

An Exploration of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and its Application to Understanding
Métis as a Social Identity

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1981) with a specific focus on the process of self-categorization. Tajfel's theory provides the theoretical framework to understand the social category of Métis as a social group. Eight self-identified Métis adults were interviewed individually utilizing a semi-structured interview to explore their Métis self-identification and operationalize the conceptual framework. The three main research questions used to develop the conceptual framework are: 1) what are Métis characteristics?, 2) Do self-identified Métis adults evaluate the Métis group to which they identify as positive, negative or both?, 3) Do self-identified Métis adults feel like they fit in or belong to the Métis group? Both open ended and closed ended questions were used to explore Métis adults' perspectives related to their social self-categorization. Data were analyzed; conclusions were drawn and verified utilizing the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994). Findings were theoretically interpreted utilizing the social identity perspective. The study's results support the use of Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group as a conceptual framework in understanding the experience and perspective of the Métis participants in this study.

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Dedication

With the deepest of love;
For Emily, Satori and Vance

With love and respect;
For Len, Lynn and Brian

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CHAPTER 1

An Exploration of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and its Application to Understanding Métis as a Social Identity

Social Identity Theory emerged in the 1960's and early 1970's during a period of time that has been referred to as the "crisis" in social psychology. Social Identity Theory (SIT) was developed by Henri Tajfel and his colleague John Turner in order to understand certain selected uniformities of group behavior. Tajfel believed that in order to accomplish this task, one must understand the way groups are constructed within a particular social system, the psychological effects of the construction, and how the constructions and their effects depend on, and relate to, the form of social reality at the time (Tajfel, 1981).

According to SIT, people derive their identity in large part from the social categories (also known as social groups) to which they belong (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). From this perspective, society is made up of many social categories such as ethnicity, class, sex, and religion. The social group(s) exists within the individual. The psychological process responsible for self-categorization is also responsible for the form that group behavior takes. Therefore, self-identification with a social category is reported to tap into, or make salient, group information such as attitudes and normative expectations of appropriateness or rules that guide group behavior. It is through the process of self-categorization that psychological group formation occurs. One's self-conception is largely composed of self-descriptions in terms of the defining characteristics of the social groups to which one belongs (Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

Tajfel indicated that prior to hypothesis testing or exploring group relations it is necessary to begin with the definition of a group that refers to the way it is constructed by those within the group itself (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, prior to exploring the utility of SIT with regards to Métis adults' inter or intra group behavior it is important to

understand the construction of their social identity from their perspective.

Tajfel's theoretical tenets are beneficial in the exploration of a Métis identity as Métis is a minority ethnic group that has emerged and undergone much change throughout a 200 year period. Currently, people who define themselves as Métis are also in the process of redefining what it means to be Métis (Peters 1991).

A minority ethnic group, the Métis came into existence in response to the requirements of the worldwide system of mercantilism known as colonialism (McLean, 1987). They emerged as a new cultural, social and historical entity, a new nation (Sawchuk, 1978) a direct result of the actions of the imperial powers of Europe engaged in the extraction of the fur staple in North America (McLean, 1987).

In the nineteenth century the term Métis referred to the French-speaking half-breeds of the red river settlement (Sawchuk 1978). Sawchuk (1978) indicates that the term Métis as it is known today is drastically different from the criteria that defined the new nation of the nineteenth century in terms of the criteria for group membership, social organization, attitudes towards the surrounding majority, and attitudes towards themselves. Sawchuk (1978) reports that the changes surrounding the term Métis reflect the political and economic changes within the larger social structure, and that the primary vehicle for the change has been the Manitoba Métis Federation, an organization that actively encourages awareness of ethnicity amongst the Métis nation.

This thesis will explore the construction of the Métis social self from the perspective of self-identified Métis adults within Manitoba. It is not an attempt to determine who is or who is not a Métis person. Tajfel's SIT will be utilized as a theoretical lens through which to explore the experience of self-identified Métis adults. Specifically, the focus will be on participants' understanding of what it means to be Métis, whether self-identified Métis feel like they belong to the larger Métis group and what behaviors, characteristics or activities are viewed as typical to ingroup members.

For purposes of this exploration self-identification is defined as the individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to a group together with the emotional and evaluative importance to him or her of that group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Belonging is defined as feeling a part of the group (Tajfel, 1981) and social behavior is defined as a shared representation of how one may behave as a group member (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

It is proposed that self-identified group members' understanding of what it means to be Métis and resulting feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group will be impacted by their experience of being Métis within the larger social context. It is hoped that such an approach will provide a more comprehensive understanding of Métis as a social category from the perspective of self-identified Métis. Although no generalization will be made to the larger population the information generated in this study may be useful for social work practice as few qualitative studies exist that explore Manitoba Métis identity. This study will offer valuable insight into social identity from the perspective of Métis adults in Manitoba as well as offering a qualitative method for accessing information to explore Métis as a social identity.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Social Identity Theory

Traditionally, human social behavior has been explained and explored from various perspectives including biological, psychological, sociological, and social-psychological. Although similarities exist in these various perspectives, in general, the perspectives maintained differences in their approach to the interpretation and understanding of social behavior. Social- psychology is defined as the scientific study of human social (or group) behavior. However, as pointed out by Hogg and Abrams (1988), traditional social-psychology tended to consider a group to consist of small collections of individuals mutually interacting within a similar time and place. What of the large-scale social categories such as gender, religion, and ethnicity for example? How might membership within these groups impact social behavior? Henri Tajfel raised this question in his critique of social psychology. Tajfel viewed social psychology's approach to understanding social behavior as individualistic, due to its focus on the individual within the group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988) rather than explaining how large-scale social categories furnish individuals with an identity or a social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

Tajfel's concern with social psychology's individualistic approach came during the 1970's and 1980's; a time that has been referred to as a "crisis" in social psychology; a time when divergence was emerging within the discipline, divergence that reflected the traditional tension between sociology and psychology. In general, the crisis was a result of dissatisfaction with the direction that the discipline was taking at the time and,

according to Hepburn (2003), it resulted in critiques that can be grouped into three broad themes, of which Tajfel was concerned with two: 1) social psychology was becoming increasingly individualistic in its approach to the social self, and 2) there appeared to be a loss of interest/research exploring the impact of broader social structures on social identity. Tajfel believed that the discipline needed to explore collective behavior and study the direct effects of the location of individuals in various parts of the social system on a wide variety of person to person encounters (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel was not concerned with the third critique that, methodologically, social psychology was increasingly relying on laboratory experiments (Hepburn, 2003).

From Tajfel's perspective a person's social identity is therefore seen as that part of the self-concept, which typically contains characteristics that represent the social groups or categories to which one belongs. The identity is derived from their knowledge of their membership within a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981, 1982a). Tajfel reasoned that social and personal identity are conceptualized as hypothetical cognitive structures that together make up most of the self-concept, each component is in turn made up of more restricted cognitive elements such as particular social categorizations of sex, nationality, political affiliation, religion, and personal characteristics such as bodily attributes, and personal tastes. The sum total of the social group identifications used by an individual to define him or herself creates their social identity (Turner, 1982).

Social identity theory was developed to produce a non-reductionist social psychology of inter-group relations and group processes (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Tajfel

believed the translation of theory into social conduct was the fundamental task of social psychology.

It is because of the socially shared, derived, accepted, and conflicting notions of appropriateness of conduct and because of the social definition of the situations to which they apply and of the social origins of their manner of changing and of relating to one another that individual or inter-individual psychology cannot be usefully considered as providing the bricks from which social psychology can be built (Tajfel, 1981).

Tajfel's position acknowledges the existence of individual self-interest. Tajfel argued that focusing only on individual identity does not move the knowledge base further from what is already known, and furthermore excludes the impact of social identity on behavior within a given social context. Social identity theory describes limited aspects of the self, relevant to certain limited aspects of social behavior at a particular point in time (Tajfel, 1981, 1982).

Theoretically, SIT has primarily focused on the explanation of uniformities of inter-group behavior, or socially shared patterns of individual behavior that pertain to the psychological aspects of the social systems in which people live (Tajfel, 1981). For Tajfel, a group is defined as a cognitive entity that is meaningful to the individual at a particular point in time. Hence there is a cognitive component, the knowledge that one belongs to a group, and an evaluative component, which is the tendency to positively or negatively evaluate ingroup attributes which results in the provision of positive or negative distinctiveness to the ingroup in comparison to out groups thereby providing a positive or negative social identity (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). In addition there is an

emotional component, including emotions such as love/hate, like/dislike, directed towards one's own group and towards other groups which stand in power and status relations to it (Tajfel, 1981), as some groups have more power, status and prestige than others (Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

If an individual's membership in a social group is meaningful he/she may be inclined to act in accordance with group notions of appropriateness, which guide behavior and reflect the system of social norms and values within a given social context (Tajfel, 1981). A person's actions are impacted by the changing social context within which he or she lives. Social identity theory assumes that however rich and complex the individual's view of him or her self is in relation to the surrounding world, an important aspect of that view is due to their membership within certain social groups or categories. Some of these memberships are more salient than others and vary in time as a function of the social context (Tajfel, 1982a.).

Tajfel argues that one's social identity seems to be switched on by certain situations, and acknowledges that these ways are not yet fully understood. Once functioning, social identity monitors and construes social stimuli and provides a basis for regulating behavior. An individual's membership within social groups not only contributes to their self-definition, it also contributes positively or negatively to the image he/she has of him/herself (Tajfel, 1981) The meaning behind one's social identification is thought to change over time in relation to the development of greater and more complex understanding of the social world within which one lives. Although Tajfel does not focus on developmental aspects of social identity throughout the lifespan, he

proposed that the enduring basis for future prejudice and conflict is laid most crucially in childhood. The sensitivity to social context continues throughout one's life.

Thus, a child learns about social categories, their content and evaluative attitudes regarding in and out groups within the social context in which they live. The evaluative components are often learned prior to understanding the concept itself and the information regarding social categories is generally transmitted in the form of stereotypes (David, Grace, & Ryan, 2004). According to SIT stereotypes are derived from, or are an instance of the general cognitive process of categorizing. Stereotypes are an oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person or situation. They are categories that people apply to other people often based on group membership and can be positive, neutral, or negative and vary in intensity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Self devaluation and of the person's group, can also occur. An extreme form of internalization of "outside" negative views by minority members were described by Clark (1981) wherein a person comes to believe in one's own inferiority.

The process of self-devaluation starts in early childhood. Evidence of its existence comes from many countries and many cultures (Tajfel, 1981). In general, however, the social group is seen to function as a provider of positive social identity for its members through comparing itself and distinguishing itself from other groups along salient dimensions that have a clear value differential (Commins & Lockwood, 1981) and are cognitive, evaluative, and affective in their representation.

Social identity theory is a theory of dynamic social construction, a representation and expression of group membership and belongingness (Hogg, 1992). In characterizing society as structured in terms of social categories and relations among and between the

categories it shares with much of sociology a structuralist perspective, however, it emphasizes the forces and pressures upon social groups to differentiate themselves from other groups rather than to strive for similarity. From a structuralist perspective, there is greater focus on conflict themes rather than consensual ones.

A conflict structuralist draws attention to profound differences in ideology, values and beliefs that can characterize different groups in society. From a conflict structuralist perspective the focus is on the competitive and conflictual nature between groups, which are attributed to pervasive intergroup power and status differentials (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). It is the nature of social categories and their relations to one another that give a society its distinct social structure, a structure that precedes its individual members (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). It is important to note that this structure is flexible, and is in constant change, whether gradual or rapid. New categories, the dissolution of categories, modifications to the defining stereotypic features of a category, as well as change in the relations within and between categories are the result of economic and historical forces (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

In contrast, from a consensual structuralist perspective society is viewed as a structured whole with some role differentiation between groups but no deep ideological divisions. There is a broad social consensus on rules of social acceptability and what is not socially acceptable; order and stability are the norm and those who do not share societal values are considered deviant (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

From SIT, membership within social categories does not require face-to-face interaction, as the social categories can function as psychological groups and can impact an individual's behavior. Social categories are historical and cultural givens that precede

interpersonal relations between its members. Social categories are groups in the social psychological sense as members define themselves and are defined by others as a distinct social entity, and under certain conditions tend to act in a uniform manner toward their environment (Turner & Giles, 1982). What constitutes inter-group behavior is any behavior displayed by one (or more) ingroup member toward one (or more) outgroup member that is based on the individual's identification of themselves and the others, as belonging to different social categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1982). Therefore, collective action is not necessary for inter or intra-group behavior to occur (Turner & Giles, 1982).

Experimental studies on inter-group behavior suggest that the perception by individuals that they are joined by common category membership seems to be both necessary and sufficient for group behavior, such as discrimination and social evaluation to occur (see Brown et al., 1986; Tajfel & Turner 1982). Like Goffman (1959), Tajfel believed it is the human desire to achieve or maintain as positive a social self-evaluation as possible within a given social context that provides the motivation behind inter-group behavior. One's social identity is enhanced to the extent that the in-group achieves positive distinctiveness from the out-group, through viewing oneself as both different and superior to the out-group (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Tajfel proposed that the psychological processes of categorization and self-enhancement gives the group behavior its unique form (Hogg & Abrams, 1990) and the social processes that relate to the struggle between groups for relative power, status, superiority, and material advantage are considered to give this group behavior its content (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

According to Tajfel (1982), what matters in self-definition is how people perceive and define themselves and not how they feel about others in the groups to which they

belong. As well, self-definition is motivated by the assumption that individuals prefer a positive, rather than a negative, self-image (Tajfel, 1982).

Individuals are psychologically connected to social structures through their self-identification as members of various social groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). This connection moves beyond simple designation into one category or another. The psychological connection to social structure is real and has self-evaluative and behavioral consequences that have a characteristic and distinctive form: group behavior (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Self-categorization is the psychological process that underpins social identification and it is this process that divides the social world into social categories. Individuals internalize these categories as the social aspects of their own self-concepts and the social cognitive processes relating to these forms of self-conception produce group behavior (Tajfel, 1982).

It is the process of self-categorization that makes the individual's group identity salient. The identification is the primary focus as the individual compares this aspect of their social self with other groups when defining the group that they identify with, or when defining groups to which they do not identify with. The characteristics of a social group are established through a process of self-categorization, and it is through this process that one can create and define one's place in society.

Social identity theory shares with a functionalist perspective the assumptions that psychological group membership has a primarily perceptual or cognitive basis and that individuals structure their perception of themselves and others through the use of social categories in order to organize and make sense of the world around them (Turner, 1982). However this functionalism is more in keeping with social anthropology in that social

identity theory views social groups as inevitable because they fulfill societal needs for order, structure, and simplicity (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). The process of categorization produces psychological accentuation of the differences between categories and the accentuation of similarities within categories (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1990).

Tajfel built upon component parts of individualistic theories such as Bruner's notion that the greater subjective worth of a physical object produces a greater overestimation of its perceived size, referred to as the "accentuation effect" (Doise, 1990, Eiser & Stroebe, 1990, Tajfel & Wilkes, 1990). According to Hogg & Abrams (1990) the underlying assumption of the accentuation effect is that the consideration of subjective usefulness and practical efficiency guides human category adoption and determines category familiarity. Subjective value is the positive feeling that is generated as a result. Tajfel believed that accentuation was produced by cognitive perceptual interference magnified by the emotional and value relevance of the classification to the subjects (Tajfel, 1990). Tajfel found that the effects of the emphasis are more pronounced when the categories are important to the perceiver; hence, social identity becomes more relevant when one of the categories includes the self (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

Empirical support for the accentuation effect was generated out of Tajfel's classic minimal group experiments where participants were minimally defined, anonymous, and had no contact with each other. They were then explicitly categorized on trivial criteria such as the over or under estimation of lines in a perception task. After completing the perception task, participants were asked to allocate rewards to groups however they were not allowed to allocate a reward to themselves. The aim of the experiments was to establish minimal conditions in which an individual through his/her behavior,

distinguished between in group and out group. Throughout the experiments attempts were made to eliminate all variables that would normally lead to in-group favoritism or discrimination against an out-group (see Tajfel, 1981, p. 233-238, 268-273 for review of minimal group experiments). The results of the experiments indicated that subjects' judgments produced an accentuation effect.

