

**Decolonizing local food culture: revisiting cookbooks for anti-colonial praxis**

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## Abstract

Spaces that organize around local food provisioning, such as farmers markets, tend to attract mostly white people, and there lacks a deeper understanding of the barriers racialized people face in engaging alternatives food initiatives. This research project aims to problematize local food discourse by uncovering how YUM (York University Market) staff, who are all racialized youth, make meaning of local food. Using an anti-colonial food justice praxis this research project examines the food experiences of participants highlighting family migration stories, food skills and an understanding of culturally appropriate foods. This research project seeks to foreground the experiences of racialized youth in alternative food initiatives such as the Good Food Market, which have historically been criticized for its overwhelming whiteness and perpetuation of class and racial privilege.

To uncover how YUM staff make meaning of local food, I employ a mixed-methods qualitative approach; cooking as inquiry, zine-making and storytelling. Participants and I cooked recipes together that used locally sourced produce. Following these one-on-one cooking sessions, we gathered as a group to create our cookbook zine. The cookbook is an assemblage of each participants recipes. Results from the cooking sessions highlight tensions between racialized youth's identity and local food, and that participants possessed some form of bodily knowledge that enabled them to prepare the recipes. The zine-making session highlighted the need for socially safe spaces for racialized youth to gather, especially around food.

Keywords: Decolonization, local food, racialized youth, critical food pedagogy,

## Foreword

This paper contains the design, methodology, cookbook and results from my Major Research Project entitled “Decolonizing local food culture”. This project meets the requirements for the Food Justice component of my Plan of Study (POS), and satisfies the learning objective which sought to develop a basic understanding of how food justice addresses race, class and gender disparities. Throughout my plan of study, I gathered the critical theories, concepts and practices to take up this research. As the project unfolded new theories became apparent, however the three main components: Food Justice, Health Equity and Political Economy still underpinned my research and informed me throughout the project. Through this project, I sought to uncover how the staff at the on-campus Good Food Market YUM make meaning of local food using a mixed-methods approach. I propose that their identities as racialized youth who have worked at alternative food initiatives can offer unique insights on their experiences in what food justice scholars have noted tend to be particularly white.

## Land Acknowledgement

The markets participants and I worked together on and gathered the majority of our food are in what is known as Tkaronto, which has been taken care of by the Anishinabek (Ah-nish-in-nah-beg) Nation, the Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-oh-show-nee) Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. I acknowledge the treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. I also recognize that this territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

I recognize my privilege as a settler on Turtle Island and intend to mobilize my knowledge and learning towards land justice for all Indigenous peoples. Following the Native Land Teacher Guide, I also wanted to acknowledge what my relationship is to this territory, how this acknowledgement relates to the work being done here, and what intentions I have to disrupt colonialism beyond this land acknowledgement. I am a first-generation settler and the descendant of immigrants from the Philippines. This acknowledgement aims to critique the romanticized notion of what “local” food means, and deliberately remind readers that local food is still on traditional Indigenous land, and that many settler farmers are a result of settler colonialism which continues to displace Indigenous peoples. My intentions beyond this land acknowledgement are to be a part of a collective remembering as opposed to a collective forgetting of Canada’s colonial legacy.

To write this Land Acknowledgement and find out upon whose traditional land our food was grown on I consulted the Native-Land.ca website and the York University website:

<https://aboriginal.info.yorku.ca/land-acknowledgment/>.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Decolonization is ultimately about, as Tuck and Yang (2012) state, the “repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (p.1). Because this project engages meaning-making of local food, I aim to support the return of land to Indigenous people by naming whose land we are on, when naming where our food was from- hence the title “Decolonizing local food culture”. Following Grey and Patel (2014), I recognize that progressive solutions such as the drive towards local food systems, small farmers and community gardens, all are sowing Indigenous Peoples’ territories (Grey & Patel, 2014). Therefore, my use of the term decolonization is deliberate and does not aim to be a metaphor, rather a statement of solidarity that land, ultimately must be returned to Indigenous peoples, and failure to recognize or even name that fact continues to undermine Indigenous food sovereignties. While my research does focus on the experience of racialized youth who have migrated from other countries, it is part of the aim of this project to be a part of a collective remembering, as opposed to forgetting, of Canada’s on-going colonial legacy. Part of what my research considers is how alternative food initiatives such as the local food movement undermines Indigenous food sovereignties by being complacent in settler colonialism.

This project sought to uncover how the staff at the on-campus Good Food Market make meaning of local food by gathering, cooking, eating local ingredients. We have also assembled our recipes into a zine-style cookbook which is included in this paper. The participants and I all identify as racialized, and/or diasporic youth who met while working together at YUM (York University Market) or GGFM (Glendon Good Food Market) or both. To engage in what Celia-Haig (2009) refers to as “Decolonizing Diaspora” which traces not only where participants have come *from* but also inquire unto whose land we’ve come *onto* (Haig-Brown, 2009). This project aims to build on food justice literature which has sought to better understand the exclusionary practices people of color face in alternative food initiatives such as farmers markets (Guthman, 2008).

### Background on the York University Market

According to *Meal Exchange*’s nation-wide survey, 2 in 5 University students, or 39% reported being food insecure (Silverthorn & Abraham, 2016). Rising costs of food, tuition fees, and housing costs all contribute to post-secondary student food insecurity. To address student food insecurity and simultaneously meet York University’s sustainability goals, Regenesys and York University’s food services started the weekly farmers market in 2013. As the market became increasingly less accessible for small farmers, the market shifted from a farmer’s market

to one of Foodshare's initiatives called Good Food Markets. Good Food Markets aim to fill the need for affordable, fresh, local produce in communities where farmers markets are not viable (Foodshare, 2020). Regenesys is a student-run, non-profit environmental justice organization based out of York's campus. Main inspiration for this project stems from my previous position as director of HR and Operations with the organization. My duties included managing the YUM (York University Market) market at Keele campus and GGFM (Glendon Good Food Market) at Glendon. The markets ran weekly, on Wednesdays and Thursdays at both of York University's campuses. In addition to the local and imported produce delivered from Foodshare, YUM also included anywhere between 2-12 local vendors. In order to be a part of our market, vendors had to align with our values and had to be small and locally owned business, aim to support sustainability and social justice, and must adhere to other fees and regulations typically set out by the University. The vendors included vegan cheeses, gluten free baked goods, local cured meats, local honey and honey products, natural and organic bath and beauty products, local arts and crafts, and we also regularly featured hot food vendors with various specialties.

When executing the markets, there is always an emphasis on "local" produce and local vendors. Half of the order from Foodshare must be from a "local" farm, and to raise awareness on where the produce was grown, we had maps of southern Ontario at the market to show exactly where the food had come from. Some of the produce however was imported, passing through the Ontario Food Terminal and transported from around the world, to supplement the produce grown locally. As a result, market staff were able to meet community needs by providing culturally appropriate foods that may not be found locally, *and* promote the locally sourced produced, often from smaller farms. Interactions with customers were naturally pedagogical: we had to be prepared to answer questions about the produce, offer recipe and meal ideas that included ingredients we were selling at the time, and once in a while engage in debates with community members on the meaning and importance of local, or why the organic produce was so much more expensive. As a form of experiential education, staff and myself had to learn and teach about local food and gained an understanding of some of the institutional barriers students faced when attempting to bring local food to our campus community.

### **Local food:**

Local food has and continues to be emphasized as an alternative to industrially produced food. When highlighting the need for "foodshed analysis" Kloppenberg et al. (1996) claim that central to building a more sustainable ecology is paying attention to the source of food, and the

distance food travels from production to consumption. Meal Exchange's national survey on University student food insecurity found the majority of respondents believe in the importance of serving locally-grown food on campus and that it would increase the availability of healthy food on campus (Silverthorn & Abraham, 2016). With increasing attention to, and concern for the negative environmental, social and political effects of industrial farming and food provisioning the "alternative food movement" (AFM) emerged as a series of local responses to global food issues (DuPuis, Harrison, & Goodman, 2011). *Alternative food initiatives* (AFIs) refer to the myriad of events that attempt to mitigate the environmental impact of the industrial food system, these include but are not limited to farmers markets, CSAs (community supported agriculture), food boxes, community gardens, urban farms (Levkoe, 2011). These AFIs include community food security initiatives, such as the York University Markets.

**Research problem:**

Criticisms of food system localisation highlight that local food is not necessarily more sustainable, or more just. Food justice advocates such as Slocum (2006), Guthman (2008) and Allen (2008) have highlighted the ways alternative food initiatives that rally around the promotion of local food often perpetuate white privilege and erase the often-racialized migrants that work on local and small farms. Spaces that sell local food, such as farmers markets, tend to valorize small-scale white farmers in what Alkon and McCullen (2010) refer to as the "white farm imaginary". The white farm imaginary, according to Alkon and McCullen (2010), holds the "small-scale, yeoman farmer as an American agricultural icon" (p.945). This is problematic when, historically, only white farmers were allowed to farm this way, and the imaginary ignores the displacement of Indigenous peoples for white homesteaders, the enslavement of African-Americans who had to work on agricultural land, and underpaid Asian and Mexican immigrants who continue to be a part of our current agricultural landscape (Alkon & McCullen, 2010).

While the market that this research centers around is a Good Food Market, and not a farmer's market, they share similarities as they are both public markets that promote local food from small-scale farmers and local vendors. AFIs have been, according to Levkoe (2011) accused of being complicit with neoliberalism, by promoting an "ethical consumerism" that focuses on individual food choice as opposed to addressing the structural issues that affect sustainable food systems and social justice. AFIs have been criticized for continuing to portray and sell local food as a commodity, and rarely engage in the systemic inequalities that can lead to food insecurity; specifically issues of income inequality and racism. Gibb and Wittman (2013)

have found that in Vancouver, Canada, there continues to be a disconnect between local food movement participants and the Chinese-Canadian farmers who grow a lot of Vancouver's local food. While some participants were aware of Chinese-Canadian farmer's role in the local food movement, the movement itself tended not to recognize or involve Chinese-Canadian farmers.

Guthman (2008) and Slocum (2006) have attempted to problematize the assumption that people of color are underrepresented in alternative food movements and alternative food initiatives because they do not know or care about their food production sources. Conrad (2020) has highlighted that these assumptions about people of color in alternative food are part of a larger problem of "white supremacy culture", and that it is systemic racism that continues to act as a major barrier for people of color to engage in alternative food initiatives. This confronts the assumption that people of color do not participate in AFIs in large numbers because they "do not know". Guthman (2008) highlighted that the way farmers market managers spoke about people of color, in conjunction with the overwhelming whiteness of these food spaces, may have a "chilling" effect on people of color. My project seeks to build on Guthman's (2008) call for more research to understand "how and to what degree people of color experience exclusionary practices in the spaces of alternative food provision" (p.395) by uncovering how YUM staff make meaning of local food. As racialized youth who worked over the span of one year at the local, on-campus Good Food Market, I believe that participants' experiences can offer insight to the degrees of exclusionary practice. I also argue that our positionalities as racialized youth in a multicultural society such as Canada contributes to food justice literature in unique ways.

Further, there is limited engagement with racialized youth and local food. While Valiente-Neighbors (2012) addresses immigrant-based definitions of local food, their research only interviewed Filipino immigrants from a wide age range, whereas my project sought participation from a mixed-race group. Similarly, there is limited literature with racialized youth and critical food pedagogy: as Jones (2018) had pointed out Black youth are often *subjects* of food pedagogy as opposed to co-producers of them.

Underpinning all of these problems is the on-going erasure and lack of engagement with Indigenous food sovereignties and non-Indigenous researchers in local food, and the lack of discussion of settler colonialism within the alternative food movement, and in alternative food initiatives. Not only does much local food discourse promote a 'white farm imaginary' subjecting people of color to racist tensions of belonging, local food discourse rarely addresses, admits or engages its on-going presence on Indigenous territories.

How racialized youth, who come from diverse backgrounds, making meaning of local food can further the social-justice aims of food system localisation. By engaging in what Celia-Haig (2009) refers to as “decolonizing diaspora” we attempt to bring awareness to our complicity in settler colonialism, and not perpetuate the erasure of our presence on Indigenous land. Our diverse backgrounds can also uncover how we use foodmaking as a method of communication across difference, laying down some ground work for cooking as a method for anti-racist praxis. By engaging in embodied pedagogies through the zine-making and cooking sessions, we also consider how racialized bodies possess unique bodily knowledge rooted in their lived experience.

### **Research objective:**

The objective of this project is to uncover how YUM staff make meaning of local food. The use of cooking as inquiry aims to consider foodmaking as a pedagogical practice, and an opportunity to share and learn food skills and food stories. Their lived experience as racialized youth who work in alternative food initiatives directly addresses the gap in literature surrounding the experiences of people of color in alternative food, and the underdevelopment of critical food pedagogy in addressing issues of race and racism. Also, to address consumer de-skilling, cooking as inquiry also offers and opportunity for participants to develop cooking skills and experience in a pedagogical setting, while considering cooking as inquiry as a method for anti-colonial food justice praxis

To uncover how YUM staff make meaning of local food, what recipes, stories and skills do participants already possess, and how do they apply that knowledge and experience to the foodshed they have come into. Those recipes are assembled here in this paper as a zine-style cookbook. Because of the growing popularity of local food, farmers markets *and* Good Food Markets, I aim to problematize local food rhetoric, to revisit the local foodshed as what Heldke (2003) refers to as a site for cultural food anticolonialism. To de-centre the “white farm imaginary” discourse, we acknowledged whose traditional land the food was produced on when noting which ingredients were local. This aims to begin viewing local food as a set of relations, in this case our relationship with the land we are on must acknowledge the history of that land.

