacity in the Mackenzie-Mekong-Amazon”, to “build networks for mobilizing knowledge relevant to the governance of the Mackenzie River Basin”, and “foster global collaboration and knowledge sharing on common

issues of watershed governance". (Trackingchange.ca, 2017). The focus is to use Traditional Knowledge and their significant insights in capturing socio-ecological changes. As outlined by Thornton and Scheer, Local Traditional Knowledge holders have significant insights, that are often discredited by external researchers and practices, about the many aspects of fish ecology such as; fish migration patterns, population dynamics, and habitat use and loss (2012).

The Tracking Change project aims to illuminate three thematic areas for each community, focusing on the sustainability of river fisheries and fishing livelihoods, meaning and well-being, and governance (Trackingchange.ca, 2017). The legacy of this project aims to provide the communities involved with practices for protecting the intellectual property rights of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge holders, the types of indicators and processes of tracking change that is unique/common to the community/landscape, and the role social media and digital technology plays in the contemporary practices of tracking change (Trackingchange.ca, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

Methodology is theory on how inquiry should begin and proceed (Schwandt, 2007). A methodology aims to situate the researcher and give structure to the study (Schwandt, 2007). The methodology highlights the strategy, the plan of action, and the processes behind the design and decisions the researcher made with their desired methods (Crotty, 1998). As highlighted in this paper I have tried to situate myself within a participatory paradigm and an Indigenst Paradigm. Within the prior portions of this paper, I have outlined my paradigmatic positioning and my theoretical approach, and it is on this basis that I have decided to move forward with the application of a methodology to this research as suggested by Berbary and Boles (2014). The purpose of this de-colonial narrative study is to record and interpret Denesoline Traditional Knowledge (TK) and stories transmitted during a multi-day travel experience. This research aims to contribute to Northern, Indigenous, community-based research by illuminating the knowledge and the narratives of land users, elders and youth from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN).

In particular, this study aims to work with LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods. This study engages the principles of community-based and Indigenous research methodologies to ensure priorities and processes are determined by community representatives, and that research outcomes have direct relevance to the LKDFN.

The five research questions that have been devised in collaboration with LKDFN representatives' Ni Hat'ni and WLED are; what TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience? What are cultural, environmental, and social changes observed

and communicated by LKDFN representatives? How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience? How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands? What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture?

These five research questions have informed the methodology chosen to guide this study. I felt it was vital to base my methodological approach on objectives of inquiry that support the needs expressed by the community and to maintain the integrity of the voices shared in this study. The methodologies used will be further explained and expanded in the following sections.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1.1 Participatory inquiry paradigm

A "participatory worldview" allows us to work in collaboration with others, facilitating a sense of belonging to a whole rather than individuals feeling disconnected (Heron & Reason, 1997). Heron and Reason (1997) further illuminate the value and purpose of the participatory paradigm within academia. Heron and Reason (1997) outline that the practical implications of participatory human inquiry promote outcomes focused on human betterment and transformation. This can be seen in not only the design and outcome of the study, which focuses on collaboration and benefit the community but also in the ability for researchers to engage with the community and facilitating training and capacity building as a focus of the research process (Heron & Reason, 1997). Methodologically, this epistemology focus on "cooperative inquiry", in which the research processes and questions are determined collaboratively (Heron & Reason, 1997). Furthermore epistemic and political participation is encouraged, meaning that the research outcome is informed by the experiential knowledge of the researcher (Heron & Reason, 1997).

While the research participants and co-researchers have the right to participate in research design, wherein there is an overlap between the researcher and participant (Heron & Reason, 1997). With a participatory paradigm focus within this study I have felt is an appropriate approach for researching within this Indigenous community as it aligns itself well with CBPR and the Indigenist principles that guide this study.

3.1.2 Community-based participatory research

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) focuses mainly on the creation of power-sharing partnerships between professional and community researchers in order to maintain these power-sharing partnerships and champion the voices of the community, co-learning, and balancing the powers of knowledge generation with direct benefit to the community involved (Israel et al, 2005; Grimwood, 2015b). CBPR is a philosophy and methodology that invites research participants as equal partners during the research process (Castleden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-any First Nation, 2008). Israel (2005) and colleagues developed a list of the foundational principles of CBPR which include, but are not limited to the following: recognizing that the community has its own identity; building on a community's strengths and resources; enabling a collaborative, power-sharing partnership during the entirety of the research process that empowers community members; encouraging co-learning and capacities for everyone involved; and balancing generation of knowledge and invention to ensure mutual benefit. The core values of each CBPR relationship and the community can vary and should be established through a collaborative discussion with those within the community at the start of the study (Israel et al., 2005).

The use of CBPR, much like narrative inquiry, has been selected as I see them as cohesive to the aims of decolonial theory and this study through its use of collaboration and

community focus as outlined above. It is vital we exemplify the importance of distancing research from being created and produced in and outsourced by legacies of colonial powers when discussing issues of coloniality and Indigenous voices (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Chambers and Buzinde (2015) recognise that it is not uncommon in tourism research to have non-Western participants to be objectified rather than being recognised as important collaborators.

As Nielsen and Wilson (2012) discuss, it is not uncommon that Indigenous peoples are recognised as "host" or "touristic other", and that research is driven predominately by the agendas of non-Indigenous researchers. Moodie (2010) identifies that CBPR is a response to conventional Indigenous research practices that traditionally subjugate the communities, rather than work with Indigenous communities. These practices traditionally used have perceived Indigenous peoples as research subjects while failing to recognise Indigenous rights (Moodie, 2010). Moodie (2010) encourages researchers to recognise that Indigenous peoples are capable of determining acceptable, relevant, and beneficial research for their communities and the appropriate process for conducting research.

As mentioned prior, this study was developed by representatives of Łutsël K'é. The two major partners of this study are the Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department (WLED) and Ni Hat'ni. Both partners are found within Łutsël K'é and personnel are determined by the Łutsël K'é Band Office. Dr Bryan Grimwood, my advisor, was reached out to by the head of the WLED Lauren King about the need for research assistance. It was shortly after this initial discussion that I became involved and would later go up to Łutsël K'é with Dr Grimwood to meet with key informants and the WLED and Ni Hat'ni and begin to flush out the objectives of this study outlined within this paper. Over a week-long period in March Bryan and I met with people from

town, talked to key informants, and began to shape the research questions guiding this study through discussions with community representatives.

Although a CBPR process is far from perfect in the move toward decolonised methodologies, the use of CBPR could be considered a step towards Indigenous-driven research. Indigenous-driven research is where Indigenous people drive the tourism research process which consists of higher Indigenous authorship and co-authorship of papers and resources (Neilsen & Wilson, 2012). The inclusion of Indigenous-driven research also highlights that Indigenous people are the end users of the research and the discussions generated are geared towards their needs (Neilsen & Wilson, 2012). It is my aim that through the use of CBPR and the collaboration with LKDFN representatives we will hopefully lead this study as a means for realising what Nielsen and Wilson (2012) have described. To maintain that collaborative process with the studies conclusion I compiled a large research report for the community to use in their Tracking Change project.

3.1.3 Indignist Paradigm and Indigenous-driven research

As discussed earlier in this paper, tourism research and the knowledge it generates is argued to still be primarily colonial due to the effects of epistemic location (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Chambers and Buzinde (2015) argue that tourism studies still fail to truly engage with Indigenous peoples and their epistemologies to co-create knowledge, rather Western epistemologies centred in ethnocentricity sustain the exploitative power dynamic focused associated with colonialism (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Chambers and Buzinde's (2015) primary focus is not of the Northern Indigenous peoples in Canada however, their analysis is still appropriate when illuminating the pervasive colonial legacies within sub-arctic regions of Canada. Globally the legacy of colonialism is very prevalent within Indigenous communities,

and the works of some researchers and practices continue to perpetuate these legacies through marginalisation and exploitation of Indigenous peoples through research (Moodie, 2010). Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) argue, however, that there have been recent attempts within tourism studies to actively include Indigenous perspectives in the research process. There have been studies focused on shifting the power dynamic away from non-Indigenous researchers and their ontological practices to combat the legacy of colonialism and its focused exclusion of Indigenous peoples (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009).

Within this study, I have tried to use an Indigenous-driven research approach by focusing on objectives of participation, collaboration, and empowerment (Nielsen & Wilson, 2012). Furthermore, this approach promotes a decolonising research objective that encourages Indigenous peoples to maintain their voice and to determine the purpose, process, and outcomes of the research (Nielsen & Wilson, 2012). Indigenous-driven research focuses on the concerns about the lives of Indigenous people through the encouragement of engagement from an empowered and self-aware perspective (Nielsen & Wilson, 2012). These approaches typically resonate with an Indigenist Paradigm (Nielsen & Wilson, 2012).

An Indigenist paradigm is a framework that provides the researcher with a valuable perspective for Indigenous research and contributes to culturally and contextually specific research objectives (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Nielsen & Wilson, 2012). Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) argue that when using an Indigenist paradigm for a foundation of inquiry in Indigenous communities, it is not possible for non-Indigenous people to maintain power over the nature and focus of Indigenous research. Rather, an Indigenist paradigm forces the researcher to undertake a collaborative manner when possible and to engage with Indigenous perspectives during data collection and its analysis (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). An Indigenist paradigm is appropriate

within this study I feel as it also illuminates the capacity and capability that the Indigenous community of Łutsël K'é already possess. An Indigenist paradigm encourages the decolonisation of research through building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

I feel it is important to note that Indigenous communities of the North are heterogeneous, with different cultural practices and values (Grimwood & Fennell, 2011). This requires the researcher to be aware of the diverse cultural values, and that the objectives of this study be representative of these values (Grimwood & Fennell, 2011) . For this purpose, I felt it imperative to focus on a collaborative research process with as much community involvement as possible.

3.1.4 Narrative inquiry

The methodology guiding the framework of this study is that of narrative inquiry. Chase (2011) defined narrative inquiry as " revolving around an interest in life experiences as narrated by those who live them" (p. 421). Although narrative inquiry focuses on life experiences, it can also "honour people's stories as data that can stand on their own as a pure description of experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). Patton (2002) would further argue that stories shared by persons offer readers the chance to view cultural and social meanings through a translucent window. In summation narrative inquiry "seeks to understand how individuals, who reconfigure their life experiences as stories, represent themselves and other social actors in their accounts, and co-construct the communities in which they belong" (Glover, 2003, P.152).

Narrative inquiry is focused on capturing detailed and contextualised stories and texts about the lives or life of either an individual or a small group (Chase, 2011; McCormack, 2004; Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). One such goal of narrative inquiry is to highlight individual's narratives and their importance in the contributions towards

knowledge within the larger culture (Chase, 2011; McCormack, 2004; Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005). Rather than a focus on fact and accuracy, narratives adjust the researcher to focus on how the story has been told with an emphasis on what was or was not said, the characters involved, the events, and how the narrator organises and understands their story (Josselson, 2011). Narratives can produce or illuminate the contributions of knowledge of a culture through the understandings of self, others, and the environment (McCormack, 2004; Riessman, 2005; Riessman, 2008). Narratives are not only oral, but they can also be a written story about a specific event, a significant aspect of a person's life, or the entirety of one's life (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004). Attention is given to the content of the narrative and the structure (Josselson, 2011). For this study, I have used narrative inquiry to illuminate the encounters and stories as they relate to the Great Slave Lake/Desnethch'e area.

Narrative inquiry has the potential to place the researcher in a position wherein they can be a platform, not a voice, from which participants can express their narratives (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004; Patton & Bass, 2002). Some of the goals of narrative inquiry are to display or illuminate the importance of individual narratives and the roles they play within the socio-cultural make-up of the environment around them (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004). Narrative inquiry is not interested in the highlighting of dominant truths (Chase, 2011; Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004; Patton & Bass, 2002). Since the aim of this research places the importance of narratives over the understanding of the social fabric of the world, narrative inquiry is a fair fit (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004). Narrative inquiry, when used appropriately, can align within Indigenous pedagogy that is structured around narrative and storytelling (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012).

3.1.5 Analysis of narrative

Analysis of narrative is similar to other more traditional qualitative data analysis techniques (Glover, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysis of narrative involves the researcher to deconstruct participant's stories into collections of themes and then examining the interconnections between each narrative shared (Glover, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysis of narrative is a thematic approach towards analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Polkinghorne (1995) describes the analysis of narrative as a "result in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories, or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings" (p. 12). Analysis of narrative allows the researcher to focus specifically on the themes and elements that persist across narratives shared (Glover, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995).

Some critiques of narrative inquiry that are the audience should be made aware will be discussed in the following portion. Riessman (2005) identifies that narrative inquiry can be seen as a way to "reify the interior self, pretend to offer an 'authentic' voice – unalloyed subjective truth, and idealise individual agency" (p. 6). Narrative inquiry is also inappropriately used when applied to larger studies that use "large numbers of nameless and faceless subjects (Riessman, 2005, p.6). Riessman (2005) also identifies that "narratives do not mirror, they retract the past" (p. 6) which is an important distinction. Riessman's (2005) statement to me highlights that narratives are not direct reflections, but rather they are reflections existing through a veil of circumstances and personal experiences to become what they are when expressed (Riessman, 2008; McCormack, 2004). I feel it is important to highlight that the telling of the story is just as important as the content of the story.

3.1.6 Reflexivity

With the nature of narrative inquiry and the multiplicity in the telling and interpretation of narrative, it is important for the researcher to practice reflexivity throughout the process, recognising that the interpretations of the story are affected by the researcher (Sermijn, Devlieger, & Loots, 2008). Due to my time, although limited, being in the community and within the travel experience, I feel it is important to note the role I have played in the outcomes of this study. Journaling was an important part of the reflective process within this study. During my time in the community and on the land, I completed a journal entry every day documenting the interviews, interactions, and activities that occurred each day. These journals also outlined my personal feelings and interpretations of these activities. The daily journals were analysed alongside the data gathered to add reflexivity, but also as a tool for myself to understand my position relative to the narrator and the narrative shared, as well as the overall impact on my analysis.

During my time in the community, I tried to immerse myself, while limited to just a few weeks, within the culture being examined, and to try and expand my perspectives of those involved in the study, and those whom I consider being friends. To maintain transparency, I used reflexivity to highlight the "values and beliefs we hold that most certainly influence the research process and its outcome" (Etherington, 2007, P.601). Furthermore, Etherington (2007) notes that reflexivity within research encourages self-input. That our research can be understood beyond what we have discovered, but also the processes of discovery (Etherington, 2007). Tedlock (2005) notes that fieldwork is an ongoing connection between important experiences with an area of knowledge and thus it is situated between the interiority of autobiography and within the outskirts of cultural analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

3.2.1 Data Collection

Data collection occurred on two main sites, Łutsël K'é and the Land over seven weeks. I lived in the community of Łutsël K'é from July 1st-until August 4th. From August 4th until the 11th we were traversing ancestral waters from Łutsël K'é to Desenethche (62°46'43.7°N 108°54'46.2°W) By August 14th I was back home in Ontario. To conceptualise this portion as best I can I will be dividing this section into pre-trip, trip, and post-trip. Each section of this data collection phase has been heavily influenced by the collaboration between WLED and Ni Hat'ni. While being privileged to stay in the community, I also helped around the community when this study did not require my attention and participated in what community events that are accessible to outsiders or what I was invited to. While in the community I worked to organise most of the logistics for this research trip, collected data for the trip, helped within the WLED office while others were out, organised (with the help of a local teacher) paddling, safety, packing workshops before the trip, and information sessions. I was also invited to sit in a few band council meetings.

This study used narrative life-focus interviews, photo-elicited interviews, participant observations, reflexive research journals, and photography. During each of the three stages of this trip, the methods being implemented did differ slightly. Participants of this trip were screened by the WLED and Ni Hat'ni. Inclusion material for participants of this trip consisted of being between the ages of 16-25, living in the community, and having been selected as being "exemplary" by the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Committee and Ni Hat'ni. Other screening criteria implemented pertained to attending workshops about the trip and participating in a group elder interview as pertains to the objectives of Ni Hat'ni (but not this study).

All data used on this trip will be stored in the Łutsël K'é TK archives to be used by the community once this study has been completed. All data collected from participants may not be used without the direct consent from participants and fellow collaborators of this study the WLED and Ni Hat'ni of Łutsël K'é. While collecting data, I took analytic and procedural memos to be complimentary to the data collected process and maintaining transparency (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Bryman & Teevan, 2012; Crotty, 1998). Procedural and analytic memos will provide readers with a roadmap as to the decisions I have made while in the field and to ensure academic integrity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Bryman & Teevan, 2012; Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, data gathered from this trip has been used to write up a research report per the requirements of the Tracking Change project pursued by the LKDFN community. This initial report was written by me to be used by the community to continue to build capacity and further their research and funding for Tracking Change related programming.

3.2.2 Pre-trip; Life-focus Interviews

The first technique I used in this study was life-focus interviews with seven youth participants going on the trip. Life-focus interviews were dialogical and unstructured to allow participants to direct the details and style of their narratives (Chase, 2011; Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004). During these interviews, I engaged with the participants through active listening, and by asking clarifying questions and probes (Chase, 2011; Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 2005; McCormack, 2004). Each interview varied between 15 to 120 minutes in length. Interviews varied in length depending on how much the participant wished to share within our dialogical encounter. These interviews were proposed as a general invitation for youth participating on this trip to highlight any Denesoline narratives prior to this trip that are associated with a travel experience, highlight any cultural and or social changes in participants

post-hoc, and to get a better understanding as to where the participants are in their life (Appendix D). Each interview occurred in a public space within Łutsël K'é. During these interviews, I also took notes to highlight the time, location, participant, date, and any observable nuances performed by the participant during the interview that were not picked up by the audio recorder (i.e. body language, eye contact, vocal inflexion.) See (Figure 3). This interview was recorded on a digital audio recorder that I brought.

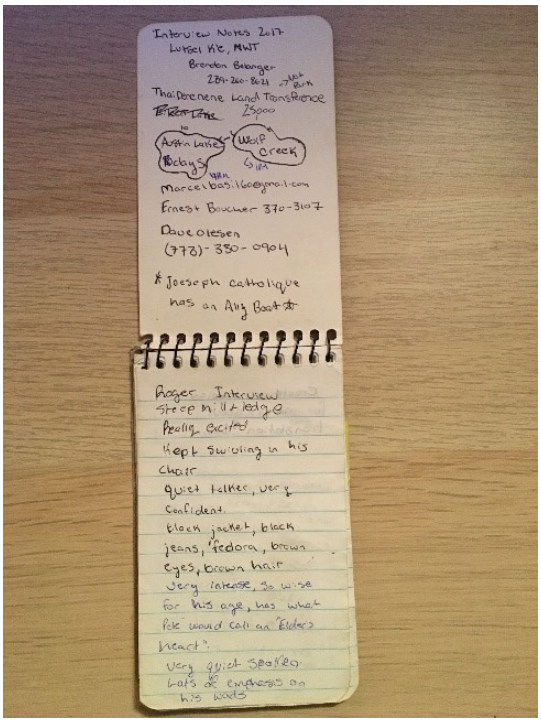

Figure 3 Sample of interview notes

To ensure confidentiality, each participant was given an 'alternative-name'. However, many participants took the opportunity to associate their names with their interviews. Each interview was digitally recorded and stored on my Personal Computer in an encrypted folder. Once each interview had been transcribed, transcriptions were provided to each participant for review and possible modification. This is to ensure that there is consistency between my

interpretations of these narratives and their telling and how the participant(s) wish to have these narratives understood or told.

3.2.3 Trip; informal interviews, participant observations, and photographs

While on the trip I used several qualitative methods consisting of informal interviews, photographs, and participant observations. Being on trip consisted of paddling along ancestral waters for four days and then staying at Desnethch'e for three days. The locations of these areas are full expanded upon in my re-collection of the trip from my reflexive journals and audio logs. This travel experience involved canoeing to Desnethch'e, setting up camp along the route to Desnethch'e, and TK transference opportunities between youth, land-user, and elder involved. Eligibility criteria as it pertained to this portion of the study were that participants were on the trip. In order to be on the trip, participants were first identified by WLED and Ni Hat'ni and adhered to the mandates placed by WLED and Ni Hat'ni. The following will go into detail of each procedure used.

Informal interviews happened on the trip and occurred at random instances that were accounted for within my daily logs. Informal interviews were used in order to gain context into instances including but not limited to traditional teachings, observed cultural, environmental, and or social change, personal experiences, and observations of interest as they pertained to the five research questions guiding this study. Informal interviews were recorded by me within my daily logs. Informal interviews were completely constructed from memory as it was not feasible to record conversations while controlling a canoe. An informal interview is the recorded conversation between one or multiple persons with their expressed consent to be recorded (Creswell, 2014). Once the recording had been completed, and the trip had been completed it was transcribed on an electronic word processing software to be analysed. While interviewing I

will also be keeping tabs of interview duration, date, location, participants involved, and other notes in a research journal kept on my person.

Photographs occurring on the trip were also taken at random times by various participants as they pertained to the five research questions guiding this study. Photographs taken on the trip were used to construct images for participants to build a photo catalogue for photo-photo-elicited interviews completed during the post-trip phase of this study. Photographs were also used to help highlight the journey. In particular, photographs helped me to observe and reflect on Łutsël K'é and its surrounding areas within the context of travel and the encounters occurring within these spaces. Bryman (2012) notes that photography, when taken in the field, allows the researcher to capture what they have observed. Bryman (2012) states that photographs "essentially become part of the researcher's field notes" (p. 115). Bryman (2012) and colleagues further emphasise that photography not only provides value as a memory aid but can also be used as sources of data to support other data and observations.

Photographs from this trip have been used within this paper and other related post-study occurrences. Photographs were taken with a smartphone camera that I brought. Photographs taken were logged for location and date to correspond with GPS locations (Appendix D) easily. Some coordinates are approximate locations as estimations on exact locations were made as our GPS was wrecked by the weather. Coordinates were gathered by orienteering locations with Eddy (the elder who was a guide on this trip) and printing them onto a Google Map print out of the area I had placed with our Sat Phone (Figure 4). Each photo was saved with a number, date, and GPS coordinate based off of the land users orienteering.

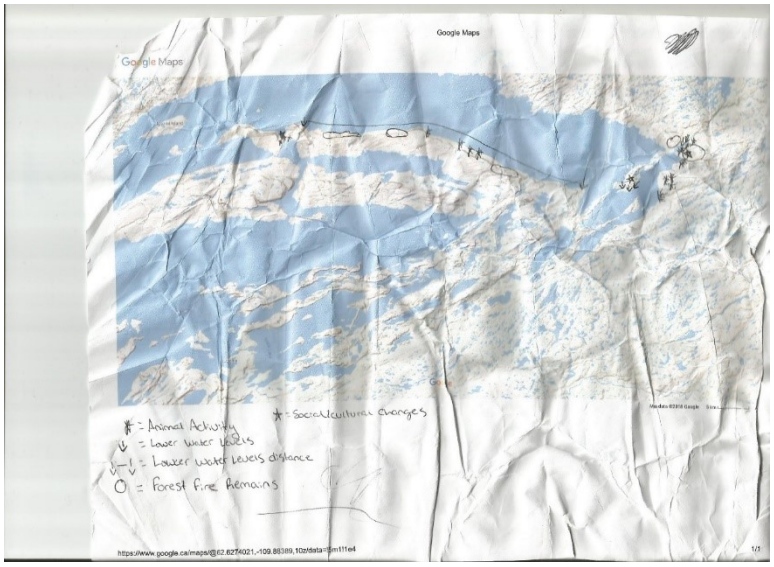

Figure 4 Trip worn map with markers for areas of interest. This map was used to generate approximate coordinates of areas of interest.

