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A systematic literature review of Indigenous food sharing practices to inform the design of transformative food-service initiatives and experiences

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Abstract

Purpose – Indigenous cultural food practices are widely recognised for strengthening the wellbeing of families and communities. Traditionally, these practices also involve the sharing of surplus food to maintain communal harmony and ecological balance. However, modern societies tend to disregard these practices and rather discard food. These actions counteract attempts of current surplus food redistribution initiatives. This study undertakes a systematic literature review to explore how Indigenous food sharing practices can inform the design of contemporary surplus food-service initiatives and reshape perceptions of service experiences.

Design/methodology/approach – Following the PRISMA protocol, a Scopus search was performed using the keywords "food" and "shar*" in Indigenous-focused journals. Twenty-five papers met the inclusion criteria, and the extracted data were scrutinised using thematic analysis.

Findings – This review shows that food sharing practices have been central to all Indigenous cultures examined. The findings identify several determinants and forms of food sharing that contribute to all aspects of wellbeing. However, multiple barriers exist that limit these practices. Addressing these barriers requires capacity building strategies, i.e. integrating cultural insights into the co-design of contemporary

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transformative food-service initiatives can enable sustainable service design and positive service experiences.

Originality/value – This review is both timely and relevant to the service design and transformative service research literature, as it provides a foundation for co-designing effective transformative food-service initiatives.

Keywords Indigenous food sharing practices, Surplus food redistribution, Transformative service research, Service design, Circular economy

Paper type Literature review

1. Introduction

Existing sub-optimal food system configurations create a paradox where 2.33 billion people experience moderate or severe food insecurity (FAO, 2024), yet global food loss and waste exceed US$1tn per annum (UNEP, 2024). Edible surplus food that becomes waste not only represents a missed opportunity to address hunger but also negatively affects social, economic and environmental wellbeing (Agarwal *et al.*, 2024). Over the past decade, numerous food programmes and initiatives have emerged to address food insecurity and unsustainable food consumption. However, many have been criticised for failing to empower individuals and for perpetuating stigma associated with the acceptance of surplus food (Vittuari *et al.*, 2017). Consumers' lack of proper service experiences with such initiatives limits the overall effectiveness of these food waste reduction programmes (Middleton *et al.*, 2018). To improve the effectiveness of these efforts, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, 2021) advocates for learning from Indigenous Peoples' food systems and adopting cultural practices to enhance food security and strengthen systemic capacity to reduce food waste.

Indigenous Peoples are the ancestral inhabitants of lands across six continents, with cultures predating colonisation and modern nation-states. They are recognised by their distinct cultures, unique knowledge and belief systems (Knorr and Augustin, 2025). Hofstede (1984, p. 21) describes culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another". Lindsay (2005) notes that most Indigenous cultures generally emphasise collectivism (prioritising communal over personal wellbeing), low power distance (shared decision-making), low uncertainty avoidance (adaptability to changing circumstances) and high femininity (nurturing social values). These cultures prioritise long-term sustainability by placing strong emphasis on intergenerational knowledge transfer and preservation of traditions (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024).

FAO, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (2021) and Kawharu (2020) argue that combining Indigenous and contemporary knowledges can strengthen food systems. Building on this idea, incorporating Indigenous cultural practices of food sharing into the design of contemporary service-based food initiatives (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Fillion *et al.*, 2014) can meaningfully engage consumers in experiences that enhance overall wellbeing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). Designing services is acknowledged as a transformative force for systemic change, developing effective solutions and creating holistic service experiences (Karpen *et al.*, 2017; Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021). As Indigenous cultural values can serve as vital enablers of sustainable consumption initiatives (Edmonds, 2012), service design can create conditions to translate these values into contextual or unique service experiences (Yu and Sangiorgi, 2018). Thus, this paper leverages service design approaches from transformative service research (TSR) (Ostrom *et al.*, 2015) to inform the blueprint of surplus food-service initiatives that integrate Indigenous food sharing practices. It specifically adopts transformative service design principles (Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021), including: *overall transformation* (action-oriented, human-centred and collaborative approaches for developing new service futures), *scope* (shared visions to align multiple perspectives and enable value co-creation), *endurance* (reforms for

long-term change) and *paradigmatic radicalness* (challenging conventional ways of doing things by envisioning or experimenting with radically new services). By applying these design principles, it reconfigures standard food initiatives into transformative food-service initiatives. Table 1 presents the definition of key terms used in this SLR.

2. Theoretical background: Commonalities between transformative service research and Indigenous food sharing practices

The emerged domain of TSR at the intersection of wellbeing and service research (Finsterwalder *et al.*, 2025) underscores the necessity for systemic change by establishing transformative service initiatives to empower people and maximise wellbeing outcomes (Boenigk *et al.*, 2021). Notably, TSR's shared vision of creating possibilities to enhance holistic wellbeing through collaborative, human- and eco-centric approaches aligns with Indigenous cultural values of collectivism and environmental stewardship (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2023; Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). While TSR aims to achieve multi-level wellbeing outcomes by using transformative services and supportive ecosystems (Finsterwalder *et al.*, 2025), Indigenous cultural values emphasise collaborative, regenerative approaches to sustain holistic wellbeing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Kawharu, 2020).

TSR views wellbeing as a co-created process, centred on balanced and reciprocal relationships, where actors integrate their resources to achieve mutual benefits (Finsterwalder and Tombs, 2021). Similarly, reciprocal relationships are central to Indigenous social and cultural practices, in which community members share resources without an immediate expectation of return (Wenzel, 1995). Additionally, both streams advocate environmental

Table 1. Definitions of key terms

Terms	Definitions	Authors
Food waste	"Food appropriate for human consumption being discarded or left to spoil at the consumer level – regardless of the cause"	HLPE, 2014, p. 22
Surplus food	"[I]s the edible food that is produced, manufactured, retailed or served but for various reasons is not sold to or consumed by the intended customer"	Garrone *et al.*, 2014, p. 133
Food sharing	"The unresisted transfer of food from One food-motivated individual to another"	Jaeggi and Gurven, 2013, p. 186
Food security	"A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"	FAO, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, 2024, p. 55
Culture	"The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of One group from another"	Hofstede, 1984, p. 21
Wellbeing	"Quality of life, as well as the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world in accordance with a sense of meaning and purpose"	WHO, 2021
Transformative service research	TSR aims at creating "uplifting changes and improvements in the wellbeing of individuals, families, social networks, communities, cities, nations, collectives, and ecosystems"	Ostrom *et al.*, 2010, p. 6
Transformative service initiatives	Efforts or activities performed by organisations to address long-term challenges and maximise wellbeing outcomes	Boenigk *et al.*, 2021
Service design	"Service design represents a human-centred, creative, iterative approach to the creation of new services"	Ostrom *et al.*, 2015, p. 136

stewardship and collaboration to reduce social inequalities (Kabadayi *et al.*, 2023; Omura, 2023; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2023). Together, these shared principles establish a solid foundation for an integrated approach to redesigning contemporary transformative food-service initiatives to disrupt conventional ways of dealing with surplus food.

Despite the scant inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in recent TSR studies (e.g. Finsterwalder and Tombs, 2021; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2023), Indigenous food sharing practices remain underrepresented in efforts to drive systemic change from wasteful, linear models towards regenerative food-service ecosystems. Nevertheless, the broader literature confirms that inclusion of cultural dimensions shapes perceptions of service experiences (Furrer *et al.*, 2000). Ladhari *et al.* (2025) highlight the importance of embedding cultural dimensions into the design of sustainable service experiences and explicitly call for further research. In addition, Vink *et al.* (2025) emphasise that service design must draw lessons from Indigenous practices to guide transformative efforts. To address these gaps, the present study conducts a *thematic Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) on Indigenous food sharing practices. The objective is to incorporate these themes into the design of contemporary food-service initiatives to improve consumer engagement and shape perceptions of transformative service experiences.

While some scholars have reviewed Indigenous food systems for transformative change in certain regions (Zimmermann *et al.*, 2023), none have examined the potential of integrating Indigenous food practices into service initiatives for redistributing surplus food. Therefore, for the TSR domain, this review fills this gap. It identifies the key cultural aspects of Indigenous food sharing practices, specifically the underlying reasons why Indigenous Peoples share food, identifies various types of redistributing surplus food and pinpoints the resulting dimensions of wellbeing. The findings of this SLR offer practical guidance for overcoming barriers and building capacity to transition towards regenerative food systems. This can be achieved by designing transformative service initiatives that enable the dignified and meaningful redistribution of surplus food. Thus, this paper addresses the following research question:

How can cultural food sharing practices of Indigenous Peoples inform the design of contemporary food sharing initiatives and novel transformative service experiences for surplus food sharing?

This paper is organised into four main sections. Section 2 describes the SLR methodology, outlining the key stages of planning and conducting the review. Section 3 presents the findings from the reviewed literature, followed by Section 4 that identifies themes from Indigenous food sharing practices. Finally, Section 5 discusses how these themes can be integrated into the design of food-service initiatives, examines practical implications and identifies directions for future research.

3. Materials and methods

This thematic SLR adheres to the PRISMA framework (Page *et al.*, 2021) to ensure a transparent and reproducible research design (Pickering and Byrne, 2014). Adopting these guidelines enhances the reliability of the SLR strategy used to systematically identify, evaluate and synthesise relevant literature by minimising biases in the selection of Indigenous-focused studies. The protocol for literature identification, screening and final selection is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram displayed in Figure 1.