Tajfel's personal research interest lay in intergroup behavior. This led him to apply his analysis of the accentuation effect in the perception of physical objects to the domain of person perception (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). He believed that the categorization process was responsible in part for biases found in judgments of individuals belonging to various social groups (Tajfel, 1982b.). Tajfel believed that stereotyping and prejudice involved a categorization process; an assimilation of knowledge of the stereotypic characteristics of large scale social categories such as race, religion, education, and sex, and a self-enhancement motive, which he derived from Festinger's social comparison theory (Festinger, 1990). Festinger's theory holds that people have an upward drive that leads them to compare themselves with others perceived as slightly better on dimensions identified as important (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

Tajfel hypothesized that the need for positive self-esteem is a motivator of social comparisons to differentiate one self from others in terms of positively valued group characteristics and to differentiate one's own group from other groups (Tajfel, 1982a.). Criticism of the social identity perspective has focused on Tajfel's self-esteem hypothesis, which received limited support past initial testing based on the minimal group experiments. However Hogg and Abrams (1990) identify a possible contributing

factor to the limited support as being a measurement issue. For example Tajfel and Turner clearly refer to self-esteem based on specific self-images, such as self as employee or self as a woman, whereas research has often measured global self-esteem, which may be insensitive to short-term variations in the positivity of specific self-images. Further, it may be that self-esteem itself may be involved as a motivation behind inter-group behavior, but may not be the primary motivating factor (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). In fact, inter-group behavior is likely to have multiple causes, just as self-esteem has multiple influences. From research conducted to test the self-esteem hypothesis (Oakes & Turner, 1990; Abrams, 1990; Hogg, Turner, Nascimento-Schulze & Spriggs, 1990; Lemyre & Smith, 1990), it appears that category salience, inter-group discrimination and self-esteem are typically intertwined. Further, Branscombe and Wann (1994) discovered that derogating an out-group could serve the function of maintaining or restoring a positive social identity. However, this occurred only when an important social identity is threatened and the threat-relevant out-group is the target of the derogation. This suggests the importance of identifying relevant out group(s) prior to conducting a study.

There are other possible motivations behind inter-group behavior. Attribution researchers such as Festinger (1990) analyzed how people explain others' behavior and found that people often over-attribute others' behavior to their internal dispositions or traits and underestimate the role of the situation or environment. Attribution theorists believe this error occurs partly because when a person observes someone behave, the focus is on the person, whereas when a person behaves or acts the attention is on what is being reacted to, making the situation more visible (Meyers, 1996). However, Festinger (1990) emphasized self-evaluation or knowing oneself as a primary human motive

behind inter-group behavior, which includes the search for meaning in the social environment and the need for a coherent self-concept. The self-evaluative motive initially proposed by Tajfel as the underlying motivation behind stereotyping and prejudice was later displaced in favor of a self-enhancement motive (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). The human need to construct meaning and order in one's environment is accomplished through a variety of cognitive processes such as categorization, causal attribution, and judgmental heuristics (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Categorization may be the underlying psychological process that maximizes meaning, and the form of the accompanying behavior (which could include inter-group discrimination, elevated self-esteem, acquiescence, intra-group normative competition, depressed self-esteem). The nature of the self-evaluative outcome depends heavily on the social context. If this is the case, categorization governs the parameters and social context governs the specific form the behavior will take (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

Further criticism of Tajfel's work surrounds the minimal group experiments upon which the accentuation principle is based. Tajfel acknowledges that judgments of human characteristics in complex social situations are much more difficult to interpret than judgments within a laboratory setting. For example, complex social situations can lack clear cut criteria for validity, so less information may be needed to confirm judgments of social categories than for physical categories made up of people belonging to one or another social group and may require considerable more information to disconfirm them (Tajfel, 1982b).

For example, the consequences of making a mistake in judgments in the minimal group laboratory setting are very different than those found in a real life social situation.

Certain neutral stereotypes can be applied to certain social groups with no negative connotation attached. Finding out that the application of these traits is an error is not threatening to a person's value system so modification of the general stereotype can occur. However, when social categorization into groups is endowed with a strong value differential, encounters with disconfirming instances would not just require a change in interpretation of the attributes assumed to be characteristic of a social category, the acceptance of such disconfirming evidence threatens or endangers the value system on which it is based (Tajfel, 1982b). For example, if an individual is prejudiced there is an emotional investment in preserving the differentiations between the in-group and out-group. The preservation of these judgments is therefore self-rewarding. This is particularly true when prejudicial judgments are made in a social context that is strongly supportive of hostile attitudes towards a particular group (Tajfel, 1981). In this situation, the existence of prejudice not only provides additional support for hostile attitudes towards a particular group it also removes the "reality check" when faced with disconfirming evidence and the judgments become more strongly entrenched in the form of powerful social myths (Tajfel, 1982 a.). Haslam et al. (1995) found strong support for in-group bias, whereas Jetten (et al., 1996, 1997) found in-group bias to be stronger in natural group settings than in experimental minimal group settings. Lalonde (2002) suggests that past research (such as Brown et al, 1986) may have failed to support the inter-group differentiation hypothesis because the focus was on a non-relevant out-group for social comparison.

As Tajfel noted, it is important to isolate the relevant out-group for the group being studied as well as the relevant dimensions of social comparison while

understanding the history and social context of the groups involved (Lalonde, 2002). The tendency to stereotype is therefore seen as arising out of the process of categorization (Tajfel, 1982 b.) and is proposed to result in in-group bias.

An individual can use stereotypes as an aid in the cognitive structuring of his or her environment and therefore as a guide for action in appropriate circumstances and protection for his or her value system. Stereotypes act as structural constants and provide a framework within which the input must be adapted, modified and re-created (Tajfel, 1982b). A search for coherence or understanding comes into play to help individuals understand the flux of social change around them. In order to understand this change, an individual makes causal attributions about the processes responsible. These attributions equip the individual to deal with the new situations in a manner that appears consistent to him/her, and in a way that will preserve as much as possible his/her self-image or integrity (Tajfel, 1981).

As long as individuals share a common social affiliation which is important to them and perceive themselves to be sharing it, the selection of the criteria for division between in and out- groups and of the kind of characteristics attributed to each will be directly determined by those cultural traditions, group interests, social upheavals and social differentiations perceived as being common to the group as a whole (Tajfel, 1981). As Berger and Luckmann (1981) argue, the selection and contents of social categorizations are not arbitrary random occurrences; individuals construct their social reality from the raw materials provided to them by the social environment within which they live. The categorization process systematizes and orders an array of stimuli in the

environment on the basis of some criteria. This ordering will have certain predictable effects, such as polarization of judgments of the stimuli (Tajfel 1982b).

Theoretically, Tajfel aimed to link the individual and social aspects of group behavior. Macrae (et al., 1996) suggests that Tajfel is one of the few theorists who attempted to address the functions of stereotypes at the individual and group level. For Tajfel, the accentuation effect explained cognitive aspects of social stereotyping that produced a perceived accentuation of differences between people belonging to separate groups and of the perceived accentuation of similarities between people belonging to the same social groups on attributes subjectively associated with their division into categories. This division of attributes occurs through the categorization process and relies on personal and or cultural experiences; the classification itself includes race, ethnic, national or other social categories. It is from Tajfel's notion of categorization that Turner (1985) developed the self-categorization theory.

Self-Categorization Theory

Turner (1985) extended Tajfel's accentuation principle and developed the self-categorization theory (SCT). For Turner (1982), the primary attribute of group membership is the self-categorization of its members. Consequently, a group exists when its members regard themselves as belonging to the same social category. Self-categorization theory focuses on the process of social self-categorization; that is, how a person comes to identify with a social group. It is this process that is believed to be responsible for psychological group formation (social identification) and group normative (stereotypical/prototypical) self-perception and conduct (Hogg & Abrams,

1990). Thus, social identification is a shift away from the perception of oneself as unique person toward the perception of oneself as an interchangeable example of a social category with which one identifies (Turner, 1990).

The process of categorization is seen as automatic, often occurring without the individual recognizing that it is happening. Turner developed the idea that groups compete for more than goods and resources. He proposed that they compete for anything that may enhance positive aspects of their self-definition (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Turner reasoned that those aspects of an individual's self-concept, and hence self-esteem, can be referred to as his or her perceived social identity (Turner, 1990). The need for positive self-esteem is considered to be a fundamental human motivation, which under conditions of heightened social identity salience, is satisfied by relatively positive evaluation of one's own group (Turner, 1982; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1990; Goffman, 1959).

Following Tajfel, Turner hypothesized that the self-concept is a cognitive structure, a multifaceted system carried around from situation to situation. He proposed that it has an overall coherence and organization that produces a sense of unity and consistency while structurally and functionally having highly differentiated parts able to operate independently of each other. Therefore, in any given situation a different part or combination of parts of the self-concept could be at work with the subjective consequence that different self-images are produced. Hence, on occasion(s) social identity can function separately from personal identity and at certain times salient self-images could be based solely on our group memberships (Turner, 1982). Social categorization is a process of bringing together social objects or events in groups

consistent with an individual's actions, intentions, and system of beliefs. The interaction between socially derived value differentials on the one hand and cognitive mechanics of categorization on the other is very important in all social group differentiations. The acquisition of value differentials between a person's in-group and an out-group is part of the general process of socialization or the implicit or explicit learning of social information.

The process of categorization provides the mould that gives shape to inter-group attitudes and the cognitive assimilation of the social values and norms provide their context. Although Self-categorization theory is considered an extension of Tajfel's SIT, it also diverges from it in that the primary focus is on the understanding of the cognitive process of categorization, and not on its effects (the resultant group behavior).

Research utilizing the Social Identity Theory

Over the last 35 years, research developing and expanding SIT in range and application (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Research has demonstrated that social identities feature in people's spontaneous self-descriptions (Rhee et al., 1995; Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Onorato & Turner, 2004) and that one's self-categorization and self-description are affected by the comparative context within which they occur. Social identities are fluid, variable and context dependent (Turner et al., 1994; Haslam 1995; Haslam, 1996).

The majority of research that has utilized the social identity perspective has been quantitative, resulting in experimental testing of theoretical assumptions and hypotheses. Specifically, research has focused on understanding inter and intra-group behavior such

as ethnocentrism (see Doosje et al., 1998; Ellemers et al., 1999; Reynolds et al., 2000), stereotyping (see Fiske, et al., 2002; Haslam et al., 1996; Haslam et al., 1999; Haslam & Turner, 1992; Hogg & Turner, 1987; Jackson et al., 1997; Tajfel, 1981) prejudice (see Lepore & Brown, 1997; Reynolds et al., 2001), and conformity (see Hogg & Turner, 1987a; Turner 1982, 1985). This research has primarily been conducted within adult (generally college students) and child populations.

Attempts have also been made to construct and validate a measure of social identity. However, as noted by Hogg (1992), social identity cannot be measured directly. It is the underlying process of self-categorization that produces systematic general effects that can be measured. Brown (et al., 1986) for example, constructed a ten-item inventory to measure identification with a social group. The scale includes components of group identification such as knowledge of group membership, value placed by members on their group membership, and emotional-affective aspects of belonging to the group. Quantitative measurement of group membership through the individual's expression rests on theoretical principles but is influenced by contextual considerations, in that results from measurements utilizing a scale such as Brown's are meant for a specific group(s) within a specific context, at a particular point in time. Therefore, it is important to understand the social content and context of the specific group being studied prior to utilizing such a scale, as well as to recognize that usage of such a scale will be restricted to that context (Hogg, 1992).

One of the limitations in the application of the social identity perspective as identified by Brown (2000) is related to the apparent lack of qualitative exploration of the social content and social context of the groups being studied, prior to hypothesis testing.

Tajfel himself noted the importance of this gap. Two studies have addressed this concern. Bettencourt and Hume (1999) investigated whether a person's cognitive representation of valued group identities differed in content from representations of personal identity. The findings indicated differences in people's qualitative descriptions of their social and personal identities. As Tajfel proposed, individuals' social identities were represented by emotions, values, and sense of belonging. Sanders and Akbar (2003) also conducted a qualitative study utilizing the social identity perspective and explored the understanding of race and racial group categorization as potential factors associated with the construction of African-American identity. They found that different individual group members defined racial categorization in different terms, and that the definitions were related to the individual's understanding of the concepts.

In general, social psychological research has been preoccupied with the dynamics of small face-to-face groups, and its theoretical orientations have focused on research into groups sufficiently small so that members can interact with each other on a personal basis (Turner & Giles, 1982). Research utilizing the social identity perspective appears to have focused on utilizing the perspectives' hypotheses to predict small group behavior (Phinney et al., 1997; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tarrant, 2004). Although the social identity perspective need not be limited to large scale social categories, there are few qualitative explorations applying the social identity perspective to the various large-scale social categories of sex, ethnicity, religion, and class, and their meanings, as understood and defined by the self-identified group members (Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 1999; Raible & Nieto, 2003; Brantlinger,

2003). Based on a literature search, no research was found examining SIT and the Métis as a social group.

The Métis

Defining Métis

The term Métis comes from the Spanish word Mestizo – it is derived from the Latin word mixtus, which means mixed (de Tremaudan, 1982). Around 1945, the term Métis when used by French speakers in Manitoba generally applied to the offspring of Native and White parentage and specifically to French and Cree speaking descendants of the Red River Settlement (Sawchuk, 1978). Around 1965 a contemporary definition of Métis emerged to define a nation that includes anyone of mixed Native and White ancestry (Sawchuk, 1978) who self-identify as such, and who may or may not be descendants of the Red River settlement (Sawchuk, 1978; Peterson and Brown, 1985). According to Sealey (1975) across Canada the term Métis is loosely applied to all persons of mixed Caucasian and Indigenous ancestry who are not classified as Indian by the government of Canada.

Research has identified various meanings to the definition of Métis. Some Métis have chosen to deny their identity, as to be Métis means to be poor; to live in poor housing conditions, to cling to pre-1870 customs of dress, language, social and economic values, and to not own land or livestock (Sawchuk, 1978). According to St. Onge (2004), the word "Métis" has ceased to define an ethnic group and instead has become a class, with negative connotations of unemployment and poverty attached (Sealey & Lussier, 1975). However, for others, identifying as Métis is a primarily positive identification through which they celebrate historical traditions of the past (Sawchuk

1978)

A review of the literature reveals a gap in research regarding Métis identification, and support for the goal of exploring what it means to be Métis from the perspective of the Métis (Peter, 1991, Sawchuk, 1978; St. Onge, 2004). However, prior to doing so it is important to gain a historical understanding of the emergence of the Métis as a social group.

The Métis as a Social Group

The Métis came into being as result of the fur trade, children who were born to European and Indigenous peoples of Canada. The Métis children were bicultural and bilingual with many speaking English or French as well as their mother's Native tongue (McLean, 1987, Sealey and Lussier, 1975). Once grown, many Métis became the new voyageurs and interpreters and an invaluable resource for the fur trading companies. Although there are different viewpoints as to whom and where the Métis descended from, the Métis of Manitoba emerged from unions between European (such as French, Scottish, Irish, and English) fur traders and Native women of the area (de Tremaudan, 1982). Even though they had a common historical background (Harrison, 1985) there were ethnic variations in the characteristics of the Métis based on their French or English speaking backgrounds, Indigenous backgrounds and differences emerged in religion, occupation, and area of settlement. As the Métis population in the fur trading colonies increased so too emerged a distinct way of life that included hunting buffalo, fishing, and trapping.

The different methods of colonization used by the French and English were

historically significant because they accounted for the vastly different attitudes assumed by the two colonizers towards the Natives. The English for example, treated the Natives with harshness and contempt whereas the French mingled with the Natives as comrades (de Tremaudan, 1982). The English aristocrats who controlled the Hudson Bay Company initially treated the Natives with scornful attitude that resulted in attempts by the Company's directors to prevent social or sexual contact between the company employees and the Native peoples who traded with them (McLean, 1987).

After 1885 the Hudson's Bay Company's attitude toward social and sexual contact between company employees and the Native women shifted (Sawchuk, 1978). The Company realized that marriage between European men and Native women was beneficial in cementing trade relations with Native villages and provided a highly specialized labor force of Native women trained in the skills and traditions that made life possible in the North. These women made all the clothing and pemmican; they cleaned skins, repaired snowshoes, moccasins, and canoes (McLean, 1987, Sawchuk, 1978). Allowing the marriages also improved morale amongst the employees (Burley, Horsfall and Brandon, 1992). Further, having a no contact rule between the men and women contradicted the life force that has always been difficult to control; it was the desire for companionship was the reason behind many of the alliances with Native women (Sealey & Lussier, 1975).

The Northwest and Hudson Bay Company were satisfied with the growth of the Métis population as it was cheaper for both companies to have a local work force familiar with the fur trade (McLean, 1987). For the Natives, the fur trading process seemed at first to present a mutually beneficial relationship (McLean, 1987). However, the more

they depended on the fur trade as a means of supplying tools to fulfill their daily needs the more dependent they became on the Hudson Bay Company and the European market for their livelihood (McLean, 1987).