During the trip phase, participant observations were one of the larger pools of collected material, more specifically the observer as a participant (Creswell, 2014; Kawulich, 2005). Observer as a participant is the observing of an activity wherein the observer (who is the researcher) is also participating in the activity or experience (Creswell, 2014; Kawulich, 2005). Participant observations were focused on documenting and highlighting instances that pertain to the five research questions guiding this research but not limited to this criterion. Participant observations made were determined by me and informed by Creswell's (2013) "observation protocol". By adapting Creswell's (2013) protocol, I was able to focus my observations on:

1. How are participants engaging on trip/in town?
2. What factors might be shaping the way they engage with each other?
3. What perceptions do I have while I interact with the LKDFN community members/participants?
4. How do my observations compare with my initial expectations and pre-conceived notions as an outsider/visitor?

While in the field and to keep myself grounded I focused inherently on the five research questions, however certain instances where phenomena occurred that have not been accounted within the research questions were also observed and documented (Creswell, 2014; Kawulich, 2005). Each of my recordings was made at the end of each day in a reflexive journal. Documented observations were first written into a field journal carried by me using codes and acronyms known only to me to protect the confidentiality and the potential to make participants feel uncomfortable (Creswell, 2014; Kawulich, 2005). After they had been roughly recorded on pen and paper, I transferred these ideas into my digital audio recorder for later transcription (See Figure 5). The transference from pen and paper notes to digital audio recorder was me reading each daily log verbatim as written. Although this caused me extra work, it was beneficial in the long run as many of my written trip observations were damaged by the weather, but the audio recordings saved what would have been lost.

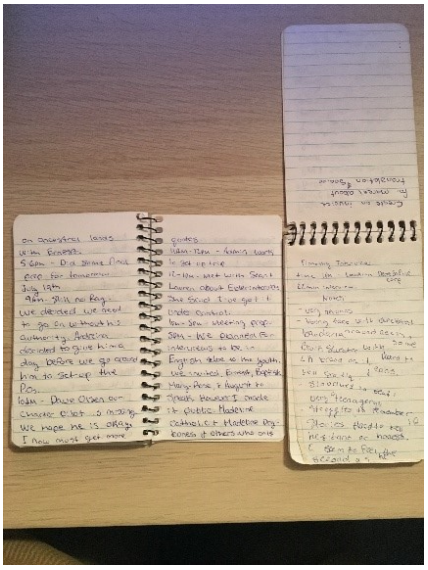

Figure 5 Sample of Informal Interview Notes & Daily Logs

Once observations had been made and transcribed they were then expanded upon in an electronic word processor to be used for analysis. Observations from audio logs were transcribed

once I had returned from the trip; this process began in late September of 2017. Expansions upon these observations pertained to observer comments and illustrations of areas. This processes occurred in late December of 2017. Observations were expanded twice but written thrice. First field notes which they were recorded via audio recordings, then into a larger field journal for expanded field notes, and then finally transcribed onto an electronic word processing software. This three-stage procedure was used because I did not have the luxury of devices wherein I could transcribe this information immediately, while I was on the trip. I also made several copies of each observation to protect them from elemental damages (i.e. re-read personal reflexive journals into my audio recorder).

3.2.4 Post-trip; photo-elicited interviews

The post-trip portion of this study focused on photo-elicited interviews and a celebration of achievements for the community and youth. Photo elicitation is defined as the use of photographs and other visual media to generate verbal discussion (Glaw et al., 2017; Thomas 2009). Within this study, Photo-elicited interviews displayed a collection of photos from the trip and are asked participants to express the narratives they associate with that photo. The hope of using photo elicitation within this study was to add additional depth, new opportunities, and different viewpoints from participants (Glaw et al., 2017). Furthermore, this method aimed to assist participants in expressing their meanings to a story, and to contrast emotions elicited using visual media with the verbal methods of interviewing being used prior (Glaw et al., 2017; Haper 2002). Photo-elicited media for the interviews used photographs taken while on the trip by me.

Participants were invited to my camping spot at Desnethche to select three photos of which they felt best represented the trip for them. A vast majority of the photographs taken during the trip were taken by me. This was mostly due to the lack of cameras and comfortability

of having youth bring such expensive items on the trip from themselves, care givers, and those involved with the trip. Having participants select the photos to be used during photo elicitation aimed to help build a sense of ownership and mitigates any tensions participants may have with the interview process as they are aware of what is coming (Glaw et al., 2017). The catalogue of photos from which they got to select from consisted of 73 photographs taken while on the trip. Each participant was shown the same collection of 73 photos on my Ipad brought for data collection. From this process, 24 images had been selected from the original catalogue of 73, not including duplicates. All 73 of the images taken while on the trip were provided to Ni hat'Ni for their purposes and used within the research report written per Tracking Change requirements. These 24 photographs were shown to each participant during their post-trip interviews occuring between August 8-11th.

All participants were shown the same 24 images. However, the context of this interview style being open-ended; not every question asked was the same as each discussion and experience varied (Creswell, 2014; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Harper, 2002). During the interview, I was actively listening, asking questions for clarification, and probing (Creswell, 2014; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Harper, 2002). There were a total of six post-trip interviews conducted, this is mostly due to some youth either using their right to decline an interview or they were unable to participate on the trip. Each interview ranged from 12-90 minutes and was one-on-one with participants in a public space while at Desnethche. Each interview was recorded using a digital recorder. Photographs were integrated during the interview by allowing for the participants to look through the catalogue of 24 photographs and share a story, a feeling, or anything they wished to share about that photo. The photographs aimed to provide a physical contextual representation of the travel experience. During the interview, I took notes to highlight the time of

the interview, the location, the date, the participant, and complementary visual observations to be used in transcription (i.e. changes in body language, eye avoidance, vocal inflexion). Once the interview had been completed, it was uploaded onto my personal computer and transcribed. Once transcribed, these stories were used in combination with the above methods, to complete a research report for the community as part of their Tracking Change responsibilities.

All data collected first and foremost belongs to the community and governing bodies of Łutsël K'é. I have only used data in which I have been given the privilege by the community and the governing bodies for the make-up of this report. Knowledge is sacred and holds the voices of Dene ancestors, and as such, it is not a commodity in which I aim to extort. Rather I have come to this study and community in the state of reciprocity providing what I could for the community and this study and aiding in the reporting portion of their Tracking Change report.

Table 1 Research activities that occured in Lutsel K'e, NWT

Dates	Intention of Visit	Research Activities
March 14 - 16, 2017	Familiarization	Informal project planning meetings Exploring the community, meeting key informants
March 17 - 18, 2017	Consultation	Formal and informal consultations with community representatives Project planning Research posters
July 2 - July 20th , 2017	Research Visit	Project planning workshops Recruitment and Signing of consent letters Planning trip logistics - land user & Elder recruitment Meeting with key informants/building community rapport
July 21 - 22, 2017	Pre-trip Workshop	Paddling workshop and water/land safety
July 21 - August 4, 2017	Pre-trip Interviews	10 Pre-trip Interviews - Life History Interviews
August 4 - 8, 2017	Travel Experience – Canoe	Experiental journey (canoeing, land camps, and attending Spiritual Gathering) Photographs for photo elicited interviews taken GPS coordinates associated with areas of physical change Traditional Knowledge transference between Elder/land-user and youth Field Observations/Audio Logs/Informal Interviews
August 8 - 11, 2017	Travel Experience – Desnethche	Musk OX/Moose hunt with youth and other workshops Meeting with key informants/building community rapport 6 Post-trip Interviews - Photo-Elicited Interviews Field Observations/Audio Logs/Informal Interviews
August 12 - 13, 2017	Debrief	Research reporting Returning gear/compiling paperwork for Tracking Change Data sharing - LKDFN TK Archive
August 13 - 14, 2017	Conclusion	Farewells/Travel back

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND CODING:

3.3.1 Research accessibility for the community

As the researcher, I find it imperative that the analysis and representation of this research are accessible for the community and useable for them. To make this research as accessible as possible, I aim to use a more traditional forms of analysis and interpretation (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2012; Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Tisbell, 2015; Neuman & Robson, 2012; Schwandt, 2007). Since this research is not interested in finding truth or making a claim, this research will use a thematic analysis approach (Creswell; 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Neuman & Robson, 2012). Glover (2003) and Polkinghorne (1995) also argue that thematic analysis through the voice of the narrator illuminates the emergent themes hidden within the narrative. This analysis aims to show how themes relate, overlap, and connect (Creswell; 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Neuman & Robson, 2012). Findings from this research aim to illuminate tensions, discrepancies, and multiplicities found within the narratives shared by the participants of LKDFN (Creswell; 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Neuman & Robson, 2012; Parry & Johnson, 2007).

The overall purpose of this study and the collection of long and rich narratives guided my decision to adopt my analysis techniques from both narrative inquiry and CBPR to help illuminate participant stories shared during interviews. Since one of the main guiding principles of this study was to illuminate dene narratives as they pertain to the five research questions, I have decided to use an analysis of narrative as defined by Polkinghorne (1995) and further expanded upon by Glover (2003), as discussed prior. Using analysis of narrative, I aim to illuminate themes shared within the narratives as they pertain to the five research questions. The following sections aim to outline the process of analysis that I have used within this study. I will

begin by outlining the processes I used for transcribing and reading participant interviews, then express my process of sorting the data and how it was coded, then concluding with the themes that were subsequently determined. As mentioned prior, all data used within the analysis and representation phase has been gifted to me from the community in what I aim to be a reciprocal relationship.

With the use of analysis of narrative, I aim to represent the narratives and their multiplicities within this research best. More specifically I hope to illuminate the contrasting themes within the experiences of the trip participants as they pertain to the five guiding research questions. The aim is to highlight the narratives and look for the multiplicities between them and how they interact with the research questions guiding this research. As stated the goal of analysing these narratives is to organically synthesise stories shared during this study into an accessible document for the community to use. The aim is not to summarise the over-arching narrative of the Łutsël K'é community, but to provide an analysis of the narratives of those involved in this travel experience and this study.

I feel it is important to highlight that this process has made me feel very uncomfortable many times as there are documented tensions between stories, experiences, and worldviews of the participants on this trip. To add onto this discomfort experienced, my power relation in this trip as a white outsider, makes the synthesis of these narratives more difficult as it highlights the reflexive role, I as the researcher, played in the generating a relationship with many of the participants and then analyzing their personal stories that they felt comfortable sharing with me. To build upon this further, during my time in the community I developed a few relationships with elders in town, who aided me in navigating these discomforts during data collection by challenging my views. Wherein during the analysis phase, due to the challenges this study faced

outlined in the 'Limitations' section of this paper, I was left to complete this portion largely on my own.

3.3.2 Transcription and reading narratives

Pre-trip life-story interviews, informal interviews, daily audio logs, and post-trip interviews (Table 1) were transcribed by me. The transcription took place from September until December where I listened to these interviews repeatedly to get as precise of transcripts as possible. Transcripts were written up on my personal computer and then stored within an encrypted folder. Once narratives on the trip were transcribed, they were thoroughly studied by myself, repeatedly over December and January. During which time, my only focus was to read, become familiar with these stories, and to respect the voice telling these stories. Once I was comfortable with the tone, voice, and the narratives themselves did I begin to synthesise them.

3.3.3 Establishing Codes; open-coding

Once the narratives were set into chronological order to establish a historical account of the travel experience, I began to pull apart my data by analysing it based on my five research questions. Each question was represented by a different colour:

- What TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience? = Yellow
- What are cultural, environmental, and social changes observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives? = Purple
- How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience? = Blue
- How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands? = Orange
- What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture? = Green

Not all stories shared were able to fit under these research questions, as the interviews were dialogical, so I added a 6th colour (Pink) to represent Motivations/Outside Forces. This section

mostly represented the motivation for participants attending the trip and the various forces pushing them to partake on this trip. Many participants shared their motivations for participating in this trip, and this was not directly covered by the research questions guiding this trip. Some narratives shared coincided with multiple research questions. Thus they were highlighted with both colours to represent this.

Each participant was then given a code/identifier to help me distinguish between the voices of my many participants. Although I became familiar with many of their voices, it was hard to identify who was sharing when their narratives were pulled out of context. Thus, each participant's first and last initial was used and a 1, 2, or 3 representing which interview this was (Ex. RC3). I then used the line number beside their identifier to mark where in the original transcripts of this story were shared (Ex. EM1 281-284).

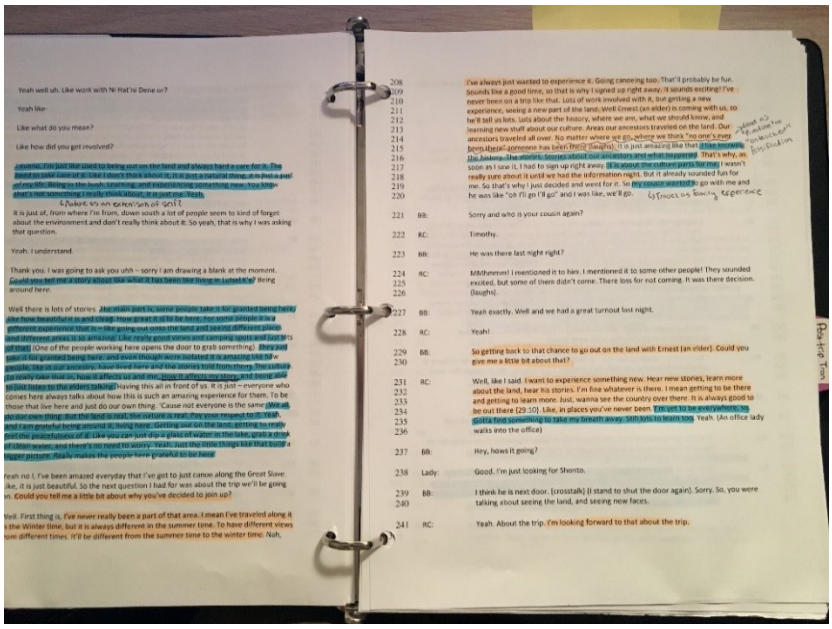

Figure 6 Initial Open-Coding Process

Taking these themes, I then cut them out physically and placed them in bags by colour. Each quote was then posted on a large black Bristol board for a visual representation of each

theme and the abundance of each. For easier access to these codes, I lumped these themes into a word document by each theme. From this re-organisation stories were then studied using analysis of narrative. In particular, I used open-coding and followed that up with a more direct coding technique to start categorising the most common or important quotes by colour and generating themes.

3.3.4 Identifying themes

Using my research questions as an anchor to situate each theme I began to pull on the threads of the narratives shared. I used a visual representation (the bristle board of codes) of the chunks pulled from the narratives, and I began to highlight subthemes in a booklet. I would begin to identify commonalities between the narratives and separate these codes into sub-themes or on occasion a new theme would emerge (Figure 7). Some codes were broad and interchangeable within themes, and thus they were put in place based off of context and commonalities with other codes within said theme or sub-theme. Once this process had finished, I was able to identify three over-arching themes and two sub-themes from each of the three over-arching themes (Table 2). Once each theme was identified it was then compared to the research questions of this study to see where it situates itself within the construction of this study.

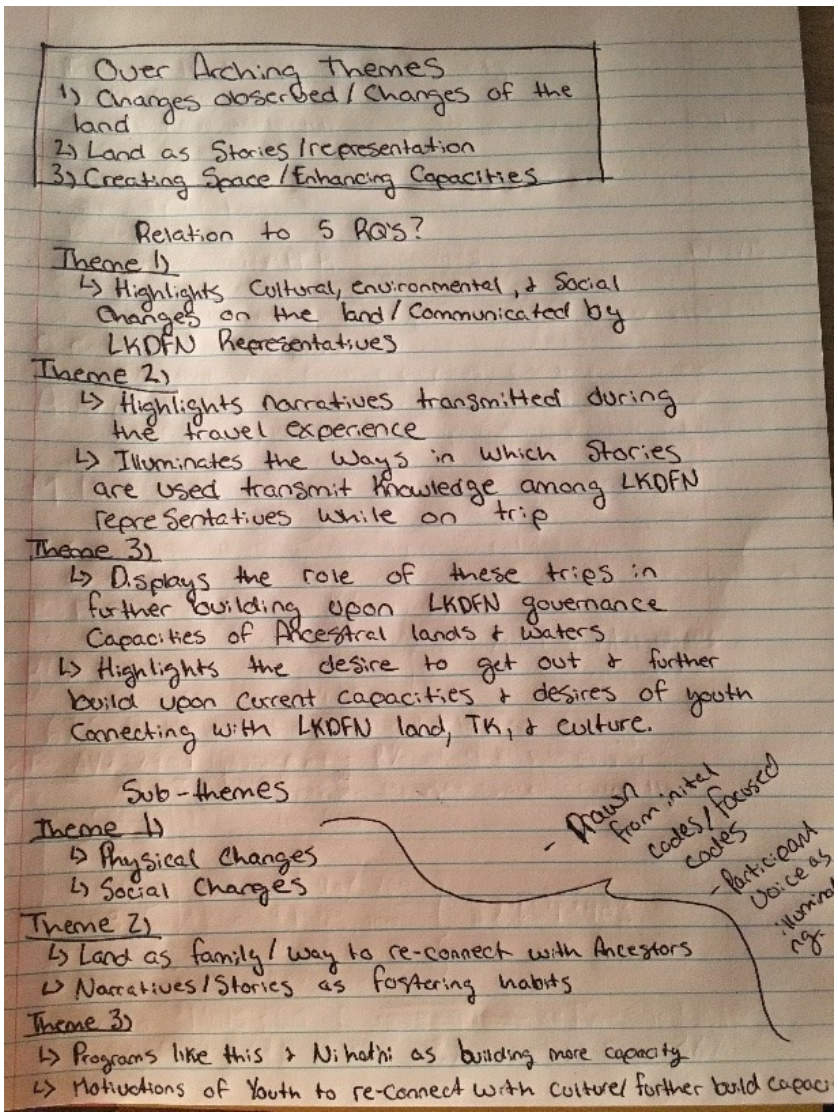

Figure 7 Sample of determining themes

3.3.5 Crystallisation

To build a complex multi-faceted view of the narratives being shared and the topic of this study is what Ellingson (2009) has identified as Crystallization within qualitative research. This study has used combinations of methods ranging from life-story interviews, observations, photo-elicited interviews, and reflexive research journals thus representing the means for crystallisation as identified by Ellingson (2009). Through the use of a multi-faceted approach to this study, the aim is to increase the trustworthiness of the research outcomes (Ellingson, 2009).

Janesick (2003) and colleagues noted that the use of crystallisation could give the researcher a more complex understanding of the research topic. Janesick (2003) and colleagues states that crystallization "recognises the many facets of any given approach to the social world" (p.67). Crystillisation is socially constructed and can allow for the researcher to provide the audience with deep and thick descriptions, attention to the complexity of interpretation, the use of multiple forms of inquiry, and reflexivity (Vik & Bute, 2009).

My six weeks in the community and one week on the land is another way in which I have worked towards a crystallization. During my time in the community, I spent time outside of observations, conducting interviews, and experiencing the LKDFN community and culture. This time within the community allowed me to construct a fuller view of the context of this study. This time in the community and on the land allowed me to experience travel within the community first-hand, and observe and begin to piece together some of the changes that this community is experiencing culturally, ecologically, and socially. Having not been an active part of the community in my time there, I would not be able to get an adequate understanding of the underlying frictions that exist within cultural, ecological, and social changes in the community over the years. The time I spent in the community allowed me to gain a fuller understanding behind the context of my study and to become further invested in this project.

3.3.6 Methodological, analytical, and ethical reflections

It is important to note that while this portion has been influenced by discourses of the non-indigenous author, this analysis of narrative blends direct excerpts from Denesoline experiences, perspectives, and most importantly their voices. I have tried to ensure consistency between stories shared and my interpretations of them by working collaboratively with the community by bouncing off these outcomes with LKDFN representatives. It is important to note

that although this study is undertaken with considerable consideration towards Indigenous ways of knowing and pedagogy that I myself am a white, southern, researcher. All stories and knowledge shared belong to the LKDFN community, and the data expressed in this paper has been used with their consent.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TRIP ŁUTSËL K'É TO DESNETHCHE

To provide the context in regard to this trip, I have created a vignette of the trip in written form based on my daily logs (both audio logs and my reflexive journal). The aim of this is to ground the reader in the events of this trip and what data collection looked like while on the trip. This is a recollection of my experiences while on the trip.

The trip lasted seven days. Of those seven days we as a group spent four of them paddling and the rest at Desnethche (the spiritual gathering). On August 4th 2017 myself, five Łutsël K'é youth, Marcel Basil, and elder Eddy Drybones departed from the docks of Łutsël K'é to the cheers of all those in town who had come to see us off. During this time, Eddy, Marcel, and I began to frustratingly organise the mass amount of luggage the youth were bringing on the trip. Eddy and Marcel voiced their displeasure with the amount of gear the youth were bringing. After we had culled the amount of gear, we began to load Eddy's boat with personal gear and our food barrel. We hired the services of a local boat operator to take us out to Shelter Bay portage with all of our gear and Pak-Canoes. Eddy Drybones took our gear and went around the portage to meet us at Shelter Bay. We all got into the boat, waved goodbye and headed northeast on the Great Slave Lake towards Fort Reliance.

The boat ride to the portage was calm. The youths sat around chatting, while Marcel told me stories of this place, the portage, and most importantly his experience paddling to Desnethche. After an hour-long boat ride we arrived on the shore of our first portage. Marcel Basil, the youth involved (A.J Catholique, Eric Marlowe, Forest Catholique, Roger Catholique, and Tim Saunderson) and I removed gear from the boats. During this time many of the youths began to form a line, and we began to hand each other the canoes, PFDs, rifles, packs and

paddles. Once everything had been taken off of the boat, we ran into our first problem; where the heck is the portage?

Marcel and Roger began looking for the portage while the rest of us began to organise all our gear. The area was unkempt as this portage does not get used too often in the summer time. During the winter the portage to Shelter Bay is a popular sledge trail, but in the summer it is a boggy, muddy, overgrown trail through the brush. Many of the youths were restless as we waited for an hour or so on the shore of the first portage. I began to show those behind how to build the canoes to prepare us to canoe around the large pass to Shelter Bay when we started to hear whooping calls from the bush. Marcel and Roger came out of the bush, rifles in hand, saying they had found the portage. We began to pack the canoes, gather ourselves, and head out onto the portage.

We did the portage in 2 trips. The first trip we went half-way through the 3-4km portage and dropped off our first load and then went back for the Pak-Canoes. The portage was hard on the youths, and I. The portage had us hike through knee-high bog conditions with 20-40 pounds on our backs. Not to mention the bugs. One of the youths struggled mightily carrying the Pak-Canoes, I decided to help him out and take the load for a bit on my own. I began to fall further and further behind the group. Marcel came back after ensuring the youths were through and helped me. He told me; “it is not our job to do everything for these boys, if you wear yourself out now you will be useless to us when the boys need you.” He grabbed the other end of the canoe, and we made our way through the bog. After we exited the bog, we took our first break, had smoked meat, and drank plenty of water (Figure 8). The portage from then on was much easier.

Figure 8 Break on the portage through to Shelter Bay. Coordinates: 62.804606°N, 110.510186°W

After a seemingly short 2km portage through rocky terrain sprinkled with peat moss, we began to near Shelter Bay. The portage once it hit the clearing began to display the two massive cliff structures that made up the valley in which the portage ran. As we exited the portage, the sun was beginning to set (Figure 9). The youths were exhausted but in awe, as we came out of the portage to a stone beach, the setting sun, and the lake as calm as glass. The youths began a cheer as we wandered back into the portage to grab the remaining gear on the trail.

