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“Where Food Grows on the Water”: Anishinaabe Wild Rice Restoration, Food Sovereignty, and Decolonization

Rachel Sabella
sabella.rachel@gmail.com

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Creation Story of the Anishinaabe prophesizes that one day, death and destruction will come to the nations, and to avoid it, they must travel westward until they find the land where the food grows on the water, and there they should settle (Barton 1). This food is wild rice, and the land the Great Lakes region.

"Ricing" or harvesting wild rice is characterized by being a communal activity. No part of the harvesting, producing, or eating processes are meant to be done by oneself. Also part of the ricing process are winnowing, parching, dancing, and cooking the rice, all steps to prepare it for consumption. Rice is used to bring people together, and that characterization is still highlighted today in restoration efforts. Rose Martin, or "Strong Wind Lady", Ojibwe, describes her childhood memories of harvesting wild rice with her family: "While my mother, and my grandmother did the harvesting, my dad would do the processing. To me as a child it was the socializing that I looked forward to" (Barton 148). Likewise, Chief Pokagon, Potawatomi, tells of his peoples' tradition of joining others in the entire ricing process: "sometimes several families went ricing together and gathered manoomin from the end of September until November…men, women, and children all helped" (Barton 157). Renee Dillard, or "Wasson", Odawa, whose contributions to wild rice restoration will serve as a case study in this paper, also represents the importance of community while ricing and processing: "the youth and the elders came out and we were dancing the rice and scorching the rice and winnowing the rice, and we were reteaching and relearning and establishing that connection with our Manoomin" (Point of Origin).

This data and analysis of this project will examine extensively the methods in which wild rice is considered sacred to many Anishinaabe communities as well as necessary for physical

health. Following this is some of the acts that led to the decline of wild rice populations. Next is an analysis of the various restoration projects, including their contributions to various conceptualizations of food sovereignty, and especially Indigenous food sovereignty. Lastly is a break down of a possible critique of the need for these projects, followed by my conclusion for this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A Note on Anthropology

Not all of these authors are anthropologists, nor do they all have anthropological intent. In the field of women's, gender, and sexuality studies, a field which myself and some of these authors belong to, anthropology is frequently an oppressive force of the past. Our class knows this. Activists and academics frequently draw thick lines between themselves, each believing the other doesn't do or know enough to properly engage in either. This paper only partially addresses these comments, but I hope that it contributes to the queering of anthropology by centering experiences of the vulnerable and oppressed, researching with a critical eye, and energizing discussions of decolonization and work that can be done to dismantle a colonial system that was built to disadvantage the people this project concerns.

Organizational Summaries

Charlotte Coté's piece introduces the Declaration of Nyéléni framework of food sovereignty, and "indigenizes" the framework. Key to this discussion is ensuring that the generalized rights-based discussion that makes up food sovereignty channels has an opportunity to be intentionally applied to issues particular to Indigenous people, especially all forms of historical trauma, such as genocidal policies, removal from ancestral territories, abuse of land, water, and resources, and kidnapping into Indian boarding schools. These issues are unique to the indigenous experience, and so indigenized food sovereignty creates a platform for their relation to food sovereignty to be addressed and corrected for. Coté also states that indigenized food sovereignty requires that the existing efforts in indigenous communities to reclaim land and food rights be reexamined under her framework, something that this project does. As a case

study, Coté examines the resistance work of the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, the Indigenous group to which she belongs. Their activism in this area focuses on sustainable self-determination, a version of that which necessary to realize food sovereign communities. The case study overall demonstrates that collective and restorative action in the food sovereignty realm are the antitheses to the destructions brought on directly by colonialism. I will similarly demonstrate in this thesis that the case studies which I have chosen use the same and additional techniques to reverse colonization. Coté's examination of the case study viewed through her framework is very similar to the data analysis that is done in this project. Coté's conceptualization of food sovereignty is one of two in this project created by individuals, as compared to organizations.

The Declaration of Nyéléni is the leading resource in defining food sovereignty in the food studies field and the most widely accepted definition, being recognized by 80 countries and numerous organizations. Prepared for the 2007 Forum for Food Sovereignty, the 6 principles outlined each address a purpose of food sovereignty, along with a description of its relevance to the movement, and the flaw in current systems that the principle works to counteract. This means that the Declaration is essentially a (non-exhaustive) list of the concerns of the food justice movement, and thus provides me as the writer with ample trails to lead back to with case studies that reflect instances of food activism or efforts to realize food sovereign communities. The Declaration is one of two conceptualizations used in this project that was created by a forum or organization, as compared to an individual.

Holt-Gimenez provides historical references for the ongoing, widespread food crises that led to the creation of the food sovereignty movement and does so by detailing many historical and recent events stemming from a global capital-intensive economy largely in favor of the elite. In response to this first section, he then examines La Via Campesina and Campesina a

Campesina, two long-standing food sovereignty organizations, to illustrate their effectiveness at implementing agricultural, ecological, and just techniques in food production. La Via Campesina is one of the foundational groups behind the concept of food sovereignty, and Holt-Gimenez' piece provided some of the essential background information that I needed to begin to understand the network of organizations and dialogue occurring within the food studies realm at this time.