### **Project design**

Participants and I cooked together for anywhere between 1.5 to 6 hours depending on their availability and the time it took to prepare the recipes. Each cooking session was audio recorded and notes were taken immediately after each session. Participants and I each prepared a

dish or recipe, and each recipe included at least one locally sourced ingredient. When the cooking sessions began, I was no longer working for Regenesiis, and neither were many of the participants. While I hoped to source our ingredients from the market directly, we ended up using local ingredients either directly from the farm in a few cases, or from nearby grocery stores that had local produce. After the individual cooking sessions, on November 5, 2019, all the participants and I gathered at York's Keele campus for a collective zine-making session where we would reflect on the cooking, our experience at the market, and create our recipe pages. This final session was also audio recorded.

### **Participant selection and ethics:**

Participants were all part-time staff that have worked at the York University Market (YUM) between 2018-2019. As part of their employment with Regenesiis all participants had also attended anti-oppression training delivered and led by me. They all were, during the time of their employment, post-secondary students in different programs. Participants all identify as either Black or people of color and are considered "youth" as they were all under the age of 30 at the time of the project. They were contacted via e-mail in September 2019 and depending on their availability we met to cook throughout October 2019. Participants were informed that their participation or non-participation will not have any effect on their future employment with Regenesiis. All participants are racialized and are what Conradson and McKay(2007) refer to as "translocal subjectivities" which highlights is a type of subjectivity whose experiences occupy various social fields on a transnational scale. They, at the time of the project, were all under the age of 30 categorically "youth".

### **Research questions**

The cookbook itself is supposed to be a form of anti-colonial food justice praxis that has assembled the recipes of participants on their own terms and designs, and purposefully complicates our notion of "local" by using locally sourced ingredients and highlighting upon whose traditional land the food was grown on. I envisioned a project that would include aspects of the market and the cooking programs and wanted to create something that could be shared but that also mirrored those initiatives. My hope was that this cookbook-zine could be shared at the market, encouraging and helping customers see different ways to cook and prepare the local produce, while also thinking critically about food, place and colonialism.

### **Key research questions:**

- How do staff and volunteers from the on-campus Good Food Market make meaning of local ingredients?
- How can cooking together reveal ways in which people of color and people from marginalized groups internalize different forms of oppression?
- How can this cooking session contribute to the growing literature surrounding race, class and gender in foodshed analysis? How can this offer a model of promoting food literacy through adult education? How can themes that emerge from this project inform food pedagogy and foodshed analysis?

In Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework I argue for the necessity of an anti-colonial food justice praxis. Chapter 3: Methodology outlines the use of mixed methods and explains the use of each methodology. Chapter 4 is a scanned copy of the cookbook zine. The title page which says “friends gather here” is a collage co-created by participants and me. In Chapter 5: Results and Findings I highlight the individual cooking sessions following a reflection of each session. I also include the results of the audio-recordings of our collective zine-making which focuses on our collective experience at the market and reflections on cooking together with local ingredients.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

My research aims for this project were to uncover how YUM staff, who are all racialized youth, make meaning of local food. This project addresses the gaps in agri-food literature surrounding how people of color experience exclusionary practice in alternative food initiatives such as farmers markets (Guthman, 2011). To address my research objectives, I employed a blend of theoretical frameworks. Before cooking with my participants, the project was grounded in critical race and anti-oppressive theories. As our cultures and parallel experiences with colonialism became evident, it highlighted the need to develop an anti-colonial food justice praxis, one that not only would foreground the experiences as diasporic, racialized youth, but also complicate our identities as settlers on Indigenous land. The decision to utilize food justice as a theoretical framework stems from food justice scholar's critique of whiteness and racism in community food security initiatives and organizations, and the alternative food movement in general. I employ an anti-colonial food justice praxis to engage the criticisms of the food justice movement which is that it does not sufficiently theorize colonialism as a distinct form of oppression. In this chapter, I also argue that an anti-colonial food justice praxis is necessary for food justice work in practice, and theoretically, which considers the work of unpacking one's own complicity in systems of oppression.

### **Food justice**

An understanding of food justice is central to my research because of the ways food justice scholarship has been grounded in anti-racism efforts, and for its critique of the ways alternative food initiatives have often replicated systemic problems as opposed to confronting them. This project, which foregrounds the lived experience of racialized youth, is grounded in our shared experiences as YUM staff. Another shared aspect of our job was the mandatory participation in anti-oppression training. In our anti-oppression training sessions, which Regenesi acknowledges are only an introductory to anti-oppressive language and theory, we discuss how to apply that knowledge to situations related to the customer service aspects of the job, an in real-life situations outside of their role in Regenesi. Interacting with a racially diverse community on behalf of a student-led environmental justice organization requires a basic understanding of our positionalities and how to navigate sometimes difficult and uncomfortable interactions with other community members. As a group, we understood this to be an on-going learning process. This project considers how our lived experiences inform our work at the market, and how our work simultaneously informed other aspects of our food provisioning.

Slocum (2006) and Alkon and McCullen (2010)'s work on whiteness in farmers markets and whiteness in alternative food have highlighted the ways alternative markets like farmers markets and CSAs often perpetuate white privilege, and in some cases even disseminate racist assumptions about low participant rates from people of color. In community food security organizations, for example, Slocum (2006) has noted the barriers to addressing racism, one of which is the difficulty for the mostly white leadership in these spaces to address their own complicity in upholding systemic racism in their organizations. While based in American examples, similar studies in Canada have found food system localisation efforts to re-inscribe racial inequalities despite the social justice aims of the AFNs associated with local food (Gibb and Wittman 2013). Food justice activists and scholar critiques of the alternative food movement overwhelming whiteness has brought about critical discussions surrounding race, privilege and geography. Food justice's focus on racialization and racial inequality has made the movement strategically positioned to highlight how systemic racism manifests in alternative food movements and aims to bring awareness to how these systems of oppression are intrinsically linked and affect food security.

Food justice critiques of racial inequality in alternative food inform my research in several ways. York University is a racially diverse campus and community, and so working at the market and interacting with a diverse clientele required a basic understanding of how to communicate across difference about food. The participants were staff *and* students at York. While they worked at the markets to serve the community, they very much so were a part of that community as well. Participants' experiences are what Alkon and Agyeman (2011) refer to as additional stories about local food which are rooted in the perspectives of folks often left out of the dominant food narrative.

An understanding of whiteness and white supremacy is central to understanding the barriers racialized folks face when either trying to access or engage with AFIs or be involved with the AFM. Guthman (2011) has described how the overwhelming whiteness of alternative food can have a "chilling" effect on people of color, however Conrad (2020) has demonstrated this phenomenon is part of a larger, systemic issue of "white supremacy culture" in alternative food initiatives and the alternative food movement. Understanding white supremacy is central to decolonization because of the ways in which white supremacy has been enacted through colonial violence and maintained by hegemony. Kobayashi (2009) describes whiteness not as simply being a white person- but the construction of dominant discourses (hegemonic discourses). For

Slocum (2006), whiteness refers to “bodies with pale skin colour, the changing tendencies of those bodies to do certain things in a particular context and the socio-spatial processes with which those tendencies are linked” (p.521). As Kobayashi (2009) states, it is not always direct discrimination but the subtle cultural means that are just as excluding- ranging from speech patterns, to body language social distance and etiquette, or friendship to collective action. From this understanding of whiteness, we begin to see how people of color themselves can perpetuate whiteness through their actions (or inaction). This is important for my research because as people of color we are not automatically experts on racism and critical race theories despite having lived experience in racialized bodies. There are many ways racialized folks can internalize their own racism and adopt racist beliefs about other racialized groups as well. White supremacy is not simply about white people and what they do, although that is a part of it, it is a belief system that can be upheld by non-whites as well. By engaging a pedagogy of discomfort (discussed further in my methodology) this project also considers different forms of internalized oppression.

White supremacy refers to the perceived superiority of white racial groups and is rooted in the fact that both Canada and the U.S are white settler states. During its colonization, priority was given to white European settlers through rights and protections that other non-white settlers would not get until much later in Canada’s colonial history (Gosine and Teelucksingh 2008). Agreeing with Gibb and Wittman (2013), speaking about racism in Canada has been deemed a “taboo” since Canada’s adoption of multicultural policy. According to Gosine and Teelucksingh (2008), the characterization of Canada as an “egalitarian, multicultural, modern state” (p.35) stems from Canada’s adoption of legislation like the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Canadian Multiculturalism act (1988). These commit the state to guarantee civil and cultural liberties to recognized citizens. Gosine and Teelucksingh (2008)’s examination of environmental justice in Canada reminds us that Canada’s multicultural policy is undermining anti-racist advocacy. Multicultural policy represents state effort to manage rather than address racial discrimination and inequalities.

Since Canada was the first nation to implement a *Multiculturalism Act* Canada wished to portray itself as one of racial tolerance (Aylward, 1999). This presumption has, according to Gosine and Teelucksingh (2008) allowed many Canadian to incorrectly contend that racism is no longer a problem in Canada, we may also forget, not know, or chose not to know that racism has been an important organizing feature of Canada’s development into a modern nation-state (Teelucksingh, 2008). Indigenous peoples were viewed as inferior upon the arrival of European

colonizers, and to this day, Indigenous peoples of Canada suffer some of the worst living conditions, experience high rates of infant mortality, and are subject to high rates of diet-related diseases (Power, 2008).

Moving beyond colorblindness, and a class-blind approach to food justice, requires a reflection of the dominant whiteness that still prevails in alternative food movements. Alkon and Agyeman (2011) have highlighted that people of color may be less inclined to be part of a movement that “valorizes” white farmers. Food justice scholars have noted, in an American context, how farmers market managers often employed “color-blindness” and “universalism” to avoid addressing race and racial inequality (Guthman 2011). In the Canadian context, the existence of multiculturalism has often obscured the need to address racial inequality. Alkon and Agyeman (2011) have noted for food justice to move forward, there is a need to move beyond colorblindness and indeed see color and acknowledge how race has and does shape lived experience. Further, Cadieux and Slocum (2015) have noted in order to practice food justice, there must be explicit attention to historical racial trauma.

Indigenous food sovereignties scholar Dawn Morrison reminds us that while the concept of food sovereignty has only recently been introduced to communities and policy circles globally, the living reality is not new to Indigenous communities around the world who have, for over a thousand years, developed traditional food gathering and foodmaking practices that have shaped and supported Indigenous cultures and economies. Morrison (2011) states that Indigenous cultures are shaped by their unique relationship to the land of their own respective traditional territories and so no universal definition of food sovereignty can reflect that reality. The underlying principles, however, of Indigenous food sovereignty are based on communal responsibilities to uphold their “distinct cultures and relationships to the land and food systems” (p.97). Morrison makes the distinction that Indigenous food sovereignty describes, rather than defines current strategies that enable Indigenous communities sustain traditional food gathering and making methods. Further, Indigenous food sovereignty also can be viewed as a framework to transforming the industrial food system. A basic understanding of Indigenous food sovereignties and how they are, or rather are not addressed local food discourse is significant and part of what my project considers. I focused on the experiences of participants as racialized youth because of the ways in which their stories are marginalized in agri-food literature. To foreground our own stories without attention to the other stories that are also left out of local food discourse contributes to settler colonialism. Confronting settler colonialism

within the alternative food movement is important to call-out amongst others and ourselves in order to keep the movement accountable to its social justice aims.

The focus on local food and racialized youth is deliberate. It engages in food justice's attention to historical trauma and recognizes how trauma settles in racialized bodies in unique ways. The way local food discourse has often marginalized racialized voices and continues to promote a white farm imaginary, makes the discussion on racism and localism uncomfortable but necessary. It also brings a sense of urgency to the discussion. The way local food discourse promotes a 'white farm imaginary' erases the work of mostly racialized migrant farm workers (who also work on small, local farms) and super-imposes a colonial food system onto unceded Indigenous land. At the market, we promoted the proximity of the produce using maps- at the time we did not consider that while this may have been a form of erasure of our presence on Indigenous land.

### **Towards and anti-colonial food justice praxis**

Part of uncovering how participants make meaning of local food is unpacking our own cultural identities. In "Beyond inclusion: Toward an anti-colonial food justice praxis" Kepkiewicz et al. (2015) highlight the importance in confronting one's own complicity in hierarchical relations of power especially in the food justice movement. For Kepkiewicz et al (2015), in order to build a more equitable food system there needs to be a need to move beyond inclusion and carefully consider the structures that perpetuate privilege and disadvantage in society. "Inclusion" may re-inscribe privilege rather than confront the inequities in our food system. This is based on the critique that many food justice initiatives are problematically based on a desire, rooted in white saviorism, to enroll people of color in a particular set of food practices (Guthman, 2008).

Following Smith (2012) and Kepkiewicz (2015), the point is not for activists and people to "confess their privilege" to achieve absolution from their complicity, rather "use this new awareness to work toward structural change" (Kepkiewicz, et al. 2015, p. 100). Being reflexive about one's complicity is central to discovering how alternative food movements can, according to Matties (2016), transform, rather than perpetuate, the colonial system. While I have indeed faced interpersonal racial and sexual discrimination and violence in my life, and indeed have felt and experienced the turmoil of living into a white supremacist hetero patriarchal society, I still possess various privileges, and, by assimilating into said society can and have (albeit unknowingly, and/or unintentionally) participated in harmful thoughts and beliefs against other

marginalized groups and people. I believe that in interrogating the internalized beliefs and assumptions I may better position myself as a genuine ally to other marginalized people and groups. My hope is that through my openness in remaining self-reflexive throughout this research project it may invite others to do the same.