3.1 Eligibility criteria

As non-Indigenous researchers conducting this review, we acknowledge the complexities of presenting Indigenous knowledge (Raciti, 2023). To uphold the credibility of Indigenous voices and lower the risk of a lack of reliability, we selected articles published in Scimago-ranked (*Q1–Q4*) journals explicitly committed to Indigenous scholarship. Journals were identified as Indigenous-

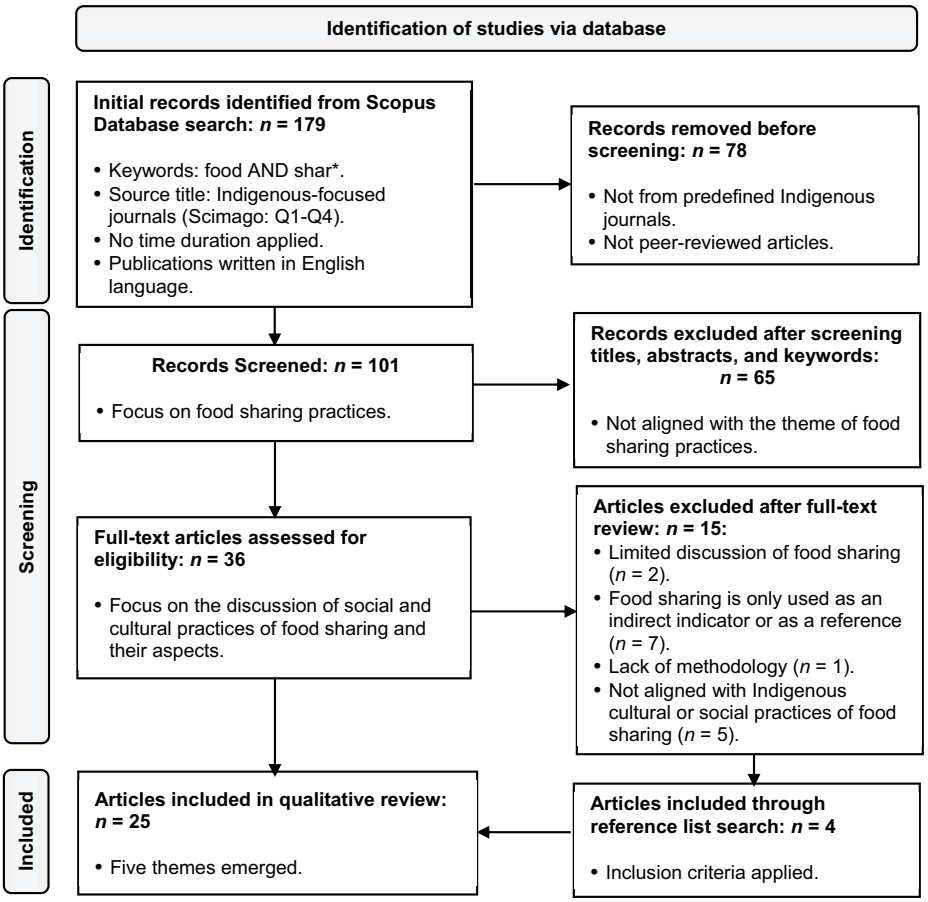

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the literature search and selection process (Page *et al.*, 2021)
Source: Authors' own work

focused when their title, scope, aims, objectives and website stated a commitment to Indigenous knowledge systems and communities. This focus ensured that findings emerged primarily from Indigenous scholars and community-led research. Such an approach ensured that the published literature reflected authentic Indigenous cultural protocols, worldviews and epistemologies that mainstream journals may have overlooked by imposing a deductive or reductionist lens on the Indigenous concepts and ways of knowing (Drawson *et al.*, 2017). Insights from Indigenous cultural food sharing practices can provide a foundational blueprint for redesigning modern food-service initiatives. Integrating these practices into the service design of novel food initiatives can facilitate their transferability to modern contexts across urban, multicultural and digital service landscapes. For these reasons, excluding mainstream journals was a strategic choice.

3.2 Search strategy and study selection

To ensure the selection of highly relevant and high-quality literature, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, as presented in Table 2. To retrieve relevant literature on

Indigenous food sharing practices, a list of 77 Indigenous-focused journals was organically compiled through an extensive online search of institutional repositories, library catalogues, publisher websites and academic databases. This list was developed with the assistance of an Indigenous scholar, which provides a layer of cultural validity and key insights on selecting source titles. The first author compiled the initial list, which was then independently reviewed by the other authors to verify the Indigenous focus of the compiled source titles. Each journal on the list was categorised according to its corresponding Scimago-ranked quartile. As of 31st March 2025, 30 of these journals were identified as Scimago-ranked and subsequently used as source titles for the keyword search in Scopus (see Table A1 for the list of ranked journals).

The Scopus database was searched to retrieve articles from a predefined list of 30 Indigenous-focused journals. The final search was conducted in Scopus on 31st March 2025 using the string: TITLE-ABS-KEY (food AND shar*) AND SRCTITLE ("Journal Name 1" OR "Journal Name 2" OR "…" OR "Journal Name 30"). This search string was chosen to capture the social and cultural dimensions of food sharing practices across Indigenous cultures. The search limited its parameters to English, the predominant language in scientific publications. This study examined research and review journal articles and did not apply any time restriction to the search criteria. This was because food sharing practices among Indigenous Peoples have been longstanding cultural customs over time.

The Scopus search retrieved 179 records. After verifying the source titles against our predefined list of journals, 78 records were removed. No duplicates were found, and the remaining 101 records were exported to Excel for screening. Authors one and two independently screened all titles, abstracts and keywords. To ensure the focus on food sharing practices, disagreements regarding record inclusion ($n = 8$) were resolved at a consensus meeting. Through discussion, all authors mutually determined the eligibility of the contested records. This further clarified and defined the body of records included after full-text assessment. In total, 65 records were excluded.

Table 2. Summary of inclusion and exclusion criteria

Database	Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion	Reasons for exclusion
Scopus	Source type	Journal	Book chapters, conference proceedings, trade journals and commentaries	Lack of peer-review process
	Journals	Indigenous-focused	Other mainstream journals	To preserve cultural epistemic integrity that mainstream journals often neglect
	Journal ranking	All Scimago quartiles (Q1–Q4)	Unranked journals in Scimago	Risk of low reliability
	Language	English	Other than English	English is the pre-dominant language for scientific publications
	Period	No time duration applied		
	Relevance to topic	Focus on Indigenous practices of food sharing	Not aligned with Indigenous cultural or social practices of food sharing	Limited discussion, indirect indicators only, only used as references, missing formal methodology
	Additional publications	Snowball sampling		

Source(s): Authors' own work

The remaining 36 records underwent full-text assessments to evaluate their focus on socio-cultural dimensions of food sharing and their broader aspects. After reviewing the records, the authors agreed to exclude 15 records. Five articles ($n = 5$) were excluded due to misalignment with Indigenous food sharing practices, as their discussions referred to unrelated food topics (e.g. political motives, cooking classes and nutrition). Seven records ($n = 7$) were ineligible because food sharing was used only as an indirect or passing reference. Two studies ($n = 2$) did not meet the inclusion criteria because they lacked in-depth discussion. One article ($n = 1$) was excluded for insufficient reporting of the methodology used. This left 21 articles for analysis. By using the technique of reference chaining (Page *et al.*, 2021), four additional articles were identified from the reference lists of the selected articles, all published in Indigenous-focused journals. This led to 25 articles for the qualitative synthesis.

3.3 Data extraction tool and analysis

Using Nvivo 15, data were extracted and analysed by using the three-stage thematic process (Thomas and Harden, 2008). Themes were defined as any aspect highlighted or described as being essential to Indigenous food sharing practices. Line-by-line open coding was performed to inductively capture the meaning of the text and generate initial codes (Thomas and Harden, 2008). To ensure consistency and minimise subjective bias, inter-rater reliability was used, with two researchers comparing the coding of randomly selected articles (Malikah and Shin, 2025). No major disagreements or conflicts emerged, thus confirming the reliability of the process. In the second stage, all researchers jointly organised or grouped the codes into clusters and developed descriptive themes. In the final stage, analytical themes and sub-themes were developed through iterative analysis of codes to capture patterns and commonalities across themes. The final themes, sub-themes and codes were cross-checked by two authors for relevance, coherence and accuracy of the data.

4. Descriptive findings

4.1 Publication trends

Understanding the significance of historical trends remains crucial for analysing emerging patterns in Indigenous food sharing practices, which have evolved with the passage of time (Ready, 2017). Figure 2 displays the number of publications (*y*-axis) on the topic from 1995 to 2025 (*x*-axis), which indicates a notable interest of researchers from 2019 onwards. The number of publications per year is not substantial, which underscores the need for further research into Indigenous food sharing practices across diverse contexts.

4.2 Leading journals

The included journals cover a broad range of food-related topics. However, research on food sharing practices remains scarce within these outlets. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the 25 included articles (*x*-axis) across journals (*y*-axis). Arctic and Hunter Gatherers Research published five papers, followed by the *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, which published four articles. Additionally, *Arctic Anthropology* published three articles, while *Rural and Remote Health and MAI Journal* published two articles each. One article appeared in each of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society and Current Developments in Nutrition*. Notably, 21 of the 30 selected journals published nothing on the topic. This trend indicates that scholars working on Indigenous food systems are urged to publish more in Indigenous-focused outlets to amplify the visibility and impact of Indigenous knowledge across the broader academic and Indigenous communities.

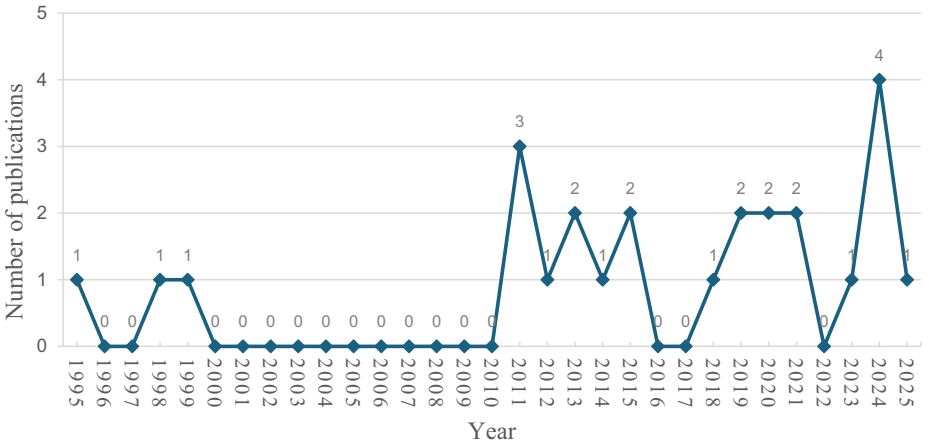

Figure 2. Historical trend in publications on Indigenous practices of food sharing from 1995 to 2025
Source: Authors' own work

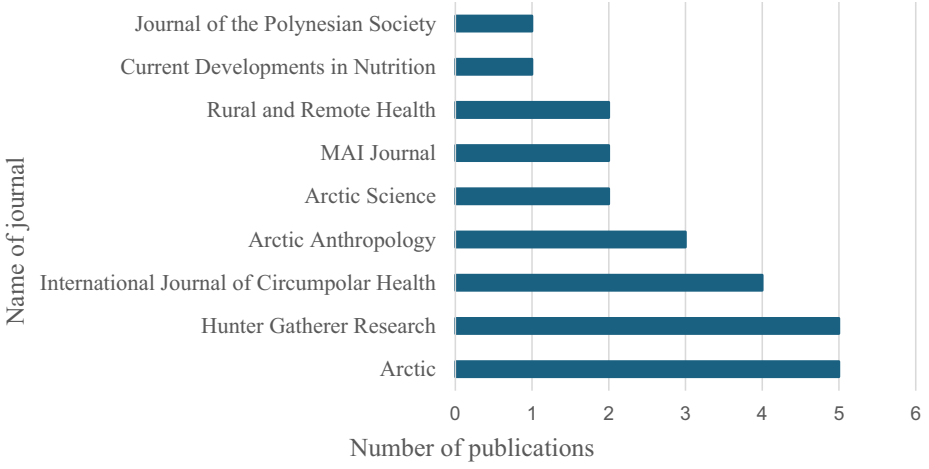

Figure 3. Journals represented in this SLR
Source: Authors' own work

4.3 Identified Indigenous cultures

Figure 4 presents a pie chart of Indigenous Peoples in the reviewed data. Inuit communities received the most coverage, appearing in 17 articles. First Nations communities were covered in five articles, Māori in two and Tongan in one. These results reveal a major gap in the representation of Indigenous cultures worldwide, with many groups underrepresented or entirely absent from Indigenous-focused journals. This highlights the need for more inclusive research to amplify diverse Indigenous voices and food sharing experiences.