Figure 9 Exiting the portage into Shelter Bay. Coordinates: 62.811136°N, 110.512636°W

As we set down the last of our gear, we could hear the sound of an engine in the distance. We could then see a boat coming into the bay, and we soon realised it was Eddy. Eddy greeted us all as we began to make camp for the night. His two dogs happily began to rummage and play around the camp. The we set the camp up on the ridgeline at the edge of the forest. The ground

was rocky and hard, but there were pillows of peat moss where we situated our tents for the evening (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Setting up Camp on Shelter Bay. Coordinates: 62.811136°N, 110.512636°W

I set up my tent closest to the portage, helped the other youths set-up their tents, and then helped the youths set up their canoes for tomorrow. Once the site was set-up, canoes were built, and the fire was made did we have our first meal on the land. As is tradition, or so I was told, we had steak and potatoes over the fire. Eric was the first cook on the journey and with warm food in our bellies, and a big fire, and Red Rose tea brewing Eddy began to share stories with the youths about the land and his time here. Being exhausted, I was the first to pack it in. I later learned that I missed out on the porcupine Eddy had caught and cooked for the youths, showing them how to clean and cook it. Eric told me the next morning that it was the best meat he had ever had.

Day two began early for me. I arose at 6:30 am under the assumption that this was common practice, I was later told by Eddy that this was not the case as he teased me for waking up early (Figure 11). I tested the canoes making sure they were structurally intact, ensured all the youths had bailers, PFDs, paddles, throw ropes, and whistles in their canoes. I then took down my site, started a fire, and put on a pot of coffee for everyone. Everyone began to wake at around

8:30 am. Marcel gave us all a hard time for being up so early and then began to pack up his tent. Eddy graciously made us all eggs, toast, and bacon for breakfast. Once everyone was fed and ready to go, I did a quick paddling recap and went over common strokes, canoe etiquette, and emergency procedures. We set whistle commands, set canoe teams, and went and paid our respect to the land and water before we headed out on our way.

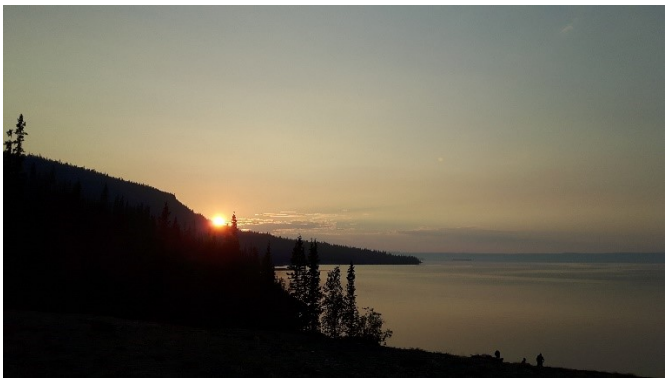

Figure 11 Sunrise over Shelter Bay. Coordinates: 62.811136°N, 110.512636°W

The weather was calm, the sun was bright, and the bay was as calm as glass. Smoke was all over the horizon from the large forest fires around the surrounding area giving the horizon a heavy haze. Roger and Tim in the lead boat headed out first with cheers, then AJ and Eric in the second boat, and lastly Forest, and I in the rear canoe. Eddy and Marcel stayed behind at camp finishing their breakfast and tidying up, let us head out. Before our departure, I figured it would take us 45 minutes to get out of Shelter Bay, but conditions were perfect, and we cut right across Shelter Bay in less than 15 minutes and were well out of the bay before Marcel and Eddy had caught up to us. We had been paddling for two hours before we took our first break. Our first break was a celebratory one and a quick washroom break (Figure 12). As we finished up our business there, Eddy and Marcel turned the corner completely astounded at our speed, saying they have never seen paddlers so quick. On the banks of our first break, I took a moment to help

correct some of the youths paddling strokes, so they did not overexert themselves four hours into the first day.

Figure 12 First break right outside Shelter Bay. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.837801°N, 110.470175°W

Eddy and Marcel headed off into the distance letting us know that they would meet us half-way to Sentinel Point with lunch ready for us upon our arrival. The paddle was gorgeous; the water was crystal clear as we could see to the bottom of the lake as we paddled along. Grayling followed closely beneath our canoes investigating us as we travelled along. The youths sang, cheered, and laughed as we passed each point on the horizon pushing forward. We came to a large outcrop where we saw Eddy's boat and Eddy and Marcel sitting in chairs near a fire. We pulled in and had our lunch for the day (Figure 13). After the youths had eaten, had water, and relaxed for a little while. Eddy and I consulted the map, and he showed us how far we had come. We were both astonished at our current pace. Eddy had never seen any group ever get from Shelter Bay to Sentinel Point in a day via canoe. The youths decided then and there we must set a new record and thus began the huge second-half push to sentinel point. Before our departure Eddy shared stories about the land, taught the youths the names of the landmarks in their traditional tounge, and sent us on our way.

Figure 13 Lunch on route to Sentinel Point. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.820781°N, 110.244399°W

Our journey from then on went from point to point, paddling to the point furthest on the horizon then taking a break once we arrived. Roger and Tim set the pace, and we kept in a single file formation following along the shore. We saw Musk Ox rummaging in the bush, moose tracks, and plenty of Grayling schooling beneath our boats. Each point varied in terrain from rock, to slate, to sand, to peat, always different (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Another break on a point on the route to Sentinel Point. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.821069°N, 110.137449°W

The youths chatted, sang, laughed, and began to grow closer as we continued our way to Sentinel Point. Eddy and Marcel caught up to us saying that we are past halfway to Sentinel

Point. We assumed we would arrive at Sentinel Point in less than four hours of paddling. The weather remained calm, the wind was minimal, and I was beginning to understand why so many other visitors have viewed this place as Eden (Figure 15).

Figure 15 Eddy and Marcel are showing Roger and Tim the outline of Sentinel Point in the distance. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.823970°N, 110.020814°W

We arrived after another long paddle to Sentinel Point. Sentinel Point has a very fitting name as it is massive sheer cliff facing out onto Great Slave Lake. Like a lone sentinel standing on a hill, Sentinel Point looks out onto the water always watching. Eddy shared with the youths the stories of this place and applauded the youth's efforts to get this far in a day. Marcel was uplifting the youths telling them "Dene boys never quit, never surrender", and they took those words with deep pride. Tim made dinner that night, the youths made camp, I checked in with Łutsël K'é giving them a status report, and we settled in for the evening. I ensured all the canoes were secured and tied down as to not be blown away by a strong wind in the night. I sat around the fire with Marcel and Eddy talking about the day, how proud we are of these youths, and shared coffee in companionship. I began to feel less of an outsider at this moment, as I began to realise we all share the same passion, nature. I settled into my tent as the sunset on a beautiful day beyond words (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Sunset over Sentinel Point. Coordinates: 62.828849°N, 109.961920°W

The first day out on the land was as perfect as it could be as it pertains to the weather. The weather on the third day was less friendly. We arose around 9 am on the third day and began to pack up camp. We had a quick leftover breakfast from dinner last night; it was quite satisfying. After a quick dip in the water to refresh ourselves for the day, we loaded up the canoes and headed off. We aimed to make it into Police Bay that evening and the Ni Hat'ni cabin just beyond that. After putting in a solid 14+ hours of paddling the day prior the youths were surprisingly chipper getting into the canoes and heading out. Weather was fair until the mid-afternoon when it began to rain, and the wind picked up. The journey was slow, and a few of the youths did not bring proper attire for the rain and thus were miserable for most of this day. There were a few moments where the middle boat almost capsized as they struggled to maintain their course. Seeing that the youths' spirits were low, Marcel and Eddy cheered them up by teaching them how to sail the canoes (Figure 17).

Figure 17 Eddy and Marcel construct a sail for the Canoes. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.778788°N, 109.698620°W

Learning to make the sail was quite the experience for the youths as Marcel shared his story of when he paddled this route last and when he did the same. After a quick stint putting together the canoes, we headed out to continue. The rain did not cease until after midday. The youths in the sail struggled all day against the wind and rain as they had never canoed this far before nor in these kinds of conditions. After the rain and wind ceased I pulled our boat to shore and took down the sail as the youths began lounging in the canoe thinking the wind would carry us there. The sun soon came back out, and we continued on our way. Roger and Tim in the lead boat were undeterred by the elements and continued to paddle hard the whole way, convinced they would make it to Desnethche that night (Figure 18).

Figure 18 Roger & Tim continuing to push onward despite the elements. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.736621°N, 109.501034°W

The paddle was long, and the middle canoe was exhausted and thus strung themselves onto the safety boat to get towed the rest of the way. My canoe mate also became exhausted and needed to join the safety boat; I continued to solo our canoe until Eddy and Marcel arrived to connect us to their boat. Roger and Tim continued until they reached the final crossing into Fort Reliance. The crossing was through a large portion of open water and with the weather seemingly changing so quickly Eddy, Marcel, and I advised the youths to be towed into Fort Reliance (Figure 19). The crossing was cold as the wind whipped across the open water and cut through our wet layers. Many of the youths were cold, but Roger, Tim, and I were prepared and handed them our tarps from our gear to use as windbreakers for them.

Figure 19 Eddy is towing us across Police Bay into Fort Reliance. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.710616°N, 109.182236°W

As we were getting towed in a couple of locals from the Spiritual Gathering took a photo of us crossing. Tim was livid at this as he did not want to be photographed getting towed, he playfully teased the others that this was on them. Marcel talked about how when we travel the land we travel as a family and that this was the right call. I too was a little annoyed to be towed in as I still had plenty of energy left. After a 45-minute boat ride across we paddled into our camp for the night, the Ni Hat'Ni cabin. The Ni Hat'Ni cabin was a small cabin with bunks in it

to be used by Ni Hat'ni members on the land when they are doing their monitoring programs (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Ni Hat'ni Cabin day three camp for the night. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.754977°N, 109.038687°W

Marcel went into the cabin and started the fire inside to warm the youths up who were cold. Roger, Tim, and I helped Eddy unload the boat, and pitched our tents up outside. Inside we had chicken noodle soup, tea, and pitas for dinner. The youths were cheered right back up with some warm food and warm lodging. I checked in with everyone to ensure everybody was all right and tucked in for the night. We press on to Desnethch'e tomorrow as Eddy says we are less than a three hours paddle away. The youths are pleased to be this close and look forward to being there tomorrow.

Day four of the trip was the last day we spent travelling to the Spiritual Gathering. The youths were slow to arise, Roger, Tim and I were the first up and enjoyed the morning stillness with our morning coffees. I was the first to be packed down in the morning and began to help Tim and Roger prepare their canoes for the day. Roger, Tim, and I had our canoes in the water by 10 are the next morning, but the rest of the group was much slower moving. We got onto the water at around noon that day and started to head off into the final leg of our journey. The youths

had found untapped energy levels knowing the end was in sight and we began to travel quickly towards the gathering. Marcel told us how proud the community would be of them, and told us to travel in a formation coming in to look like one canoe turning into three. The paddle in was long and rigorous as my canoe mate was exhausted still from the gruelling day yesterday. As we turned the last bend, AJ and Marcel began to fire their rifles/bear bangers into the air signalling our approach. The community was slow to respond not expecting us to arrive so soon. As we got nearer more people began to arrive at the shores trying to figure out who is coming in. They then noticed it was the canoes and began to fire their rifles into the air happily introducing our arrival. From the water, we could see swaths of people at the gathering running towards the beach as we began to near the shore. Roger and Tim arrived first to applause and cheering, then Forest and I, then lastly Eric and AJ landed to great applause. The community was celebrating our arrival with handshakes, shoulder clasps, and cheers. A few of the community members lead by Victor began to sing us a song of our voyage here and repay the land for a safe journey. Unbeknownst I was wearing my hat when the song began to which Eric quickly punched me and pointed at it, I took it off quickly. Once the song had finished the youths dispersed with their families and began celebrating. The youths were elated to see their families. I pilled the canoes on the shore, tied them together, collected the PFD's and went off to find a camp (Figure 21).

Figure 21 The canoes from the trip all tied down and put away for the next few days. Aprx. Coordinates: 62.776519°N, 108.910026°W

One of the locals from town (a friend of my advisor) invited me to pitch up my tent near her camp. I graciously accepted her offer, set-up camp, and had a great chat with her about the trip. I left her tent and headed off to ensure all the youths had somewhere to stay and found them all camped out together. I was expecting them to stay with their folks, but they preferred each others company and camped together. They shared stories from the trip, laughed, and then settled in for the evening. I wandered around the gathering saying hello to all those whom I knew from town and helped out where I could with setting up camps, gutting fish, gathering water, chopping wood. Eddy and Marcel saw me and invited me over to their camp for coffee and chats. They told me about how happy they were that this trip happened and how proud they are of these youths. They called me a friend, and I felt the same. We enjoyed our coffee, and I went to bed with a full belly and full heart.

Day five was less eventful than any other day; more people from town made their way. The youths began to complete their exit interviews with me, and Eddy and Marcel also sat down to interview with me. They also took a few of the youths out for a moose hunt, and although they were unsuccessful, the youths talked about how much they learned about the land from Eddy and

Marcel. I spent most of that day on my own as I needed the rest after such a rigorous few months. That night there was a large dance around the spiritual fire in the middle of the camp. The youths were there, and they also joined in on a large round of hand games (a traditional Dene game) (I was invited but declined as I'd never played before). A few of the youths even learned to smoke fish from the elders in town running a workshop and brought me some. I helped out around the camp and settled in for the evening after a long chat with my contacts in Łutsël K'é about our flights home and getting that information ready to share with the rest of the guys. I was also shown how to skin a moose head and spent most of that day hanging out around a fire helping to cook and prepare the moose head to be shared. Day five I went to bed a little homesick but also sad to leave such a beautiful place. I went to bed to the backdrop of drumming, singing, and cheering. Once the music stopped there was a deafening silence from the nature around me.

Day six began much like every other day, beautiful sun and relatively warm weather (around +14). Eddy and Marcel offered to take me out onto the land and show me the places where Eddy had grown and show me the areas where the land had changed as he had seen it. I eagerly agreed and we headed out onto the water in his boat and out to his old stomping ground. Eddy took us to a place just outside Fort Reliance where his camp used to be in the summer when he and his parents would come in and trade at the old trading outpost. The structure was still there and he told me stories of him as a little boy, recounting his footsteps as a child running around the local area. He seemed sad to see so much time go by but was excited to share with us. We then got gas for his voyage back to Łutsël K'é at the Ni Hat'ni fill station as we had permission to do so. He then took us to Pike's Portage and told stories of when he was a boy and where his family used to dog sled up and down there. He showed where the water levels have

dropped. We picked berries then tracked a herd of Musk Ox from our boat walking along the ridgeline. Eddy took us to the head of the river from Artillery lake and talked about the sacredness of this place. We also payed respect to his ancestors buried there. We saw the old chimneys of Old Fort Reliance and then went home for dinner. Eddy made us a fish and instant mash dinner. He told stories of his life and we talked about our lives. I went to bed again that night with a full belly and warm heart, anxious about leaving tomorrow as the charter flights out of here have been less than ideal. I informed everyone that we need to be ready by 11am tomorrow to leave and to meet on the beach ready to leave. I slept poorly that night; the bear in camp did not help that matter much.

The final day was the most stressful by far. I was up by 6 am, had breakfast with my friends at camp, final goodbyes with other friends and a few others from town, gathered my things and was at the beach by 10 am. I then made sure everyone else was packed up. Canoes were ready to go, so I got those ready to get on the plane. I called and made the weather checks and gave the pilot the correct information for landing. We then offered a spot on the plane for a sick child, and elder, which turned into a rather large situation as the Elder would not leave without his wife, and thus one of us had to stay behind. The pilot offered to get the next person when he came back and drop them off, but I needed to leave on this flight as I had all the gear. One of the youths bowed out which was frustrating, so the flight back into Łutsël K'é was agonizing. Once I landed, I gathered my things, thanked the pilot for his help, and politely asked him to remember the youth left behind as he has no other way home. After I packed the canoes up and had everything put away, I came back when the plane landed and made sure that AJ got off the plane safely, and he did. I was then invited to dinner with two members from the town whom I knew from my advisor and had stayed with during my time up in the community in

March. We talked about the trip, the flight tomorrow, and I went home to bed and slept hard. I was up early the next day, packed, said my heartfelt goodbyes, left some final paperwork for the office to handle, and was then off back to Yellowknife. Thus my time in Łutsël K'é ended, and only time will tell if I will ever have a chance to return. Although if I do, Eddy has offered to take me out on the land, so maybe one day I should take him up on that.

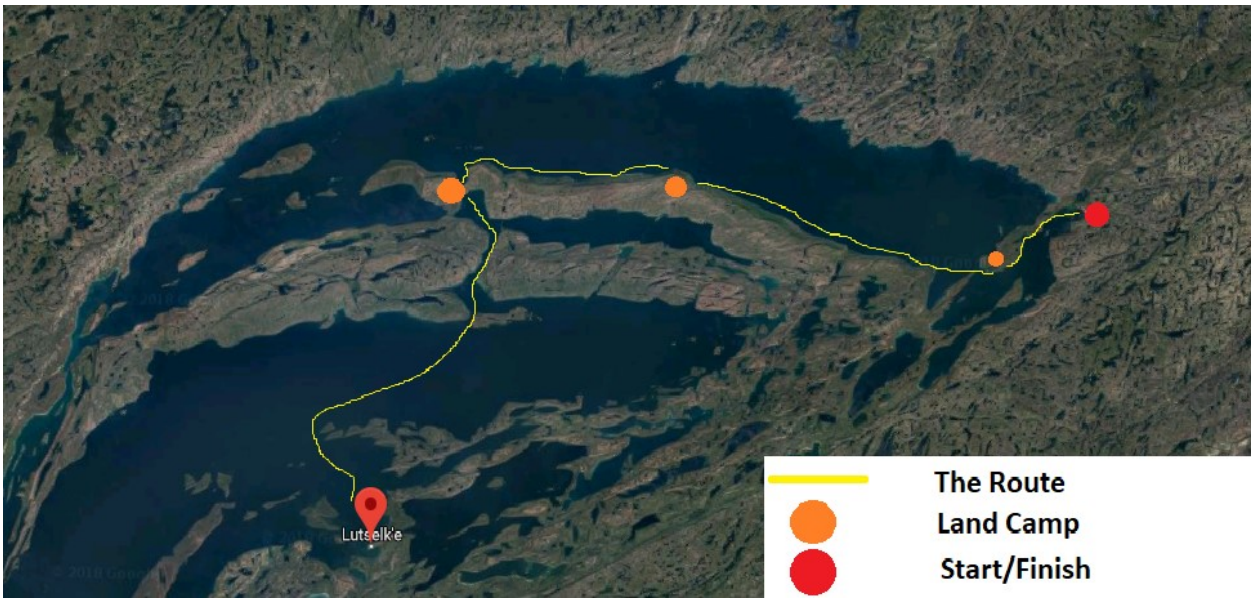

Figure 22 Trip Map

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

The purpose of this de-colonial narrative study is to record and interpret Deneoline traditional knowledge (TK) and stories transmitted during a multi-day travel experience. This research aims to contribute to Northern, Indigenous, community-based research by illuminating the knowledges and the narratives of land users, elders and youth from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN). In particular, the study aims to work with LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods.

This study used narrative inquiry and community based participatory research. Methods used from this methodology consisted of life-story interviews, reflexive journals, participant observations, photography, and photo-elicited exit interviews to highlight the Denesoline TK and stories shared during a multi-day travel experience across ancestral lands and waters. Analysis of narrative was used to delve into stories shared by participants and highlight the connectivity between narratives shared while on the trip.

The purpose of this section is to highlight the stories shared by participants and to synthesise them in a way in which that will be of use to the LKDFN community. Organization of the data, aimed to connect each research question to each theme to assist in the reporting portion of the Tracking Change program. As discussed prior, each research questions was established in collaboration with WLED representatives of Łutsël K'é to highlight relevant community needs. The data synthesised within this section of the paper was used to generate a community report as part of the requirements of the Tracking Change initiative funding this study. This section is divided into three smaller sections representing each of the major themes synthesised during the analysis of narrative (Table 2). Each section consists of an introduction and verbatim chunks

from the transcribed interviews to highlight the participant's voice. Areas wherein I have included text between brackets is to help clarify and highlight observed behaviours.

The first section focuses on highlighting themes of change as they pertain to the land and the participants involved. Section 5.1 breaks down into two smaller sections wherein I highlight physical changes and social changes conveyed in the qualitative data. The second section (5.2.) illuminates narratives as they pertain to the recurrent theme of land as stories and representation. Section 5.2 breaks down into two smaller portions focused on narratives associated with the land as shaping identity, and stories as knowledge transference. The final section focuses on narratives highlight the continued growth in capacities within the LKDFN and making space to combat legacies of colonialism. The smaller sections of this portion illustrate the narratives shared related to travel motivations, and in building further capacities. Each section aims to draw from the last, pulling in threads from each story illuminating the complexcities within these narratives shared.

Table 2 Summary of Findings Chapter

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5.1.1 Environmental Changes	5.1.2 Social-Cultural Changes
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5.1 Observations of Change

One of the over-arching themes of this study was to document changes as they occurred within the north. Not only is this theme of major interest for the LKDFN community, but it is also a major theme of the Tracking Change project. As highlighted in the literature review of this study, the north has seen drastic changes in the past few years, and the community identified this a need to be addressed in this study. Accordingly, this section aims to amplify further the Dene voices regarding the environmental and social-cultures changes observed and narrated during the trip. Various changes to the cultural, physical, and social environment were both discussed explicitly and implicitly by all participants through their narratives. While some of these changes have been highlighted in previous studies, this study illuminates the ways in the LKDFN views these changes and how these environmental changes affect the Dene way of life.

5.1.1 Environmental changes

Łutsël K'é is a stunning and breathtaking place for many reasons. These reasons extend to the welcoming nature of the people within the community, the expanses of greenery, the cliffs, the clear water, and the many large mammals that live in and around Łutsël K'é. Although the lands surrounding this place have been called "Eden" (Hall, 2003) many times by others, the land has changed in ways that can be heard from within lifetimes of resident's. Many Łutsël K'é youth are taught at a young age to *"respect the land", "pay the land", and "care for the land, and it will care for you"* (Marcel Basil 8\7\17, 7\26\17). The community loves the land, the land is life, but that does not apply to all those who visit Denesoline lands.

5.1.1.1. Pollution

As highlighted by Elder Eddy Drybones:

> *"They [outsiders/miners] don't care what's happening with that ground or anything. They want that money. But our people, it's not like that. They love the land. They love their water. They love to keep everything alive. So, it's different too, eh? Dene people, they love the land, they wanna' keep it." (Eddy Drybones, 8/8/17).*

Mining operations within the north are quite abundant and many times during my time in the community did various LKDFN community members voice their concern over mercury and arsenic pollution. During our life-story narrative, youth Eric Marlowe expressed his concerns about hearing stories as they pertain to pollution:

> *"Just, I don't know. I think the water is getting contaminated. With, I think, arsenic. Arsenic. This the mine and people used to dump there, used to do that." (Eric Marlowe, 7/22/17).*

The pollution stems into concern within these narratives as some areas around the mine where people used to fish now feel unwary to fish from. When asked about fishing in that area Eric also noted that *"Fish? From there? It is probably not good" (Eric Marlowe, 7/22/17).* Eric was not the only person to air their concern about fishing from areas around mining practices as an anonymous community member told me while visiting their home.

