Spaces & Places: Understanding Sense of Belonging and Cultural Engagement Among Indigenous Youth

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Abstract

Indigenous youth continue to live with a socioeconomic and political legacy of colonization and marginalization, confronted by environments harmful to their psychosocial development. Resource strained communities may compound these experiences and outcomes for many youth. Increasingly, research points to the mitigating effects of resilience for youth exposed to contextual risks. Resilience is however dependent on both personal capacities and the availability of relevant resources within families, schools, and communities. Meaningful connection to community together with cultural continuity are important contributors to resilience. However, without critical examination of the conditions that support such youth engagement, attempts at fostering these connections may be largely unsuccessful. Spaces & Places explored the cultural continuity and civic engagement of Indigenous youth living in three communities of Atlantic Canada. Using an interactive, transactional theory of resilience, we explored how youth interact with community resources, and how these interactions impact connections with their community and culture. Participatory qualitative image-based methods were used to explore the availability of spaces and how they establish a sense of belonging to community and culture for youth. We used video capture of a day-in-the-life of participants with photo elicitation in reflective interviews, within a Participatory Action Research framework. Youth and community partners actively participated in the research process, including data analysis and knowledge mobilisation.

Keywords

Indigenous youth, cultural engagement, civic engagement, resilience, participatory visual methods, action research

Background/Study Justification

Spaces & Places explored the role of informal community structures and supports (such as parks and recreational centers) in the civic and cultural engagement of Indigenous youth and how these resources enable youth to become full contributors to their communities (Dolan, 2012; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012). This research sought to identify how community structures and supports encourage cultural and contextual engagement of Indigenous youth to build resilience.

For four decades, resilience researchers have sought to understand how children who experience significant adversity thrive in spite of hardships (Cicchetti, 2013; Luthar, 2006; Masten, 2014, 2018). Much of this research has highlighted the cultural and contextual factors associated with successful adaptation in diverse human ecologies (Chaskin, 2009; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, & Williamson, 2011; McGrath, Brennan, Dolan, & Barnett, 2014; Ruiz-Casares, Guzder, Rousseau, & Kirmayer, 2014; VanderPlaat, 2016). As Anderson (2008, p. 4) says, “much of what seems to promote resilience seems to originate outside of the individual.” As with many other resources related to resilience, we need to deconstruct these processes to understand what exactly it is about contextual and cultural factors that promote resilience and positive outcomes (Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). Previous research engaged in by the authors contributed to an in-depth

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understanding of resilience within various social ecologies, such as family, and formal services and the way that they influence the resources available for psychosocial growth (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). The goal with Spaces & Places was to broaden this understanding of protective community processes by exploring what these processes look like in rural and remote communities and how a community’s physical and social infrastructure enhances cultural continuity for Indigenous youth. The resilience literature is relatively silent on these aspects of individual–community–culture interactions, making this research conceptually and theoretically innovative.

The coinvestigators of this study identified the need to better understand youth living in rural and remote communities of Labrador and Cape Breton, Canada. This research is of relevance to community-based service providers focused on youth within these regions, as it conceptualizes what spaces are available to youth living in rural and remote communities that establish a sense of community and cultural connection when facing heightened risks. The research also sought to understand how these spaces facilitate a sense of civic and cultural engagement in youth, in turn fostering resilience. Partners on this study indicated prior to its development that resources within the communities in which the research occurred were strained, impacting informal support resources for youth. Integrating results into practice and policy was considered a means of facilitating improved community structure, contributing to positive life outcomes for young people living there. Knowledge uptake continues to take place through formal dissemination methods (policy briefings, academic publications, etc.) and through participatory methods where the applicants and youth coproduced knowledge, and youth in particular were able to share findings with their communities (see Knowledge Mobilization [KM] Plan below). An interdisciplinary (sociology, social work, political science, education) and cross-sector (academic, government, community) team facilitated increased relevance and uptake of results. Additionally, this research brought to the study of resilience a better understanding of cultural continuity and civic engagement of Indigenous youth (for example Liebenberg, Ikeda, Penny, & Wall, in press). It also added important methodological innovations regarding the contribution of participatory visual methods to critical and Indigenous methodologies (Liebenberg, Sylliboy, Davis-Ward, & Vincent, 2017; Liebenberg, Wood, & Wall, 2018; Reich et al., 2017).

