

“Are we doing another steal?”

Decolonizing the self as prelude to research in the
Australian Native Foods industry: a deep-thinking
framework

Emily Kay

MDietSt. BExNutrSc. BEd (hons).

Olivia Wright

Supervisor

Foreword

This qualitative research project was conducted and written by Emily Kay for *ARC ITTC for Uniquely Australian Food* as part of her Masters of Dietetics Studies at the University of Queensland. In consultation with three professionals, each experienced in the field of Australian Native Botanicals, this research explored the attitudes, values, and understandings that should serve as prerequisite to conducting ethical and respectful research with First Nations Peoples. The final output of the study was a deep-thinking conceptual framework, designed for researchers.

This manuscript has not been formerly published but is considered an exceptional and important read for those interested in conducting research in the Native botanicals industry with First Nations Australians; as such, this research paper has been endorsed (supported) by the ARC Centre's First Nations Advisory Chairperson, Honorary Professor Henrietta Marrie AM as recommended reading.

Executive Summary

Background Traditional Knowledge (TK) systems of Australia's First Peoples represent significant potential for economic sustainability and profitability within Australia's Native Foods industry. Decolonisation-of-self has been posited as vital prerequisite to research which respects, rather than exploits, Indigenous Peoples and their TK.

Aim This project aimed to explore 'decolonising-the-self' to formulate a deep-thinking framework for researchers to engage with prior to undertaking research within the Australian Native Foods Industry.

Methods Qualitative interviews were conducted with professionals purposively sampled from the Australian Research Council Transformational Training Centre in Uniquely Australian Foods, based in Brisbane, Australia. Semi-structured interviews were developed to facilitate exploration of the concept 'researcher decolonisation' with participants. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to the inductive thematic data analysis and interpretation was adopted.

Results Three participants representing academia, community engagement, and research coordination within the Australian Native Foods Industry participated in the research. Eight key themes were identified: honesty and truth telling; acknowledgement of Aboriginal sovereignty; shared power through guaranteed voice; shared power through guaranteed consideration of interests; self-determination through land rights, land access and ownership of natural resources; empowerment through capacity building and benefit sharing; relationality and accountability; Western science and Traditional Knowledge in consonance.

Discussion This novel exploration of the process of 'decolonising-the-self' provides evidence that researchers should undertake a reflective and critical look at their research methods and ideologies, guided by the deep-thinking framework, to ensure that their research does not translate to exploitation of Australia's First Peoples for their TK.

Introduction

Loss of ecosystems and their constituent species is occurring at an alarming rate¹; a decline symptomatic of an economic paradigm that rejects natural law, instead promoting perpetual growth on a finite planet^{1, 2}. The globe over, however, there is an awakening to the inherent risks of a *consequence-free consumption* mindset², and sustainable alternatives are being sought. The World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 landmark report *Our Common Future*, implored the recognition of Indigenous Peoples as "repositories of vast accumulations of traditional knowledge and experience... Larger society could learn a great deal from their traditional skills in sustainably managing very complex ecological systems"³ (p. 115). A sentiment reinforced by the 2008 statistic revealing 80 percent of the world's prevailing healthy ecosystems comprising traditional Indigenous territory⁴. While there is evidently much to learn from those who have mastered the art of living harmoniously with nature over millennia, Traditional Knowledges (TK) of the world's Indigenous Peoples are not natural resources for non-Indigenous peoples to steal and exploit. "They are, and will always be, the precious life-sustaining property of First Peoples: sacred symbols encoding the hidden design of their respective universes... ancient and irreplaceable maps suggesting possible paths to inner as well as ecological equilibrium with the wider, ever-changing world"⁵ (p. 19). Today, Indigenous Peoples comprise some of the most vulnerable groups³, translating to rapid disappearance of their TK^{3, 6}; Australia's First Peoples are no exception to this trend.

Custodians to Australia for at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples hold vast knowledges of this continent. As host to between 7 and 10 percent of the world's species, Australia is counted among the world's 17 "megadiverse" countries⁷. Since many of these species are endemic to Australia, they hold significant economic potential for Australian Industries⁶. However, while sustainable development and economic security will depend upon the adoption of Australian First Peoples' vast TK of the continent, whether they are able to "secure a stake and participate in this and any other industries based on Australia's biological wealth and its management"⁸ (p. 34) remains to be seen. Despite the potential for economic wealth and cultural benefits from participation within this industry⁸, Australia's laws and institutions remain generally unsupportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' interests and governance within the Native Foods industry⁹. Indeed, challenges to access and benefit sharing permeate the entire value chain, including: commercial land-use restrictions; limited resource access for native food business start-ups; absence of consultation processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples regarding trade and export or intellectual

property right applications; non-mandatory research ethics conditions for private enterprises; non-mandatory negotiations with traditional land custodians for plant access; jurisdictional limitations for TK disclosure agreements; non-compulsory benefit sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples⁹. This list, by no means exhaustive, illustrates inherent ignorance of Australia's First Peoples' rightful sovereignty in this sector; reminiscent of western research with First Nations Peoples the globe over.