Raster and Hill explore the White Pine Treaty of 1837 between the US federal government and the Ojibwe People. The treaty recognizes the political sovereignty of American Indians, and Raster and Hill argue that food sovereignty, including tribes' ability to fish, hunt, and harvest on their territory, is an extension of political sovereignty. Wild rice, a staple to Ojibwe cultural identity and diet, has been selectively bred by the Ojibwe for generations. When the University of Minnesota mapped the wild rice genome and began genetically modifying it, this staple became patented, threatening the cultural practices and even their legal rights to harvest from their own territory in cases of crossbreeding or contamination. Raster and Hill explain that the unwarranted and uninvited experimentation on wild rice is a violation of the political and food sovereignty granted in the White Pine Treaty and poses a threat to the ecosystem and spiritual and physical health of the Ojibwe. Raster and Hill's piece contributes to this project an additional understanding of the significance of wild rice to the communities that depend on it, in a political context. In addition, their examination of the threat posed to wild rice is an example of an ongoing indirect effect of colonization disregarding the health and survival of the indigenous peoples that thrived on this land until these effects set in.

Barbara Barton unveils the explicit, drawn on, and highly intentional destruction and defamation of wild rice in the Great Lakes region, particularly in Michigan. She covers centuries

of historical accounts that make issue of the presence of wild rice and Anishinaabe lands, commonly referred to as dominionism, defined by Sbicca (2018). Primary drivers of the destruction include the logging industry, duck hunting clubs, and the culture of the US to develop and expand at any cost. The extensive examples of industrialization and racism towards Anishinaabe culture clearly illustrate the long-term results of colonialism. To follow up the accounts of destruction, Barton details the restorative efforts for wild rice in the Great Lakes region. Revealing that restoration projects have been present in various degree since the early 1800s (approximately as long as the intentional destructive projects), the understanding builds that wild rice in the region has only survived this long due to the constant efforts of indigenous groups as well as non-indigenous-specific conservation organizations, and that any wavering of restoration could be disastrous for the rice population. This understanding is also key to this project, as some of the case studies examined have limited reach and impact, but they play no small role in ensuring the survival of the rice. In the following chapters, Barton connects how the activities of restoration and conservation groups frequently involve trying to remove the obvious effects of European-American authority in the area over the centuries, also connecting closely to the defenses made in Hoover's book regarding religion and spirituality's secure rooting in the water and food of the region. Concluding with explanations of availability and use of wild rice today, Barton makes clear that since European contact, Manoomin has struggled to survive in the circumstances brought with contact, and that a strong effort of decolonization will be necessary for some Anishinaabe communities to rely on wild rice once again for their physical and spiritual health, a sentiment that engages well with Coté's conclusion regarding restorative action.

Joshua Sbicca's *Food Justice Now!* argues throughout that because of the degree to which food is indicative of culture and food injustice is indicative of structural injustice, food

justice is the quintessential study that connects all activists and struggles. Secondarily, Sbicca intends to breach the boundaries of what is romantic food justice (such as urban gardens and farmers' markets) and encourages more diverse and creative activities to be included in the food justice conversation – obviously an outcome of his primary argument above, and an argument plenty present in *Black Food Matters*. Sbicca's motif of questioning where power lies reveals issues caused by dominionism (a product of cultural imperialism), distrust in government, labor exploitation, social and literal boundaries, and white supremacy and privilege. Sbicca's book rings true with many anti-capitalist sentiments. One of these key arguments shows the problematic nature of how we sometimes try to solve labor inequalities: if the presumed answer is to pay laborers more, the system is already far too broken for that to be the answer. This argument is also indicative of how in-depth Sbicca is with his analyses with neoliberal and racial capitalism.

Chef Sean Sherman's cookbook with Beth Dooley describes how to build an indigenous pantry and indigenous plates – meals that have been decolonized. The cookbook opens with Chef Sherman's description of his exposure to food as an Indigenous person throughout his childhood, and how it came to be his profession in many ways. The recipes typically include a short paragraph explaining the significance of the dish or an ingredient within it. Many recipes and descriptions feature wild rice, detailing how it is prepared, used, and shared, and why these uses are significant for those to whom the rice is sacred (Sherman 79-80). Chef Sherman described the cookbook as less of an intent to show the reader the right way to cook a specific meal, and more of a philosophy for how to use Indigenous food in general (Decolonizing Indigenous Foodways 2021).

Chef Sherman's work used in this thesis was also presented at the ISU-sponsored series, Decolonizing Indigenous Foodways (2021). This event series hosted several food justice advocates and experts. The events consisted of a discussion panel, a cooking demonstration, and a lecture. Chef Sherman was present in all three events. Central throughout his comments and lecture were notions of an indigenous perspective of landscape, and thus, educating the audiences on what exactly Indigenous food options are, especially in contexts of regional, seasonal, and culturally appropriate foodways.