Competition between the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies was inevitable and resulted in rapid expansion that had both trying to secure trade in all the profitable regions of the country. The Red River colony, located at the junction between the Red and Assiniboine Rivers became a strategic location contested by companies for control of the fur trade, as political control of the colony offered political control over the entire transportation infrastructure (McLean, 1987). As competition increased the two companies resorted to armed attacks on each other (McLean, 1987) and in 1821 the British State intervened forcing the companies to merge. Monopoly power was given to the Hudson Bay Company, which enabled them to control market prices by manipulating and controlling the supply of furs reaching it (McLean, 1987). The merger resulted in massive lay offs, as without competition, surplus manpower and posts were not needed.

The Hudson Bay Company had fostered the dependence of the Métis and Indigenous populations for their livelihood. The Métis and Indigenous experienced a work shortage, the company brought Métis families to the Red River area/colony from the discontinued posts and gave them land to grow food for themselves and the Company (McLean, 1987). Over time, many Métis in the Red River Colony became dissatisfied with sustenance farming and engaged in the free trade of furs (McLean, 1987). Other Métis became dissatisfied with the control the Hudson Bay Company placed on the fur trade and were concerned with their freedom to hunt and trade as they pleased (Anderson & Anderson, 1978).

The free trade of furs was one of a combination of events outside of the Hudson Bay Company's control that threatened the company's profits. Over trapping was leading to a depletion of furs, as well, fashion styles were changing resulting in less demand for furs (McLean, 1987). Until 1869 the Hudson Bay Company's policies and controlled underdevelopment had kept agricultural and industrial expansion out of the western regions (McLean, 1987). However, the company's tight control was questioned as the Red River colony became the object of fierce competition between the mercantile empires of Quebec, Ontario, and the United States as steamer and rail linked the region to American economic influence (Sawchuk, 1978). The empires demanded the exclusive powers of the company be removed as their economic interest shifted from trade of furs to agriculture (Sawchuk, 1978). It was in the Canadian administration's interest to gain power over the area as the company's tight control was incongruent with one of the main goals of confederation: the settling of the west. This would involve the creation of an agricultural colony to finance eastern Canada's Industrial growth (McLean, 1987). The Hudson Bay Company's loss of control and profit in the fur trade lead to the decision to sell the majority of the company's land to Canada (McLean, 1987). With the sale the company would also be handing over its power in the region.

Although the settlement was strategically planned and controlled, the administration was eager to take possession (de Tremaudan, 1982) prior to the official purchase and transfer of land. They sent surveyors to assess the land value and divide the land into townships and sections without asking permission or explaining the reason for their actions to the land's inhabitants (de Tremaudan, 1982). As the deal with the Hudson Bay Company was not settled, the Métis were the legitimate landowners, they felt their

rights were being ignored (McLean, 1987) and were resistant to the way the Canadian administration was going about settling the west. This was the first confrontation between the Federal Government and the Métis and became known as the Red River Resistance or Red River Rebellion (McLean, 1987).

In November of 1869 the Métis organized and formed a provisional government under the leadership of Louis Riel to protest the invasion and defend their rights (McLean, 1987). For the Métis, the settlers coming into the region meant an end to the fur trade, buffalo hunt, and freighting businesses: an end to their way of life (Sawchuk, 1978). The Métis wanted to bring the Red River Colony into Confederation (Pelletier, 1977) however they wanted to ensure their rights were recognized.

The Manitoba Act of 1870 ensured that the Red River colony was transferred to Canada as a province; the Act also promised that land would be distributed amongst the Métis either as land or in the form of money scrip. Scrip was a document that entitled the holder to receive land or money. In 1885, 1710 money scrips and 232 land scrips were issued in values of 80, 160 or 240 dollars (Harrison, 1985). According to Harrison (1985) many Métis chose to take money scrip, as the land allotted through the land scrips was not enough to sustain their way of life of trapping and hunting. Further, as many Métis were in dire need of food and clothes, the money scrip was a fast solution to their needs.

Although scrip was designed to prevent land speculators and surveyors from coming, it did not stop them and the government did nothing to prevent them from approaching the Métis (Sawchuk, 1978). Many of the Métis found their land forcibly taken away, others entitled to scrip received none and others became discouraged and

sold their land titles (Sawchuk, 1978). In 1870 after the Red River rebellion there was a period of increasing conflict, and confronted with violence many Red River Métis packed their belongings and headed west hoping to continue their independent way of life. Eventually 200 families regrouped and rebuilt their society at Batoche, Saskatchewan under the leadership of Gabriel Dumont (de Tremaudan, 1982).

With the Canadian Government's continued expansion into the west the Métis were once again facing a situation similar to the one that drove them from the Red River settlement (Sawchuk, 1978). The surveyors arrived marking off land without checking if it was already occupied; the Métis responded by sending petitions to the Canadian government for compensation of land being taken from them, however, the petitions remained unanswered (de Tremaudan, 1982). In 1885 at Batoche under the leadership of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, the Métis took up arms in defense of their right to the land and self-government; however this rebellion ended in defeat just as had the Red River Rebellion (Peterson & Brown, 1985). At a loss of how to protect their interests in a changing society, the Métis (Sawchuk, 1978) dispersed to marginal rural areas and the peripheries of Native reserves (Peterson & Brown, 1985). Many found themselves living in poverty and some began to deny their Native heritage identifying only with their European background (Sawchuk, 1978).

Today, the Métis of Manitoba find themselves dispersed throughout the province. According to Statistics Canada's 2006 census 389,785 people identified themselves as Métis in Canada. Furthermore, the Manitoba Métis Federation (2008) estimates that there are approximately 100,000 Métis living in Manitoba. Although many Métis are in the process of exploring what it means to be Métis and reconnecting with their social

history, debate and disagreement about what it means to be Métis and who is or who is not a Métis continues. Gaining an understanding of what it means to be Métis from the perspective of self-identified Métis cannot occur without exploring the individual's experience of being Métis within the group, as well as within the larger social structure.

Application of Tajfel's Theory to Understanding the Métis as a Social Group

Based on Tajfel's theory, the Métis are a minority group, with common problems, specifically that they are the objects of certain attitudes and treatment from the dominant society (Tajfel, 1981). Sealey (1975) reports that many Métis have been considered to be socially and intellectually inferior to the dominant race, bringing about a desire by many to escape into the Aboriginal or European Canadian groups. The Métis also share common negative factors of prejudicial treatment; discrimination (Sealey & Lussier, 1975) and economic and social disadvantage (CASW, 1954) represented in unemployment, poverty, and lack of educational opportunities (Sealey & Lussier, 1975).

In order to apply Tajfel's theory, it is necessary to understand how the economic, cultural, social and other criteria that distinguishes them as a social group impacts the Métis people psychologically. As a result, questions to explore these effects include: Do they (or do they not) feel themselves to be members of the social group to which they self identify and consider as distinguished from other groups? What have been the effects of their feelings of belonging (or not belonging) on their social behavior? (Tajfel, 1981)

Tajfel contends that the feelings of belonging or not belonging are impacted by a diffusion of beliefs within the group about themselves and the wider society that in turn impact its member's behavior. He identifies three such beliefs:

- 1) The criteria for their categorization as separate from and by others are such that it is nearly impossible for a member of the minority group to move out individually from the group and become a member of the majority. In other words the identity is imposed on them by the dominant society and individual social mobility will not affect their identification by others as a member of the minority (Tajfel, 1981).
- 2) The group already exists in the sense of wanting to preserve its separate identity and the belief that passing or leaving the group as nearly impossible is determined not only by the constraints imposed by others in the dominant society but also by powerful within group pressures (Tajfel, 1981).
- 3) Group members believe they have the right to shed some or all of the difference that distinguish them from the dominant society (Tajfel, 1981).

It is important to note that the effects that emerge as a result of the individuals' group membership and beliefs about their place within the dominant society will vary amongst members of the same group (Tajfel, 1981). As a result, not all group members will choose the same behavioral response, and a variety of patterns can be found within any one minority group as there are individual variations in personality, abilities, social roles, family background, achievements, and opportunities (Tajfel, 1981).

According to Tajfel (1981), all that can be achieved when exploring social groups is the identification of certain patterns of behavior, attitudes, or feelings which appear more important than others because they are adopted by a variety of people in a variety of groups in a variety of circumstances. For Tajfel (1981) there are a limited number of responses to the problems minorities' face and the solution adopted is closely related to the social conditions in which the minorities live. Similar to Tajfel, Sawchuk (1978)

identifies two choices for any individual attempting to cope within the context of domination, exploitation, and poverty that characterize minority groups, including the Métis:

- a) Individualism wherein an individual can attempt to pass and become incorporated into the dominant society; or
- b) Collectivism wherein an individual joins with others emphasizing ethnic identity in an attempt to develop a more economically and politically viable position in society.

According to St. Onge (2004) by the 1950's well over half of the descendants of the 18th and 19th century fur traders and local Native women did not perceive themselves and were not perceived by others as Métis. They had fully integrated into the dominant society (St. Onge 2004). Tajfel would propose that amongst the Métis who integrated there occurred a diffusion of beliefs about themselves as a group, that although they are aware of differences from the wider society they have the right to shed some of these differences if they choose, and they may merge into the surrounding society even while maintaining some of their distinct characteristics (Tajfel, 1981).

Sawchuk (1978) recommends that current research exploring self-identity define Métis as those who self identify; as some Métis do not identify as such although that is their legal status, some identify as Aboriginal, others as Caucasian and have chosen to cut themselves off from one side of their background. Peters (1991) also advocates for a self-definition approach, as the decision to identify as Métis rather than belonging to some other group has a voluntary component, it is also contextual as historical events, and current political processes and everyday practices can play a role in the self-

identification process. Further, it is important to remember that the way the larger society defines what it means to be a member of a group may be reflected in an individual's self-definition (Peters, 1991).

CHAPTER 3

Method

Design

This study's design is based on Tajfel's theory of social identity. According to Tajfel (1981) one's social identity is that part of an individual's self concept that is derived from knowledge of his or her membership within a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group membership. The process of self-identification is purported to tap into or make salient the knowledge, evaluative and emotional perspective one has about the group to which a person identifies. Tajfel theorized that if an individual's membership in a social group is meaningful he or she may be inclined to act in accordance with group notions of appropriateness, which guide behavior and reflect the system of social norms and values within a given social context (Tajfel, 1981).

Tajfel put forward that identification with a social group contributes to an individual's self-definition as well as his or her self-image and in general, one's membership within a social group was a primarily positive contribution to their sense of self (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel's theory (1981) argues that one's self-identification with a group would contain the following three components:

- 1) A cognitive component which includes knowledge that one belongs to a group;
- 2) An evaluative component that includes ones' positive or negative evaluation of the group and his or her membership in it; and
- 3) An emotional component based on ones feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group.

The majority of research exploring the social identity perspective has focused on the explanation of uniformities of inter-group behavior, or socially shared patterns of individual behavior that pertain to the psychological aspects of the social systems (Tajfel, 1981). However, Tajfel advocated that prior to hypothesis testing or exploring group behaviors and relations it is important to begin with an understanding of a group that refers to the way it is constructed by those within the group itself (Tajfel, 1981). A review of social identity literature was found to be scarce in this regard. Further, although support exists within the literature for exploring what it means to be Métis from the perspective of Métis people, a review of the literature revealed a gap in this regard as well (Peters, 1991; Sawchuk, 1978; St. Onge, 2004). In response to these identified gaps this thesis utilizes Tajfel's SIT to explore the group conception of Métis with a snowball sample of self-identified Métis adults in Manitoba. Specifically, this study explores Tajfel's three components of self-identification with a group and operationalizes the concepts from the perspective of self-identified Métis adults in Manitoba. Tajfel's three components of a person's self-identification with a group will guide the following three research questions:

- 1) What are Métis characteristics?
- 2) Do self-identified Métis adults evaluate the Métis group to which they identify as positive, negative or both?
- 3) Do self-identified Métis adults feel like they fit in or belong to the Métis group?

The responses generated will serve to operationalize Tajfel's conceptual framework from the perspective of self-identified Métis adults in Manitoba.

Although this writer does not disagree with Tajfel that the group can contribute positively to an individual's self concept, it is hypothesized that

(a) If an individual self-identifies with a social group he or she may evaluate the group and one's membership in it as positive, negative, neutral or a combination each.

(b) A person may or may not feel like they belong to the group. The feelings associated with belonging may be associated with positive, negative or neutral characteristics, or a combination of positive, negative and or neutral characteristics.

Sample Participants

The target group for this study is self-identified Métis adults currently residing in the province of Manitoba. Snowball sampling was chosen as the sampling method for two reasons; 1) for convenience, as the time available to complete this study is limited; and 2) to explore Tajfel's SIT with self-identified Métis adults. Eight participants were recruited from self-identified Métis adults known to this writer or who were referred to this writer as potential participants.

Having participants known to the researcher or referred to participate by those known to the researcher potentially increases the reliability of the responses as participants possess an awareness of the interviewer's Métis identity, and possibly had an established level of comfort that resulted in truthful responses and feedback to this researcher as an in group member.

All potential participants were contacted in person or via telephone at which time this writer will explain the purpose of the study, explain issues related to confidentiality, and address any questions or concerns raised. Prior to participating, all participants confirmed that they self-identify as a Métis person.

The sample size and method used for participant recruitment was based on convenience and the generalizability of the results is limited due to the small sample size. The research was conducted after research ethics approval was obtained from the University of Manitoba Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data, the researcher reviewed a consent form with each participant informing them of the purpose of the study, the fact that participation was voluntary, and that participants had the right to withdraw at any time and that their responses were kept confidential (see Appendix A for a copy of the consent form). A signed copy of this document was provided to each participant. The researcher assured each participant that he or she would not be identified by his or her given name in any records kept, and pseudonyms would be used in any publications that result from the study.

Although this researcher protected participant confidentiality, participant anonymity is not be possible to guarantee amongst research participants, as the research was conducted with participants who may have known each other. The researcher ensured that participants were aware of this reality as a part of the informed consent process.

Further, all participant contact information and all written records were kept in a locked file cabinet within the researcher's home office, and will be destroyed after the thesis is complete.

Each participant was asked if they would like a summary of the study's results at

a later time and permission to contact them at a later date was obtained so that they may receive a summary of the results (See appendix B for permission form).

Procedure

Prior qualitative research exploring social self identification has focused on spontaneous self -identifications utilizing the Twenty Statements Test (see Rees & Nicholson, 1994, p.37 for a full description of the measure) with a particular focus on ethnic identity and its development (see Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 1999; Phinney, J 1996; Rhee et al.1995; Verkuyten & Kwa 1996; Verkuyten, 1991 for examples). This measure asks research participants to provide 20 statements in response to the question, "Who am I?" The statements are then placed into one of four categories based on whether they are physical, social, self-reflective, or statements that are not personal to the self (Rees and Nicholson, 1994). This measure allows for spontaneous self- descriptions, however, it does not explore the statements given by participants nor access the meanings attached to such identifications, experiences with the identifications, or where the participant learned about such meanings. An additional issue concerns the importance of understanding what the participant means by a given description when counting responses and coding similarities. For example, "small" and "short" may mean very different things or the same thing to different people.

An integral aspect of this study is the development of a measure that will access information from participants regarding their Métis identity. The review of the literature revealed few studies providing information on identity from the perspective of Métis adults in Manitoba. Further, of the studies that do exist this writer was unable to locate clearly described methodology or a description of interview questions used. Therefore,

an important aim of the present study is to obtain a greater understanding of the meanings attached to the self-identification of Métis persons through the use of a semi-structured interview method.

The interview questions are designed to reflect the main concepts of Tajfel's definition of social identity which includes three group components: 1) a cognitive component that includes knowledge that one belongs to a group, 2) an evaluative component that includes ones' positive or negative evaluation of the group and his or her membership in it, and 3) an emotional component including ones' feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981).

The conceptual framework below represented as Figure 1 graphically presents the theoretical concepts guiding this exploration and contains the cognitive, evaluative and emotional components as defined by Tajfel's (1981) SIT. The arrows represent the interactive nature of the three components, with the center representing the process of self-identifying as a group member, allowing for the exploration of the three components. It is hoped that the responses generated from the research questions will serve to operationalize the concepts as they relate to Métis adults in this study.