The need to move toward an anti-colonial food justice praxis is based on the fact that food justice activism has failed to conceptualize colonialism as a distinct system of oppression. Kepkiewicz (2015) points out that Alkon and Agyeman's (2011) work on food justice frames settler colonialism as a "racial project" without engagement on how colonialism is different, or how racialized people are affected by the ongoing colonial project. According to Lawrence and Dua (2005) it is important to maintain the distinction between race-based oppression and colonialism because "thinking about Indigenous peoples as one racial minority among many can function to erase their calls for sovereignty and self-determination as nations" (p.101). How then can we employ an anti-colonial food justice praxis that recognizes all forms of oppression without engaging what Dhamoon (2015) refers to as the *Oppression Olympics Framework*? For Dhamoon (2015), central to this would be decolonizing anti-racist feminism. To decolonize anti-racism Dhamoon (2015) has demonstrated the ways in which anti-racist scholars have, albeit unintentionally, reinforced colonial logics in their theorizing of anti-racism. In debates on whether or not people of color are settlers, she states that people of color are settlers, but do not carry the same privilege as white settlers. This point does not, however, negate the fact that people of color and settlers are complicit in the colonial project (p.21), rather, as Phung (2011) states, there are *degrees* to being a settler. For Dhamoon (2015), a feminist praxis of decolonizing anti-racism cannot obscure one struggle at the expense of another.

Anti-colonialism, and a commitment to decolonization provides a framework for racialized people to consider re-connecting to traditional and ancestral foodways. However, as Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us, engaging in decolonization is not a metaphor for social-justice aims, or even consciousness-raising efforts, and we need to accept and recognize incommensurability. Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Cornstassel (2014) also remind us that solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must be grounded in place-based relationships, and should be approached as incommensurable, "but not incompatible" (p.3). Grounding this project in an anti-colonial food justice praxis framework helps me understand how local food initiatives such as the Good Food Market further settler colonialism and can undermine Indigenous food sovereignties by foregrounding the proximity of locally grown produce,

celebrating a vague relationship to land without deeper consideration of settler relations to land. This is important for me as a researcher and for participants to address and unpack our complicity in hierarchical relations of power as part of our on-going commitment to anti-oppression praxis.

The theories outlined in this chapter provide a framework for my research. My project seeks to understand how YUM staff make meaning of local food, and to build on food justice literature which highlights and foregrounds the experiences of people of color in predominantly white, alternative food spaces. The use of an anti-colonial food justice praxis brings explanatory power to understanding my participants not only as racialized youth, but diasporic youth who have faced different, but parallel experiences with colonialism.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

To address my research question, I employed a mixed-methods qualitative approach, drawing on oral history interviews, cooking as inquiry and zine-making. Cooking as inquiry as articulated by Brady (2011) includes autoethnography and collective biography-however this project used oral history interviews to focus more on the collective experience of staff and myself as opposed to focussing on autoethnographic accounts which centre the researcher. The methods employed are grounded in critical food pedagogies, and decolonizing methodologies. The cookbook zine was an artful display of the recipes created by participants and me. The cookbook itself is also analysed, as it included an analysis of our recipes, where ingredients were sourced and whose traditional land it was grown or purchased on. I used a mixed-methods approach to address my research question because I sought a deeper understanding of how participants made meaning of local food by actually gathering, cooking, eating and making art out of local food. Being grounded in critical food pedagogies and decolonizing methodologies was important for me to do research that was collaborative with room for input from participants and within this a sense of self-determination.

Further, beyond the discussions of growing and consuming local produce I wanted to know and share that knowledge of how to prepare local ingredients as part of popular education's spiral model of reflection and action. This is directly related to the widespread consumer de-skilling which has led to an "atrophy" of cooking skills intergenerationally, and notably with millennial youth. Despite local food's claims for economic and environmental justice, it has been found to reproduce oppression and continues to struggle with it's social justice aims. In this next section I offer a brief description of popular education praxis and decolonizing methodologies and explain its importance to this project.

### **Popular education praxis/Critical food pedagogy**

I wanted to bring the staff together for a project that would not only highlight their experiences as people of color in alternative food, but also do so in a way that would be a space for healing and critical dialogue about our food system and our place in it. Integrating popular education praxis and critical food pedagogies within the project allows for critical self-reflection and dialogue amongst myself and participants. I chose to consider co-creation in cooking as an approach to popular education, critical pedagogy and praxis. Popular education is grounded in the recognition that education is not politically neutral, that it either resists or replicates systems of oppression (Freire, 2000). Freire's notion of the "banking" model of education is a critique of

the way traditional education has imposed roles on teacher and student, assuming that students were empty vessels to be deposited with knowledge by the teacher. The problem, according to Freire, with the banking model of education, is that it further indoctrinates students to accept hegemonic ideologies and beliefs as opposed to becoming critical thinkers capable of their own liberation (Adkins, 2014. Freire, 2000). The goal of popular education is social change but also individual transformation through what Freire (2000) refers to as conscientization or conscientizacao. For Adkins (2014) conscientizacao encourages students to become aware of the political, social and economic realities that affect their lives and come to the realization that they have the power to change these realities. It rejects the assumption one should accept these realities as universal givens. Freire (2000) suggests that conscientizacao can be reached through methods such as dialogue and storytelling (Adkins, 2014). When referring to critical pedagogy, praxis refers to the combination of theory and practice.

Popular education, but more specifically critical food pedagogy, informed my research in several ways. A large part of participants' and my job at YUM is grounded in critical food pedagogy. Staff and I had to know where the food came from and even suggest ideas on how to prepare and eat certain ingredients. In line with this, I used methods that would simultaneously be an opportunity for learning together with participants. Critical pedagogy recognizes that all knowledge is created within a political and historical context and supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized students (Adkins, 2014). I believe critical pedagogy is key for differently located people to create a learning environment that is open to mistakes but committed to social and racial justice. Further, grounding this project in critical pedagogy allows for participants and I to learn from each other in a way that challenges traditional ways of learning (ie. Banking model) and teaching how to cook. This co-learning is also key to the cooking as inquiry method aspect of this research.

For Breunig (2005) critical pedagogy, like experiential education, "encourages critical thinking and promotes practices that have the potential to transform oppressive institutions or social relations" (Breunig, 2005, p. 109). Based on the criticisms that critical educational theory has had trouble moving from criticism to action, Breunig believes in the potential for experiential education and critical pedagogy to achieve their intended goals by examining how educators can turn critical theory into practice. Further, critical food pedagogies are uniquely located as a form of food literacy that does not impose universal notions of health and "good food" onto others but allows students to reflect on the knowledges that stem from their own experiences as racialized

people. For Sumner (2013), food literacy includes more than the act of foodmaking, but also includes the preparation, shopping, prepping of the food with an awareness of where it was from, how it was made and its health benefits. My project fosters and develops a critical food literacy for participants and myself because it includes and questions all aspects of food provisioning, from the shopping, preparing, eating and reflection of the whole process.

Swan and Flowers (2015) describe critical food pedagogy as “the proliferation of teaching and learning about food; the diversification of food educational curricula; the rise of new food pedagogues; the shift in expertise and knowledge about food; and the racialized, gendered and classed inequalities produced through these shifts” (p.147). Critical food pedagogy differs from food literacy because it is grounded in critical pedagogy, and emphasises critical thinking around food, going beyond individual skill-building around food. Further, critical food pedagogy through actual foodmaking can be a form of praxis: as long as the theoretical pillars of critical pedagogy guide the project.

Critical food pedagogy and popular education is central to the design of my research project, as I intended for it to be participatory and based off our pre-existing relationships and positions. I wanted to create a space that would foster dialogue and critical thinking amongst participants and myself. It allows them to story themselves through food in an arena that often posits people of color to be “objects” of food literacy. Using popular education methods allows participants to challenge universal assumptions about local food, grounded in their lived experiences as racialized, and diasporic youth. Through my I pursued methodologies that would benefit participants by offering opportunities to learn about, and think critically about, our foodshed and our place in it. The cookbook, and this paper is structured as popular education praxis: theory, action and reflection.

### **Decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies:**

While my project is indeed grounded in critical pedagogy and popular education praxis, it was important to engage in Indigenous methodologies and decolonizing methodologies as well if I were to take anti-colonial food justice praxis seriously. As a non-Indigenous person I immediately felt discomfort in wanting to engage Indigenous methodologies. Most of my discomfort stemmed from what I did not know, and shame in not knowing more about Canada’s colonial past. Shame, according to Slocum (2007), can be a pedagogical tool learning and unlearning. Further, as a descendant of Filipino immigrants, decolonization was particularly

important for me to begin unpacking beliefs that have become engrained in Filipino culture as a result of our colonial history, which I elaborate on later in this section.

Decolonization is central for non-Indigenous people to unlearn stereotypes and assumptions about the Self and Other. White supremacy, which relies on orientalism, anti-black racism and native erasure, requires differently located people to think critically about how colonialism has enforced homophobic, ableist, sexist, and racist beliefs about other people (Smith, 2012). Decolonization as a critical lens for people of color to consider ways to ask critical questions about food systems and social conditions, was not only empowering for ourselves but also ensured that we do not contribute to the oppression of others.

I wanted to engage in decolonization in my own life from a diasporic Filipino perspective and wanted to integrate decolonizing methodologies in my project but was unsure how to do so without appropriating Indigenous methodologies. For guidance I referred to Fortier's (2017) "Unsettling Methodologies/Decolonizing Movements" where Fortier explores engaging in decolonizing research methodologies with non-Indigenous activist groups. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith in *Decolonizing Methodologies* "Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (Smith 1999, pg 20).

Engaging decolonizing methodologies is important to supporting Indigenous food sovereignty in Canada and abroad, as it recognizes the ways in which Western ways of knowing, legitimized by universities and similar institutions, delegitimize Indigenous ways of being and knowing (Hunt, 2013). Decolonizing methodologies is also central to this project because while I sought methods that would be empowering and educational for participants, it had to be done in a way that would not undermine Indigenous food sovereignties.

Recognizing that there are no standard models for decolonizing research methods, Smith (1999) provides examples of techniques used while conducting research with Indigenous communities. Fortier (2017) reminds researchers that studying the decolonization process among non-Indigenous can "centralize the role of the settler as the primary actor in anti-colonial and decolonizing actions." (Fortier 2017, p.21). The term settler suggests a particular identity within settler-colonialism, as a person of Filipino-Chinese diaspora who come from nations that were also colonized I seek to understand my positionality with this settler and Indigenous dichotomy.

Fortier (2017), drawing from Indigenous mentors and methodologies, established five core principles to guide his research, which I have attempted to use to guide my project as well.

The principles include:

1. Drawing on multiple ontological realities and worldviews
2. Situating contemporary political struggles within the structures of settler colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism
3. Engaging in critical self-reflexivity
4. Seeking to embody practices of decolonization not only in my research but as a life praxis; and
5. Creating long-term and sustained relationships across and between the participants of the study (Fortier, 2017, p. 22)

Throughout the project and even after the project was complete, I sought to embody the practices of decolonization. I intentionally did my best to maintain meaningful relationships with participants beyond the project and engaged in critical self-reflexivity throughout the project as well as well. Finally, agreeing with Fortier's point on continuous self-reflexivity about one's identity or position as non-Indigenous researcher, I accept at times it may be difficult or even impossible to reconcile my connection to a colonizing institution like the university. Engaging in decolonizing methodologies was central for confronting and unpacking my own values that are rooted in colonial values imposed on my ancestors. It was integral to not only talk about decolonization the same way I did not just want to write about food justice- I aimed to understand how to apply these principles to my project but also my personal life and learn to embody those principles.

### **Oral history and Counter-storytelling**

Oral history is a form of decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies, as oral ways of knowing and storytelling are important aspects of Indigenous culture (Smith L. T., 1999). Storytelling has also been a methodology used in popular education praxis, as a form of what Freire refers to as dialogue. I drew on oral history and counter-storytelling methodologies during the cooking sessions and zine-making, while I had some questions to guide each session, I attempted to allow participants to share stories that arose organically as we cooked.

As Sheftel and Zembrzycki state; "Oral history is grounded in the relationship between interviewee and interviewer- without both, there is no oral history" (Oral History Off The Record, 2013). The quality of the relationship can have an influential effect on the interview.

Oral history research interview approaches was useful to my work as it enabled me to recognize researcher and participant relationships and also recognize the ethical complexities of the interview relationship. Oral history research provided ethical considerations when interviewing staff and friends, and how to navigate emotionally difficult topics and the ethics of making those stories public (or not). For example, Norkunas (2013) reminds oral historians how to be a “vulnerable listener”- someone who is “keenly sensitive to the nonverbal communication from the narrator... in an effort to respect her narrator’s emotional boundaries” (pg 81) (Norkunas, 2013). This means having a whole-body presence when listening to participants speak, taking into consideration gestures and pauses to ensure I do not cross any emotional boundaries, or even be prepared to stop the interview if we have crossed that boundary. It’s being sensitive to and cognizant of non-verbal forms of communication between interviewer and interviewee.

According to Attarian (2013) this vulnerability should extend outside of the interview as well. This means the creation of a safe space where there is empathy for the narrator/interviewee and where they feel safe enough to be vulnerable to share their stories and where the researcher/interviewer feels safe enough to be vulnerable as well (Attarian, 2013). Storytelling is a form commonly used in popular education as a means to resist hegemony and domination (King, 1993; Stone-Mediatores, 2003). Stories are the connection between personal experiences and larger political actions, bridging the gap between individual and collective action (Barndt, 2012). For Solórzano and Yosso (2002) counter-stories are “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society)”(p.32).

The use of counter storytelling and oral history research methods was best suited for this research question because it recognizes the relationship I have with my participants as valid and challenges the notion that qualitative data could ever be “objective”. It allows for more flexibility in the interviews/cooking sessions with freedom to share stories as they arise, with interview questions there as a guide or prompt rather than a rigid list to adhere to. It allows me to be self-reflexive throughout the research process. Further, counter-storytelling has been named as a method best grounded in anti-colonial food justice praxis because it centres the experiences of people often left in the “margins” of alternative food discourse.