“The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful.” (p. 30)¹⁰

With this sentiment, Linda Tuhiwai Smith¹⁰ reminds us of research’s inextricable link to European colonialism. Datta¹¹ references Lincoln’s *rape* research model to describe oppressive research behaviours towards Indigenous communities: “the researcher comes in, takes what he [sic] wants, and leaves when he feels like it” (p. 3). Martin¹² lists schools, universities, research, literature, and multi-media technology as much ‘weapons of colonialism’ (p. 25), as legal, welfare, political, religious, and economic institutions, due to their role in the violent severance of Aboriginal Peoples from their Stories, knowledges, and Country. The oppressive and destructive force of scientific research on the world’s First Peoples reflects five core beliefs¹³, effectively transmuting research into another colonising process¹⁴: good research is the domain of non-Aboriginal researchers only; research of Aboriginal peoples and communities is an inherent right of non-Aboriginal researchers; Aboriginal peoples are primitive; intellectual and cultural heritage of Aboriginal Peoples is public, and freely accessible; exploitation of Aboriginal Peoples and communities is justified in furthering the status and academic repute of researchers and institutions. This type of research, iconic of western scholarship, perpetuates an imperialist hegemony¹⁵, its roots deeply embedded in western ideology and science.

Europe’s eighteenth century philosophy catalysed a conceptual shift towards a model of the natural world where humans, by virtue of their ability to discern natural laws comprising the universe, were separate and superior¹⁶. The world was viewed as inanimate but mechanical, where nature was imagined to operate like a man-made machine, possible to understand by breaking it down to individual components¹⁷. This reductionist worldview was founded upon the assumption that mastery of an isolated sector equips the ‘master’ with sufficient knowledge to understand how that sector

contributes to the whole¹⁸. This decontextualised, disciplinary-focused approach frames knowledge as *individual in nature*, rather than holistic^{19, 20}, demanding scrupulous quantification and apprehension^{5, 21} to understand and organise natural phenomenon²². **This approach was critical to Europe's scientific and technological advancement of the Industrial Revolution²³**, which Europe interpreted as empirical proof of racial supremacy to populations they encountered during trans-oceanic voyages of exploration²³. The observation of Indigenous Peoples' closeness to nature was interpreted as evidence of inferiority, laying the foundations for justification of settler colonialism²⁴ - the ontological, epistemological, and cosmological violent disruption of Indigenous relationships to land, denoting a structure reinforced every moment of occupation²⁴, rather than constrained to the discrete event of settler arrival²⁵.

Decolonizing research, in contrast to traditional western research, seeks to "critically dismantle colonial constructs to acknowledge many "ways of knowing" as equitably valuable"²⁶ (p. 205), honouring and centralizing Indigenous voices and worldviews in the research process^{11, 27}, acknowledging and actively strengthening Indigenous sovereignty^{11, 15, 19, 24, 28}. Patrick Lewis explains that decolonisation of the self is a necessary prerequisite for engaging in Indigenous research, "and then only as ally"¹⁴ (p. 47), maintaining that non-Indigenous researchers cannot use Indigenous methodologies since they cannot know or understand what First Peoples have endured through colonization¹⁴. As a non-Indigenous scholar, Datta¹¹ describes decolonization as the process of "unlearning, and relearning regarding who we are as a researcher and educator, and taking responsibilities for participants" (p. 2). An inherent component of such responsibility is understanding what is meant by Indigenous ways of knowing, or TK.

"Indigenous Knowledge is a systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. It includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct and long-term experiences and extensive and multigenerational observations, lessons and skills. It has developed over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation."²⁹ (p. 7)

The inter-generational transferral of holistic knowledges is foundational to the environmental ethics of Indigenous Peoples²⁰. Indigenous ontology totalises, and is deeply entrenched in the relationality of knowledge and all of creation^{19, 30}. This relational knowledge denotes an ever-evolving

and -changing circular continuity of movement, where past, present, and future are dynamically connected²², recognising and including the innumerable stakeholders within this time-space continuum²⁰. The deep relatedness between and within the entities comprising the cosmos make it “difficult and unnecessary to separate one Entity from the other... we are therefore related to every inch of our Country and to every Entity within it”¹² (p. 70). Thus the word *community*, is not restricted to human entities, but to all entities relationally connected through this community. Australia’s First Nations People use the word *Country* to describe this kinship system³¹.

At this critical juncture of a rapidly expanding native foods industry, the question thus remains, how researchers, particularly those trained in western research methods, can undertake decolonizing research that truly centres TK to strengthen the sovereignty and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders within the field of Australian Native Foods. In consideration of Patrick Lewis’ admonition to decolonise the self, this project explores the notion of ‘decolonization of self’ to formulate a deep-thinking framework for researchers to engage in this decolonizing process prior to undertaking research within the Australian Native Foods Industry.