5. Thematic findings of Indigenous food sharing practices

Before presenting the thematic analyses (see Table A2 for the full list of themes, sub-themes and sample codes), it is crucial to recognise that Indigenous food systems fundamentally differ from existing industrialised food systems. Indigenous cultural foodways centre on hunting, gathering and sharing of locally acquired foods, including land and sea animals, birds, plants, berries, eggs, herbs and other country-specific food resources (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Kawharu, 2020; Quintal-Marineau, 2019). Harvested foods are shared among family members, extended kin and the wider community in accordance with complex cultural food distribution rules (Omura, 2023). These sharing practices carry deep cultural meanings that extend beyond economic transactions (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Scholars describe these practices as subsistence (Ready, 2017) or social economy (Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Quintal-Marineau, 2019), distinguishing Indigenous food systems from Western food systems that predominantly rely on store-bought food (Collings *et al.*, 1998).

The findings reveal that all 25 articles mainly focus on the sharing of country food, not store-bought food, within Indigenous food practices. Seven studies place greater value on sharing cultural food, though one article notes that store-bought food items are increasingly becoming a part of the Indigenous social economy (Quintal-Marineau, 2019). Despite the fundamental differences between Indigenous and industrial food systems, these cultural sharing practices offer transferable insights for contemporary surplus food redistribution initiatives. The findings of this review are organised and synthesised into five major themes that collectively address our research question. These include the determinants (Theme 1), types (Theme 2) and impact (Theme 3) of food sharing on wellbeing, highlight the barriers to

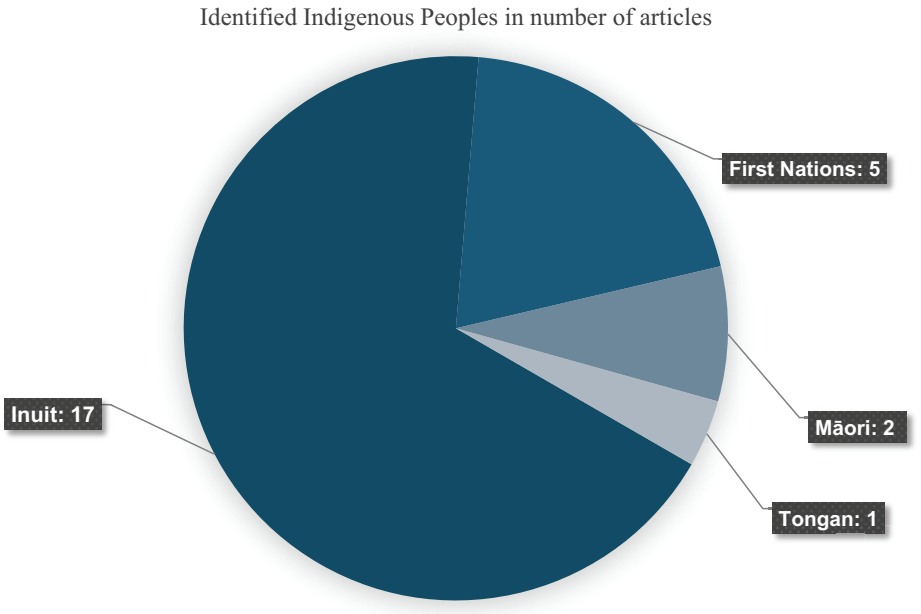

Figure 4. Number of publications with an Indigenous Peoples context
Source: Authors' own work

food sharing (Theme 4) and outline capacity building (Theme 5) approaches. Each theme includes sub-themes, and their various aspects are supported by evidence drawn from the reviewed literature (article counts are indicated in brackets below).

5.1 Theme 1: Determinants of food sharing

5.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Cultural significance. 5.1.1.1 Cultural identity (21 articles). Food sharing emerges as a fundamental practice in all reviewed Indigenous cultures, i.e. the Inuit, First Nations, Māori and Tongan. Although food acquisition methods vary to some extent among these cultures, the essence of food sharing remains consistent and is deeply rooted in cultural identity. Sharing food with family, extended kin and a wider community through established sharing networks is a cornerstone of Inuit culture (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Collings, 2011; Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Rana *et al.*, 2024; Ready, 2017; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018) and plays an inherent role in shaping Inuit identity (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Fillion *et al.*, 2014; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Wenzel, 1995). Food sharing is also integral to the Inuit worldview (Omura, 2023), as one participant in Carter *et al.* (2025, p. 10) describes it as "it's our livelihood, it's our culture… It's a survival thing for Inuit". Another participant in Caughey *et al.* (2024, p. 325) expresses the centrality of food sharing by saying, "we grow up eating with other people". Despite evolving environmental and socio-economic conditions, food sharing remains a key characteristic of Inuit identity (Martin, 2011; Quintal-Marineau, 2019).

Food acquired through subsistence activities and shared within and beyond communities is central to First Nations cultures (McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Natcher *et al.*, 2021; Natcher, 2019). These practices embody foundational teachings of their worldview (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). One Elder (knowledge-holder) in Neufeld and Richmond (2020) describes these practices as instilling pride, freedom and identity. Similarly, for Indigenous Māori, growing, preparing and sharing food with family and the wider community carries deep cultural significance and is closely linked to feelings of wellness, happiness and belonging (Kawharu, 2020; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015). Likewise, food sharing remains vital for preserving Tongan identity (Neill and Toloke, 2021).

5.1.1.2 Cultural continuity (13 articles). This is one of the primary determinants of Indigenous food practices. The reviewed Indigenous cultures indicate that Elders bear responsibility for transmitting traditional foodways, knowledge and values to younger generations (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Traditionally, they impart their experiences and wisdom during community gatherings centred on meal sharing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Omura, 2023). In addition, joint preparation, distribution and consumption of meals further reinforce intergenerational learning of food harvesting, preparation techniques, preservation skills and sharing protocols (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Neill and Toloke, 2021; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). These practices help preserve knowledge, language and social capital (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Natcher *et al.*, 2021). However, colonisation, wage economies and climate change have led to a decline in Indigenous knowledge transfer (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Ready, 2017), resulting in the loss of subsistence-related language, weakened social connections and communal responsibilities (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018).

5.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Food access for families and community. 5.1.2.1 Generalised reciprocity (5 articles). Sharing food with families and communities is often attributed to generalised reciprocity, in which resources are shared without an immediate expectation of return (Wenzel, 1995). For example, successful hunters often provide free access to food for close relatives and community members, who reciprocate by assisting with butchering, processing and preparing communal meals (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Ready, 2017). However, Wenzel (1995) cautioned against oversimplifying the common assumption that

hunters and gatherers always engage in generalised reciprocity, emphasising that multiple motives and complex social dynamics underpin Indigenous food sharing practices.

5.1.2.2 Supporting people experiencing vulnerability (12 articles). The essence of cultural food sharing is to support family and community, particularly those unable to participate in harvesting activities (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Lardea *et al.*, 2011; McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Food is particularly shared with those who lack access to food resources or face food shortages (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012). These practices serve as a vital support mechanism, helping community members in need (Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Martin, 2011; Rana *et al.*, 2024) and those unable to afford food (Kawharu, 2020; Quintal-Marineau, 2019).

5.1.2.3 Altruism (6 articles). The review reveals that food sharing also occurs without any reciprocal expectations, prioritising community support and ensuring that everyone is cared for and no one is left hungry (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; Martin, 2011; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Quintal-Marineau, 2019). In Indigenous cultures, the selfless act of sharing food often occurs even before a formal request is made by those in need (Carter *et al.*, 2025). One knowledge holder in Carter *et al.* (2025, p. 10) illustrates, "So, sharing country food really goes a long way. When you share, you never know who in need you may be really helping". However, a lack of mechanisms often makes it difficult for people to identify community members who need food (Natcher, 2019).

5.1.2.4 Generosity (5 articles). Generosity constitutes a fundamental cultural value and moral obligation among Indigenous Peoples, distinguished by its substantial influence on the widespread distribution of food resources and the enhancement of collective wellbeing (Collings *et al.*, 1998; McMillan and Parlee, 2013). Food is generously shared within the entire community (Carter *et al.*, 2025). Quintal-Marineau (2019) observes that food sharing is not limited to subsistence, and store-bought food is also generous sharing of store-bought food within family networks and broader communities (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013).

5.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Resilience. 5.1.3.1 Crisis-based sharing (5 articles). Despite shifting socio-economic conditions, climate change and government policies (see Theme 4), Indigenous communities demonstrated resilience and the zeal of food sharing remains unchanged (Collings, 2011; Martin, 2011; Quintal-Marineau, 2019). Indigenous Peoples use reciprocal sharing networks as a key mechanism for coping with challenges (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Inuit communities in Nunavut, Canada, mobilised to support one another through extensive resource and food sharing practices (Rana *et al.*, 2024). Rana *et al.* (2024, p. 8) quote a participant as saying, "We helped out each other, we had to, I couldn't get through without my community helping us out. People would drop food for us at our door. We pulled together".

5.1.3.2 Minimising inequalities (3 articles). Subsistence is inherently rooted in the principle of equality (Ready, 2017). Beyond mere survival, food sharing functions as a normative mechanism to uphold communal equity by discouraging hierarchical structures that would otherwise allow individuals to monopolise and store food resources (Omura, 2023). Indigenous cultures obligate generous food redistribution that strengthens social cohesion, prevents disparities in access, creates social balance and sustains collective wellbeing (McMillan and Parlee, 2013).

5.2 Theme 2: Types and forms of food sharing

5.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Social network sharing. 5.2.1.1 Kin-based sharing (14 articles). A food sharing social network is defined as a web of kin and non-kin relationships through which individuals interact to access, distribute or receive food (Collings, 2011). Kinship dominates food redistribution practices across the literature (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Collings, 2011; Collings *et al.*, 1998; Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Natcher *et al.*, 2021; Natcher, 2019;

Quintal-Marineau, 2019; Ready, 2017; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018; Wenzel, 1995). Food is primarily shared through kinship-based networks that encompass immediate and close family members, extended relatives, village co-residents, and, in some cases, inter-community relations (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Quintal-Marineau, 2019; Wenzel, 1995). Social network analysis repeatedly shows that the highest volume and frequency of country and store-bought food transfers occur within close kinship networks (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Natcher, 2019). Despite the integration of wage economies and commercial foods, kinship retains its structural dominance, with store-bought food items and other resources circulating mainly through kin-based ties and obligations (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; Quintal-Marineau, 2019).