### **Zine-making as popular education praxis**

According to Sinclair (2014), zines and zine-making can be used as “a pedagogical tool for awareness, education, empowerment and transformation” (pg 296) (Sinclair, 2014). By focussing on food-systems issues and asking students to reflect on their place in this system, we

engaged with what Sumner (2013) refers to as a critical food pedagogy, another form of food literacy. To create the cookbook, and assemble the recipes developed during the cooking sessions, I use zine-making- which is grounded in popular education praxis. At the time of the original conception of this project, this cookbook would be distributed at the market to show customers different ways to prepare the produce at the market while making visible, and taking seriously, our land acknowledgement. It is similar to how cookbook zines were distributed at farmers markets in BC to raise awareness of the injustice's "local" migrant workers (Bagelman, Silva, & Bagelman, 2017). At the time of writing myself and many of the participants are no longer working for Regenesis. Even if this particular cookbook does not become distributed at the market, it still provides a tool and platform to complicate the meaning of local from an anti-colonial, multicultural perspective. Through the zine-making final activity in this project, we will also be engaging arts practice as research.

### **Cookbooks**

As a pedagogical tool, cookbooks illuminate how our lives are "unevenly and globally interconnected through one of our most intimate everyday practices-eating" (pg 392) (Bagelman et al, 2017; Cook and Crang, 1996). Community cookbooks have been able to offer insight into what Christensen (2013) refers to as "colonial geographies". Through her analyses of three cookbooks from the North West Territories, Christensen (2013) also viewed them as sites of resistance. Cookbooks are an effective method of highlighting the "multiplicity" of one's own identity. As Antoniou (2004) articulates in her cookbook/biography, she reflects on how she marginalized her ethnic (Cypriot) identity to claim her lesbian identity, but it was through cooking that she began to re-imagine her ethnicity and re-story herself.

Its participatory nature, zines are an open invitation for dialogue on the subject matter, allowing participants to be co-creators and not just consumers. For the same reasons I wish to use the zine to compile the recipes, Desyllas and Sinclair (2014) utilized zines to teach their students that their voice have as much validity, power and legitimacy as any author, and used them as a way to empower students (Capous Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014).

The cookbook zine is a "wedding" of the critical and the creative, and as Barndt (2008) states about popular education approaches, will also be a tool in education engaging people more fully, inspiring collective action (Barndt, 2008). I wanted to uncover participants; lived experience through food and art and storytelling, but in a reflexive, collaborative way in which they feel part of the project and not subjects of it. This project embodies the four key elements of

community arts according to Barndt (2008) which are collaboration, creative artistic practices, critical social analysis, and commitment. Each step from the planning, cooking and zine-making exercise were collaborative, promoted critical self-reflexivity and was grounded in a commitment based on respect and humility. Cookbooks (for engaged research) are also political tools that can either resist or reify systems of oppression. In ethnic cookbooks especially, they can tend to embody colonial attitudes of authenticity and exoticism. The zine-making itself is a form of arts-based research and hoped that the activity itself would also generate further dialogue related to the project.

### **Cooking as inquiry**

I employ cooking as a method of inquiry for several reasons. First, it highlights new knowledge by transcending the mind/body dichotomy that assumes we are disembodied subjects. Second, the act of actually cooking together directly addresses the widespread consumer de-skilling and can allow participants a space and opportunity to learn new cooking skills or recipes in a safe space. Finally, I argue that cooking is a useful way to engage in what Boler and Zembylas (2003) refer to as a “pedagogy of discomfort” to highlight internalized biases and hegemonic values. Central to decolonizing one’s mind is the reflection of the emotional stances we have, which often reflect hegemonic values.

Utilizing cooking as a method of inquiry is central to answering my research question because of how it tends to the visceral and complicates the mind/body dichotomy. I do not claim to offer anything unique simply by being a woman of color, rather I am curious how cooking in intimate settings such as the kitchen in one’s home with people of color can highlight any new knowledge on how this method of inquiry can be used to communicate across difference. During the cooking process I reflect on questions like if my race and gender affected my relationship with my participants, or if the fact that we had shared identities allowed for participants to feel more comfortable.

The fact that the recipes are also anchored by the use of local ingredients “places” cooking as inquiry within a very specific social, political and geographic context. We are not cooking anywhere, using anything we want- I specifically prompted participants (and myself) to use ingredients grown, produced and purchased within a relative proximity to our current location. As articulated in Heldke’s earlier articulations of cooking as inquiry- I aim to go beyond the dichotomies presented to us, what Dewey refers to as “Cartesian anxiety” of theory

and practice. Agreeing with Heldke and Dewey, theory and practice are not separate, but are two interrelated, interdependent domains of human life (pg19).

Agreeing with Heldke's (1992) assertion that we may gain knowledge through cooking, Brady (2011) offers a different take on how cooking might serve as a form of inquiry, a method of research called "cooking as inquiry". Cooking as inquiry seeks to add layers to the often-disembodied practice of social research that overlook the body and foodmaking as sites of knowledge (Brady 2011). This method, according to Brady (2011) also engages researchers as researcher-participants in a reflexive, collaborative study that "explores the ways in which the embodied self is performed relationally through foodmaking" (pg323). Cooking as inquiry draws on autoethnography and collective biography- however I have modified this approach to best suit my research needs and work within time and space constraints. Autoethnography aims to analyze and describe personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Bochner, 2011) but requires being immersed in the culture, usually for a long period of time. While I have worked with participants for over a year, I was not taking field notes or working on the project during that time, so as opposed to autoethnography I focus on the oral history interviews that took place during the cooking, and the "collective" zine-making. Drawing on both of these methods cooking as inquiry generates a narrative brings to light a process by which our embodied selves are "relationally performed" or "made social" through food making (Brady, 2011).

### **Pedagogy of discomfort in the kitchen**

The recipe analysis aspect of this project seeks to address what Kepkiewicz refers to as a "pedagogy of discomfort" which deliberately complicates participants' understandings about privilege living in a colonised country (Kepkiewicz, 2015). Part of the recipe analysis asks not only where the food is from but prompting participants to look into "whose traditional land was the food grown on" (Haig-Brown, 2009). By deliberately asking questions often left out of local food discourse, my hope is thinking about local food critically can begin to foster dialogue around Indigenous food sovereignty and urban-based food justice movements.

According to Boler and Zembylas (2003), the pedagogy of discomfort is described as "an educational approach to understanding the production of norms and differences" (pg 108). It requires the need for educators and students to move outside their comfort zones, which Boler and Zembylas describe as the "cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of hegemony" (pg108). It also requires a sense of "bodily knowledge" where students become aware of the emotions that arise in their bodies and address these emotional

reactions. Trinh Minh-Ha (1989) refers to this as an “instinctual immediacy”(p.40) in martial arts, but also is required while in the kitchen . It’s a knowing of the self and your surroundings, being present and acting out knowledge through your body not just intellectually.

Engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort draws attention to how we embody dominant values and assumptions in our daily lives and routines, which can of course extend to how we gather, prepare and consume food (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). By recognizing and closely examining emotional reactions and responses, we highlight our “emotional stances” which can be the starting point for identifying unconscious privilege and bias, it can emphasize the “invisible ways in which one complies with dominant ideology” (pg 108) (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). This is integral to this project because of the focus on the embodied and visceral aspects of food making.

As Flowers and Swan (2015) and Jones (2018) have noted, engagement with, and addressing racism continues to be underdeveloped in food pedagogy scholarship. Central to decolonizing one’s mind is undertaking the emotional labour required to engage in a pedagogy of discomfort. When engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort, it is explicit that we are confronting, unpacking, and making sense of hegemonic thoughts and assumptions that we have internalized throughout our lives and even intergenerationally. As a woman of color, this means confronting the fact that I too have internalized racist assumptions about my own cultural background and of other races as well. As Boler and Zembylas (2003) state, a pedagogy of discomfort does not only ask members of the dominant culture but also of marginalized people to reconsider internalized hegemonic values; “there are moments in which it is uncomfortable for a gay person to consider his or her own internalized homophobia- similarly, for a person of color to reflect on their own internalized racism. The point is that no one escapes internalizing dominant cultural values, even though these values take different forms in different individuals.” (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p.112).

A pedagogy of discomfort can take place in the kitchen: beyond solely addressing hegemonic and dominant narratives about our thoughts and assumptions, it extends to all of our senses which become used in the kitchen. It means reacting to new flavours, smells, and textures, and also other cultures and histories. It means being open to stepping out of one’s own comfort zone through the act of cooking together. It means being open to a new way of relating to one another and acknowledging food as a set of relationships to the others that have been a part of your food arriving to you. Further, individualism is a core barrier to addressing the social

determinants of health. When educators and students engage in a pedagogy of discomfort by considering how hegemony has shaped our values, especially surrounding food, it runs counter to values liberal individualism will have us accept as neutral. It is precisely these embodied experiences of diasporic youth that can contribute to and push food justice scholarship forward, with increasing attention to racial trauma there ought to be more research that does not disembody participants or treat research subjects as disembodied subjects worthy of inquiry.

### **Data analysis**

Brady(2011) highlighted guiding principles for future projects that may use cooking as inquiry, here, I highlight how I have adopted these principles for my own project and highlight how the data will be analysed.

- a. Identify theme: The theme is “local” food, how do we as BIPOC youth make meaning of “local” food?
- b. Menu: The project was done fall 2019, so the recipes chosen by participants and I also included what was in season, what was available and accessible. Each participant was to choose a recipe, the only requirement was that the recipe included one locally sourced ingredient. The menu, then, was a series of recipes from the participants and one from myself that all included a local ingredient.
- c. Cook together: While I originally wanted to have one cooking session with everyone together, circumstances changed, and I couldn’t do it all at once. Instead, I cooked individually with each participant either at their place or my mom’s place (located closer to York’s Keele campus and was accessible for participants and I). The more intimate setting ended up generating a lot of dialogue and stories to work with which led to much more rich data.
- d. Analyze and compose an account of the research: After I cooked with each participant individually (which was audio recorded) I made notes. After all the cooking sessions I had a final group session where we would all gather and make our recipe-zine page which would be put together in a sort of cookbook zine. We had more final discussions during the group session while we were making our recipe pages and doing our recipe analysis.

Individual cooking sessions and the collective zine-making sessions were audio recorded, transcribed and coded to generate themes. In the results sections I highlight the themes generated from the individual cooking sessions first, then the themes from the collective zine-making. The

cookbook zine is included in this paper, every participant presented their recipe on a piece of paper, included whose traditional land the food was grown or purchased on, and featured a photo of the meal or dish. Each zine-page was scanned and assembled here in this paper. The cookbook zine is a display of our recipes but also a part of the analyses.

## **Chapter 4: The cookbook**

**FARM FRESH**

*Local. Fresh. Delicious.*

**FRIENDS GATHER HERE**

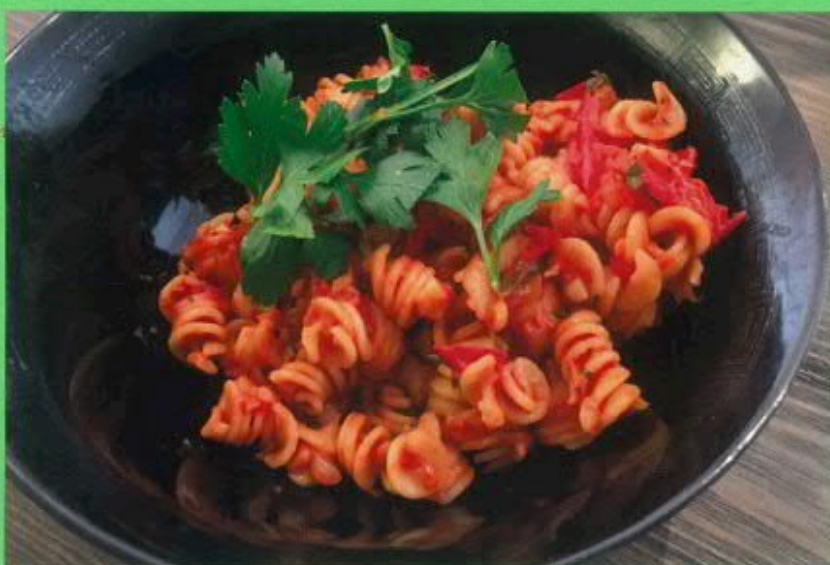
ALL NATURAL • DAIRY & EGG FREE  
CERTIFIED GLUTEN & WHEAT FREE\*  
CHOLESTEROL FREE • LACTOSE FREE  
NO REFINED SUGARS • 0 TRANS FATS  
SESAME, PEANUT & TREE NUT FREE  
NON-HYDROGENATED • G...  
LOW IN SATUR...  
NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS •  
FLAVOURS • NO PRE...  
CERTIFIED 100%...  
ETHICALLY CRAFTED BA...  
AND.. SINFULLY D...

Labels: GMO, NON-GMO, NO MSG, NO PRESERVATIVES, NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVOURS, NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS, NO TRANS FATS, NO REFINED SUGARS, NO HYDROGENATED OILS, NO PEANUTS, NO SESAME, NO TREE NUTS, NO DAIRY, NO EGGS.

- ① Step 1: Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat.  
 - Add the onion and cook uncovered for 3 minutes, until it turns golden brown  
 - Add the garlic and stir until it turns aromatic

- ② Step 2: Stir into the pan after adding tomatoes and tomato paste  
 - Increase heat to high and bring to boil  
 - Reduce heat to medium and let simmer, uncovered, stirring often, for 6-7 minutes OR until the sauce reduces and thickens slightly

- ③ Step 3:  
 Stir in the parsley. Season with salt and pepper



- ④ Step 4:  
 Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water following packet directions.  
 - Drain and return to the pan

## Tomato Sauce Pasta

Land acknowledgement: Thank you to the Anishnabewaki, Huron-Wendat + Haudenosaunee

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 brown onion chopped \*
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- Half cup diced tomatoes \*
- 1 tablespoon tomato sauce
- Salt + Black Pepper
- 400g Fusilli pasta



- ⑤ Step 5:  
 - Add the sauce to the pasta; toss to combine

⑥ **Serve with Love** ❤️

# Thai Curry Noodle Soup

\* original recipe uses chicken & fish sauce which was omitted here for a vegan version!