Materials and methods

Study design

This research employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to qualitatively explore the concepts of decolonizing research within the context of the Australian Native Foods industry with the aim of creating a conceptual framework for researchers of Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI) and Uniquely Australian Foods.

Participants

Five professionals with experience in the Australian Native Foods Industry across academia, community engagement, entrepreneurship, research, and research coordination were purposively sampled from ARC Transformational Training Centre in Uniquely Australian Foods and affiliates. Effort was made to ensure the participants represented a diverse range of expertise, providing insight across disciplines within the field, thus providing a degree of data triangulation. Of the five eligible participants invited to participate, three responded to the communication, all of whom agreed to participate.

Consent

Consent was obtained from each participant prior to interview. Verbal consent was checked prior to digital audio-recording of the interview.

Ethics approval

Ethical approval for this project was covered under The University of Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee approval #2019002607, since all participants are affiliated with the ARC Transformational Training Centre in Uniquely Australian Foods.

Data collection

Receptive one-on-one interviews were undertaken via teleconference call or in-person and recorded for later transcription. The interviews were semi-structured, to allow for greater interviewee freedom and autonomy in describing the phenomena under discussion, specifically, identifying and describing the constructs of decolonizing research in the Australian Native Foods industry. Interviews ranged from 50- to 100-minutes duration, in a location of the interviewees' preference, during the months of April 2021 and May 2021. The researcher (EK) conducted all interviews, and then transcribed the interviews verbatim. Transcripts were returned to participants to allow for assessment of accuracy and corrections.

Data analysis

Hermeneutic phenomenology recognises the “indissoluble unity between a person and the world”²¹ (p. 24), with interpretation representative of meaning-attribution and construction between the world and an individual³². Interpretation, thus, is understood as inherently and inextricably influenced by an individual's background and historicity²¹. In light of this, the researcher was the sole data analyst for this project, who adopted an inductive thematic approach to data analysis. Interpretation and analysis of interview transcripts fit within the construct of a hermeneutic circle, which encompassed: extensive preparatory background reading; relationship development with participants prior to, and post- interview; data engagement during transcription, and finally, thematic organisation and reorganisation of data. Further, in keeping with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, participant backgrounds were explored, providing important context for raw data analysis and interpretation; thematic transcript organisation was then presented to the participants with original transcripts, to check the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation relative to intended meaning. Final results represent the resolution of the hermeneutic circle, with data interpretation and organisation “free of contradiction, for the moment”²¹ (p. 25). Tong et al's *consolidated criteria for*

reporting qualitative research (COREQ)³³ was used to structurally guide the qualitative research process.

Results

Participants

This research project sought the expertise of 3 professionals, each with extensive, but distinctive, experience in this field. As per hermeneutic phenomenological theory, context underlies meaning, thus each participant's (P1, P2, P3) unique relationship to their work follows.

P1 embodies relational accountability and integrity, as evidenced by a lifetime of devotion to the cause of kindness in **integrated child protection, disability services, substitute care, family work, juvenile justice, and now community empowerment through the Australian Native Foods industry.** P1 holds the rare capacity to see the bigger picture in a reductionist world and is an advocate for deep and reflective thinking.

P2 has over 16 years volunteering with Indigenous communities both within Australia and abroad. With an endless capacity to empathise, P2's fearless honesty about the most challenging of topics is catalytic in conversation.

P3 is an Aboriginal traditional owner and Elder, as well as a notable Indigenous scholar. An extensive academic record includes dozens of publications covering a broad range of subject matter reflective of dedication to Indigenous Issues at the local, national and international level.

Qualitative themes

Transcript analysis revealed four overarching conceptual domains - recognition, reform, reconciliation, resonance - and eight key themes: (1) *honesty and truth telling*; (2) *acknowledgement of Aboriginal sovereignty*; (3) *shared power through guaranteed voice*; (4) *shared power through guaranteed consideration of interests*; (5) *self-determination through land rights, land access and ownership of natural resources*; (6) *empowerment through capacity building and benefit sharing*; (7) *relationality and accountability*; (8) *Western science and Traditional Knowledge in consonance*. Table 1 details the mapping of these themes to their respective framework domain, as well as 'deep thinking' constructs pulled from transcript analysis. Fig. 1 comprises a graphic of the final deep-thinking framework.