5.2.1.2 Sharing by invitation (5 articles). Once food is distributed within immediate social networks, any surplus is shared with the broader community. This includes invitations to distant relatives or non-kin households and individuals experiencing vulnerability, such as families without an active hunter, Elders or widows (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Wenzel, 1995). Invitations are typically issued formally or informally, often by phone calls or by sending a child as a messenger (Collings *et al.*, 1998; McMillan and Parlee, 2013). Additionally, surplus from large harvests is occasionally announced over local FM radio stations for redistribution to the wider community (Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Ready, 2017; Wenzel, 1995).

5.2.1.3 Sharing by request (7 articles). Another key form of food access is demand-sharing and request-based sharing (Wenzel, 1995). Rather than waiting passively for food, individuals directly request hunters, harvesters and households for food to satisfy cravings or dietary needs (Carter *et al.*, 2025; McMillan and Parlee, 2013). Such requests are frequent from Elders, who seek specific types of country food believed to benefit their physical health or spiritual wellbeing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Collings *et al.*, 1998). Declining such requests generally violates cultural norms and carries significant social consequences, as fulfilling these demands is an obligatory expression of reciprocity, respect and communal responsibility (Quintal-Marineau, 2019; Wenzel, 1995). Amid socio-economic changes and the growing integration of store-bought food into Indigenous food systems, demand-sharing now includes a wide variety of commercial food items such as fruit, vegetables, tea and sugar, which are increasingly requested to be shared (Martin, 2011; Wenzel, 1995). These commodities are routinely shared using the same cultural practices.

5.2.1.4 Sharing as gifting (5 articles). Another prevalent form of food sharing in Indigenous sharing networks is gifting, where food is given to kin and non-kin members without any prior request (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Wenzel, 1995). Food is often shared as gifts with those in need (McMillan and Parlee, 2013). In today's context, gifting store-bought food is preferred over cash, which not only reinforces Indigenous values but also reduces the risk of money being used for alcohol (Quintal-Marineau, 2019). Similarly, in Māori communities, gifting a significant portion of the harvest to the community is a valued practice and an expression of generosity and collective wellbeing (Kawharu, 2020).

5.2.1.5 Sharing by delivery (6 articles). Delivering food to individuals, households and various community establishments is another identified sharing practice (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Collings *et al.*, 1998). This ensures that Elders, people with mobility limitations, and those with limited food access receive their harvest share or surplus food. In Arctic regions, food is delivered through multiple channels. These include commercial or community-based shipment services (Collings, 2011), aerial delivery to remote and isolated regions via small aircraft and helicopters (Lardea *et al.*, 2011) and the use of land and water transport, such as snowmobiles, boats and vehicles (McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Rana *et al.*, 2024).

5.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Community-based food sharing. 5.2.2.1 Community-wide food sharing (13 articles). This is one of the most visible and common forms of food sharing

identified in the reviewed literature. In this form of sharing, harvested food is made openly accessible to community members and the general public, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Kawharu, 2020). Community-wide food sharing is characterised by expressions of generosity and altruism. A respondent described this as follows: "[…] the lineups are very, very long. There's lots of people that want country food when it's caught and when it's available. Everyone is giddy and excited waiting for their share" (Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 10). Indigenous cultures discourage storing excess food, and it is obligatory for households to redistribute surplus food with the broader community when they acquire an extra food supply from a successful hunt or gathering (Martin, 2011; Ready, 2017).

Indigenous community-wide sharing uses traditional and contemporary ways to redistribute surplus food. This includes large communal feasts and gatherings (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Collings *et al.*, 1998; Wenzel, 1995), direct sharing with neighbours (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Neill and Toloke, 2021; Ready, 2017), online sharing (Kawharu, 2020), food banks, community restaurants (Lardea *et al.*, 2011) and public pantries and freezers (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013). Indigenous cultures recognise that redistributing large subsistence harvests can feed the entire community, which is far more affordable than store-bought food (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Food sharing also extends to inter-community interactions (Carter *et al.*, 2025), with exchanges stabilising Indigenous food systems (Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018).

5.2.2.2 Sharing meals communally (6 articles). Eating together at communal feasts or sharing prepared meals is central to Indigenous cultures (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Omura, 2023). One form of meal sharing is open commensality, in which meals are shared openly with community members (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Wenzel, 1995). Furthermore, ritualistic sharing also occurs, such as sharing meals at weekly Sunday gatherings, when families prepare extra meals to share with neighbours or community members (Neill and Toloke, 2021). As Indigenous cultures are affected by modernisation, commercial food items are now regularly incorporated into these shared meals (Harder and Wenzel, 2012).

5.2.2.3 Organised sharing (12 articles). In many Indigenous cultures, hunters or harvesting groups traditionally formed formalised partnerships to ensure food availability for their communities. These structured alliances based on mutual agreements of resources and skills sharing and long-term reciprocity have now largely diminished (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Wenzel, 1995). Nevertheless, the underlying principle of collaboration has evolved into contemporary institutional partnerships. Today, Indigenous communities collaborate with government agencies, non-governmental organisations and research institutions to enhance food access (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Kawharu, 2020; Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Natcher *et al.*, 2021; Natcher, 2019; Rana *et al.*, 2024). Notable examples include community food banks, soup kitchens (Lardea *et al.*, 2011), harvesting and hunting programmes (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018), regenerative gardening (Kawharu, 2020), food mail programmes (Martin, 2011), hunter support programmes (Natcher, 2019) and food hamper programmes (Rana *et al.*, 2024). Overall, these initiatives facilitate community-based food sharing to enhance collective wellbeing.

5.3 Theme 3: Food sharing practices to maximise wellbeing

5.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Personal wellbeing. 5.3.1.1 Physical wellbeing (7 articles). Food sharing in Indigenous cultures is fundamentally motivated by achieving holistic wellbeing outcomes (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024), particularly by sustaining the physical health of individuals, families, relatives and the wider community (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Martin, 2011; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Indigenous Peoples consider food acquired from land or

water to be healthier and to be "real food", whereas the consumption of store-bought food is discouraged for maintaining better health (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). Therefore, specific foods are requested by community members, who believe they are essential for maintaining physical health and vitality (Carter *et al.*, 2025; McMillan and Parlee, 2013). Such requests are typically met through community sharing and social support systems (Lardea *et al.*, 2011).

5.3.1.2 Mental wellbeing (7 articles). Indigenous food practices nurture subjective and psychological wellbeing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). For many, these practices evoke feelings of happiness, comfort and emotional stability (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; McMillan and Parlee, 2013; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015). According to one participant (cited in Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 10), "[t]he best is when people are walking by or driving by and you randomly stop them to give them a fish or some meat of any sort, people are so happy!" Furthermore, sharing food is considered important for uplifting emotional and mental health, as it fosters social interactions that form new relationships, reduces isolation and strengthens a shared sense of responsibility (Martin, 2011; Natcher, 2019).

5.3.1.3 Spiritual wellbeing (5 articles). Within Indigenous cultures, participation in food sharing activities is linked to attaining spiritual wellbeing, transcending conventional expressions of interconnectedness with nature (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Carter *et al.*, 2025; Martin, 2011). These practices are perceived not merely as social or economic exchanges but as spiritual acts affirming reciprocal relationships with land, water, animals, ancestors and spiritual entities (Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Omura, 2023). For many, subsistence activities are an expression of gratitude, responsibility and respect to animals and land, which directly connect individuals with the soul-nourishing spiritual realm (Omura, 2023). Through participation, Indigenous Peoples strengthen their belongingness and perform their roles with pure intentions to improve wellbeing within a larger web of existence.

5.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Community wellbeing. 5.3.2.1 Community solidarity (9 articles). Indigenous food sharing practices prioritise collective wellbeing, embodying cultural values of equitable access to resources and communal responsibility (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; McMillan and Parlee, 2013). This ethos enforces mutual care obligations, supporting family and community needs (Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Natcher, 2019; Wenzel, 1995). The distribution of food resources maintains community resilience and social structures (Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Rana *et al.*, 2024), instilling community harmony, mutual trust and a sense of cultural solidarity that binds the community together (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Quintal-Marineau, 2019).

5.3.2.2 Social cohesiveness (12 articles). Food sharing is integral to forming and maintaining social relationships within Indigenous communities (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Natcher, 2019; Ready, 2017). Harder and Wenzel (2012) characterised food as a social currency that facilitates interaction and relationship building (Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). These practices strengthen social ties at both individual and collective levels (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Neill and Toloke, 2021; Omura, 2023). The reinforcement of food sharing practices has important implications for uplifting social wellbeing (Martin, 2011).

5.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Environmental wellbeing. 5.3.3.1 Reciprocal relationship with environment (7 articles). The principle of reciprocal relationships extends beyond personal and communal wellbeing and encompasses the environment itself. Indigenous Peoples' strong cultural values of stewardship and guardianship are embedded in cultural codes and social protocols (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Omura, 2023). Indigenous Peoples show high respect for the land and water, which provide all sources that nourish life (Kawharu, 2020; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015). Their worldviews reject the exploitation of natural resources but favour harmony with nature (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Rana *et al.*, 2024). This is

reflected in food sharing practices, where wasting food is considered disrespectful and sharing ensures everyone in the community is taken care of (Martin, 2011). The principle of stewardship and guardianship is simple and translates to the idea that if you take care of the land, the land will continue to provide (Martin, 2011).

5.3.3.2 Zero waste (6 articles). Indigenous cultures achieve long-term sustainability through environmental stewardship and resource sharing (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Kawharu, 2020). By using traditional food preparation practices, they actively minimise food waste by using every available part of a harvested plant or animal (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Rana *et al.*, 2024). In addition, surplus food is shared with others, ensuring everyone has enough to eat and nothing is wasted (Martin, 2011; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). As a result, nothing goes to waste. These practices maintain ecological balance while nurturing community wellbeing.

5.3.3.3 Sustainable harvesting (3 articles). Rooted in the principles of reciprocity and environmental stewardship, Indigenous food practices emphasise taking only what is needed, leaving resources to regenerate for future generations and to maintain a healthy environment (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Kawharu, 2020). In addition, these practices manage surplus food by redistributing it across communities. This reduces overall demand for food resources, which ultimately decreases the collective harvest pressure on land and water use. In this way, Indigenous food systems play a vital role in conserving land and water resources (Carter *et al.*, 2025).

5.4 Theme 4: Barriers to food sharing practices

5.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Socio-culture and economic disruptions. 5.4.1.1 Socio-cultural changes (5 articles). Modernisation has significantly eroded Indigenous cultural values and practices (Collings *et al.*, 1998). Sharing networks, once central to community life, have weakened due to the loosening of strong social ties. Rapid population growth, urban migration and changing regional demographics have further faded out feelings of belonging and community cohesion, leading to cultural disconnection and depleted sharing practices (Guo *et al.*, 2015; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). In particular, younger generations are increasingly disengaged from cultural food practices (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). Such disconnection from native roots evokes feelings of loss, sadness and frustration, which negatively affects the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples (Caughey *et al.*, 2024).