## Ingredients:

rice noodles ... 1/2 package  
 veggie broth ... can full  
 edamame ... as much as you want  
 green onion ... cut 2-3  
 "Thai kitchen" curry paste (green) ... 1-2 tbs  
 coconut milk ... 1 can  
 cilantro ... as much as you want

## Instructions:

- cook rice noodles, set aside
- bring broth, coconut milk & curry paste to a boil, simmer
- cook edamame (boil according to package instructions)
- plate noodles, add edamame & pour soup over.
- top with green onion & cilantro

♥ ENJOY ♥

VEGETARIAN

LOCAL - from farm

LOCAL - from farm

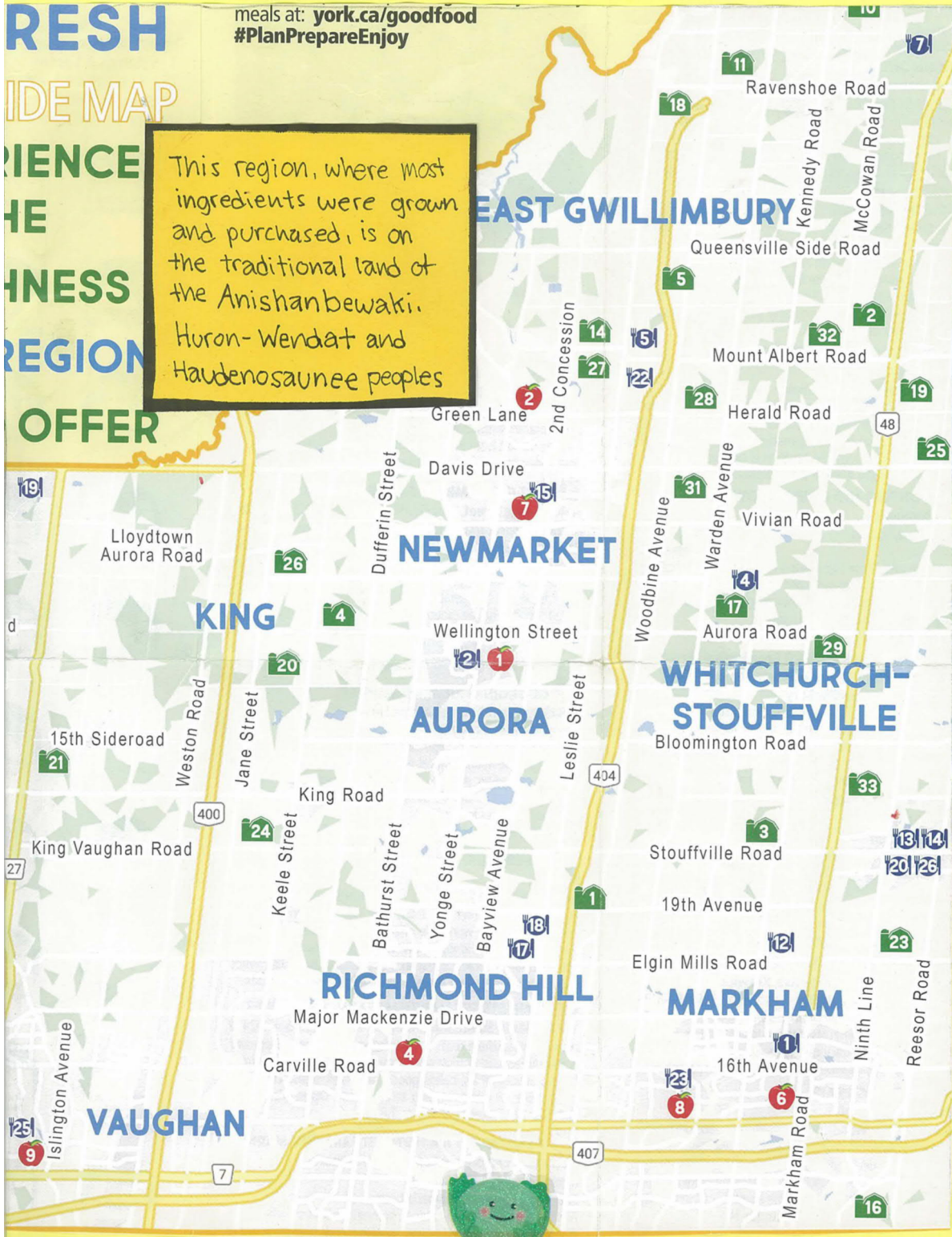


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meals at: [york.ca/goodfood](http://york.ca/goodfood)  
#PlanPrepareEnjoy

This region, where most ingredients were grown and purchased, is on the traditional land of the Anishanbewaki, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee peoples



## Ingredients

- Onion
- Tomato Salsa or Tomato paste
- Romano Beans
- Carrot
- Olive oil
- Garlic

You can top both dishes with lemon and parsley!



All ingredients have been obtained from the lands of:  
Anishinabewaki  
Huron-Wendat  
Haudenosaunee  
people. Except olive oil.

## Ingredients

- Onion
- Green Beans
- Olive Oil
- Garlic
- Tomatoes

## Zeytinli Tac Fasulye

1) Start by taking Romano beans out of the bean pod.

2) Boil beans in water for 5 minutes

3) In a different pot heat olive oil and add grated/diced onions and garlic.

4) As onions get translucent add sliced carrots and salsa (tomato paste or paper paste would work too)

5) Finally add your beans into the second pot and add salt if required

6) Serve cold or enjoy right away

1) Cut the ends of the bean and clean thoroughly

2) Cut them into two or three parts depending on the size of the bean.

3) Put olive oil in a pot and add diced onions with grated garlic.

4) Peel tomatoes and slice them; add it over garlic and onions.

5) Add pieces of beans and add salt on top of the tomatoes.

6) Finally add olive oil and pressure cook for 4 minutes

7) Serve it cold or enjoy it right away



# Lentil Soup



## Ingredients:

- 1 medium Onion - (Round the bend farm)
  - 2 tbsp Cumin (superstore)
  - 5 cloves of garlic
  - 1 cup red lentils (superstore) soak in water
  - 1/2 cup uncooked rice (superstore)
  - 6 cups broth (vegetable) (superstore)
  - 1 tbsp ginger seasoning
  - salt - to taste
  - pepper - to taste
  - one large carrot (Round the bend farm)
  - hot sauce/seasoning to taste
  - 2 tbsp oil
- Optional garnishes:**
- Lemon wedges
  - Hemp seeds

## TO MAKE:

- Heat oil in a deep pot and sautee onion, garlic and cumin seasoning till onions is translucent.
- Add lentils, cut up carrots and rice and sautee
- Add ginger, black pepper, and salt
- Add broth and bring to a boil for 10 minutes
- Taste the soup and add salt to taste
- Stop the boil and bring it to a simmer for 20-30 minutes
- At this point I add my hot sauce or chill powder to my taste, and if my soup is too thick, I'd add 1/2 a cup of water.
- The soup is ready when the carrots and lentils are soft and the soup comes together in an oatmeal consistency.
- You can either puree the soup for a smooth texture or keep it as it is for a thicker texture.
- serve the soup in a bowl and squeeze lemon on top of it and sprinkle hemp seeds on top.
- Grab a spoon and ENJOY!



# FOOD LOCATION

## 26 ROUND THE BEND FARM

16225 Jane Street, Kettleby  
roundthebendfarm.com

905-727-0023  
sue.rtbfgmail.com

We are a working family farm, raising turkeys and growing fruits and vegetables since 1986. Offering farm gate sales of fresh turkeys and vegetables from asparagus to zucchini. RTBF also offers our vegetables and fruits in a seasonal CSA program, with pick up at the farm or delivery to your home or business. RTBF has children's activities, farm animals, fall wagon rides and many fall displays. **Open May to October.** Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, closed. Winter hours: Open Friday 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Open select holidays.

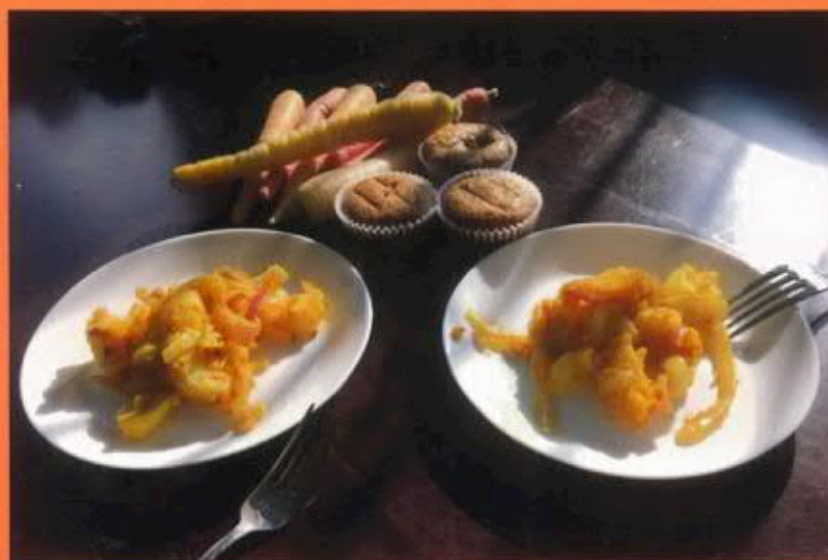
Onions  
Carrots



# FLAVORS

The Superstore is an occupied Land of Anishinabewaki, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenosaunee.





## Potato Curry

### Ingredients

- 2 medium sized potatoes
- 2 small onions
- 1 tbsp of turmeric
- 1 tbsp of curry powder
- 1 tbsp of cumin
- 2 tbsp of oil
- 1 Pinch of salt

**CERTIFIED 100% VEGAN**

### Directions

- Cut up the potatoes and place them in a pot of boiling water
- Cut up two onions into thin slices
- Add the boiled potatoes to a pan and add oil
- Add the onions and the seasoning
- Sauté the potatoes and onions until it is fully cooked
- Add to a plate and serve with love ♥

Potatoes + Onions grown  
on Anishinabewaki,  
Huron-Wendat,  
Haudenosaunee land

NUT FREE SANS NOIX + GLUTEN FREE SANS GLUTEN

# GỎI CUỐN (RICE PAPER SPRINGROLL)

GỎI CUỐN IS SOMETHING I GREW UP WITH & A FAVOURITE IN MY FAMILY. IT IS INTERACTIVE, FUN, & MOST IMPORTANTLY DELICIOUS. IT IS TRADITIONALLY MADE WITH MEAT BUT I AM VEGETARIAN, SO IT HAS BEEN COOL MAKING THIS DISH INTO MY OWN.

## Sauce

- 1 HEAPING TABLESPOON PEANUT BUTTER
- 1/2 CUP OF OYSTER SAUCE
- OPTIONAL: A SPRINKLE OF FRIED SHALLOTS
- USE AS MUCH WATER TO THIN IT OUT
- ⊗ MIX ALTOGETHER IN A SAUCEPAN UNTIL ALL IS INCORPORATED



## Fry

- 2 CARROTS, CUT MATCHSTICK STYLE
- 1/2 TARO, CUT MATCHSTICK STYLE
- 1 LEEK, CUT HORIZONTALLY
- 2 TOFU SQUARES (FIRM), CUT MATCHSTICK STYLE
- 1-2 TABLESPOONS OF COOKING OIL
- ⊗ STIRFRY IN PAN, SEASON WITH SALT + PEPPER + CHICKEN OR MUSHROOM SEASONING TO TASTE, UNTIL SOFT + GOLDEN BROWN



## Assemble

- 1 CUCUMBER, CUT MATCHSTICK STYLE
- 1 LETTUCE, PEEL
- 1 PACKAGE OF RICE PAPER WRAPS
- 1 PACKAGE OF RICE VERMICELLI (BÚN), SOAK IN HOT WATER FOR 5 MINUTES
- A COUPLE STEMS OF CULANTRO, MINT, THAI BASIL

## Eat

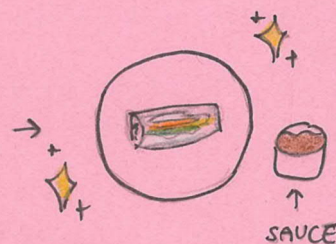
- DIP RICE PAPER IN A SHALLOW BOWL OF WARM WATER
- ↳ PLACE ON RICE PAPER TRAY (AVAILABLE IN ASIAN FOOD MARKETS)
- ASSEMBLE RICE VERMICELLI, LETTUCE, CUCUMBER, FRIED VEGGIES, HERBS & WRAP IT UP WITH LOVE
- DIP IN SAUCE, BUT DON'T GET LOST IN THE SAUCE. ENJOY!



USUAL  
ORDER  
OF  
ASSEMBLY

→

- ← HERBS
- ← FRIED VEG.
- ← BÚN
- ← LETTUCE
- ← CUCUMBER
- ← RICE PAPER
- ← RICE PAPER TRAY





## WHERE TO FIND YOUR INGREDIENTS

📍 **NATIONS - ST CLAIR WEST X KEELE**  
**ON THE LAND OF: ANISHINABEWAKI,**  
**HURON-WENDAT, HAUDENOSAUNEE**  
 WHAT YOU CAN FIND: RICE VERMICELLI, RICE PAPER,  
 CHICKEN / MUSHROOM SEASONING, OYSTER SAUCE, PEANUT  
 BUTTER, FRIED SHALLOTS, TARO, TOFU, CULANTRO,  
 THAI BASIL.