Table 1 Research framework domains and comprising key themes and constructs, as identified from transcript analysis

Framework domain	Key themes	Deep thinking constructs
1. Recognition	Theme 1: honesty and truth telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of the destruction from settler colonialism • Honesty and truth telling about white privilege • Honesty and truth telling about racial exclusion
	Theme 2: acknowledgement of Australia's First Peoples' sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty was never ceded • Understanding each nation's laws and LORE, and ways of knowing, being and doing
2. Reform	Theme 3: shared power through guaranteed voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate engagement of Indigenous communities in the research • Contributions acknowledged in the research • Approval sought at each step • Seeking input regarding perspective and definitions of research concepts (e.g. health)
	Theme 4: shared power through guaranteed consideration of interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of, and appreciation for, underlying worldviews to drive decision-making • Acknowledging communities as experts in their own lives • Deep learning about different perspectives
3. Reconciliation	Theme 5: self-determination through land rights, land access and ownership of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the relationship to Country • Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' custodianship of the natural resources comprising Country • Awareness of ownership and patent laws to facilitate innovation and navigation of laws & policies
	Theme 6: empowerment through capacity building and benefit sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting Traditional Knowledges • Sharing control over the research process • Consideration of benefits (both monetary and non-monetary) • Creation of training pathways and involvement • Language use to facilitate equal access to the research and findings
4. Resonance	Theme 7: relationality & accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding implications of research (relationality) for communities and Country • Accountability for relationships – with living and non-living world • Accountability for Traditional Knowledges
	Theme 8: Western science and Traditional Knowledge in consonance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western science and Traditional Knowledges used in conjunction are critical for success • Traditional Knowledges provide the wisdom to ensure Western Science is used with responsibility and relational accountability • Methods treated respected and valued as complementary for progress

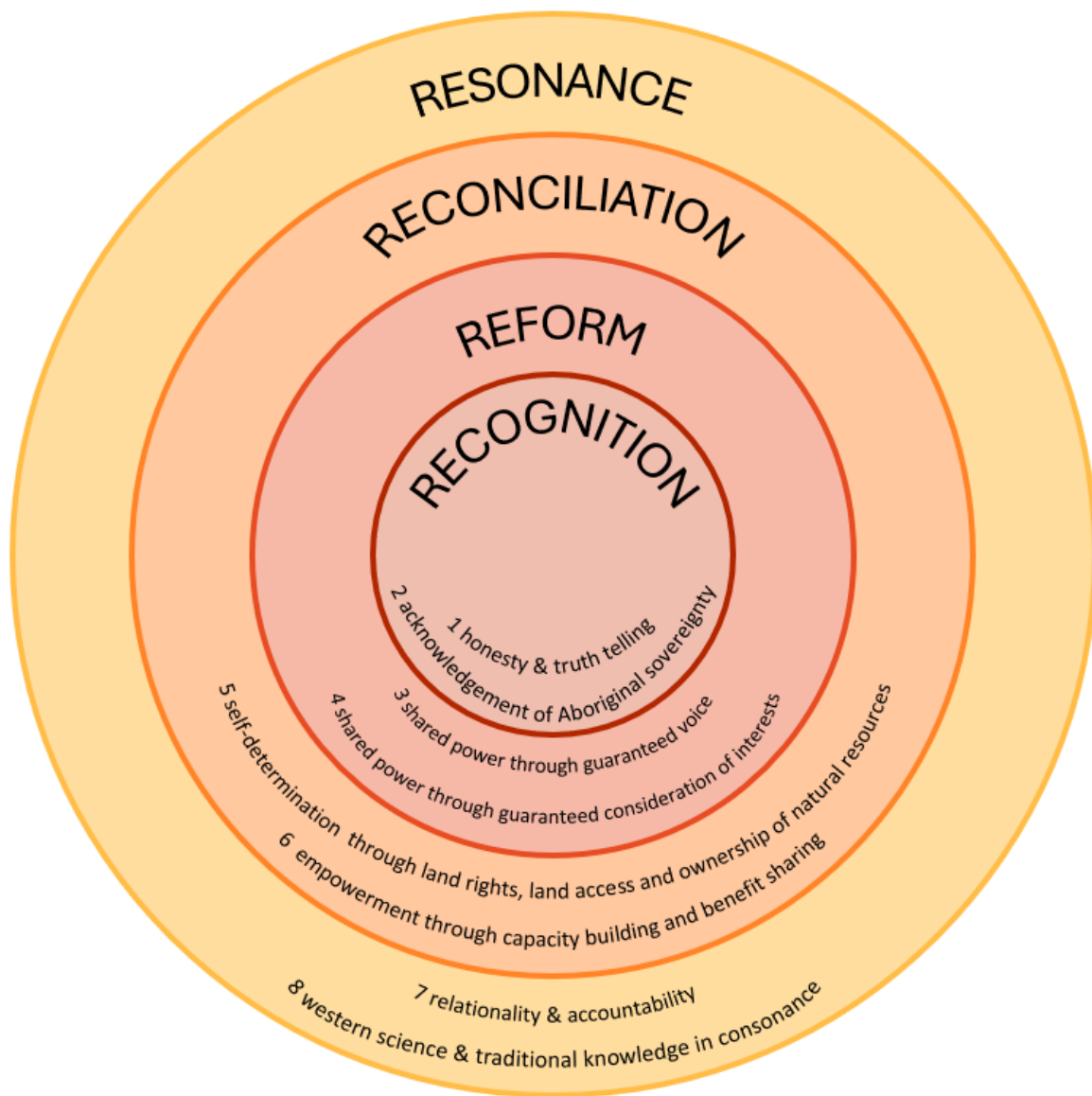


Fig 1. ‘Decolonizing the self’ deep-thinking framework for researchers. Featuring the 4 framework domains (recognition, reform, reconciliation, resonance), and the corresponding mapped key themes.