> *"We need to do more sampling from those areas and the rivers and creeks that branch from them to make sure there are no poisons in our fish. Poisons like arsenic and mercury." (Anonymous, 7/6/17).*

Eddy elaborated similar concerns stating:

> *"but if people don't stop their polluting, maybe next few years, we'll have it this side, eh? This land is not that big, you know, it's not big at all. See how fast it is filling?" (Eddy Drybones, 8/8/17).*

Pollution noted did not just relate to that of outsiders and mining but also trash within the bush. Youth on trip noticed areas where litter was prevalent on the land, in particular, the Ni Hat'ni cabin we stayed and on the portage into Shelter Bay (Figure 23*); "I see little garbage and barrels. Not lots, just like in the area, like quite a long way you see something." (Roger Catholique 8/8 17).* Seeing litter on trails and at areas associated with LKDFN made both Eddy and Marcel quite upset, stating *"Kids gonna see that and think that's okay. It is not. These people are gonna' be role models but treat our land like that. It makes me mad" (Eddy Drybones & Marcel Basil, 8/8/17).* Marcel Basil shared his frustration with litter as we left the Ni Hat'ni cabin, saying how angry he saw the place like this. Pointing out that the sign [Ni Hat'ni] talks about our ancestors and yet to see empty beer cans, and trash around the site was infuriating. Pollution concerns were an ever prevalent theme within narratives shared but were not the only other perceived physical change noted on the land.

Figure 23 Litter along the way 62.740037°N, 109.082330°W

5.1.1.2 Wildlife

When discussing the connecting between LKDFN community members and wildlife, I feel Roger's quote below best highlights recent changes:

> *"I remember the caribou that used to come through here, back in like 2009. I remember being like 9-10 years old, and the caribou used to run right through town here. You'd go out and shoot a couple here, just what you needed, you don't waste." (Roger Catholique 7/21/17).*

Changes in wildlife behaviour was a consistent theme identified during the analysis of narrative. Many a time I was told of stories when "*they'd have to chase Caribou off the runway for the planes to land*" and that people remember shooting Caribou a mere few steps from their front porch as highlighted by Roger. Caribou moving north has now become the common discussion with folks in town as outlined by Roger:

> "*When looking at it, it all adds up to a bigger picture. That's all stuff from me, what I've observed. Being a part of the Wildlife Youth Committee. We talk about it during our meetings, when they talk about the mining business and all that. They ask what we recommend or what they think we'd do and whatever I see, I think about it. Cause' like a lot of the changes I've seen come down from the animals, they're not like around. Just trying to think up why because nature is everywhere, and it is alive. It is everywhere and it is not stopping. And when we talk about changes, we gotta talk about that too. The mining and the cutting, trying to stop a natural disaster. Gotta protect the land, try and keep it as pristine as it was a 1000 or a 100 years ago. Like how our ancestors kept it. Because the land is very important to us. The animals, we are all just apart of nature. That's how I was taught. You have to respect nature because you can't control the weather. You can't stop the rain or the snow. You gotta do what you can, what is in front of you. Do your best, one day it'll be your turn." (Roger Catholique 7/21/17).*

The movement of wildlife from ancestral locations to new locations does not cease with that of the caribou as noted many a time during our trip. During our trip, and even while in town (Figure 24), we did come across solo musk ox in dense brush, which is abnormal as noted by Eddy *"That one has changed. Musk ox, you never go inside a tree. Here, you have to go way up*

there [barren lands] to get one that lives" (8/8/17). Eddy continues to note; *"The moose is moving to the barren land. You go way out in the barren lands, you see moose all over there. They're big, eh, you can see them far, too. And musk ox, they're in the bush a lot. That's a change I see." (Eddy Drybones, 8/8/17).* During our travel to Desnethch'e many folks noted our route to be a highly Moose populated area and a favoured Moose hunting ground, we failed to see a Moose but saw many Musk Ox within the area.

Figure 24 Solo Male Musk Ox just outside town sizing us up in the van 62.352397°N, -110.646733°W

5.1.1.3 Water Levels

Each and every participant to share their perspectives on changes to the land noted the lowering of water levels. Youth Sweetgrass echoes these observations: *"The water dropped… Yeah a couple years ago. The ponds are dried up over here [referring to the ponds around Łutsël K'é]" (Sweetgrass Cassaway, 7/21/17).*

Honeyrain further emphasises these concerns of fluctuating water levels:

> *"They [community] just keep saying climate change and you can see it from now. Even for myself, we used to have more, the waters were much higher. Behind the arena, you know where that sand area is? You could just walk out on there. And I don't know but we used to go out there. It happened for three days and then the water came back. I don't know what it was but the water used to be much higher. They [the elders] would always tell us, 'it's not like before'. That's what they always say in that exact quotation 'it's not like before.'" (Honeyrain Catholique, 7/21/17).*

Although such narratives highlight the changes to the landscape there are also multiplicities that exist in regard to the summer I was there was considered to be a normal water level, as both Eddy Drybones and Marcel Basil noted that levels were higher this year; *"It's just the water"* when responding to my inquiry about changes to the land. *"It went down quite a bit before but it looks like we got it back again, eh Marcel?" "Looks like we got it back again." "In the old days, elders say we don't get water from anywhere but the barren lands. If there's a lot of snow in the barren lands, we get good water. Most know about that, in the barren lands, the water don't go down. Cause' that is where all the watershed comes from."* (Eddy Drybones & Marcel Basil. 8/8/17). The lowering of water levels of the Great Slave Lake is a narrative that proceeds these stories as many holds these sentiments as I was told quite often during my time in the community.

Along the way, Eddy and Marcel pointed out areas where the water levels had dropped in their lifetimes. While out travelling Eddy showed me places where he has noticed the biggest changes in the lowering of water. One area he had seen a large change was the area heading into Pike's Portage (Figure 25). Eddy shared stories of when he was a boy and folks would canoe up to the portage and leave their canoes there for the winter (personal log, day 5). Eddy told stories of little water canals that allowed canoers to get as close as possible to the portage, but they are all dried up now and have been for some time (personal log, day 5) (Figure 26). Areas once

underwater are now home to a large batch of blueberries that many of the elders from the spiritual gathering were picking (personal log, day 5).

Figure 25 Lower water levels at Pike's Portage 62.759166°N, 108.936728°W

Figure 26 Blueberry bushes and other foliage growing in what was once a canal up to Pike's Portage 62.759166°N, 108.936728°W

5.1.1.4 Forest fires

A more visual representation of the changes to the landscape in ancestral areas of the Denesoline is that of forest fires. An anonymous resident when asked about recent changes they have noticed response:

> *"A lot of forest fires is happening every year. A lot of trees burned down in Fort Reliance (right by the Spiritual Gathering) too. So it looks very different now" (Anonymous 7/21/17).*

The year prior to my arrival in town, many people told me stories from a town about the huge forest fire behind the Spiritual Gathering site we were canoeing too. Even today the land has a huge scar through it from the raging fires (Figure 27) from that summer. Roger highlights the changes when talking about the changes at Desnethche *"Like we were lively and loud, just to be with a really good friend. It's before the forest fire too, it was really bushy and all green" (*

Roger Catholique, 8/8/17). Along the way to Desnethche, we noticed plenty of areas that had seen recent fires as Roger also notes during his exit interview *"In an area like that too, black sand and stuff like that. It's just a lot of burnt grounds to it, a lot of forest fires in the past. In the woods. I could tell it might grow. Regrow itself, animals come back. It's like a circle, I guess." (Roger Catholique, 8/8/17).*

The land is sacred to the Denesoline, and the land around the area of Desnethche is very special as I was told by many people while in at the Spiritual Gathering (Personal Journal day 5). The Denesoline travel to Desnethche for a plethora of reasons but one of the common reasons to travel here is to heal and pay respect to the Lady of the Falls (Personal Journal day 5). To see such drastic changes to the landscape surrounding this place was disheartening for me (Personal Journal Day 5).

Figure 27 Remains from the massive forest fire behind Desnethche. Burned flora from here to the horizon. 62.775112°N, 108.901967°W

Changes in important landscapes to participants was prevalent. Roger recollects a time he returned to a favoured trapping area with his Grandpa:

> *"One time we were hunting. We went back to the lake, my uncle travelled that way for a long time. It got all burnt. So we (Granpa and I) were trying to weave our way through to find the trail down to the lake. It used to be like, ribbon. Like it was marked. Now it is like different with all the deadfalls and such. Cause of the big forest fire. Stuff like that makes it harder to find a trail. We keep on going through and eventually, we make it there and stuff like that. It can get dangerous. (Roger, 7/21/17).*

This was not the only story Roger has of massive burns altering landscapes that were special to him and his Grandpa:

> *"Mmhmm, just one cabin. That was about halfways – well not halfways, but pretty far in, like a quarter way in we had a cabin there. A nice like shelter. Also near the end, where we lay, there is a lodge right there. We pass right by it, there is also an old pine cabin there. We'd bring our lines up to the cabin, I remember. But that uh area burnt down like over 10 years ago" (Roger, 7/21/17).*

When I asked Roger if it was a forest fire he responds:

> *"Yeah (sounds saddened by it as he looks down). A natural one. We don't know how far it went. How deep in, or if they're still there. Don't know if that cabin is still there so. But, not too sure, sure we aren't the only ones out there so. Yeah, they're probably just rubble now. All burnt. Yeah (7/21/17).*

5.1.1.5 Climate Change

When asked about any stories about changes to the land participants have noticed, the use of the term climate change is a consistent theme. In particular, this anonymous community member explicitly uses the term *climate change*:

> *"So I know you said you haven't been able to go out [on the land] too much, but from what you've seen around the community, and on the land itself, are there any changes you've noticed, like physical changes to the land-" (Me 7/21/17) "Climate change, that's for sure. I've seen lots of weather change. It kind of feels like it's always in the middle of July. Oh, yeah, it's pretty hot here. The weather just changes often. It rains, windy, it's stormy. Then it gets hot." (Anonymous 7/21/17).*

Discussions of climate change have been ongoing for years within the community, however, changes within lifetimes have been noted. Community members even mentioned it being warmer than it was even a year ago in places they frequent often. An example of this is Sweetgrass remembering her trip to Artillery Lake; *"Well, when I went to Artillery Lake it wasn't as cold as it was before. I went there three years ago and it was really cold. Then I went there and it wasn't that cold. It was warmer."* (Sweetgrass Cassaway, 7/21/17).

Even Elder Eddy identified the change in climate up north in his lifetime saying; *"Well, the weather's changing, but slow. I notice it's getting warmer." (8/8/17).* Eddy further expands upon this observation during our interview highlighting fluctuations in climate:

> *"But there's some years it stays colder. Now it gets nasty when it gets hot, it's really hot. And sometimes it just gets cold, like a little bit too, that's definitely one too. Other than that, I don't see nothing much change. Some years, there's some birds. Not as much as last year. Like, this year, those brown birds, they used to pass through. Not very many. But next year, there might be lots again, so everything changes every year" (Eddy, 8/8/17).*

Roger emphasizes Eddy's observations noting other large changes year-in and year-out:

> *"Other small things, like water levels. Going up and down, and, you know differences with climate change. When looked at it, it all adds up into a bigger picture. That's all stuff from me, what I've observed. Being a part of the Wildlife Youth Committee. We talk about it during our meetings, when they talk about the mining business and all that. They ask what we recommend or what they think we'd do and whatever I see, I think about it " (Roger, 7/21/17).*

Youth are told stories from elders in town consistently about the changes they see on the land, and the re-occurring theme of climate change are ever prevalent. When asking a local youth Honeyrain about the narratives she has heard about changes in town she responds:

> *"No, they (the Elders) just keep saying climate change and you can see it from now. Even for myself, we used to have, the waters were much higher. Behind that arena, you know where that sand area is? You could just walk out on there. And I don't know but we used*

to go out there. It happened for three days and then the water came back. I don't know what it was but the water used to be much higher. They (the Elders) would always tell us, "It's not like before." That's what they always say in that quotation, "It's not like before." Sometimes I just want to ask like what do you mean? But they're just gonna be like, "The land is not the same like before so you gotta respect it." (Honeyrain, 7/21/17).

As outlined by Eddy, the changes in the land are rapid but not the only changes that have occurred on the land:

"In the old days, elders say we don't get water from anywhere but the barren land. If there's a lot of snow in the barren lands, we get good water. Most know about, in the barren lands, the water don't go down. 'Cause that's where all the water in the watershed comes from. Yeah. Land doesn't spoil too much water. Like people think it does. It doesn't. Because I know the earth is alive, it kills itself. I think sometimes it gets too much, it just goes on chaos, take as many human lives with it. But then it grows again. Looks like it's been through a lot with billions of years (Eddy draws a circle in the air with his hand) (Eddy, 8/8/17).

Overall, climate change has been highly discussed within the recent literature as it pertains to the Northwest Territories. Climate change has been linked to pollution, fluctuations in water levels, and forest fires in other studies, all of which were prevalent themes within the physical changes of Denesoline ancestral waters and lands. The above exemplifies real-life experiences shared on how environmental changes are being observed, discussed, and changing dene livelihoods and the ancestral lands and waters of the Denesoline.

5.1.2 Social-Cultural Changes

To note environmental change as the only large wave of changes in the north would be narrow-sighted as Eddy highlights when asked about the non-physical changes he's seen in his time:

"The way I see it, people trying to strive forward, but at the same time their culture is dying with them. It's gonna go that path that nobody is gonna remember pretty soon. That's where we're headed. So, I don't know. It's nearly 100 years. Things changed. People, Earth, ways, so, you can't stop it ... Anyways, that's my thinking of today, into the

future. I don't look in the past, 'cause I already know what happened. I'm just worried about what's gonna happen in the future, you know? With the people, but I know it's gonna change a lot. It's gonna change. (Eddy, 8/8/17).

The purpose of this section is to illuminate themes that have come to the surface during the analysis of narrative about observed and discussed cultural, and social changes communicated by LKDFN representatives.

5.1.2.1 Less time for traditional skills

Discussing changes in the community as they pertain to culture are hard to exemplify as it is not something you can really track in a photo. However, Eddy when sharing his childhood growing up does a great job painting the picture of how quickly the community has been affected by outside forces

"I was born in 1950, in a place on that trail [Pike's Portage] going up to Artillery Lake?That lake, that's where I was born. In the bush there. It was just my mom and dad. It was the end of the old cultural days, that's when I was born. So babies were still being born all over the bush. Even natives, they used to have their own doctors. Their own nurses for stuff like that. Now, the hospital, everything came up. Nobody goes about it that way now, they go to the hospital now. They're scared, everybody's scared, right? In the old days, not like that. Everybody is their own doctor, their own nurse. Today it's different. In old culture, we use wildlife for food: caribou, moose, fish, rabbits, duck, even squirrel. But today, the people that have done it in the past, they're not gonna do it anymore. They store buy their food. I think that's how it's going. You don't see wild meat cooking, no fish cooking, you know? When Desnethche first started, you'd normally see that lot, dry meat hanging, dried fish, today nothing. Slowly it's dying, I think, this place." (Eddy, 8/8/17).

68 years may seem like a long time, but in today's rapidly evolving world that is a short time. Eddy's story of being born in the bush directly mirrors every participant's story of their birth noting that they were born in *"a hospital"*, which was not much of an option when Eddy was born. The changes in town from youth getting out on the land often, to stay in town, have been a rapid change. Many youths make mention of as they grew up they got less time on the

land as they began to focus on school. Youth in town now faces a melting pot of differing ideals between going to school and staying close to their culture, and cultural mishmash that for me became apparent during my time at the Spiritual Gathering. On the fourth day of the trip when we arrived in Desnethch'e, I noted in my journal that:

> *"It was very counterculture to kind of what I had seen when I got here [as in Łutsël K'é], just almost like this melting pot. It's almost like oil on the water where, like the Elders are still very invested in their culture, but at the same time, too, a lot of them [community members] have gone through the residential school system and so Christianity and Catholicism are very, very prevlent within the community. The two have kind of adapted in this kind of strange hybrid." (Brendan, Day 4 Journal Excerpt).*

Eddy mirrors this balancing act between maintaining the culture and following Eurocentric systems like this:

> *"But there's another thing, too, you know? These families now, in the residential school survivors, so it's not the same as in the old days. A lot of them carrying this hurt, confused feelings, so they're probably, maybe it happened to their kids. So they try and protect their kids too much. So, they're not going to school, some of them. No certificates for the job, no nothing. Years ago you don't need that. Go set-up your trap. You got your paycheck. But today, if you go and have your certificate, try and get the best job you can get. And that's where the money is today, not in the bush anymore."(Eddy, 8/8/17).*

Eddy, as he always is, is incredibly insightful in peeling back the changes colonialism and the residential school system has had in changing the portions of dene livelihood that many other papers seems to overlook, living in the bush is no longer a prosperous way for Denesoline youth to live with rising costs of living.

Eddy shares a story with me that I interpret as when the Denesoline began to lose their power was when they started to focus on making money and moving away from prior cultural practices. Eddy shares a story an Elder shared with him one:

> *"Why did we lose the power?" "Remember I told you? That's because we used to communicate with animals, you know. But after, we start using animals for money. And*

that's where we lost the power." People say we got baptized, it's not true. It's because we start abusing our own power, now we don't have that. Start selling the herd for money. So now, Natives don't have that power of animals anymore. That's what other elders told me, anyway. I believe it, too." (Eddy, 8/8/17).

Consumerism pulling Denesoline away from their culture has been noted many times by Eddy and other elders, mentioning the lack of drying meats and fish while at the spiritual gathering and the abundance of *"store food"*. Roger shares a similar story mirroring this when talking about his Grandpa's upbringing;

"Yeah, he [his grandfather] was taught by many elders. He was around back then, they taught him though, like it was different back then. There was no cell phones or internet when he was growing up. He was taught the hard way. Now he is hard like caribou hide and wore that kind of stuff. Now it is different, you wanna wear that stuff you go to the store. Back then you had to do everything by hand." (Roger, 7/21/17).

The story Roger and Eddy shared both really illuminate the role in which consumerism has affected the way in which goods and gear are prepared within Łutsël K'é. As Eddy mentions numerous times during my time with him, *"why would people go back to the old ways when things are much easier now?"* which further amplifies the loss in traditional skills. Roger's story further highlights this by illuminating the ways in which consumerism has changed how people travel now:

"Back then you had to do everything by hand. You gotta take your time with it. Even landmarks, and travelling. You've gotta remember a lot. You've gotta sit, watch, listen, look closely. That's what he [his Grandpa] tells me." (Roger, 7/21/17).

As youth begin to focus further and further on education and making money to maintain their livelihood in place with a high cost of living, it is not surprising to see how purchasing goods and technology have taken prescience over some traditional skills.

5.1.2.2 Youth disconnect with culture

When asking participants about their motivations for participating in this trip, one participant (AJ) in particular noted that:

> *"I don't really know much about my culture. Yeah. (seems solemn while saying this). Well, I do see little bits of changes I think. Not as much stuff like this any more (referring to Desnethch'e). Like these big gatherings. Not much anywhere." (AJ Catholique, 7/21/17).*

This was a common theme that the youth expressed, and is further highlighted by Honeyrain:

> *"I think that's the only time that I mostly spent my times in the bush and then as I got older I kind of started to realize that I was missing out on my own culture. It's because I live here. I'm so used to being just here and I'm just like, I'm from here but I noticed that when people started coming in they started to know more of our culture more than I did." (Honeyrain, 7/21/17).*

Youth feeling removed from their culture is a theme that has been outlined in many other decolonial studies focusing on this subject; however, it highlights how life is changing in Łutsël K'é. When I asked Eddy why he sees such a drastic loss in youth practising their culture he illuminates the effects of the residential school system. Eddy highlights this from a critical perspective:

> *"These parents today, and the residential school survivors. And they went through a hard, hard time. I think that's why, you know, that changed it, residential schools, that's what changed it. Changed the people around you, and it's hard to regain [pause] look at me. I'm 60 years old, only now, after I went for the settlement, I couldn't tell the truth until I got there. I got mad about it. Then, everything came out. Now, I could talk to people, stand around people, be heard again. You know? Because I was hurt all the time, shy all the time. I couldn't even go to people and talk to them. So, a lot of things happened, that's why it's up to the parents to make sure your kids are growing the right way, instead of over and over. Because they got a life to start, too. You can't be a kid 'til you're 20. (Eddy, 8/8/17)"*

When probed why their parents are in charge of passing down traditional skills instead of the community Eddy remarks *"I don't know, you tell me. Your nation is like that I guess. If your (referring to the parents of my nation) don't teach you, you can't know anything." (Eddy, 08/08/17).* While parents play a vital role in the passing down of skills, the family structure within Łutsël K'é has also seen a shift as Grandparents begin to fill in the role of primary caregiver for many within the community. Even those who do not view their grandparents as parents in their lives, still saw them as essential learning many skills and spending time on the land with them as highlighted by Roger's memories of teachings from his Grandfather:

> *"Well. I always think of the time, when I was like 12. When I shot my first caribou. I helped him [my Grandpa] skin it. I was feeling paranoid because I'd never done stuff like that. But then he showed me, taught me to feel pride in it, how to be confident." (Roger, 7/21/17).*

Elders within the community of Łutsël K'é are highly respected and play a very large role in the passing of skills onto the youth. Another youth from town reminisces on the role their Grandpa had when teaching bush skills. They share a story that mirrors the narrative shared by Roger when I ask; *"What did that feel like when you shot your first caribou?"* I ask. they respond:

> *"I felt sad, because when I went to the caribou it was looking at me, and it was wounded, and I didn't know what to do, so. It was pretty good, though, looking back, usually, we would get caribou hide jackets when you shot your first caribou. My Grandpa did show me what to do. I cut half the caribou, and then my hands got too cold, so I just asked my Grandpa to finish the other half. It was pretty good, to know how to kinda cut a caribou. Skin it." He later mentions that "Now I know how to go hunting. I know how to fish. I just basically felt, it made me feel like a man. Shooting the caribou. Catching the fish and feeding my family." (Anonymous, 7/21/17).*

The skills and fond memories many of the youth carry are from times with their Grandparents on the land, it has even developed passions for some as one participant highlights

"*My late grandpa used to canoe all the time. Every year he used to canoe here and I started canoeing I guess."* (Anonymous, 8/8/17).

5.1.2.3 Passing of Elders

Grandparents and Elders within the community play a huge role in the community of Łutsël K'é and as these narratives highlight, also play a role in learning traditional skills essential to dene livelihood and independence. An unfortunate narrative to arise is the loss of grandparents leading towards losing the chance to get out on the land. When sharing Eric mentions one of the last times he went hunting I probed him asking; *"and how does that make you feel, not going out hunting as much anymore?*" he responds *"I don't know, it's different because grandpa's not around anymore. Just my granny. She can't do everything herself*." Honeyrain highlights the importance of those Elders in town who have passed on *"I really wish that I got to speak to the Elders that passed because everyone has knowledge. Everyone does and its so crazy because they all have their differences. Everyone's smart. It's just different smarts so they know so much about the land. I love people who do, it makes me feel safe." (Honeyrain, 7/27/17).*

Losing respected Elders for any community is tough, but it is even harder when those elders who are passing are those who hold the traditional skills that were used ancestrally by the Denesoline people. Eddy highlights the loss of skills between Elders, parents, and their children. When discussing with Eddy about how youth travel today he talks about that gap in traditional skills:

> *"Pretty hard to go back. Pretty hard to go back, unless you start over. To me, I see the elders raise their kid, and show them how to have respect, and show them how to survive. They show them how to cook, how to use an axe, how to use everything, so you could survive on your own. And you go out now, I don't see that. Sure, school is good, too, but you have to know how to tie a string by the time you're 12 or something. Look at these*

kids who are growing up, none of them can. By the time they're running around, they gonna have to start over again, all over." (Eddy, 8/8/17).