📍 **TRINITY BELLWOODS FARMERS MARKET - OSSINGTON X DUNDAS WEST**  
**ON THE LAND OF: ANISHINABEWAKI, HURON-WENDAT,**  
**HAUDENOSAUNEE**

WHAT YOU CAN FIND: LEEKS, CARROTS, CUCUMBERS, LETTUCE, MINT.

📍 **MANY FARMERS AT THIS MARKET ARE WHITE SETTLERS**  
**BENEFITING FROM INHERITING INTER-GENERATIONAL**  
**LAND. SOME OF THESE LAND INCLUDE:**

- **THE ANISHINABEWAKI:** the People of the Three Fires (Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations). THE CHEPPEWAS OF SAUGEEN, AND THEN THE CHEPPEWAS OF NAWASH, NOW KNOWN AS THE SAUGEEN OSIBWAY NATION. (MT FOREST, ON)
- **THE ANISHINABEWAKI, ATIWONDERONK, HAUDENOSAUNEE.** (PARIS, ON)

## **Findings/results**

In this chapter I present the findings of the themes generated from the individual cooking sessions (section 1) followed by the themes generated from the collective zine-cookbook making session which will be outlined in section 2. To prepare for each cooking session, participants and I corresponded over e-mail to confirm the recipe, and what ingredients would be needed, so that when we met, we could begin cooking right away with all the ingredients and tools ready. Prior to the project, all participants were going to be referred to with pseudonyms. However, after the zine-making, all participants asked to be referred to by their real names. They all claimed a sense of pride and authorship of their recipes and the cookbook and wanted their names and stories to be reflected as such. When Brady (2011) offered a guideline on how to conduct research using cooking as inquiry you first must identify a theme. Our theme, of course was local food. Beyond merely talking about local food, we aimed to actually prepare local food. Following Brady's guidelines for cooking as inquiry I discuss the themes from the cooking sessions engaging autoethnography, which centres the voice and experience of the researcher. I share quotes from participants and offer my analyses throughout. Following the more internal reflection aspect of autoethnography, the zine-making considers collective biography, which does not centre one researcher voice or perspective but considers the groups as a whole.

### **Section1: Findings from individual cooking sessions**

#### Theme 1: identity and foodways

I began each session by asking each participant to introduce themselves and share where they were from. I started with this question to learn more about each participant. The question "Where are you from" intended to prompt stories of migration and open our conversation prior to cooking. Asking the question prompted interesting responses I did not anticipate before the project. While all participants were keen to share where they were from, other stories emerged surrounding the nature of the question "Where are you from". It brought about conflicting feelings amongst participants, while they understood that my question was part of the project and that I didn't mean any offence, they reflected on how the question "where are you from" has been asked by white folks as a form of racial categorization. Christina shared a story that did not take place at York but at her other job at a farmer's market downtown Toronto. Here, she explains that the mostly white customers often tried to racially categorize her, and the question "Where are you from" was regularly asked and subsequently turned into a racial guessing game of what country she could have come from. Erşan shared that he often felt tension when trying to

explain to Canadians where he was from (Turkey). Ayan, who is Black and Muslim, stated that the intersectionality of her faith which she says is made visible because of her Hijab, and her skin color, the question “where are you from” also prompts similar tensions and anxieties depending on who is asking, and how. Mahtani (2014) summarizes this tension as a mixed-race, Canadian woman stating:

I am not often considered Canadian even though I was born in Canada, raised there, and returned to live there and teach. I never really know how to answer when people ask me the ambiguous question “Where are you from?” because I know they are not inquiring about my place of birth or my childhood geographies- they are asking me this question because they want to racially categorize me. (p.10)

Participants and I related to our shared experiences of being asked where we are from. I shared with a few participants my own experiences of being asked where I was from, and when I would say “Toronto” or “Canada” the answer would often be followed up with “But where are you *really* from?”.

After discussing and processing the nature of the question “Where are you from?”, participants proceeded to share migration stories about themselves and their families. Lux was born in Canada, and her parents are Sri Lankan refugees. She shared that despite being born in Canada she spent the first 4 years of her life in Sri Lanka, so when she returned to Canada to enter the public-school system, she did not speak any English, and had what she called an immigrant experience growing up. Erşan is a recent immigrant from Turkey, arriving 2 years ago to study. Ayan shared that she was born in the United States and has spent time living in Egypt and the U.K before finally coming to Toronto, Canada. She also mentioned that despite being born in the U.S her family is originally from Somalia. Jocelyne shared that her family migrated from Sri Lanka when she was a child, first settling in Montreal before finally coming to and staying in Toronto. Christina shared that her parents are what she referred to as “boat people” a term to describe Vietnamese refugees who would get on a boat to flee Vietnam during the war, unsure of where they would end up.

Lux spoke explicitly about how it bothered her that mostly white celebrities are now profiting off of a traditional ingredient such as Turmeric because of its recently discovered health and beauty benefits. She stated, “we had this before, you [white, western people] always made fun of it, ‘oh it smells like curry’ and you rejected it. But now, it’s trendy”. Jocelyne recalled some stories about when she was in high school, where white classmates would tell her that her food smelled anytime she brought traditional Tamil food to school. Erşan expressed that for him,

it would be challenging to explain to Canadians where he was from, as he says, Canadians did not have a definition of Turkish identity. He shared stories of interacting with Canadians who would have a hard time categorizing him. Ayan shared a story about a family member of hers, who experienced harsh anti-Black racism in the Canadian healthcare system, and how learning to cook healthy meals is central for her and her family to reclaim their health.

Depending on our experiences and positionalities all participants, to varying degrees experienced some form of microaggressions or overt racism. Participants recognized the challenge is making sense of these experiences within a Canadian, multicultural society where many of us are led to believe that a multicultural society would somehow also equate to a more tolerant and accepting society. Mahtani (2014) notes that many migrants end up in Canada because of this perceived notion that racism was milder here. When cooking with Ayan, we spoke directly about the sinister nature in which racism manifests in Canada. She shared that in many ways it [referring to racism] is worse here in Canada, because of the way multiculturalism has made any critique of racism and its effects deemed as “rude” in Canadian society. She stated “How Canada is, to the outside world, everyone thinks we’re so multicultural, but we are not. I honestly think we are worse. We are able to conceal how bad we are”. Even people of color have been under the assumption that increased diversity and multiculturalism somehow equates to, as Mahtani (2014) describes as “milder” racism. While there are indeed racialized people who will not experience interpersonal racism or even deny that racism exists, participants to some degree have been subject to it and were aware of it.

In addition to microaggressions and overt discrimination, racism manifests in what Heldke (2001) refers to as a form of “cultural food colonizing”. Through Heldke’s (2012) reflection on her own food adventuring, cultural food colonialism refers to her own desire for ethnic foods “particularly the foods of economically dominated cultures” (p.395). In her self-reflexive essay “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism” Heldke (2012) examines her own attitudes in what she calls “adventure cooking” and how this is motivated by attitudes deeply connected to Western imperialism and colonialism. Heldke (2012) would unpack uncomfortable feelings in the kitchen, likening her tendency to go “culture hopping in the kitchen” (p.395) to the attitudes of various nineteenth and twentieth century European explorers, painters and anthropologists that would set out for new, and remote cultures to co-opt, and “borrow” from. The stories shared by participants speaks back to this form of cultural food colonizing, from the perspective of peoples who come from those colonized countries Heldke refers to. Writing from

her own privileged perspective and unpacking the colonial attitudes that inform her own food adventures, also informs racialized youth in several ways. First it highlights the emotional “pain” of witnessing white people continue to take and profit from colonized cultures. Secondly it also helps us understand how racialized people have been “Othered” through their food. When racialized people’s traditional, cultural food has been ridiculed, and if not ridiculed than made “exotic” it is another form of cultural food colonialism. Racialized people’s cultural food becomes a novelty. Novelty, and in turn, exotic, can be ways to delineate between Self and Other. For Heldke (2003) “Novelty is also attractive to adventuring food colonizers because it marks the presence of the exotic, where exotic is understood to mean not only ‘not local’ but also ‘excitingly unusual’” (p.398). Following Heldke (2003), exotic food can be understood as authentic because of its novelty. After these stories of migration and identity, I shifted the focus of our cooking sessions towards the local food and ingredients.

### Theme 2: local

Central to uncovering how YUM staff make meaning of local food was their racialized and translocal identities, and to see how those identities informed how they cooked, ate, and described local food. Working at the market, we sold local food, encouraged its consumption, and regularly exchanged with each other and customers recipes, stories and ideas on how to prepare different types of squash when they were in season, what to do with large amounts of tomatoes or how to use some of the herbs. So much of our job which was customer service was also pedagogical. How did staff define local food? In addition to preparing the local ingredients, I also asked participants individually what local food meant to them. Their definitions highlighted different perspectives on local food, which I describe and analyse here.

Erşan, when describing what local food mean to him, evoked what Valiente-Neighbours (2012) refers to as an immigrant-identity based definition of local food. Erşan stated “A lot of fish, a lot of corn, and kale. A climate where it rains all the time” to describe some of the produce available where he immigrated from in Turkey. Valiente-Neighbours (2012) describes “immigrant identity-based localism” as inward-looking to both the mind and body and lived daily in immigrant food practices. Local in this sense is an embodied element of immigrant’s cultural background. When I asked Lux “what does local food mean to you” she replied, “Local to me, means close to home... Local means I know where it is coming from, I feel a connection to it”. Lux’s definition of local food evokes a geography-based definition and a visceral definition when she states that she feels a connection to it. According to Valiente-Neighbours

(2012) this sort of defining of local food demarcates “local” as meaning a geographic container. When I asked Jocelyne what local meant, she replied “It means giving back to the land you already are on”. Similar to Lux, Jocelyne spoke about local food using the geography-based definition, describing local food in terms of proximity.

Asking Christina what local meant to her, she said “you have this ideal picture of it informed by farmers markets, a super palatable version. But I’ve learned so much about the trickiness of calling something local”. Christina followed up by sharing a story where she was being interviewed for a job to be a local food purchaser for a shop in Toronto that focusses on selling local products. In this story, Christina shared that she was told she was the only interviewee who expressed concern for food justice. This concerned both of us, and we continued to discuss how problematic it is for companies that promote their local food or local products, to not tie those issues to issues of equity and social justice.

### Theme 3: cooking together

Cooking was significant for this project because, as Valiente-Neighbours (2012) states, cooking at home in one’s own kitchen is an aspect of food system localisation that is not typically part of the definition of local food, and is more often associated with the “slow food” discourse (p.536). Cooking together adds another layer to the local food question, which is now what we’ve purchased local produce how do we cook it? How do we prepare to adhere to our individual tastes? Local food discourse focuses heavily on production and proximity of the production or growth of local produce. Home-cooking, however, is the next aspect of local food discourse I aimed to explore through cooking as inquiry.

Employing cooking as inquiry was to make meaning of local not just in words but also by actually cooking and preparing local ingredients. Where we got the local ingredients varied: from a local farm to a grocery store. The ingredients played varying roles in our dishes. Meaning-making with local food and immigrant populations, according to Valiente-Neighbors (2012) is central to realizing the social justice aims of local food. Taking the concept of reflexivity further, Heldke (2003) states that the local foodshed can also be a site for anticolonial food activity.

As Brady (2011) notes, foodmaking is also a performance of identity. While Brady’s (2011) cooking as inquiry considered dietic discourse as her theme when developing cooking as inquiry, I wanted to consider what local meant by using local ingredients and speaking about our experiences as racialized people. The act of cooking together in an intimate setting led to sharing

stories that likely would not have been shared at work, or at the market. Cooking with each participant showed me things like peoples preferred tastes, memories of cooking and eating in their childhood, and what “home” meant to them. Local food often evokes a sense of proximity to one’s home, however memories of home from elsewhere are highly politicized.

In the first cooking session with Lux, I prepared a Thai coconut noodle soup while Lux made a tomato sauce pasta. The local ingredients in my recipe were the green onions and served as more of a garnish, whereas with Lux’s tomato pasta dish the locally grown tomatoes were central to the dish. In the dishes prepared by Erşan, all the ingredients were local and thus central to the dish. Ayan’s lentil soup used local carrots, potatoes and onion. Jocelyne’s “curry potatoes” used locally grown potatoes with her spice-blend that she brought from home. With Christina’s Goi Cuon, the lettuce, carrots and tofu were all grown and produced locally.

Every participant had varying levels of experience cooking for themselves and others. My intention was not to measure their cooking skills, my conception of a “successful” cooking sessions is something edible at the end. I approach each session with an open mind and no expectations, open to learning from each participant. Selecting a recipe, or not needing a written recipe, highlights the cooking experience and bodily knowledge that participants did or did not, possess. Recipes and selecting recipes require a degree of self-awareness and self-reflexivity. Cooking together highlighted bodily knowledge, and the recipes selected came with stories of migration and survival.

Erşan and Jocelyne both were able to prepare their meals without referring to a written recipe. Erşan prepared two traditional Turkish dishes and made both of them in a timely and efficient manner. He seemed comfortable enough in his own kitchen to chop, prep, and sauté all while holding a conversation with me. Erşan shared memories of his childhood where he was able to learn how to cook at young age, he also mentioned that coming to Canada he would not have a choice to learn how to cook for himself. With Jocelyne, we cooked at my mom’s kitchen, where she arrived with a container of her own pre-mix of spices from her home. We prepared the curried local potatoes together, I offered to help prep the potatoes. While we both were peeling, she seemed very comfortable despite not being in her own kitchen, and confident in the preparing of the potatoes, and using her sense of smell and sight to gauge when the potatoes were ready. She showed me how she can tell the potatoes are ready, and for how long to sauté them. Like Erşan, she didn’t refer to a recipe, and seemed to have known how to prepare the dish based on intuition. When I asked her about her cooking experience, she stated that she had learned

form her parents, but also taught herself how to cook because she has been a vegan for several years, and thus needed to know how to prepare vegan meals for herself.