Domain 1: Recognition

As the first, and central, domain of the deep-thinking framework, *recognition* encompasses a process of truth telling and honesty about the impact of settler colonialism for Aboriginal Peoples, and acknowledgement that sovereignty of Aboriginal Peoples was never ceded.

Theme 1: honesty and truth telling

“We need to tell the truth about what’s happened... need to feel it somehow, need to understand it” [P2]

This call to recognition of the grief and harm of settler colonialism (both past and present) was raised by all three participants as a critical component of deep thinking. As explained by P2,

decolonizing research requires coming to “an understanding of where indigenous peoples are now and what they’ve been through and what they’re still going through”^[P2] creating space for “humility and a different position”^[P2] in the researcher. Theme one also encompasses the issue of “white privilege and how that actually dominates what gets heard, who gets heard, and what’s done to continuously lock out or exclude indigenous groups from moving”^[P3].

Theme 2: acknowledgement of sovereignty

“It’s acknowledging that’s their country, they’re still there, they own it”^[P2]

This theme implores taking a critical look at the relationships to land that are disturbed through settler colonialism and recognising, acknowledging, and honouring the fact that Aboriginal Peoples never ceded sovereignty. P2 suggested how researchers can actively acknowledge this sovereignty: “understanding their ways of doing, being and knowing, understanding how they prefer to do business, their preferred languages for terms that they’re using, protocols on approaching people to do research, their core operating principles within their own Country and their own nation”^[P2].

Domain 2: Reform

Since *reform* denotes the practice of changing with the purpose of improving, this domain represents deep thinking that challenges the assumption of WS superiority relative to TK.

Theme 3: shared power through guaranteed voice

“we’ve got to get that right - about where in the research process we’re actually engaging them”^[P2]

In the absence of sharing power through guaranteed voice, there is a risk of “doing *to*”^[P1] in the research process, rather than a true “*with*”. P1 stressed the importance of researchers investing time in learning about TK in order to appreciate and understand the place from which this ‘voice’ is coming from. “What is the Indigenous definition of health? What does [name of Aboriginal Elder] say is health? Because we’ve got all these things that *we* measure, that *we* think mean health, but it’s a bigger story”^[P1]. P1 also added that shared power describes a relationship where nothing is done without the approval of community members.

Theme 4: shared power through guaranteed consideration of interest

“we want to run our own enterprises and run our own businesses”^[P1]

Reform is the deep thinking that underpins respecting Aboriginal Peoples as experts in their own lives. P1 explained that this requires an attitude of openness and humility, “getting to know

people, talking about things, swapping information, sharing ideas, looking at things from different perspectives”^[P1]; a willingness for deep thinking about ideas outside your own agenda and accountability for relationships. P2 agreed, that “the way to do research with indigenous people properly is that shared power and finding out what they actually want researched, so it's not just us going in saying we'd like to do this”^[P2].

Domain 3: Reconciliation

Reconciliation describes the process of restoring relationships. Themes in this domain prompt reflection around how research can serve to restore relationships, particularly with Country, which underpins wellbeing and identity for Indigenous Peoples.

Theme 5: self-determination through land rights, land access and ownership of natural resources

“it's how to use existing laws to be able to protect what you've got, in the way you are able to depict how these food plant species belong to you as a clan, or a family clan, or an individual in the clan, because of your song line”^[P3]

P1 and P3 highlighted challenges for Australia’s First Peoples regarding access to Australia’s Native Foods industry, noting the need for researchers “who are very much aware, who have gone through and looked at the legal processes, the laws, and also the attitudes and the way people think and do things to continuously exclude us”^[P3]. They further emphasised the importance of deep thinking around how natural resources (including TK) can be protected through research.

Theme 6: empowerment through capacity building & benefit sharing

“Are we gonna do it again? Are we doing another steal?”^[P1]

This question points to the legacy of settler colonialism, of treating land and its constituents as commodity for profit; a concern raised in all interviews. P2 criticised the use of exclusive and technical science jargon used to exclude Aboriginal Peoples: “the language is so exclusive, there’s no translation, but really it should be practical... accessible, in a culturally appropriate way...this is *their* product”^[P2]. Further, P1 admonished that researchers must recognise that “Aboriginal People own all the Indigenous knowledge IP and product IP... anything that’s developed has to be a benefit sharing arrangement”^[P1]. P1 expanded on this that researchers have a responsibility to consider how their research will promote self-determination in this sector for Aboriginal Peoples. “if you don't, at the same time as doing the science, also build capacity amongst the entrepreneurs, then it doesn't work.”^[P1].

Domain 4: Resonance

The final and outer-most domain of the deep-thinking framework, *resonance*, is unique, in that it not only describes the deep thinking that must precede research, but also provides a conceptual guide for the research process itself, that is, the coupling of WS and TK.