Connection to culture and community can facilitate positive outcomes such as civic participation (Dolan, 2012; Perkins et al., 2007), increased social capital (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003), positive social development (Lerner & Benson, 2003), and well-being (Evans, 2007; Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996). Our understanding of who we are is largely the result of a process of co-construction between ourselves, the communities we inhabit, and the larger world around us, reflexively determining who we think we are, what we value, and how we behave (Park, 2010; Taylor & Snider, 2012). The dominant discourse and physical structures that express this discourse impact how individuals construct their identities, including whether they experience a sense of belonging to their communities and culture. When community structures, and the systems underpinning them, intentionally or unintentionally marginalize youth, failing to provide appropriate spaces for engagement in community life and culture, youth will seek alternative ways of establishing a sense of value and community (Bottrell, 2009). In this process, marginalized young people may behave in ways that inadvertently support negative interpretations of youth behavior (Bottrell, 2007, 2009). Establishing opportunities for youth to engage with their communities positively also results in opportunities for youth advocacy, where youth can express their needs more constructively (Evans et al., 2012; Liebel, 2004; McGrath et al., 2014). This study explored how young people spend their time, how they interact with adults in adult controlled spaces, where they find youth-friendly spaces, where they have opportunities to participate, where they are excluded, where they experience their culture, and where they are forced to hide their identity, especially as young Indigenous people. Through this process, we sought to uncover the processes that make positive youth engagement and cultural continuity possible.

Within Indigenous communities, concepts of civic connection—connection to community—are augmented by cultural connection. Indigenous culture is inextricably linked to land/place; a collectivist sense of community and self emerges from this place-based understanding. Indigenous understandings of resilience are also strongly connected to space and place (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Lalonde, 2003). As McGuire (2010) explains, “Knowing who I am and where I came from gives me a solid foundation in my life . . . this is the base that nurtures, heals, and is nourishing me” (p. 119; see also Marker, 2004). Indigenous youth who connect with culture have better psychosocial outcomes than those who do not (Lalonde, 2003; Migneone & O’Neil, 2005; Reading, Knetic, & Gideon, 2007; Ritchie & Reading, 2004; Wilson & Rosenberg, 2002). In their groundbreaking work around youth suicide in Indigenous communities, Chandler and Lalonde (1998) demonstrated the need for cultural continuity as a central component of improving youth identity, self-esteem, and sense of hope and future (see also Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000; Lalonde, 2005; Lalonde & Chandler, 2004; Mignone, 2003). As a social determinant of health, meaningful connections to culture and community are key to positive outcomes for the most marginalized of Indigenous youth (Greenwood, 2005; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Mignone, 2003).

Intergenerational trauma, loss of language and culture, and low socioeconomic status contribute to the significant challenges faced by Indigenous youth (Adelson, 2005; Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014; Greenwood, 2005; Lalonde, 2003; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009). Rural communities of Cape Breton and remote communities in Labrador are no exception. These challenges place Indigenous youth at risk of poor outcomes including disengagement from school, substance abuse, engagement with the criminal justice system, and unemployment (Adelson, 2005; Galabuzi, 2004; Jacobs & Gill, 2002; Kendall, 2001; Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; Ritchie &
Reading, 2004). Using a resilience framework to address these issues necessitates a shift in perspective from these problems as individual deficits, to problems as signifiers of the need to better mobilize community-based support resources. While resources in rural and remote communities of Canada may seem scarce, strategic use of available resources and opportunities located in recreational spaces, or the natural environment, may have a profound impact on positive outcomes (Gupta & Mahy, 2003; Martin & Marsh, 2008; Wilson & Peters, 2005). While we know that connection to culture and community fosters positive outcomes for Indigenous youth, and consequently their communities, we need to better understand what that connection to culture and community looks like for youth in rural remote communities, and how this can be meaningfully fostered. These are critical questions that we need answered if we are to design and implement policies and programs that secure a positive future for youth as full contributors to their communities and ensure the continuity of Indigenous culture.

Specifically, then, Spaces & Places was guided by the following questions:

1. What spaces and places are available for rural and remote Indigenous youth that foster sense of belonging?
2. In instances where such spaces and places are absent, what do youth do instead, and what spaces and places do they wish they could access?
3. How do existing and/or envisioned spaces and places contribute to cultural and contextual connection?
4. How do these spaces and places act as protective factors that add to the resilience of marginalized youth?