Themes

A set of themes both in my research and thesis involve political and cultural power and influence, particularly concerning appropriation, supremacy, imperialism, colonialism, and dominionism. The importance of such things lies in the modern-day destructive effects caused by historical powers, and all of which I argue have directly or indirectly led to the struggle for health in Anishinaabe communities: a system which many of the authors and their subjects in my readings are regularly working to dismantle and fundamentally change in order to "achieve" food justice and sovereignty.

What many sources call into question is the general theme of doing what is best for people, especially one's own people, over just the self. Like many concerns of activists, there are organizations, cooperatives, activists, and NGOs trying to achieve proper justice for the groups most vulnerable. Not all authors argued for a best way to support people suffering from food violence, but this thesis demonstrates that the literary work in activism and academia as a whole contribute to cases of individuals or groups trying to decide amongst themselves what that could be. This is key to my thesis because of something that Barton centered: the codependence between wild rice and Anishinaabe. In the case of wild rice in the Great Lakes region (just like

the water quality in the Mohawk communities, and the attacks on Black people by police), these sources reveal that there is not exactly time to debate the most effective route to security, and that rather, every single effort to end food violence is necessary and contributes to the huge end goals – one of which for some Anishinaabe communities being decolonization.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data

The research done for this thesis was done in three primary ways. First, I analyzed academic articles and books whose topics center one or more of the following: efforts toward food sovereignty, analysis of historical trauma, documentation of colonizer development, and understandings of Anishinaabe cultures. Second, I did a comparative analysis of the websites of relevant organizations. Third, I attended the ISU event series "Decolonizing Food Systems", which provided several opportunities for engaging with my peers and professors on a topic that my thesis heavily concerns, as well as ask the guest speakers questions to gain their insight into certain areas of my thesis topic.

Comparative analysis of academic articles and books provided excellent insight into the historical processes that are essential to unpacking my research questions. While a variety of topics were examined, each of them centered one of three key parts of my thesis: understandings of Anishinaabe cultures, discussion of food sovereignty and its theoretical framework, or analyses and occurrences of colonialism. The materials in these resources mostly served as secondary sources, while several primary sources were included throughout, such as tables, newspaper articles, and personal experiences documented through interview.

Comparative analysis of websites and toolkits/workbook materials provided by organizations essential to restoration of wild rice provided the most current news and details of on-the-ground work being done. While analyzing these sources, something key was to consider the identity relations of the organizations, and especially how they play into their greater goals. This was an immense contribution to my research because the resources were created by activists closest to the restoration projects and Anishinaabe communities, and thus were primary sources. I believe this also makes them the one of the most accurate representations of the current culture

of this area of the food sovereignty movement. This is as opposed to books that may have been written by scholars trying to achieve a certain result or answer a specific question, and it makes them preferable because they are simply reacting to what is in front of them day-to-day. They are adapting in real time to issues that concern them daily, rather than *choosing* a research project and choosing to devote one's time to it.

Attending the ISU event series "Decolonizing Food Systems" provided several opportunities for learning from the experts around me in my department, and especially the guest speakers that the series hosted. Thanks to this event, I was engaging with experts in foodways, colonized food, methods of Indigenizing food, and food sovereignty. The events I attended included a panel discussion, a cooking demonstration, and a lecture presentation. During the panel discussion, Chef Sherman, Mac Condill, and Shana Bushyhead Condill spoke about the recognition that seed savers deserve, protecting native landscapes which are often farmed and cared for by Indigenous communities, and how to use an Indigenous perspective when utilizing land. The panelists describe this perspective not as using solely native plants and animals, but recognizing what purpose each item serves in a local environment, being innovative with applying Indigenous knowledge to new techniques and products – as Bushyhead Condill described it, not "freezing the native experience in time".

Although a common thread in anthropological research, I did not engage in participant observation for this thesis for a number of reasons. Most obviously, we are currently working under the constraints of both the oppressive clock of a university and doing so during a pandemic. Without a much-extended research period, participant observation would not have been medically safe or socially wise, or even possible. If given proper allowances, the benefits of participant observation would have been manyfold. Some of which include the expanded

community of those connected to my research questions available for group interviews; an intimate, rather than distanced, academic, connection with the work being done, which allows for more thorough and committed research; and the opportunity to form networks with researchers, anthropologists, activists, and those of Anishinaabe cultures that would encourage more thorough investigation into my primary thesis statement, as well as learning about new angles from which to view the issue of dwindling wild rice populations. Certainly, my privilege gets in the way of fully understanding the immediacy of the issue and the threat to communal well-being. Through interviews and participant observation, I could hope to become more familiar with these concerns, and more properly represent them in my work.