Theme 7: relationality and accountability

“we see everything as a big jigsaw puzzle, and all the parts of the jigsaw puzzle, need to have attention, otherwise, the picture doesn't work” [P1]

A recurring theme in P1's interview was jigsaw as metaphor to guide holistic thinking. The importance of a holistic approach was reiterated by P2, “everyone's kind of coming in separately, whereas it's not the way Indigenous Peoples do things... seeing the whole is the way Indigenous Peoples see it, the relationality” [P2]. Using relationality to guide deep thinking encourages a culture of accountability, consciously reflecting upon where and who the research “is going to influence” [P2].

Theme 8: Western science and Traditional Knowledge in consonance

“There's a way we need to combine. We can never go back to the way that the world was, but there's wisdom and there's knowledge in here, like a blueprint... it's using this wisdom to join these little bits and take it forward.” [P2]

In the quote above, P2 discusses how TK can be used to recontextualise WS as part of the whole. P1 credits the coupling of WS and TK with the success of projects, illustrating the potential of this research approach, if applied correctly: “everything we do is based on science. So if we're trying to improve the supply chain by improving the shelf life of products, we research it; we know what packaging to use, how long it can stay, how to test it, what to do with it - everything is based on the science. That's the fundamental thing that's made a difference” [P1].

Discussion

This research sought to explore the perspective of professionals working within the Australian Native Foods industry to inform the development of a deep-thinking framework for researchers to commence the decolonizing-the-self process. Key themes identified were mapped to four framework domains inspired by inductive thematic analysis of interview transcripts. The four domains guide the researcher through introspective recognition of their relationship with settler colonialism and western ideology, reformation of research training, reconciliatory research consideration, and contemplation of relational accountability. The framework is represented as concentric circles (Fig. 1), denoting the

perpetual nature of the decolonizing process; decolonization of the self, just like decolonizing research, does not describe a destination. Instead, it denotes a journey of unpicking the ideological conditioning, and opening oneself up to new (or old) ways of knowing, being, and doing, that challenge the oppressive hegemony.

While frameworks for decolonizing and Indigenous-centred research exist^{30, 35-38}, many of these frameworks detail the research process itself, particularly within the social sciences. As far as the researcher is aware, this project was unique in its goal to produce a framework for decolonizing the researcher in preparation for conducting decolonizing research in the Australian Native Foods industry, though the framework is certainly generalizable to other contexts. As discussed further below, decolonizing the researcher is a critical prelude to decolonizing research, hence the importance of this framework for researchers who are preparing to undertake research for and with Indigenous Peoples.

The first two themes, *honesty and truth telling* and *acknowledgement of Aboriginal sovereignty*, both point to the importance of **recognising** (*framework domain 1*) “the persistence of colonialism, oppression, and domination in systems of western research training”¹¹ (p. 3). The importance of this acknowledgement is echoed across decolonization literature by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars^{10, 14, 24, 39}. As Verna St. Denis implores, “do the ‘critical work around looking at your own history,’ learn ‘the history of the violence, the tremendous violence, then you’ll begin to understand your connection to the people who live in my community.’”¹⁴ (p. 47). In recognition of the relationship between settler colonialism and the contemporary history of Indigenous Peoples, this provides space for acknowledgement that sovereignty over land was never ceded by Indigenous Peoples¹¹. This is a theme not only referenced by scholars⁴⁰, but comprises a core message of the Uluru statement from the Heart, written by Australia’s First Peoples⁴¹. It is thus centred within the deep-thinking framework.

The next two themes, *shared power through guaranteed voice* and *shared power through guaranteed consideration of interest*, highlight the need for **reform** (*framework domain 2*) in the way research is undertaken by non-Indigenous scholars. Previously WS has been regarded as superior to other ways of knowing, indeed this comprised the premise for settler colonialism¹⁵; decolonization, then, is the ongoing anti-colonial practice of honouring Indigenous ontology and epistemology^{11, 15, 19, 28}, viewing Indigenous knowledges and methods as equal in value to western knowledges and methods¹¹. These themes mirror core principles included in Doyle *et al.*’s Yerin Dilly Bag Model for Indigenist research³⁷, which centres Indigenous knowledges and values; authors use the term

culturally safe research to denote a power balance between researcher and researched, reached through centralising Indigenous values and voices³⁷. From his research, Datta shares the words of an Elder: “It [research] should focus on our voice instead of your academic priorities”¹¹ (p. 9). This sentiment points to a key concept of theme four; that Indigenous Peoples are the experts in their lives and should be honoured and respected as such.