In order to answer these questions, we sought to (1) identify spaces and places of significance to youth, using observational and reflective image-based qualitative techniques; (2) use narrative approaches to explore the concept of cultural and civic engagement; (3) identify how cultural and civic engagement fosters well-being and resilience in culturally specific contexts; (4) explore how existing and/or absent spaces and places contribute to the isolation, marginalization, and disenfranchisement of the youth and their communities; (5) provide training opportunities for youth and students to participate in culturally relevant studies using image-based and other qualitative methods; (6) provide an opportunity for youth to participate in research through data gathering and analysis; (7) participate in KM by returning their findings to their communities and local governing bodies; and (8) engage in national and international innovative KM activities.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by an interactive transactional understanding of resilience and an ecocultural perspective for research on human development (Georgas & Berry, 1995; Kirmayer et al., 2003). We understand resilience as:

- a transactional process within an organisational framework. From this perspective, developmental outcomes are determined by the interaction of genetic, biological, psychological and sociological factors in the context of environmental support. According to this view, any constitutional or environmental factors may serve as vulnerability, protective, or risk variables, directly or indirectly influencing behaviour. (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993, p. 517)

Three aspects warrant discussion. First, within a transactional model, the accessibility and relevance of resources in a young person’s environment count a great deal more than earlier resilience researchers believed. Recent research shows that more change in outcomes can be accounted for by environment-level variation than by individual factors alone (Lalonde, 2005; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Tol, Song, & Jordans, 2013). Second, a transactional understanding of resilience suggests that individuals are more likely to engage with resources, and do better, when they exercise influence over what opportunities are available and how they are made available (Wyman, 2003). Third, resilience includes the capacity of individuals individually and collectively, to seek out the culturally and contextually relevant resources they require to build and sustain their well-being (Sanders & Munford, 2014; VanderPlaat, 2016). This understanding of resilience diverges from traditional Western psychological notions of resilience as the individual “beating the odds.” An interactional, environmental, and culturally pluralistic perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of resilience and has a better fit with more collectivist philosophies found in many cultures, including Indigenous culture (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Lalonde, 2005).

Based on this understanding of resilience, this research was guided by three principles: (1) An ecological perspective: A community’s social and physical ecology are more important to the resilience of its members than the qualities of individuals alone. (2) Facilitated navigation: The more a community helps individuals access resources, the more resilient individuals, their families, and communities as a whole will be. (3) Complexity: Nurturing resilience requires that a complex, interrelated set of processes be engaged in to make many different resources available. While transactional interactive interpretations of resilience make clear the complexity inherent in the processes that contribute to growth, they also make clear the complexity involved when investigating these processes. Furthermore, a resilience-focused approach to promoting positive outcomes for youth necessitates inclusion of youth voice in assessment, review, and planning procedures.

Method

The methodology for Spaces & Places extends the SSHRC-funded Negotiating Resilience Project (NRP). The NRP was a five-country image-based study of the interactive processes of youth in transition between two or more culturally or contextually distinct worlds. Researcher-produced visual observation data and participant-produced reflective photographic data with narrative interviews were used to understand these
processes (Liebenberg et al., 2014). The approach involved filming “A day-in-the-life” of participating youth (Gillen et al., 2006). Video footage was then viewed by the research team who selected clips to be included in 30-min compilations. Participating youth commented on their own compilations as well as reflexive photographs (Harper, 2002) related to the research, that youth made over a period of seven days, in elicitation interviews (Liebenberg, 2009).