Denesoline skills from my time in the community, seem to be passed down via practice and through narratives. Honeyrain highlights the importance of not just hearing these stories but having the chance to practice these skills; *"stories they mean something. They don't.. they're not just something you can just tell once and think you know it, just by hearing it. Our ancestors used to live by it". (7/27/7)*. To lose the skills these Elders who have passed on posses is a devastating loss that this community endures. To only have access to stories but not practice these skills at a young age further widens the passing down of TK, and traditional skills being. Roger highlights the immense importance these Elders play in the community:

"Elders really make a difference to the culture. We still have to keep strong faith and commune in our culture. Explain what we can, and listen. Do what we can to keep it alive, and pass it down to future generations." (Roger, 8/8/17).

To further build upon the observed and discussed the social change in the exchange of TK and traditional skills is the language barrier many of the youth face when talking to Elders. Many of the youth in town cannot speak their traditional language, as highlighted by Eric when asked if he can speak his traditional language *"Not really."*. Eric further flushes out this language barrier *"I don't know.. I didn't really pay much attention to when they're talking in Chipewyan, but now I start to pay attention more. Because when my grandpa passed the way he told me to listen to what everybody has to say in Chipewyan." (Eric, 7/21/17).* Many youths identify with Eric's sentiments, however, many also express frustrations when they feel that their discussions with Elders are circular in the discussion as illuminated by Honeyrain after the Elder group interview; *"I don't know. It was really repetitive. I went home and told my dad and I was like, 'Dad, they kept telling us to respect the land' and he just starts laughing and he's like, 'well are you?'" (Honeyrain, 7/21/17).*

However, youth are not deferred by these barriers, and all the participants had noted that a major reason for participating in this study and travel experience was to re-connect with their culture. When asking Sweetgrass about stories and experiences that influence her culture she mentions; *"Yeah. Makes me want to learn my culture more and be more close to my culture, to pass it down. So I could teach the youth, so they can know what's up."* When probed about where this desire comes from she further expresses that; *"I've always enjoyed being in the bush and being Dene and wanting to know my culture. I don't know, it just seems right I guess." (Sweetgrass, 07/21/1*7). This sentiment of showing the *"youth what is up"* is also illuminated by Roger when discussing his motivations for this trip *"I want to learn new things, experience things I haven't been able to yet. Use these learning experiences to help my grandfather like he cared for me." (Roger, 7/27/17).* When asking Eddy about how youth should try and hold onto their culture, his response illuminates the changes observed and discussed by the youth and also provides guidance;

> *"You know, all the stories about the old day, but you can't think about that all the time. You gotta think about the new ways too." (Eddy, 8/8/17).*

While socio-cultural changes are hard to highlight the impacts of these changes are evident in the rapid changing of lifestyles from Eddy's time to the life of the youth participants of this study (Figure 28). It is important to acknowledge and understand the barriers and cultural differences that have occurred within the LKDFN community in a short 60 years between the Elders and youth. To see how the world has rapidly changed for the youth and the multiplicities youth face in trying to stay connected to their culture while functioning with Eurocentric constructs of knowledge and capitalistic economies. The following section aims to highlight the narratives that were transmitted during the travel experience. The following section also aims to

illuminate how stories are used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives on the trip.

Figure 28 Eddy is looking at an abandoned trading post he remembers as child outside Fort Reliance. 62.721032°N, 109.145554°W

5.2 Narratives on the Land

The land, from my time in Łutsël K'é, is a sacred space that is vital to Denesoline culture. The land as such a sacred space has been represented through many different ways and stories. In particular, the Land seems to mostly take place as the teacher of each narrative and place where many personal and spiritual lessons are learned. This section highlights the narratives that were transmitted during the travel experience. This section also aims to illuminate how stories are used to transmit knowledge among the LKDFN representatives during the travel experience.

5.2.1 Narratives of Identity

During my many discussions with participants and interviews, a very common narrative that was shared and transmitted during our travel experience was narratives associated with their Identity. The two major themes relations to the themes transmitted during the trip were 1) the

land is a part of their personal identity 2) the land being an influential part of their cultural identity. These themes are not entirely separate as they commonly interact with each other however, it was important from an analytical approach to pull them out and focus on each. These themes are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

5.2.1.1 The Land as Personal Identity

Each participant had their own unique stories of the land, but the relationships expressed between themselves and the Land continued to highlight the role in which the Land influences them. As Roger so adeptly highlights when I ask him what motivates him to get out on the land:

> *"I dunno, I'm just used to being out on the land and always had a care for it. The need to care for it. Like I don't think about it, it is just a natural thing. It is just a part of my life, being in the bush. Learning, and experiencing something new. You know that's not something I really think about, it is just me." (Roger, 7/27/17).*

Honeyrain also expands upon this idea of the land just being "me", when talking about the Land as a space to connect with herself and experience "me time". She notes this phenomenon thusly:

> *"Yeah, I find myself in the bush. It's not alone space but you get a time out there to think and you don't ... Here it's different, it's not the same so for me, me time is being in the bush." (Honeyrain, 7/21/17).*

When asking participants about what appeals to them about being on the land, again and again, this idea of "feeling like myself" and "me time" is ever prevalent. It is less of a thought-provoking question when asking the youth why they enjoy getting on the land as the answer is always direct and rapid. My interview with an anonymous participant highlights this;

> *"I feel like myself on the land. I can connect more with myself. Okay. I don't know, it's nothing you do. If you need to be chopping wood, I would probably always do it. I just feel like doing stuff when I'm out there. It's like pretty much exploring yourself. Knowing yourself better." (Anonymous, 7/21/17).*

Sweetgrass and Eddy also illuminate the way in which the land represents an extension of themselves. Eddy Eddy expresses this extension of himself, by referring to himself as "coming from a stick" (8/8/17). Sweetgrass pulls the relationship between herself and the land not only as an extension of herself but also the culture she identifies with. She explains this relationship as:

> *"I've always enjoyed being in the bush and being Dene and wanting to know my culture, I don't know, just seems right I guess. It is just a part of me." (Sweetgrass, 7/21/17).*

5.2.1.2 The Land and Cultural Identity

The land has been identified by many in Łutsël K'é as sacred, and as a part of their identity. When narratives were shared on the land there also emerged this theme as the Land is a part of the Denesoline culture. As highlighted in section 5.2.1.1, being on the Land is an important part of self-discovery but it also highlighted the role in which the land plays in its influence on Denesoline cultural identity. When participants were asked about why they wanted to participate on this trip many attributed this as an experienced wherein they could 'experience' their culture. Forrest in particular states that these trips "*Helps me know how to get to this place and see the land, travel the land. Experience my culture." (Forrest Catholique, 7/27/18).*

Roger further emphasises Forrest's perspective stating:

> *"Well an Elder is coming with us, so he'll tell us lots. Lots about the history, where we are, what we should know, and learning new stuff about our culture. Areas our ancestors travelled on the land. Our ancestors travelled all over. No matter where we go, where we think "no one's ever been there" someone has been there (laughs). It is just amazing like that. I like knowing the history. The stories. Stories about our ancestors and what happened. That's why, as soon as I saw it, I had to sign up right away. It is about the culture parts for me." (Roger, 7/27/18).*

Having the opportunity to travel the land and 'experience' culture is an emergent theme that has occurred consistently enough that it needs to be given merit. Travelling the land as an

avenue for experiencing Dene culture is a significant theme. Eddy highlighted this sentiment when I asked him about cultural changes he sees:

> *"That's what I'm trying to say if you wanna raise your kids right, Your kids to know about the culture, you gotta do it often. Not get on the land once a year." (Eddy, 8/8/17).*

Getting out on the land just once, on long trips like this travel experience, are increasingly more common as highlighted in section 5.1.1.2. Travelling the Land has been indicated to be an important theme in experiencing the culture, and trips like this have been identified as avenues wherein youth can 'experience' their culture.

5.2.2 Knowledge Transference

A narrative that became increasingly emergent, when looking at the sharing of narratives transmitted during the travel experiences, and how stories are used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives while on the trip is the Land playing the role of "teacher". The teacher has been placed in quotations due to it being a word of my own device to understand this dynamic, the Land within these narratives is more of an avenue of knowledge and spirituality than a physical matter that bestows knowledge. A common connection between Land experience and connection to culture is an interesting theme that has been illuminated in the prior section. However, the role of the Land is consistently a space of learning. Eddy highlights this theme when discussing areas of improvement in school education for LKDFN representatives:

> "*If they (the school) had a little camp somewhere for kids, take them over there, show them what they could do on their own, not bring them a plate, or say, "How you put lard in a frying pan? ... That's not the way. But that doesn't come from us. Us, we tried teaching. But their parents, they don't want them to do anything. How is it that they don't know how to make fire? They need to get out on the Land more often, learn from it." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

When asked later during that same interview, about the theme that youth do not want to go out on the Land, Eddy further sheds light on learning from the Land and the importance of getting on the Land at a young age. Eddy explains the importance of these land skills thusly:

> "*But whoever doesn't wanna go, it don't matter. Whoever striving forward, that's who you take, you don't only show them cultural, you show them how to work, you know? If you don't you hurt us, if you don't work, what's gonna happen? If you work and you're well-off, you have a future. But if you don't work, don't want to, or you haven't been shown, then you end up in the street. There's only two ways. But kids will learn more, and more, and more, you know. Pretty soon, they just go crossing the boat, and frying fish, they dry fish, whatever they wanna do." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

Eddy continues this thought later in his interview further highlighting his point above:

> *"They've been in schools, these programs, you know, why is somebody not doing this more often, a couple days go hunting, show them how to skin moose, and make smoked meat. They'll get into it… Oh, yeah. Kids can't get into anything unless you show them. And if they grow up too big, too quick, you can't change it. You know, they get up to about 20, 30 years, how you gonna change it? You can't change it." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

These discussions I have had with Eddy shed light on how youth learn not only traditional skills, but also life skills and with that self-reliance. Many youths participating on this trip had little to no experience in the bush, while others were incredibly adept at their land skills. In particular, Roger, who has spent time working as Caribou Monitor, has learned many important skills from the land. When asked about why he feels being a caribou monitor is important he mentions it as a learning experience:

> *"Well, it is a learning experience. Getting to know these animals. They can't speak for themselves, like you and like me. We gotta help out, respect the land like the Elders talk and learn tips from them. I think about what they say. Gotta think about what happens outside, like the animals they're smart too. They know something is going to happen. You need to observe and gotta learn from listening to them." (Roger, 07/21/17).*

These experiences on the land are not possessions one holds close to their chest, but rather a community resource to be shared and celebrated. As other youths have noted, this trip as a way for them to obtain knowledge and bestow it onto others, trips like these generate stories and these same stories are used to pass down knowledge to others. Many of the youth interviewed also illuminated the role getting out on the Land plays for knowledge dissemination into the community:

> *"For the people that want to go it'll be good for them. Those that aren't inclined. Bummers for them (both laugh). It is good. Good for our youth. Get to know our land and the other side of it. IT'll be really good experience and lots of good stories and lessons passed along to generations and the kids below us." (Roger, 07/21/17).*

Honeyrain further emphasises Roger's point:

> *"I feel like I learn, every trip is a new experience for me and it's something that I really like. I want to carry that with me and be able to tell my children in the future that I went to places rather than just staying in one spot. Women then couldn't do much so I want to kind of just want to be able to tell my children, you could do whatever the F you want." (Honeyrain, 07/21/17).*

While doing this analysis of narrative, it is important to note that the term "teacher" was not used in regards to the role the land plays in establishing stories shared within Dene pedagogy. Rather the term "teacher" is my term established to help me understand this complex interplay between the Land and knowledge transference. The Land for many youths has been identified as an avenue to learn and later pass down this knowledge onto other generations. Eddy's sharing also illuminated this interplay between the Land and knowledge transference, illuminating the difference in youth who spend time on the land versus those who do not. The roles in which Eurocentric constructs of education play within Denesoline pedagogy should heed space for youth to experience knowledge transference through nature-based avenues and the

sharing of stories. The Land is not just a place but also an avenue of learning that connects all paths of life and grounds narratives through a collective shared experience.

Figure 29 Marcel sharing his knowledge on how to build the Pak-Canoes

5.2.3 LKDFN Motivations Enabling Future Capacities

This study was built from the already existing capacities of the LKDFN. The LKDFN has been involved in strengthening capacities as they relate to land monitoring and the Dene way of life. As part of the study, there is the incentive to continue to build these capacities by getting youth on the land and involved in the Dene way of life. Programs like Ni Hat'ni, the Tanning Camp, and the Youth Caribou Monitors exist today because of the capacities that the LKDFN has and are continuing to build within the community.

The capacities that exist within the community are the reason why these programs endure, but not all programs are the same. This trip only occurs once a year and only really targets a select few of people within the community. Those on the trip did feel the benefits of participating in this trip, as AJ notes the importance of this experience:

> *"I think this experience, everyone should do, that's young. Cause it's great for them. Makes you feel like what Marcel said; more responsible for your own things, feel pride in those things and to be positive like Marcel said." (AJ, 08/08/17).*

An anonymous participant compliments AJ's sentiments:

> *"It means quite a bit, I guess. A big deal to travel the land like this, and experience the wilderness, and especially going canoeing. I usually go up by boat or skidoo, so it's a once in a while thing to get to go canoeing." (Anonymous, 07/21/17).*

This section of this paper aims to illuminate the role these trips play in further building upon LKDFN governance capacities of ancestral lands and waters and to highlight the desires expressed by participants to get out on the Land and further build upon current capacities, connect with LKDFN land, traditional knowledge, and culture. To begin understanding the motivations of those participating and the importance of further building upon current capacities I will first illuminate the important ties between the Land and family as expressed by the youth interviewed.

5.2.4 Travel as Family

It is fair to say that many youths in town are always excited about this trip and the opportunity to travel the land via canoe. However, what is not openly discussed often is how LKDFN representatives travel. Having the honour to travel the land with an Elder begins to illuminate how the LKDFN views travel. Travelling the land is a family ordeal, regardless of who is on the trip, when you travel you are family. This can be seen by the way in which Eddy speaks of his discussion with one of the youth during the trip:

> *"I tell him that when people travel together like this, it's a family. (Eddy folds his fingers in as he talks about this feeling of being a family). Respect one another, and kinda work together. There's one. There's not two group. But one is a little bit better, the other slow. Now you guys both know. 'Cause if you get mad, you can't learn nothing. Plus I told, if you don't make it, people gonna laugh at you. So if you say you're gonna make it, do. Just get to it." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

Roger echoes this sentiment when discussing his perspective of the trip as a whole when I ask: "Yeah. I have one final question for you. That is, is there a story or a moment on this trip that really represented what this trip meant to you?

> *"Not really a moment, but just canoeing altogether. Sometimes people would get left behind from previous trips, but we all stuck together and support each other, and got in together like a family. That's what I find moving for me." (Roger, 08/08/17).*

This idea of "family" is where many of the motivations to continue to partake in these trips arise. Many of the youth identified travel as a family event. This can be seen in the way in which participants discuss their motivations for participating in this trip. Particularly Honeyrain outlines the importance of practising culture together:

> *"They [programs like this and the Tanning Camp] bring us together. The things that we do together. We all do it as a family. We're all related here. (She motions with her fingers towards the whole of the town). But they have their own households, so when we do our cultures, I feel like it brings us together and it unites us. We're stronger together." (Honeyrain, 07/21/17).*

AJ outlines the sentiment of a community coming together and feeling like a family stating *"It feels great to see those people again, feel like a family again. Cause' I'm usually back in Grand Prairie." (AJ, 08/08/17).* This idea of a people of differing background coming together while travelling the land feeling like *family* is further emphasized by a story shared by an anonymous participant:

> *"When I was a kid, we were travelling to Fort Reliance, and we were driving and the battery started smoking. That was a pretty crazy experience. In the motorboat driving, and then next thing you know the battery goes up in smoke. That was pretty intense. And then we had to go park in the island, make smoke signals, wave other boats down. We had to burn fresh, green wood. That was a pretty cool experience, making smoke signals, and the boat breaking down." (Anonymous, 07/21/17).*

I probe the anonymous participant asking "Did you feel in that moment that you were really apart ... Did you feel that vibe of community when you guys were trying to get people's attentions?" They respond:

> *"Yeah, because once we seen a boat we all rushed and tried to get bushes, made a big fire, eight-foot bonfire. And then sure enough they came. They helped us out, like family." (Anonymous, 07/21/17).*

Many memories for youth travelling relate back to trips with family, being a family, or becoming a family due to the trip (much like the way in which we came together on our trip). However, the motivations of participants did not cease at the present iterations of family. When discussing the opportunity and the importance to partake on this trip many youths related this trip back to a time they remember with their grandparents prior to their passing.

5.2.4.1 Connecting with Ancestors through travel

As was stated by Marcel many times during this trip, the experience to travel the land like this is not only a cultural experience but also a "*spiritual journey*". For many youth travelling, the route we took brought up memories of past Elders prior to their passing. To travel the land like this was a way in which they could pay their respects for their past Elders. When discussing why this trip was important to an anonymous participant they stated*"A lot I guess. Yeah, because I told my ... Last time I talked to my grandfather I told him I was going on this canoe trip and he was happy for me.* I probe the anonymous participant asking "Yeah. So does it almost feel like this was a way to like connect with your grandpa, or to like…" to which he responds promptly; *"Yeah, cause his grave's here." (Anonymous, 08/08/17).*

Getting to pay respects for prior Elders, and to see the land in which they cherished is of major importance for youth and instilling the pride to maintain LKDFN governance towards ancestral lands. For many youths, travelling the land is a way to reconnect with family and experience life from their perspective. Many youths discussed places their families had been to noting that is a very important experience, seeing the places in the physical and not just through stories. To illuminate this theme, I outline the conversation with AJ when I ask him about his time on the land with his family along this route. AJ shares the following about his experience in visiting these locations without his family physically present: "*Typically out on those points like we*

did (during the trip – We would have a picnic). Yeah, my dad would tell me 'this where I went hunting once' or 'this is where they stop when they go'. That is usually about it. I would see them as pretty interesting. Knowing where he'd been. Feeling like I'd been there too with him." (AJ, 07/21/17).

Eric attributes this travel experience as a way to reconnect with his ancestors and experience their livelihoods when discussing his perspective:

> *It's because, traditional to do that, going back in the day we used to do that. Before the boats and motors. Just like our Ancestors did." (Eric, 07/21/17).*

Travelling the land and having the opportunity to partake in experiences like this allow for youth to experience the lives of their ancestors. It helps youth to begin to develop relationships with other members of the community and begin constructing relationships with the land. As Eddy mentioned, earlier in this paper, "*Kids can't get into anything unless you show them. And if they grow up too big, too quick, you can't change it." (Eddy, 08/08/17).* Youth in these communities are the future from which younger generations will learn from. This idea was something I struggled with as noted in my daily journals:

> *"I think a lot of people just think when you go on a canoe trip that you're just going on a trip and I think back to what Eddy and Marcel had said, more so Marcel had said, this is a spiritual journey for these boys. I think, at the time I didn't really understand but now I have an idea. I think I'm always less focused on the present and the past. I know this. I like to live in the moment. To think about the fact that these boys are going to share these stories with the younger generation, their children and their kids about how they did this huge canoe trip and did it in freaking two days of paddling ... I can't even say two and a half … Two and a quarter days of paddling to get to DesnethCh'e from Shelter Bay is just incredible. But to tell the younger kids about this story and to instil in them the drive to try to beat these records and to keep going." (Daily Log, Day 4).*

Getting the opportunity to traverse the Land, generate stories, share knowledge, and re-visit Ancestors through landscapes is something these youths can carry forward into the future.

These narratives begin to outline why these types of programming are important and hopefully begin to build further capacities.

5.3 Building Upon Current Capacities

A theme that became ever apparent during my analysis was the importance of these trips. When asked, during the exit interviews, why these types of trips are important participants varied in their response, but all indicated the importance of experiencing the Land for your wellbeing, this is outlined by AJ when discussing his perspective on why others should follow in his footsteps: *"It's nice for youth to canoe to Desnetché [wind] to get some people out there, experience it. It's pretty good for them." (AJ, 69-70, 08/08/17).* Roger compliments AJ's noted improved physical wellbeing at the trip's conclusion: *"Well they didn't have motors (the ancestors), but this would be just as long, but they always paddle. Just manpower and I feel happy that we paddled most of the way. It's good that we do that. Good for your mind, and your body." (Roger, 08/08/17).*

However, trips like this have their benefits they also cease to help the community with their infrequent nature. This narrative was prevalent in the daily talk in town about the trip when discussing how youth in town *"only really get out on the land once a year" (Journal, 07/14/17)*. Eddy illuminates this narrative when I ask him what it means to him to get out on the Land with these youth:

> *"Oh, I'd go out with any kid. Don't matter who. I'm just happy to show them how to make fire, how to cook on their own. They're doing good, they set up tents and everything. When it comes to cooking, and doing something, or tying string, nothing. And that's the most important way. So, that one you'll have to talk to whoever you're working with. If you do it often, they all would know soon. But for ten kids, once a year, how will they learn anything? Can't. Whoever's traveling with them, of course they're happy, they're making money, they don't care. Yeah, but what about kids? Where do they go from here? So, that's what the ... That's my really concern right now, the cultural way. I got it reading in me, so I could teach that easy, but working with kids, if you're only going to do it once a year, with three or four kids, I mean, we're not going anywhere." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

Based off of all the changes the community faces, the importance of getting on the Land for maintaining the Dene way of life, and furthering of current capacities, where do we go from here? This study fails to answer this question. However, Eddy shares his thoughts on this idea of where to go from here. Eddy shares how he learned the Dene way of life from his Father and graciously shared it with me during our interview:

> *"You change it now, when they're excited, and ... Then they make it on their own, they don't have a problem. But that's what my dad did to me. He didn't let me sit around. Took me out, and I helped him, feed dogs, we had to cut wood, and make sure there's lots of wood, make sure water's there, then I go play. Not before. Today, nobody has to do anything, you know, makes like just a parent, and working like crazy, kid is sitting around. Not how it's supposed to be. You have a job to do, eh? After you're done with here, daily, that's every day life. Yeah, well, all the things he did. Some amazing, and some hard ... But, I have to, 'cause otherwise he'll be mad. So, after I do it, everybody's happy, and I'm happy. Sometimes it's hard, but I still did it, without complaining. Now, today, I'm using that skill. Nothing is hard for me. And if I didn't, everything would be too hard for me, I wouldn't know how to do it." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

Eddy also notes the way in which the world has changed around him during his lifetime stating; *"to lose all this luxury, who would?"*. Eddy further emphasises the importance of striking a balance between maintaining the Dene way of life while existing in the world today, noting that both can exist:

> *"But it's gonna get worse. 'Cause it's not the old way anymore. The way I see it is you could try and hang onto the cultural, but you know how time is. It doesn't go backwards. It goes forward. Along with everything else that's coming too. So, how are you supposed to do that? Sometimes I think the elder culture, teach your kids into these new technologies. Go forward with them. The only way, I think. Hang onto the cultural too much, you're gonna be slow going forward. You got the certificate for any kind of job. That's another thing, how to think about before you take in too much kids out of here. That's why I say, do it often. Close-by the town." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

Eddy is always looking forward as he states; *"I know what is in the past, I'm not looking back there no more, I'm looking forward." (08/08/19).* The importance to maintain a balance between the Dene culture and the skills for today's work environment is critical to Eddy. Eddy

again illuminates on why building on these capacities is important for Dene youth and their well-being:

> *"Get them education. And they'll make the people's ways stronger. The government will start listening to you, if you start seeing that. Right now, you're just pulling people, putting them all in one bunch. That's not too good. But that's what they wanna do anyway, these government people. You know how they are. They don't care. That's not people's fault. It's nobody's fault, it's just the way ... It's just the way things gotta go on this earth. You can't ... If you think that guy is wrong, that guy is right, you know, you can't think on it. Because maybe the other one came from, you know, like me, I come from a stick, you could say. But I know the knowledge of everything here. I could survive anywhere, you know?... But if I got into this work site, dealing with people, machinery, and computers, I'm not worth anything. And that's what's coming my way. So, you can't ignore that too. You gotta know these new stuff, these new ways. They gotta know both." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

The dialogical nature of this interview allowed for these ideas to be heard, and do a service to this study because to highlight the ways in which these capacities should be further built upon, by an outsider, feels out of place and inappropriate. However, the need to maintain consistent avenues for youth to practice traditional skills and experience the Land is a narrative that is overbearingly discussed within the community during my time there. To strike a balance between the two is hard, as illuminated in section 4.2.2.1, however, Eddy broaches the path where the LKDFN exisiting capacities continue to provide more traditional skills programming:

> *"Cause if a band or new people keep it in balance, like, have more of the new way, have more, teach them faster. That's why I'm saying, if you have a little camp by the town for the kids to go out and do their cultural stuff, you don't have to do it once a year. You'd do it all the time." (Eddy, 08/08/17).*

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

To begin this section, I feel it is necessary to re-iterate the purpose of this study as outlined prior. The purpose of this de-colonial narrative study is to record and interpret Denesoline traditional knowledge (TK) and stories transmitted during a multi-day travel experience. This research aims to contribute to Northern, Indigenous, community-based research by illuminating the knowledges and the narratives of land users, elders and youth from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN). In particular, the study aims to work with LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods. The content-specific approach has the focus on not being a confining vessel but rather aims to highlight Denesoline stories and further illuminate the presence of the Denesoline.