Themes five and six, *self-determination through land rights, land access, and ownership of natural resources* and *empowerment through capacity building and benefit sharing*, build on themes one to four and prompt the researcher to contemplate, as priority, how their research will benefit both land and people, that is, promote **reconciliation**, for Indigenous Peoples. Theft of TK and land has been, and continues to be, the signature of settler colonialism²⁴; reconciliation, thus, cannot occur unless the settler colonial attitudes and values are challenged, and Indigenous Peoples are recognised as the rightful beneficiaries of their knowledge systems and land. Building on preceding themes of honouring Indigenous Peoples as the experts in their own life, themes five and six pertain to the right to self-determination to address their priorities, a sentiment echoed across a broad scope of research disciplines^{19, 37, 42-45}. Themes are also paralleled with Smith’s and Wilson’s recommendations that research should be conducted *with* (themes three and four) and *for* (themes five and six) Indigenous Peoples^{10, 19}.

The final two themes, *relationality and accountability* and *western science and traditional knowledge in consonance* encourage the researcher to reflect upon the **resonance** (*framework domain 4*) of their research. The coupling of WS and TK has been paired within the resonance framework domain alongside *relationality and accountability*, pointing to the importance of researchers diligently reflecting on the research process, making appropriate changes when western methods are inappropriate for the context^{11, 19}. This is relational accountability in action, where researchers accept their responsibility for those with whom they are engaging, and are accountable for the resonance of their actions with the living and non-living world^{19, 22}. Marchand adds that accountability pertains to understanding how WS and TK are different from one another, prior to attempts of identifying their potential interconnectivity²⁰; he also states that integrating WS and TK is different from integrating western and traditional ways of *forming knowledge* and that the latter should be discouraged, since both methods of *coming to knowledge* comprise valuable, yet discrete contributions to sciences; he also distinguishes *coupling* of WS and TK from *amalgamation*, with an inherent weakness in the latter being a propensity towards a linear model²⁰. The resonance domain also points to the relationships

between communities and researchers, as well as the researcher with themselves; as Shawn Wilson shares “if research does not change you as a person, then you aren’t doing it right”¹⁹ (p. 83).

The primary limitation of this study was the small number of participants, which limited the breadth of perspective. Furthermore, the bias of participants, due to ethical constraints, was in that of researcher; more voices from Indigenous communities would have contributed extraordinary value to this research.

Further development of this deep-thinking framework will help ensure the inclusion of all necessary components for truly decolonizing researchers within the Australian Native Foods industry. Additionally, as recommended by Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholars alike, there is scope for the development of decolonizing research training, so it is suitable for Indigenous contexts^{11, 19, 46, 47}.

As advocated by Linda Tuhiwai Smith²⁷, decolonizing the research training underpins transformation of both researcher and research, suggesting “the process of decolonization of research will help regain control over Indigenous ways of knowing and being, ways in which research can be used for social justice”¹¹ (p. 3). With such potential for Australia’s Native Foods industry through application of Traditional Knowledges, it is paramount that a decolonization of the researcher precedes any research in this space, to ensure that the use of TK does not translate to “another steal” by non-Indigenous peoples.

References

1. Forest Peoples Programme, Centres of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge, Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, Secretariat of the Conventions on Biological Diversity. Local Biodiversity Outlooks 2: Summary conclusions and recommendations. The contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and to renewing nature and cultures. A complement to the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. Moreton-in-Marsh: Forest Peoples Programme; 2020.
2. Kimmerer RW. Braiding sweetgrass : indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. First edition. ed. ProQuest, editor. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions; 2013.
3. World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1987.
4. Global Environment Facility. Indigenous Communities and Biodiversity. Washington, DC: Global Environment Facility; 2008.
5. Knudtson P, Suzuki D. Wisdom of the elders. St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin; 1997.
6. Marrie HL. Emerging trends in the generation, transmission and protection of Traditional Knowledge. Presentation to the 18th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. New York 2019.
7. Cork S. Biodiversity: The importance of biodiversity Canberra: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy; 2011 [Available from: <https://soe.environment.gov.au/science/soe/2011-report/8-biodiversity/1-introduction/1-1-importance>].
8. Fourmile H. Bushtucker: some food for thought. Artlink. 1999;19(4):34-7.
9. Lingard K. An inclusive governance framework for bush food commercialisation. Ninti One: CRC; 2015.
10. Smith LT. Decolonizing methodologies : research and indigenous peoples. 2nd ed. London : Dunedin: Otago University Press; 2012.
11. Datta R. Decolonizing both researcher and research and its effectiveness in Indigenous research. Research ethics review. 2018;14(2):1-24.
12. Martin KL. Please knock before you enter : Aboriginal regulation of outsiders and the implications for researchers. Teneriffe, Qld.: Post Pressed; 2008.
13. Hart VG, Whatman SL. Decolonising the concept of knowledge. HERDSA : Annual International Conference, July 1998-1998.
14. Lewis PJ. What does it Mean to be an Ally (Part II). International review of qualitative research. 2018;11(1):46-50.
15. Tuck E, Yang KW. R-words: Refusing research. In: Winn MT, Paris D, editors. Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry With Youth and Communities: Sage Publications; 2013.
16. Petri R. A short history of western ideology a critical account. London: Bloomsbury Academic; 2018.
17. Beckett C, Donald Cameron S. On how to rediscover our "sense of place": David Suzuki. San Francisco, California, USA: Kanopy Streaming; 2015.
18. Sammel A. Indigenizing Education. Singapore: Springer Singapore; 2020. p. 121-44.
19. Wilson S. Research is ceremony : indigenous research methods. Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub.; 2008.
20. Marchand ME, Vogt KA, Cawston R, Tovey JJ, McCoy J, Maryboy N, et al. The Medicine Wheel: Environmental Decision-making Process of Indigenous Peoples. East Lansing: Higher Education Press : Michigan State University Press; 2020.
21. Laverly SM. Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations. International journal of qualitative methods. 2003;2(3):21-35.
22. Beckett C, Donald Cameron S. Native Ecology: Gregory Cajete. San Francisco, California, USA: Kanopy Streaming; 2015.
23. Adas M. Machines as the measure of men : science, technology, and ideologies of western dominance. 2014 edition. ed. ProQuest, editor. Ithaca, New York
London, England: Cornell University Press; 2014.