Spaces & Places departs from the NRP methods by centering local governance bodies in the intellectual leadership of the study and incorporating youth-led KM activities, where youth engage as knowledge brokers between the study and their communities. Working from a study collaboratively designed between the authors (i.e., an academic in partnership with community-based service providers), community-based service providing partners of the study and youth participated in the data gathering, data analysis, and dissemination of findings. As findings emerged, youth in each site, as a team, selected an art medium (video, murals, posters, etc.) to communicate findings back to their communities (http://youthspacesandplaces.org/findings/; see also Chalfen, 2011; Coad & Evans, 2008; Ladkin, 2004; Mitchell, de Lange, & Moletsane, 2017). The relevance of an image-based approach to work with youth is demonstrated not only in numerous photovoice projects conducted with Indigenous youth throughout North America (Casteden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-ahit First Nation, 2008; Lardeau, Healey, & Ford, 2011; Larkin et al., 2007) but also in recent projects conducted in communities of Labrador, such as “Video Schmideo” (the Nunatsiavut Government) and work conducted by Ewald and Gottesman (http://www.ericgottesman.net/news/). These methods align with the decolonization of research and a move to embrace transformative (Mertens, 2003) and Indigenous ways of knowing (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008), centering youth voices in a broader discussion of their social ecologies. In order to be meaningful, knowledge must be rooted in the realities it is trying to explain (Kana’iaupuni, 2005). Elicitation interviews incorporating participant-made photographs enable researchers to access marginalized voices, overcome power imbalances, and facilitate dialogue (Bolton, Pole, & Mizen, 2001; Karlsson, 2001; Liebenberg, 2009; Young & Barrett, 2001). The focus of interviews is not so much the content of the image, but how the content is given meaning by participants (Gloor & Meier, 2000). Additionally, this approach offers marginalized or silenced groups an opportunity to reproduce and understand their world in opposition to dominant representations (Beloff, 1985; Goffman, 1979; Luttrell & Chalfen, 2010; Press, 1991; Schratz & Steiner-Löffler, 1998) while maintaining a degree of control over the research process as participants interpret visual material in their own way (Harper, 1988; Rich & Chalfen, 1999). These methods position participants as authorities on their own lives, directing the tone and focus of interview content (Clark, 1999; Daniels, 2003). The design of this study also acknowledges the difficulty of understanding obscured processes at play in the lives of youth, through incorporation of video observation data combined with elicitation interviews. Previous research has demonstrated the value of this method when exploring these hidden processes (Crocket, Drewery, McKenzie, Smith, & Winslade, 2004; Liebenberg et al., 2014; Mitchell, Crawshaw, Bunton, & Green, 2001). Finally, engaging youth as knowledge mobilizers who return findings to their communities through an integrated KM process reflects principles associated with decolonization of methodologies regarding culturally appropriate knowledge transfer (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health, 2009; Hanson & Smylie, 2006).

Staffing: Each site comprised a site investigator (SI; Wood, Wall, and Hutt-Mac-Leod, respectively) and at least one site researcher (SR) from the community to conduct fieldwork under the supervision of the SI. Each site also included an advisory committee (AC) of three to five local individuals (community leaders, stakeholders, involved community members) who helped define what it means to be “doing well”, identify appropriate ways to access youth, and oversaw the ethical application of the research in their community. These individuals also acted as conduits for dissemination of results to practitioners and policy makers. Working across all three sites was the Principal Investigator (PI; Liebenberg) and a graduate student project manager (PM).

Sampling: The research took place in three Canadian communities: two remote communities of Labrador and a rural community in Cape Breton. The Indigenous youth living in Labrador are principally Inuit and Southern Inuit and therefore represented by the Nunatsiavut Government and the NunatuKavut Community Council, respectively. The third community comprises Mi’kmaq youth, under the leadership of their community’s chief and council. In each community, 8–10 youth, between 12 and 18 years, were purposively selected, resulting in a total sample of 24–30 youth. Within each community, youth considered by their community to be doing well despite facing significantly higher risks than normal were identified by the AC. In this way, culturally relevant selection criteria were maintained.

Ethics: Ethics approval was obtained from the host university as well as ethics review boards representing each of the three participating communities. Parental/guardian consent was required for youth to participate. Active consent was however also obtained from youth (see Liebenberg et al., 2018, for a detailed discussion of the ethics process).

Data collection: The design of this grant was based on our previous research experience and ensured adequate time for project development, participant identification, data gathering and analysis, and KM. Additionally, the research was situated within a participatory action research model. Consequently, we anticipated that the process outlined below would change within each
community, as youth gained increased ownership of the project (see Liebenberg et al., 2017; Liebenberg et al., 2018). Timing of data collection, analysis, and KM activities involving youth, was structured to accommodate fluctuations in their own commitments during the study.

Phase 1 (timing: Months 1–4/duration: 4 months): Project development. Ethics approval was obtained and research kits were developed. Existing community-based ACs were invited to the research. The PM and SRs were hired and trained. A “train-the-trainer” approach was used.

Phase 2 (timing: Months 5/duration: 1 month): Participant identification and consent. SIs, SRs, and local ACs identified and invited youth to the study and obtained informed consent.