The five research questions that have been devised in collaboration with LKDFN representatives' Ni Hat'ni and WLED are; what TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience? What are cultural, environmental, and social changes observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives? How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience? How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands? What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture? This study engages the principles of community-based participatory and Indigenous research methodologies to ensure priorities and processes are determined by community representatives, and that research outcomes have direct relevance to the LKDFN.

This section of the paper will be structured around each of the research questions to bring this paper to a close. During the analysis section, these research questions were used to help aid

the coding process and later expanded upon, this section will pull these layers back to build a discourse on each question and the current literature. In sum, this thesis does not aim to make any ultimate claims to truth, but rather illuminates and contextualizes the voices of community representatives in relation to the research questions and relevant current literature. The outcomes of this study aim to contribute to relevant community discourses on Dene self-determination, land and water governance, the Tracking Change project, decolonizing tourism, and cultural livelihood.

6.1 Research Question #1

What TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience?

This portion of the paper aims to explore the narratives transmatted during the travel and land camp experience. As the main research objective in regards to the Tracking Change project and research question guiding this section will be focused on more contextual experiences in regards to change. The following section responds to the above research question through connecting back to existing literature, or lack thereof, in regards to narrative representation within literature and the gap in which I feel this research begins to illuminate. During my analysis section, I identified that there were two major themes in regards to narratives shared that were frequent; the land being a part of their identity, and the land being an influential part of cultural identity.

6.1.1 Narratives illuminating transitional livelihoods of Dene youth

A major issue identified within current academia is the transitional lives youth live wherein they are pulled between the traditions of Dene culture and the pressures of Eurocentric capitalistic structures (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard 2007). Elder Eddy Drybones best exemplifies this conflict during one of our many conversations when he discusses how the opportunities youth once had are no longer

viable. Eddy highlights the way traditional livelihoods fare in comparison to Eurocentric necessities such as money. This conflict is described by Corntassel and Bryce (2011) when they identify this confinement about state-based rights that inhibit Indigenous responsibilities to Indigenous homelands (Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2007). As this distance occurs between Dene livelihood within youth livelihood, we begin to see compartmentalisation of Indigenous self-determination through their separation from the land (Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2007).

The contrast between ingrained Eurocentric constructs and dene pedagogy due to the legacies of colonialism were most starkly illuminated during my time at Desnethch'e. Desnethch'e in its self is a sacred gathering site, critical to the Denesoline culture of the LKDFN (Parlee et al., 2007). However, during my time there I observed what I perceived as a cultural clash that I observed similar to oil and water. This phenomenon discussed was the awkward connection between the church and traditional Dene practices. It painted a strange vignette as Elders from town participated in church, the programming of Desnethche, to an, extend, was focused on the timings of prayer at church. Putting the effects of Eurocentric culture at the forefront of the daily proceedings.

Furthermore, many youths in town, in particular, do not get to experience the land nearly as much as their previous relatives did as they had noted. Youth attributed their obligations to attend school/work as major transitionary times from their time spent on the land. Now this, in particular, is an unfair assessment as plenty has changed within the community, and in particular within the lifetime of those in town as illuminated by Eddy. What once brought in money such as trapping, fishing, and guiding are no longer economically viable to maintain a livelihood within a capitalistic societal structure. These changes can be seen as agents of colonisation through deeply

seeded Eurocentricism as outlined by many Indigenous academics (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009). The most common agent of colonisation identified is the exact opposite pedagogical ideals between state-sanctioned educational systems and narrative based Dene pedagogy (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009). Escobar (1995) illuminates the pervasiveness of Eurocentrism through its historical geographic conditions that have become intertwined with the geopolitics of power and not through expressed proximity. This is highlighted by the loss of traditional language, skills, and values within local LKDFN youth. This state dependence as expressed by Alfred (2009) could be associated with the loss of traditional skills, values, and language. Many youths in town discuss this major issue as many youths have lost access to the teachings of certain Elders in town who only speak their ancestral language.

To re-iterate due to the transitionary lives many Dene youth live with responsibilities in both maintaining a Dene livelihood while living within Eurocentric capitalist constructs have illuminated agents of colonisation identified by many Indigenous scholars within the sub-arctic regions of Canada. While this loss of traditional language, values, and skills as emphasised by those participating in this study can be illuminated through the narratives shared by participants, it can also illuminate the importance of maintaining strong Dene cultural constructs. The following section aims to display the narratives shared and begin the discourse of importance on maintaining dene livelihood and ancestral dene lands.

6.1.2 Narratives on the Land illuminating the important relationship between Dene land and people

During my time living in Łutsël K'é, I had been told by many Elders that stories are sacred. With that, I feel it is important to reiterate that while I was recording and analysing the narratives shared by participants that I have also kept in mind the sacredness of these stories being shared. The two most common themes pulled from stories shared while on the land were that of the land establishing personal identity via teachings, ancestral stories, or personal experience and the role in which the land plays in defining cultural identity. This theme of being myself while on the land was one that majority of the participants shared. Stories expressed all had to do with a time in which youth were experiencing the land. The similarity of these narratives transcended the pre-existing differences between youth involved. While many youths shared stories from differing parts of their lives, they all expressed a story of personal significance having to do with the land. The land within dene livelihood is sacred as has been highlighted by numerous Indigenous academics (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007). Indigenous peoples take their identity from the land in which they reside becoming a defining feature of themselves and also displaying where they are from (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O'Neil & Łutsël K'é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). To ignore the importance of the Land to Dene livelihood would be incredibly narrow sighted.

Youth narratives of land as a cultural identity also ring true with Indigenous academics as a vital part of dene pedagogy (Legat, 2009). Ballantyne (2014) states that the focus of dene pedagogy is with relationships to the land, embodying and thinking within dene stories, and acting our various values associated within the Dene way of life. This lack of connection with the dene pedagogy and in relation dene culture is a clear driving force for many youths on the

trip. One participant Honeyrain illuminates this feeling explicitly when discussing how she felt that those coming from outside her community knew more about her culture than she. A large portion of this loss based off of the many interviews was the loss of traditional skills and the lack of time spent on the land. As discussed in the prior section youth having to strive to excel in a transitory society has thus distanced them from the land, in turn, their identity and culture.

A major theme within the narratives shared on the trip had to do directly with the land shaping their identity and cultural identity. To state the loss of these environmental/human connections as harmful is an understatement. From my observations from the themes many of the youth in town struggle with a crisis of identity as they become further distanced from the land and the expectations of a Dene as highlighted through the narratives shared. A major part of Dene pedagogy as illuminated by Ballantyne (2014) isliving out dene stories. This has been further removed from LKDFN youth as they do not get the opportunity to experience the land and in extension their culture. Travelling the land has been distanced from a daily occurrence for many youths within the town. Getting out on the land just once in a year on trips like this have become increasingly the norm for many of the participants of this study. This phenomenon falls in line with current literature as authors express effects of colonisation on the loss of traditional skills and knowledge (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard 2007). It is through these land-based experiences where dene pedagogy lives that the meanings of being Dene can restore which this study illuminates within a contextual experience. As Coulthard (2013) describes it is essential in the combat against the forces of colonisation to restore traditional skills and values thus leading to the shift of meanings of Indigenous back into an Indigenous paradigm outside of the forces of the white discourse. To restore dene self-determination, it is vital to restore traditional skills and knowledge through

land-based experiences with youth to maintain the Dene way of life within youth. As Eddy illuminates, these changes do not need to be major but rather it is the little things that contribute the most potential.

To further build upon this point, while this study aimed to focus on the traditional skills that were physically passed down from adult to youth, Eddy would argue this did not occur. In particular, Eddy discusses how the youth only learned paddling and that participating in such programs once a year does little in teaching traditional skills and knowledge. However, for some youth, this was the furthest they had ever traversed the land, as one anonymous participant mentioned the longest paddle he ever did was the six-hour day part of the pre-trip workshop. Based off of Cámara-Leret (2014) and colleague's definition of TK, there is the basis to note some skills that the youth had learned. Some of these TK skills passed down based off of my trip observations, but not limited to canoeing, reading weather patterns, where to place a shelter, cleaning small game/fish, mental resiliency, and basic orienteering. However, many times during the trip Elder Eddy took the opportunity to share stories, traditional names of places, share traditional stories, and pass on his personal experiences as a bushman. Furthermore, Eddy and Marcel took time to outline areas of change, animal tracks, and took the youth out on a boat trip around Desnethche to sacred sites and historical landmarks. However, Eddy also noted the lack of traditional practice in the actual trip itself, noting the way we travelled as "Not traditional". Rather we should be focused on establishing on areas wherein dene pedagogy is at the heart and these skills can be practised frequently. This phenomenon Alfred (2009) refers to as a *zone of refuge,* but Eddy simply puts it as a place where kids can practice skills and practice oftens.

6.1.3 Summary of Section 6.1

In summary, the major themes identified through trip participants narratives were associated with the land as shaping their personal and cultural identity. The long-lasting legacies of colonisation have thus affected how youth identify as they now must focus on transitional livelihoods, balancing Dene livelihoods through Eurocentric constructs. This has affected the ways in which youth can live out a Dene pedagogy as the pervasive effects of a highly influenced Eurocentric capitalistic society have changed the identities of a traditional dene livelihood from living off the land towards more monetised avenues of labour. With that change there then becomes a conflict between personal identity as many youths feels the need to "experience their culture" through yearly programming aimed at getting youth on the land, wherein traditionally youth were out on the land daily. As identified by Indigenous academics, to lose such connections and relationship to the land has cultivated an identity crisis wherein youth cannot participate in a vital part of Dene pedagogy, living out dene stories, as they no longer possess the skills (Ballantyne, 2014). To which now we as a collective must begin to establish a discourse on the return dene pedagogy to the forefront within current Eurocentric systems to ensure that Indigenous power and presence can be continuously contested (Alfred, 2009; Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012). To further build upon the current discourse the next section aims to illuminate the physical changes the LKDFN community has been facing and how this further impacts LKDFN youth.

6.2 Research Question #2

What are cultural, environmental, and social changes observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives?

This section aims to build off of the prior portion of this paper by focusing on environmental and societal changes identified by those who participated in this study. The section hopes to contrast these identified changes to current literature and begin a discourse on the effects these changes have on current LKDFN residents. The purpose of this section is to highlight Denesoline voices as they pertain to the current state of their ancestral lands and spaces and display the ways in which this study expands the current literature through contextualised experiences of change.

6.2.1 Environmental changes contextualised

With the role of the land as a primary agent of Dene pedagogy, we can begin to descend into the current changes the community faces outside and contrast against ancestral stories and current literature. To say that change has been stagnant in the north would be ignorant, that while the socio-cultural norms of LKDFN youth have changed so has the environmental landscape around them. As discussed in the literature the town of Łutsël K'é (Snowdrift the prior name) was built during the time of *'sedentarism'* wherein Indigenous peoples were dispossessed into communities and towns (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009). While within these towns the Denesoline continued to live off of their heavy meat-based diet due to the large populations of caribou and fish (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009). As the main hunting lands of the caribou began to shift simultaneously as did the residents of Łutsël K'é having to travel further and further northward to get to the caribou. This change in wildlife behaviour, in particular to the caribou, has been noted as being part of climate change and habitat destruction (Sharma, Couturier, & Cote, 2009). In particular, the Beverly Caribou herd, one of the largest herds that travel near

Łutsël K'é, has seen changes in their migratory paths (Sharma, Couturier, & Cote, 2009). One of the youth participants illuminates this through one of his narratives discussing the contextual effect it has had in his lifetime, wherein one year they were there and the next they were not. Research by Parlee (2014) and colleagues also emphasise the change in caribou migratory patterns, wherein there hunting grounds have shifted further east since 2000. Furthermore, previous research with the LKDFN community noted a significant decline in caribou populations in line with current narratives shared in this thesis (Parlee et al., 2014).

To suddenly lose traditional access to caribou has been an effect that has been on the mind of many LKDFN residents during my time in Łutsël K'é, and from studies like Parlee's (2014). Studies indicate the growing concern over caribou migrating habits from other sub-arctic communities, noting the change in migratory pathways (Ferguson, Williamson, & Messier, 1998). This was a theme highlighted during many of my interviews with participants and also a prior observation from other LKDFN studies (LKDFN Tracking Change, 2016; Parlee, Manseau, & Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation 2005). The changes in animal behaviour do not cease with that of the caribou but also with musk ox and moose. A much less documented occurrence, but during my time with Elder Eddy, he mentioned changes in Musk Ox behaviour noting them to enter newer regions. While this is also highlighted by Eddy discussing moose whom he finds to be more prevalent further north than they once existed. This too could be attributed to sudden changes in caribou habitat that has already seen moose and white-tailed deer begin to encroach on these areas (Parlee et al., 2014; Cluff, 2005). While on the land we did not note any white-tailed deer, we did, however, fail to see any moose in what is highlighted to be a moose rich environment.

Eddy was born just outside of Pike's Portage and was one of the LKDFN members to be raised out on the bush, showing the changes that happened within his 63+ years of life are staggering. When we discuss the changes of wildlife within the Northwest Territories many perceive these changes to occur over lifetimes, but in the instance of Eddy it has been within a single lifetime, and for some of the youth they have also seen a rapid change in wildlife. This study helps to illuminate the cracks in which Eurocentric forms of inquiry fall as many of these stories of environmental change have been passed down from one to another for lifetimes. Furthermore begins to highlight the effects of climate change noted by McBean (2005) and colleagues to already by occurring.

The effects of climate change do not cease with the experiences of participants as they pertain to wildlife either. Many community members discuss the lowering of water levels and the changing of landscapes due to forest fires. With longer hot seasons and drier summers with nasty storms as more common than before. It is one thing to illuminate these changes as is highlighted in often, but this study contextualises the effects these changes have on the community. The loss of ancestral lands to forest fires is something this study contextualises well, wherein current literature notes this as an issue (Tarnocai, 2006; Gagnon & Gough, 2005; Hinzman et al., 2005; Rouse et al., 1997) it misses out on the spiritual impact these changes have on sacred land such as Desnethche.

This goes against the discourse of previous research that tends to highlight the effects of climate change as 'slow' (Rouse et al., 1997). This study illuminates the more rapid changes in climate change and how it has altered the relationship between the Denesoline and the caribou. While other studies have done well to capture the changes that are physically occurring many do so through the constructs of Eurocentric designs of inquiry, wherein this study uses the voices of

those who live here and are affected by the changes. This study also contextualises the changes in climate change in regard to the livelihoods of those living in Łutsël K'é. Ultimately, this study has illuminated the need for further discourse on the abundance of climate change study and the actions these changes are having on residents within the Northwest Territories. It is important to note the effects, but bring power to the voices of those being affected by these changes.

6.2.2 Societal changes contextualised

Much like the rapid changes in the environment the community of Łutsël K'é has also seen vast societal changes. Many of these changes have been highlighted within the prior section, in particular, the transitory life-styles LKDFN youth currently face, but this section aims to contextualise the changes illuminated. Within many studies, the discussion of the impacts of colonisation on the loss of traditional skills and values highlight how these changes occur but do not illuminate the people living within these changes. One of the youth Roger best contextualises the impacts of these lost skills when discussing his upbringing of his Grandfather. Wherein studies like Alfred (2009), Corntassel (2005), Coulthard (2013), Ballantyne (2014), Legat (2009), and Wildcat (2014) illuminate the geopolitical power imbalances between Eurocentricism on Dene way of life; it sometimes feels we do not contextualise the direct impacts on those living within these communities. This study helps to support these discourses on the legacies of colonialism by highlighting the voices of those living within these bounds of Eurocentricism and practising the Dene way of life. This study illuminates the 'where' of these effects expressing the 'how' of critical decolonial studies when discussing the effects of Eurocentric capitalistic structures in Dene communities.

This study also provides the reader with a better understanding of the contextual effects of forced Eurocentric pedagogy on sub-arctic Dene communities through the establishment of

residential school systems. A major theme within the LKDFN community is the structural change within the family dynamic due to Eurocentric constructs of knowledge. Wherein knowledge was passed down through stories from ancestors it now resembles more Eurocentric constructs of knowledge such as state-sanctioned schools as identified by current literature (Alfred, 2009). Current literature discusses this as the pervasion of Eurocentricism through colonisation and the residential school system (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Battiste, 1998; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007; Ballantyne, 2014; Fanon, 1963; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Legat, 2009; Wildcat et al, 2014). However, this study illuminates how this system has impacted the family structure as fewer participants are raised by their parents, but rather by the Elders, aunties, and uncles. Many studies illuminate the dire effects of small Indigenous communities losing their Elders has, but few contextualise the relationships between those in town and the names of those being lost. For many in town, the loss of Elders is not just the loss of knowledge and a family member, but for many, it is also the loss of their parental figure and main caregiver. Wherein knowledge used to stem from community narratives shared from Elders to youth, now it lies within the perceived notions of Eurocentricism through books and the teachings of state-sanctioned institutional systems.

6.2.3 Summary of Section 6.2

In summary, this section illuminated the environmental and societal changes as experienced by the community through the narratives shared. This section illuminated the roles in which this study plays in contextualising the current literature towards the individual experience of ‘change’. Wherein, the ‘how’ of the effect, is discussed often within the current literature as it pertains to environmental change in the Northwest Territories this study aims to identify the ‘where’ and ‘whom’ these changes are affecting. In discussing not only the changes

in wildlife but contextualising these changes through the day-to-day experiences of those involved.

To further express the contextualization of this study this section also illuminated the large-scale societal changes often identified by those writing within critical pedagogical practices and bringing it to the individual experience. This study illuminates not the existing issue of Eurocentric capitalistic structures like ‘consumerism’ but rather the individual experience of trying to pursue the Dene way of life within these pervasive constructs. This section also provides the reader with a better understanding, not of the role of the Residential school systems detrimental effects of the local community but rather the legacies that continue to exist from these forced Eurocentric constructs. This study provides the reader with the understanding not of the ‘what’ occurring but rather to the ‘whom’ it is occurring to bringing power back to the voice of the Denesoline living amongst these legacies of ‘change’.

6.3 Research Question #3

How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience?

Within this study, it became clear that within Dene pedagogy knowledge transference occurs through the sharing and living out of stories. With the previous sections illuminating how these forms of knowledge transference are constrained, it is important to illuminate the avenues that influence knowledge transference. As this community continues to adapt and change programs like this focused on the Dene way of life, have become increasingly more popular. As a means to combat issues of colonisation and reinforce Dene self-determination programs like this will continue to occur and as such it is important to note how these programs illuminate knowledge transference.

While it is important to acknowledge the impacts of colonisation and the legacies that still exist today this section will focus more so on how knowledge was transferred. In this section, I do not aim to discuss what knowledge was shared directly as that knowledge is not mine to keep, but rather illuminate major avenues of knowledge transference that future studies and programs need to respect. While drawing on current literature within this following section, I will discuss the two major themes I identified as a part of knowledge transference. These two themes are the land as an avenue of knowledge transference, and the collective shared experience of travel as an avenue of knowledge transference.

6.3.1 The land as an avenue of knowledge transference

In previous studies that examine how Dene pedagogy lives and breathes, scholars note that Dene pedagogy focuses on land-based relationships, acting out various values associated with the Dene way of life, and the embodying and thinking within Dene stories (Ballantyne, 2014; Legat, 2009). Through the ways in which Dene pedagogy is explored and lived the Dene must be able to interact with the Land. Wherein previous studies illuminate how the land is being harmed by anthropocentric activities and the role in which the land plays in supporting Anthropocene ways of life, this study highlights the way in which the land provides an avenue of knowledge transference. To not only be in a location but being defined by that location is how Dene pedagogy supports identity. Several current academics identify the role in which the land becomes a defining feature of a people and also displaying where they are from (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O'Neil & Łutsël K'é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). This is still occurring within the ways in which participants shared stories and their experiences while on the land. Many attributed this trip, not as just a way to "travel" or a "vacation" but a way to see Ancestral lands and re-live the stories of their ancestors. As one

youth expressed during our interview hearing these stories and re-visiting these places is a way to connect with ancestors.

The way in which Dene pedagogy is shared and celebrated is much different from how Eurocentric communities share and celebrate knowledge (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O'Neil & Łutsël K'é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). Wherein Eurocentric societies celebrate knowledge through institutionalized systems and monetary gain; Dene communities attribute knowledge as a community resource to be shared and celebrated (Agrawal, 1995; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2002; Parlee, O'Neil & Łutsël K'é, 2007; Getty, 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). This study illuminates this discourse in the way in which this trip allowed youth the chance to experience the stories of their ancestors and bestow it onto others through the generation of their stories. Again this theme is highlighted in earlier sections, but one participant best describes this dynamic when discussing the importance of getting on the land. This participant illuminates how that experiences not only affect the current individual but also become teaching points to be passed down to other generations.

The land for these youth is not just a vast space of sheer geological marvels and swaths of peat moss; it is what we within Eurocentric constructs would identify as a "classroom". The experiences had on the land allow for youth to practice Dene pedagogy and pass down the stories from their travels onto the community empowering all. The difference between youth who partake in experiencing the land often and those who do not is stark within the community and thus it is important that space for Dene pedagogy be practice be heeded. As was stated prior within this paper, the land is not just a physical space but rather an avenue that constitutes learning through a collective shared experience connecting all paths of life through the shared experience on the Land.

6.4 Research Question #4

How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands?

Through the previous two sections, we have illuminated how the Denesoline of LKDFN interact with their environment and the vital role in which the Land plays in Dene pedagogy through the sharing and experiencing stories. What has yet to be discussed is the "how" in which these events occur, and a large portion of that "how" has to do with traversing the land. Due to vast ancestral lands of the LKDFN being on the land is quite an endeavour and during my time in the community, different stories could be shared about the same locations depending on the time of day, the group you were with, and your level of knowledge of the land. While travelling the land as it pertains to LKDFN community members provides a wholly different perspective than that of traditional definitions of tourism, current literature still pulls parallels between Western perspectives of travel and that of other knowledge. As discussed by Chambers and Buzinde (2015) the issue lies not in Western perspectives and their values, but rather how we privilege Western perspectives to hamper the legitimacy of other paradigms constantly. Thus, I aim to illuminate the roles in which this travel experience contributes to LKDFN self-governance of ancestral lands and waters.