5.4.1.2 Changes in economic systems (15 articles). Shifts in socio-economic systems have raised serious concerns about the sharp decline in Indigenous food sharing practices (Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Natcher, 2019). Modern economies that promote wage employment have reduced the time available for subsistence activities, resulting in marginalisation of individuals' participation in customary harvesting and gathering (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Collings *et al.*, 1998; Quintal-Marineau, 2019). In comparison with the Indigenous social economy, this integration has led Indigenous communities to greater isolation and disconnection from their own cultural food practices and networks (Collings, 2011; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Natcher *et al.*, 2021; Natcher, 2019; Ready, 2017). Some Indigenous individuals with steady cash incomes now purchase country food, which goes against the norms of some Indigenous cultures (McMillan and Parlee, 2013).

The rising cost of equipment and housing, along with low incomes, are major financial barriers that pose immense pressure on food insecurity and lower subsistence activities (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Martin, 2011; Ready, 2017; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). High prices for store-bought food further limit overall accessibility of food (Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Neill and Toloke, 2021; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). Although sharing meals remains a cultural expectation and norm, these higher prices strain household budgets (Quintal-Marineau, 2019).

5.4.1.3 Government policies (7 articles). Strict conservation regulations governing land hunting and sea fishing, rising costs of licensing equipment and permits for harvesting, the imposition of tax obligations on farmers and livestock and the allocation of Indigenous land to industries severely hinder subsistence activities (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Martin, 2011; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Natcher *et al.*, 2021; Ready, 2017). These excessive measures restrict Indigenous Peoples' access to land and water resources and undermine their self-determination and food sovereignty, that is, the right of Indigenous communities to control and sustain food systems in line with cultural values and community needs (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015).

5.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Environmental disruptions. 5.4.2.1 Climate change (10 articles). Ecological imbalance has majorly disrupted Indigenous food systems (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Unpredictable and extreme weather patterns have made it difficult for hunters to travel long distances safely (Natcher, 2019; Ready, 2017). Additionally, water pollution from shipping traffic and industrial activities has damaged marine ecosystems, reducing the availability of key species essential for physical health and wellbeing (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Fillion *et al.*, 2014; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015). This reduced availability of food produces less surplus to redistribute, which complicates cultural sharing expectations (Natcher, 2019).

5.4.2.2 Food insecurity (15 articles). Historically self-sufficient Indigenous communities are now experiencing alarming rates of food insecurity (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Natcher, 2019; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Food insecurity emerges when food systems are strained, restricting access, availability and quality of food (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Lardea *et al.*, 2011; Rana *et al.*, 2024). All the barriers discussed above collectively undermine Indigenous food systems, making it difficult to uphold cultural values centred on food sharing (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). Today, the scarcity of country food and its unaffordability restrict food sharing closer to kin and making it difficult to share with the wider community (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013; Ready, 2017). Households now increasingly rely on unhealthy food alternatives, which cause nutrient deficiencies and related health problems (Martin, 2011). Indigenous food practices have strong potential to mitigate food insecurity (Harder and Wenzel, 2012), and realising this requires capacity building through revitalising Indigenous food practices and developing food initiatives (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Fillion *et al.*, 2014).

5.5 Theme 5: Building capacity for food sharing practices

5.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Adoption of Indigenous food practices. 5.5.1.1 Enhanced food security (11 articles). Strengthening Indigenous food practices offers a pathway to increase food security (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Ready, 2017). Traditional food sharing networks and social ties are vital enablers for supporting households facing food shortages (Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Lardea *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, enhancing access to surplus food through culturally grounded food initiatives offers a key strategy to address food insecurity, health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Fillion *et al.*, 2014; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020; Rana *et al.*, 2024). Addressing these challenges necessitates multi-sector collaboration between organisations, governments, institutions and communities (Guo *et al.*, 2015; Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015).

5.5.1.2 Circular approaches (7 articles). Contemporary approaches to reducing waste, such as the circular economy, are aligned with Indigenous regenerative approaches (Kawharu, 2020). Circularity in Indigenous cultures extends beyond food sharing, aiming to generate zero waste by fully using all parts of harvested plants and animals. For example, feathers from harvested birds are used to make blankets and pillows, skin is used to make

boots, clothes and beddings and bones are used to make hunting tools (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Carter *et al.*, 2025; Harder and Wenzel, 2012; Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999; Martin, 2011; Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the behavioural coding embedded in the Indigenous worldview ensures that nothing is wasted (Martin, 2011).

5.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Food initiatives based on Indigenous food sharing practices. 5.5.2.1 Knowledge transfer (9 articles). The literature highlights several food initiatives that revitalise Indigenous food sharing practices to address food insecurity and waste. Notable examples include community kitchens where participants prepare traditional meals together or learn cultural cooking techniques (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Fillion *et al.*, 2014; Lardea *et al.*, 2011). Kawharu (2020) argues that well-designed, Indigenous community-led food initiatives offer better opportunities to revive Indigenous practices (Collings *et al.*, 1998; Natcher, 2019; Rana *et al.*, 2024). Elders advocate programmes centred on cultural foodways to transmit traditional knowledge, skills and values to younger generations (Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Neufeld and Richmond, 2020). These initiatives not only encourage a renewed connection with ancestral practices but also maintain cultural identity (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024).

5.5.2.2 Community engagement (8 articles). Incorporating Indigenous food sharing practices into contemporary food initiatives offers an effective way to redistribute surplus food (Carter *et al.*, 2025; Caughey *et al.*, 2024; Guo *et al.*, 2015; Kawharu, 2020; Lardea *et al.*, 2011). Such initiatives can re-engage communities disconnected from their cultural heritage (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Kawharu, 2020). Community-led initiatives empower participants to take ownership of their food systems and preserve cultural heritage (Quintal-Marineau, 2019; Rana *et al.*, 2024). Inclusive food sharing initiatives create supportive environments that boost community engagement, food security and overall wellbeing. (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Lardea *et al.*, 2011).

5.6 Summary of findings

This SLR synthesised 25 articles to examine Indigenous food sharing practices and extracted culturally grounded principles for designing contemporary food initiatives that can enable transformative service experiences. The synthesis reveals five major themes, summarised in Figure 5. This figure illustrates a sequential view of food sharing practices, underpinning why food is shared (Theme 1: determinants of sharing food), how it is shared (Theme 2: types of sharing food), what impact food sharing creates (Theme 3: wellbeing outcomes), what prevents food sharing (Theme 4: barriers and challenges) and how to build competence (Theme 5: capacity building approaches) to revitalise Indigenous food sharing practices.

6. Discussion and implications

The reviewed literature addresses a diverse array of food-related topics, ranging from the sharing of country food to the systemic challenges Indigenous communities face in sustaining cultural food practices. Despite the broad geographic contexts and varied methodologies across these studies (detailed in Table A3), the findings remain consistent across the identified themes. This SLR mapped and synthesised the guiding principles of Indigenous food sharing practices across Inuit, First Nations, Māori and Tongan cultures. By distilling these practices into service design logics, this discussion advances TSR objectives. The findings provide actionable insights for service researchers and practitioners, offering a pathway towards more equitable and regenerative food systems.

Indigenous cultural values frame food as a basic human right essential for human flourishing (Varney and Soma, 2025). Placing this perspective at the heart of food-service initiatives guides practitioners to implement transformative service design through its core elements (Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021). Integrating Indigenous food sharing practices into

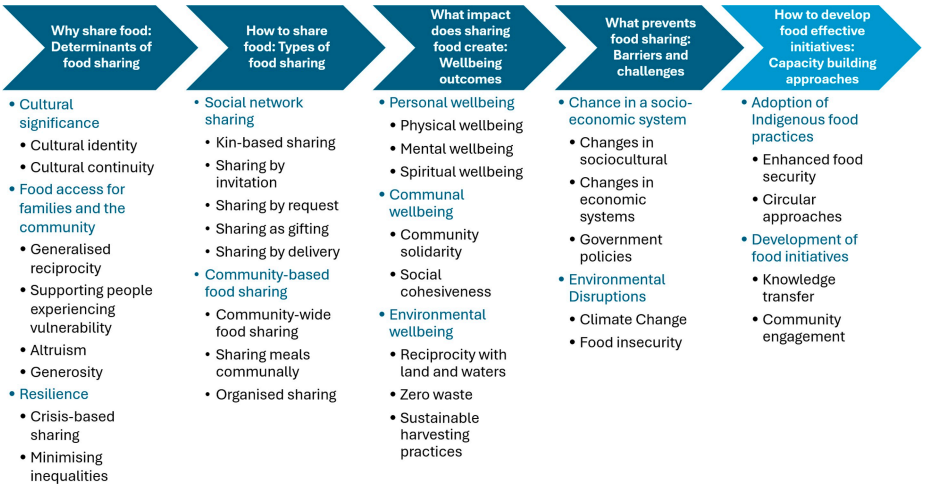

Figure 5. Summary of findings
Source: Authors' own work

the design of contemporary urban, multicultural and digital food-service initiatives enables human-centred, collaborative and action-oriented approaches to emerge (Knorr and Augustin, 2025), supporting the principle of *overall transformation*. Furthermore, this integration bridges Indigenous objectives of achieving holistic wellbeing with the purpose of contemporary initiatives. It creates conditions for inclusive and relational strategies that unlock further possibilities for value co-creation (Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021; Vink *et al.*, 2025). This relates to the design principle of *scope*. Moreover, these strategies support the endurance necessary to reform existing food systems for long-term sustainability (FAO, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, 2021). This embeddedness achieves *paradigmatic radicalness* by challenging existing norms and negative perceptions of surplus food experiences (Varney and Soma, 2025; Vittuari *et al.*, 2017).

Human-centred service design, which prioritises both cultural and personal values while addressing user needs, offers problem-solving solutions that create unique value and service experiences (Karpen *et al.*, 2017; Ladhari *et al.*, 2011). As illustrated in Figure 6, the amalgamation of Indigenous food sharing determinants, ways of sharing and wellbeing objectives into the design of a transformative food-service initiative reconfigures previously fragmented service experiences, helping to dismantle systemic barriers. This approach builds the capacity of food-service initiatives to deploy resources to maximise wellbeing outcomes (Karpen *et al.*, 2017). The following sections discuss the specific implications of each of the *five identified themes* when applying transformative service design principles.