Phase 3 (timing: Months 6–9/duration: 4 months): Data gathering. As filming requires the presence of two researchers, the project manager and local SR worked together in each of the sites to film each of the youth. A week prior to filming, SRs visited participants to establish rapport. This meeting included a one-hour session to accustom youth to filming. Youth were also provided a compact digital camera to make photographs for seven days, focusing on spaces and places in their community where they feel they belong, and don’t belong, and how these places make them feel about their community and culture. On the day of filming, as much of the day as possible was filmed. Videotaping was paused when youth were in private personal care or requested a break. The SR not videoing observed the day and made detailed field notes. The following day, both researchers met again with the youth. At this meeting, all photographs were saved to flash drives for the youth and a password-protected external hard drive for the project. Photographs selected for discussion were printed using a portable printer. An open-ended elicitation interview (see Appendix A) was conducted with the youth of the selected images. All video footage was then viewed individually by the PI, PM, SRs, and local SI. A selection of focal interchanges were identified by each person watching the footage. Consensus was sought on relevant moments, using video conferencing. A 30-min compilation video of each youth’s day, consisting of approximately six 5-min clips was then created. These clips contained data the team believed to be pertinent to the availability or absence of spaces and places for youth. The project manager and SR then returned to each youth to conduct an individual interview of their own compilation (see Appendix B), exploring how clips provide information on places, how this makes the youth feel about the community, and how spaces impact on their behavior. Youth were asked whether there were events that should have been chosen other than those selected and why. Each youth then selected two to four images and two video clips for inclusion in focus groups with all local participants. These groups focused on the collective of local youth data and were integrated into a two-day local data analysis workshops run by the SI project manager and SR that will include participating youth (Coad & Evans, 2008; Crocket et al., 2004). All interviews, including focus groups, were audiorecorded and transcribed.

Phase 4 (timing: Months 10–14/duration: 5 months): Data analysis. Our intent in analyzing the data was to use grounded theory principles (Barnes, Taylor-Brown, & Wiener, 1997; Sampson, 2001; Suchar, 1997). These methods have been used successfully with the NRP (Liebenberg, Didkowsky, & Ungar, 2012). In this approach, analysis begins in the field (Bottorff, 1994; Harper, 1986; Pink, 2001), when team members view video data to create compilations and continue with individual and focus group interviews. At each site, the SI, project manager, and SR would have seen all video footage and photographs and would have read most interview transcripts. Together with the PI, various members of the team were then part of a 2-day data analysis workshop with youth participants in their respective community. Here a participatory approach to theme analysis was used (see http://youthspacesandplaces.org/methods/; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012). The intent of these workshops was for youth to establish a findings framework that would then guide additional data analysis by the larger team. For this larger analysis, the intent was to work from within case (i.e., each participant) to across case (i.e., the entire collection of data; Collier, 1979; Orellana, 1999; Wagner, 1979).

Phase 5 (timing: Months 15–24/duration: 10 months): KM. In addition to reports for communities and government departments, conference presentations, and academic publications, a key component of this project was the integration of participants in a community-based discursive feedback process (Bammer, Michaux, & Sanson, 2010; Coad & Evans, 2008; Estey, Kmetic, & Reading, 2008; Leadbeater, Banister, & Marshall, 2011; Mitchell, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2017; Smylie et al., 2004; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). Youth participants have become knowledge mobilizers in each of their own communities: Participants in each site decided on a medium for dissemination (such as art, poetry, video, photographs, etc.) to the broader community. A CA$5,000 stipend (included in the funding budget) was allocated for each of the three groups of participants. This approach was particularly well suited to participating communities who have a rich history of engagement in arts.

Knowledge Mobilisation
The last 10 months of this partnership were designated purely for three core components of KM activities. The first
component included publications and presentations of the findings and the research methods employed. Partners (including youth), the PM, and SRs have coauthored publications including journal articles, book chapters, and reports. Paper and poster presentations have been made at various international conferences by the applicants, SRs, and various youth participants. In some instances, additional funding was secured to facilitate attendance by greater numbers of youth participants.

The second component of the KM plan provided a unique opportunity for youth participants to engage in the research as knowledge mobilizers, contributing to social change within their communities. Following their participation in the data gathering and analysis, each group of youth participants decided on a means of disseminating findings. Youth used activities such as videos, murals, and posters to translate and communicate findings back to their communities (see http://youthspacesandplaces.org/findings/). Ways were found of extending these activities so as to share findings more broadly. Dissemination activities were further supported through advocacy by other members of the research team. The hope was that as youth engage in a community-based discursive feedback process, they would establish a unified voice and a forum for youth and community stakeholders to address identified social issues together (see also Reich et al., 2017).