Christina, Ayan, Lux and I referred to written recipes and even YouTube videos to clarify how to prepare a certain ingredient, or to see if a substitution can be made without drastically affecting the flavor and form. With Christina, she and I watched a Youtube video to clarify how to prepare the taro for the Gui Cuon. With Ayan, we looked online to double check the ratio of lentils to rice and to vegetable stock. While not every participant possessed the bodily knowledge to prepare their recipe from memory alone, it still highlighted a degree of creativity in the kitchen. Christina and Jocelyne, for example, shared how they modify and make substitutions in their cooking to adapt to their vegan and vegetarian diets. Jocelyne described this as making vegan foods but “in a brown way”.

Cooking together highlighted intergenerational bodily knowledge. For those of us (myself included for a few recipes) we did not possess the bodily knowledge to create a recipe by memory alone and had to use social media to learn. This highlighted a degree of resilience and creativity in the kitchen. Further, the use of substitutions to adhere to cultural and religious traditions. All participants had varying experience in the kitchen, and with cooking. For Lux specifically this is hampered by the lack of access to a kitchen as a student living on campus. Erşan, while having access to a kitchen, lived in a shared residence with other students, one of which came to cook his own meal as we were wrapping up our own meals.

-

Every participant touched on some aspect of Heldke’s “Foodmaking as a thoughtful practice” (Heldke, 1992) as we cooked together. Heldke states that foodmaking challenges the subject/object and mind/body dichotomy which is central to viewing food as an object or commodity. Foodmaking develops a self-other interconnection by blurring the separation between us and the food being made. Foodmaking also highlights bodily knowledge and the body as a site of knowledge and information. Three participants spoke about “eyeballing” ingredients and their apprehension towards using recipes. The “eyeballing” technique highlights a bodily knowledge transferred from one to another. Heldke states that to cook food well does not require exact measurements but rather a “knowledge in the eyes and the hands” (p.219). Erşan’s story about feeling a sense of belonging highlighted how Heldke views foodmaking activities as community activities (p.220). Creating recipes, testing and exchanging them are community activities. Foodmaking also highlights emotional and erotic knowledge

(Heldke, 1992), which was most prevalent with Christina's comment about how she cooks better for others, because it was made with love. Heldke states that cooking is the most powerful form of love (Heldke, 1992, p.223).

To consider foodmaking, and cooking, as a form of philosophical inquiry, we have to entertain a conceptualization of food beyond the mind over body duality. We also have to consider food as more than just an object, of commodity to be consumed, but a set of relations. This became evident to me when I thought more deeply about choosing a recipe to prepare for each participant. It was not only "how can I cook this local vegetable" but I also considered their allergies, dietary restrictions or choices, and what, based on what I already knew about them, I thought they would like or enjoy. I wanted to make something that would highlight my gratitude for their participation in my project, but also my appreciation for them as individuals. Curtin (1992) states "the relational person sees that in order to care for others, we need to care for ourselves" (p.17) however one must embark on the task of viewing one's self as a relational person, and that to view care for oneself as removed from care for others is a moral illusion. When we view food as a commodity, we consume it for personal benefit, to promote personal health. However, when we view food as a set of relations, we see that we not only eat well so that we may be well, but that others wellness is implicated in what we eat. As Curtin (1992) states;

By being mindful of the ways food comes to our tables, we can become aware of the fact that to be healthy, to really care for oneself, one needs to care for others. And caring for others is really to care for oneself. We should make the effort to know where our food comes from and decide whether to be a part of that process. To care for oneself is to care for the migrant laborers whose daily, bodily work provides our food. To care for migrant laborers is truly to care for oneself. (p.17).

To add to Curtin's (1992) point, I suggest that we should care about everyone implicated in our food system, including the migrant workers, the enslaved black folks whose labour built the foundation of our agricultural system and the Indigenous peoples who have been displaced, forcibly from their traditional territories. This view on food as relations is counter to the neoliberal conception of local which further commodifies food and primarily benefits local capitalists. Viewing food as relations opens up an opportunity for food to also be a political tool, and pedagogical medium (Finding Flowers Project, 2020) .

I agree with Heldke's (2003) assertion that cooking (including all aspects of cooking, from recipes, to grocery shopping to cookbooks) has significant potential for anticolonialist activity (p.404). Like Heldke, I see food as a powerful medium for anticolonialism because of

how much diversity exists in North American cuisine. With foods and cuisines available from all over world, and the fact that we all need to eat to survive, it can become not only a thoughtful practice but an anti-colonial, anti-racist practice as well. I do not suggest, however, to revert back to commodified, objectified notions of food (specifically local food) but rather have foodmaking and eating be a performance of a relational self, implicated in an unjust food system. I hope that this realization can move individuals at a visceral level to fight for social change.

The individual cooking sessions allowed me to get to know participants at a more intimate level, gaining a better understanding of where they were from, their food practices, what local meant to them and their experience cooking. Beyond what I learned about participants, I learned a great deal about myself as well. Based on the tasti-ness (or lack thereof) of some dishes, I noticed that I wanted to make so-called “ethnic” dishes such as my attempt at Filipino fruit salad, Thai curry coconut noodle soup, and Pad Thai. These dishes were a form of my own embodied performance of how I perceived myself as a Filipino woman, and how I wanted participants to perceive me based on my ability to prepare these meals. I noticed that I tried to prepare two Thai dishes, not because I am Thai, but there are some culinary similarities to my own cultural background. Based on where I was, and the popularity of Thai cuisine, it was sometimes easier to find ingredients for Pad Thai than it would for a more traditional Filipino dish. I do not have the experience and skill to prepare these dishes well, they are recipes I enjoy consuming myself, however I did not spend the time to learn how to prepare them well. I also do not have memories of family members preparing them. I was delighted to learn that apparently, I am much more skilled and experienced at baking than I am preparing noodle dishes. I prepared vegan carrot muffins for Jocelyne which she enjoyed, and mini apple pies for Ayan who enjoyed them so much she took them with her after our cooking session. I had previously worked at a cupcake bakery and have more memories baking with my family than I do preparing other traditional meals. When cooking with each participant, I learned something new from everyone. Whether it was a cooking skill or new attitude toward cooking, the experience of actually cooking together highlighted how much knowledge participants already possessed, even when they claimed not to have any cooking skill or experience. While Lux, for example, claimed never to have even turned on a stove on her own prepared a delicious tomato pasta using tomatoes we had purchased together at a nearby farm market. She also gave me a lot of information about how to use turmeric in my cooking and also skincare. Ayan and I prepared Mediterranean Lentil Soup, and despite burning some of the carrots and rice, it added a smokiness to the soup that

sadly, neither of us were able to recreate again. The experience however taught me the power of spontaneity in the kitchen, and to have a brave attitude towards cooking, being open to making “happy mistakes” and adjusting accordingly. I felt particularly inspired by cooking with Jocelyne, with her, I found out that we both attended the same high school albeit at different years. We reflected on our shared experience at a predominantly white school, and the shame that often came with eating our cultural foods in public. Despite this Jocelyne had learned to reclaim her Tamil identity through her vegan dishes that she makes for herself. With Christina, I related to our shared experience of wanted to reconnect with our cultures and traditions through food, but not necessarily having the bodily knowledge and experience to prepare them from memory. I was comforted to see that Christina had to refer to Youtube videos to clarify certain techniques, it made me feel like it was always OK to refer to other resources to teach yourself how to cook. Cooking together highlighted how we can resist colonial logics within the kitchen, and how much knowledge our food and bodies already possessed. I wondered but was unable to tell if perhaps the fact that some participants felt like they “could not cook” was rooted more so in Eurocentric criteria of cooking skills. While I cannot measure the skills and techniques used by participants against, for example, a professional chef, I thought that all cooking sessions were successful because every session led to delicious, flavorful meals, and everything was prepared without any accidents in the kitchen. The recipes all produced different ways local produce can be prepared: local tomatoes became pasta, local potatoes were “made brown” with Jocelyne’s spice mix, local beans became Zeytinyağlı barbunya and Zeytinyağlı Taze Fasuly, local carrots and local tofu turned into Gui Cuon, local carrots became Mediterranean Lentil Soup.

## **Section 2: making the cookbook the collective zine-making**

In Brady’s (2011) recommendation on how to carry out cooking as inquiry, she mentions bringing the group together. My initial intentions for this project was a collective cooking but due to time constraints and challenges booking a kitchen I cooked individually with each participant and gathered everyone together for a final zine-making activity. The individual cooking sessions were more intimate and focused on our individual experiences, the collective zine-making focussed more on our shared experiences working at the market. The recipes all used local ingredients, and all mention whose traditional land the ingredients were grown on as a way to raise awareness and problematize the conventional way in which local produce is promoted and advertised. I provided refreshments and zine-making and art supplies. Because we all took photos of the food we made (which was another aspect that rose organically) I printed

the photos to include in the zine-pages. I gave each participant full artistic freedom to use whatever materials they want and present their recipe however they wanted. The only requirements were to note which ingredients were local and the land acknowledgement. During the zine-making, I asked the group questions that pertained more to our shared experience at the market, what they learned from cooking together and how it made them feel.

The creation of the cookbook and the cookbook itself is an artistic representation of what it means to deeply consider anticolonial ways of making and sharing food. The cookbook was not a dictation of how I wanted things to look, in terms of style. It is a representation of how each participant wanted to present their own recipe. It is also not homogenous in its font, style or handwriting. According to Heldke (2012), cookbooks can also manifest cultural food colonialism in two ways: “first, they speak to the food adventurer’s never-ending quest for novel eating experiences- where novelty is also read as exoticism, and second, they turn the ethnic Other into a resource for the food adventurer’s own use” (p.395). This cookbook aimed to resist cultural food colonialism by giving each cook authorship over their own recipe and compiling the recipes like a zine. By having participants create their own recipe zine-page, I sought to allow participants feel as if they are self-publishing their recipe. This is counter to what Heldke (2012) says is a common “food colonizing” attitude of many cookbook writers, that rarely note exactly who the recipes were from, and hardly ever speak on the history of those foods, recipes or ingredients. These recipes, the local ingredients, and the stories of the people who brought those recipes highlight the diversity prevalent in our foodshed and aims to de-centre dominant rhetoric surrounding local food.

In retrospect, I should have allotted more time for the creation of the cookbook, and the creation of the zines. Also, while art-making can be therapeutic, it seemed to have cause minor stress to participants who were not experienced in visual arts. I specifically chose zines a medium as I believed it to be the most accessible. One participant made a comment about how they felt “stressed” by the task of making a zine- this reminded me that while the playful nature of visual arts and zine making has therapeutic potential, it does not mean that is the case for everyone. I reassured all participants that this was not supposed to be stressful, rather more fun, however future research can consider a blend of mediums for participants (perhaps I could have offered that this participant write a reflection instead) or provided more examples of zines that would showcase diverse artistic abilities. When I told participants, I did want to share this zine

with others, all participants asked to have their real names used in my project and no longer use their pseudonyms.

### Reflecting on YUM (York University Market): race and representation at our Good Food

#### Market:

During the zine-making, I asked participants questions surrounding our shared experience at the market. The participants and I were in charge of setting up, running and cleaning up the weekly Good Food Market YUM. I asked participants to share what they felt were major barriers to making our market run efficiently.

“I remember towards the end they were trying to set up how to get everything to Glendon-they wanted it to be volunteer based and wanted my mom to get involved, we aren’t kids.” -Lux

“with the logistics of that, that wasn’t effective in any way. I know the end goal is to get local produce to as many students as possible but the impact of not having the support or man power/support on top of that the carbon footprint. It creates the responsibility to someone. It wasn’t fair. In terms of challenges of local produce, it’s not to black and white. Certain things don’t grow here. Some people think this is Narnia. Like they take it out on us, the organic kale lady, the raspberry man. She comes by every week and looks at the prices and goes ‘this is ridiculous!’ just to emphasize, we are operating at a loss to keep this running. Its got to be sustainable. We’re not even making money. There is lots of misinformation when it comes to local and organic.” -Christina

“But one thing we cant say thought is that they maybe just didn’t have that knowledge. Coming into Regenesi I had to learn as well, maybe we can share that knowledge. For me it was the physical aspect...we were lucky we didn’t have any injuries, other than a few cuts. I feel like that was a hard problem for us, it was stressful.” -Ayan

[jokingly] “we risked our lives!” -Jocelyne

When Lux stated “towards the end” she was referring to the end of her time working at Regenesi. This time also coincided with the beginning of the provincial government’s “Student Choice Initiative” which aimed to give students the ability to choose which student groups they wanted to give their student levy to, and which ones they do not. This significantly affected the funding Regenesi would be able to access, and thus threatened the continuation of the market. During some of the markets, we would also be campaigning to simultaneously educate students on the effect the student choice initiative would have on the market and ask for their continued support. The initiative forced students to opt in to certain student levies before a certain date. This initiative greatly affected staff. Lux’s comment on being asked for her mother to volunteer was rooted in a desperation to keep Regenesi initiatives running with minimal and shrinking

financial support from the University administration and increased pressure from the provincial government on student groups such as ours.

The physical labour of carrying and transporting over 50lbs of produce, coupled with the demands of some customers proved to be a major barrier for the market. This is in line with the fact that many community food security initiatives either run on unpaid labour of volunteers or are heavily reliant on the charity model. These structural inequalities trickle down to the people who execute these markets in an attempt to bring local and fresh produce to the community. Following this, I asked participants how they felt their race affected their experience at the market. I mention here when quotes are in response to a previous answer, as the setting was a group conversation.