Our findings suggest that *determinants of Indigenous food sharing* enrich existing motivations for participating in contemporary surplus food initiatives (Schanes and Stagl, 2019). Embedding these determinants in service design makes underlying motivations more visible. This visibility aligns user motives with service experiences across touchpoints (Yu and Sangiorgi, 2018) and creates conditions for diverse actors to mobilise them in urban and multicultural settings to take collective surplus food redistribution actions. This corresponds to the design principle of *scope*. Furthermore, it also enables the projection of future action trajectories to navigate systemic challenges and advances the principle of *overall*

transformation by moving beyond mere service exchanges towards relational value creation systems (Finsterwalder *et al.*, 2025). Re-illuminating Indigenous food practices also contributes to *relational* service design (Vink *et al.*, 2025), strengthens reciprocal consumer-service relationships and shapes dignified surplus food experiences (Finsterwalder and Tombs, 2021; Varney and Soma, 2025).

Indigenous *ways (types) of food sharing* offer a multi-channel framework that diversifies the customer journey. By blending these methods within digital or other platforms, food initiatives can move beyond centralised pickup points (Diprose *et al.*, 2025) and create varied service experiences that empower broader consumer segments (Chen *et al.*, 2019). For example, delivering surplus to geographically or socially isolated marginalised populations (Stein, 2023) reframes food assistance as an act of social participation and forms community-based social experiences (Edwards, 2021). As such, multi-channel service delivery increases user engagement and enables scalable service models (Chen *et al.*, 2019), which resonate with the design principle of *scope*. Furthermore, presenting surplus food as "gifts" rather than "charity" dismantles food donor-receiver hierarchies and restores human dignity (Edwards, 2021). Drawing on the Indigenous perspective, the evolving transformative service design *disrupts the fundamental assumption* of surplus food for the needy and reframes it as food for all. This transition can break free from the limiting beliefs attached to surplus food initiatives and contribute to gradual, long-term system transformation.

Although current food initiatives focus on improving sustainability, circularity and food security (Vittuari *et al.*, 2017), the absence of explicit *wellbeing considerations* in conventional service design can lead to unintended consequences for service users (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020; Polonsky *et al.*, 2026). By placing personal, communal and environmental wellbeing at the centre of new food-service initiatives, this advances the TSR objectives of human flourishing by leveraging service design (Ostrom *et al.*, 2015). This approach informs value propositions that offer contextual experiences better suited to consumer needs (Yu and Sangiorgi, 2018), providing cues that encourage consumer engagement across service touchpoints. As consumers interact with the service to achieve their goals, they generate subjective wellbeing outcomes that emerge from their experiences and verily depend on the service user, circumstances and sociocultural factors (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). Thus, the Indigenous dynamics of achieving wellbeing are associated with the *endurance* principle, providing the new ways of thinking by readjusting surplus food redistribution practices.

While the first three themes addressed the internal mechanisms of Indigenous food sharing practices, the fourth identified barriers. Service designers can address these

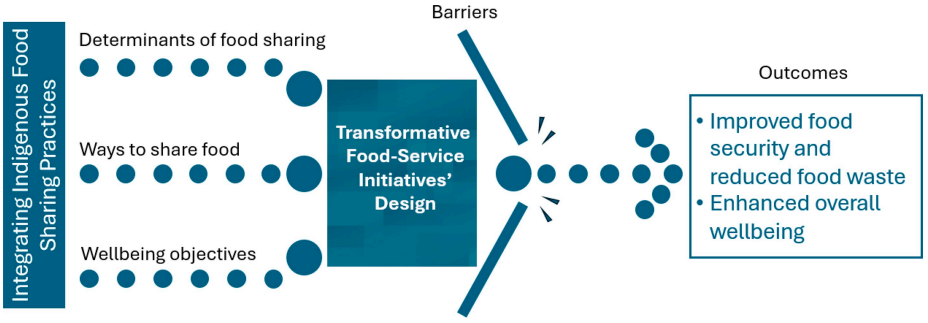

Figure 6. Illustrative view of the findings' integration into the design of Transformative Food-Service Initiatives

Source: Authors' own work

challenges by adopting *collaborative* approaches and *co-design* methodologies, particularly those that align with Indigenous research approaches such as community-based participatory research (Drawson *et al.*, 2017). These co-design strategies embody *paradigmatic radicalness* by encouraging the exploration of alternative ways of doing things and shifting beliefs and norms (Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021). Based on Indigenous values, such initiatives challenge conventional practices, empower individuals, maintain human dignity and improve food security (Lopes *et al.*, 2025). They also reduce inequalities (Davey *et al.*, 2023) and advance TSR's objective of fair and dignified service-resource access by dismantling systemic barriers (Kabadayi *et al.*, 2023). Rather than developing restrictive policies, governments should establish mechanisms that allow stakeholders to collaborate and co-design action-oriented, transformative food-service initiatives capable of effectively overcoming identified barriers to food redistribution.

The synthesis of this review further reveals that adopting the "low-power distance" dimension and nurturing values of Indigenous cultures in co-designing transformative food-service initiatives *builds capacity* for *enduring* food systems (Swiderska *et al.*, 2022). Adopting these cultural values supports a shift towards regenerative models (Fischer *et al.*, 2024) that maximise holistic wellbeing (McKinley and Walters, 2023). This aligns with the design principle of *endurance*, which implies long-term systemic change through transformative service design (Koskela-Huotari *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, this integration improves *service design capabilities* to support transitions towards regenerative service ecosystems (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2023). Hence, embedding Indigenous food sharing practices reconfigures contemporary food initiatives and transforms them into transformative food-service initiatives.

7. Future research avenues

While this review affirms the potential for incorporating Indigenous food practices into the design of contemporary food service initiatives to uplift holistic wellbeing, it lacks empirical evidence to evaluate their effectiveness. Future research should address this gap by developing multi-level wellbeing metrics specifically tailored for transformative service initiatives. Although various measures have been applied to evaluate multi-level wellbeing outcomes (Landry and Furrer, 2023), this study advances the TSR domain by putting forward the development of wellbeing metrics grounded in the dimensions identified in this review, such as personal (micro level), communal (meso level), societal (macro level) and environmental (meta level) wellbeing (Finsterwalder *et al.*, 2025). Such wellbeing-focused metrics could enhance consumer engagement with service initiatives by clearly demonstrating how individuals contribute to their own wellbeing and that of their families, communities, societies and the environment.

This review provides a blueprint for incorporating Indigenous food practices into food-related service initiatives that can alleviate food insecurity, minimise inequality, mitigate food vulnerability and enhance broader wellbeing outcomes. To assess long-term impact, future research should use longitudinal case studies that track effects on consumers over time. Additionally, a comparative analysis of Indigenous grounded and contemporary food sharing initiatives can examine differences in user engagement rates, vulnerability reduction, perceived user dignity and overall wellbeing outcomes.

The following Table 3 presents a detailed list of questions organised in accordance with identified themes:

8. Conclusion and limitations

This study systematically reviewed 25 articles from Indigenous-focused journals to examine Indigenous food sharing practices and their implications for designing transformative food-

Table 3. Future research questions

Food sharing	Future research questions
Determinants	• How can Indigenous motives of food sharing be aligned with the personal values of consumers to activate surplus food sharing activities and impact consumer engagement?
Types	• How can different types of identified food sharing be leveraged to design novel customer journey maps for food sharing?
	• What integration strategy can be used to blend modern sharing platforms with Indigenous food sharing protocols to maximise wellbeing co-creation?
Wellbeing impact	• How can the concept of community wellbeing be integrated into the service design of a food-service initiative that stimulates positive emotional and behavioural responses in users to redistribute surplus food?
	• How can we develop wellbeing metrics for transformative service initiatives that measure their impact?
Barriers	• How can TSR proponents better support Elders in Western cultures to uphold traditional food sharing practices that may benefit younger contemporary generations?
	• How can the customer journey of novel food sharing initiatives be configured to address barriers to food sharing in urban as well as rural settings?
	• What policy recommendations emerge from the participatory co-design processes with communities that help establish effective community-based surplus food redistribution initiatives?
Capacity building	• How can multiple stakeholders be involved in participatory research to co-design a transformative food sharing initiative?
	• What role can technology and Artificial Intelligence play in designing food redistribution service initiatives to enable transformative experiences?

service initiatives. This review extends the TSR discourse by highlighting how integrating Indigenous food determinants, sharing types and wellbeing objectives into service design allows practitioners to overcome barriers and build capacity for sustainable, dignified and regenerative food systems. Furthermore, this paper equips practitioners with identified Indigenous food sharing elements (Figure 5) and strategies that enhance consumer engagement and reshape their perspectives of service experiences by adopting transformative service design principles.

This study is limited to English-language publications, potentially introducing linguistic bias and overlooking perspectives published in Indigenous or other languages. It intentionally excluded mainstream journals to preserve cultural epistemic integrity and prioritise Indigenous-focused journal articles across all Scimago quartiles. It also excluded other sources of knowledge, such as books, trade journals, conference papers and commentaries. Future reviews can include mainstream journals and other sources to enhance the existing understanding of Indigenous food sharing practices. Despite these limitations, the current SLR establishes a foundation for co-designing transformative food-service initiatives.

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Further Reading

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Appendix

Table A1. List of *Q1* to *Q4* journals with an Indigenous focus as of 31st March 2025

S. No.	Indigenous-focused journals	Scimago journal rank quartiles
1	*Aboriginal History*	Q2
2	*AlterNative*	Q1
3	*American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*	Q1
4	*American Indian Culture and Research Journal*	Q3
5	*Anthropological Linguistics*	Q4
6	*Arctic*	Q3
7	*Arctic Anthropology*	Q2
8	*Arctic Review on Law and Politics*	Q2
9	*Arctic Science*	Q1
10	*Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*	Q1
11	*Current Developments in Nutrition*	Q1
12	*Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education*	Q1
13	*EcoHealth*	Q2
14	*European Expansion and Indigenous Response*	Q2
15	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	Q2
16	*Indiana*	Q3
17	*International Indigenous Policy Journal*	Q1
18	*International Journal of Circumpolar Health*	Q2
19	*International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*	Q3
20	*Journal of African Cultural Studies*	Q1
21	*Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*	Q2
22	*Journal of the Polynesian Society*	Q3
23	*MAI Journal*	Q1
24	*New Zealand Journal of Psychology*	Q4
25	*Oceania*	Q2
26	*Psychology and Developing Societies*	Q3
27	*Rural and Remote Health*	Q1
28	*Studies in American Indian Literatures*	Q3
29	*Transcultural Psychiatry*	Q1
30	*Wellbeing, Space and Society*	Q1