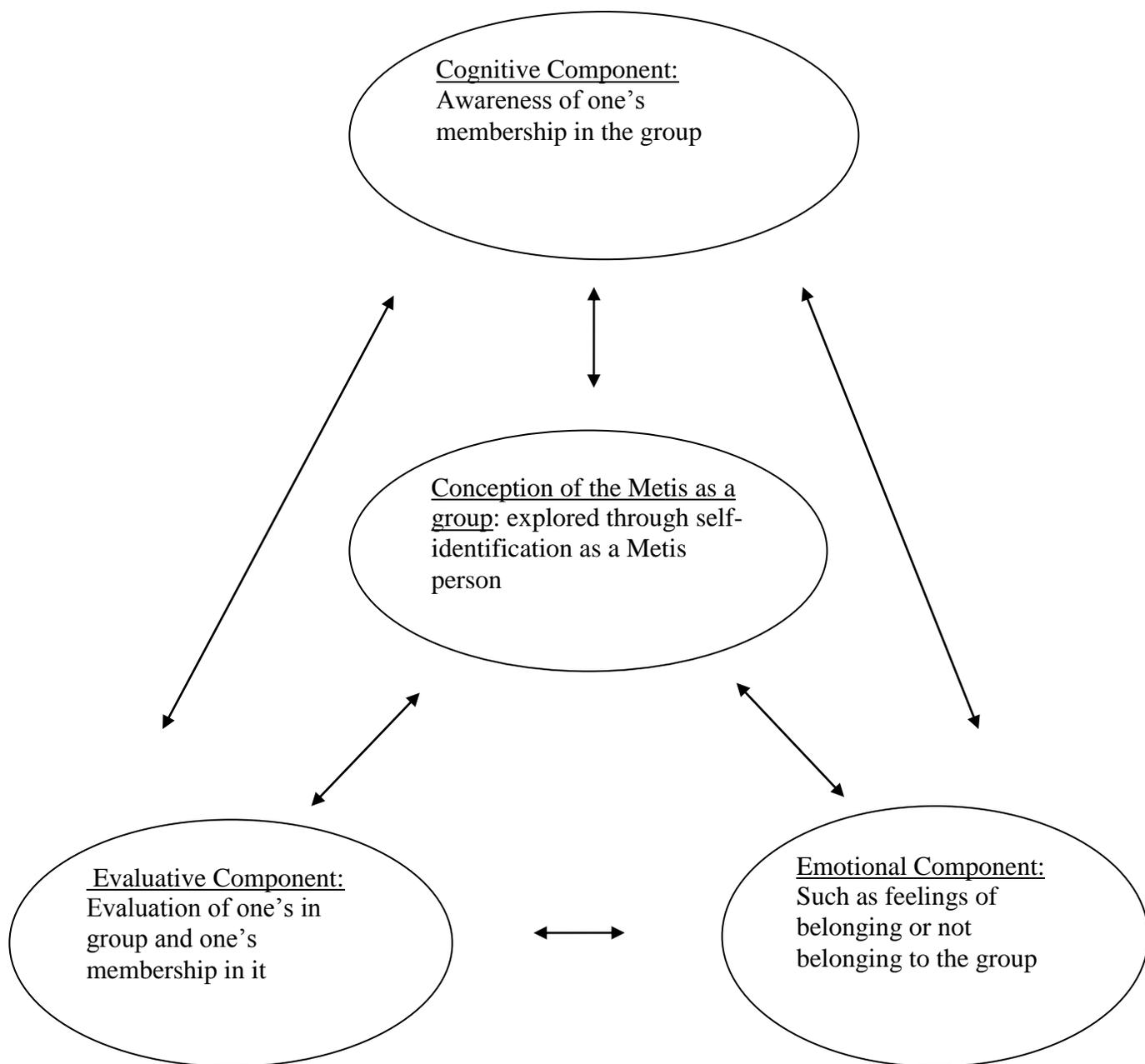


Figure 1. Theoretical conception of a group.

The three main research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) What are Métis characteristics?
- 2) Do self-identified Métis adults evaluate the Métis group to which they identify as positive, negative or both?
- 3) Do self-identified Métis adults feel like they fit in or belong to the Métis group?

In order to answer these main research questions, more specific questions were designed to access more detailed information related to each of the three main theoretical constructs.

Measure

1. Demographics - Demographic information was collected to identify research participant age, gender, home community and to confirm their self-identification as Métis.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your home community?
4. Do you identify yourself as Métis?

2. Cognitive component of social self-identification. Asking participants to self-identify with a social category is useful in making their social identity salient (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Haslam et al., 1996; Haslam et al., 1998; Haslam et al, 1999), however, it is important to explore participants understanding of the meaning attributed to that social category as there may be significant variability amongst participants in their understanding of their social self identification (Verkuyten & Kwa, 1996; Jasinskaja –

Lahti & Liebkind, 1999). The following research questions will be utilized to understand participants' definition of their identity as well as to explore the circumstances behind their choice to self-identify. It is expected that participant responses to the following questions contain knowledge that one belongs to a group and information about the group.

1). How do you define Métis?

2a). How long have you known that you were Métis? Tell me about the circumstances.

2b). How long have you chosen to identify as Métis?

2c). What prompted your identification?

3). Are there activities, characteristics or behaviors that are typical to the Métis as a group? Examples?

3. Evaluative component of social self-identification. One's social identification is proposed to have an evaluative component, which is the tendency to positively or negatively evaluate in-group attributes (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) as well as one's membership within the group (Tajfel, 1981). The following questions were designed to directly access information related to the evaluative component of participants' identification.

1a. What are the positive/good things about being Métis?

1b. What are the negative/bad things about being Métis?

2a. What are the positive/good things about the Métis as a group?

2b. What are the negative/bad things about the Métis as a group?

3. Do you see yourself as similar to other Métis? Why or why not. Example?

4. Do you engage in any of the activities or behaviors typical to the Métis as a group? Why or why not?

4. Emotional component of social self-Identification - One's social identification is proposed to have an emotional component that is connected to one's emotional investment in their group membership and includes feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981). In order to understand what it means to be Métis it is important to explore the emotional impact of one's self identification with the group. The following questions were designed to directly access information related to the emotional component of participant's Métis identity that are specific to feelings of belonging or not belonging to the Métis as a group (Tajfel, 1981).

1. What does being Métis mean to you?
2. Do you feel like you belong or fit in to the Métis as a group? Why or Why not? Can you give me an example?
3. Are there different contexts/situations in which you identify/don't identify as being Métis? Can you give me an example?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of being Métis?

Data Analysis

Spencer, Ritchie & O'Connor (in J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (Eds.), 2003) state that data analysis was once considered a mysterious part of the qualitative research process. Today, authors of qualitative research texts offer many approaches or ways to analyze data. In general one can find an overview of various approaches as well as the authors' own interpretation or style of conducting data analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Some

qualitative research texts focus on specific processes involved in analysis. Wolcott (1994) for example, outlines a detailed account of three different ways of transforming qualitative data through description (which in general addresses the question what is going on here?), analysis (which addresses how things work), and interpretation (which examines what is to be made of it all), stressing that it is up to the researcher to decide based on the goal of the study which of the three processes will be utilized.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) offer students and researchers from any discipline a handbook of strategies for analyzing qualitative data. They provide detailed examples of specific methods used in the analysis process, such as how to go about coding data or the illustration of the analytic strategy of narrative analysis. Other authors focus more on the different traditions or assumptions about the nature of qualitative inquiry and goals of analysis. Creswell (1994) for example provides an overview of four qualitative research traditions; 1) ethnography which involves the study of an intact cultural group within its natural context over a period of time where the researcher collects primarily observational data; 2) phenomenology, where human experiences are examined through the detailed descriptions of those being studied and occurs with a small number of research participants during extensive and prolonged meetings to ensure the development of patterns and relationships of meaning; 3) grounded theory, where the researcher's goal is to generate theory from the data by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information; and 4) case study, where a researcher explores a single case or phenomenon that is bounded by time and activity and collects detailed data using a variety of procedures during a continual period of time (Merriam, 1998). Tesch (1990) outlines over 26 types of qualitative analysis and

identifies difficulty with attempts to categorize the lengthy list of labels as some of the terms have the same meaning as others, some describe the researcher's perspective (such as interpretive) or tradition on which they base their approach (such as ethnography or phenomenology) while others describe the approach used (such as discourse analysis) or the type of data, method (such as participant observation) or location of research. Other types of analysis such as grounded theory furnish the researcher with a set of assumptions about the production of knowledge and a set of guidelines for the research process (Tesch, 1990).

Tesch's list demonstrates a view taken by some qualitative research authors that a lack of consensus about what analysis means and the strategies and techniques that can be used to undertake the process has resulted in a belief that there is no right or wrong way to go about the analysis process. However, the same authors also note that the possibilities for analysis and the methods used in the process are directly impacted by the type of data collected and the goals of the researcher in the study (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 2002; Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006 & Spencer, Ritchie & O'Connor 2003).

Choosing the appropriate type of analysis entails finding a fit with the study's theoretical assumptions and goals (Tesch, 1990). Tesch (1990) categorized 26 types of analysis based on whether the research interest was in; 1) the characteristics of language as communication or as culture; 2) the discovery of regularities through the identification and categorization of elements and exploration of their connection or the discovery of regularities through patterns; 3) the comprehension of the meaning of text/action through the discernment of themes or through interpretation; or 4) reflection. There was a clear

fit between the analysis needed for this design and Tesch's (1990) approach to analysis in the second category. The two main types of analysis that fall within this category were grounded theory and the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994).

Grounded theory is theory derived from data that is systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. Strauss & Corbin (1998) offer a methodology or way of thinking about and studying social reality as well as the methods or procedures for going about analyzing data. The text is a useful handbook that sets out many tools researchers can utilize when analyzing qualitative data. In grounded theory, a researcher does not begin with a preconceived theory in mind, but rather allows the theory to emerge from the data; unless the researcher is extending or elaborating an existing theory as its use can stand in the way of the researcher and the data and hinder creativity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) prefer that researchers do not use existing concepts and provide their own names for what is going on then describe the conceptualizations in terms of the dimensions and properties evident in the data relegating the use of existing theory to comparison with the research findings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Although grounded theory and its procedures are widely used in the carrying out of qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin in Tesch, 1990) for this writer it was integral that the methods chosen for the analysis process not only fit with the aims of description of the phenomena under study from the participants perspective, and the exploration of the relationships among the categorized data, but that it was flexible to allow for the use of theory as a guide in the research design. This flexibility can be found in Miles and Huberman's approach.

Thus, the analysis of data in this study incorporates a deductive approach (Miles

& Huberman, 1994) in that analysis begins with orienting concepts from Tajfel's SIT from which the conceptual framework, research questions, categories, and preliminary codes were drawn. It also incorporates an inductive approach as the variables within the conceptual framework are developed and operationalized from information collected from research participants during the research process. Based on the goals of this study and the incorporation of theory as a guiding principle within the design it is believed that Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis methods are appropriate for this study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) offer a comprehensive sourcebook to researchers conducting qualitative analyses. They regard data analysis to consist of three processes; 1) data reduction; 2) data display; and 3) conclusion drawing and verification of data collected.

Data Reduction

According to Miles and Huberman, (1994) the first component of data analysis is data reduction, which involves the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming the data that are contained within the detailed field notes. The process of data reduction organizes the data collected in such a way that conclusions are drawn and verifications are made (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Reducing or condensing data involves coding. Codes are labels that assign units of meaning to information provided by participants in the study and may be attached to a sentence or paragraph (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Coding allows researchers to thoroughly review what the data are saying and creates the link between the pieces of data that are coded from the interviews, the categories that the data are assigned to, and

the theoretical concepts (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

In this study, a preliminary list of codes and their corresponding definitions derived from the conceptual framework were developed prior to interviewing participants to aid in tying research questions and the concepts of interest to the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The start list of codes can be found in Appendix E. The table displaying the codes includes the main concepts from the conceptual framework, the preliminary codes for the concepts related to the main concepts in the conceptual framework, the corresponding abbreviation for each code, and the research question to which each code is connected to. The definitions for the codes are found in Appendix F, as per Miles & Huberman's (1994) technique.

The codes were used to retrieve and organize information found within the field notes kept on each semi-structured interview. In order to become familiar with the data contained within the field notes, this researcher followed the following process:

- 1) The text contained in the notes was transcribed into a computer using the Microsoft word program.
- 2) Prior to organizing the text, the transcriptions were read through, to see what, if any meanings, patterns or themes emerged from the data.
- 3) The data in the text was coded manually from the preliminary list of codes; and the most appropriate codes were assigned to a chunk of data where a chunk refers to a paragraph or sentence, for example (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes were revised or developed as appropriate as the process of analysis unfolds.
- 4) Each code was assigned a color and the qualitative data within the field

notes will be color-coded to aid in data management (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Data Display

The second component of data analysis involved retrieving the data (Coffey & Atkinson) through the use of data display. Displaying the data aids in making sense of the qualitative data collected. In general, a display is a way of organizing and compressing information and is a part of the analysis process that also permits conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the coded qualitative data was entered into a conceptually clustered matrix for analysis to explore similarities, differences, and interrelationships amongst the categories (Miles & Huberman 1994). As a descriptive display, the purpose of the matrix was to gain conceptual coherence by clustering together items that belong together (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In this study, more than one research question was used to access information related to the same concept. Therefore, the matrix was initially formatted as a participant -by- research- question matrix so that all participants' responses to the research questions are viewed and compared. To enhance the researcher's ability to view the data clearly and avoid data overload during analysis, a separate display was used for each concept and related research questions (Appendices H, I, J, K.). After the individual questions were thoroughly explored a second matrix was constructed that clusters the conceptually related research questions together (Appendix L). All matrices were used as integral aspects of data analysis; the constructed matrices cannot be included due to the sheer volume of information each contained, it was not possible to reduce the displays to be placed in this thesis

Conclusion Drawing

The third component of analysis involves both conclusion drawing and verification. In order to fully appreciate the issues of conclusion drawing and verification they are presented and discussed separately. Conclusion drawing is discussed first.

Interpretation involves transforming the coded data into meaningful data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest researchers outline the specific tactics used to draw conclusions from the matrix data during the data analysis process. In this study, the preliminarily tactics used to generate meaning from the data included;

- 1) The notation of any patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- 2) Clustering, or inductively forming categories of "things that go together" (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- 3) Noting relations among variables (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- 4) Making conceptual or theoretical coherence, which involves exploring the validity of the findings to determine their fit with the conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- 5) A research journal will be kept in which questions, problems and decisions encountered during data collection and analysis will be recorded (Merriam, 2002).

Methods for Verification

The meanings that emerge from the data need to be tested for their confirmability or validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to increase both researcher and reader confidence

in research findings. This study will incorporate seven tactics to assess data quality.

1. Checking for researcher effects: This tactic involves exploring and acknowledging the potential effect the researcher has on the participant and participant on the researcher. As Miles and Huberman (1994) state: outsiders influence insiders and vice versa, which can lead to biased observations and inferences. The following measures taken from the recommendations made by Miles and Huberman (1994) were used to address these potential effects.

First, the following measures were used to avoid bias stemming from researcher effects on the participants:

- a) Disclosure of my social identity to research participants is purposive to avoid bias stemming from the effect of the researcher on the site or being seen as an outsider.
- b) The questions used in the interview are unobtrusive and would not generate information that would cause any harm to the participant. Further, the use of a semi-structured interview that includes both closed and open-ended questions provides the flexibility required to capture participants' perspectives, allows the interviewer to answer any questions participants have, and permits the interviewer to conduct checks to ensure that she has accurately perceived what the respondent has stated (Creswell, 1994, Merriam, 2002, Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- c) Interviews were conducted in a comfortable agreed-upon location.
- d) The purpose of the research, the procedures used and future use of the data will be used will be clearly explained to participants.

Second, the following measures were used to avoid bias stemming from the effects of the participants on the researcher:

- a) Translating interpersonal thoughts into theoretical thoughts.
- b) Follow up sense of being misled by participants by trying to understand why this may be occurring.
- c) Keeping research questions firmly in mind to avoid wandering too far from them.

2. Weighting the evidence: This tactic involves weighing out the strength of the data collected from participants. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) the following circumstances will help to strengthen the quality of data collected from the participants:

- a) Reports are from the participants themselves - it is their own experience,
- b) The researcher is known as a member of the in-group
- c) The information is collected in an informal setting
- d) The participant is interviewed individually which enhances comfort and willingness to respond truthfully.