An arts-based approach to KM is well aligned with the strong arts tradition of all three participating communities. For example, Spaces & Places used preexisting local events such as the annual Labrador Creative Arts Festival, Canada’s longest-running children’s festival, as part of the dissemination strategy. The festival is completely youth orientated, and all submissions must be created by youth themselves. The focus of the festival is exchange, where ideas and resources are shared. It is therefore consistent with the KM philosophy underlying the project, that Indigenous knowledge should be grown and nurtured locally and developed by youth themselves to be shared within their own communities. Furthermore, integrating traditional cultural practices such as storytelling with audio and visual technologies in the KM plan allowed youth to network within and outside of their communities and regions, increasing their community involvement. Finally, as findings hold the capacity to be shared across the international community, this project represented an exciting opportunity for youth to talk across cultures and contexts.

The third dissemination component was facilitated through the broader partnerships of the project and targeted federal policy as well as international policy and programming. The purpose of this KM component was to communicate research findings to the widest possible practice and policy audiences globally. To facilitate this, findings were packaged in a variety of ways to communicate effectively with heterogeneous audiences across cultures and contexts. Reports and other dissemination products have been made available through a project website (www.youthspacesandplaces.org), the NunatuKavut Community Council, the Nunatsiavut Government, Eskasoni Mental Health Services, and other project partners. Furthermore, the applicants (Wood, Wall, and Hutt-MacLeod in particular) have shared findings at public forums so as to influence policy and practice locally and nationally. The research was designed explicitly to ensure continued community involvement. Because communities were involved throughout and held a deep understanding of the project and its value to them, during the knowledge dissemination stage, key groups engaged in dialogue pertaining to emerging findings. KM activities targeted policy makers, community leaders, practitioners working with youth, and community members at large. Additionally, the Nunatsiavut Government, NunatuKavut Community Council, and Eskasoni Mental Health disseminated findings to other Indigenous organizations such as National Inuit Centre for Health, the National Aboriginal Health Organization, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, as well as at annual general assemblies. These partners further facilitated dissemination of findings by participants at events such as the Nunatsiavut Youth Conference and the Atlantic Summer Institute.

Rigor
Rigor in Spaces & Places was maintained through various means. First, the team composition combined with interactive data gathering and analysis activities addressed the issue of researcher bias. Specially, researcher bias was tempered by the research design through to the dissemination of findings embedded in a PAR and community-driven approach, AC-defined participant selection criteria, collaborative data collection, youth-driven data analysis, and collaborative dissemination activities.

Additionally, we used multiple methods (reflective video and photo generating activities in elicitation interviews) in a progressive process (individual interviews and focus groups) to facilitate deeper reflection on lived experience, impacting the content of the data. Participant production of images enabled participants to think more critically about their social context over an extended period of time. Similarly, the video footage allowed for a different perspective on interaction with environment by youth. Finally, the focus group facilitated a process of critical pedagogy as explained by Freire (1972, 1973/2002) and used by Wang and Burris (1997). This final component added an additional layer of critical reflection to young people’s exploration of their social context and the ways in which it connects them with their community and culture.

Appendix A
Photo/Image Interview Guide

(1) Pick the photograph that shows the spaces in your community that you like the most and the spaces that you like least. Could you tell me more about these photographs?
(2) Pick the photograph that shows the spaces in your community that most make you feel like you belong to your community and the spaces that really make you
feel like you don’t belong or are not welcome in your community. Why did you pick these images?

(3) Which photographs show what you really enjoy about living in this community and what you really dislike about living here? Explain them.

(4) Is there any other photograph here that you would still like to talk about?

(5) Is there any other photograph here that you would not like to talk about? Why is this?

(6) Is there something you did not take a photo of that you wish you could have photographed?

**Appendix B**

**Video Interview Guide**

*After each clip.* “Can you tell me a bit more about what was happening in this clip?” At the end:

(1) “Did you like the clips we chose?” “Why or why not?”

(2) “Was there a particular clip that stands out to you about the spaces and places in your community and that says something important about the resources in your community?”

(3) “Are there events we filmed that we should have chosen other than the ones we just showed you?”

(4) “Was there one clip that especially showed what you enjoy about living in this community or what you really dislike about living here? Please explain.”

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**Notes**

1. The research was originally designed for application in Labrador. Following successful funding, a third site in Cape Breton was added.

2. Once the research began, the youth changed the design from cross sectional to longitudinal, repeating the photo elicitation component at all sites, and the video observation in one of the sites.

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