Search String for Scopus

(TITLE-ABS-KEY (Food AND Shar*) AND SRCTITLE (“Aboriginal History” OR “AlterNative” OR “American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research” OR “American Indian Culture and Research Journal” OR “Anthropological Linguistics” OR “Arctic” OR “Arctic Anthropology” OR “Arctic Review on Law and Politics” OR “Arctic Science” OR “Australian Journal of Indigenous Education” OR “Current Developments in Nutrition” OR “Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education” OR “EcoHealth” OR “European Expansion and Indigenous Response” OR “Hunter Gatherer Research” OR “Indiana” OR “International Indigenous Policy Journal” OR “International Journal of Circumpolar Health” OR “International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies” OR “Journal of African Cultural Studies” OR “Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved” OR “Journal of the Polynesian Society” OR “MAI Journal” OR “New Zealand Journal of Psychology” OR “Oceania” OR “Psychology and Developing Societies” OR “Rural and Remote Health” OR “Studies in American Indian Literatures” OR “Transcultural Psychiatry” OR “Wellbeing, Space and Society”)

Table A2. Themes and codes

Sub-themes	Second-order codes	Sample first-order codes
Theme 1: Determinants of food sharing		
Cultural significance	Cultural identity (21 articles)	"Inuit subsistence activities remain crucial to their life and identity" (Omura, 2023, p. 241)
Socio-culture and economic disruptions	Socio-cultural changes (5 articles)	"We trap everything in the bush, even beavers … My mom taught me how to do that … It's different now my mom has passed away and my kids, I don't hardly go over there now … I'm forcing myself to go there more and more" (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024, p. 6)
Adoption of traditional food practices	Enhanced food security (11 articles)	"Factors improving food security were the customary systems for sharing 'country food', and the presence of social support networks in the community" (Lardea *et al.*, 2011, p. 2)
	Culture continuity (13 articles)	"[S]haring healthy kai strategies could prevent the further loss of traditional knowledge" (Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015, p. 38)
Food access for families and community	Generalised reciprocity (5 articles)	"… contemporary Inuit subsistence, while retaining its essential/traditional cultural goal … does not always conform to commonly held assumptions of hunter-gatherer sharing as generalised reciprocity" (Wenzel, 1995, p. 43)
	Supporting people experiencing vulnerability (12 articles)	"[a] lot of people in here they don't have no boats, or you know the stuff for hunting … They can't hunt. … Other people hunt and it's good when they share their meat too, to feed the family. 'Cause my brothers always do that when they kill moose; they share with those who are unable to participate in harvesting" (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024, p. 27)
	Altruism (6 articles)	"… eating and being together and helping one another, make sure everybody—you know, no one should starve … cause Mother Earth provided enough stuff here for everyone" (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020, p. 6)
	Generosity (5 articles)	…store food is made available to a family's network, as would country food, and emphasises the importance of generosity… (Quintal-Marineau, 2019, p. 588)
Resilience	Crisis-based sharing (5 articles)	"We helped out each other, we had to, I couldn't get through without my community helping us out. People would drop food for us at our door. We pulled together" (Rana *et al.*, 2024, p. 8)
	Minimising inequalities (3 articles)	"When we consider the reality of inequality within the settlement, the simultaneous vibrance and decay of subsistence makes more sense" (Ready, 2017, p. 644)

(*continued*)

Table A2. Continued

Sub-themes	Second-order codes	Sample first-order codes
Theme 2: Types and forms of food sharing		
Social network sharing	Kin-based sharing (14 articles)	"kinship ties appear to have emerged as a salient aspect of payuktuq food distribution and sharing practices" (Collings *et al.*, 1998, p. 311)
	Sharing by invitation (5 articles)	"Invitation sharing includes both close relatives and more distantly related or nonrelated households" (Collings *et al.*, 1998, p. 308)
	Sharing by request (7 articles)	"Much food sharing between households in northern Dene communities occurs in response to a request" (McMillan and Parlee, 2013, p. 437)
	Sharing as gifting (5 articles)	"Women described Three strategies for sharing food: gifting store food, hosting meals and sharing a store account" (Quintal-Marineau, 2019, p. 590)
	Sharing by delivery (6 articles)	"Everyone is giddy and excited waiting for their share which may be distributed at various public buildings or on the beach, or delivered to homes" (Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 10)
Community-based food sharing	Community-wide food sharing (13 articles)	"… the lineups are very, very long. There's lots of people that want country food when it's caught and when it's available. Everyone is giddy and excited waiting for their share" (Cater *et al.*, 2025, p. 10)
	Sharing meals communally (6 articles)	"Shared Meals Eating food in other households is an important way to access country food on a regular basis, and meals involving participants from outside the hosting household, and even extended family, happen daily and are more common than the removal of country food from a host's house. The main gathering place for intra-ilagiit shared meals is usually the family leader's home" (Harder and Wenzel, 2012, p. 310)
	Organised sharing (12 articles)	"The [Nunavut] government had food hampers (program), I heard, and that really helped. It was it good food, good supplies that they put in there. Everything that we needed" (Rana *et al.*, 2024, p. 7)
Theme 3: Food sharing practices to maximise wellbeing		
Personal wellbeing	Physical wellbeing (7 articles)	"We didn't have any fruits back then, like you couldn't get fruits. So mom would say, 'Oh, you needs a good glass of berry juice to make you better'…when the snow was melting and you'd go and there would be berries left from the previous fall, she'd pick those and make juice and she'd swear it would make you better and I swear it does too" (Martin, 2011, p. 389)
	Mental wellbeing (7 articles)	" [t]he best is when people are walking by or driving by and you randomly stop them to give them a fish or some meat of any sort, people are so happy!" (Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 10)

(*continued*)

Table A2. Continued

Sub-themes	Second-order codes	Sample first-order codes
	Spiritual wellbeing (5 articles)	"Reciprocal relationships or shared roles in the maintenance of traditional foodways are described as 'intimate and spiritual'" (Neufeld and Richmond, 2020, p. 9)
Community wellbeing	Cultural solidarity (9 articles)	"Culturally embedded sharing practices thus optimized access to the resources of the ilagiit for both individuals and households, who shared the responsibility of community well-being" (Harder and Wenzel, 2012, p. 309)
	Social cohesiveness (12 articles)	"… the practice of sharing food, which plays a pivotal role in the system, and is crucial in fostering the development of an extended family and relationships within its members" (Omura, 2023, p. 256)
Environmental wellbeing	Reciprocal relationship with environment (7 articles)	"Traditional food-sharing activities have been linked with spiritual and mental health benefits" (Martin, 2011, p. 285)
	Zero waste (6 articles)	"[F]ood-sharing and ensuring that everyone has enough to eat is the strongly held belief that nothing should be wasted" (Martin, 2011, p. 393)
	Sustainable harvesting (3 articles)	"We must not over harvest so that we continue to have supplies and harvests for later" (Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 11)
Theme 4: Barriers to food-sharing practices		
Socio-culture and economic disruptions	Socio-cultural changes (5 articles)	"We trap everything in the bush, even beavers … My mom taught me how to do that … It's different now my mom has passed away and my kids, I don't hardly go over there now … I'm forcing myself to go there more and more" (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024, p. 6)
	Changes in economic systems (15 articles)	"There is concern that traditional food-sharing practices are increasingly under stress due to adverse socio-economic factors" (Lardea *et al.*, 2011) "… contemporary economic trends encourage wage labor and discourage subsistence hunting is troubling. Simply put, wage employment seems to foster the isolation of individuals within the settlement, at least as measured by the movement of country food" (Collings, 2011, p. 216).
	Government policies (7 articles)	"[P]articipants discussed some of the barriers to getting out on the land and accessing traditional foods, such as increasingly strict policies and regulations regarding hunting and fishing; competing commitments such as paid employment and childcare; and rising costs associated with licensing, gun regulations" (Martin, 2011, p. 391)

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Table A2. Continued

Sub-themes	Second-order codes	Sample first-order codes
Environmental disruptions	Climate change (10 articles)	"Climate change have also been identified as stressors to food systems in the Circumpolar North" (Guo *et al.*, 2015, p. 1)
	Food insecurity (15 articles)	"We want to eat country food, but the lack of it, there are so many people in the community now, there is sometimes less sharing outside of family members, because there is not enough" (Carter *et al.*, 2025, p. 11)
Theme 5: Building capacity for food-sharing practices		
Adoption of traditional food practices	Enhanced food security (11 articles)	"Factors improving food security were the customary systems for sharing 'country food', and the presence of social support networks in the community" (Lardea *et al.*, 2011, p. 2)
	Circular approaches (7 articles)	"'Return to land' systems to regenerate and rehabilitate Papatūānuku. And then the cycle begins again …. This is our own Indigenous 'take' on the notion of a circular economy, similar to the circular economy emphasis on product life cycle, product reuse and recycling" (Kawharu, 2020, p. 22)
Food initiatives based on Indigenossus food-sharing practices	Knowledge transfer (9 articles)	"Programmes based on cultural teachings are recognised as crucial for fostering resilience" (Rana *et al.*, 2024, p. 10)
	Community engagement (8 articles)	"The Niska (goose) program, beyond addressing issues of overabundant and invasive species and food security, underscores its significance in providing not just tangible benefits but also cultural advantages to communities on a global scale. The program, in its entirety, represents a comprehensive approach that intertwines cultural revitalization, community engagement, and holistic wellbeing, emphasizing the need for holistic interventions that go beyond addressing immediate challenges to create enduring positive impacts on Indigenous communities" (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024, p. 9)

Table A3. Contextual findings and future research

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
1	Ahmed *et al.*, 2024	*Rural and Remote Health*	This paper explores the goose harvesting programme, rooted in traditional food practices and its impact on wellbeing	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (photovoice and semi-structured interviews)	5 First Nations women experts	Fort Albany First Nations, Subarctic Ontario, Canada	Traditional food, specifically goose	Initiatives based on customary food practices play an integral role in engaging community members and revitalising Indigenous cultural values that contribute to holistic wellbeing	Future food programmes should recognise the essential role of Indigenous women in supporting the intergenerational transmission of knowledge to address food insecurity and enhance wellbeing
2	Carter *et al.*, 2025	*Arctic Science*	This paper examines the cultural significance of country foods for Inuit and explores their seasonal harvesting	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (workshop: semi-structured interviews and individual interviews)	14 communities across three Inuit regions in Arctic Canada 133 Inuit participants	Inuvialuit Settlement Region Nunavut Nunavik (Quebec)	Traditional foods	Sharing and eating country food strengthens community bonds, supports physical and mental wellbeing and reinforces food sovereignty	This study emphasises the need for policies and initiatives that support harvesting and shared consumption of country foods to promote overall wellbeing
3	Caughey *et al.*, 2024	*Arctic Science*	This research explores the meaning and significance of country food in the context of	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (in-depth	10 Inuit women over age 50	Qikiqtani region of Nunavut	Traditional food	Traditional food sharing practices are attributed to wellbeing, social connection,	Future interventions can be strengthened by incorporating traditional values that align with