3. Checking the meaning of outliers: This tactic involves looking for unexpected data or exceptions to the findings, exploring and discussing the information they provide. Outliers provide the opportunity to refine concepts used in the study. Once an outlier was found, verification was done to determine if what was occurring is different in the other data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

4. Following up surprises: If responses are obtained that are well outside the range of expectations (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the following steps were taken:

- a) Reflection of the surprise to surface the violated theory;

- b) Consider how to revise the theory;
- c) Look for evidence to support the revision.

5. Looking for negative evidence: This entailed looking for evidence that disproved the findings of the study. This was done by asking the following question of the findings, "Are any of the data inconsistent with this conclusion?" (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

6. Replication of a finding: According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the tactic of replicating findings can be used in several ways. Although a popular method of implementing this strategy is through triangulation of data from several sources, this method of replication was not used in this study. Replication was explored through the collection of data from new participants as each new data strengthens or qualifies old data by testing their generality (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Further, asking each participant the same question allowed for comparisons among respondents (Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

7. Getting feedback from informants: This researcher utilized this tactic to check out whether the meaning conveyed by the participants through the information collected was understood by the researcher, and accurately portrayed. This strategy occurred during data collection.

Standards for Judging the Quality of Conclusions

Miles and Huberman (1994) propose some practical guidelines in the form of questions researchers can apply to their work in order to go beyond the use of tactics as justification for good conclusions. This study incorporated this aspect of their

recommendations to strengthen confidence in the conclusions, clarify the study's limitations and identify recommendations for future research.

The questions that were asked of this study are in relation to the issues of 1) objectivity/confirmability; is the study free from unacknowledged researcher biases? 2) Reliability/dependability: Has the process of the study been consistent, have things been done with reasonable care? 3) Internal validity, which refers to the quality of the designs and measurement; 4) External validity, which refers to the generalizability of the study's results and their relation to other research results; and utilization, or the applicability of the study's findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

First, the following questions taken from Miles and Huberman's (1994) recommendations were asked of the study to address the issue of objectivity/confirmability:

- 1) Were the study's methods and procedures described clearly and in detail?
- 2) Can the sequence of data collection, processing, condensing and display be followed for conclusion drawing?
- 3) Are the conclusions explicitly linked with exhibits of displayed data?
- 4) Has the researcher been explicit and self-aware about personal assumptions, biases, and values?
- 5) Were rival explanations really considered?

Second, the following questions taken from the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) were asked of the study to address the issue of reliability/dependability;

- 1) Are interview questions clear and are the features of the study congruent with them?
- 2) Are the basic theoretical paradigms clearly specified?
- 3) Were any forms of peer or colleague review in place?

Third, the following questions taken from the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) were asked of the study to address the issue of internally validity/credibility:

- 1) How content rich or meaningful are the descriptions given by participants?
- 2) Does the account given by participants make sense?
- 3) If triangulation did not occur is there an explanation given for this?
- 4) Are the data clearly linked to categories of prior or emerging theory?
- 5) Are areas of uncertainty identified?
- 6) Was negative evidence sought for? Was it found?
- 7) Have rival explanations been actively considered?
- 8) Did the participants consider conclusions accurate; if not is there an explanation for this?
- 9) Were any predictions made in the study, and if so, how accurate were they?

Fourth, the following questions taken from the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) were asked of the study to address the issue of external validity/transferability:

- 1) Are the characteristics of the original sample fully described to permit adequate comparisons with other samples?

- 2) Does the report examine possible threats to generalizability? Have they been discussed?
- 3) Are the boundaries of the generalization from the study defined?
- 4) Do the findings include enough thick description to allow readers to assess the potential for appropriateness for their own settings?
- 5) Are the findings congruent with, or connected to prior theory?
- 6) Does the report suggest settings where the findings could be explored or tested further?

Lastly, the following questions taken from the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) were asked of the study to address the issue of utilization or application of the study's findings by potential consumers of research.

- 1) Do the findings stimulate working hypotheses on the part of the reader as guidance for future action?
- 2) What is the level of usable knowledge offered?
- 3) Are there ethical concerns raised in the report?

Limitations of the Present Study

While there is no consensus among qualitative researchers on addressing issues of validity and reliability in research, many recommendations can be found (Creswell, 1994). What appears to be consistent within the literature is clearly reporting the study's limitations and attempts to manage them.

First, a primary limitation of this study is potential researcher bias. As a Métis woman, I have life experiences that have contributed to my thoughts, feelings, and

beliefs related to my own social identity. As a researcher, it is important that I recognize the impact such experiences have had on my worldview (Creswell, 1994). In this study, my personal and professional experiences guided my interest in this research topic and contributed to the development of the research questions. I bracketed my personal self during the interview process with participants by retaining a participant focus and reporting responses from their perspective though checking and asking for feedback from each participant to ensure I understood the meaning of what they were conveying. Further, the use of research tools enabled this researcher to achieve a balance between the sharing of my personal identity as a Métis person and remaining objective as a researcher. The tools utilized that allowed the researcher to retain a professional focus included an informed consent letter that outlined the purpose of the study and the researchers role, a semi structured interview questionnaire and interview guide that was closely followed with each participant. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001) and Miles and Huberman (1994) the use of a semi structured interview and interview guide reduces interviewer bias, thereby enhancing interviewer objectivity if the interviewer does not stray far from the questions. As well, a self reflective journal was kept throughout the data collection and analysis process. Although the researcher followed the recommendations of Rubin and Babbie (2002) and Miles and Huberman (1994) through making every effort to be aware of the potential impact of my personal experience and bias throughout the research process to retain objectivity through bracketing of self; it is likely that my “self” did come though during the process and resultant writing of this thesis.

Rubin and Babbie (2001) state there are no clear guidelines and no “right or wrong” when it comes to deciding what role the researcher takes when conducting a study; at one end of the continuum there is participant as observer at the other there is observer as participant. In the latter case anything the researcher does will have some effect on what is being observed. In this study disclosure of the researcher’s social identity to participants may have benefited the research. For example, participants’ knowledge of the researcher’s Métis identity may have positively impacted their willingness to participate in the study and share their experiences. As Rubin and Babbie (2001) recommend, this decision to share this information was based on the researcher’s understanding of the situation, and knowledge that participants would likely see the researcher as an in-group member thereby potentially enhancing participants’ comfort with sharing their experiences, ultimately reducing a higher quality of data collected. In addition, self-identifying as Métis to participants may have opened the door for participants to ask the researcher questions about my experience as a Métis. Although no participants requested any information this researcher was prepared to respond to questions that may have emerged.

Third, the generalizability of this study is limited. The goal of this study is to understand the particular in depth and not what is true of many (Merriam, 2002). This study is an exploratory and descriptive qualitative design that used a small snowball sample to best investigate the research questions. The results of this study contribute to and are compared with the sparse data that currently exists on Métis identity in Manitoba. Although no generalization will be made to the larger population the information generated in this study may be useful for social work practice as few qualitative studies

exist that explore Manitoba Métis identity. This study offers valuable insight into social identity from the perspective of Métis adults in Manitoba as well as a valuable qualitative method for accessing information to explore social identity.

CHAPTER 4

Results:

Addressing the Gap

The research results are presented in this chapter. The goal of this qualitative study was three fold, first, to address the lack of qualitative research approaches on Tajfel's SIT, second, to respond to the gap in research related to Métis identity and third, to apply Tajfel's SIT to Métis identity. These goals were met by utilizing the tenet of Tajfel's social identity theory as the guiding theoretical lens to develop a conceptual framework specific to Métis adults in Manitoba and obtain an initial understanding of the meaning(s) attached to the self-identification of Métis adults in Manitoba. According to Tajfel, a person's social identity is part of an individual's self concept composed of three components; 1) a cognitive component which involves the knowledge that one belongs to a particular social group, 2) an evaluative component which is the tendency for the individual to positively or negatively evaluate in-group attributes and one's membership within the group, and 3) an emotional component which involves the attitudes and emotions one has towards one's in-group and to out-groups. In general Tajfel proposed that the positive or negative significance of one's group membership can be seen through the evaluative and emotional information that they attribute to their group identity.

In this study, the analysis of data was guided by the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) and involved three processes, 1) data reduction, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion drawing and verification of data collected. Data was transcribed and reduced through manual coding by the researcher. Coded data was then displayed in conceptually clustered matrices that cluster data together according to predetermined

theoretical categories and thematic categories that emerged from the data. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified utilizing a series of steps as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) that involved asking a number of questions of the study's findings.

This chapter begins with section one which presents a summary of participants demographic information. Section two reflects the study's findings and is divided into three subsections that correspond to the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components of the conceptual framework. Each sub-section contains a general overview of the specific components of the theoretical framework, the research questions designed to explore them and the presentation of the results as they connect to each component of the framework. As well, research questions designed to explore more fully the conception of the group (such as the definition of Métis) from the perspective of in-group members and participant responses are presented within the sub-section that the researcher determined most appropriate. Further, the themes and patterns that emerged from the data will be presented within the subsections. Each section concludes with a table that graphically displays the results for each component of the theoretical framework operationalized by participants in the study. The chapter concludes with section three which presents the operationalized conceptual framework and a summary of the study's findings.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Demographic information collected from each participant included the variables of age, gender and home community. This information is displayed below in Table 1 as well as in appendix H. As part of the recruitment criteria, participants were required to self identify as a Métis person to this researcher. To protect participant confidentiality, pseudonyms are used.

Participants were asked three questions designed to access demographic information. Participants were first asked their age, secondly, they were asked their gender, and lastly they were asked to indicate their home community. Of eight participants, 6 women and 2 men volunteered to participate in the research study. Their ages ranged between 26 and 59 years. Each participant shared that their home community was located in the province of Manitoba. Some participants indicated their home community as that where they currently reside while others indicated their home community as where they spent their childhood. Below, table one displays the responses provided by each participant.

Table 1.

Sample Demographics

Participants	Age	Gender	Home Community
Billy	34	Male	Hodgson
Rose	59	Female	Fisher Branch
Jordon	26	Female	Hodgson
Clint	29	Male	Fisher Branch
Violet	49	Female	Fisher Branch
Gladys	53	Female	Hodgson
Jo	47	Female	Winnipeg
Vanessa	38	Female	Winnipeg

Section 2: Components of the Conceptual Framework

Cognitive Component

The cognitive component of one's social identity is purported to contain the knowledge that one belongs to the group. This was explored through the first research question which asked participants if they identified as a Métis person. As previously stated, participation in the study required volunteers to self-identify as a Métis adult. Asking participants to self-identify as Métis served the main purpose of fulfilling the requirement for the cognitive component of the theoretical framework, as the individual acknowledges their knowledge of their group membership. All participants openly identified as Métis, indicating that all were aware of their Métis identity, thereby fulfilling the cognitive component of Tajfel's theory.

Tajfel (1981) indicated in his writings that prior to hypothesis testing or exploring group relations or behavior it is integral to have an understanding of the group from the group's perspective, which also includes knowledge of relevant out-groups. Obtaining detailed information about a group is therefore necessary to developing an accurate conceptual framework for Métis identity.

Despite Tajfel's belief in obtaining knowledge about the group from the group's perspective, he did not include information about the group as part of the cognitive component of the conceptual framework. In order to gain a detailed understanding of the Métis as a group this researcher further investigated participant knowledge of their group membership and their knowledge of in-group attributes. Following Tajfel's conceptual framework this information is not included as part of the proposed conceptual framework, however it is utilized to gain a more complete understanding of the Métis as

a group and is presented below in text under the sub-headings; participant knowledge of their group membership, circumstances behind choice to identify as Métis, and information about the group. The information is also displayed below in Table 2 (which presents the exploration of participant knowledge of their group membership represented as the time they have known of their identity, when they chose to openly identify as Métis and the reason behind their choice to identify as a Métis group member) and Table 3 which presents information about the group.

Participant knowledge of their group membership

The second interview question was designed to further explore participants' knowledge of their group membership and was divided into three questions investigating 1) the length of time participants were aware of their identity, 2) how long they chose to identify as Métis, and 3) the circumstances behind participants' choice to identify with the group. Participant responses to questions one and two will be combined in subsection 1 under the heading; length of time participants knew of their identity and when participants chose to identify as Métis. Participant responses to the three questions are presented in detail following a summary of their responses to the questions displayed below in Table 2:

Table 2

Exploration of participant knowledge of group membership

Participants	Time Known	Time Identified	Reason Identified
Billy	14 years	14 years	Employment equity
Rose	All her life	23 years	Desire to feel a sense of pride
Jordon	10 years	4 years	Financial assistance for education, Socialization
Clint	All his life	All his life	Lifestyle choice
Violet	12 years	12 years	Preserve knowledge of heritage, Financial assistance for self or children's education
Gladys	2 or 3 years	2 or 3 years	Desire to feel at peace
Jo	All her life	All her life	Employment equity, preserve knowledge of heritage
Vanessa	4 years	4 years	Preserve knowledge of heritage, Employment equity

Length of Time participants knew of their identity and when participants chose to Identify as Métis

Many of the research participants did not learn of their Métis heritage until adulthood, and for most, once they became aware of their heritage they chose to openly identify as Métis. Only three participants, Rose, Clint and Jo have known of their Métis heritage all of their lives however just two participants; Clint and Jo have identified as Métis all of their lives. This lifelong open identification appears to be connected to their family of origin as well as the communities within which they were raised. They both reported positive fostering of their Métis identity by their families and communities as they were growing up, describing their Métis heritage as a way of life and indicating they had a sense of pride instilled in them by their families from birth, as Clint indicated; “I’ve known of my Métis heritage my whole life; I was brought up to be proud to be Métis, it is a way of life for me and my family”.

In contrast, Rose knew of her Métis heritage all her life but did not self identify as Métis until she was an adult; she described growing up that her Métis heritage was never talked about within her immediate family, indicating that it was her mother who was the primary keeper of the truth about their Métis identity, and that she kept this truth to herself to protect her family from racial discrimination. Rose explained;

My mom was never clear about it (our Métis identity) when asked, sometimes she would say yes, sometimes no, sometimes nothing. When I was growing up the Métis people were really discriminated against, treated like dogs, so my mom actively downplayed any identification with them.

Participant's delayed awareness of their Métis identity and choice to identify seemed to be connected to the theme of Métis identity being a well guarded family secret. This theme emerged during participant interviews.

A connected theme also materialized; it appears that the color of one's skin although not an indicator of one's belonging to the Métis as a group, is integral to one's ability to "pass" as a member of another group such as White, thereby allowing one to keep one's membership in the group a secret, in order to avoid racial discrimination for example. Further, after talking with participants, it appears that skin color is not only connected to keeping one's membership within the Métis group a secret but of one's Aboriginal heritage in general. For many of these participants, dark skin represents one's Aboriginal ancestry; the Aboriginal side of their family.

During the interviews, more than half of the participants described their parents or grandparents' experience of racial discrimination that led them to hide their identity in order to protect their children from experiencing the same prejudices that they had endured, and the resultant feelings of shame or embarrassment. Like Rose, four other participants reported experiencing their parents or grandparents negative experiences or views associated with identifying as Métis. These participants report that while growing up they were directly or indirectly discouraged from talking about or asking questions related to their Métis identity. Unlike Rose, however, the following four participants did not learn of their Métis identity until adulthood. Gladys reported not knowing she was Métis until a few years ago, she had her suspicions while growing up and described what it was like to ask her mom questions, never receiving answers and witnessing what she now knows as her mother's denial of her Métis heritage. Gladys' mother was able to

pass as White because of the color of her skin, and disassociated with family because of their skin color – because they appeared Aboriginal or had Aboriginal names;

My mother hid her Métis heritage by never admitting to it, she changed the pronunciation of names to hide relations with Aboriginal people like Beardy became Birdy. It may have been my grandma who started hiding her identity as she was treated like a slave by her step mother who was White, my grandmother taught my mom to hide her Métis identity because it meant such shame. My mom even threw out her fiddle because it was associated with her Métis heritage.

In talking with Jordon, she described feelings of confusion and exclusion; being left out of social gatherings and experiences that she witnessed her cousins enjoy when she was growing up. She stated;

I started asking questions when I saw my cousins were going on trips to the red river ex that was paid for (by the local MMF) and getting financial awards for passing grades I wondered how come they got these things and I did not. It was Jordon's mother who told her of their family's Métis heritage when Jordon was 16. Her mother explained to her that they did not apply for their "Métis rights" (at the local MMF), because of their dad's denial of his heritage.