If I were to replicate this research with the knowledge that I gained during the process, I would like to change the following areas and details of my methodology. First, given more time and with my current perspective, I would have liked to have been able to interview and visit with leaders, participants, and representatives of the organizations whose case studies I examine here. This would have provided the opportunity to receive more individualized information and details about these projects, which I would have been able to use to represent the restoration projects more thoroughly in my thesis, as well as gain additional perspectives. A potential con to this method would be the concern of possible bias shared by those individuals. If bias did turn out to be clear, I would likely consider reaching out to other organizations or entities not necessarily affiliated with Indigenous communities, especially like representatives from state Departments of Interior and Departments of Natural Resources. Another methodology for analyzing resources that I would have liked to use is contemporary comparative analysis utilizing social media, especially Twitter, to assess the representation of wild rice destruction and restoration. I could have done this in the form of including in my analysis a section examining how these two things

are represented commonly and accessibly today. Although not a potential downside, this would have taken my thesis in a different direction, or at least added a new branch to it for me to analyze in the context of the whole of restoration projects. I believe that utilizing social media for this would be effective in a comparative analysis of representation because many of my peers have agreed that they use social media for almost 100% of their news, only using actual news outlets and sites when a story particularly interests them. This tells me as the researcher that Twitter and social media as a whole present surface-level, yet honest and intriguing news. Social media is also unique to other news outlets because it encourages engagement with the topics, compared to reciting a news story on the radio, or publishing researching findings in a journal. Social media is meant to be a platform where people interact with each other, and perhaps most notably, to share opinions.

Data

A Note on Terminology and Spelling

Anishinaabe refers to a broad culture group of Native American and First Nation peoples, mostly concentrated in the Great Lakes region. Some of the tribes, both federally recognized and not, include Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. Ojibwe and Anishinaabe are not interchangeable words used to refer to the same people; however, many authors use them this way. I use the terminology as it was presenting to me by each author to ensure consistency in academic research through time, as well as spelling. Due to Anishinaabemowin not being a written language in origin, spellings of the language's word are rarely agreed upon. Some, but not all spellings of Anishinaabe include, Anishnaabeg, Anishinabek, and Anishinaabek. Likewise, Ojibwe is also commonly written as Ojibway. Manoomin is the Anishinaabemowin word for wild rice, which has also been spelled *mannomin, mnomiin,* and *mnomen*. Additionally, the word

“indigenous” is not everyone’s preferred word who identifies as such. Authors frequently use “Indigenous”, “Native”, “First Nation”, and “Indian” interchangeably. In my own writing I primarily use “indigenous”, as that is what is frequently used in academics as I was taught in the culture and the time of writing this.

The Significance of Wild Rice

Wild rice is significant to Anishinaabe populations for spiritual and physical health. Its decrease and habitat destruction has led to a colonized food system and in many cases replaces the diet that has been culturally and physically depended upon. The Anishinaabe relationship with wild rice begins at a point of migration, endeavored upon when Spiritual Leaders of tribes, still residing in the East at the time, received prophecies of destruction that would soon be brought on the tribes, unless they migrate West. The exact location for them to settle in would be made clear when they arrived to “the land where the food grows on water” (Barton 1). This food is wild rice, and it was found in great abundance among the Great Lakes, as well as the many lakes of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ontario, all places where the Ojibwe settled (Vennum *x*). This prophecy and journey passed down through generations demonstrates that wild rice has been entwined with Ojibwe spirituality for generations and this connection cannot be severed. Vennum (58) explains how wild rice is used as a sacred food among Ojibwe communities: although a staple of many Ojibwe communities’ diets, spiritual tradition deemed much of how wild rice is used, whether it be an occasion that requires its consumption and processing or prohibits it. Wasson Dillard, an Anishinaabe culture-bearer and educator in Michigan also explains that manoomin has always been used is various ceremonies and feasts and is used as an offering to the passed away (Point of Origin). Roger LaBine, Ojibwe Elder,

says of the prophecy, “this gift from the creator is respected, honored, and feasted and has become part of the identity of the native communities in the Great Lakes region” (Barton 2).

Shiloh Maples, a consultant for Native health and diet and community organizer for healthier and more accessible food systems explains how Indigenous food systems become colonized: “by being displaced and disenfranchised from decision making processes, they are separated from land-based practices and lose their food sovereignty” (Point of Origin). Likewise, Panoka Walker of the Deer Clan Anishinaabe describes that when their people cannot live on their land “there is a loss of relationship to that spirit of the Water”, clarifying that trash pollution breaks their connection to the Manoomin that they depend on (Barton 32). And it is not only people that depend on the presence of wild rice in the Great Lakes. Wild rice beds are the ideal habitat for many waterfowl and fish, and for this reason, the population of one of these species is often determined by the presence of the other (Barton 25).

Sean Sherman, founder of the Sioux Chef and co-author of *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*, grew up on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and writes of his journey into rediscovering indigenous food systems: “Long ago the tribes were sovereign over their food systems, maintaining food security through a rice knowledge of the land and its food resources…above all else, they were healthy and self-reliant” (Sherman 4). Later he explains in the context of growing and harvesting traditional foods, he “had to shuck off layers of European culture…and I learned to see the world through indigenous eyes” (Sherman 11). Indigenous food systems were severely negatively impacted by European arrival, and thus, subject to colonization. This has been described by Cote (page) as “the inability to access traditional foods as a result of forced migration, urbanization and environmental contamination”.

