Supporting the Micmac Farms Through Ethnographic Communication Research

Anthony Sutton

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SUPPORTING THE MICMAC FARMS THROUGH
ETHNOGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

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B.A. Western Oregon University, 2008

A THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
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SUPPORTING THE MICMAC FARMS THROUGH
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By Anthony Sutton

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Laura Lindenfeld and Dr. Darren Ranco

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
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“Living in New York City, I experienced being at the top of the food chain, and living in Presque Isle Maine, we are at the bottom of the food chain. The food we get is the bottom of the barrel, low quality, and expensive.” This was a story told to me by a tribal administrator, which represented a problem of food security. The Micmac started a farm in order to address community health issues of high obesity and diabetes. In the summer of 2011, I worked three months on the farm supporting community needs and goals of the farm. My research stems from Maine’s Sustainability Solutions Initiative (SSI), which developed from a 20 million USD NSF grant. A key feature of SSI focuses on addressing community problems by engaging with stakeholders and community members, which involves being problem driven and produce knowledge with and for the communities the research serves. After meeting with the tribal council, they agreed to collaborate and expressed needs of additional labor, as well as coordinating community outreach. I also studied the interactions of groups and individuals to see where communication studies could support the growth of their farm. One chapter utilized risk
communication. In this chapter I argue that power structures within administration threaten the tribes attempt to gain greater economic and food security. This analysis revealed two key risks that threaten this business, economic constraints and not planning and operating correctly. These risks created mistakes in daily operations that cause inefficiencies in production, which contributes to the farm by identifying threats to the business. During this analysis, I realized that my data consists largely of economic behaviors. No issues of tribal sovereignty, health, or past food traditions became dominate themes. I employed a genealogical analysis as influenced by Michel Foucault to understand the underlying discourses that operate in and through the Micmac Farms. In this chapter I explore why do economic behaviors dominate the data? I created a history of farming discourse by analyzing documents to see where key events in history influenced changes with farming practices. I then traced these moments to see how they arise on the Micmac Farms. The grants the farm utilize center on economics because they derive from the farming discourse and a rich history of business. This also becomes an output for the Micmac because they must be careful to find culturally appropriate funding sources that promote indigenous culture and knowledge instead of negating them. I incorporated these findings into a technical report for the community. I outlined a plan to improve management on the farm, as drawn out through my analysis on risk. It involves reorganizing task allocation to resolve inefficiencies in farm production. This addresses a community need of developing a successful business, and I outlined another plan to encourage community interaction around the farm. This involves educating youth about food systems, working with elders to learn past food traditions, and utilizing high school youth to begin a Community Supported Agriculture program.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

July 6th 2011 – "Today I realized that I want to be here (on the farm) more, but I can't. I want to be here more in order to provide all I can for the farm to succeed. I know if I spent more time here, I would neglect my life and my research would suffer. I am a researcher and a part-time farmer, not the other way around." This quote represents a passage from a journal entry during my field research during the summer of 2011. I chose to share this passage because it represents a moment when I saw myself becoming a member of the community I lived and worked with. The lines between researcher and community member began to blur, and my fidelity to this audience is represented in my desire to support them beyond what I could feasibly offer. This represents an interesting approach to research, as the work I produce not only serves a community, but it serves my friends. Due to the closeness of myself and the community of research, I have included stories from my ethnographic work throughout the chapters of this thesis to highlight important themes or concepts.

The Aroostook Band of Micmac identified access to food as a community need. In terms of rural communities, Native American communities generally face greater food insecurity issues than non-Native communities (Gunderson, 2006, p. 200). Specifically, questions began to arise over where the community’s food comes from and to what degree it retains nutrients after traveling great lengths (Lynds, 2010). Food studies literature refer to this as food insecurity (Skinner, 2006, p. 29; Cantrell, 2001, p. 70; Loring & Gerlach, 2008, p. 470; Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 57). Along with the lack of access to high-quality produce, the Micmac noticed that many diseases their community correlates with the consumption of processed foods (Lynds, 2010). These
diseases include diabetes, cancer, and alcoholism (Lynds, 2010). Additionally, 70% of tribal members suffer from being obese or overweight, 10% have diabetes, and 50% have hypertension (BIA, 2003; Grant 2, 2012b, p. 11). In contrast, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) report 68% of Americans as obese. This example illustrates how prevalent these diseases occur in Native and non-Native communities. Lynds (2010) indicates that both access to food and health of the community drove the Micmac to grow food for tribal members. According to the Micmac Farms, after the initial success of a community garden, the Micmac received a rural business enterprise grant for 492,363 USD, a subsequent grant for 31,739 USD from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grant, and the tribe contributed 80,000 USD in matching funds, to develop an indoor farmers market, greenhouses, and a brook trout hatchery (Lynds, 2010). This represents the first major economic-development project for the Aroostook Band of Micmac, and it occurred by utilizing rich-farming land in Aroostook country to improve the conditions their tribe faces.

While the Micmac were finishing the building to house their farmers market, I approached them to collaborate with the University of Maine. The support for this research comes from the University of Maine’s Sustainability Solutions Initiative (SSI), which developed through a 20 million USD National Science Foundation (NSF) grant through the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). A key feature of SSI focuses on addressing community problems by engaging with stakeholders and community members (Lindenfeld et al., 2012, p. 35). Additionally, this focus requires research to be problem driven and produce knowledge with and for the communities with whom researchers collaborate (Lindenfeld et al., 2012, p. 24). As a
result, my research with Maine tribes focuses on supporting tribal needs, and my communication research and contribution to communication scholarship develops from this process. Prior to engaging in this process, I needed to familiarize myself with Micmac history and food studies literature. This information also serves readers to understand the Micmac Farms, as it did for me.

A Brief Introduction of Wabanaki and Micmac History

The Micmac community represents one of four tribes in the Wabanaki Confederacy. Wabanaki, or, “people of the land of the dawn,” refers to the Passamaquoddies, Penobscots, Maliseets, Micmac, the Abenakis of Quebec, and Abenakis who used to inhabit Western Maine (“The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes,” 1989). The State of Maine and the Federal government recognizes the first four tribes. The four tribes in Maine have five reservations, with the Passamaquoddy having two locations. This section serves to provide background information that the researcher and readers need to understand the work produced with the tribe. To do this, this section overviews the Micmac, food security, food security in Maine, and the Micmac Farms.

As described to me from a community member, they call the Micmac “the Aroostook Band” because of the distribution of tribal land throughout Aroostook County. Aroostook is the northernmost county in Maine that borders on the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec. Despite having a central location in Presque Isle, the tribe also manages pockets of land throughout Aroostook County. In total, the Micmac have 29 federally recognized bands, and the Aroostook Band represents the only one in the United States, with the other 28 in Canada (Prins, 2002, p. 190). The Aroostook Band of
Micmac has around 1,000 members, most of whom live in Aroostook County. When I use the term “Micmac” in this thesis, I refer only to the Aroostook Band.

Traditionally, the Micmac diet consisted of food harvested in close proximity to the community, which changed seasonally (Lockerby, 2004, p. 408). The Micmac maintained highly mobile lives (Prins, 2002, p. 27). The community's movements occurred due to the availability of seasonal foods (Prins, 2002, p. 27). The Micmac made use of both coastal and interior resources (Prins, 2002, p. 24). Food also played a key role in the community. The principles of sharing and reciprocity often associated with food played an intricate role within Micmac culture (Davis, Prosper, Wagner, & Paulette, 2004, p. 361; Prins, 2002, p. 34). Micmac community members often shared food harvests within the community (Davis, Prosper, Wagner, & Paulette, 2004, p. 361). These examples illustrate the importance of food procurement and the social implications through of communal sharing within the Micmac, which became impacted by colonization.

The establishment of reservations or bands disrupted the Micmac food system and their culture. The 1876 Indian Act placed Micmac within bands or reservations in order to ‘civilize’ the population to become Canadian citizens, which disrupted ties to their culture (Prins, 2002, p. 184). Traditional culture also includes the Micmac food system. Additionally, the federal government manages each reserve, as well as its resources (Prins, 2002, p. 184). All of these bands face dire economic situations and low unemployment, and as a result, many members move from band to band for subsistence (Prins, 2002, 191). Subsistence in this case refers to jobs.
Harold Prins (2002) describes the Micmac bands as traditionally migratory people, an association that is linked to the Micmac’s need to seek work in the 19th century (Prins, 2002, p. 191). Many of the reserves offer few economic opportunities, which have led many Micmac workers to travel elsewhere to find jobs (Prins, 2002, p. 191). The distribution of the various band of Micmac allowed members to relocate to other areas closer to seasonal work like logging, river driving, and harvesting (Prins, 2002, p. 191).

In Maine, many Maliseets and Micmac traveled to Aroostook County for seasonal work in the potato industry (“The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes,” 1989, a-31). The presence of the potato industry and Micmac history becomes observed with the tribe making traditional baskets to gather potatoes. Overall, examples illustrate how few employments opportunities the reservation or band system offered, and Maine represents one of the places tribal members found themselves. The band system also disrupted traditional food systems, which increased the prevalence of food insecurity within the tribe.

Food Insecurity

Rural communities, both in Native and non-Native populations, tend to face more difficult food insecurity issues than populations in more urban areas. Francisco Menezes (2001) describes food insecurity as a situation in which quantities of high quality produce do not exist to support healthy diets (p. 29). The overall problem in rural communities occurs in part because of the distance foods travels to reach remote communities. Food insecurity often mean low quality, costly food that lacks variety (Skinner, 2006, p. 29; Cantrell, 2001, p. 70; Loring & Gerlach, 2008, p. 470; Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 57). Distance plays a significant role in food insecurity in rural communities, where fresh
produce, in particular, becomes limited in quantity and type and becomes further inaccessible due to the cost of transportation. In northern areas, like Aroostook County, seasonality impacts the availability of particular produce (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 57). The problem becomes further exacerbated by low household incomes and poverty. Food access issues for rural communities, both Native and non-Native, are so significant that scholars have increasingly referred to these regions as “food deserts” (Wrigley, Warm, Margetts, & Whelan, 2002; Larsen & Gilliland, 2009; Beaulac, Krisjansson, & Cummins, 2009).

Issues of food insecurity and poor nutrition often plague rural communities. This problem impacts many areas around the United States. Furthermore, rates of food insecurity occur at higher rates in Maine. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) marks Maine as having the highest food insecurity issues in New England (Mills, 2011, p. 110). Part of this occurs because of Maine being a rural state. As of 2009, Maine’s unemployment rate rose to 8.2% from 4.6% in 2006, and of the families with jobs; they typically earn $6,000 less than the national average (Acheson, 2010). A correlation exists between income and the quality of food in diets (Mills, 2011, p. 108). Thus, individuals with lower income status tend to have less access to healthy foods. Part of this issue derives from the cost of fruits and vegetables. In Maine, the distance food travels to reach consumers increases the cost, which drastically impacts the population’s ability to buy fresh-healthy food.

The issue of cost in relation to food insecurity becomes a serious issue while examining the rates of poverty in Maine. In terms of the Micmac, Aroostook County represents the most agricultural intensive region in the state and one of the poorest
regions in the nation (Grant 2, 2012b, 11). Reports generally use the unemployment rate as a key indicator of an economy. As a state, Maine has an unemployment rate of 8.2%, while Aroostook County’s rate is 10.2%, easily above the national average of 9.3% (Acheson, 2010, p. 7). The situation of the Micmac is even direr, which has unemployment rates of 70% (Grant 2, 2012b, 11). These statistics become important in relation to food insecurity, especially with regard to the ability to procure fresh fruits and vegetables. The poorer the community, the more likely that community is to depend on cheap, unhealthy foods to sustain itself. Mills (2011) explains that consuming inexpensive (processed) foods may increase risk of poor nutrition, obesity, malnutrition, and being underweight (Mills, 2011, p. 110). Indeed, problems of obesity and other food-related health concerns like type 2 diabetes and heart disease represent a prevalent issue in the State of Maine, in particular for the Wabanaki communities.

If families or communities do not have access to high-quality produce, food choices center on foods accessible to lower budgets. In terms of nutrition, health, and diabetes, the cost of food limits what people buy (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 58). In other words, healthy eating is frequently unaffordable even in the context of otherwise affluent societies like the U.S., and people eat food to which they have access (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 61). Native American populations suffer disproportionately from food insecurity in the U.S. Given that Native Americans earn 40% less per capita than the rest of the American population, the high cost of quality food can limit the communities’ ability to buy it (Gunderson, 2008, p. 193). These examples provide insight into the problems many rural communities, both Native and non-Native, face with regards to food insecurity. It centers on food quality, quantity, variety, price, and distance of produce. To
solve the problem with food insecurity and health, rural communities need to provide their people with an abundant access to affordable and nutritious food.

The leading causes of preventable death in Maine stem from tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition (Mills, 2011, p. 107). In terms of preventable disease, obesity has risen close to tobacco use in recent years (Mills, 2011, p. 110). This issue has great costs for health care. In Maine, obesity cost the state $1 billion in health care (Mills, 2011, p. 111). Obesity and its consequences represent a vast and significant problem in Maine, and greater access to food must be created to help improve nutrition and health of the state’s most vulnerable communities. An urgent need exists for efforts to improve access to healthy food (Jacobus & Jalai, 2011, p. 158). Overall, problems with food insecurity focus on lack of quality produce and cost. Food insecurity leaves people consume food they can afford, which leads to many prevalent diseases in this country and Maine.

July 22nd 2011 – “We sell our food cheaper than anywhere else and today we couldn’t pick enough peas. We constantly picked them. I could pick around ten pounds in an hour, which were then sold as soon as I brought them in. Today I stayed late to ensure we had enough to sell but it wasn’t enough to meet the demand.”

One solution to issues with food insecurity in rural communities involves developing local food infrastructure. For rural communities, developing the ability to grow their own food often represents a solution (Cantrell, 2001, p. 72; Skinner 2006, p. 29; Misesuah, 2003; Loring & Gerlach, 2008, p. 473). Returning to traditional methods of food procurement does not, however, always represent a possibility. For instance, environmental issues such as the pollution of local food sources have rendered it
impossible for some communities to return to a traditional diet (Cantrell, 2001, p. 71; Misesuah, 2003, p. 827; Skinner, 2006, p. 29; Loring & Gerlach, 2008, p. 470; Davis, Prosper, Wagner, & Paulette, 2004, p. 379). This does not suggest that traditional foods do not continue to play a role, but it explains how current influences may limit access to traditional local foods. However, the incorporation of traditional foods with locally grown foods does represent a meaningful step in the solution to the complicated issues surrounding food insecurity (Cantrell, 2001, p. 72; Misesuah, 2003, p. 828; Fritze, 2002, p. 338). Developing local food infrastructure has many parallels to the roles that traditional foods have played in various communities. The inclusion of traditional foods depends on the availability of the resource and knowledge of its procurement. Locally produced food, whether traditional or not, represents a beneficial solution to the lack of access to high-quality food, and it often fulfills many functions of food’s traditional role in the community.

June 17th 2011 – “Today I realized the quality and taste of locally produced food. My friend and fellow farmer introduced me to the onions we were growing. We ate them right from the row, after peeling the outside layers of course. The onion was sweet and mild at first, with a slight spicy finish. I had never tasted onions that fresh before. This quality and taste of food easily out-performs the grocery store’s industrial food.”

Introducing locally produced food has many benefits for the community. Local food provides many benefits beyond produce, communities benefit individuals physically and psychologically, as food production provides exercise and a means for social networking (Fritze, 2002, p. 335). Community gardens also develop a strong sense of community because they integrate friends and relatives in the procurement of food.
Local food production also impacts how people conceptualize the community. The knowledge derived from gardening contributes to a greater sense of home. Providing food gives individuals a sense of self-sufficiency and increased control over their diet. In sum, the development of locally grown foods in rural communities can help resolve issues of access to a variety of affordable and nutritious food, which can provide a meaningful step to addressing the health issues derived from problems with food insecurity.