6.4.1 Traditional notions of travel and its relation to power

Within academia, there has been the argument that tourism studies can still be seen as an agent of colonisation through the use of colonial constructs of knowledge seeping into other forms of knowledge (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Nayar & Fanon, 2012). Wherein many critical academic articles speak on the roles in which tourism plays in the role of commodifying Indigenous peoples and the traction in which colonialism seeks to gain to perpetuate how we see tourism and those as objects of *gaze* (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012; d'Hauteserre, 2011).

Some ways in which tourism and travel has been associated with characteristics of empowerment such as; tourism is an activity of leisure, to partake in tourism means once must move outside their 'normal' location with the intention to return home, things in which that are out of the ordinary are directly featured to the tourist gaze, and the tourist gaze creates a hierarchy through signs, and then distributes them within that hierarchy (Urry, 1990). While in context, these characteristics exemplify the unequal power dynamic that exists between tourists and hosts, by portraying tourists sd most elite and those as non-tourists lesser, they do not necessarily illuminate the role in which travel can empower youth to restore cultural identity and self-determination. A large reason for this is identified within the works of Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012) who discuss the impact of tourism on Indigenous groups by not recognising them as people whom also partake in tourism outside of the confines of a Eurocentric understanding of tourism.

The first step this paper takes in disassociating the traditional identification of tourism and Indigenity discourse is through the capacities outlined by the community of Łutsël K'é. This study was not the first to occur and was built entirely off the already existing capacities of the LKDFN. These programs exist with the incentive to continue to build these capacities by getting youth on the land and involved within the Dene way of life. Moreover, while many of the motivations for participants to participate on this trip identify with the traditional Eurocentric motivations of a tourist, they parallel in a different dynamic. A very common westernized motivation for travel is to visit family and or experience culture (Urry, 1990). While this motivation remains intact with participants, the way in which they approach that travel experience to visit family is rather different from current views of travel. When you travel, you are family, regardless of your ethnicity, gender, and identification. Travel is a transcending event

bringing people altogether from all paths of life within the LKDFN community. One youth best illuminated this in section 5.3.1 but I feel it is important to re-iterate her knowledge wherein she highlights that practising culture together brings the community together and transcends boundaries. That programming such as this Ni'hat'Ni, the Tanning Camp play a larger role in bringing the community together through culture.

The act of travel from the perspective of those involved in this trip illuminate how travel changes depending on the paradigmatic situation of the person. Wherein Westernized ideas of motivations for travel being identified as visiting family, we fail to recognise the experience of travel as a bonding family experience based on the participants in this study. This continues to be illuminated in the ways in which this trip was viewed by participants. This travel experience was not only just a physical and psychological experience but also a *"Spiritual journey"*. I cannot do justice to discuss a sacred experience for those involved but what I can say is that from the themes within this study, this idea of *"Spiritual Journey"* does not just pertain to the internal experience of the participant but also a way of re-connecting with lost ancestors. The travel experience for some was a way in which to transcend physical barriers of passing and still feel a way to connect with those who have passed on, which again illuminates the pre-conceived notions of Westernized motivations of visiting family as family of being physically present, wherein the Land plays a role in which participants re-visit and connect with family members who are no longer present.

The physical structure of the land also influences how the dynamic of Westernized ideas of travel motivations differ from those who participated on this trip. Where in Westernized ideas of travel to see landscapes, and regions are viewed as "*commodified"* (Tonts & Greive, 2002). This study illuminates the way in which we view westernized ideas of landscapes as motivations

for travel are limited. A large reason for that is the way in which we approach these ideas through the phenomenon of *epistemic location* (Hollinshead, 2012 as cited in Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p.5). One the themes that emerged from the narratives shared was the way in which travelling to certain landscapes and areas acted as a way to both live-out Dene pedagogy through reliving traditional stories but also visit locations cherished by their ancestors. One youth in particular in section 5.3.1.1 illuminated this when discussing one of the many points we stopped at on our journey, to me this was just another land marker on the trip, but for him, it was a much different experience it was place where his father had been and he felt connected to him there. His expression of this began to reshape the way in which I thought of landscapes; landscapes as transcending boundaries.

The role in which youth interacted with the land has already been discussed prior, but it is important to illuminate the ways in which our pre-conceived notions of "land" in westernized perspectives of a travel fail to illuminate some of the rich underpinnings of travel motivations. This study adds to the work of tourism academics by illuminating the richness of travel motivations when removed from westernized constructs and pulled into a more indigenized framework. The chance to travel to certain landscapes, not just for the expressed desire to see them and experience it, but to consider such locations as family and way to strengthen connections with the community and with cultural stories I feel is a valuable discourse to be had within tourism studies. By reversing the roles in which we traditionally perceive tourism I feel this study begins to illuminate the roles of tourism within decolonization through reflexivity.

6.4.2 Travels potentiality as an agent of decolonisation

Tuck and Yang (2012) identify that decolonisation within the research process requires that scholars revisit the roles in which emotions played within the research process. This can be

done by engaging in reflexivity by interacting with your participants as the researcher when in the meaning-making process (Tucker & Akama, 2009). Academics illuminate that for the decolonisation of tourism studies to begin there ought to be a focus on cross-cultural relations occurring with Indigenous tourism encounters that move away from the commodification of the cultural "others" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; d'Hauteserre, 2014). Here I feel this study begins to illuminate an attempt at an intent to illuminate a different logic as it pertains to knowledge production in tourism (Tuck & Yang, 2012) by focusing on more indigenized paradigms.

This study begins to illuminate the ways in which travel can begin to combat the pervasive constructs of colonisation when removed from traditional definitions of tourism. Within this study, travel is implemented as a means of combating legacies of colonialism by engaging youth with the opportunity to practice Dene pedagogy and the Dene way of life. Indigenous academics within the literature identify that in restoring traditional skills and knowledge to those communities impacted by colonialism can begin a "spiritually grounded" battle against the pervasive construct of colonization and Indigenous resurgence (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ballantyne, 2014; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard 2007). This study aims to provide the reader with a better understanding of how travel can be an agent of decolonisation, through the act of "Making space" as opposed to "Taking space" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

Through the participation in this trip, the youth had the chance to experience the lives of the ancestors while also re-living current stories from the current involvement of the land. In many cases, tourism compartmentalises Indigenous stories into constitutions of "pristine" or "remote" and highly desirable for nature-based tourism (Ellis & Enzoe, 2008). These visions associated with romanticised meanings of Indigenous past can be harmful as they obscure the current presence, inhabitation, and the meanings of the landscape as something of the past

(Grimwood, Yudina, Muldoon, & Qiu, 2015d). Tourism and travel, due to its multiplicities, even in its most basic forms can illuminate certain narratives and power differentials that can marginalise and hide current Denesoline livelihoods (Grimwood, 2015a). Where in this study aims to illuminate the current and thriving Denesoline livelihoods in the present space. Through the re-connecting of youth with ancestral space and the illumination of thriving Denesoline practice in the now, discourse can continue to assist the LKDFN in their combat against colonial legacies.

Furthermore, this study challenges the temporal and spatial dimensions placed upon Denesoline relationships with ancestral waters by government institutions. As discussed prior, typically definitions of *local* tend to delegitimize the ownership of Indigenous peoples on certain land and its' use (Gray, 2009; Cameron, 2012). This study illuminates the large tracks of land from which the Denesoline are actively engaged with, outlining the issues associated with current confining terms that perpetuate hegemony that greatly favours the state over Indigenous peoples (Gray, 2009). This study pushes back against the confining terms used to favour the state by actively outlining the ways in which Denesoline people of LKDFN are actively interacting with ancestral lands well outside of the barriers of the term *local*. This is best emphasized by youth Roger when discussing the humour in assuming we are the first people to be in such a space, lots of people have been here before. The oral narratives of youth shared within this thesis outline the recent oral histories being created and the active presence Densoline still maintain on their ancestral lands.

6.4.3 Summary of section 6.4

Travel within this program exists within a paradigmatic approach focused on Indigenous objectives and goals wherein the aim is to further current capacities and support future

generations. It is from this position that I feel this study begins to illuminate how tourism can be an agent of decolonisation through the act of "making space" and illuminating the vital presence of all community members through the stories that enliven the landscapes of the Northwest Territories in the present. As outlined by Indigenous academics it is in the spaces where Indigenous pedagogy can begin that the resurgence can exist (Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007; Wildcat et al., 2014). It is here I feel this study identifies the importance of re-connecting youth with the land, re-learning traditional skills, and re-living Denesoline stories in the struggle against colonial legacies. Through travel based programming like this study, while a bare minimum, one can begin to see the importance of Dene resiliency and is illuminated by Elder Eddy in previous sections. Eddy highlights the importance of maintaining education to strengthen the people building self-determination and getting the respect of the government, rather than segregating them through treaties, titles, and definitions.

6.5 Research Question #5

What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture?

6.5.1 Highlighting 'Zones of Refuge'

Current academia mentions that programs that can focus on the restoring of traditional skills and values can begin to shift the meanings of Indigenity back to an Indigenous paradigm removing it from the constant comparison of the white discourse (Coulthard, 2013; Coulthard, 2007). Corntassel and Bryce (2011) identify Indigenous resurgence as; reconnecting with homelands, cultural practices, and communities, and is centred on reclaiming, restoring, and regenerating homeland relationships" (p. 153). The spaces wherein Dene pedagogy is regarded as the highest and the approaches towards Indigenous self-determination is what Alfred (2009) identifies as 'Zones of Refuge'. This study contributes to this discussion wherein discussing the current impacts these land camp/travel experiences have on youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) argue that Indigenous pathways toward authentic actions begin within the individual pushing back and transcending the effects of colonialism. Wherein other studies have been conducted that focus on putting the livelihood of the Denesoline first, such as the work by Holmes (2016) and colleagues in establishing the Dene "code of conduct" for outsiders travelling along Denesoline traditional lands.

This study supports these forms of research in regards to its focus to encourage visitation on Denesoline land that is based on the community ideals of land use practices, is well informed, and respectful to the land users of the area (Holmes et al., 2016). Their study begins to illuminate how Indigenous-driven research can begin to support other academics and more importantly community governance strategies (Holmes et al., 2016). Wherein this study displays how the

community has begun to live out these values and stake claim to their lands, traditions, and capacities to continue these forms of programming.

This study illuminates how youth feel about their culture, and how they seek to continue to learn more and become involved in further programming like this. As discussed in section 5.1.1.2 travelling the land is a vital theme in experiencing the Denesoline culture. This trip in particular illuminated the avenue these programs play in allowing youth to 'experience' their culture and practice the Dene way of life. As some youth even identified, that these experiences are empowering and a defining part of their personal story, as one youth put in section 5.2.2; every trip is chance to build the strength of my children through the sharing of my story. Furthermore, to push against the traditional patriarchal values established through the legacies of colonialism.

These trips and experiences are not just an individual experience, but also a shared community experience to be shared and celebrated. During my time with the LKDFN community, I had not seen anything as empowering as arriving on the shore of the spiritual gathering and having the community welcome us with a blessing and then embrace the youth and tell them about how proud they were. To get on the land is not only a vital part of generating stories within a Dene pedagogy but also a way to empower youth and the community.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

During my time in Łutsël K'é, I met many people, was challenged by my preconceived notions, and learned many valuable lessons. The desire to return that many researchers feel who have spent time in the community is something I too now feel. From the immense geological structures to the solemnness of the Great Slave Lake, to the friendly and welcoming community who let me in, and to the friendships I have made make me feel the passion so many others have felt looking back at their time in the community and on the land. For those who have not ventured it is hard to express the teachings you garner from the things we overlook and the perspective such a people can instil in you.

This study begins to illuminate how the Denesoline relationships to the land have changed both positively and negatively due to the ecological and sociological changes outlined. By not further building upon already discussed effects of environmental and sociological change, but rather by illuminating the individual experience of those pushing back against these changes. From the changes in stories of wildlife we can begin to see not only are the ecological integrity of areas vital to the caribou changing, but also how the migratory changes of caribou affect the narratives of those who have witnessed fundamental changes to their cultural livelihood. Academics have noted the aggravating circumstances of ongoing explicit and implicit effects associated with colonialism with those of the LKDFN (Parlee, O'neil, & LKDFN, 2007) but this study illuminates the ways in which this affects the individual's experience in living within these confines.

This study allows for the reader to examine how westernised definitions of tourism fail to holistically capture the effects of travel, in particular when travel and tourism are removed from westernised paradigmatic structures and practised within an indigenized paradigm. Higgins-

Desbiolles (2008) builds the framework for this discussion noting that although tourism is typically considered as deviant within critical tourism studies, it has also made aware the potential in which tourism and travel can have in rectifying unequal power dynamics. From challenging the pre-conceived notions and expectations of tourism, we can begin to shift the power dynamics associating Indigenous peoples as tourists, rather than objects of the tourist gaze (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012). This can be witnessed in the ways in which travel experiences when removed from pre-conceived notions of the "Western tourist" could act as an avenue of decolonisation through the "making of space" defined by Chambers and Buzinde (2015). Programming incentives like Tracking Change begin to illuminate how tourism practised with Indigenous directed interest can push back against the boundaries of colonisation through making space wherein Dene pedagogy can be practised, and knowledge transference can be implemented.

The research questions guiding the study focused on the recording and interpreting of Denesoline TK and stories during a multi-day travel experience. In particular, this study focused on working with LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledge and narratives could contribute to Denesoline self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods. I feel this study has done so. By illuminating the individual experience of those involved within these forms of programming, we can begin to illuminate the power narratives contributing towards youth empowerment and Dene self-determination within LKDFN participants. The research questions established with the consultation of LKDFN representatives focused on; what TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience? What are cultural, environmental, and social changes observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives? How are stories used to transmit knowledge among

LKDFN representatives during the travel experience? How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands? What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture? Through the use of narrative inquiry and community-based participatory research methodologies, the narratives shared by those involved in our multi-day travel experience to the spiritual gathering (Desnethche) were collected and synthesized using analysis of narrative. To maintain reflexivity within this study, I also kept a research journal of my own experiences of the trip and areas wherein I was challenged philosophically. These journals were used to contrast against Denesoline paradigmatic ideals from a Westernised perspective to illuminate how my knowledge was severely limited.

As was discussed within the discussion portion of this paper, my discussion was structured around each research question to pull this paper back together. During our analysis of narrative, I used each research question to help illuminate the themes inherent within the narratives shared; then we further pulled these themes apart into what became the sections of our analysis. To further emphasise the main outcomes of this study we contrasted our findings with that of current literature to illuminate not just themes/major narratives but rather the individual experience.

Our discussion brought to light not just the stories shared while on the land in regards to our first research question but also the transitory lives in which Denesoline youth live in balancing Dene way of life within Eurocentric capitalistic systems of knowledge. Where in stories shared illuminated the importance of maintaining strong Dene cultural constructs by practising Dene pedagogy. Where we can begin to discuss the power dynamics that exist and pull those back into discourse from an Indigenised perspective focusing on the stories of maintaining

Dene livelihood and ancestral lands. With these narratives shared we begin to illuminate the ways in which Denesoline landbased relationships are not only part of participant personal identity but also an avenue wherein knowledge is transferred.

In regards to our second research questions, narratives shared began to illuminate not only the changes in which are occurring within Denesoline lands and communities, but rather contextualise these changes to the individual community of LKDFN. This section provided the reader with a discourse focused not on the general overlay of these changes that many current academic studies tend to illuminate in regards to environmental and sociological changes (i.e. climate change, wildlife integrity, and socio-cultural effects of pervasive state-based legislation) of the sub-arctic regions of Canada. This study provided the reader with the "where" and "whom" of these changes rather than the "how" by contextualising the day-to-day experiences of those living out the Dene way of life during these changes. While also trying to maintain a platform from which allowing Denesoline voices to maintain power within their stories shared.

Our third research question began to illuminate the role in which the Land plays within knowledge transference among participants of this multi-day travel experience. Where we as the reader can begin to see how our Eurocentric constructs of knowledge do not holistically envelope all ways of knowing and the avenues in which knowledge can be obtained and celebrated. This section illuminated the way in which experiences on the land allowed for youth to practice Dene pedagogy and how knowledge is not an individual achievement but rather a community-based resource to be shared and celebrated. The role in which the land provides youth with an avenue not just for self-discovery but also to constitute learning through a collective shared experience transcending boundaries through one singular space, the Land.

The fourth research question of this study allowed us to begin to illuminate how traditional notions of "travel" and "tourism" perpetuate notions of power through expectations. Wherein ideas of "travel" and "tourism" as most commonly identified through the lens of Westernized paradigmatic structures we begin to perpetuate unequal power dynamics as it pertains to Indigenous groups who are commonly perceived as a product of tourism illuminated by the works of Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012). Through challenging the notions of tourism expectations by establishing a multi-day travel experience focused on Indigenous objectives we can begin to see the ways in which Eurocentric identifications of "travel" do not holistically capture the effects of 'tourism'. Wherein participant expectations remain similar for Western travellers to partake in travel to visit family and LKDFN community members having the same experience, we can begin to illuminate the ways in which paradigmatic systems vary these experiences. Wherein visiting family does not just exist within the confines of the individual but also the 'spirit', land, and community in which you travel.

This section begins a discourse on Hollinshead (2012) idea of *Epistemic Location* through the contextualisation of the Dene participants experiences. We can begin a discourse on the motivations of tourism existing outside of the traditional forms of "tourism" studies through reflexivity. We can begin to discuss the potentiality of non-traditional forms of tourism as an avenue for decolonisation through the "making of space" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). As discussed by Tuck and Yang (2012), decolonisation within the research process requires scholars to revisit their roles in the research process and the effects of such emotions paradigmatically through reflexivity.

Where Chambers and Buzinde (2015) illuminate decolonial tourism to begin there needs to be a focus on cross-cultural relations occurring with Indigenous tourism encounters that push

on the ideas of the commodification of the cultural "others". This study begins to illuminate an attempt towards focusing on the perspectives of tourism and travel from a more Indigenous paradigm (the experiences of the LKDFN participants) and voices. By illuminating the roles in which this multi-day travel experience built areas of space wherein Dene pedagogy was at the heart, we can begin to discuss what role, if any, does travel play within Decolonial processes. This study pushes against the power differentials as outlined by Grimwood (2015c) that can perpetuate ideas of Dene livelihood as a "past" activity, wherein certain narratives can begin to hide current Denesoline activities.

This study illuminates Denesoline livelihoods being practised in the present space through the re-connecting of youth with ancestral skills, spaces, and through building upon current existing capacities of the LKDFN community. As current Indigenous academics illuminate, it is within the spaces where Indigenous pedagogy is at the heart that resurgence can exist (Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2011; Coulthard, 2007; Wildcat et al., 2014). Through this multi-day travel experience, although a bare minimum, we can begin to illuminate the role in which these programs play in Dene youth resiliency and empowerment; Elder Eddy Drybones best illuminates this with this excerpt as to the importance of the Land on Denesoline governance of ancestral waters and lands:

"Get them education (the youth). And they'll make the people's ways stronger. The government will start listening to you, if [they] start seeing that. (Eddy, 809-810, 08/08/17).

Lastly, this study begins a discourse on the impact this land camp/travel experience has on LKDFN youth connections with the land, traditional knowledge, and culture. This study illuminates the ideas discussed by Coulthard (2013; 2007) where the restoring of traditional skills and values can begin the shifting of Indigenity back to an Indigenous paradigm moving it

from the constant comparison of the white discourse. Wherein this study contributes to the discussion of the current impacts these land camp/travel experiences have on youth connections to their culture, the Land, and traditional knowledge and skills.

By the establishing of spaces wherein, Indigenous paradigms were at the heart Alfred (2009) discusses the idea of 'Zones of Refuge'. 'Zones of Refuge' are areas wherein Indigenous pedagogy is respected above all, and the approaches leading towards Indigenous self-determination is what Alfred (2009) is referring to. This study supports these notions through the use of research processes focused on collaboration with the LKDFN and Dene centric objectives. Much like the work completed by Holmes (2016) and colleagues on establishing a Dene "code of conduct" this research supports the pathways towards authentic Dene actions pushing back and transcending the power dynamics associated with the legacies of colonialism. This study aims to highlight the ways in which Indigenous-driven research can begin to support both academics and the community governance strategies through cross-cultural discussion within the research process.

In a practical context, this research has been used to complete a Tracking Change research report to continue to fund multi-day travel experiences like this one. To continue to build upon the already abundant capacities, the LKDFN community possess and to continue to monitor and be present on ancestral LKDFN lands and waters. While critical tourism academia is well versed on the effects of pervasive westernized/Eurocentric paradigmatic structures on Indigenous peoples, this study contextualises these affects towards the sub-arctic regions of the Northwest Territories in Canada.

As changes within the sub-arctic regions of Canada continue to occur, we should begin to focus more heavily on the ways in which non-traditional forms of research can help assist both

the communities and the land itself. Wherein Indigenous views are taken in and respected the same as those of Eurocentric forms of scientific inquiry. As this study has highlighted, the narratives of those who are heavily involved with the land possess a large breadth of untapped knowledge that tends to be marginalised by groups that do not challenge their paradigmatic positioning. In conclusion, this study aims to be a resource in which the LKDFN community can continue to work with and use in their work to continue to build upon current capacities and maintain Westernized documentation indicating that Denesoline lands are still very much resided within as is the Dene way of life.

7.1 Limitations

After the conclusion of this study, there are some limitations to which the reader should be aware of. The first limitation of this study is in regards to the time spent within the field. A longer time within the community of Łutsël K'é would have been immensely helpful in gathering more data that would be further in-depth. While I was able to get to know many of my participants and begin to establish positive relationships with vital community members (Chief Marlowe, Elders, and respected land users) I was unable to reach that point quickly. Wherein if I had more time in the field I would have had the opportunity to interview more prominent members of the community and gather in their views and positions to contrast with those of the youth who participated on this trip. During my discussions with Elder Eddy, he told me many times to interview all these other Elders too, but with my time constraints and the amount of time it took for me to build trust within the community, it was not possible. This study would have benefitted greatly from having the perspective of many Elders and the immense knowledge they possess about the themes of this study. It is also important to note that although all voices were accounted within this study, in particular, Elder Eddy's voice was amplified more often than

others. The reason for this is that many of the youth involved in this study did not always wish to express their stories or have certain portions of their interview shared. To respect their wishes it also created a dynamic wherein Elder Eddy's voice was a dominant voice which may skew the themes expressed within this study during the analysis of narrative.

Another limitation to consider is that while this study was devised with Indigenous objectives and goals in mind, I am not Indigenous myself. Therefore it is important to note that the paradigmatic assumptions and expectations I carry have affected the interpretation and authenticity of the narratives shared. Where I tried to address these paradigmatic assumptions through reflexivity and personal journal logs, that this study would have been better served with close work with the LKDFN community in the writing, crafting, and interpreting of these interviews.

Lastly, it is important to note the difficulty of maintaining Indigenous representation within the planning and implementation of all portions of this study within a community-based participatory research methodology. Wherein the implementation, planning, and preparing for the trip was mostly carried out by me as involvement from the LKDFN community was hard in regards to these forms of planning as travelling the Land is a much different process from their perspective than it was for mine. Where I tried to keep an open-mind about practices and packing list, I was also largely involved in many of the decision making processes in regards to the trip. The one place I ensured to remain as removed as possible was while on the land, I took a conscious step back to become a participant noticing my power dynamic and the effect it could have on the authenticity of knowledge transference while on the land. So while the route, narratives, and skills/ knowledge shared on the trip were done so by LKDFN representatives, the logistical preparing and implementation were conducted by a Western paradigmatic frame of

mind. This caused friction during the initial day of our trip as I was told by both Elder Eddy and land-user Marcel that this was not “the traditional way” of travelling.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected was completely almost in its entirety by me. While this is not in line with CBPR practices, this occurred due in part to trying to follow CBPR practices. Originally this trip was to occur a few weeks prior to leaving room for me to complete planned workshops, and other avenues of analysis incorporating participants in this process. However, prior to the departure of this trip a well respected Elder passed away and as per tradition, the community canceled all flights and other programs to focus on his passing and celebrating his life as a community. Our trip was due to leave that day and was postponed by the Band Council out of respect of his passing. To accommodate the community I canceled my flights home and extended my stay in the community to continue this research. I feel it is important to thank Chief Marlowe for his support and encouragement in reaching out to me during this time asking me to stay and ensure the trip happens.