Raster and Gish Hill, authors of the Dispute of Wild Rice, explain the connection between wild rice and spirituality further in their paper: “Allowing the rice to grow naturally demonstrated reverence for the spirits and safeguarded the Ojibwe’s primary food source. Collectively, these religious components of the wild rice harvest demonstrate that the reciprocal relationship the Ojibwe people maintained with the plant was both ecological and spiritual” (14).

The Decline of Wild Rice

Industrialization, spurred by endless pursuit of capital, along with efforts to “clean” and maintain the land by expanding towns and governments, led to the significant decrease of wild rice populations in the Great Lake region. In the historical context of manifest destiny and a wide open profitable plain, brothers Lew, John, and Hiram Ives bought 240 acres of land near Detroit that encompassed Knaggs Creek. Knaggs Creek was a site with abundant wild rice growth. So much so that in fact it was even used as cattle feed. This was not the case after the Ives brothers spent the 1850s building a dry dock for shipping cargo, and then eventually dammed the creek. The construction and operation of both the dry dock and the dam took a huge toll on all the wildlife that has previously thrived in the habitat of Knaggs Creek, as it quickly disappeared totally (Barton 20).

Plenty of projects similar to the Ives brothers’ occurred throughout the 19th century in Michigan, with attempts to make the wetlands more accessible to industry and create better appearance for prospective new neighbors, each of them leading to the unwanted alteration of the fragile habitats in which wild rice grows, and each project diminishing its chances for survival even more. The improvement projects and industrialization continued into the 20th century, one notably being the oil pollution in Muskegon Lake documented in the 1930s. The lake was home to around 47 lumber mills, each transporting their supply using the lake. The lake was ruled

contaminated by the oil pollution throughout, and no vegetation or wild rice survived this period of the lake's history (Barton 18).

Industry and the demand for materials isn't the only thing that forced Manoomin out of the picture. As settlers, missionaries, and eventually families searching for useful land began to take interest in the Great Lakes region, they were drawn to the rich marsh lands that Michigan had to offer (Barton 61). But it wasn't the marshes themselves that they were interested in – it was the potential that the same land supposedly offered. One missionary in an 1867 article described the marshes as "dismal-looking", and writes, "Cut off the timber, cut a few ditches, and your swamp is hard, dry, productive land…and at but a trifling expense. Towns are now covering just such grounds" (Presbyterian Monthly 280). This position taken by many interested in profiting off the area prioritized foods, practices, and desires of European-Americans. This history has led to a political system and food systems that continue to prioritize non-native foods and non-native experiences, that result in declining mental and physical wellness and community structures (University of Minnesota Extension). Only through dismantling the systems that colonization enabled, can Native experiences be recognized and respected.

This habitat destruction was also made possible by the white cultural attitude of hygiene and maintenance at the time. Malaria was just beginning to be connected to mosquitoes, and mosquitoes, like Manoomin, thrived in areas with low water. While the logging industry was also enjoying just the beginning of its success in Michigan, doctors began circulating the false ideas that logging dispersed malaria by disturbing the swampy soil and that vegetation was another host of the disease. With doctors behind them, engineers were called into the region to drain the wetlands and rid the residential areas of the disease (Barton 74). One renowned doctor, Henry Lyster, published an 1880 article stating that the only way to "reclaim" the state of

Michigan and all her profitability was to achieve “a complete draining of the State” (238). Another common bother to residents who were frequently small farmers and ranchers in the 19th century was blackbirds who were said to gather in flocks of thousands, steal crops, outrage farmers, and wreak havoc by stirring up neighborhoods (Hubbard 286). It was also common knowledge that blackbirds resided here so comfortably because of the rich environment of the Creek – another reason for residents to support its drainage. Another anecdote contributed to European-Americans in the Detroit area developing a fear of the wild rice waters. Documented in the *Detroit Free Press* in 1906. A man and woman out fishing on a boat in a wild rice marsh became lost and were unable to navigate out of the “desolate labyrinth” of wild rice before dying of “cold, exhaustion, and mental torture” (Barton 21).

These idyl neighborhoods, hunting clubs, and industrial ventures paved the way for the negative effects of tourism today. Wasson Dillard says of the tourism in northern Michigan near Mackinaw, “A lot of people have their summer homes and resorts here. The resort people that live up here, they don’t really appreciate the rice the same way Indigenous people do. They *really* don’t want the rice tangling up their boat motors” (Point of Origin).