Understanding the rationale behind the Micmac project and studying the food practices involved with developing locally produced food has implications for many communities with food insecurity issues in Maine and throughout North America.

**Project Overview**

To summarize this background information, the Micmac way of life changed drastically since the commencement of tribal reservations or bands. This disrupted traditional food systems because the tribe could no longer travel seasonally to procure food. This system also left the tribe very economically disadvantaged. As a result, high unemployment rates make it difficult for people to attain fresh fruits and vegetables needed in a healthy diet. This situation represents a major component of food insecurity; cost and distance contribute to the problem of accessing fresh produce, and this problem is quite pronounced for the Micmac community.

This study with the Micmac Farms has many implications for rural communities in Maine and the United States. This thesis does not wish to posit itself as a panacea for all Native American or other rural communities. Rather, this project’s response to food insecurity issues by creating a farm represents a strategy that the literature on food
insecurity has not adequately explored. My research aims to help grow our understanding of attempts to create greater food security and address issues of obesity and other health issues related to food in a rural, tribal community in Maine.

I spent three months living and working with the Aroostook Band of Micmac in Presque Isle Maine. Many scholars refer to this as ethnographic work; I choose to conceptualize this as community-based research, even though I draw on many of the tenets of ethnography and describe my methods as ethnographic. The research that I developed for this thesis resulted from a problem-driven approach and partnership with the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The tribe expressed a need for help on the farm and for coordinating outreach efforts for the farm. These needs influenced how I took notes as a field researcher. I focused on farm production and how community develops around the farm and farmers market. Complete objectivity does not exist, and knowing this, I tried to collect information that accurately reflected my experience with these themes. From these observations, I created interview questions to verify my observations and bring greater depth to them. All of this information later influenced the chapters produced for this thesis.

After this introduction, I detail the methods I utilized for my research. I drew heavily on anthropology, communication studies, and other forms of ethnographic work. In this chapter I discuss the role of a researcher with the type of work in which I am engaging, including living as an ethnographer within a community. This chapter outlines my research methodology and describes methods and strategies for note taking, as well as what data I collected and my processes for coding.
Chapter Three focuses on issues of risk. In this chapter I draw on my ethnographic field notes and a series of focus groups to explore what power structures exist that threaten the farm as an economic venture. This analysis utilized data from participant observation and focus groups to identify areas of risk on the farm. I started with an empirical analysis because it helped me address the immediate problems I experienced on the farm, which has a direct feedback to supporting the success of the Micmac Farms as a business. Analysis of risk in this chapter allowed me to give voice to the farm’s significance. Through the farm the tribe reclaimed control over its economic and food security. Past systems of power have taken these two systems away from the tribe, and this farm represents a shift in how power operates. Additionally, this chapter allowed me to identify key risks to the farm that I could communicate back to the community. According to the data I collected, structures exist that cause problems with the management of the farm. These problems center on creating unnecessary work for the farm staff, which decreases the amount of work that can be done by making tasks longer. Identifying risks of the farm represents an output that communication literature brings to the Micmac community. This allows them to identify problems within the farm and move towards alleviating them to continue the success of this farm. This chapter required detailed data analysis, which led to think about what didn’t show up in the data.

In chapter four, I conducted a genealogical analysis that builds on Foucault. This chapter considers the data I collected in Chapter Two in light of documents produced about the farm, for example, grant proposals. Discourse analysis enables me to consider past food traditions and supplement the data I collected from my fieldwork. Review of historical and contemporary documents helps to situate the contemporary discourses on
the farm in a broader context. I argue that certain discourses were able to arise in the current context of the farm because of particular historical discourses that dominated. This, in turn, suppressed other discourses. Notably absent from the Micmac Farms discourse are issues of tribal health and sovereignty. Many of the conversations and behaviors I observed on the farm privileged the realm of economics, for example, the need to purchase a new mower to improve efficiency of weeding the strawberry patch. To understand this, I needed to step back from empirical research and understand how larger power systems operated through written texts and consider how they influenced and continue to influence this project. In this chapter I construct a discourse on farming and ask what behaviors of the farming discourse becomes embodied within the Micmac. This helps me to explain why economic concerns dominate thematically. I then return to the discourse to see how key movements change knowledge and action on farming, which translates into the behaviors I recently observed on the Micmac Farms. For instance, power systems strongly influence how U.S. farms produce food, and this analysis traces how that power becomes represented with the Micmac. The need to procure federal grants and other sources of funding represents a key source of power that influences the behaviors on the Micmac Farms.
CHAPTER 2
FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

Background

As described in Chapter One, this research derives from the collaboration with the Micmac Farms and aims to support the goals and needs of this community. My academic interests focus on food’s connection to community and sustainability within Native communities, and I became immediately interested with the Aroostook Band of Micmac and the Micmac Farms. The Micmac started farming in order to meet community needs for affordable food produced locally. I initially contacted the Micmac during the end winter of 2011, and during our first meeting with tribal administrators, we discussed the possibility of collaborating between the tribe and the University. My approach to collaborative research derives from Maine’s Sustainability Solutions Initiative and focuses on the goals and needs of that community and that academic research always derives from that process (Lindenfeld et al., 2012, p. 24). The Micmac Farms expressed a need for additional work on the farm and a person to coordinate events for the farm. The work on the farm includes assisting in daily farm tasks and interacting with customers that visit the farm. Work at the farm began in June and continued through the end of August of 2011. As a researcher and participant in the community, I spent 20 hours a week on the farm, and this approach to research also allowed for me to establish a positive rapport with the community. This time allowed for participant observation, which assisted in the construction of interview questions for focus groups held in August of 2011. Throughout my time with the community, the Micmac vocalized a desire to host culturally relevant events at the farm to allow citizens from Aroostook County and other
members of the general public to interact with the tribe and the farm. This required me to make contact with individuals willing to display cultural practices at the farm at no cost. In addition, each event needed a press release to encourage the general public to attend these events at the farm. This chapter attends primarily to the methodology I used to document my experience on the farm. In Chapter Three, I turn to a discourse analysis of key documents related to the farm's development. In that chapter, I outline my methods for that analysis.

**Ethnography**

*Definition and Rationale*

This thesis did not carry out a traditional ethnography, but the project draws on many aspects of ethnographic research. This section describes what ethnography involves and how ethnographic methods contributed to the design of this study. Ethnography involves reconstructing the characteristics of a culture, which requires examining data from multiple sources (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 130; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 169). In addition, the goal of ethnography mainly centers on producing knowledge (Atkinson & Martyn, 2000, p. 254). This thesis diverges from many traditional ethnographic approaches in that it was designed to help address community needs that were identified through the research. Some approaches, for instance, applied anthropology and ethnography, focus on solutions to local problems (Atkinson & Martyn, 2000, p. 253). This project takes inspiration from those approaches and from the field of sustainability science (Kates, Clark, Corell, Hall, Jaeger, Lowe, & Svedin, 2001), that aims to identify ways to link the production of knowledge with action and assist communities in transitioning to more sustainable practices (Kates et al., 2001). This
research project worked with the community of study while developing research problems that emerged through identification of the community’s needs. Incorporating the Micmac Farms community and their perspectives includes involving them with problem development and solutions (Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006, p. 467). Working with the community guided fieldwork and participant observation leading up to a series of focus groups to verify the accuracy of fieldwork observations.

Ethnography offers many methods for working with the Micmac, this project’s community of study. First, research receives constant refocusing throughout fieldwork and data collection. Research needs to keep an open mind and let the community shape the research (Ranco, 2006, p. 70). This offers flexibility to a study and allows for greater practical use within the community of study because it ensures that the research is relevant and responsive. Sustainability science argues that research must be salient, legitimate, and credible (Cash et al., 2003) to ensure that it is useful to communities. In ethnography, research begins with an idea, which receives continuous redefinition throughout the study and finalized at the end (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 2). These examples illustrate the flexibility of research to develop continually, which allows for greater use within the community of study, thus enhancing the salience, legitimacy, and credibility of the research outcomes and products.

For this thesis, I used modified ethnographic methods for a number of reasons. First, modified ethnographic approaches created a culturally responsive structure for working with this community. The approach for this analysis involves a structure similar to Charlotte Loppie’s work with the Micmac. Loppie (2007) combines Western ethnography and participatory research (p. 227). This type of research includes
examining patterns of behaviors, beliefs, and language of an entire cultural group (Creswell, 2007, p. 68). However, for the research conducted with the Micmac, examination focused on people working with the farm, not the entire cultural group. Second, this modified approach enabled me to address the needs of the farm in a relatively short period of time. Ethnographic research describes a problem, understands the causes, provides information for change, and facilitates intervention (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 7). For this research, the use of focus groups serves not only for data collection, but as a possible method to improve communication on the farm. Given that my research took place in an abbreviated period of time – summer months, when I was not attending classes in Central Maine (152 miles away from the farm) – the modified ethnographic approach allowed me to combine focus groups with participant observation and deliver feedback to the community quickly. Ethnography lends itself to this study through flexibility, which allows me to generate research with applications for the community, and the modified approach allowed me to balance data collection with addressing the community’s needs.

**Role of the Researcher**

While living and working within a community of study, I needed to consider how that impacted my role as a researcher and a community member. First, the researcher represents a primary instrument for data collection (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 273). In ethnography, this means that participant observation takes on an especially important role. Participant observation involves the researcher playing a role within the community and the study (Atkinson & Martyn, 2000, p. 248). My role in this project included working on the farm as well as collecting and analyzing data. This positioned me
throughout the past two years as a participant-observer in the Micmac Farms community, which enabled me to experience both an insider and outsider perspective. In particular, my own affiliation as a member of one of the Wabanaki tribes enabled me to understand many of the issues that the Micmac face.

Ethnographers must be the least obtrusive in order for individuals to behave normally (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 73). The researcher learns by observing, participating, and recording conversations and daily activities (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 72). As a result, any mixed feelings between the researcher and the community may impact data. Furthermore, all ethnographers must acknowledge their biases. Personal opinions of the researcher may impact data (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 274). As a researcher, I served as an instrument for data collection by participating with daily activities and interaction within the Micmac Farms, which required me to subdue my personal biases and earn the trust of the community. Maintaining the role of the researcher and negotiating the insider/outsider roles also became another important point to emphasize for this study.

Ethnographers maintain an interesting position within a community of study. Ethnographers find themselves as members and non-members of a community, and they must maintain the role of researcher despite relationships they create (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 72). This does not downplay the importance of developing relationships with the community; rather, it reinforces the role of the researcher to prevent one from neglecting research needs. My fieldwork committed 20 hours a week to farming in order to reserve time to complete research priorities. I needed to be diligent with maintaining these roles as the project developed because I found myself becoming more absorbed within the community.
July 17th 2011 – “It rained today and we could not complete the outdoor tasks. Instead, we cleaned the farmers market so it didn’t look like a construction site anymore. While sweeping, I was reminded of a story from when I was a kid. My father built our first house when I was twelve years old, and I remember helping him sweep it. It hadn’t been the first time I was convinced to sweep a construction site, but this was the first time I was cleaning the building that was going to be my house. While sweeping the farmers market, I made the connection to sweeping my own house and how I felt connected to it. In a way, the farm serves as a welcoming place to me.”

Ethnographic work also acknowledges the changes observed in the researcher. Ethnographers expose themselves through entering the local culture and society of the community, and they record their personal transformations (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 74). The transformation occurs because of the development of relationships between researcher and the community. I recorded these personal transformations in order to use them as data for this thesis and for future writing. My transformation into a community member is a method of data collection due to the personal relationships created throughout fieldwork. Despite the relationships developed, the ethnographer must always maintain her/his position as a researcher. For instance, I found myself as a researcher wanting to work more hours on the farm, and I knew that if I made this choice, I would neglect my roles as a researcher.

Community-Based Research

This section provides a brief review of community-based or community-oriented research with indigenous communities. For the Micmac Farms, the community has local research needs. Given that this thesis engaged in community-based research to benefit the
Micmac community, drawing on the literature from community-based research approaches is especially relevant. Ranco (2006) explains how (as cited in Smith, 1999) community-oriented research addresses community needs, collaborates, assumes that the process is as important as the outcomes, and involves local stakeholders to assist in research (p. 75). This type of research works with communities, rather than developing the project in the interest of the researcher. Kerkhoff and Lebel (2006) refer to this as problem-oriented research, which generates information to be transferred to its users (p. 452). Furthermore, the researcher allows for the problem to emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 45). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states that research should be important to the community (p. 189). These authors all indicate the importance of developing research problems with the community, which creates research relevant to the community. Moreover, Smith (1999) states that research needs to involve the people, individuals, or communities in ways that end with a positive result for those being researched (p. 191). This echoes Ranco’s (2006) emphasis on the importance of outsiders (researchers) addressing real problems of the community (p. 70). Collectively, this body of literature validates the need to focus on engaging with communities and emphasizes research that addresses the needs of a community with the intent to benefit that community. My work is fundamentally driven by this perspective.

This thesis employs community-based research with the Micmac Farms. The project addresses local problems and allows for local participation in research. Local participation includes using traditional ecological knowledge or TEK (Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006, p. 459). This allows for the researcher to incorporate TEK, or local insight and knowledge from the farm, into the research. Moreover, the scope of this project
continually develops from the needs identified by and with the community. The needs assessment takes place through direct involvement within the community, as previously described in the role of a researcher in ethnography. Through active participation, this thesis takes shape as a response to documenting the needs of the community by supporting the Micmac Farms to become a sustainable, thriving, community-based enterprise. Active participation requires a great deal of personal commitment to work towards benefiting the community. Ranco (2006) indicates that researchers working with Native communities should create relationships that extend beyond fieldwork (p. 70). These relationships serve to help understand issues within the community, and emphasize the level of commitment used within community-based research.

Fieldwork

Pre-fieldwork and Community Access

For this project, previous research allowed me to develop an understanding of the Micmac and local food projects as a starting point for research, not to direct the research. In other words, prior to completing fieldwork existing literature serves as guidelines for project ideas, not as assumptions (Thomas, 1993, p. 35). In addition, the researcher should develop research questions by examining previous studies and speaking to people knowledgeable on the subject (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 69). These ideas assist in creating a theoretical model of the community. Ethnography begins with a question, which later develops a formative theory (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 3). This allows for the beginning of data collection during fieldwork. Initial theoretical and conceptual models assist in organizing observations into units or structures (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 2). This thesis
drew on several sources to construct the theoretical framework for the Micmac Farms, which assisted with observations made during fieldwork.

To develop the theoretical model for this project, this project relied on literature working with indigenous communities, community-garden literature, and local newspapers. This thesis sought out literature on the Micmac in general and work describing indigenous communities and resources in particular. The community-garden literature provided the most pertinent insights on concepts relevant to the Micmac Farms, such as community interactions. Lastly, local newspapers provided recent information on present and future developments of the farm and helped to contextualize my participant-observation experiences and focus group conversations.

Prior to beginning work with the Micmac, I took time to make connections with community members involved with the project. Certain research requires formal permission from communities (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 77). Respecting this notion, I received formal permission to conduct my research from the Micmac Tribal Council on June, 1st 2011. This thesis sought out formal permission for two reasons. First, I wanted to ensure that my research was respectful to the community. Second, this served as another way to make my name and presence known positively within the community. Overall, work with the Micmac community received initial direction through the theoretical framework derived from relevant literature. This project did not require formal permission, but requested it as a sign of respect and goodwill within the community.