24. Tuck E, Yang KW. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. 2012;1(1):1-40.
25. Wolfe P. Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of genocide research*. 2006;8(4):387-409.
26. Krusz E, Davey T, Wigginton B, Hall N. What Contributions, if Any, Can Non-Indigenous Researchers Offer Toward Decolonizing Health Research? *Qual Health Res*. 2020;30(2):205-16.
27. Smith LT. *Decolonizing methodologies : research and indigenous peoples*. London : Dunedin, N.Z.: Zed Books; 1999.
28. Battiste M. Research Ethics for Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: Institutional and Researcher Responsibilities In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, Smith LT, editors. *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. Los Angeles, London: Sage; 2008.
29. Inuit Circumpolar Council - Alaska. Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to assess the Arctic from an Inuit perspective. Summary and recommendations report. In: committee FSPa, editor. Anchorage, Alaska: Inuit Circumpolar Council - Alaska; 2015.
30. Hart MA. Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work*. 2010;1(1):1-16.
31. Terare M, Rawsthorne M. Country Is Yarning to Me: Worldview, Health and Well-Being Amongst Australian First Nations People. *The British journal of social work*. 2020;50(3):944-60.
32. Koch T. Interpretive approaches in nursing research: the influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *J Adv Nurs*. 1995;21(5):827-36.
33. Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *Int J Qual Health Care*. 2007;19(6):349-57.
34. Tuck E, Ree C. A Glossary of Haunting. In: Holman Jones SL, Adams TE, Ellis C, editors. *Handbook of autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, Inc.; 2016.
35. Absolon KE. *Kaandosswin, this is how we come to know! Indigenous graduate research in the academy: Worldviews and methodologies*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing; 2008.
36. Bartlett JG, Iwasaki Y, Gottlieb B, Hall D, Mannell R. Framework for Aboriginal-guided decolonizing research involving Métis and First Nations persons with diabetes. *Soc Sci Med*. 2007;65(11):2371-82.
37. Doyle K, Cleary M, Blanchard D, Hungerford C. The Yerin Dilly Bag Model of Indigenist Health Research. *Qual Health Res*. 2017;27(9):1288-301.
38. Kingsley J, Townsend M, Henderson-Wilson C, Bolam B. Developing an exploratory framework linking Australian Aboriginal peoples' connection to country and concepts of wellbeing. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2013;10(2):678-98.
39. Breen AV. You do not belong here: storytelling allyship in an ugly sweater. In: Wilson S, Breen AV, DuPré L, editors. *Research and reconciliation : unsettling ways of knowing through indigenous relationships*. Toronto : Vancouver: Canadian Scholars; 2019. p. 49-59.
40. Moreton-Robinson A. *Sovereign subjects indigenous sovereignty matters*. First edition. ed. Place of publication not identified: Routledge; 2020.
41. The Referendum Council. *Final Report of the Referendum Council*. URBIS; 2017.
42. Dobbs RJ, Davies CL, Walker ML, Pettit NE, Pusey BJ, Close PG, et al. Collaborative research partnerships inform monitoring and management of aquatic ecosystems by Indigenous rangers. *Reviews in fish biology and fisheries*. 2016;26(4):711-25.
43. Wilson S, Breen AV, DuPré L. *Research and reconciliation : unsettling ways of knowing through indigenous relationships*. Toronto : Vancouver: Canadian Scholars; 2019.
44. Finn S, Herne M, Castille D. The value of traditional ecological knowledge for the environmental health sciences and biomedical research. *Environ Health Perspect*. 2017;125(8):085006-.
45. Ward LM, Hill MJ, Chreim S, Poker C, Olsen Harper A, Wells S. Developing an Innu framework for health research: The canoe trip as a metaphor for a collaborative approach centered on valuing Indigenous knowledges. *Social Science and Medicine*. 2020;266.
46. Kovach M. *Indigenous methodologies : characteristics, conversations and contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 2009.

47. Simonds VW, Christopher S. Adapting Western research methods to indigenous ways of knowing. *Am J Public Health*. 2013;103(12):2185-92.