Chapter 4: Analysis

The Restoration of Wild Rice & Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Many indigenous, non-indigenous, and non-tribal groups have been working on projects to restore wild rice, whether it's protecting natural habitats, hosting events to educate those of all ages, using traditional techniques, and more. In this project, I place these projects into one of two categories: cultural restoration and physical restoration. The restoration projects featured in this paper, no matter the type, all work to achieve indigenous food sovereignty. This section serves as a demonstration as to how diverse types of wild rice restoration efforts are all connected by multiple perspectives of Indigenous Food Sovereignty showing multiple routes for protecting land, cultures, traditional knowledge, and land rights. Although many non-indigenous groups are contributing to these restoration efforts, this project aims to uplift the efforts of those that have been most affected by colonization. Thus, included in the criteria for selection of restoration case studies is that those leading the projects are Indigenous. Other criteria include that the projects are ongoing at this time, and that they are not in the development or planning stages, but rather they have been established for long enough for a degree of data to be obtained.

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians have been working to restore wild rice since 2009 by seeding rice directly into the lakes that once heartily supported wild rice beds but have since declined in wild rice populations or completely lost their rice. I describe this projects as one of physical restoration. LTBB's efforts for wild rice restoration are notable in particular because of their proactive monitoring and management of the Manoomin after seeding it. The table below illustrates the level of monitoring LTBB maintains as well as how their efforts have

ramped up since beginning. LTBB also works to directly engage communities by hosting events where wild rice is prepared and served to educate on its cultural importance in health, spirituality, and history. In addition, the lakes in which Manoomin is seeded by LTBB are chosen for their proximity to these such communities, so that ideally the rice is tended and used by those to whom Manoomin is culturally appropriate. These restoration projects feed into the Indigenous Food Sovereignty definition provided by Chef Sean Sherman. In a lecture at Illinois State University, Chef Sherman lays out 6 pillars of Indigenous Food Sovereignty: 1) healthy food access; 2) cultural food producers; 3) regional food systems; 4) local control of food systems; 5) access to indigenous education; and 6) environmental protections (The Revolution of Indigenous Food Systems of North America 2021). By prioritizing seeding new rice and doing so locally, pillars 4 and 6 stand out in LTBB's work for indigenous food sovereignty. Additionally, the educational events put on by LTBB with the Center for Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University and Wasson Dillard hugely contribute to all 6 pillars.

PICK UP DATE	LOCATION	PRICE PER LB.	TOTAL WEIGHT	TOTAL COST	# INLAND LAKES SEEDED
9/10/2002	White Earth	unknown	4 lbs	unknown	1
9/3/2003	Leech Lake	unknown	1,300 lbs	unknown	1
9/16/2004	Leech Lake	$1.50	1,500 lbs	$2,250.00	1
9/22/2005	White Earth	unknown	1,500 lbs	unknown	2
9/6/2006	Leech Lake	unknown	1,800 lbs	unknown	3
9/5/2007	Leech Lake	$1.75	1,500 lbs	$2,625.00	4
9/8/2008	Leech Lake	$2.50	1,500 lbs	$3,750.00	3
9/9/2009	Leech Lake	$3.00	1,500 lbs	$4,500.00	4
9/1/2010	Leech Lake	$2.50	1,500 lbs	$3,750.00	4
9/7/2011	White Earth	$1.50	1,500 lbs	$2,250.00	4
8/29/2012	Leech Lake	$1.75	2,000 lbs	$3,500.00	4
2013	Leech Lake	$1.75	2,000 lbs	$3,500.00	3
9/8/2014	Leech Lake	unknown	2,500 lbs	unknown	2
9/8/2015	Leech Lake	$2.00	3,500 lbs	$7,000.00	3

Table 1: Note the significant increase in pounds of rice seeded, as well as the unsteady price per pound of rice, an effect of its commoditization.

Hillary Butler, an elder among the 120 Ojibwe nations on the shores of the Great Lakes, claims that it's his life's work to show kids that the outdoors has more to offer than they think, and especially that outdoor traditional activities offer an alternate route to alcohol and drugs. He says that to have food sovereignty, a community has the power to choose what foods are important – important medicinally, culturally, and spiritually. By hosting frequent outdoor educational camps for kids in indigenous families, he passes on his knowledge as an elder of their traditional hunting (rabbits), harvesting (wild rice), and fishing (walleye and whitefish) methods. A nearby lake that he notes as especially important is one of the largest unchanged natural wild rice beds. He says that a lack of knowledge of how to care for and use the land and this wild rice bed has resulted in a loss of food quality and of cultural connections to the land, and that these issues will only increase as time goes on. Using his position as an elder within the tribe, he is encouraging more young people every year to be passionate about caring for their sacred land and foods, as well as protecting the wild rice beds and sacred waters from further exploitation. He believes that education projects like his own and community projects like organic gardening are the keys to being healthy and choosing what is important to one's community – fitting his own description of food sovereignty: choosing what foods are important for one's own community. (Growing Native Great Lakes 2018).

Likewise, Dillard hosts a manoomin processing event for students of Northern Michigan University studying Native cultures and social issues. The event works to educate the students on traditional processing by allowing them to assist in dancing and winnowing the wild rice, while also making positive connections with an institution that has great influence in determining how

and what indigenous food systems and larger social issues are being taught (Point of Origin; Michigan State University 2021).