**Location**

The location of this project in relation to where I live and work as a researcher has posed limitations on the project. A traditional ethnography involves living fully within
the community for an extended period of time. However, this did not represent a possibility for me as a student pursuing a Master’s thesis. In order to balance commitments of researcher and work with the Micmac Farms, I committed to living three days a week within the community throughout the course of a summer, which totaled around 20 hours per week on the farm. This approach has implications for research. Limits exist for the amount of participation a researcher can engage with communities (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 94). Not living fully within a community limits the research capabilities (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 94). Research capabilities may include how community members perceive a researcher and the amount of trust one receives. How much a community trusts the researcher or the cultural appropriateness of a researcher’s involvement both limit participation (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 94). On the other hand, enhancing a researcher’s present in social events may alleviate the inability to immerse oneself fully within the community. For instance, once a researcher enters the community, s(he) should maintain viability by visiting regularly, conducting informal interviews, visiting homes, eating meals, shopping, and attending community events (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 88). For the Micmac Farms, working on the farm, selling produce within the farmers market, and coordinating community events at the farm served as ways to maintain visibility and presence in the community despite not living fully within the community.

*June 17th 2011 –* “One of the farmers asked me how much I was learning, and I explained that I learned a lot so far. They replied, “sucks being a famer doesn’t it?” I feel he meant, “sucks” referring to hard work since I come from an academic background. I do not think he views farming negatively, as every time I see him, he is
smiling or making jokes. He also referred to me as a farmer, which suggests my acceptance into the farming community."

**Participant Observation**

Despite not being fully immersed in the community for a great length of time such as a traditional ethnography, there are well documented ethnographic strategies for data gathering that I used to develop this thesis. Like in a more comprehensive ethnography, these strategies allowed the data to shape observations and methods for participant observation.

It is of essential importance to let the data guide observations. A researcher always filters observations through their personal interpretive frames (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 95). This notion impacts any study, and my aim was to minimize these impacts by allowing the data to shape theory, an approach that Glaser & Strauss (1967) describe as grounded theory. Grounded theory states that the theory develops from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1). This requires the researcher to resist shaping or guiding research to a theory and allow for the data to develop itself through an inductive research process. Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity refers to a researcher allowing for the continual development of theory, which becomes lost if one focuses on what one thinks will happen (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 46). For the generation of theory to emerge, a researcher must incorporate changes he/she observes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 63). The researcher incorporates new or contrasting ideas in order to reflect the community of study. A researcher must remain open minded and unprejudiced (Ranco, 2006, p. 62). While working with the Micmac Farms, this research minimizes personal biases by allowing the data to develop the project and
verifying observations through interviews. This largely influenced the procedures of my data gathered as a participant observer.

Given the grounded theoretical approach, the participant observation phases served as a means for data collection prior to designing and completing the focus groups. These observations allow for the data to reflect emerging themes, which then guided the development of focus group questions. Participant observation involves learning through exposure and or involvement with daily activities with community members in a research setting (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 91; Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007, p. 93), and the underlying theoretical assumption about this approach is that knowledge specific to an area can be gained only by experience (Scott, 1998, p. 317). This means that researchers immerse themselves within the community (Creswell, 2007, p. 68) and have direct involvement with it. The researcher becomes the primary instrument for data collection (Schensul, et al., 1999, p. 72). This occurs through active participation within the community of study. For this project, this meant that I needed to immerse myself into the daily activities of the farm, which required me to work as a farmer, while taking time throughout the day for documenting my experiences and observations through field notes (Schensul, et al., 1999, p. 92). During participant observation, my primary aim was to identify information that helped me to understand the needs of the community relative to the Micmac Farms project.

The knowledge and skills learned on the farm represent métis knowledge (Scott, 1998). Métis refers to an experience involving a range of practical skills one acquires by responding to a constantly changing environment, both human and natural (Scott, 1998, p. 313). For the Micmac Farms, métis knowledge represents a relevant term to describe
what knowledge of information this research seeks to gain through participant
observation. In the case of the farm, both farmers and I engage in métis because we have
to adapt to and learn from constantly changing situations (Scott 1998, p. 314) and I must
learn through experience, in this case, the daily activities of the farm. The knowledge or
métis learned through daily practice becomes the data gathered within this project.

Data Collection

Due to the relatively short amount of time spent with the Micmac, data collection
focused special attention on ensuring that meaningful data arose within my observations.
Accurate data collection gave direction to the project and guided additional data
collection. Fieldwork allowed for the generation of hypotheses working to verify theory
(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 39). Each developing hypothesis became linked into the
central theoretical framework, which than constituted the core of the emerging theory
(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 40). Thus, accurate coding of observations contributes to
developing key themes and concepts, which must continually shape and guide research.
The research model must adapt throughout data collection (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 48;
Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 149). As a result, data collection during fieldwork has a
significant impact on research, which needs careful methods in order to gather useful
data. This section describes the role of the researcher in data collection and methods to
collect data.

Above all, to gain greater access to meaningful data, I needed to earn the trust of
the community. Ethnographers build relationships of trust and good rapport. (Schensul et
al., 1999, p. 76). Furthermore, a researcher must build relationships with those who know
relevant information (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 71). Building relationships allows for
greater knowledge of the project or community. Additionally, engaging in community-based research may help with a community reluctant to divulge information (Menzies, 2006, p. 13). This relates to the type of community-based research this thesis engages in with the farm. Addressing the needs of the community may help with observations and data collection on the Micmac Farms. While observing, a researcher needs to collect and record efficiently without disrupting (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 71). The appropriateness of note taking depends on the situation. For the farm, our tasks typically do not merit breaks as sometimes we worked through lunch to complete what needed to be done, thus breaks for note only occurred during lunch or mandated breaks.

In order to make the most of my fieldwork, I needed efficient methods for note taking. Regularly keeping detailed observations allows for the production of useful data (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 114). This becomes important for this thesis, as the short fieldwork season required that I make excellent use of my time to produce usable and meaningful observations. All observations must reflect the actions and feelings of what has happened. For example, note taking involves describing the scene similar to a photograph (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 115). This involved keeping my opinions and thoughts separate from the farm’s observations. Recording observations also includes self reflection (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 73). Note taking for my research involved multiple notebooks for separating emergent themes and concepts. Consistent with ethnographic methods, I maintained a separate notebook to record my personal thoughts, opinions, and changes. This enabled me to employ strategies that recorded accurate and meaningful observations, while also attending to my own experience throughout the field season.
Many strategies exist for note taking. A researcher may use any form of shorthand note taking that works and record and code them as soon as possible (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 116). Data collection involves collecting, coding, and analyzing data and deciding what data to collect next for allowing theory to emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). This type of diligence allowed for emergent themes and concepts to develop by recording observations of the community throughout my summer as a farmer. Data collection also allows for greater clarity of the project under analysis (Thomas, 1993, p. 41; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 149). Thomas (1993) refers to this as conceptualization, because the project’s focus becomes clearer due to the commencement of data collection (p. 41). Greater understanding of the project allows for the development of informal and formal questions to key informants. Within data collection, the researcher used short-hand notes to record observations during fieldwork.

In this thesis, I used shorthand descriptions of my observations in a small notepad throughout the day. After leaving work, I expanded on these shorthand descriptions to describe the events as accurately and thoroughly as possible. An ethnographer can ensure other researchers find their results agreeable through diligent note taking and verbatim responses from participants (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 283; Thomas, 1993, p. 39), and this was my goal throughout the process. Verifying observations with field consultants and informants also helps validate findings (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 283). Recorded observations on the farm enabled me to identify emergent themes, which I researched more thoroughly through conversations with informants. After concluding my field observations, I coded and analyzed the data. The following section describes the process of coding that I used for this research project.
Coding

Coding allows for the continual development of emerging themes with the research. The analyst must continually verify theory as data comes in (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 26). In order to do so, one must focus on domains most relevant to the study (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 48). However, the selection of particular categories for theory hinders the development of others (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37). Consistent with ethnographic approaches to coding, my research selected themes by observing patterns and or reoccurring themes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 175; Thomas, 1993, p. 50). My project focused on domains most relevant to the needs of the community.

July 22nd 2011 – “Today we had a lot of customers and one remarked about how he used our potatoes in an award-winning leek soup. He used all local ingredients, except he didn’t use those words. It seemed to be natural or common, “oh I used potatoes I grew and yours.” At least he did not mention “local” as a typical restaurant might advertise, for instance. The interaction signified a sort of community, like having regulars at a coffee shop.”

The Micmac Farms expressed interest in improving access to local food and developing a community around the farm. These became key themes for note taking. My local food theme included anything that involved food production, which resulted in numerous sub themes, such as how the farm learns from season to season and economics needs of the farm. My second theme centered on developing community around the farm, so this included observations about noting how the farm develops regular customers or how the tribe interacts with the farm. The selection of these themes meant that I focused deeply on these and not on others, even though I remained open to emerging themes
outside of this domain. This approach enabled me to give focus to the project and allowed for time to be spent on fully developing what the community identified as most useful. All the data I collected during my participant observation I collected by hand. I used handheld notebooks throughout the data to make brief observations. At the end of the day, I expanded these, again by hand. Before I started my focus groups, I read through these again, taking notes and seeing where re-emergent concepts arose in my observations and this became the basis for my interview questions, which I then verified, disproved, or further developed through focus groups.

Focus Groups

Rationale

The farm had many people providing input on daily farm interactions. The focus group interviews I conducted produced information pertaining to norms, behaviors, attitudes, cultural domains, innovations, and instrument content (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 128). Furthermore, a current setting and form do not exist for farmers or those outside of the farm to come together and discuss the needs of the farm. Rather than conducting individual interviews, I decided to use focus groups. This decision was important for a number of reasons. First, it allowed me to observe dynamics of the community members as they talked about the farm. Second, it enabled the group to discuss current or future tasks for the farm and learn about each other’s perspectives. The focus groups served as a an important method for my data collection to confirm my observations from my field work, while also establishing a place for community members of the farm to come together and learn from each other.
A focus group that includes topics relevant to the farm had benefits and disadvantages. First off, a focus group cannot go into questions in great depth as individual interviews can (Huntington, Brown-Schwalenberg, Frost, Fernandez-Gimenez, Norton, & Rosenberg, 2002, p. 788). Questions or topics only receive general discussion. However, successful focus groups offer opportunities for improved collaboration and relationships. The focus group does allow for collaboration to begin when successful (Huntington, et al., 2002, p. 788). The co-generation of knowledge helps improve relationships (Huntington, et al., 2002, p. 779). My choice to use focus groups over individual interviews reflected the theme of building community around the farm and functioned both as an analytical tool for me as a researcher and as a solution for the need to bring together members of the community who do not otherwise have a time and space designated to talking together about their work and goals.

**Procedures**

I conducted two focus groups took place in August of 2011. Each focus group consisted of a different group of individuals: one for the farmers and the other for people working in the tribal offices involved with the farm. Each focus group’s responses were recorded with two digital voice records to ensure that I had high quality recordings and a back-up if one of the recorders failed. In addition, each focus group was conducted over a meal that I provided. This was especially important given that the community project focuses on food and food production.

**Sample Population**

I chose different focus groups to observe different responses to my questions. For instance, some questions, such as, “what have you done differently this year than last
year?” will have different responses from the farmers than administrators. Key informants may have limited knowledge, and interviewing multiple people on the same topics helps verify the information (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 84). In addition to helping verify information, respondents with different backgrounds add greater detail to subjects and help reveal where conflicts and different views exist. Maximizing the differences in respondents allows for research to collect varied responses on a particular subject (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 56). Furthermore, comparing respondents contributed to the study. Explaining the similarities and differences of groups may help explain their interactions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 51). The use of different groups motivated this project selection, which allowed for greater detail given to domains and themes observed on the farm.

This project included groups based on their role with the farm. Chosen groups must be justified by their relevancies and differences pertaining to the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 48). I did not have to arrange these, as the groups developed through observation. One group consists of those who work on the farm, while the others work in the tribal offices. It was clear that two core groups exist in the farm’s structure. The workers in the tribal offices provide instruction for day to day farm operations. As a result, it did not seem appropriate to have administrators and workers discussing the farm in the same group at first. This rationale brought forward the idea to complete separate groups in August. This allowed workers and administrators to voice their opinions amongst themselves, without worrying about the other groups’ presence. This also created greater insight into the questions chosen for the focus group. Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as theoretical relevance, which allows for the description of properties
of categories within the study (p. 49). The use of group studies allows for similarities and differences to emerge, which assists in developing theoretical properties and emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 55). As a result, the diverse background of the groups chosen for the focus groups yielded a greater theoretical relevance, or great clarity of emergent themes observed in the study.

**Interview Questions**

The types of questions chosen for the focus groups derived from the participant observation during fieldwork completed from June through August of 2011. The questions reflected both themes identified as relevant to the community: increasing access to fresh food and building community at the farm. The questions have been ordered in respect to their topics or domains (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 155). The questions remained general to see if observed elements of these themes became prevalent with focus group discussion. Typically, ethnographic researchers use interviews to compare and provide insight into emergent themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 53). This allows for insight, confirmation or disconfirmation of key themes observed during field research (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 150). The multiple interview sessions allow for greater credibility of the information and greater clarity on emergent themes and credibility of information (Thomas, 1993, p. 39; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 134). In my focus groups, these questions produced conversation within the groups and enabled me to verify, dismiss, and further develop emergent themes from my participant observation research.
Validity

Prior to data analysis, I employed several methods to ensure the validity of data. Specifically, my research emphasized internal validity, which refers to the accuracy of a researcher’s finding within the group of study (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 275). The goal of my research focuses on those involved with the farm, so internal validity is especially pertinent to this goal. Several threats exist with regard to ensuring internal validity. For one, the research setting changes (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 279). This may become a problem for a young, dynamic organization like a newly developed farm. Also, if the research omits sections of the population, this impacts internal validity (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 279). This represents why I focused on the farm itself, rather than the Micmac community as a whole. Certainly, future research could and should consider the farm in the context of the broader community. Lastly, observer effects refer to changes in people as a result of their knowledge about the research (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 280). Researchers may help alleviate this by developing trust and comfort (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 280). For my thesis, I engaged in work at the farm to build trust within the community and understand their perspectives more deeply and fully.

Additionally, several strategies exist to enhance internal validity, some of which I employed. Testing questions prior to interviews ensures that participants understand them (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 281). My research tested focus group questions with individuals outside the population of study. Also, using comfortable interview setting and location also improves internal validity (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 281). The focus groups I conducted took place both on the farm and in tribal administration offices to ensure the comfort of participants. The use of multiple groups with focus groups and participant
observation also contributes to validity. Using multiple sources of data helps improve the accuracy of data (Thomas, 1993, p. 39; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 131). I used my participant observations and the multiple focus groups as multiple sources of data in this project. Lastly, interviewees were asked to provide input on findings from the study. Consulting participants with research findings prior to publications also improves validity (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 281). After my fieldwork, I maintained contact with the participants to ensure the accuracy of their voices within the research, and that the research has relevance within the community.

To ensure accuracy of the findings, I provided the community with copies of written work, as the evaluation of TEK needs to include community validation and information from individual interviews in relation to their biases (Menzies, 2006, p. 13). Moreover, an ethnographer can ensure other researchers find his/her results agreeable through diligent note taking and verbatim responses from participants (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 283). Overall, by involving the community with the research, this helps accurately represent the community.

Data Analysis

Identifying Data

In this study, data represents observations of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK involves a body of information connected to the environment, which always grows and adds knowledge (Menzies, 2006, p. 6). TEK includes knowledge of the past and present (Menzies, 2006, p. 8). This term does not only represent knowledge of the past, but it explains that communities continually develop in the present. The use of TEK also has more relevance to use in Native communities due to the incorporation of past
knowledge, which makes it a more culturally responsible term than métis. The induction of a farm required using past knowledge and adding new information to it due to the needs of the farm. Observing TEK also included individual narratives describing the progress of daily farm activities.

**Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis involves how ethnographers interpret their data (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 147). This research analyzed narratives (stories) produced through focus groups in relation to observations made on the farm during participant observation. This becomes important when addressing the needs of a community due to how individuals construct stories. People construct their experiences as stories (Glover, 2004, p. 147). Since experiences construct stories, this allowed for insight into many elements of the farm, such as communication between personnel. For instance, stories allow for a deeper understanding of the existing theme (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 195). Collecting the stories from all focus groups served a greater purpose as well. Elements of a story function to create a community narrative (Glover, 2004, p. 147). In this thesis, this allows for a community narrative around the farm, not a narrative about the Micmac community. Additionally, when I analyzed the data for this project, I always kept the community in mind.

Using the data from this project, I made it a point to create documents that also contributed to the goals of the community. I transcribed my own focus groups because I feel that the project was small enough to accomplish myself, as well as it gave me a more intimate knowledge of the transcriptions. When I analyzed these, I also choose to do this by hand because I completed my participant observation by hand, and it became easier.
for me to compare the two methods. I compared these two for the same themes as my participant observation, food production and community building, while taking note of emergent themes that did not arise in my participant observation, or responses that enhanced my observations. Further work on this data could be completed with the assistance of another researcher that may identify data that I have missed. I also have the possibility to do future research by transcribing all my notes and focus groups and analyzing with software such as NVivo. This may provide interesting insight on areas such as language use around the farm that I had not noticed.
CHAPTER 3
COMMUNICATING RISK ON THE MICMAC FARMS

Introduction

“Native Americans have been building agricultural businesses all around, typically exploited by local farmers and business. This is a chance for them to have their own farm you know and for them, us to learn management skills that needed to, and why shouldn’t they have their own farm” – Tribal Administrator.

This quote derives from a focus group conducted with the tribal administrators of the Micmac Farms in Caribou Maine, a small town situated in Maine’s northernmost county, Aroostook. This example illustrates resistance the farm has faced with its use of federal grant money from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to gain greater control over the tribe’s economy and food system. In this chapter I aim to identify potential threats to the Micmac Farms success as a business. I argue that existing power structures within tribal administration create miscommunication on the farm, which threatens the tribe’s attempt to create economic opportunities and a sustainable food system. To support this argument, I discuss the Micmac Farms in the broader context of food security and obesity in Maine and New England. Micmac Farms explicitly aims to alleviate food insecurity within a tribal nation. This chapter argues that the farm’s ability to achieve its goal depends on strong, effective communication practices and infrastructure. Communication theory maintains that how we communicate constructs our experience of the world (Fisher, 1978, p. 51; Cronen, Pearce, & Harris, 1982, p. 64). I describe communication practices I observed at the farm through participant observation methodologies and focus groups and consider the information I gathered through the lens
of risk communication theory. My analysis reveals two key risks: economic constraints and not planning and operating correctly. Risks have been identified due to their perceived potential to impact key values within the community, which involves maintaining the farm as the tribe’s first economic venture to have it as a resource to feed the tribe and supplement food resources to Aroostook County. As a business, the farm generates jobs within the tribe and addresses health and food concerns by supporting a tribally owned sustainable food system. In the larger picture, this project portrays how an underserved and historically marginalized tribe has developed a project to take greater control over their own destiny.

Methodology

The study draws on ethnographic methods and was designed to study the Micmac Farms during the second growing season. In the summer of 2011, I spent three months completing fieldwork – both in the ethnographic and in the farming sense – with the community. My fieldwork included participant observation, where I learned through deep exposure and involvement with the community members on the farm (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 91; Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 93). This fieldwork also literally involved work in the fields where I tilled, planted, and tended to crops along with the community members working on the farm. In August, 2011 I conducted focus groups with groups of farmers and administrators (separately) to create an environment where individuals feel comfortable to speak freely. Second, the two groups also allow for comparisons to be made on how groups view aspects of the farm. My work assumed a Grounded Theory approach, which involved allowing the data to speak for itself (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.
1. Daily observations also served as the basis for generating interview questions for the two focus groups.

A grounded theory approach enabled a process to facilitate the production of knowledge, or coproduction, within data analysis that developed from a relationship that mutually benefited both the researched community and the researcher. Presence at the farm assisted in both major goals of the tribe’s product, increasing farm production and developing events to increase the interaction of non-Native populations with the tribe. Immersion into the community also allowed for greater insight into communication structures involved on the farm. My research benefited from personal experience and observations of the bureaucracies and power structures that influence communication practices. One key area of observation is the power structure that exists between administrators, who delegate tasks, and farmers, who are expected to respond to the administrators. This structure often disabled the effective exchange of information from farmers to the administrators. Given the project’s underlying ethical premise that this research should serve the community and its needs, the grounded theory approach enabled me to build a theoretical model of primary risks that the farm faces and to share these research findings with the community through a technical report that is currently under development.

This project attempts to contribute to communication scholarship by creating a better understanding of how communication researchers can produce meaningful scholarship for other researchers while creating useful documents to the community of research. As such, my approach falls within the broader realm of participatory action research, an approach that seeks to increase our understanding of how changes in
practices, communication, and actions can benefit communities (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). This research approach has been used to focus on farming communities, and serves as an inspiration to my work (Braun & Hocde, 1998). Over the past years, communication research has made important contributions to action research (Tracy, 2007). Building on this body of literature, my analysis of the communication practices within the farm in relation to risk and the goals of the farm should thus directly benefit both other researchers and the community.

Understanding and Contextualizing Risk

In the context of this study, I understand risks to “threaten things that we value.” (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 5). Risks impact the Micmac Farms as a business and thus the Micmac tribe as a community in that they represent possible threats to improving local access to food. To address risk, one must understand its potential impacts and the perceptions of these impacts. Analyzing risk involves making observations about the magnitude of the risk and possible outcomes (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 42; Renn, 2010, p. 179). These examples illustrate how analysis sheds light on perceptions of risk on the farm, and risk communication also provides a way to suggest remediation through decision theory. Decision theory provides a way to collect and organize information related to risk decisions (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 20). This approach utilizes information from participant observation and focus groups as information applicable to risk decisions. Lastly, risk communication suggests that decision making requires a social contract between involved individuals, which includes cooperative two-way communication that recognizes all involved parties’ right to be heard and receive
information about risk (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 113; Renn, 2010, p. 178; Garcia, 2010, p. 278).

In the context of the Micmac Farms, a risk communication approach enables us to understand some of the key communication issues the Micmac Farms faces that could threaten its very existence. Understanding that the current power structure operates according to a top-down decision making model sheds light on why certain forms of risk and miscommunication occur. As I describe throughout this essay, the farm would receive significant benefit by increasing the exchange of information from the farmers to the administrators, and my action oriented research is designed to feed back to the community in culturally responsive, respectful ways to help ensure the farm’s productivity and ultimate sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

Tribal casinos have come to represent how many mainstream U.S. Americans perceive tribal communities’ strategy to help their people. In fact, only one third of the over 500 recognized U.S. tribes have casinos, so what can the remaining majority of U.S. tribes do to help their communities? The Aroostook Band of Micmac chose to explore a business that addresses a basic need: food. This section highlights the significance of this project as a response to food insecurity, which also serves as an economic venture not typically seen within Native American communities. To understand how the Micmac Farms contributes to food issues in Maine, this section first describes food-security and obesity in the U.S. and in Maine. Second, it outlines how the Micmac Farms creates new ways of thinking about resolving food-security issues.
During my fieldwork, a tribal administrator mentioned a story about being at the end of the food chain. He described living in New York City and how their markets always received the best food. In the city, he experienced being at the top of the food chain. In Presque Isle Maine, they sit at the end of food chain. When the food arrives, it has lost most of its nutrients and stores sell it at a higher cost. Food studies literature refers to this as food security and to the lack of access to high quality food as food insecurity (Olson, 1999; Carlson, Andrews, & Bickel, 1999). As Mills (2011) indicates, the USDA marks Maine as having the highest food-security issues in New England (p. 110). Typically, Native American communities face greater food insecurity than non-Native communities (Gunderson, 2006, p. 200). This occurs due to a correlation between income and the quality of food in diets (Mills, 2011, p. 108). A diet that relies on low-quality food also has health implications and creates complex feedback loops for community members. People with food insecurity who consume inexpensive, processed foods may increase risk of poor nutrition, obesity, malnutrition, and being underweight (Mills, 2011, p. 110). Identifying this as a key problem became a motivating factor for the development of Micmac Farms. Thus, the tribe has great stakes in the farm’s success for reasons related to tribal sovereignty, community cultural values, economic issues, and health concerns. For example, the Micmac identified the fact that many diseases their community faces correlate with the consumption of inexpensive-processed foods (Lynds, 2010). Growing food locally became a meaningful pathway to alleviate health concerns within the Micmac community, while addressing other needs as well.

A need exists to harness Maine’s resource to improve access to healthy food (Jacobs & Jalai, 20011, p. 158). This served as a key driver for the Micmac community
to develop their farm. The Micmac received a rural business enterprise grant for $492,363 from the USDA, a subsequent grant for $31,739 from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grant, and a tribal contribution of $80,000 in matching funds to develop an indoor farmers market, greenhouses, and a brook trout hatchery (Lynds, 2010). This represents the first major business enterprise for the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The tribe used these funds to utilize rich-farming land in Aroostook country to create an accessible form of healthy food and alleviate health disparities. To further improve access to healthy food, this community has future plans to become a four-season farm, a difficult task for this northern climate. They plan on achieving this through cold-storage systems and cold-weather greenhouses. The greenhouses operate with low heating costs, and will grow crops such as spinach year-round. The success of this farming project goes beyond addressing food insecurity. This project represents a way for the tribe to increase its independence by taking control of their economy by employing tribal members, and equally, developing a secure-food system that does not rely on industrialized food. There is a great deal at stake for this project, and understanding the risks to the farm and addressing these in a timely, culturally responsive manner can help to ensure the success of this important endeavor.

Communication Practices

Prior to describing communication practices within the farm, this chapter provides a brief overview of the Micmac in Maine. The Wabanaki, or, “people of the land of the dawn,” refers to the Passamaquoddies, Penobscots, Maliseets, Micmac, the Abenakis of Quebec, and Abenakis that use to inhabit Western Maine (“The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes,” 1989). Maine recognizes the first four tribes and has five reservations,
one for each tribe and two for the Passamaquoddy at different locations. The research for this thesis involved collaboration with the Aroostook Band of Micmac in Presque Isle Maine.

As described to me from a community member, the Micmac refer to themselves as the Aroostook Band because of the distribution of tribal land throughout Aroostook County; one of Maine’s largest but also poorest counties. Despite having a central location in Presque Isle, the tribe also manages pockets of land throughout Aroostook County. This becomes evident with the tribal administration building and the farm existing in two different towns. The tribe built the farm on tribal land in Caribou, Maine. The Micmac, as a whole, have 29 federally recognized bands, and the Aroostook Band represents the only one in the United States. The rest live in Canada (Prins, 2002, p. 190). The Aroostook Band of Micmac has around 1000 members, many of them residing in Aroostook County.

Harold Prins (2002) describes the Micmac as traditionally migratory people (p. 191). Many of the reservations offer few economic opportunities and, as a result, many Micmac workers travel elsewhere to find jobs (Prins, 2002, p. 191). The distribution of the various band of Micmac allowed members to relocate to other areas closer to seasonal work, such as logging, riving driving, and harvesters (Prins, 2002, p. 191). According to a tribal resource book, *The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes*, many Maliseets and Micmac traveled to Aroostook County for seasonal work in the potato industry during the 20th century. As a result, the Micmac’s choice to engage in agriculture has cultural and historical roots. The farm becomes especially important as the Micmac Tribe now has a local source of food and economic venture for employing community members, opposed
to traditionally having to leave the community. This creates a greater sense of independence for the community by creating new opportunities on the reservation that did not exist before.

For the Aroostook Band, the term “community members” refers to people who live within the Micmac community, who may not necessarily be Micmac. Community members can be Native from other tribes or non-Native. Members refer to people living in the community recognized as tribal members; Micmac Farms employs one member and two community members. Both of these community members have tribal affiliation outside of Maine. For these people, this farm provides them with an opportunity to work for the tribe close to their family. As one community member stated,

Farmer 1: If we can sell, then we’re still in business, all of it. He likes his money (points to another participant); he likes his money, and I like mine. I don’t know what I would do because my husband doesn’t work. I would be shit out of luck. I’d have to look for another job and last time it took over a year.

In general, Aroostook County offers little for employment, and unemployment rates typically appear higher in Native American communities. As a result, this business venture signifies a key move for the tribe to work towards generating economic independence for the tribe. The next section elaborates on the communication practices that developed through participant observation.

From a grounded theory perspective, fieldwork aimed to characterize how farmers and administrators interacted in relation to the farm as a business, which included farm production. This entails recording information pertaining to farm operations and customer access to food. For instance, observing cost prices between farms and the grocery store represents information relevant to farm production. Within these observations, distinct communication practices emerged in relation to this farm’s values.
For the analysis of these practices, I grouped them into four categories, which this chapter describes with quotes from participant observation and interview data:

1. Office to farm: Communication from Tribal Administrators to the farm.
   Example:
   - “What we have is a team of people in charge of the project and when you have a team of people what happens is things fall through the cracks, right?”

2. Farmer to office: This is the opposite of the office to farm category. Example:
   - "You need to pick their brains more; they only tell you a little bit."

3. Farmer to farmer: This represents communication between farm employees.
   Example:
   - “I think we kind of communicate pretty well. I mean what we need and what we expect. To you know, we expect everyone to do in order to sell the vegetables, quality, you know.”

4. Farmer to customer: This came from interactions from the customers to the farm.
   Example:
   - Don’t plant stuff YOU like just ‘cause your taste is not everyone’s taste. Listen to what they’re saying and go with what their saying and you will be more profitable.

**Analyzing Data for Risk**

The current structure for delegating tasks on the farm undermines the tribe’s move towards economic and food security. In risk communication, research first needs to define risk. Defining risk involves specifying their valued outcomes in order to make decisions about them (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 22). For the Micmac, the key risk becomes business and, thus, economic issues serve as a central frame. Without business, the tribe cannot improve existing resources on the reservation. Risk also involves a chance of losing something of value to people (Fischhoff & Kadvany, 2011, p. 41). The values align with the goals of the farm, which represents a source of local-healthy food.
and the first tribal economic venture. Additionally, the essence of risk derives from the perceptions and practices defined through communication processes between active participants (Garcia, 2010, p. 283). As a result, communication signifies an important management factor (Garcia, 2010, p. 283). With managing Micmac Farms, communication practices directly impact farm production, which relates to the success or failure of the farm. Miscommunication occurs due to the bureaucracies in place. The current structure allows for information to move in one direction, administrators to farmers. Two key risks threaten the values of the farm: economic constraints and not planning and operating correctly.

**Risk of Economic Constraints**

The economic constraints on the farm occur due to limited money to operate, which represents a constant factor impacting both farm production and the business’s ability to expand. Furthermore, financial constraints impact the tribe’s attempt to attain greater economic and food independence. This category of risk involves two sub-themes; 1) being overworked and 2) not meeting customer needs. Being overworked means that there are simply too many tasks and not enough employees to handle all of the work. This becomes evident first within the Farmer to Farmer groups, and it manifests itself as a problem on the farm, as opposed to in the tribal office. This becomes apparent as many of the farmers work additional hours at no cost to ensure production. These efforts exceed the 40 hours for which people receive pay. The category of Office to Farm provides a different perspective on this issue. From the administrators’ perspectives, there are limited budgets to run the farm business. There is a risk of paying workers too much too quickly and running out of money, when the management must ensure that the business
remains viable throughout the growing season. The focus group conducted with the farmers adds additional insight to the economic constrains of the farm.