7.2 Areas for Future Research

This study is a complimentary piece of work to the current work being completed by the LKDFN community and those involved in their research practices. While this study highlights the contextual experience of Dene youth who participated on this trip, it did not illuminate the effects of others outside of this trip. It would be vital for future research to look into the collective views of changes from a more mature audience and their narratives and experiences. While youth are the future of the LKDFN community, a lot of powerful ideas and knowledge were not captured within this study that could be incredibly viable for the LKDFN traditional knowledge archives.

Another area of future research is to delve into the role of tourism within decolonisation. While this study had strands of these themes and potentiality of tourism as an agent of decolonisation, this was not the main focus of this study. I feel it would be beneficial to have such a study conducted by a person with an Indigenous paradigm in order to contradict and conflict with the ideas highlighted in this paper. Further work within tourism from other paradigmatic structures would be immensely beneficial to the tourism studies field and in illuminating the multiplicities that exist.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Telephone Recruitment Script

Telephone Recruitment Script

P = Potential participant identified by Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department (WLED) or Ni Hat'ni
R = Member of the research team

R - May I please speak to [name of potential participant]?

P - Hello, [name of potential participant] speaking. How may I help you?

R - My name is Brendan Belanger, and I am part of a research team involving the University of Waterloo and the Łutsël K'é WLED and Ni Hat'ni. We are doing a study that involves working with people in Łutsël K'é to highlight traditional Dene stories along the Snowdrift river watershed and display the importance of Traditional Knowledge, youth developing nature-based relationships, and community governance in the South Slave Region. I have been informed by Ray Griffith that you have been selected as a candidate to participate on this trip.

As you have been told by the WLED, the trip along the Snowdrift river basin includes pre and post interviews which will be about 45-60 minutes, observations while on the trip, photographs, and informal interviews while on trip. I would also like to invite you to meet at a certain time to go over what participating on this trip would entail for you. For this interview, your participation would take no more than 60 minutes (or *120 minutes total*) *of* your time. Would you be interested in setting a date, time, and location for this interview now?

P - No, could you please call back later (agree on a more convenient time to call person back)?

OR

P - Yes, could you provide me with some more information regarding the interviews (or *workshops*) you will be conducting?

R – (provides background information as per information letter and consent forms)

Before the interview begins, I will provide you with a hard copy of the information letter that I just referred to and give you the opportunity to sign an informed consent form about this process. These documents will have contact names and numbers, and help assist you in making a decision about your participation in this study.

P - No thank you.

OR

P - Sure (set date/time/location for interview).

R - Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to our conversation. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at 289-260-8621

P - Good-bye.

R - Good-bye.

Appendix B: Information Letter

Date _____

Dear _____,

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled *Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters***.** As a reminder, this study is a narrative study that engages with the experiences of participants and traditional teachings as they pertain to a travel experience associated with the Tracking Change program. The aim of the study is to highlight the stories of participants and the community about the Snowdrift river basin and the importance of nature-based relationships, community governance, and the cultural, environmental, and social changes observed on the travel experience.

The data collected during this study will be provided to the Łutsël K'é Traditional Knowledge archive to remain in the community and to highlight the stories from this travel experience to gain a better understanding on the importance of nature based relationships, community governance programs, and cultural, environmental, and social changes associated with the Snowdrift river.

This study has been reviewed and received clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 22323).If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact please feel free to contact Brendan Belanger at bbelange@uwaterloo.ca.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by January 1st, 2018, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email. Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of this experience.

Sincerely,

Brendan Belanger

University of Waterloo; Recreation and Leisure

bbelange@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Date:_____

Dear Łutsël K'é resident:

This letter is an invitation to participate in the study **Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters.** This is a collaborative study involving myself, a student researcher from University of Waterloo, the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department, and Ni Hat'ni. I (Brendan Belanger) am a Master's student at the University Waterloo in the department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. We would like to provide you with as much information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

This research is a narrative study that engages with the experiences of participants and traditional teachings as they pertain to a travel experience associated with the Tracking Change program along the Snowdrift River basin. The aim of the study is to highlight the stories of participants and the community about the Snowdrift river basin and the importance of nature-based relationships, community governance, and the cultural, environmental, and social changes observed on the travel experience. This study involves working collaboratively with the Dene residents of Łutsël K'é to highlight relationships to ancestral waters, primarily through interviews with participants of the trip both before, during, and after the experience, observations on the land, GPS tracking to highlight areas of dene cultural significance, and photographs. All collected information will be provided to the Łutsël K'é Traditional Knowledge Archive for the purpose of being useful to the community.

Participation in the canoe trip and research project is voluntary. Your participation **will involve going on a canoe trip organised by the WLED and Ni Hat'ni. Taking part requires 2 45-60 minute face-to-face interviews with a University of Waterloo student researcher, being apart of descriptive observations of the travel experience, being potentially photographed while on trip, and being informally interviewed on trip to help clarify certain experiences, or stories while on trip.** The pre and post interviews is to take place in an agreed upon location and will focus on your social and environmental relationships and connections to ancestral waters, Łutsël K'é, and the travel experience. These interviews will occur at different times, once prior to the trip and once after the trip has been completed. During the interview you may decline to answer any of the questions asked should you wish so. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. If you do not want to participate in the pre-trip interview, you can withdraw from the trip and research project. Withdrawing from the research project also entitles withdrawing from the trip as this is a research trip.

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to help the collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Once the interview has been completed you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to give you the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information provided will be

made confidential. However, you may choose whether or not you want to be acknowledged for your contributions by name in any research presentations, publications, and reports. Data collected during this study will be retained and secured in a password-protected file for a minimum of 10 years, and will be stored indefinitely within the Łutsël K'é TK Archives. Accordingly, only persons associated with this project, or members of the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, will have access to the knowledge you have provided. Your participation would involve taking part in a 7-10 day canoe trip, which is focused on the transition of knowledge from knowledge holders onto youth and to document cultural, environmental, and social changes associated with the travel experience to meet the needs of Ni Hat'ni and the Łutsël K'é Wildlife and Lands department. This trip will consist of LKDFN youth, LKDFN land users and I (a university student researcher). This trip will require participants to canoe, portage, and practice land based skills in setting up camp, preparing food, and other required needs on a 7-10 day canoe trip. During the trip participants will be required to fill out a traditional ecological assessment of the Snowdrift river basin for Ni Hat'ni's records. Knowledge derived on this trip will be integrated into action items for designing future collaborative research that is accessible to the community and to celebrate distinctive cultural livelihoods on the surrounding ancestral waters.

The physical risks associated with your participation in the land camp are similar to those that Dene experience any time they travel and camp during the spring/summer season. Safeguards in place to ensure your safety are as follows: a sat phone, GPS, first aid kit, have at least one person on the trip trained in first aid and wilderness first aid, paddlers will have phone numbers for Łutsël K'é Health Centre, RCMP, Band Office (Wildlife, Lands and Environment) and Łutsël K'é ENR. At least one paddler will have a gun and it is recommended to take a dog (to alert sleepers of a bear). The group will follow bear safety protocols especially in relation to food storage. In the event of serious injury or unsafe conditions, there will be access to Medevac and a Charter Flight for immediate extraction.

The events, encounters, and experiences of the travel experience will be recorded in field notes, mapped, photographed, and recorded, and used to document particular features or details that may be helpful in communicating the process and outcomes. However, you may choose whether or not you want to be acknowledged for your contributions by name in any research publications, reports, or presentations resulting from this study. This means that you can decide if your name is to be associated with the contributions you make to the travel experience. Data collected during this study, including photos and recordings, will be retained and secured in a password-protected file for a minimum of 10 years, and will be stored indefinitely within the TK archive in Łutsël K'é. Accordingly, only researchers associated with this project, or members of the LKDFN, will control access to the knowledge you provide. However, during informal interviews you may be within earshot of other participants and as such other participants may know what you or others have said. Should you decide to withdraw from the study during the canoe trip, you will not be recorded in any way.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Brendan Belanger by email at bbelange@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact Andriena at Ni Hat'ni at

tdndepartment@gmail.com. Regular research reports, including a summary of the trip, will be distributed to the LKDFN Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department, and Ni Hat'ni.

This study has received a research license from the Aurora Research Institute (*ARI 16143*) and has been reviewed and received clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 22323). However, the final decision to participate is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, you may contact the Chief Ethics Officer in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

It is our hope that the outcomes of this collaborative project will help foster Denesoline knowledge about ancestral waters and promote nature-based relationships with youth, passing down traditional knowledge onto youth, and promoting future community governance incentives.

We look forward to the possibility of your participation and thank you immensely and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Belanger

_____(*Ray G. Director of WLED and Andreina C. Director of Ni Hat'ni)*

Appendix D: Interview Guide

DATA COLLECTION SCRIPTS

Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters

Note: The techniques used in this study for the collection of data are designed to encourage a reflective narrative, and create a dialogue where the participants control the pace of the conversation while the researcher listens, clarifies, probes, and when appropriate brings forth topics related to the study. The scripts provided below are to be appropriately considered as 'conversational guides' and meant only to provide a sense as to what may be discussed in this respective data collection phase.

Phases	Guidelines
Preparation	Explore the field, Formulate examinant questions
Initiation	Formulating initial topic for narration, using visual aids
Main Narration	No interruptions, only non-verbal encouragement to continue story-telling
Questioning Phase	Probe without the use of opinion or attitude based questions, no why-questions
Concluding Talk	Stop recording, Why-questions allowed, Memory protocol once completed interview

<u>Pre-Trip Interviews: Life-history</u>

Briefing: "I want to thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. This study has been approved and received all the necessary licences from both the Aurora Research Institute and a University of Waterloo ethics committee. As briefly discussed upon on the other materials you have been provided with and brief conversations up until this point, this interview focuses on your experiences, knowledge, and stories associated with Łutsël K'é and ancestral waters. I would like to begin this interview by asking general questions related to your connection to the Łutsël K'é and ancestral waters. I will then periodically through out this interview provide prompts to help me clarify the elements of your experiences, knowledge and stories that you share. Please remember that no question is mandatory for you to respond to. If you wish to skip a question, please just say so. If at any point you would like to stop the interview, please let me know and I will stop the interview."

- The interview begins by asking my participant(s) to *narrate an outline of their life,* paying special attention to **narratives they have heard**, or know about **ancestral waters and Łutsël K'é**, the **experiences associated with the ancestral water (if they have any) and Łutsël K'é,** and **how these narratives and or experiences have influenced their family, community, identity, being Dene, and physical/mental well-being**.
- Prompts during this interview will invite the participant to clarify and expand on ideas, themes, topics, and or to elaborate and provide detail wherever possible and appropriate

as it relates to the stories being shared (e.g., describing settings, characters, people, events, circumstances, lessons to be learned/communicated, cultural, environmental or social change etc).

- Prompts will also be used during this interview to invite participants to discuss about the priorities associated with the trip itself from the WLED and Ni Hat'ni
    - Stories related to Dene governance and management of ancestral waters and Thaidene Nene
    - Stories related to youth connections to the land, traditional knowledge, and culture
    - Stories related to cultural, environmental, and social change associated with ancestral waters and or Łutsël K'é
    - Stories related to the different ways in which Dene and other groups have used ancestral waters

Debriefing: "Well, those are the end of the questions I have for you today. I want to thank you again for your participation in this interview and for sharing your stories about Łutsël K'é and the surrounding ancestral waters. If you would like I can return to you with a written up version of this interview when it is ready. This should give you a chance to elaborate on and clarify details from the stories that you have graciously contributed. Would you like to remain unanimous or would you like your name to be associated with your stories and this conversation? Thank you".

Trip: Observations, GPS Tracking "Trailmark", Informal Interviews, and Photographs

Note: the methods used during the trip are to be used in collaboration with the post-trip interviews. As such most of the data collected during this portion will be complimentary to the rest of the study in providing detailed descriptions of the travel experience from my perspective, GPS coordinates of locations where TK and narratives were transposed, informal interviews clarifying certain teachings and narratives that I as an outsider will likely not understand, and photographs of activities and the land to be used during post-trip interviews.

- Participant observations will be written during breaks during travel as I will be pre-occupied with paddling during most of the day. During breaks in a personal journal I will provide a brief outline of observations paying special attention to the research questions guiding this research. Once at camp for the night, I will expand upon these observations and will expand again further once at base camp in Łutsël K'é.
- GPS Tracking will be using an APP called "TrailMark" provided by the WLED and Ni Hat'ni to highlight areas of specific interest culturally, environmentally, and socially. These coordinates will be used to supplement this study with precise locations of certain experiences and narratives.
- Informal interviews occurring whilst on trip will occur to provide the researcher with clarification of certain experiences, stories, or teachings shared while on the land. This informal interviews will be described as asking questions such as;
    - "Could you expand upon that story?"
    - "Is it possible for you to explain to me as an outsider the importance of this traditional teaching to ancestral Dene livlihoods?"

- "If you could would you mind clarifying what '_____' means in this instance?"

Post-trip Interviews:

Briefing: "I want to thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. As briefly discussed upon on the other materials you have been provided with and brief conversations up until this point, this interview focuses on your experiences, knowledge, and stories associated the travel experience. I would like to begin this interview by showing you some photos from our trip. I will then periodically through out this interview provide prompts to help me clarify the elements of your experiences, knowledge and stories that you share. Please remember that no question is mandatory for you to respond to. If you wish to skip a question, please just say so. If at any point you would like to stop the interview, please let me know and I will stop the interview."

- This interview starts by showing participants images taken during the trip by the researcher. While each photograph is show I will be asking the participants to narrate their experiences associated with each photograph paying special attention to the stories and teachings they had been told about these locations, and how these images influence the Traditional Knowledge and experiences passed down onto them during this travel experience
- Prompts during this interview will provide a platform for participants to expand on their ideas, topics, themes, or to elaborate and provide detail wherever possible and appropriate as it pertains to the TK and narratives transmitted during the travel experience
- Prompts will also be used to invite participants to discuss:
    - The TK and narratives transmitted during the travel experience
    - The cultural, environmental, and social changes they had or had not observed during this travel experience
    - How these narratives associated to this can/could be used to transmit knowledge to the LKDFN community
    - How this travel experience contributes to the roles in which LKDFN contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters
    - The impacts this experience had on your connections to land, traditional knowledge, and culture
- Topographical maps will be used to give a precise location of a photograph should the images be unclear as to where they were taken

Debriefing: "Those are all the questions I have for today. I want to thank you for your participation in this interview and being able to share these stories so graciously with me. Should you wish it, I can provide you with an written-up version of this interview when it is ready. This will give you a chance to elaborate and clarify details from the information you have contributed. Thank you".

Photo-elicited Interview photo catalogue

Image 1 62.804606, -110.510186

Image 2 62.811136, -110.512636

Image 3 62.811136, -110.512636

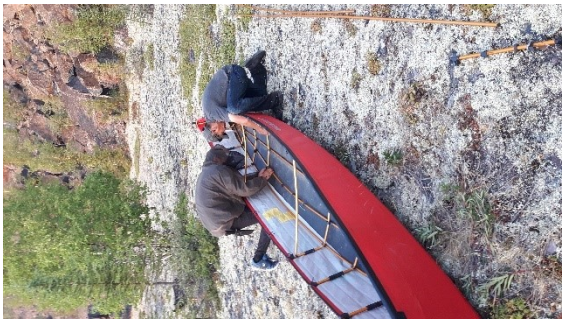

Image 4 62.811136, -110.512636

Image 5 62.811136, -110.512636

Image 6 62.811136, -110.512636

Image 7 62.837801, -110.470175

Image 8 62.820781, -110.244399

Image 9 62.820781, -110.244399

Image 10 62.821069, -110.137449

Image 11 62.823970, -110.020814

Image 12 62.828849, -109.961920

Image 13 62.828849, -109.961920

Image 14 62.778788, -109.698620

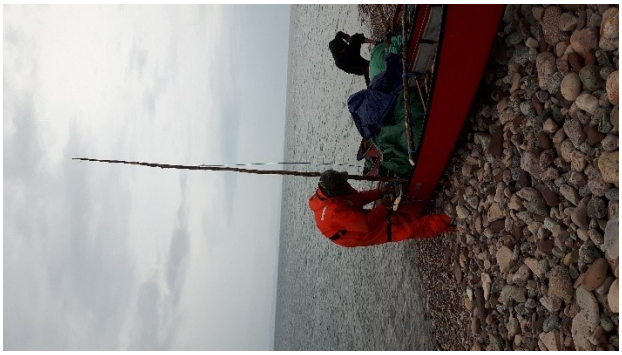

Image 15 62.778788, -109.698620

Image 16 62.736621, -109.501034

Image 17 62.710616, -109.182236

Image 18 62.710616, -109.182236

Image 19 62.754977, -109.038687

Image 20 62.754977, -109.038687

Image 21 62.776519, -108.910026

Image 22 62.776519, -108.910026

Image 23 62.776519, -108.910026

Appendix E: Feedback Letter

University of Waterloo

Date

Dear ***(Insert Name of Participant),***

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled *Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters.* As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to highlight the narratives associated with traditional Denesoline narratives as they pertain to the Snowdrift river basin.

The data collected during interviews and other methods will be provided to the Łutsël K'é Traditional Knowledge archive where it will be accessible to the community. All sacred knowledge and narratives highlighted will only be used at the expressed permission of Łutsël K'é Wildlife and Lands Department and Ni Hat'ni.

This study has received a research license from the Aurora Research Institute (*ARI 16143*) and has been reviewed and received clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 22323). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Brendan Belanger at bbelange@uwaterloo.ca

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by January of 2018, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted below.

Sincerely,

Brendan Belanger

University of Waterloo
Recreation and Leisure Studies

bbelange@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix F: Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Notification of Ethics Clearance of Application to Conduct Research with Human Participants

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Faculty Supervisor: Dr Bryan Grimwood
Department: Recreation & Leisure Studies

Student Investigator: Brendan Belanger
Department: Recreation & Leisure Studies

ORE File #: 22323

Project Title: Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along the Ancestral Waters of the Snowdrift River

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☑ *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)* ☐ *Clinical Research Ethics Committee (CREC) is pleased to inform you the above named study has been reviewed and given ethics clearance.*

Approval to start this research is effective on the ethics clearance date which is: 7/7/2017 *(m/d/y)*

University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committees are composed in accordance with, and carry out their functions and operate in a manner consistent with, the institution's guidelines for research with human participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2nd edition), International Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), the applicable laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. Both Committees are registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Federal Wide Assurance, FWA00021410, and IRB registration number IRB00002419 (HREC) and IRB00007409 (CREC).

The above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application (Form 101/101A) and the most recent approved versions of all supporting materials.

Ethics clearance for this study is valid until: 7/7/2018 *(m/d/y). Multi-year research must be renewed at least once every 12 months unless a more frequent review has otherwise been specified by the Research Ethics Committee (Form 105). Studies will only be renewed if the renewal report is received and approved before the expiry date. Failure to submit renewal reports by the expiry date will result in the investigators being notified ethics clearance has been suspended and Research Finance being notified the ethics clearance is no longer valid.*

Level of review:

☑ *Delegated review*

☐ *Full committee review meeting date:* _____ *(m/d/y)*

Signed on behalf of: ☑ *HREC Chair* ☐ *HREC Vice-Chair* ☐ *CREC Chair* ☐ *CREC Vice-Chair*

_____

☐ *Julie Joza, Acting Chief Ethics Officer, jajoza@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 38535*

☑ *Nick Caric, Manager, ncaric@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 30321*

☐ *Karen Pieters, Manager, kpieters@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 30495*

☐ *Joanna Eidse, Research Ethics Advisor, jeidse@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 37163*

☐ *Laura Strathdee, Research Ethics Advisor, lstrathd@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 30321*

☐ *Erin Van Der Meulen, Research Ethics Advisor, ervandermeulen@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 37046*

This is an official document. Retain for your files.
You are responsible for obtaining any additional institutional approvals that might be required to complete this study.

Appendix G: Research Poster for LKDFN Community

Tracking Denesoline Knowledge and Narratives along Ancestral Waters.

Update on master's thesis research associated with the project Tracking Change.

The purpose of this de-colonial narrative study is to record and interpret Deneoline traditional knowledge (TK) and stories transmitted during a multi-day travel experience. This research aims to contribute to Northern, Indigenous, community-based research by illuminating the knowledges and the narratives of land users, elders and youth from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN). In particular, the study aims to work with LKDFN representatives to document and understand how traditional land-based knowledges and narratives can contribute to Dene self-determination, land and water governance, and cultural livelihoods.

Project Overview

This report highlights the current progress of Brendan Belanger's master's thesis research study. The study was implemented by researchers from the University of Waterloo located in Ontario. This study worked in collaboration with Łutsël K'é Wildlife, Environment, and Lands Department, Ni Hat'ni, and Tracking Change. The study was completed over an 8-week period from June until August 2017.

In early March of 2017 my advisor Dr Bryan Grimwood, and I came up to Łutsël K'é. The purpose of this visit was to meet with those involved in the Tracking Change initiative. While here I was able to chat about the canoe/research trip being planned for the summer months. I spent time talking with Lauren King of the Wildlife, Environment, and Lands Department and Andreina Cambronero of Ni Hat'ni. After the trip was completed Dr. Grimwood and I worked on integrating my Masters Thesis towards the needs expressed and the goals of the Tracking Change program. To meet the goals outlined by the community and the goals of Tracking Change we devised 4 research questions to guide this study. They are as follows:

1. what TK and narratives are transmitted during the travel and land camp experience?
2. What cultural, environmental, and social changes are observed and communicated by LKDFN representatives?

3. How are stories used to transmit knowledge among LKDFN representatives during the travel experience?
4. How does the travel experience contribute to LKDFN governance of ancestral waters and lands?
5. What impact does the land camp/travel experience have on LKDFN youth connections with land, traditional knowledge, and culture?

Data collection occurred through pre-trip interviews, post-trip interviews, a research journal, photographs, and observations. Each participant of the trip was interviewed. Each interview was approximately 25-45 minutes in length. Interviews were dialogical in nature, but focused on personal experience and stories shared about the land. With the help of local land users, elders, and other community members we devised routes to travel and estimated costs and duration. With 5 local youth, and land user Marcel Basil, and land user and Elder Eddy Drybones we departed from Łutsël K'é. Baptiste Catholique ferried us to the old portage into Shelter Bay where we then set off on our trip to Desnethché. Our first night was spent in Shelter Bay after a long day of portaging. Then after a long and beautiful day of paddling we camped on Sentinel Point for the night. The next day we canoed to the Ni Hat'ni cabin just outside of Fort Reliance where we camped again for the night before pushing onto Desnethché the next day. During our travel Eddy and Marcel shared stories, taught the youths bush and life skills, and even caught a porcupine. While at Desnethché Eddy and Marcel chatted with the youths, and showed us places where the land had changed.

At this current time I am well into my analysis of these stories shared and experiences, using a descriptive narrative analysis, emphasizing on the importance of each story in the creation of the whole. I hope to have another update in the near future outlining the final findings from the report to be shared with the community and celebrated.

"Elders really make a difference to the culture. We still have to keep strong faith and commune on our culture. Explain what we can, and listen. Do what we can to keep it alive, and pass it down to future generations." Roger Catholique

Marsi Cho! Thank You!