Butler and Dillard's work in their communities demonstrate the four key principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty promoted by Indigenous Food Systems Network: 1) sacred or divine sovereignty; 2) participatory; 3) self-determination; and 4) policy (Indigenous Food Systems Network 2021). By engaging people with their efforts, especially young people, both Butler and Dillard are ensuring that their Indigenous food systems are participatory and foster relations at individual, familial, communal levels, and by promoting education in their respective food systems, they are instilling the knowledge of sacred connections to food and the systems that produce food. Dillard and Butler's work on and around reservations as well as Indigenous Food Sovereignty as a whole work to provide a framework of policy that protects the sacred waters and lands used by tribes and the rights of Indigenous people to use those waters and lands as is culturally appropriate to them. Finally, all of the work described above contributes to the self-determination principle of Indigenous Food Sovereignty. By engaging with their students, Butler and Dillard are not only reifying their own control over their food options, but they are passing the reigns off to those that follow after them, ensuring that the knowledge accessible to few yesterday becomes accessible to more today, and to many tomorrow. The many different Indigenous experiences of cultural and historical trauma, especially concerning food violence, are direct results of colonization, and to push back against those results and efforts to restore the food culture of Indigenous people contribute to the dismantling of colonization, colonized food systems, and cultural trauma and food violence in these communities.

The Sacred Roots Program, which serves to address chronic illness among Indigenous communities formed the Food Sovereignty Alliance, the function of which is to bring more

everyday Indigenous folks to the table to participate in discussions that they historically had not been part of. The Food Sovereignty Alliance also prioritizes protecting the environment that Anishinaabe depend upon and educating those they serve on using traditional Native foods in healthy and affordable ways. By intentionally working to increase the number of Indigenous voices in decision-making positions to take control over the food that impacts their communities and re-centering Indigenous knowledge of land and food, the acts of colonization are being combatted (Sacred Roots 2020). In Charlotte Coté's conceptualization of Indigenous Food Sovereignty, she argues that it must go beyond rights-based discussion and center cultural relationships with the environment, knowledge that allows communities to control their own wellbeing, and the ability to disconnect from issues directly linked with colonization such as Indigenous inequalities and health issues (Coté 338, 2017). By addressing inequalities in Indigenous health issues and care and uplifting Indigenous people and their voices to places of power, the Sacred Roots Food Sovereignty Alliance is an excellent realization of Coté's definition of Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

The Anishinaabe Agriculture Institute is a program created to restore healthy food systems through respectful relationships (Anishinaabe Agriculture Institute 2021). Their mission is to relocation a food economy, which restores traditional food varieties that are able to adapt to a changing climate. Winona's Hemp and Heritage Farm is one of several projects within the Anishinaabe Agriculture Institute. Winona LaDuke, a prolific Indigenous activist, author, speaker, and agriculturalist, manages the heritage farm near Snellman, Minnesota, a restorative agriculture program based on Anishinaabe knowledge. Some goals of the farm include: using as little fossil fuels as possible, improving quality of life, being gentle to the earth, for Native people to have access to tribal food, and for young people to learn how to grow that food. The

heritage of the farm describes these goals as “food sovereignty” (Winona’s Hemp and Heritage Farm 2021). While the heritage farm doesn’t work directly with restoring wild rice, the guiding principles of the farm enact the principles of The Definition of Food Sovereignty from the Declaration of the Nyéléni (2007). These are 1) focusing on food for people; 2) valuing food providers; 3) localizing food systems; 4) putting control locally; 5) building knowledge and skills; and 6) working with nature. Through tending the land without the assistance of chemicals, machines, or fossil fuels, LaDuke’s work with the heritage farm remains supportive of the local economy, culture, and people, while protecting the land and ensuring the sustainability of their food system. Additionally, the Declaration acknowledges the weight that industry and capital (both direct effects of colonization in North America) have on local, culturally appropriate food systems, outlining that food sovereignty “offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users.” (Nyéléni 2007: Forum for Food Sovereignty 2007). For those involved with the Anishinaabe Agriculture Institute, this description from Nyéléni means not only resisting and dismantling, but restoring, rebuilding, and recreating the food systems that most benefit them.