Question: What have you done differently this year than in previous seasons?

PI: How come there was a cutback on hours and workers?

Farmer 2: Just because it's our second year.

Farmer 1: Now we're on our own.

Farmer 2: We're on our second year and what we make on the market is what they have to pay us with. It's our second year were not going to be making as much as five years down the road.

This example illustrates how economic risks constrain the amount of time workers have on the farm. As a result, the lack of funds to support the farmers becomes a common point of contention. Furthermore, despite the economic constrains voices in this focus group, they also suggest the point of economic independence for the tribe. The farm began from grant funds and now has the money to sustain itself, which contributes to the tribe's attempt to gain economic and food independence. Further economic constraints exist with the risk of not meeting customer needs.

July 6th 2011 – “The term cherry picking never seemed real until I picked strawberries. While picking, I would get berries too soft to sell, so I would eat them. That soon became old because I could no longer eat anymore, but I did not want to waste them. I also picked every ripe berry I could find. However, when picking to sell, one must look for the best, otherwise, it will go to waste and you will lose customers. As one farmer said, 'maybe on person gets a bad batch and doesn't come back.' Also, if you don't pick the best, they rot anyways. I finally understood what it means to 'cherry pick.' We pick the best in order to keep the customers satisfied, and the rest can become jam.”
A farm needs to maintain a fidelity to the consumer in order to make money. Not meeting customer needs undermines this opportunity to develop tribal resources. The category of farmer to customer largely represents this risk. The farmers interact with the customers, not tribal administration, and as a result, this interaction drastically impacts farm sales. Within this category, common observations center on how the farm records their experience with journaling, markets itself, and prices their goods. Journaling represents a key with how the farmers respond to customer needs. The farm used observations from previous seasons to add additional crops that customers wanted from last year. In addition, journaling observations also indicated the demand for various products, which allowed for increasing or decreasing the amount of food grown based on popularity. This fidelity to the customer’s needs contributes to the tribe’s economic independence through generating loyal customers needed for a successful business. The follow passage depicts the incorporation of the community’s needs within the farm.

Farmer 1: I was in the grocery story and I heard an old lady ask, do you have this, no, she’s like I can never find it dried or fresh or nothing, the summer savory. And people were asking, do you have summer savory? I wrote down a couple herbs people really asked about, next year I’m gonna make sure I grow that because that’s what the community’s asking for. Give them what they ask for. Don’t plant stuff YOU like just ’cause your taste is not everyone’s taste. Listen to what they’re saying and go with what their saying and you will be more profitable.

This narrative describes how the farm listens to customers in order to meet their needs, which contributes directly to supporting Micmac Farms. The farmers use journaling in situations like this to learn and improve in following seasons. From a historical perspective, the Micmac workers use to support non-Native agricultural businesses, and now, non-Native customers support the tribe’s efforts to develop economic independence.
This method allows the farm to serve customers better in subsequent seasons. In sum, economic constraints on the farm occur because of restricted hours on the farm, and another risk exists by not addressing the needs of the customer. Overall, these impact the tribe's ability to develop local food and job opportunities on the reservation. The impacts of farm management provide another key risk, as the next section describes.

**Risk of Not Planning and Operating Correctly**

Power structures influence the management procedures on the farm. This risk involves two sub-themes: not balancing the needs of the farm correctly and not acting on experience. The office to farm category largely represents the risk of not balancing the needs of the farm correctly. This occurs due to the existing power structure that encourages one-way communication from administrators to farms. Three administrators coordinate the tasks of the farm, and sometimes they rank the importance of farm tasks differently. For instance, one administrator ranks weeding the apple trees on the bottom of the task list and instructs us to continue working on the vegetable crops. This neglected the apple trees, which another administrator saw as a top priority, and this caused the apple trees to become overgrown and difficult to manage. This issue becomes observable when asking about communication practices within the farm.

*Question: How would you characterize communication on the farm?*

*Administrator 1: The reason is that communication isn't where it should be is that we really don't have one person that's in charge of the project. What we have is a team of people in charge of the project and when you have a team of people what happens is things fall through the cracks, right? And that's what's happened here. As we get better and better and we get that farm manager up there, I think communication will be better. I think Farmer 1 comes down and gives us a great wrap-up of what she does and what she needs, but we don't, we can't give her the right support sometimes that she needs.*
Despite the neutrality of this question, the administrator immediately points out the faults in communication that impact the planning and operating of the farm. They center on having too many people voicing their opinions on a project, which leads to confusion on what tasks take priority and how to complete them. From the farmers’ perspective, these faults contribute to mistakes with instructions. These mistakes represent risk due to their impact of the values of this project. Novak and Sellnow (2009) indicate how lapses in organizational decision making represent an example of risk (p. 349). The risk focuses on management and risks pertaining to management impact the tribe’s ability to establish itself economically. This administrator later indicates that the farmers do a better job of communicating than the administrators do. Both groups recognize communication within the farm as good.

*PI: So communication between people is generally pretty good?*

*Famer 1: It needs to be good in order to get the job done.*

From a risk communication perspective, good management between farmers occurs due to two-way communication. Increased communication interactions between an organization’s workers allows for the identification of new and emerging problems, which allows for greater ability to resolve risk (Novak & Sellnow, 2009, p. 352; Renn, 2010, p. 178). This example suggests how the one-way communication that occurs from administrators and farmers creates problems with farm management, and the two-way communication that occurs within the farm improves management between farmers. This example suggests how increased communication may contribute to the tribe’s ability to sustain their food system and new economic opportunities as seen in the example.
between farmers. The next risk elaborates on how mistakes on the farm increase workloads.

June 26th 2011 - "I arrived today and I looked at all the food we plated, 20 rows about 100 feet each in all. I started to notice a connection to food with planting it. I can feel the soil in my hands as I put each plant in the ground that I raised from seed. After closing the dirt around it, we move on. Today we destroyed this. We were instructed to remove all of the squash, which today we were told was wrong, so now the same hands that planted each plant so gently must now remove and discard each plant."

The risk of not acting on experience represents a risk that increased communication helps alleviate. From the farmer’s perspective, not acting on experience causes an increased workload causes declines in production, which impact both values of this project, economic and food security. This task becomes observed within the farmer to farmer category. This returns to the notion of journaling, as this purpose also allows for the farmers to learn from previous mistakes. For this season, farmers wrote down notes on what areas squash did not grow well and how they could improve on planting crops.

Farmer 1: And we had an experiment with the melons. So we put the cabbage down there but you haven’t been down there today. We had a moose walk through from the end of the cabbage in between two rows with the broccoli on the side and he munched the inside of every head for 20, 25 cabbage, pulled some out, ate some broccoli, went right through it. That’s one thing I learned this year, not to put anything down by the woods.

(Group Laughs)

Farmer 1: Even though they’re gonna come up a little bit, they totally destroyed that end. So yeah, next year not something they want.
It has already been suggested that two-way communication exists between farmers, so the risk centers on their information being able to reach the administrators. If administrators do not consider farmers’ experiences, they reaffirm current power structures that exist with farm communication and threaten the farm’s ability to provide economic and food stability to the Micmac.

August 18th 2011 – “The week before, I helped plant our tomato crop, four rows at 100 feet each in total. Today we found out we have blight, a fungus. It happened in a matter of days. Blight attacks the plant and kills it very quickly. I first went and looked at our once green and vibrant plants, now turned black, the color of death. Our hope was that we could salvage the green tomatoes to make chow chow, a traditional (in the contemporary sense) Micmac food consisting of pickled tomatoes. While picking the tomatoes, I began to feel the aftermath of the blight attack, all the work and potential food, now gone.”

Discussion

The focus on risk for this chapter creates a slightly negative image of Micmac Farms, when in fact; the opportunities outweigh current risks with communication. Prior to concluding, this chapter outlines briefly the success of Micmac Farms and why their project has become the business focus for the Aroostook Band of Micmac. In a recent article, newly elected Chief Richard Getchell indicates how agriculture represents a “high economic priority” (McCrea, 2011). This statement suggests the overall opportunities for the farm to develop the tribal economic and food independence. The farmers contribute greatly to these opportunities. This next quote describes the administrators acknowledging the importance of having skilled workers.
Question: How has collaborative research helped the farm?

Administrator 2: It has to do with you, but it also has to do with the people we have out there this year, from the tribe.

This response shows the respect and recognition that the farmers deserve. Even with restricted hours, these employees often show up on their own time to complete tasks that benefit the farm as a business. Additionally, farmers take the initiative on actions to benefit the farm.

Administrator 2: She’s taking up to Anderson’s grocery in Stockholm, her own town, and she’s selling food there. Everybody’s done it, they have treated this as their own business, so you don’t have to tell them exactly what to do everyday most of the time, but they go out and they make things happen, which is important.

Treating the farm as their own business explains why the farmers contribute so greatly to the farm as a business. They treat this as their own business and their own community, which explains why communication practices within the farm function so well, and it also explains why they take the initiative of working extra hours without pay to complete farm tasks. The farm staff greatly impacts the success of the farm, which becomes visible with the agriculture becoming a focus for the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The workers’ passion for the farm contributes to the tribe’s efforts to develop economic and food security with tribal resources.

To conclude, communication practices within the farm reveal two key risks: economic constraint and not planning and operating correctly. This is not to suggest that other risks do not exist, but rather to focus on two that became clear throughout the course of my research. First, economic constraints focus on issues of restricted working hours. This occurs because limit funds exist to support the farm. However, the limited funds also suggest how the farm actually sustains itself. In previous years the farm
received funding through grants and now the farm’s profits pay the employees. This suggests how the tribe shifted from federal grant funding, to a small and growing economic and food source. Having local jobs and food represents new opportunities and independence for the Aroostook Band of Micmac. Furthermore, meeting the needs of the customers represents a key factor in the farm’s success. Farmers use journaling to achieve customer satisfaction. The acceptance and support of the farm by non-Natives also suggests an interesting shift in history. Previously Micmac workers developed non-Native agricultural businesses, and now non-Native populations support the growth of a farm owned and operated by the Micmac. Second, the risk of not planning and operating correctly focuses on the impacts of management on the business. Existing power structures on the farm control the management of the farm. This environment does not provide easy access for farmers to contribute information to administrators. This becomes evident with administrators admitting that communication issues occur because having multiple managers of the farm. In contrast, management between farmers exists with two-way communication, which assists in alleviating risk. However, if the information learned between farmers, for instance in the moose incident, does not reach administrators, then this impacts the farms operations and ability to feed and employ the community.

In closing, the examples illustrated in this analysis support the argument that management problems deriving from communication undermine the tribe’s attempt to create economic and food independence. Additionally, analyzing risk from this perspective offers opportunities for additional research on risk management within the farm, which allows for use with the Aroostook Band of Micmac, as well as,
communication scholarship. Furthermore, this analysis brings forward an important question, which transpires as the elephant in the room. From ethnographic notes and interview transcriptions, the data gathered predominately focuses on economics. For instance, the key risks that arose on this farm all develop from their relation to the farm as a business. This chapter focuses on the risks with the greatest potential to threaten the farm as a business, so why do economic behaviors become such a prevalent theme? This theme arises far more frequently than tribal health, past food traditions, and tribal sovereignty, which all represent key themes deriving from the farm’s commencement. To address this question, the next chapter utilized an analysis influenced by Michel Foucault to address why economic behaviors become naturalized within the population of the Aroostook Band of Micmac.
CHAPTER 4
UNEARTHING FARMING DISCOURSE: A CASE STUDY WITH THE AROOSTOOK BAND OF MICMAC

Introduction

Why did Micmac Farms emerge as it did, when it did, given the particular sociocultural, ecological, and political conditions of the state of Maine? I began this chapter with that question in mind, but slowly it began to change/evolve through the process of researching and writing. I found that I could not fully address this question without understanding the broader farming discourse that operates within the United States. Additionally, after studying Foucault, I became interested in studying lines of descent, which involves showing how history becomes embodied within individuals. Therefore, this research explores the following question: how do key behaviors from farming discourse become unknowingly embodied within Micmac Farms? I examine this question through a genealogical analysis focusing on lines of descent. To answer this question, I first describe the Micmac community and farm itself. Within this, I analyze particular behaviors that stand out within farming discourse and their relation to power and control of populations. After this, I examine farming discourse from a broader perspective to understand how behaviors, thoughts, and actions present on Micmac Farms become shaped by a discourse driven by power and money.

This research involves a collaboration made with the Aroostook Band of Micmac. Twenty-nine bands of Micmac people exist throughout North America, twenty eight of which reside in Canada. The Aroostook Band represents the only Micmac in the United States, and as previously stated, this thesis uses “Micmac” to refer to the Aroostook Band. The Micmac has identified access to food as a community need. A need existed
due to power dynamics and colonial practices that disrupted traditional ways of living. Historically, the Micmac diet consisted of food harvested in close relation to the community (Lockerby, 2004, p. 408). The Micmac maintained highly mobile lives (Prins, 2002, p. 27). The community’s movements occurred due to the availability of seasonal foods (Prins, 2002, p. 27). The Micmac made use of both coastal and interior resources (Prins, 2002, p. 24). These examples illustrate the Micmac traditional food system, which they maintained control over their food security by migrating seasonally. Furthermore, the establishment of reservations or bands disrupted the tribe’s ability to control their own food system and provide a healthy diet for their people.

August 20th 2011 – “In addition to building an economic venture, the farm represents a community-building project as well. As a result, the tribe asked me to set up monthly events to encourage interaction of community members with the farm. One of the events I held a cooking demonstration at the Micmac mawiomi, or pow wow. In Maine, zucchini grows so well that individuals can hardly give it away, so I thought I would cook this plentiful item in a simple, yet delicious way. All ingredients except the salt and pepper came directly from the farm. Many people both native and non-native from this area had never tried zucchini before and many of them liked it.”

Without being able to control the destiny of their food system, the Micmac community’s health began to suffer. Along with not having access to high quality produce, the Micmac noticed that many diseases their community faces correlate with the consumption of processed foods (Lynds, 2010). These diseases include diabetes, cancer, and alcoholism (Lynds, 2010). Additionally, (as cited in BIA, 2003) 70% of tribal members suffer from being obese or overweight, 10% diabetes, and 50% hypertension.
(Grant 2, 2012b, p. 11). Lynds (2010) indicates that both access to food and health of the community drove the Micmac to grow food for tribal members. The move to growing food represents a very significant shift in how power operates around the community.

The power that operates around the Micmac food system operates in two separate tracts, one involves the Micmac control over their own food system, and the other acts more powerfully to control behaviors within the community. This chapter largely focuses on power controlling behaviors operating with the Micmac community and their farm. Power constantly operates within the community and takes different forms as systems, like the food system, within the tribe change. Power relations created the initial conditions for a farm to exist in the first place by placing the tribe into reservations and disrupting the food system, without health disparities as viewed within the Micmac community, a need for a tribal farm would not exist. These health disparities represent how power acts through the bodies of a population, and furthermore, this notion of power changes shape and influences the population through the food system, which becomes prevalent with the commencement of the Micmac Farm.

The Micmac started with a community garden in order to address the health needs of their community (Lynds, 2010). The tribe attributes the diseases their community faces to not having access to healthy food (Lynds, 2010). These diseases include diabetes, cancer, and alcoholism (Lynds, 2010). Lynds (2010) indicates that both access to food and health of the community drove the Micmac to grow food for tribal members. According to the Micmac Farms, after the initial success of a community garden, the Micmac received a rural business enterprise grant for 492,363 USD, a subsequent grant for 31,739 USD from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grant, and the tribe
contributed 80,000 USD in matching funds, to develop an indoor farmers market, greenhouses, and a brook trout hatchery (Lynds, 2010). The transition from a community garden into a farm causes a shift in how power operates, which in turn influences the behaviors of this population.