Violet candidly reported her experience of finding out about her Métis heritage. She did not find out she was Métis until 12 years ago when she was 37 years of age. She described being approached by a member of the local MMF who offered to research her family name, indicating she believed it was a Métis family name. Violet reported that sure enough she found out she was Métis, and described feeling surprised as her family had only ever identified as French. However, upon exploring this further with her, Violet

like Gladys also appeared to have had her suspicions when one family member shared some knowledge of their Métis ancestry. Although it was confusing for her as “it was talked about but not talked about” now that she knows however, she reports it makes complete sense; the family member maintained the secret by not directly speaking of their Métis identity, but shared just enough to raise the question in the back of her mind. She describes her family dynamics as follows; “The older generation are embarrassed to say they are Métis, they still don’t accept that we are Métis. They see themselves as French; to my dad it was embarrassing to have Indian blood”. She went on to indicate that she makes a conscious choice not to identify or even discuss her Métis identity with certain family members, stating; “I don’t identify as Métis when with older family members because they are not accepting of it and are telling us younger generation to leave it alone”.

Vanessa described what it was like to bear witness to the silence and shame connected to what she now knows as her family’s Métis heritage during a moment with her grandmother. She described a time when she was with her grandmother before she died, interested in learning about the family history she asked to look at her grandmother’s photo albums, albums she could not recall having access to prior to then. Vanessa stated that she found photos that sparked her curiosity. She shared;

I think I was in my early twenties when I was visiting my grandmother I remember asking her about some photos that I found, they were in a shoe box hidden behind the family photo albums. The people in the photos looked native, I recognized her handwriting on the back and I asked her who these people were. I remember she just sat there and said nothing, I felt really confused, it was so

weird to be there in that moment, I later asked her for the photos and she let me take them. I had a feeling they were important and that I needed to have them, she never admitted or told me of our Métis heritage before she died; I later came to understand she was ashamed.

Although Rose, Gladys, Jordon, Violet and Vanessa all witnessed or lived with the embarrassment, shame or denial experienced by their parents or grandparents' Métis heritage, it appears as though their eventual choice to identify as Métis as an adult has been a liberating experience inducing a sense of pride. As Violet stated; "I am not embarrassed to say I am Métis, I am proud". Further, it allowed for a sense of internal peace, as Gladys stated, identifying with her Métis heritage helped her to understand herself better; "Now that I know everything makes sense, I feel like I am a complete circle."

Circumstances behind choice to identify as Métis

In order to explore the circumstances behind one's choice to openly identify as Métis participants were asked what prompted their choice to identify as Métis. Review of answers to this question demonstrated similarities and differences amongst participants in their responses. Upon exploration of participant responses, two themes emerged first, many participants identified as a Métis person for practical reasons such as the benefits one would attain from doing i.e. employment equity and financial support for education. One participant also identified the importance of identifying for the socialization opportunities available to her children. Secondly, many participants identified as Métis explaining it was a way of preserving the knowledge of their heritage for future generations. Each of these themes is presented separately below.

Employment Equity and Financial Support for Education

Half of the participants openly identified as Métis for reasons related to the practical benefit of doing so such as employment equity or financial support for their own or their children's future education. Billy for example described that he only identified as Métis for employment purposes. During the interview he shared how being Métis facilitated his application process with the RCMP and allowed him to return to his home province to work once he graduated from the RCMP training academy. Jordon also chose to identify as an adult in order to assist her children with their future education however.

Socialization

Jordon openly described how she would like her children to have access to the rewards and opportunities for socialization being a member of the local MMF would provide sharing;

I identified to benefit my children which I lost out on growing up, like the financial awards for passing grades, the gatherings at Christmas or going with the local MMF as a group to the city for outings like the Red River Ex.

Preserving the knowledge of one's Métis heritage

The theme of a desire to preserve the knowledge of one's Métis heritage emerged from three of the participant interviews. Jo stated her reason for openly identifying as Métis had deep personal significance. It was clear that the preservation of the knowledge of her heritage was very important as she shared that she was taught by her parents to be proud of her heritage, to remember who she is and where she comes from. For Jo, this pride was connected to the importance of preserving the knowledge of her Métis heritage

for future generations that was extended to her from her parents that she stressed as important for her to carry on with her son, she explained;

I'm proud of my Métis heritage and it is very important for me to make sure my children know their heritage as my parents taught me, for me it comes down to the whole person by my being here now and my parents both gone it adds to the circle and I have done that once with my son.

For other participants, their reasons for identifying as Métis were more varied.

Clint indicated that identifying as Métis is not something he even thinks about, it is the way of life he has always known and would never change. For Gladys, it was clear that she desired to feel complete, identifying openly after years of not really knowing for sure provided a sense of validation and wholeness that she wanted to celebrate describing "I am so proud to say I am Métis I get the rest of my life to live as a Métis person".

Information about the Group

Asking participants to self-identify as a member of the Métis as a group fulfilled the requirement to develop the cognitive component of the conceptual framework. It also served a second purpose; it allowed the researcher access to information about the group. According to Tajfel, (1981) self-identifying as a Métis adult is purported to make information about the group salient thereby allowing access to information about the group.

In order to develop a conception of the group it is important to begin with a definition of the group as it is constructed by members within the group itself. Further, developing a conception of the group as it is defined by in-group members was accomplished by asking participants to disclose information about the group including

activities, behaviors and characteristics participants believe to be in common amongst group members. The following section describes group members' definition of Métis, as well as the finding that an overwhelming majority do not see themselves as similar to other Métis. This discussion is followed by group members' identification of activities, behaviors, and characteristics believed to be held in common amongst in-group members.

Defining Métis

A clear majority, seven participants' definition of Métis includes "one who is of part Aboriginal descent". Differences in participants' responses emerged in the specific descriptions and language used. For example, some participants included their own heritage such as Cree, Icelandic, or Scottish as an example of their definition; however, the majority of participants did not specify which Aboriginal, Caucasian or European ancestries are a part of a Métis person. Clint and Jordon were the only participants who defined Métis as one who is part Aboriginal or Native and part French. Other participants provided examples such as a "Mixed Blood" or as Billy stated "a Métis is part Aboriginal, they do not have treaty status". For the majority of participants the importance was placed on the fact that a Métis person is of part Aboriginal descent. One participant defined Métis as "another culture".

The researcher also explored whether participants viewed themselves as similar to other Métis. Five participants (Billy, Jordon, Gladys, Clint and Vanessa) indicated that they do not see themselves as similar to other Métis. Three of these five participants reported they see themselves as an individual, whereas the other two attributed the reasons why they don't see themselves as similar to other Métis as related to outward

appearances, that the color of their skin whether it was fair or darker in appearance prevented them and others from outwardly identifying them as a Métis person.

Through the process of defining Métis, there emerged a clear understanding of who was not a Métis and the identification of two out-groups. A Métis person is a part of both these groups White and Aboriginal. They are out-groups not only for the purpose of defining who is not a Métis but because of participants' experiences of prejudice and racial discrimination from members of these groups. The theme of racism was evidence throughout the evaluative and emotional components of the conceptual framework, and is discussed in greater detail further on in this chapter.

According to Tajfel (1981) it is important to establish the relevant out-groups that are of significance to the in-group. The out groups are bound to the context and social climate of the time and are significant as they provide the in group with a comparison for evaluation of their in group characteristics. This evaluation of one's in group characteristics is important because it tends to occur in comparison to a relevant out-group generally resulting in the in group members more positive evaluation of their in group. For Tajfel, (1981) the ascription of positive value and emotional attributes to the group to which one identifies, in turn provides a positive social self definition that contributes positively to ones' self.

Activities, Behaviors, and Characteristics of the Métis

An interview question designed to further explore participant knowledge of the Métis as a group asked participants to list or provide specific examples of activities, behaviors or characteristics that they believe are typical to the Métis as a group. The researcher also explored whether participants engage in any of the activities or behaviors

they see as typical to the Métis as a group. The responses to these questions are presented below.

The majority of participants identified activities and behaviors that included fiddling, cultural celebrations, community or family gatherings, hunting, and jigging. Typical characteristics shared included traits such as happiness, teasing or poking fun, and the view that Métis believed in helping each other out in times of need. As described by Violet; “In talking with other Métis I understand the shared beliefs such as when you know and believe you are there for your elders at their time of need such as their death and you feel the closeness to them”.

Some participants identified skin color as a characteristic of the group, while others like Clint shared being Métis has nothing to do with the color of one`s skin. For those participants who do see skin color as a characteristic of the group it was viewed as a defining feature which prevents them from seeing themselves and from others seeing them as identifiably Métis. Gladys for example didn`t see herself as similar to other Métis because she doesn`t have any of the physical features or appearance of the Aboriginal side of her heritage. Whereas others who appeared visibly Aboriginal or Caucasian identify themselves as outwardly Métis by placing Métis symbols on their vehicles, jackets, and jewelry.

Two participants shared that they did not have responses for this question they both did possess knowledge about the group at other points in the interview process. One participant, Clint contributed a significant amount of information in response to this question including his belief that the Métis people held respect for elders, and helped those in need.

Out of curiosity this research wondered whether participants engage in any of the activities or behaviors they identified as typical to the Métis as a group. An overwhelming majority of the participants indicated that they do not engage in any of the activities or behaviors typical to the Métis. Only one participant, Clint reported that he participates in activities and behaviors typical to the Métis as a group such as “Hunting and sharing food from the hunt with those in need; especially elders or those who don’t or who are not able to hunt. Teasing and joking with everyone giving and receiving the teasing, having respect for elders and women and giving away what I have that another may need.”

Of the seven respondents who indicated that they do not currently engage in activities or behaviors typical to the Métis; Jordon, Gladys, Jo and Vanessa reported no reason other than to state that they are not involved at this time. One participant, Billy stated he had “no interest in doing so”, Violet indicated she is not involved right now because of time, as she has many other commitments and Rose stated she hasn’t been involved with the culture for the last 15 years as she has moved to another community and is experiencing a new culture.

Information provided by participants in response to the research questions exploring information about the group including the definition of Métis and identification of the two out-groups and the activities, behaviors and characteristics typical to the Métis as a group is presented below in Table 3:

Table 3.

Information about the group

<u>Definition of Métis</u>	<u>In-group</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone whose ancestry includes Aboriginal descent • Another culture <u>Out-Group</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caucasian/European Descent • Aboriginal
<u>Behavior/Activities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiddling/fiddle music, jigging, square dancing, hunting, participating in community or family gatherings, participating in cultural celebrations, eating wild meat, eating bannock.
<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Traits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness/jolly, teasing/poking fun, proud <u>Physical features</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark skin, high cheek bones, light skin <u>Value/belief</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping each other out in time of need, sharing, respectful of elders, respectful of women, accepting of people <u>Symbols</u> - The Métis flag, the sash

Evaluative Component

The Evaluative component of the Social identity theory is considered to reflect a person's tendency to positively or negatively evaluate in-group attributes as well as one's membership within the group. Two research questions were designed to explore this aspect of Métis social identity, on a personal as well as a group level. The first research question focused on the individual level of group membership, it was divided in to two parts and asked participants what are the positive or good things about being Métis and what are the negative or bad things about being Métis. The second question was designed to explore group members' evaluation of the group. It was also divided into two parts and asked participants what are the positive or good things about the Métis as a group and secondly, what are the negative or bad things about the Métis as a group. It is important to note that for the following questions some participants provided more than one response.

Positive and Negative Evaluation of One's Membership in the Group

Three themes emerged in the data on what was positive about being Métis; the practical benefit(s) associated with being Métis such as employment equity, secondly participants identified a connection to community and thirdly a positive sense of self. Each theme is presented below.

Employment Equity, Financial Support for Education

Half of the participants reported that the positive or good things about being Métis were connected to the practical benefit(s). Billy, Rose and Vanessa all identified responses that were categorized as the benefit of employment equity or affirmative

action, while Jordon and Rose listed benefits of a financial nature connected to access to assistance for children's education.

Connection to Community

Two participants identified the positive aspect of being Métis in terms of the connection to community. Jo stated "I know where I come from; I think every person needs to know exactly where they come from because ultimately your beginnings create the person you are and to know one self makes you whole." This quote illustrates the importance of the positive connection to her community, in stating "to know one self makes you whole". The quotation speaks to the positive aspect described by three other participants; that being Métis contributes to a positive sense of self.

Positive Sense of Self

Positive aspects about being Métis revealed a strong common theme between participants, a feeling of pride. Participants stated that they are proud to be Métis and that strongly contributes to a positive sense of self. For example, Clint described his feelings of pride due to being Métis: "I have a positive self-identity from being different from everyone else; I am not just another face in the crowd".

The second part to the first question asked participants to identify the negative or bad things related to being Métis. A very clear connection arose amongst six participants in response to this question. It was during this portion of the interview that two out-groups clearly revealed themselves as of primary importance in relation to the Métis adults in this study; that of Caucasian or European and Aboriginal. Further, two themes emerged amongst five of the eight participants as the primary negative aspect connected

to their Métis identity; that of racism and external disdain. The responses participants shared were candid, and are presented below. For some, their experience directly impacted their behavior in social situations; specifically leading those to not self disclose as a Métis person.

Racism

Rose identified racism as the bad thing about being Métis. She openly discussed feeling that people look down on her because she resembles the Aboriginal side of her family, an experience that she has carried for the greater part of her life. Jo also candidly shared that racism was a negative aspect about being Métis, however she reported that she did not personally experience this until adulthood when she moved to Winnipeg: This experience caused her to deny her Métis ancestry in certain situations:

Coming to the urban jungle I was exposed to negative prejudice and racism that I never saw much of or was exposed to growing up. Because of this I did not feel like saying I was Métis, I held back. I don't know why it is the drunken Indian and not the drunken German for example.

External disdain

The theme of external disdain was evident in participants' responses to the question exploring what is negative about being Métis for them individually. Also represented in the selections are the identified out-groups of White and Aboriginal. For example, Clint openly shared his feelings of external disdain in the following statement;

Having a unique self-identity is a negative because I am too White for the Natives and too red for the Whites, sometimes in other people's eyes I am seen as an

undesirable half-breed. I feel caught somewhere in the middle of White and Aboriginal.

Jordon also candidly described what it was like for her to be in a social setting in the White community. There was an undertone of pain as she described; “I feel like I have to wear a mask in White society, I mask who I really am because of discrimination and stereotyping”. She also shared; “To the Aboriginals being Métis is a “wanna be”; seen as wanting to be equal to the Aboriginals, this is not the case, being Métis is a totally separate identity”.

Rose also shared her opinion characterized as external disdain in the following statement;

The general (White) society has the opinion that the Métis are just someone else who wants a free ride for society to carry them; treaty Aboriginals don't want the Métis to receive Aboriginal rights, they don't want the Métis to be lumped in with them as it would dilute their rights. The Métis are not wanted on either side White or native, Métis people don't belong on either side.

One participant, Vanessa shared her experience that fits within the themes of racism and external disdain, further; she also shares her perception of within group racism. She describes;

I have witnessed and experienced what I would call prejudice or racism from White, Native, and Métis people, but I don't blame that on the group, I see that as individual choice to act that way. I'm offended by it as an individual and a member of a group. It has made me choose to be careful about my heritage in social situations; it is easy for me though as I have White skin I can pass as

White. The most hurtful though has been the experience of prejudice from those of any Aboriginal descent; the prejudice within the group pisses me off the most.

Positive and Negative Evaluation of the Métis as a Group

The second research question was also divided in two parts as it was designed to explore participants' evaluation of the Métis as a group. The question asked participants about the positive or good things and the negative or bad things about the Métis as a group. Some participants offered more than one response for these questions. A sense of support; both financially and through a sense of community, and political activism were the two of the main themes identified by participants as the positive aspects of the Métis as a group. Other factors identified were the mixed ancestry, the unique and rich history of the Métis.

Support

A review of participant's views of the positive or good things about the Métis as a group revealed that just under half of participants identified a sense of support as a key positive aspect of the Métis as a group. As Jordon stated; "I have a support system, for example I witnessed one Métis person face many obstacles because they stood alone when trying to access funding for their schooling, I will have the support of the Métis local behind me." Jordon's description represents two forms of support, that of financial support for educational opportunities and the support of a community represented by the local MMF of which Jordon is a part. Vanessa's description of a supportive community is more general when she stated; "I see the Métis as a supportive group, a supportive people, whether it is for those in need or a gathering in celebration of an event". Further, for Gladys, the support of the Métis community is at a more personal level as she shared;

“I feel accepted and welcomed; I feel a part of the community even though I don’t practice the culture”.