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			community wellbeing	conversational interviews and focus groups)				cultural identity and food security	health and environmental policies
4	Collings, 2011	*Arctic*	This paper uses a social network analysis to examine whether food-sharing patterns are influenced by climate change or other external stressors, such as shifting economic and social conditions	Mixed method – quantitative network analysis and qualitative ethnographic research and interviews	14 Inuit men	Ulukhaktok: Northwest Territories, Canada	Traditional food store-bought food	Traditional food sharing practices are adaptable to environmental conditions but remain vulnerable to political and economic changes	Not applicable
5	Collings *et al.*, 1998	*Arctic*	This paper compares and analyses historical ethnographic accounts with contemporary food-sharing social networks to understand the patterns of change	Qualitative – mixed method: ethnographic research, interviews, historical ethnographic accounts	20 households in the Inuit community of Holman	Victoria Island, Canada	Traditional food	This paper compares several types of sharing practices and finds that customary Indigenous food practices have declined due to modernisation, wage economies and cultural shifts	Not applicable
6	Dombrowski *et al.*, 2013	*Arctic Anthropology*	This paper analyses kin-based	Mixed method – quantitative	330 adult residents of the	Labrador, Canada	Traditional and store-	This paper finds that kin-based	Not applicable

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			food sharing practices, comparing traditional and store-bought food	social network analysis and qualitative interviews	Inuit community		bought food	sharing is highly reciprocal and frequent in both traditional and store-bought food	
7	Fillion *et al.*, 2014	*International Journal of Circumpolar Health*	The article aims to develop a strategic plan to address food security while strengthening cultural food practices and empowering communities	Qualitative – participatory approach (workshops and group discussions)	23 Inuit participants	Inuvialuit settlement region	Traditional food	This paper offers several recommendations for developing community-driven food initiatives that build capacity to revitalise food-sharing practices and enhance food security	Future research and interventions should adopt interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches to developing food initiatives
8	Guo *et al.*, 2015	*International Journal of Circumpolar Health*	This paper examines factors contributing to the decline of food-sharing networks and rising food insecurity in urban communities	Quantitative – cross-sectional household surveys	Inuit and non-Inuit households	Iqaluit, Nunavut	Traditional food	Barriers such as unemployment, rising prices, socio-cultural changes, migration and environmental changes are hindering customary food-sharing networks from reducing food insecurity	This study emphasises the need for collaborative approaches involving multiple governmental agencies and community organisations to address food insecurity

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
9	Harder and Wenzel, 2012	*Arctic*	This paper examines the changes in food sharing practices over time in the context of a mixed economy	Qualitative – mixed method: ethnographic research, interviews and conversations	10 Inuit households and 69 individuals	Qikiqtaaluk Region of Nunavut, Canada	Traditional food	This paper finds that kinship networks continue to govern food distribution and highlights that Indigenous practices of food sharing buffer social inequalities and climate challenges	Adopting Indigenous food practices can help address food insecurity
10	Hovelsrud-Broda, 1999	*Arctic Anthropology*	This paper explores the critical role of food sharing as a link between past and present cultural systems and survival	Mixed method: qualitative observations and quantitative secondary data analysis	Inuit	Isertoq, East Greenland	Traditional food store-bought food	Customary food sharing practices typically occur within closely related households, governed by kinship ties and reciprocity. The study also found that store-bought food sharing is non-existent	Not applicable
11	Kawharu, 2020	*MAI Journal*	This paper explores the opportunities that food initiatives based on	Quantitative – survey	200 surveys with Māori participants	Northland: Aotearoa, New Zealand	Traditional food	Their findings suggest that food initiatives rooted in Indigenous food practices can	This article emphasises the need for infusing Indigenous and contemporary

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Research context: Methods	Peoples	Regions	Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			traditional food practices can create					reconnect and re-engage communities with cultural knowledge and values that are essential for food sovereignty	knowledges to strengthen existing food systems by exploring Indigenous concepts of reciprocity and environmental stewardship to inform the circular economy
12	Lardea *et al.*, 2011	*Rural and Remote Health*	The purpose of this study is to understand the effects of newly introduced food initiatives in an Indigenous locality	Qualitative – participatory action research (photovoice, workshops, group discussions and field notes)	Five Inuit men and three women	Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada	Traditional food store-bought food	Food initiatives act as vital support networks within the community, creating community solidarity and contributing to food security	There is a need to develop more intervention that not only focuses on improving food security but also contributes to improving the community's wellbeing. Additionally, such programmes should incorporate support mechanisms to help those in need

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
13	Martin, 2011	*International Journal of Circumpolar Health*	This paper develops the understanding of the relationship between food and culture and how it shapes overall health	Qualitative – interviews and focus groups (storytelling approach)	Inuit participants: eight young adults, eight middle-adults and eight Elders	Labrador, Canada	Traditional food	This study highlights that food sharing plays an integral role in the transmission of generational knowledge that is vital to maintaining a healthy lifestyle	The future food programmes can benefit from the cultural food practices, allowing conventional approaches to be rethought by connecting food to wellbeing
14	McMillan and Parlee, 2013	*Arctic*	This paper explores the changes in food sharing practices between two forms of hunting: community-organised and household-arranged hunts	Mixed method – quantitative network analysis and qualitative ethnography, interviews and conversations	First Nations: community hunt: 10 households and 15 participants. Household-organised hunts: 7 households and 10 participants	Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, Canada	Traditional food	Findings identify several motives and forms of food sharing, such as sharing by request, sharing as gifting	Adopting Indigenous food sharing practices to manage food resources can potentially address the needs of people experiencing vulnerability
15	Natcher, 2019	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	This research quantifies the harvest of country foods and their distribution	Quantitative – mixed methods; surveys and network analysis	879 First Nations households	Alberta, Canada	Traditional food	This study identifies several barriers to harvesting traditional food that negatively affect food sharing practices. Their findings indicate that sharing	Cultural food practices should be used for sustainable development motives and to enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
								practices are diminishing due to changes in socio-economic conditions, land allocation to industries and government policies	
16	Natcher *et al.*, 2021	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	This paper examines First Nations households' engagement in mixed economies aimed at changing economic and ecological conditions and its impact on their vulnerability	Quantitative – exploratory research surveys	1268 First Nations household surveys	Peace River region of British Columbia and Alberta, Canada	Traditional food	This paper highlights several barriers to customary food practices and the decline in food sharing networks. Their findings show that changing economic and environmental conditions are increasing vulnerability and food insecurity among First Nations	This study calls for targeted interventions to uplift the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples
17	Neill and Toloke, 2021	*Journal of the Polynesian Society*	The paper explores traditional food as a marker of Tongan	Pasifika research methodology	3 Tongan experts	Aotearoa New Zealand	Traditional food	This study highlights that cultural ways of	Not applicable

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Research context			Findings supporting the literature	Future research
				Methods	Peoples	Regions	Foods		
			identity and examines how it sustains cultural norms and traditional identity over time and place	(Talanoa): extended open-ended conversations				preparing and sharing food are shaped by time and place, but in essence, it maintain cultural identity	
18	Neufeld and Richmond, 2020	*Current Developments in Nutrition*	This study examines the historical context of the present-day food environment, revealing that colonial disruptions have contributed to food insecurity and cultural loss among Indigenous Peoples	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (life history interviews and open-ended conversations)	18 First Nations Elder women	Ontario, Canada	Traditional food	This study highlights several barriers to cultural food sharing practices that contribute to food insecurity, including changes in the social environment stemming from structural discrimination, displacement and cultural disconnection	This study emphasises the development of food programmes to revitalise Indigenous food practices
19	Moeke-Pickering *et al.*, 2015	*MAI Journal*	The paper explores Māori food security and sovereignty, focusing on	Māori research methodology: interviews and photographs	10 Māori participants	Eastern Bay of Plenty region, Aotearoa,	Traditional food	This paper reveals that food security is rooted in cultural practices of food sharing and is	This study highlights that framing Indigenous food sharing in food

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			revitalising cultural food practices to address food insecurity and promote holistic wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand			New Zealand		essential to uplift wellbeing of people and the planet	programmes can help build resilient communities
20	Quintal-Marineau, 2019	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	This paper explores the contemporary practices of food sharing within Indigenous communities, focusing on the sharing of store-bought food	Qualitative – mixed method: field work (diaries) and interviews	82 Inuit interview participants and 76 dairies	Clyde River, Nunavut	Store-bough food	This paper finds that store-bought food is becoming an integral resource for communal feasts and meal-sharing events. Furthermore, it is shared as gifts, hosting meals and accounts on food stores are also shared	Not applicable
21	Omura, 2023	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	This study explores the Inuit worldview on food practices and the role of child sharing in distributing food	Qualitative – mixed method: ethnographic research and interviews	Inuit	Nunavut, Canada	Traditional food	This paper concludes that food sharing practices are central to the Inuit subsistence system. Food is shared to show	Not applicable

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Focus of study	Methods	Research context: Peoples	Research context: Regions	Research context: Foods	Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			within extended families					respect for wildlife. By sharing food, Inuit prevent the establishment of a hierarchical structure that reduces inequality	
22	Rana *et al.*, 2024	*International Journal of Circumpolar Health*	This paper highlights the role of Indigenous sharing practices during crises to uplift the community's wellbeing	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (interviews)	70 Inuit Participants	Nunavut, a Canadian Arctic territory	Country food and food hampers	Community food sharing initiatives provide access to both country and store-bought food during crisis periods, contributing to the community's wellbeing	This paper urges policymakers to integrate Indigenous knowledge in future food initiatives
23	Ready, 2017	*Hunter Gatherer Research*	The paper examines the persistence of cultural food-sharing practices in Inuit social, economic and political life aimed pressures from wage labour and market integration	Qualitative – mixed method: ethnographic research, interviews and secondary data	110 Inuit households	Nunavut, Canada	Traditional food	In evolving economic structures, the social relationships sustained through food sharing remain paramount for Inuit communities	Researchers working with Indigenous communities with transitioning economies should develop frameworks aimed at sustaining traditional food practices

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Table A3. Continued

No.	Authors	Journal	Research context				Findings supporting the literature	Future research
			Focus of study	Methods	Peoples	Regions	Foods	
24	Tomaselli *et al.*, 2018	*Arctic*	This paper explores the importance of country food for community residents and its critical role in providing local food security	Qualitative–community-based participatory research (interviews, exercises and field notes)	23 Inuit and 7 non-Inuit	Victoria Island, Nunavut, Canada	Traditional and store-bought food	This paper argues that country food or locally harvested foods are vital for retaining cultural identity, sustaining associated practices and ensuring food security	Interdisciplinary research is needed to preserve cultural practices surrounding locally harvested food that are essential to maintain cultural resilience and improve food security
25	Wenzel, 1995	*Arctic Anthropology*	This paper provides a comparative analysis of historical and present-day sharing practices among Inuit communities	Qualitative – mixed method: ethnographic research, interviews and historical data	Inuit	Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada	Traditional and store-bought food	This paper finds that the Inuit sharing system is dynamic and bounded by rules and traditional obligations. Despite cultural erosion, Indigenous practices of food sharing remain central to the Inuit community and maintain its holistic wellbeing	Not applicable