While the Micmac started to utilize these funds to expand their farm, I approached them as a researcher interesting in working with them. In the summer of 2011, I spent three months living and working with the Micmac to support various goals of the farm, such as a need for additional work and coordinating outreach efforts. During this time I also took tedious notes on how various structures of the farms worked. One of the areas I coded for involved food production, and I took notes on actions or behaviors that influenced production on the farm. In other words, did a particular behavior cause the farm to do better or worse as a business? I also took notes on how the farm impacted the community of the Aroostook Band of Micmac. For instance, did this revive past traditions of food or bring new ways of thinking about food? How does this contribute to improving Micmac health? After I finished my fieldwork and began to analyze my observations, I found that numerous themes I thought might arise did not. Examples of this include past-food traditions, health, and sovereignty. Sovereignty in this case refers to the tribe’s ability to control their economic and food destinies through farming. These represented absences in my data, which become a point of analysis, or a way in to understanding a greater discourse that operated within and through the Micmac.

To understand why these absences occurred, I began to explore what I did find. Both the data I collected as a farmer, as well as during focus groups, largely comprised of economic behaviors and actions. Economic behaviors become evident with actions that
support the prosperity of the farm. As an active participant, I found the behaviors became associated with securing the success and profitability of the farm, which represents a very distinct movement from the health origins of the farm. This brings me to a key question of this research, why do economic dominate behaviors on the farm and how does the power of a discourse motivate these behaviors?

July 14th 2011 — “Our strawberry crop is coming to an end soon, which is worrisome because it makes the most money. One of the farmers told me that the potatoes come soon, which will sell faster than we can pick ’em. I guess new potatoes are an Aroostook County favorite. He was right, as the sales took priority over the strawberries. This is our ‘meat and potatoes’ in the most literal sense or maybe potatoes and potatoes.”

To examine why economic behaviors occur on the farm, I choose to analyze the history of farming as motivated by Michel Foucault. Foucault discusses two approaches to analyzing history, archeology and genealogy. These types of histories allow one to analyze how discourse produces ways of thinking as well as behaviors, which becomes relevant to the research question of this project. Gutting (2005) provides an excellent rationale for choosing genealogy over archeology. Archaeologies understand the conceptual systems of a practice, but they do not study the effects of a practice (Gutting, 2005, p. 45). In the case of the Micmac Farms, an archaeology enables a researcher to understand how a discourse makes knowledge both practical and possible, but a genealogy moves closer to understanding the absences from my data collection. A genealogy allows for the construction of a history that acts through bodies, which contributes to answering the questions I have while analyzing the data from my project.
The economic behaviors that dominate the data derive from a discourse that acts through this population. A genealogy on farming helps bring forward this discourse and develop power relations that influence populations.

A genealogy differs from archaeology in that it analyzes the power relations within a discourse and their impacts on the body. First, a genealogical approach provides an explanation of how power within a discourse produces knowledge. A close tie exists between knowledge and power (Gutting, 2005, p. 50). Power both constrains and produces knowledge (Gutting, 2005, p. 51). A genealogical analysis also contributes to this project by illustrating how power creates changes within a discourse, which become represented in particular behaviors. Returning to the Micmac food system, the behaviors and knowledge about food react highly to how power operates within that structure. When power entered the Micmac food system, the tribe lost behaviors and knowledge about traditional food systems and inherited a new discourse of food, which became represented through changes in dietary habits. In recent times, this power changes shape and appears within the context of the farm and grant funding. Similar to controlling behaviors around past food systems, the grants that support this farm may serve a similar function in the sense that they control the actions of recipients (farmers) in order for the farm to receive continued support. Therefore, the methods utilized in this analysis serve to generate a discourse that operates through the population of the Micmac, while also contributing to understanding the power struggles that ebb and flow through the Micmac food system.

To carry out a genealogy on farming, research specifically focuses key events in history and their impacts on the discourse. Specifically I examine how farming developed
over time and identifies for major events that changed how American farmers grow food. This does not include looking for origins, but outside influences of power drive these major changes in the discourse. Foucault (1971) describes how descent attaches to the body within, “nervous systems, temperament, digestive systems, faulty respiration, improper diets, and in deteriorating health due to past ancestral mistakes” (p. 82). For instance, the health disparities, such as obesity and diabetes, observed with the Micmac tribe represent how a discourse driven by power interacts through a population. The Micmac food system has power constantly interacting with it in various ways, which becomes represented in the population through their health. In the 21st century, power interacts with how and what a farm should be, which controls agency within the farm. In order to develop an understanding of the behaviors of the farm, this research utilized grant documents in order to identify areas where power shapes behavior on the farm.

Grant documents contribute to this analysis in a number of ways. First and foremost, little documentation exists on the Micmac Farms. Grants contain not only a rich resource of information describing the farm, but it portrays how the farm views itself from the tribal administration’s perspective. Furthermore, these documents contain information about the farms future plans for development and it includes steps the tribe plans on making as the farm continues expanding. Both the background information about the farm, future plans, and how to achieve those plans all provide critical information into the behaviors that operate on the farm. This approach also reveals how grants represent the form power takes within the Micmac food system in the contemporary time period in Maine.
Discussion

Farming exists as a nexus of behaviors that result in a specific kind of knowledge. In this section, I describe how the behaviors, which became possible via the previous historical analysis, arise within the context of the Micmac Farms. Specifically, I employ Foucault’s notion of lines of descent to examine how the Micmac Farms embodies the history of the farming discourse. To do this, I focus on two grants the tribe wrote to generate additional funding for the farm. Prior to examining these articles for specific behaviors exhibited by the farm, this chapter briefly reviews each grant.

First, both of these documents contribute greatly to this project because these documents contain language that the tribe uses to describe the goals of the farm and how it operates. *Growing Micmac Farms and Farmers* (2012a) represents a grant written between the collaboration between the tribe and a non-profit. This research refers to this document as Grant 1 (2012a). This grant developed from a partnership between the Micmac and a private institution to encourage farming. As a result, it goes into greater detail about how the tribe partners with organizations to encourage local agriculture. The tribe produced the second grant, *Micmac Farms ANA* (2012b) by themselves. This chapter refers to this document as Grant 2. Grant 2 focuses on gaining support to encourage farm production and this grant specifically uses more language relevant to understanding the Micmac Farms, since it does not have to describe partnerships in detail like Grant 1. The analysis of Grant 1 occurs in three sections: economic benefits, economic reliance, and health.
Grant 1

Economics take a clear position within this grant, and this section explores two examples of this. First, Grant 1 (2012a) explains how this project benefits the area economically, as well as increases tribal employment (p. 1). By framing this grant in relation to economics, the Micmac unknowingly recognize the importance economics play within the farming discourse. Furthermore, by acknowledging financial benefits this grant recognizes the importance economics plays with projects receiving funding. Overall, these points illustrate how outside funding motivates behaviors within the farm. Benefitting local economies and increasing employment equally suggest the need for the farmers to exhibit behaviors to support the farm as an economic development project, which does not align with the initial goals of this food project. Additionally, this document shows how economics acts as the driving force and the need for government funding to develop agriculture.

Second, this grant concludes by listing their priorities, which include project management, farm production, marketing, workforce development, and USDA program utilization (Grant 1, 2012a, p. 12-15). All of these represent the main goals of how the tribe plans on utilizing this grant. The first four take a clear stance on this farm's success as a business. If this grant did not frame it this way, it may appear outside of the discourse or not aligned closely enough with it, which would impact the possibilities of being funded because the farming discourse explicitly frames farming in relation to money. At this moment, the grant clearly signifies the need for the tribe to exhibit specific behaviors in order to attain these funds. This represents the grant's ability to shape knowledge and behaviors within a discourse, for the farm, it is the Micmac food.
system and population (farmers) within begin to exhibit the knowledge and behaviors illustrated by the document. Furthermore, the grant not only shapes knowledge and behaviors, but it contributes to a sense of reliance on external funding.

The economic reliance that occurs within the farming discourse becomes embodied through the tribe’s use of language in Grant 1. This chapter refers to economic reliance as the behaviors people exhibit that recognize federal funding as the way to succeed. The tribe exhibits this behavior by explaining how they plan on fostering a positive relationship with grand funders. For example, Grant 1 (2012a) indicates a goal to increase relationships with community and USDA through meals, cultural exchanges, and new media (p. 9). This grant has not been fully implemented yet, but it provides insight into the next steps of the farm for the 2012 growing season. All of these aspects within this goal to increase the relationship with the USDA become new actions or behaviors within the farm. Meals, cultural exchanges, and new media now must be incorporated into the knowledge around the farm and become apart of the behaviors the farm must exhibit to increase their chances of continual funding. Many of the behaviors/actions within the farm become attached to these grants due to their financing abilities. In addition to these economically-motivated behaviors, health still remains as actions and knowledge within the farm.

Health represents a pivotal reason for the Micmac to pursue agriculture. Grant 1 does not focus on health specifically, but it does not negate it either. In the farming discourse on food, health-based initiatives have struggled in recent times, and if they align with economics, they stand a better chance. This behavior occurs in the construction of this grant. “We will focus on youth and young adults to introduce them to the mutually
reinforcing motivators of food sovereignty, food security, healthy lifestyles, enjoyment of nature, and economic return from farming” (Grant1, 2012a, p. 8). This quote describes how the farm serves to address health disparities, and it also aligns this project with generating economic return. In addition, it shows how these behaviors occur together, almost in tandem. In other words, health never serves the primary role for the farm, it occurs as a side-benefit of the farm as an economic entity, and this example clearly illustrates how this farm serves both economic and health behaviors. Generally, this grant exhibits a strong connection to succeeding as a business and attaining external funding. This connection to external funding creates a power situation that creates knowledge/behaviors on the farm, which become represented with actions such as increasing local economies, employment, and developing continued relationships with funders in order to secure additional funds.

**Grant 2**

Grant 1 derived from a partnership the tribe became involved with, while the tribe developed Grant 2 on their own. As a result, this document contains more language and behaviors associated with the farm, which provide additional insight into how these grants serve to generate power, knowledge, and behaviors on the farm. The analysis of this document occurs in three sections: economic benefits, economic reliance, and health.

In terms of economic benefits, the tribe frames the success of the farm as a business in relation to receiving the grant (Grant 2, 2012b, p. 26). The language within this grant explains how the farm succeeds as a business after receiving additional funding. This suggests outside capital as a critical element for success. Furthermore, the notion of outside funding becomes embodied within the Micmac as exhibited through
behaviors on the farm. The section on the Micmac’s sustainability plan provides insight to these behaviors.

Within Grant 2, the Micmac layout a plan for sustainability, which provides an excellent example to how the farm exhibits behaviors that indicate a need for grant funding to succeed. Here, sustainability refers to the farming business as a long-term entity. The Micmac’s sustainability plan includes, high-quality staff, workforce training, inviting youth participation, providing quality infrastructure (finishing the building, fixing shed/tractors etc.), developing partnerships, accessing programs, and good planning (planting, crop rotation, harvesting etc.) (Grant 2, 2012b, p. 25). This example provides insight into the future direction of this project, which center on farming efforts succeeding as a business model. This document frames outside funding as necessary in order to achieve these steps. The steps themselves represent either current or future behaviors of the farm. For instance, providing quality infrastructure and good planning exist as current behaviors, while inviting youth participation represents a behavior that the farm will soon adopt. Lastly, this notion of needing grant funding to succeed becomes prevalent in other areas of the grant as well.

Another key behavior of the farming discourse occurs with economic reliance on funding. Reliance on grant funding becomes a form of power or control. It controls in the sense that in largely influences behaviors on the farm. For instance, the previous paragraph mentions good planning, which contain a set of actions by the farm in order to succeed as a business and/or acquire additional sources of revenue. Not all projects need funding to work, but as indicated in the discourse, many projects need access to capital to prosper. This Micmac acknowledge the importance of grant funding for success clearly in
the next passage. “In the two years since starting the farm project, ABM has spent over $130,000 of its own funds towards construction of the two buildings, purchasing equipment and operating the farm, and cannot afford to do the work needed to take the project into its next phase as a sustainable-agricultural business” (Grant 2, 2012b, p. 14).

Reliance becomes clearly illustrated with several behaviors in this passage. First, this states that the Micmac have exhausted their own funds, and the only way to develop their farm requires access to capital or federal money. The grant refers to the farm moving to the, “...next phase as a sustainable-agricultural business,” which represents a shift with how the tribe thinks about this food project. This statement clearly indicates the goals of the farm to be a sustainable business, which requires new behaviors such as planning and providing quality infrastructure. Interestingly, it also indicates this grant facilitates the, “next phase.” The use of “next phase” further solidifies the farm as an economic entity by suggesting transformation. In this case, grants serve to motivate this transformation through power, knowledge, and behaviors. The farm as an economic entity represents a significant transformation from where the farm started, however it still retains notions of health within this document and the farm itself.

In this document, language around health and food shifts. The Micmac Farms started as a community garden that focused on increasing access to healthy food. When discussing the community garden, health typically takes a primary position. Due to the success of this initial project, the tribe applied for a grant to expand their operation. The expansion represents the shift that occurs with language and behaviors on the farm: “With the success, the tribe decided to grow the farm into a natural resource-based economic development project to create jobs and generate income for its members”
In terms of farm behaviors, the farmers now must grow enough food for the tribe, as well as significant production to serve the farm as it becomes an economic venture. In a way, their first grant turned a community garden into a farm. This shift has implications around the behaviors exhibited around this project.

When the tribe received the first grant their project officially became a farm, which changed how people act and think. Actions and knowledge changed due to the discourse changing. In community-garden literature the promotion of health benefits from food represents a key behavior in the discourse (Kingsley, Townsend, & Henderson-Wilson, 2009; Fritze, 2002). However, moving into a farm brings the farming discourse and economics maintain a strong position in how people behave and think about farming. With the Micmac Farms, this becomes realized through the introduction of grants. These grants inhibit knowledge, power, and behaviors into the farm as required by the grant and in order to receive additional funding. The economic behaviors on the farm derive from the grants economic development goals, which become exhibited through increasing production through improved infrastructure and planning. As a result, the economic behaviors become more prevalent in the farm, which I have observed within my fieldwork and data collection. It becomes less about the health of the tribe and more about the health of the economic, which represents an interesting shift in behaviors and goals resulting from the introduction of outside funding and the stipulations attached to it. This does not negate all health-based actions on the farm; it simply puts them as a secondary function or benefit of the economic development of local agriculture. Now that I have identified these behaviors and how they operate through this population, the next step in this analysis involves understanding the historical discourse of farming that made
these behaviors possible. In other words, the grant documents just did not utilize random behaviors, they have very specific origins tied to power and economics, which now influence modern farming.

**Constructing Farming Discourse**

While constructing a discourse on farming, this research utilized historical documents to trace key moments in history that changed how farming production occurred because changes in production directly relates to the Micmac Farms and outside funding changing their production. Specifically, this analysis exposes traditional historical discourse by showing how power operates through production and thus controls populations of farmers as a result. In this section, this chapter constructs the farming discourse in the following sections: saving the free market, maximizing production minimizing cost, local agriculture local economics, and health.