Political activism

Two of the respondents viewed the political activism of the Métis through the MMF as a positive aspect of the Métis as a group. For Rose the historical pride was linked to the history of the Métis of Manitoba in general and the role of Aboriginal women in that history. Jo shared the view that the history of the Métis in Manitoba was the most positive aspect of the Métis as a group. The sense of pride connected to this emanated from her as she said; “I feel pride that we were one of the earliest founders of Manitoba”. Participants’ view of the history of the Métis is tied to the theme of the MMF’s political activism as the most positive aspect of the Métis as a group. For example, Rose stated;

As an association the MMF is pushing to protect the heritage of the Métis, they are demanding recognition for the historical wrongs committed against them (the Métis) and want their own identity and rights as Aboriginal peoples.

Jo also sees the Métis’ struggle for distinction as group as a key political strength that is a positive feature of the Métis as a group. She shared; “I see the Métis as a proud people in a struggle to be identified as a distinct culture, because we are of more than one culture, such as Cree, Scottish, and Icelandic for example”.

Lastly, the mixed ancestry of Métis culture was identified by one group member as the most positive aspect of the group. Clint stated “The Métis are not exclusive because you are of two mixed cultures; you aren’t just stuck with Native or French, they are two different cultures that are brought to make a nice match between them.

The second part to the research question explored participants' evaluation of the Métis as a group and asked respondents what are the negative or bad things about the Métis as a group. The only similarity that emerged amongst participants was that the majority (five of the eight) did not evaluate the group negatively. As no clear theme emerged in response to this question, the responses to the question provided by three of the participants are presented below.

Some group members were specific in stating they had nothing to report for the question and others identified characteristics that were attributed to the group from out-group members. For example, one respondent explained those out group members' negative stereotypic or prejudicial views of the Métis as a group is what is negative or bad about the Métis as group. In his opinion, the Métis as a group takes on the negative characteristics attributed to them by out group members. Clint openly shared his frustration as a result of Métis people take on the out group stereotypes such as being late for work and saying they are on "Métis time" Clint stated; "The negative stereotypes such as Métis time upset me, such as lazy or always late, this has made me work harder and be punctual in all things" Clint goes on to describe how generalizations are attributed to the Métis by out-group in the following statement; "The stereotype of being temperamental or having a temper, I have witnessed the whole group being painted as temperamental. When one person fights, the whole group is painted as having a temper". Because of the in group (Métis) taking on out group prejudice, Clint has changed his behavior.

Vanessa was the only participant who spoke of internal disdain. Her response to the question links to the perceived negative treatment of in-group members by in-group

members. During the interview it was clear that some of her negative experiences as a Métis woman left a mark on a very personal level. She did not go into great detail about those experiences however there was sadness as she spoke of her frustration with some in-group members who do not accept those Métis as Métis “because of the color of their skin”. Although she herself is Caucasian in appearance, she stated she has witnessed racism within the group from those of both colors and directed towards Métis who have “White or darker skin”. She further went on to report that the “political” discussion about who is or is not Métis that is based on where they descend from also upsets her. She described within group discrimination, as she spoke of witnessing heated discussions amongst in group members whereby people argued about “who is a Métis that was based on where their families descend from, such as the Red River Valley for example”.

Two of the participants who provided a response to this question utilized their local MMF as their reference group. Jordon openly shared what it was like for her to be the only one in her immediate family who openly identified as Métis in the community. She also discussed her feelings around being a member of the local MMF where she is related to many of its members. For her it is a welcoming place because of this familial connection, however, in asking her what she sees as negative about the Métis as a group she described being left out of most discussions within the local by the same familial relations who welcomed her into the local. She stated; “I sometimes feel like I have no voice, at meetings for example I feel overruled by the majority the closer family members”. Although she is related to them, she is an extended family member and she further explained she is never the one to attend any events or go on any of the trips as it is always the “closer family members”.

Gladys's perspective as to what is negative about the Métis as a group is also connected to her local MMF. She shared that as a group, "the MMF is more politically extreme that I am personally comfortable with as an individual." This discomfort with the local MMF's political activism keeps Gladys from participating as an active member, however she reports that she does "feel welcomed and accepted and helps out whenever there is need".

The Evaluative component of adult Métis identity is operationalized with the positive and negative factors identified by participants in their responses to the research questions designed to explore their evaluation of in-group attributes as well as one's membership within the group. Drawing from the information provided by the participant interviews, the evaluative aspect of adult Métis identity is defined and represented below in Table 4.

Table 4

Evaluative component of the Conceptual Framework

<p>Participants evaluation of their membership within the group and in group attributes</p>	<p><u>Positive Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical benefits - employment equity, Financial assistance for education, • Socialization opportunities • Connection to community • Positive sense of self • Supportive • Political activism • Métis culture <p><u>Negative Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal disdain • External disdain • Racism • Hierarchical structure within a local MMF • Political activism
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Emotional Component

According to Tajfel the emotional component of one's social self-identification is proposed to include feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981). In order to fully understand what it means to be Métis the researcher explored participants' feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group by specifically asking the following question; Do you feel like you belong or fit into the Métis as a group, and why or why not. Five of the participants indicated that they primarily have feelings of belonging to the group whereas three indicated that in general they do not feel as though they belong

to the Métis as a group. Participant responses reflecting these feelings are presented below under the headings of belonging and not belonging.

Belonging

The majority of participants in this study indicated that overall they feel as though they belong to the Métis as a group. For many, their feelings of belonging are tied to the acceptance garnered from the Métis community, with some of the participants finding out about their Métis heritage in adulthood, they have only recently becoming a member of the Métis community.

Acceptance

The theme of acceptance emerged from many of the participants' responses when sharing what led to their feeling of belonging to the Métis as a group. Acceptance from the community was identified as very important, including for those who were not born and raised in the community. Jordon described; "because most of my family is a part of the group I feel like I have the right to belong". Other participants only recently gained entrance to their community after researching their families' heritage as an adult or coming forward to claim their Métis identity after spending their childhood shielded by their families in denial of their ancestry. Violet recently discovered her heritage described "people don't look down on me when I am in a group of Métis such as at a gathering, they accept me for who I am".

Gladys shared her experience of being welcomed into the Métis community as an adult and the feelings of acceptance she experienced, she also described feelings of belonging that spoke directly to an internal acceptance of her true self; she shared; "I asked questions when I was younger, never getting any answers, I have a feeling of

completeness now; the pieces fit together, now that I know I am Métis everything makes sense”.

Further, one participant Jo, feels as though she belongs to the Métis as a group, however, her feelings of belonging are more connected to the acceptance she feels from the community where she grew up which fostered her Métis identity. She stated “I feel like I belong, I feel more Grand Rapids Métis than Winnipeg Métis because in Grand Rapids I never had to exert any effort to belong or feel a part of the group”.

Not Belonging

Three participants in this study reported that even though they identify as Métis they do not feel as though they belong to the Métis as a group. Of the three who do not feel as though they belong to the Métis as a group, one participant; Billy, indicated it was because he is “not active in its culture or politics”. While Rose stated she is not currently active in the culture she attributes her feelings of not belonging to being sheltered from the culture while growing up. She reported that her mother did so in order to avoid the discriminatory treatment the Métis were facing at that time.

For Vanessa, her feelings of not belonging are entrenched in internal and external disdain. She candidly states;

I don't feel I am Métis enough, I am sensitive to my surroundings, I feel too White for those who see Métis as a color and not a culture, I feel like a wanna be to those who see it as French and Native mix only, and I feel too Native or wanna be Native for those who see Métis as totally separate from traditional Aboriginal culture. I feel more accepted in some Aboriginal communities as I choose to

embrace traditional Aboriginal practices, in some of these communities they do not see the color of my skin and accept my mixed heritage.

The Emotional component of Métis as a social identity is operationalized with participants responses to research questions within this component that were designed to tap into feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group. The emotional portion of adult Métis identity is defined and represented below in table 5.

Table 5

Emotional Component of Conceptual Framework; Feelings of Belonging or not Belonging to the Group.

Feelings of Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance – community acceptance, self acceptance, • Pride
Feelings of Not Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being active in Métis culture or politics • Internal and external disdain

Section 3: Chapter Four Summary

This chapter presented the results of the research. Data obtained from participant interviews was analyzed utilizing the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) and involved the processes of data reduction during which data was transcribed and reduced through the process of manual coding by the researcher, data display which entailed the entering of data into conceptually clustered matrices according to predetermined theoretical categories as well as those that emerged from the data, and conclusion drawing and verification of data collected, utilizing the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) that involved asking a number of questions of the study's

findings. The study's findings accurately represent the responses of the participants who provided a glimpse into their Métis identity.

The chapter was divided into three sections containing 1) demographic information, 2) the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components of the conceptual framework, and 3) the summarization of the chapter and presentation of conceptual framework for Métis social identity. The chapter also contains information collected from participants that goes beyond Tajfel's theoretical tenet further exploring participant knowledge of their group membership and information about the group such as in-group attributes. Participant responses to the research questions were included to represent the identification of similarities, patterns, underlying themes and differences discovered through the analysis of the data. Selection of participant responses was based on ability to accurately represent the results as well as for uniqueness. A summary of the results are presented below in Table 6. This table graphically displays the conceptual framework operationalized with participant responses, demonstrating the usefulness of Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group as a framework for exploring Métis identity.

Table 6

Participant Defined Conceptual Framework: Métis Social Identity.

Cognitive Component

Knowledge of one’s Métis identity	All participants identified as Métis.
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Evaluative Component

Participants evaluation of their membership within the group and in group attributes	<p><u>Positive Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical benefits - employment equity, Financial assistance for education, • Socialization opportunities • Connection to community • Positive sense of self • Supportive • Political activism • Métis culture <p><u>Negative Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal disdain • External disdain • Racism • Hierarchical structure within a local MMF • Political activism
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Emotional Component

Feelings of Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance – community acceptance, self acceptance, • Pride
Feelings of Not Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being active in Métis culture or politics • Internal and external disdain

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Chapter 4 presented the study's results from the perspective of the Métis adults who participated in the research. Further, the major themes, similarities and differences identified amongst participant responses were also represented. Henri Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group (Tajfel, 1981) provided the orienting concepts for the development of the conceptual framework, research questions, categories and preliminary codes for data analysis that enabled the researcher to explore a definition of the Métis as a group that is specific to Métis adults in Manitoba. The conceptual framework was operationalized with data obtained through interviews with self-identified Métis adults who participated in this study. Findings in this study were delineated through qualitative data analysis procedures based on the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994).

This chapter presents the discussion of the study's results and is divided into four main sections. This first section provides a brief review of the study's purpose, section two presents the theoretical interpretation of the results utilizing Henri Tajfel's social identity theory and is further divided into three sub sections corresponding to the three main research questions guiding this study which are; 1) what are Métis characteristics?, 2) Do Self Identified Métis adults evaluate the Métis as a group as positive, negative or both?, And 3) Do Métis adults feel like they belong to the group? The main themes discovered in connection to the research questions and the findings that connect to existing literature on Métis identity are presented and discussed in the sub sections. The third section utilizes Tajfel's theory to present the theoretical interpretation of the

potential psychological and behavioral effects of being a member of the Métis as a minority group. Finally, the fourth section provides the chapter summary.

Section 1: Purpose of the Study

Métis identity as it is constructed by Métis adults in Manitoba with the goal of gaining a better understanding of what it means to be Métis from the perspective of self-identified Métis adults in Manitoba. In order to accomplish this task it was necessary to choose a theoretical lens to guide the development of a conceptual framework unique to the group. Social identity theory was chosen as the guiding theoretical lens, and provided the framework for developing the conception of the Métis as a group.

Tajfel (1981) theorized that a social group exists within the individual; that the social group is also a cognitive entity containing a cognitive, evaluative, and emotional component. The cognitive component is defined as the awareness or knowledge of one's membership within the group, the evaluative component involves the positive or negative evaluation of one's group and one's membership within the group, and lastly, the emotional component contains the investment of emotion in one's group membership and may include feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981).

Three main research questions guided this study to operationalize the conceptual framework and three components of a group. This resulted in the development of a conceptual framework that is unique to Métis adults in Manitoba who participated in this study. The discussion and theoretical interpretation of the three main research questions guiding this study and any connection of the results to existing literature on Métis identity are presented in section two.

Section 2: Theoretical Interpretation of the Findings; connecting the Three Main Research Questions to the Conceptual Framework

This section presents the study's results as they connect to the three main research questions guiding this study. Further, the research questions are linked to the three components of the conceptual framework via the theoretical interpretation of the results utilizing the social identity perspective. Tajfel (1981) defined the cognitive component as simply consisting of one's awareness of their membership within a group, however he also emphasized the importance of understanding the group from members' perspective. In order to fulfill both requirements, information about the group and membership in it is presented and discussed as a part of a proposed expansion of the cognitive component of the conceptual framework.

Findings discovered through the main research question defining Métis characteristics are connected to the cognitive component of the conceptual framework. Research findings are also linked to any existing literature on Métis identity.

Research Question One: What are Métis Characteristics? Operationalization and proposed expansion of the cognitive component of the conceptual framework

Henri Tajfel's personal research interest lay in inter group behaviour, such as the experiences unique to minority groups, for example, negative attitudes and prejudicial treatment. Tajfel (1981) contended that it was integral that a minority group such as the Métis be understood from their own perspective; defined in their own terms, and not in terms adopted or dictated by a majority group. Tajfel (1981) further proposed that prior to hypothesis testing and understanding inter group behaviour it was necessary to first

begin with an understanding of the social group(s) in question. Although Tajfel offered significant contribution to research literature on social groups, he himself did not accomplish the task of understanding a group from their perspective prior to conducting research. In fact, in a review of existing social identity literature Brown (2000) discovered an overall lack of qualitative exploration of the social content and social context of the group being studied prior to hypothesis testing amongst the social identity research literature in general.

Tajfel (1981) developed a conception of a group that provides a starting point for researchers to develop the appropriate questions required to understand a social group from their perspective. Curiously, Tajfel did not include information about the group as a part of this conceptual framework. This study expanded upon Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group through ensuring that information about the group such as group characteristics, activities, and behaviors believed to be held in common amongst group members was obtained from in-group members and further, this information will be included within the cognitive component of the conceptual framework . Obtaining information about the Métis as a group occurred through the application of the process of self-identification outlined by Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory.

A key aim of this research study was to understand the Métis as a social group from their perspective. Gaining access to information about the group from participants was accomplished through the application Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory. Tajfel (1981) theorized that self- identifying as in-group member sets in motion a categorization process that makes information about the group and one's membership in it salient on a cognitive level, bringing to the forefront of one's mind information about the group to

which they identify or see themselves to be a part of. Tajfel's colleague, John Turner (1990) further described the process of an individual's self-identification with a group as a cognitive shift away from perception of self as individual and unique to one of an interchangeable example of the group to which he/she identifies. Thus information collected is unique to the group, containing group characteristics and not individual characteristics. Asking participants if they self-identify as a member of the Métis group served to operationalize the cognitive component of the framework as defined by Tajfel (1981), it also served to expand this component by allowing the researcher access to information about the Métis as a group from participants.

Collecting information about the Métis as a group was necessary to gain an understanding of how in group members define themselves, as well as provide the opportunity to explore similarities and differences amongst participant responses. Obtaining a definition of the group as it is constructed by members within the group itself was accomplished by asking how participants define Métis, as well as asking participants to disclose information about the group including activities, behaviors and characteristics they believe are held in common amongst group members. First, participants were asked to define Métis.

Defining Métis: Who is in and who is out?

The In-group

According to Tajfel, (1981) the social group exists within the individual and information about the group is disseminated amongst its members in such a way that it is not required that individual group members to have had contact or connection with one another. Tajfel (1981) theorized that consensus about "who is who"; who is an in-group

member and who is not will in most cases be shared by members of the in-group. Previous research exploring Métis identity, although sparse, found that defining “who is who” in terms of the Métis Nation has changed reflecting the changing views of in-group members, and the changes experienced by in group members within the larger society over time. According to Sawchuk (1978), prior to 1965 being a member of the Métis in-group meant for most that Métis people were of French and Aboriginal heritage. Interestingly Sawchuk (1978), Sealey (1975) and Peterson and Brown (1985) all discovered the emergence of a more generalized and inclusive definition of Métis after 1965 that is not limited to language spoken (French or English), European component (French, Scottish or English for example or location such as whether one’s family descended from the red river settlement. Post 1965, the Métis have defined the boundaries of their group more loosely to include anyone of mixed White and Aboriginal ancestry (Sawchuk, 1978, Sealey & Lussier, 1975). In this study, participant definitions of Métis reflect the more current (post 1965) definition of Métis identified by Sawchuk (1978) and Sealey and Lussier (1975).