“I think York is a microcosm that is a different experience than other farmers markets like downtown. It was more diverse here. It’s a racialized population and I am racialized myself. It’s positive at YUM but can’t say the same downtown [Toronto]”- Christina

“It brought meaningful conversation, people come in talking about their experiences, their issues with farmers markets and how inaccessible it was to them, and how this was great to them, I don’t know if it was because I was a person of color and they were able to connect with me, and if they saw me with a hijab you know talking about there were so many Somali girls they would come they would say this is so cool, they don’t usually see that right. I feel like my race contributed, it was a positive experience. If I was downtown, I would not have liked it.” -Ayan

“It’s nice there’s representation. Downtown farmers markets do tend to be white people, look at the majority of us, we’re people of color, when you think of environmentalism, upper middle class, older, males. It’s nice having that representation across lie right here being able to connect with people our age”- Lux

“I just wanted to say, we’re usually suppressed in situations in farmers markets downtown but this was our place to actually speak...this is our chance to talk, and it was great. It was our space.” -Ayan

“the seed day at the market when we were giving out free seeds, so many people were extremely empowered by that, and again, its because we have such a large racialized population, so many racialized people were getting seeds and were like, growing it. It was so powerful for me to see that people were taking control of what they eat. Its like, food sovereignty from the start” -Christina

“You don’t have to be white to have a food market. Ours worked and we had more options. We had culturally available produce unlike you [Ayan pointed to the door, referring to ‘other’ markets’]” -Ayan

Most participants commented on the whiteness of farmers markets downtown overtly, which they tied to how and why we enjoyed our own market because of how diverse the customers and staff were. As Slocum, and Guthman have highlighted in their ethnographies of farmers markets they are predominantly white. While the context within which they write refer to American farmers markets, similar tendencies of overwhelming whiteness in alternative food initiatives have been noted here in Canada as well. The way participants positively spoke about their race and representation was remnant of how McCutcheon (2011) describes community food security that is “For Us, By Us”. McCutcheon highlighted the FUBU principle as being central to community food security. FUBU was a 90s shoe company started by five Black men, with FUBU standing for *For Us, By Us* out of their concern for the benefits that a sense of ownership may bring to the Black community. McCutchen (2011) stresses the self-reliance as central to not only the inception of the sneaker company but to other community food security initiatives that are run by, and reflective of, the community in which they serve (McCutcheon, 2011). In terms of output, profits and outcomes, the Good Food Market continues to rely heavily on unpaid labor and the costs of the produce rarely covers those costs. Despite the fact that these markets are increasingly less feasible as funding cuts become more prevalent, the conversations with the staff highlight that despite the barriers and funding cuts we found meaning and purpose in the markets through our connections with each other and customers. Participants felt that as racialized youth, it allowed for other racialized youth to feel welcome at our market and more inclined to speak to staff and ask questions. There was a consensus amongst participants that the barriers to making the market more efficient, or to host more vendors, was too challenging considering the positionality of us as students and staff, and of the nature of the partnership between Regenesis, York University’s food services and Foodshare. As market manager, I recognized how difficult it was not only to execute the market but balance the needs and expectations of the other parties involved in executing the market.

While I did not ask any questions regarding politics and political organizing, three of the participants discussed their involvement with the 2019 election. Because it was not a focus for this project, and because participants did not want their political affiliation mentioned, it is worth noting that their frustration with government is what motivated them to get involved politically. And so while this project does not lead to public policy recommendations explicitly, three of the participants were involved with local political organizing.

As we wrapped up the zine-making exercise, I asked the group what they thought about the experience of cooking together, and what new knowledge they may have gained during our cooking sessions:

“Cooking was healing and therapeutic, cooking with people our age was nice, there are always assumptions about why our generation doesn’t cook as much, systemic issues”-Christina

“yeah, I mean no housing means no kitchen” (referring to Glendon) -Lux

“I don’t feel embarrassed anymore about my food”-Jocelyne

“I cook better with, or for other people”- Christina

“I’m not afraid anymore. It was hard to talk about past traumas, but it was nice. Was nice to speak about these issues” -Ayan

“we claimed our space, it was our space” -Erşan

“I liked that you mentioned migrant workers, I learned a lot about that here” -Jocelyne

“Yeah, Canadians have power to pressure government to change this, we care about politics but as students we’re so busy it’s hard to get involved” -Erşan

“This is like a safe space, you can’t find it anywhere else”-Christina

“Look at the carbon footprint, just because I don’t eat meat doesn’t mean I don’t have a big carbon footprint” -Jocelyne

Following these answers, I asked the group how they felt about cooking together, especially using the local ingredients:

“It makes you feel more belonged, makes you feel less alienation to the land and culture. It’s big for one’s association to the place” -Erşan

“People that have diasporic experience want to have a sense of belonging to the land that they are on. Even though I was born here I grew up in a different culture as to what is considered dominant Canadian culture. To see a piece of myself in food that was grown here and made here, yeah it’s just that craving for a sense of belonging and a symbol of food is that” -Christina

“I related to what Christina said about food. I was scared to bring brown food to school because I didn’t want to get made fun of. So, I tried to adopt to Canadian food but seasoned it, in like, a brown way. In high school and elementary school. Now I relate to it. Now I feel the belonging.” -Jocelyne

“I would lie, wouldn’t eat or bring brown food to school at all. They had those multicultural days where they would eat something from every culture. I don’t even want to participate in this. Because if it was any other day of the year, you all would have made fun of me for it! This week we wont make fun of you, but try this again tomorrow!”- Jocelyne

What the zine-making exercise highlighted to me was also that racialized youth need safe spaces to get together-whether it be to organize politically, to relax and socialize, or to study. During the zine-making a white male student stood at the doorway watching us from the window. It made everyone uncomfortable and I politely asked if he could leave as I was doing a research project for school. He did leave, however when I returned all participants commented on how hard it is to escape the white gaze, and how little time and space there is on campus specifically for us to exist. All participants expressed appreciation for the space provided by the project. The space allowed participants to be themselves without scrutiny or the need to “code-switch” (ie. Talk white). This was an unexpected benefit and outcome of bringing the participants together.

I was especially moved by Jocelyne’s comment, that after our cooking session, unpacking how we’ve internalised white supremacist beliefs about ourselves, she no longer feels ashamed of her food. I noted after the session how emotional I felt, how angry I was that an entire culture would make an individual feel shame around their own food and culture. The realization and understanding of the origins of the shame experienced surrounding one’s traditional and cultural foods is empowering. Ayan’s comment on how speaking on past traumas was hard, but nice, also resonated with me in several ways. I knew that talking about racism and trauma would be difficult, emotionally for us. But I also knew that moving through those challenging emotions was central to beginning our healing. Without safe spaces to talk about our traumas, we are not able to heal from them. Finally, Lux’s comment about cooking, that no housing means no kitchen, was also important to note. Post-secondary student food insecurity is tied to student housing issues. How are students expected to cook local healthy meals for themselves when they do not even have access to a kitchen? Prior to this project, I had assumed everyone had a kitchen, I did not realise how much of a privilege that is.

## Conclusion:

Through cooking as inquiry, art-making and oral history storytelling, participants and I made meaning of, cooking and ate local food. After this project, what does local food mean to me, now? After my own experience as researcher my conception of local food has taken on a more significant meaning. Local food continues to represent a sense of proximity, community and belonging- but my conception of what local food is has shifted from the only way I felt I could engage with the alternative food movement as a racialized youth myself to something with more spiritual meaning. Considering whose traditional land, we live on, and whose traditional land our food was grown on, constantly reminds settler of the on-going colonial project. It reminds me that I want to, through my foodmaking practice, be in good relations with the people I cook with and the land on which I cook and eat. Viewing food as a series of relationships that cannot be commodified recognizes that there are other actions required beyond just buying local in order for all of us to eat well.

I have also summarized here what local food means to me based on the experience and findings of the project.

1. Local foodshed a site for cultural food anticolonialism: Through what Heldke (2003) refers to as cultural food colonialism, there are ways white supremacist culture manifests in the way we decide what to eat. In shifting away from view the exotic “Other” as a resource for “ethnic” food, Heldke states we should view these chefs as conversation partners, not resources. The local foodshed is a practical way to think about anticolonial food activity. Eating locally, in conjunction with an active rejection of colonial attitudes is central to what Heldke refers to as truly anticolonial ways of making dinner. While Heldke (2003) speaks from her positionality as a privileged white woman, these points are still applicable to people of color because of the ways internalized racism functions against oneself and others.
2. Cookbooks as a form to resist cultural food colonialism. The cookbook itself also can resist notion of cultural food colonialism, again by bringing authorship to the recipes and the people who wrote them. Using a zine format also opened up publishing ideas from diverse voices and abilities.
3. Cooking as a method for anti-racist praxis. Cooking as inquiry was used to explore embodied qualitative methods to uncover how staff make meaning of local food as racialized youth. Heldke (1992) refers to foodmaking as a thoughtful practice, and I

add that with intention and self-reflexivity, foodmaking can also be an anti-racist practice. Brady's (2011) conception of cooking as inquiry recognizes how foodmaking is a performance of ethnic identity. While her project focussed on dietic discourse, cooking as inquiry can begin to unpack how racism has and does shape racialized people's relation to local food. The colorblind, multicultural rhetoric that prevails in alternative food (and society in general) often undermines anti-racist efforts. By denying that racism exists, by denying recognition of someone's skin color, we allow racism to continue unchecked. Hooks (1992) states, "Mutual recognition of racism, its impact both on those who are dominated and those who dominate, is the only standpoint that makes possible an encounter between races that is not based on denial or fantasy" (p.28) (hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, 1992). Following Heldke (2012), referring to hook's above quote, states that it is by placing our colonizing relationship "squarely in in the center of the dining table" (p.406) that we have any hope for becoming anticolonialists.

My findings highlight the ways in which racialized youth have experienced *Othering* through their cultural, and traditional foods. Despite having experienced shame and discrimination, the project provided a culturally safe space to unpack white supremacist culture in our lives and reclaim our own cultural food traditions. Results also indicate that all participants carried to some degree bodily knowledge on how to cook. My findings related to the market indicate that despite the various institutional, financial and physical barriers to having the market run as efficiently as we would like, the market continues to be meaningful for staff and customers. Participant's experience as racialized youth highlight that as people of color, their presence at the market led to a more welcoming environment for customers.

Some of the major limitations of this project include the limited time to work on the zine. I attempted to ask the group questions while they prepared their recipe zine page. While it was generally not a problem it was challenging to try and have a discussion while making the zine page. I should have allotted more time to work on the zine-pages without asking questions. The project intended to produce a cookbook to be shared with the community at the York University Market as a way to engage the community in an anti-colonial discussion on local food and complicate how we understand where our food comes from. Ultimately this project aims to support Indigenous food sovereignty, but a cookbook can address colonial food culture at most,

to directly address land back to Indigenous peoples, more actionable policy recommendations could have been made.

**Recommendations:**

Based on the discussions and stories from participants, there is clearly a divide between the intended outcomes expected by the University's administration (food services), Regenesi the organization, and the staff as individuals. For participants, there was an understanding of the potential the market had as a space for political organization. However, any political action or initiatives that would be in tension with the organization we worked for, Regenesi, and the University, would likely be shut down or rejected. The University celebrated its on campus Good Food Market, saw that it addressed student insecurity without engaging the root causes for our food insecurity. Foodshare was crucial to running the market. Regenesi was the other key organizational player in insuring the market existed, being a student-led organization there was a sense of autonomy when executing the market. So, while some participants may have wanted more power over how our market ran, we had to work within the confines of the University campus' bylaws and regulations and the expectation of the organization.

Based on the findings of this project, it is recommended that people who wish to engage in alternative food, begin to unpack the ways we have internalized different forms of oppression, even if we ourselves are part of a marginalized group. There are various calls to action that include making alliances with food justice organizations and other social justice oriented groups- however these alliances must obviously be formed with individuals from that group. How can food be a useful medium to begin to see the Other as a "conversation partner" as Heldke (2003) states, as opposed to an exotic other treated like a resource. Foodmaking as a thoughtful practice offers practical ways to consider how to embody anti-oppressive theories. Confronting systemic racism begins with a mutual recognition of racism as a problem, a fact that colorblind approaches to racism undermines.

Through this project I address the gap in knowledge by highlighting how cooking as inquiry can further critical food pedagogy and address the gap in literature surrounding local food discourse and racialized youth. Findings have indicated that even people of color can internalize the multicultural myth, and that it can impede efforts to be engaged effectively in anti-racism efforts. Participants such as Christina recognized the performative nature of land acknowledgements and stated that she wished the University did more to address the lived

experience of Indigenous students, and by at least recognizing the ways in which they, the University, has historically upheld white supremacist colonial values.

The results highlight how diasporic youth, involved in the campus Good Food Market made meaning of local food by cooking, eating, and art-fully displaying local ingredients. They define local food in unique and sometimes conflicting ways. How staff define local food, is an aspect of food justice theorizing that Slocum and Cadieux (2015) recognize as central to the “practice” of food justice. Uncovering how YUM staff make meaning of local food speaks directly to understanding barriers people of color face in engaging with alternative food spaces, something Guthman has highlighted as important for furthering food justice work. My findings highlight that these barriers are multi-scalar in nature. At the market level, there are institutional barriers to having our market run efficiently. Coupled with the fact that the University lack proper framework to address microaggressions and racial harassment (Henry F. e., 2017), the market not only relies on low-wage or unpaid student labour, but we also lack institutional forms of accountability if staff or customers are subject to racial harassment at the market. Even if we, as staff, wanted to make the market more equitable, the bureaucracy we faced to make these changes were overwhelming. At an individual level, participants have faced ridicule for eating traditional cultural foods. While this was unique to Ayan as the only Black participant the story she shared spoke specifically about Anti-Black racism in Canada’s healthcare system. Black people in Canada continue to face Anti-Black racism in all aspects of life. Slocum and Cadieux (2015) note that essential to the practice of food justice is a recognition of historical and racial trauma. Participants and I shared with each other stories and experiences of racial trauma, and with some, we spoke about how historical trauma had affected our own families. Mutual recognition of trauma, according to Slocum and Cadieux (2015), makes healing possible.

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