**Saving the Free Market**

The first critical event in the United States farming discourse occurs during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl eras. The Great Depression manifested as a massive global-economic disaster. To exacerbate this already dire situation, the Dust Bowl represents an environmental disaster that occurred due to farming practices in the U.S. and Canadian prairie lands, which rendered these prime farmlands useless. These events created a situation that left farmers struggling. Hayes (2011) indicates, the first agriculture act derived from the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, in order to assist struggling farmers (p. 68). These events represent a shift in how farming existed in relation to the government.
Prior to these events, farming existed in the free market because it fluctuated with supply and demand as determined by the people. The Great Depression and Dust Bowl created a situation where this market failed. As a result, the government stepped in because of farming’s connection to health, safety, and welfare of the population (Hayes, 2010, p. 68). Hayes (2010) indicates this represents the beginning of federal involvement with the food system (p. 68). Additionally, it signifies the introduction of a large power source into food production, which has the capacity to mobilize populations in order to advance capitalism (Foucault, 1976, p. 141). In terms of farming behaviors, the solution to saving this market focused on subsidizing particular farms not to produce food in order to keep prices competitive and keep farmers in business. Power introduced this and as a result, it changed knowledge and behaviors of the farming population during this area. Pieces of this moment in history still contain behaviors in modern farming, as the transformation of the Micmac community garden into a farm changed behaviors as a result of outside funding, similar to how federal funding changing production of free-market farming. This notion of outside funding or financing becomes a reoccurring event within the discourse.

Financing becomes a reoccurring theme that continues to appear throughout farming discourse. This situation of federal funding saving domestic food production perfectly describes the rationale for the Micmac Farms, the farm started as a result of a population needing a stable source of food for security and health and it occurred through the use of outside funding. The connections to past behaviors help make the rationale behind the Micmac’s farm possible. Furthermore, two decades later food production underwent another drastic change
Maximizing Production Minimizing Cost

During the 1960s, the federal government changed the established behaviors from the previous era. During this time, the government increased the economic capacity of the farming discourse. In the 1960s, the President put an end to subsidizing farmers not to farm and started maximizing production and exporting food, and minimizing the price of food became a key focus (Hayes, 2010, p. 69). The previous behaviors made populations of farmers focus on delivering a steady source of food, never producing too much in order to keep prices competitive. Now farmers must grow and produce as much as their land yields, which represents a drastically different approach than the previous era. These behaviors become prevalent with the USDA as their education and research group started focusing on increasing annual production of food (Hayes, 2010, p. 69). So not only do farmers' exhibit the behaviors to produce as much food for as cheap as possible, but the USDA provides new behaviors to accomplish new farming practices. This drastic shift in production shows how influential power plays within the farming discourse and how it has the capacity to mobilize populations in order to achieve the economic goals of the farming discourse. Many of the actions and behaviors from this era become exhibited within the Micmac Farms. The idea of maximizing production and minimizing the cost represents a key focus of the farm. They maintain prices competitive with other stores, as well as the grocery store. Furthermore, similar to how the U.S. focused initially on feeding their own populations, now they export to other countries. The Micmac Farms underwent the same process as they started with a focus with their tribe, and now expand the sale of their produce to populations outside of that community. Additionally, this era produced Large American food companies, which contribute greatly to the American
Economy (Hayes, 2010, p. 68). This does not fit the mold of the Micmac’s farm, so local agriculture emerging in the 21st century plays a role in further understanding this tribal farm.

**Local Agriculture Local Economies**

_July 7th 2011 – “I helped one of the farmers make signs today in order to advertise our produce. They proved effective as customers soon picked up during the afternoon. One of the customers, a Franco American couple with quite the sense of humor came in. They were actually repeat customers from the year before and they were amazed that now there is an indoor market. The man exclaimed, “this is a good thing,” while admiring the new storage system. The wife later commented on how she likes the freshness of our food over the grocery store.”_

This history does not focus on the emergence of the local-food movement, but examines it to understand why it emerges and what behaviors it introduces to the farming discourse and the Micmac Farms. Data from a USDA Economic Research Service news brief on the food marketing system in the U.S. (www.ers.usda.gov) illustrates how consumer demand for local foodstuffs extends to new forms of retailing on a national level (Phillips, 2010, p. 218). Virginia Manuel (2010) indicates the USDA’s role in the State of Maine to promote regional and local food systems. This involvement occurs due to consumer interest in local food (Manuel, 2010). These examples show the interest in local food at the national, as well as the state level. A slight shift occurs in this era with food production. It does not completely changed like previous eras, but it incorporates support for local agriculture due to the consumer demand for it. The power system within food production recognizes consumer demand due to the important economics play, so
power continued to mobilize populations to produce mass quantities of cheap food while also organizing smaller groups of people to address consumer demands. This provides a critical point for making the Micmac Farms possible because demand for local food now includes small-scale farmers. So now that small-scale farms enter the discourse, where does their support come from?

Local agriculture in Maine has several obstacles to overcome. Libby (2010) indicates that Maine doesn’t have enough farming, distributing/marketing systems, and a committed public to make it happen (Libby, 2010, p. 61). Accordingly, current infrastructure cannot support increasing local food production in the state. Some sort of catalyst needs to happen in order for farming to expand. Financing the food system represents one way to improve it (Phillips, 2010, p. 216). The solution to finance food systems derives from the great depression era, which made this idea possible. When the free-market food system failed, outside funding allowed it to succeed, and now this same behavior represents the solution to modern problems with local food systems.

Furthermore, this notion of financing’s connection to success also becomes prevalent with the Micmac Farms, especially in relation to the grants. On the farm itself, a need always exists for additional funding to fix or improve infrastructure in order to maximize production, as well as to improve the planning and organization of each growing season. The grant frames these needs as being satisfied by grant funding, which will allow the farm to further develop as an economic enterprise. As a result, past conditions created the financing as a way to succeed concept within this discourse, so who will fund these projects?
Increased funding represents a way to develop local agriculture in Maine, but in a struggling economy both at the state and national level, where does it come from? Farming has limited access to capital (Phillips, 2010, p. 218). The capital needed to boost the food system outweighs what the private sector can afford (Phillips, 2010, p. 218). The USDA represents a key funder of projects in Maine. The USDA invested 417 million in 2010 with projects in Maine (Hayes, 2010, p. 73). With all the budget cuts, the USDA has begun a push to support local food systems with existing program funds (Hayes, 2010, p. 73). Overall, the introduction of outside funding created a situation where farms commonly need grants or a source of money in order to prosper, this occurs early in the discourse and continues to remerge through farmers, which becomes a behavior that the Micmac farmers exhibit, as well as becomes a crucial component of the future of their business. In a way, a system of power created this financing system that apparently has no end because after almost a hundred years, this reliance on financing with farm production has become naturalized. This discourse provides tremendous insight into understanding why these economic behaviors dominate the data I have collected in my research, and I still need to address where health fits into this discourse.

**Health**

Within farming discourse, addressing health disparities becomes accomplished while simultaneously generating economic gains. As a result, health-based initiatives around food may not receive as much federal interest. In the 21st century the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, a federal program, did not receive funding (Hayes, 2010, p. 72). Furthermore, the women, infant, and children (WIC), a program established with federal funding, received a 700 million dollar cut (Hayes, 2010, p. 73). These examples
represent programs that people facing food insecurity may utilize and the fact that even programs focusing on women and children face dramatic cuts makes it important to know how to address health problems. With the Micmac they have done this through farming. It may not become a key driver of a farm because the farming discourse relies strongly on economic behaviors, but as seen with the grants, the farm has clear goals for moving towards developing a healthy community. By pairing an economic development project with community health benefits, the project has a better chance of being funded opposed to solely health-based initiatives.

In sum, the Great Depression and the Dustbowl marked the first key events in changing how American produces food. The government intervened due to the relation of farming and the nation's health and security. This made it possible for the Micmac Farms to develop a rationale for developing farming to address tribal health and economic needs. The next major event occurred with the 1960s with the era of cheap food. The major behavior change here becomes exhibited through mass producing food to minimize cost. This changed the focus of the American farming system on local populations to exporting to other areas, which also arises with the Micmac's farm transitioning from a community garden to a farm. They now produce food for their people and other markets. In the 21st century, the public demand for local food has increased government funding for local farms, which becomes prevalent with the USDA supporting extensive projects in Maine. Within this time period, financing projects to produce success becomes a reemergent and dominant element of this discourse. Power established this notion of financing to succeed, which dominates this era. The farm grant documents support this by stating how the next steps to growing as a business involve grant funding. Furthermore,
the introduction of local agriculture into the discourse makes it possible for small-scale agriculture, like the Micmac, to exist. Lastly, health’s role in this discourse becomes realized through partnering with economic ventures as health-based initiatives in the 21st century face drastic budget cuts. Overall, this discourse sheds light on the economic behaviors that dominate the data I have collected with Micmac Farms. Furthermore, it also reveals the role power plays within the food system. Power in this system becomes associated with money and business. The ability to provide funding becomes a way to shape populations in order to move them towards economic goals, which also explains the behaviors I observed on the farm. It also helps me to understand why the absences in the data exist, because they did not belong in the farming discourse.

Closing Remarks

In closing, this project created more questions than answers. Due to the nature of this analysis, this chapter cannot explore how my conclusions fit into a broader context about subsistence farming within Native American communities. It would be interesting to explore how other projects similar to the Micmac function in regards to funding. Additionally, this chapter explored grants as a method of power to control agriculture, what other methods exist? Lastly, another major paper focuses on understanding the conditions that created health disparities within the Micmac in general. Despite these unanswered questions, the conclusions in this chapter move my research forward by addressing why particular themes did not arise in my data.

My research with the Micmac left me with many unanswered questions, much of what I thought might occur on the farm, did not, so I began to explore what did arise. Many of the behaviors occurred as economics, how can we sell more food? I analyzed
two grants from the farm in order to illustrate economic behaviors I observed. Through this chapter, I explained why these behaviors dominated my data by generating a discourse on farming. This discourse developed through observing where key events within farming shaped behaviors of this discourse. Now that these behaviors have been established, it becomes possible to see how they become embodied through populations, such as the Micmac. For my research, it has helped me to understand why economics constantly arose as an observation on the farm, because economics represents the core of the farming discourse. Furthermore, grants play a key role in the expression of power in the farming discourse. The grant shapes actions on the farm, which moves this population to accomplishing larger goals of economic development, which represents a very different position than the health focus the tribe’s community garden had. These behaviors became dominated by economics when they became a farm. The money they used to do this transformed the possibilities that can occur on the farm, which has economics at the forefront.
August 26th 2011 – “Today represented my last day as a farmer. It seems logical to discuss this in relation to this section of my thesis, as both eventually come to a close. I remember very distinctly how people talked to me and about me: They dreaded my final day as much as I did. Every week I drove away from the farm, except this week I drove away for the last time. As my now friends stood up from the task that held their focus and waved, I knew I could no longer serve them in the same capacity as I did throughout the summer, I now had the privilege and responsibility of representing them as a researcher.”

Throughout this project, I always believed my role as a researcher meant maintaining a strong fidelity to my audience. My role has shifted from farmer, to facilitating collaboration, as I introduce the tribe to organizations to partner with in order to promote the success of the Micmac Farms. The data I collected allowed me as a research to generate scholarship to not only promote tribal needs but contribute to communication scholarship as well. From this approach I have generated two key texts, an analysis of risk communication on the farm and a genealogy of farming. Prior to discussing these texts, I wanted to reflect on my experience as an ethnographic researcher.

In my methods section I discuss extensively how ethnographic researchers work within a community, and instead of providing a summation of that work, I wanted to share what stood out the most for me. The role of the researcher plays an important role in ethnography, and I reflected on this constantly. I took diligent notes on how people talked about me, like when people referred to me as a farmer. For me, this signified my
acceptance into the community. I struggled early on about balancing the roles of farming and being a researcher. As I stated in the introduction, I wanted to be there more and more, but I couldn’t. I had the opportunity to continue my work with the tribe in the summer of 2012, and I learned more about the role of a researcher from this experience.

When I returned to the tribal offices in 2012, I thought back to my first meeting with the tribe in 2011 during the same month. My first visit, the community members viewed me as an outsider and it took a few weeks before I felt accepted into the community. When I returned in 2012, people greeted me as a friend, as a community member. They shook my hand, joked with me, and smiled. I think they appreciated me returning because typically organizations working with them do not make the long trip to visit them. I have heard them refer to themselves as the forgotten tribe, referring to their relationship with organizations working with Maine tribes. My ability to serve them within their community added greatly to the relationship we developed on an individual level, as well as my standing as an individual representing the university. Above all, it made me realize that the type of work that I do with native communities does not happen with one trip because the relationships continue. I realized this when I returned the following summer. It also made me think about my role as a researcher and a community member and how to balance these two positions to serve the community I work with. In addition to my presence on the farm, I continue to support them with my research as a communication scholar.

As a scholar, I wrote two key chapters to help the farm and contribute to communication scholarship and the first utilized risk communication. My analysis using risk communication allowed me to develop an understanding of the significance of this
project. The Micmac traditionally lived as a migratory people, moving based on the season for food. Once they were removed from this system, the tribe no longer controlled their food system or their economies. The commencement of a farm signifies regaining control over their own destiny as a tribal nation. The farm allows for them to not only supply their people with fresh food, it also allows for local employment. Regaining control represents the significance of this project, so in relation to risk, this chapter explores systems that threaten that value. From fieldwork and focus groups, this chapter examines two key themes: economic constraints and not planning and operating correctly, in relation to threatening the viability of this farm. Economic constraints derive from the fact that this project has limited money due to it being grant funded. As a result, management restricts the amount of workers and hours people can work on the farm, which form an interesting dialectic between needing more money to pay farmers and the farmers needing more hours to provide more food to the customers. Not planning and operating correctly focuses on communication structures and how the farm delegates tasks. This theme explains how cases of one-way communication impacted the farm by causing tasks to take longer to complete, which negates other tasks that need to be completed, which directly impacts the farm as a business. In sum, this chapter highlights the significance of the farm in that it allows the tribe to regain control of their own destiny through food and economic security, and I utilized risk to identify prevalent risks with communication that threaten the success of the farm. While writing this thesis, I also learned a lot about bridging the gap between my studies as a student and real life implications.
When I describe my work within communication studies, I find I fall mostly into applied communication and this contributed greatly to my success as a student. I have completed 19 years of school and I often remember asking, "when am I ever going to use this?" I think that question stood in the back of my mind throughout my undergraduate experience and it remained unanswered. I finally began to address this with this thesis and my Masters degree at the University of Maine. The work I produced for this thesis was real. My work with the farm allowed me to develop a richer and deeper understanding of communication scholarship because I could use my experience with the Micmac as a way to understand it, and at the same time, the communication literature informed the work I completed with the Micmac. Additionally, the work I produced as a scholar served a community that I became apart of, and this made me work harder to produce higher quality work to serve this community, which played a role in my academic achievements. The next chapter I wrote from my work with the Micmac used rhetoric to understand discourses operating in and through the farm.

My fourth chapter draws on Foucault to produce a genealogy of farming. This approached helped me to address unanswered questions with my research. During my three months with the tribe, my field work and interviews do not produce significant data about past food traditions, health, or sovereignty. Furthermore, the behaviors I observed on the farm focused on economics, such as needing additional hours, more equipment, and improved infrastructure. In this chapter reading vast amounts of documents represents the first step in a genealogy. I read newspapers, grants, and the Maine Policy Review special issue on food to create a discourse around farming. I utilized Foucault's notion of the lines of descent to uncover key moments in the discourse that changed
behaviors within farming, such as the great depression and the current local food movement. Economics becomes the focus of all of these lines of descent, it just materializes differently throughout history and descent attaches to the body in particular behaviors. These behaviors become an unspoken part of the discourse, which operates through populations. In sum, this approach helped me move closer to these unanswered questions because I began to recognize why I observed so many economic behaviors on the farm. It happened because once the Micmac chose to become a farm, it became apart of this discourse and the economic driver of the discourse began to operate through this population of people, which becomes prevalent in their behaviors as well as how they frame the project in relation to their goals.