In *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*, Chef Sean Sherman and Beth Dooley, intend to completely separate European staples and notions of cooking from Indigenous diets – or, to decolonize indigenous food systems (Sherman 6). His cookbook lives up to his own definition of Indigenous Food Sovereignty, the pillars of which are outlined above in connection with LTBB’s restoration efforts, and others with its strong commitment to harvesting techniques. Chef Sherman writes that in collecting items for an Indigenous pantry, it is essential to fish and rice with a frequency and methods that are sustainable for the waters (Sherman 81). Throughout the

cookbook and lecture at ISU, he emphasizes the importance of self-harvesting from locations nearby that you are familiar with – and how doing so encourages further knowledge of the land, developing connections within neighborhoods and communities, drastically decreasing food miles (and thus, dependance on corporations and fossil fuels), and an awareness and appreciation for Indigenous knowledge. By encouraging seasonal and regional eating, self-harvesting, and decolonizing Indigenous diets, especially in the context of utilizing traditional knowledge for contemporary foods and techniques, Chef Sherman is advocating for a food culture which protects and defends all decolonized foods, especially ones like wild rice which are particularly in danger due to colonization, and people working to reverse the effects of colonization. By making decolonized meals accessible and known to not only Anishinaabe but to the general public, Chef Sherman is restoring and defending Indigenous knowledge, which in turn results in greater awareness of issues of food violence facing Indigenous communities. When addressing how individuals can help in the fight for Indigenous Food Sovereignty, he frequently states that the best thing anyone can do is learn "how to make food taste like where you are", indicating the importance that traditional knowledge and the above effects of traditional harvesting techniques have on achieving Indigenous food sovereignty at a personal level (The Revolution of Indigenous Food Systems of North America 2021).

Finally, a common denominator in most, if not all, stories resulting in Indigenous land appropriation within and outside of this project is the clear cause that settlers, European-American immigrants, and white people across the history of this area were only looking to improve conditions for themselves. This should be read in two ways, the first as a possible critique of this thesis and the activism represented, and the second as a response to that critique. First, it can be argued that the actions that resulted in wild rice destruction were not done to

intentionally harm Anishinaabe culture or people. In the cases represented in this paper, these folks were acting with the knowledge they had, advocating for the health and safety of those around them. Freezing to death in wild rice reeds, the rash of malaria, and crop destruction are all things that would severely rattle a community. If the nearby doctor says that the standing water could be to blame for some of these issues, it is understandable, maybe even logical, to want to drain the waters, and deal with unknown consequences later. However, in response to this, the data and case studies of destruction in this thesis clearly represent the frequency and ease in disregarding Indigenous situations and experiences. Clearly, wild rice in the Great Lakes region was not a threat to everyone's health and safety, or else Anishinaabe would not physically and spiritually depend on it so. If they had chosen to cooperate with local tribes in ways such as signing non-exploitative treaties (and following them), communicating about concerns with living near the wild rice, and considering native lifestyles and connecting to the areas before making grand decisions about the land, these settlers would have rightly acknowledged Indigenous land and food sovereignty. But these causes were not prioritized by those moving in, and rather, their own experiences and preferences were. Lastly, whether those enacting these projects realized it or not, they *were* done to intentionally harm Anishinaabe culture or people. In the historical context of the first presidency of the United States, George Washington ordered his military leaders to target the crops of Indigenous communities and to burn and destroy producing lands so as to starve out the populations (The Revolution of Indigenous Food Systems of North America 2021). Food violence, breaking treaties, and ignoring political, land, and food sovereignty are ingrained into the history and formation of this nation. So, even when it may seem totally logical and even desirable to respond to public health and these other concerns with draining the wetlands that support local ecosystems, it certainly wasn't the only response

possible, it did nothing to recognize Indigenous sovereignty, and only further legitimized the all-too-common acts resulting in displacement of Indigenous communities by privileging one's own needs and desires. This is what had fed into the centuries-old issue of creating and reproducing the privilege that colonization awards to European-Americans and white people around the world.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Protecting and restoring foodways, achieving food sovereignty, and decolonizing are all reliant on diverse types of activism and projects. This was visible in this project through the variety of cultural and physical restoration projects, along with the variety within each of the two types. A movement cannot achieve its goals solely through one type of activism. One might not think that teaching a young boy how to snare a rabbit plays the same role in the fight for indigenous food sovereignty as does opening a coop grocery store or holding a nationwide protest. But this project revealed that the role these acts play are equally essentially and celebrated in these case studies. And of course, anthropology as a discipline is committed to protection and restoration of cultures and peoples. This project contributes to anthropology as a study that examines how humans respond to the needs of themselves and their communities, how they interact with and enforce measures of protection, and finally, it demonstrates how food and identity are intertwined in human culture.

A goal of this thesis was to contribute to the queering of anthropology by highlighting experiences of those whose voices are not recognized or respected, especially with an intent to reverse effects of systems of privilege – in this case colonization. With conceptualizations of decolonization as one of its principle concerns, ISU's Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program has encouraged me to use my thesis to engage with the relationships between identity and colonization. As a result, one conclusion of this project is that as identity is erased by colonization, it can be restored through processes of decolonization.

Finally, the significant of multiple working definitions of the same concept is essential in anthropological work, and perhaps becomes even more so as time passes. No work is done in a vacuum; this project, along with the resources used, works in conjunction with other

anthropological research being done, even at an undergraduate level. For an anthropologist to be able to work with several conceptualizations of one topic, networks of activism and academics are created, ideas shared broadly, research made more inclusive and accessible, and collective and restorative action takes place.

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