As a developing academic, I found combining the risk and genealogy perspectives very rewarding. This approach provides an example of how researchers and communities can collaborate and mutually attain their goals. The research with SSI and Maine EPSCoR maintains a strong fidelity to serving communities, and as an academic, departments require outputs, such as journal articles. The outputs of communities and universities do not match up well. My duel approach of empirical and rhetorical analysis show researchers may bridge the gap and produce outputs that satisfy multiple parties within collaborative research. For instance, both the risk and rhetoric chapters I drafted with the intent to submit for publication, and within these chapters, I have findings such as identifying risks to the business or understanding how grant documents influence the goals of the farm, directly feed back into the community and their goals.

My key findings for this dual approach center on supporting the farm as a business. The risk chapter allowed me to work heavily within the data to find problematic
areas with the farm management. Risk of economic constraints and not planning and operating correctly became key outputs that improve how the farm functions as a business. Additionally, my genealogical analysis illustrated the roles grants with the behaviors on the farm. This may serve the community by allowing them to work within this structure by finding grants that better align with their goals. The outputs for these chapters and the Micmac both align, but I cannot send these chapters as they are to the Micmac, as they would not be culturally responsive and appropriate. Most importantly, they would not be helpful.

I cannot submit the chapters I have drafted for communication audiences to the Micmac, so I needed a different medium to deliver their outputs. In addition to the two chapters I wrote for this thesis, I drafted a technical report of my key findings, which I plan on implementing when I return to the farm during the summer of 2012. The findings from my risk and rhetoric chapters do not differ greatly from the technical report, but I needed to frame them differently for the Micmac. My experience as a farmer made the framing of this document easier because I know and understand my audience so well. A technical report with these findings shows how collaborative research benefits multiple parties involved within a project. In addition to this technical report, my work with this thesis and tribe made me consider what counts as research outputs.

As I stated earlier, the tribe appreciated my general involvement because I made the commitment to visit them. In my time there, I recognized that organizations typically invite them to southern locations but do not reciprocate and visit on their land. The fact that I worked with them in their community stands out as an output. My immersion also helped people involved with the farm to understand the significance of this farm. They
may not express it how I do in this thesis, but they feel it because they live it. Alongside my presence on the farm, the tribe recognizes increased collaboration as another output.

As my role on the farm changes, I find my role shifting to a community consultant. In one occasion in this role I invited the farm staff to meet at the university to discuss the project, which led to increasing collaboration with other organizations. From one partnership and one meeting, the tribe now works with numerous groups to assist on all areas of the farm, such as grant writing, processing, and aquaculture. On other occasions, the tribe has recognized press releases as also serving as a significant output. They brought this up due to how these documents raised awareness about the farm while increasing the amount of customers to the farm. My experience on the farm as an ethnographic researcher made me reconsider what counts as outputs, and I have heard other students and researchers struggle with this. They struggle because they want to do more, but they might have, it just may not look like what a university considers an output. I find it important to reflect on these smaller outputs as I have outlined in the last two paragraphs. It helped me understand how a community perceived outputs because these small outputs created large impacts for the community my research served. This research accomplished objectives for the community and communication scholarship, however, my approach has several limitations as well.

Limitations

As I mentioned in previous chapters, one of my major limitations focuses on generalizability. Over 500 federally recognized tribes exist in the United States, and they all operate very differently. For instance, the tribes within Maine share a common history and language, however, all operate distinctly from one another. Therefore, conclusions
drawn from the Aroostook Band of Micmac do not easily generalize to other tribal nations. For instance, Aroostook County represents the most agricultural intense county in the state, which certainly contributed to the Micmac Farms being a possible and rational concept. Other tribes may not have such a local or rich history with farming to draw on. As a result, I do not argue that other tribes cannot learn from the Micmac Farms, simply, my research does not attempt to generalize because other tribes have particular conditions that impact how they think about food and farming. The scope of this project cannot reach each unique situation.

In addition to limitations amongst tribes in the United States, this analysis also has limitations within the Micmac Tribe. The Micmac have thousands of members and 29 bands of tribes located mostly in Canada. The Aroostook Band of Micmac represents the only band located outside of Canada. The spatial difference creates limitations. The Canadian bands of Micmac operate differently and have different governmental influences, so the conclusions drawn from the Aroostook Band do not easily generalize amongst all Micmac. The United States and specifically Maine, has institutions like the USDA who currently contribute to developing local agriculture, especially in communities such as the Micmac. These conditions may or may not exist for the Canadian bands. Again, these differences do not mean other tribes cannot learn from the Aroostook Band; it means that the other Micmac bands operate under different conditions and the scope of this project cannot address them.

Another limitation of my research results from my proximity to the research, which also becomes a point for future research. I analyzed all the data I collected myself, with help from my advisors. Therefore, the proximity I have to the data prevents me from
seeing other themes. For instance, one of my advisors identified many risks that I did not consider or did not see while writing my chapter on risk. As a result, collaborating more with other researchers offers potential to write additional papers using the data sets I have collected.

**Future Directions**

My first avenue for future research derives from my methods of analysis. Both my participant observation and data analysis I completed by hand. I chose to do this because I read through the data so often; it became easier just to write notes for analysis as I went along. The same process continued after I transcribed my focus groups. I used these notes as a starting place for my analysis. Transcribing all of my notes and using software such as NVivo offers additional opportunities to explore themes and language use within the farm. Overall, by collaborating with additional researchers and using software such as NVivo, I can continue working with the data sets to produce additional papers exploring themes that my analysis methods overlooked. Another question worth researching derives from the origins of the grants that funded the Micmac Farms.

This project drives from the federal initiative; “Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer,” which encourages local-agriculture production. In order to get a complete picture of what this federal initiative did for local agriculture, the conditions that led to the development of the Micmac Farms would need to be compared to other farms affected by this federal funding. Does it matter whether or not a tribe developed this farm? Does a tribal farm provide more or less access to capital to develop economic enterprises like a farm? These questions cannot be addressed within the scope of this
project, but it has important implications for food insecurity research. Furthermore, my discourse analysis also offers several avenues for additional research.

Throughout my discourse analysis, I have developed several ideas for additional papers on farming discourse. When analyzing a discourse on farming, focused heavily on understanding the role economic incentives played on the Micmac Farms and how these incentives control this population’s behaviors. In addition to incentives such as grants, what other methods of control exist that influence farming populations? In 2007, U.S. farms generated 297 billion and accounted for 41% of the nation’s land area (Gabe, McConnon, & Kersbergen, 2010, p. 37). The power that operates within the farming discourse clearly has success in generating vast quantities of capital, and additional research may shed light on the methods power uses to mobilize these populations.

Besides economics, another paper that I know needs to be written focused on health. Health remains as the foremost motivation for the commencement of the Micmac food project. They originally sought a way to alleviate health disparities observed within the tribe, such as obesity and diabetes, but what allowed for such great health disparities to occur in the first place? “One might say that the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault, 1976, p. 138). The ability to, “disallow it (life) to the point of death” clearly has a role with the health disparities, such as food insecurity and poor nutrition, which provided the motivation for the Micmac Farms. To understand this, future work needs to address the interaction of power within the discourse of the Micmac Food system. My discourse analysis briefly addresses how power acts through this discourse to change the behaviors
of the Micmac, but it needs to be the focus of an analysis to fully address why the tribe faces health issues not seen in other areas of the state.

**Farm Reflections**

I have a difficult time stepping back and thinking about the farm as if I were an outsider, because I have been so close to this research for so long. I also find that how I view the farm slightly different than the administrators of the farm and the farmers, and I don’t mean from a researcher or academic perspective. I have accepted that this already influences how I interpret my experience, but I am talking about myself as a member of the farm. On the farm two groups exist, the administrators and the farmers, and throughout my research I found myself going between the two groups and being able to see what each group cannot. For instance, in my risk chapter I discuss how both workers and administrators feel pressure to increase employment. The pressure occurs differently with each group. The farmers feel the direct pressure from the amount of tasks that need to be accomplished, and the administrators watch the budget carefully to ensure funding exists to support the farm’s current operations. These two groups feel the same pressure, but they view it very differently and my experience allowed me insight into both, which also creates a perspective of the farm that neither group has at the moment.

I try to think of the words to describe how I view the farm and the first analogy I come up with is the Maine Sustainability Solutions Initiative (MESSI). As apart of the Knowledge to Action team, we actively engage in interdisciplinary research with communities, similar to what I have accomplished with the Micmac. We often joke that this time of research is MESSI because for one it has many difficulties and many
rewards. We are also learning about how to do this type of research while engaging in it. I feel this analogy works very well when I try and distance myself from the farm.

Now the farm could be MESSI in the most literal sense, but I see a similar process occurring on the farm as with our research team. The farm and those involved with it learn through doing. They did not have time to study how to be farmers or run a farm. The administrators took an opportunity when it presented itself and now this project stands as the tribe’s first successful economic venture. This project matters the most for the people, for the tribal members. When the idea of a farm entered the community, pessimistic attitudes began to arise regarding whether or not this farm would actually succeed. Attitudes like this likely arise due to a historical familiarity with opportunities claiming to help that ended failing. The farm became identified as another reoccurrence of the same behavior. However, the farm has not left and continues to grow. It continues to grow in the literal sense, as a business, and for the community. My thesis has already addressed the first two areas, but I think how the farm grows the community describes how this project truly matters.

The farm helps grow the community through bringing positivity. As one administrator stated, “it’s easier to build from success.” The fact that the Micmac farm continues to develop as a business begins to address the pessimistic attitudes I discussed in the previous paragraph, and it also provides opportunities for continual development of tribal resources. For instance, a company wanting to grow tobacco in Maine contacted the Micmac to work with them. This would not have happened without the farm and now the tribe can grow tobacco for ceremonial purposes, which it formally did not have. In this example, the farm develops economically, which benefits the tribe, as well as culturally.
by bringing the opportunity for the tribe to obtain tobacco grown by native people on
their land. I think that properly states why this project truly matters because it benefits the
people, they have the most to lose and gain from this project. As a whole, the project
represents the people, which is why making it successful very meaningful. To support
that success, I have two key suggestions.

My first suggestion to contribute to the Micmac farms has to do with
management. In the summer of 2012 the tribe hired a farm manager to oversee the day to
day actions of the farm. From what I have seen, this person may fill that position I held as
between administrators and farmers. The manager has worked in farming for over a
decade, which brings an intimate level of knowledge of what resources the farm needs to
complete various tasks. This did not exist before. In order for the manager to function
effectively, all matters related to the farm from both administrators and farmers needs to
occur through that person. In other words, the farm manager must also function as the
medium in which communication occurs from administrators to the farm and farmers to
the administrators. As outlined in chapter 3, miscommunication on the farm occurs
because administrators prioritize tasks differently, which leads to the farmers completing
tasks improperly. The farm manager may alleviate this if administrators submit their
input through this person, and then the manager becomes the only person to prioritize the
day to day tasks. However, if administrators continue to delegate tasks to the farmers,
then communication and management systems may break down and the problem repeats
itself. This represents a short-term suggestion for the farm. I also have one suggestion
that may take longer to accomplish.
Building and incorporating the farm into the Micmac represents another large goal of this project, which I have struggled with the more I learn about it. I attended a food studies conference and many presenters discussed how community develops around food and cited literature claiming this as well. I felt that nobody described clear plans on how to develop community around food, it occurred more or less spontaneously. The one answer I did receive suggested that it merely takes time. I think this makes sense because solutions do not just present themselves, and as one of my advisors states, “you must feed your brain.” No food pun intended, but this conference didn’t uncover a plan, it served to feed my brain. I began to think of solutions to building community with the Micmac that would be culturally responsible, and I started with the youth.

I am not a youth in the sense of how I am going to describe it, but as a young-native scholar, the Micmac viewed me as a youth and supported my research because they wanted to help me. My plan to encourage the development of community around the farm stems from this same notion. The Micmac have two youth programs, the little feathers and the boys and girls club, the former being primarily for the youngest children. My plan can start with both programs, but it involves educating the youth with food systems and why they matter. This can be accomplished through many movies produced in recent times such as Food Inc. While learning about food systems, the youth must also learn from the elders to learn what food means for the Micmac. From here the youth may branch into a garden program and cooking classes which provide food for the youth and elders programs. Involving the youth and elders within the farm have been needs expressed by the community. Along with this education component, another program must exist for older youth.
My idea for programs for older youth derived from an existing job program for the Passamaquoddy. Each summer the Passamaquoddy recruit high school youth to work amongst the community earning both money and real-world skills. Another need expressed by the community for the farm centers on providing opportunities for this population in the Micmac community. From the farmers’ perspective, they suggest that past initiatives have not worked because the youth have not been dedicated to the success of the farm. For instance, when the farm pays people to pick by the pound, individuals start picking everything including unripe produce, because more pounds equals a larger pay check. Unfortunately the pay checks soon end because the work does not meet satisfactory standards. A program involving the Micmac youth must solve this problem.

During a meeting discussing the farm, a community member also expressed a need for the farm to provide more food to tribal members. My plan addresses both the problem with the Micmac youth and need for more food. It involves employing high school youth to implement a Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) delivery program. A Micmac CSA would include a variety of seasonal produce delivered each week directly to tribal families for a set cost, which can also be paid for with food assistance programs. The youth will be responsible for contacting families on the reservation to sell CSAs to each family. After generating a list of interested families, they will begin work on the farm preparing each CSA. As I have learned through experience, when you directly sell produce, it strongly influences your work ethic, which should translate into youth preparing a product that they can be proud of. The voices of their satisfied or unsatisfied customers will also contribute to their work ethic. A successful CSA program also addresses the need to provide more food to tribal members. I have also experienced that
the proximity of the farm to the Micmac population also acts as a barrier to tribal members obtaining produce. The transportation needed to move the young-business entrepreneurs to and from the farm can also bring the packaged CSAs to the tribal administration offices, which is located in close proximity to the people who need this food. Above all, the education and CSA work opportunities provide greater interaction between the Micmac community and the farm, the problem I have struggled with the most.

Final Remarks

As my project and this thesis come to a close, I cannot say goodbye. Simply driving away from the farm for the last time does not signify the end of the partnership, this collaboration that I created between the tribe, myself, and the university, continues as it begins to take another shape. I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in this type of research. It made the work I do meaningful and significant. It allowed me to generate research useful to the community I worked with. It also contributed to communication scholarship through two articles, one utilizing risk communication and the other, a genealogy of farming, which became key pieces of this thesis. In closing, community-based research contributed greatly to my master’s education and what I learned about research methods, and above all, generating quality research that serves the community of study.
REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Anthony Sutton was born in Fresno, CA, on August 5th, 1986. He spent a majority of his life living in Oregon, where he attended Western Oregon University (WOU) in Monmouth. He graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Social Science.

In the summer of 2008, he moved across the U.S. to Augusta, ME, where he served as a Maine Conservation Corps Environmental Educator. In Augusta, Sutton used his skills of research, writing, and teaching attained from WOU to serve the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) education and outreach sector. Sutton spent nine months working closely the DEP’s partner organization, The Maine Energy Education Program to promote environmental literacy around the energy choices citizens make, from electrical use to transportation. At the end of his term of service, Sutton reapplied for another nine months of service, which expanded his experience with teaching, creating curriculum, and managing large data sets.

After two very rewarding years with the Maine Conservation Corps, Sutton began to move towards his goal of graduate education at the University of Maine in 2010. In the fall of 2010, Sutton entered into a Communication Masters program, where he attained a graduate teaching assistantship, as well as a research assistantship. He is grateful for these assistantships as they contributed greatly to his success as a student and as a developing scholar. Anthony is a candidate for the Master of Arts in Communication from The University of Maine in August, 2012.