In this study, participants’ definition of Métis was characterized as “one who is of part Aboriginal descent”. Overwhelmingly, seven of eight participants shared this belief in their definition. For the majority of respondents, defining Métis is equated with who is a member of the in group, and this membership is based upon ancestry, specifically the Aboriginal component. Differences amongst participants emerged in the specifics of participant responses, where some participants used examples of their own heritages in explaining what “part Aboriginal” means, such as part French, Scottish or Icelandic for example. It is important to note that the emphasis was placed on the importance of the

Aboriginal component and not one's other ancestries. Although only one participant diverged from the majority in her definition, it is important to include her response: Violet defined Métis as "another culture". She reported that she was not able to specify the cultural components in this definition, as she herself had only recently discovered her Métis heritage indicating she has yet to experience or participate in the Métis culture. This researcher was unable to locate current literature reflecting a similar definition of Métis as "another culture" as indicated by Violet. However, past literature such as that of Harrison (1985) describes how the Métis were once defined by their recognizable cultural characteristics both by in and out group members.

Harrison (1985) indicated that although the Métis were seen as a heterogeneous group they were recognized by in and out group members by various cultural characteristics such as languages spoken (i.e. Michif), home communities (such as the Red River settlement), ways of dress (such as the Métis sash), and ways of life such as hunting, trapping, farming or working within the fur trade. Harrison (1985) described reasoning similar to Sealey (1985) and Sawchuk (1979) regarding the current difficulty defining the Métis nation, seeing it as due in large part to social and political changes experienced by the group after the Red River rebellion that led to widespread dispersion and assimilation of the Métis. Today, it is very difficult to identify the Métis as a unified group apart from the rest of the Canadian population (Harrison, 1985), as participants in this study also revealed, a definition based on ancestry may not necessarily equate with recognition by in or out group members.

The out-groups

As previously indicated, Tajfel (1981) discussed the importance of gaining an understanding of the in-group from their perspective; he further recommended the identification of relevant out-groups that are of significance to the in-group prior to exploring intergroup relations or behavior. According to Tajfel (1981), it is significant to identify the out groups from the in-group members' perspective as they provide the in-group with a comparison for evaluation of their in-group characteristics. Further, in the special case of minority group members, identifying the out group(s) will lead to the potential identification of "who" is contributing to the negative attitudes and prejudicial treatment of in group members. Although this researcher did not directly ask participants who they see as relevant out groups, it was through the exploration of defining Métis that participants identified who was not a member of the Métis as a group. Participants in this study identified two out-groups; White and Aboriginal; an interesting finding as they are the two ancestral groups that a Métis person is a part.

Discovering that the Métis participants in this study identified White and Aboriginal as the two relevant out-groups is not a new finding. As Harrison (1985) stated throughout history, relations between the Métis and their two ancestral groups have been openly hostile on many occasions. According to Tajfel (1981) the out-group(s) identified by in-group members are bound to the context and social climate of the time, in the case of the Métis of today the identification of the two out-groups is likely connected to current social and political relations between the groups; as Harrison (1985) report that the Métis have not been given the resources or the rights of First Nation Aboriginals or the access to or advantages of White society, leading to discontent

between the groups. Further, as will be discussed in more depth later on, the majority of participants in this study candidly revealed their own conflictual relationships with the out groups.

Participants' definition of Métis in terms of ancestry represents the first of several traits identified as characteristic of the Métis as a group. It is important to note that there was a significantly high degree of acceptance amongst participants that being of mixed Aboriginal and White ancestry is a primary characteristic that binds them together as in group members and distinguishes them from other social groups. Findings connected to the other information about the Métis as a group collected from participants including activities, behaviors, and characteristics participants viewed as representative of the Métis are presented next.

Activities, Behaviors, and Characteristics of the Métis

Tajfel (1981) stated that the process of defining a group; particularly for a minority group requires the inclusion of or reference to the subjective characteristics of the group; that include but are not limited to stereotypes and belief systems for example. Tajfel (1981) contends that for a minority group like the Métis to become a distinguishable social entity there needs to be amongst most of its members the awareness that they possess in common socially relevant characteristics and that these characteristics distinguish them from other social groups within their social environment.

Although research exploring the Métis as a group is sparse, a review of existing literature revealed the desire to identify the characteristics of the Métis is not a novel phenomenon, with most literature strongly recommending the identification of Métis characteristics or understanding of the Métis as a group from their own perspective

(Sawchuk, 1978, Sealey & Lussier, 1975, Peterson & Brown 1985, St. Onge, 2004).

After reviewing existing literature however, this researcher found little identified characteristics of present day Métis for comparison purposes for the results of this study. For example, although Sawchuk (1978) made reference to “important characteristics they (the Métis) use to differentiate themselves as a group” the specific characteristics are not clear. This researcher was able to locate a research study on the Métis of Manitoba conducted in or around 1954 by the Manitoba Chapter of the Canadian association of Social Workers. The study was conducted in response to the difficulties members of the CASW in Manitoba faced when working with the Métis (CASW, 1954). The CASW social workers found little recognition in terms of governmental responsibility to supply or adopt services to suit the needs and conditions of the Métis. In response, the social workers set out to first, identify the needs of the Métis socially and economically and secondly, to develop a profile of the Métis in terms of their way of life at the time so as to contribute to education about a group they witnessed facing prejudice for their lifestyle differences from White society. Any results of relevance from the CASW study will be utilized by this researcher for comparison purposes, with the acknowledgement of the 55 year time difference.

This study explored information about the group by asking participants to identify activities, characteristics and behaviors they believe to be held in common amongst group members. Further, out of curiosity, the researcher explored whether participants engage or participate in any of the identified activities or behaviors seen as typical to the group. According to Harrison (1985), the Métis of today do not have separate languages, wear distinctive style of dress, have definitive physical similarities,

live in the same region or follow the same line of employment as they did in the past, leaving it difficult to identify the Métis as a cohesive and distinct group within Canada.

In this study, participants identified many characteristics that they see as typical to the Métis as a group, with the majority identifying characteristics, activities and behaviors recognizable as some of the cultural characteristics and activities engaged in by the Métis people in the past (as reviewed in literature written by Sealey & Lussier (1975), Harrison (1985), Burley, Hosrfall, & Brandon, (1992), Peterson & Brown, (1985), Sawchuk, 1978) and Anderson & Anderson, (1978) for example) such as jigging, fiddling, celebrations or family gatherings and cultural symbols such as the sash. Participants further identified value or beliefs such as the importance of helping each other out in a time of need, sharing, respect of others such as elders, and acceptance of people in general. Similar characteristics were identified by the social workers conducting the CASW study, in which they report that the Métis way of life emphasized friendly virtues such as readiness to share good and ill fortune, care and concern towards people and tolerance of the mistakes of others. Further, participants in this study identified personality traits believed to be held in common by Métis like teasing or making fun.

An interesting physical characteristic, skin color, was identified by only a few respondents however it is important to mention here as this study will show, the color of one's skin emerges as a significant underlying issue for many of the participants throughout the exploration of the research question and operationalization of the components of the framework. Skin color, both fairer and darker in color was identified by some participants as a defining feature of the Métis. After witnessing participant's

definition of Métis as one's ancestral origins; Aboriginal and White, it was not surprising that the color of one's skin was identified by some participants as a characteristic of the group. Skin color; particularly a "visibly brown color" was also identified by Sealey and Lussier (1975) as characteristic of the Métis. For those participants who do see skin color as a characteristic of the group, they viewed it as a defining feature that prevents them from seeing themselves and from others seeing them as identifiably Métis. Further, because of their outward appearances, the color of their skin, whether it was White or Aboriginal in appearance was described as a barrier, preventing them and others from accepting them as a member of the Métis as a group.

Another interesting characteristic emerged through exploration of participants views of their similarity to other Métis. Many of the participants do not see themselves as similar to other Métis, however want to be seen as a member of the Métis as a group. Upon exploring this further, many of the respondents indicated they do not see themselves as similar to other Métis because of the desire to be seen as an individual; a characteristic held in common amongst many participants in this study. This finding is consistent with the individualistic nature of the Métis identified by Sealey and Lussier (1975). A related and curious finding; participants see themselves or possess a strong desire to see themselves or be seen by others as an individual yet also presented with a strong desire to be identified as a member of a social minority group. Many of the participants presented with these two seemingly conflicting desires; wanting to be seen by self and others as an individual, and for the most part not at all similar to other Métis people, yet at the same time wanting to be seen as a member of the Métis as a group, a membership that carries with it widespread stereotypes about the group attributed to all

group members. Participants did not appear to be aware that in identifying their desire to be seen as individual and not similar to other Métis they identified an attribute held in common amongst the Métis participants of the study, and the Métis people of the previous generation described by Sealey and Lussier (1975) as individualistic and non-conformist.

Participation in Group Activities or Behaviors

This researcher was curious as to whether participants engage in any of the activities, or behaviors they identified as typical to the Métis as a group.

Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that they do not engage in any of the activities or behaviors they identified as typical to the Métis, the majority reporting they are not involved at the time, indicating no reason(s) for not being involved. One participant, Clint indicated he practices the Métis culture as a way of life and actively participates in activities and behaviors identified as typical to the Métis. For Clint being Métis is a lifestyle choice positively fostered and supported by his family and community. After gathering information about the Métis as a group, this researcher further explored their individual experience(s) as a member of the group through asking about the length of time they have actually known they were Métis, and what prompted their choice to identify as a Métis person.

How long have participants known they were Métis and what prompted their choice to identify with the Métis as a minority group?

Participants in this study were recruited through the process of snowball sampling; which allowed the researcher to know or know of the respondents, given this,

it was surprising to discover that the majority of participants did not truly “know” they were Métis until adulthood. Although all participants have since chosen to identify as a Métis person their reasons for doing so vary. Of significance is the discovery that half of the respondents report identifying for practical reasons such as the benefit(s) achieved from doing so such as employment equity, represented in a statement from Billy, “Being Métis means it has gotten me into the RCMP faster than being Caucasian”, and financial support for their own or their children’s education. Another similarity was discovered, three of the respondents identified as Métis out of the desire to preserve the knowledge of their heritage for future generations. For two of the respondents this desire was strongly related to their experiences growing up not truly knowing “who they were”.

The effects of assimilation- Uncovering Denial, Revealing Shame

The researcher questioned why participants were unaware of their identity for so long; according to Pelletier (1977), this “phenomena” is due to the assimilation of the Métis into mainstream society in Manitoba after the 1870 rebellion, a process of assimilation that occurred to such an extent that few of their descendants knew of their Métis origin. Gaining an understanding of why participants were unaware of their heritage revealed layers of information and at times painful emotion connected to the experience of being Métis in society. During the interview process, many participants described being denied “access” to information about their true heritage by their parents’ or grandparents’, with most reporting that their Métis heritage was a well guarded family secret. After sifting through the interview notes a similarity began to emerge, many of these same respondents who indicated not knowing the truth about their Métis heritage until adulthood had witnessed or experienced their parents’ or grandparents’ shame,

embarrassment and denial of their true identity. Although some of the respondents connected their parents' sense of shame to their experience of prejudice and discrimination at a particular point in time in their lives which in turn, led them to hide their true identity in hope of protecting their children from experiencing the negative treatment they had endured, others like "Violet" do not understand why the "older generation is so embarrassed", why they continue to deny their Métis identity; stating, "I can't see why the older generation is so embarrassed – it is your culture and you shouldn't have to hide it".

Although participants in this study described the "older generations" negative feelings attached their Métis identity this researcher could not help but notice that for many, the negative feelings described were really connected to the Aboriginal component of their Métis Identity. As Violet shared, for her family it was embarrassing to have "Indian Blood". Although the Métis are not "politically" classified as being of full "Indian Blood", they are classified under the broad governmental category of Aboriginal people; therefore, to openly identify as Métis would entail acknowledgement of one's Aboriginal ancestry, and it is impossible to separate the two in this regard. Openly identifying as Métis appeared to be difficult if not impossible for some Métis of the "older generation" as previously described by Vanessa in her experience with her grandmother who took the truth about their Métis heritage to her grave. Tajfel (1981) would have hypothesized that there is a reason why Vanessa's grandmother persisted in not revealing her true identity as doing so may have presented a significant psychological problem related to the internalization of a negative view of self.

The participants in this study did not report to carry the shame, embarrassment or denial that their parents or grandparents did. For example Vanessa stated,

I'm not going to hide who I am, I am proud of descending from the Red River Settlement and I am not going to carry the shame that my ancestors did. I will carry pride and ensure my children know where they come from.

This researcher was left with the sense that for many of the participants, the shame and embarrassment exists and a very real part of their everyday lives. For some of the participants they are carrying the residual shame from past generations; entrenched in the teachings received from their parents that being Métis is shameful and embarrassing. For others, the teaching was connected to their Aboriginal ancestry and lead to the denial of that part of their identity. As children of a generation who experienced significant negative treatment because of their Métis identity, many grew up not really knowing they were Métis, the truth about their identity was a well kept family secret with unspoken rules that everyone knew such as “never to discuss it”. The internalization of the message “I am ashamed of who I am” was inherited by some of the older participants in the study, passed down from previous generations that experienced significant negative treatment and discrimination from out group members. For these participants, the deep rooted painful emotion(s) like shame and embarrassment connected to their identity are reignited in their present day life experiences of prejudice, racial discrimination and perceived negative or unjust treatment by out groups.

Unlike Sealey and Lussier's (1975) statement that “few Métis harbor hatred or bitterness towards the White or Aboriginal people for past persecution and hardship” for the majority of respondents in this study, including the two who experienced a positive

fostering of their identity within their family and home communities growing up, feelings such as anger, frustration, shame and embarrassment is connected to present day relations with the two out groups; painful emotions displayed as anger and frustration when speaking about their experiences of negative treatment such as negative stereotypes, attitudes, and racism.

According to Tajfel (1981), it is through the process of self-identifying or being identified by someone else as a member of a minority group that one is lead to certain perceived social consequences including discrimination, prejudicial treatment from others and negative attitudes based on some common criteria of membership that the awareness of being a minority develops. These criteria, like the color of one's skin, blended ancestral heritage or "mixed blood", for example have individual significance in a group member's life and connect group members together through the social implications. Implications such as widespread negative stereotypes attributed to the group experienced by the Métis of the past (Sawchuk 1978, Sealey & Lussier 1975, Harrison 1985, St. Onge 2004) and the present day Métis who participated in this study.

The finding that the majority of participants did not know of their minority group status until adulthood is interesting in terms of application of Tajfel's theory. According to Tajfel (1981), an individual's awareness of being a member of a minority group and the choice to identify with it following this awareness is dependent upon the perceived clarity of the boundaries separating the social group from other groups. For the majority of participants in this study, it is the mixed Aboriginal and Caucasian or European ancestry that separates the Métis as a social group from other social groups and is the primary feature found to be held most in common amongst participants in the study. A

mixed ancestry is the primary defining characteristic of the group that distinguishes them from relevant social groups in their environment. Further, all participants were aware of their membership within the Métis as a minority group, and although the degree of identification varied in terms of participation in the culture for example, and reason for identification varied, all participants chose to self identify as Métis.

Research Question Two: Do Self Identified Métis Adults Evaluate the Métis Group and their Membership in it as Positive, Negative or Both?

The second main research question, “Do self-identified Métis adults evaluate the Métis group and their membership as positive, negative or both?” was designed to tap into the evaluative component of one’s identity as a member of the Métis group and explore this component of one’s group membership. Responses generated from participants served to operationalize the component from their perspective as Métis adults. According to Tajfel (1981) one’s social identity consists of the three components of a group: the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components. Tajfel (1981) proposed that the evaluative component of a group may contain positive or negative evaluative characteristics attributed to the group and one’s membership in it by in group members. Although Tajfel (1981) acknowledged the potential negative value connotations attached to one’s social identity, he theorized that overall, the tendency is for group members to ascribe more positive evaluative attributes to the group to which they identify as it provides a positive social self definition that contributes positively to one’s self (Tajfel, 1981).

Participants in this study easily responded to the question regarding their evaluation of their within group membership on an individual level, as both positive and negative terms. Evaluating the Métis as a group however revealed an interesting finding consistent with Tajfel's hypothesis; few participants reported anything negative about the group, indeed participants ascribed more positive attributes to the Métis as a group.

Evaluating one's membership within the group – the individual level

For the most part participants identified both positive and negative issues connected to their experience of being Métis. On the individual level, participants reported three main positive aspects attributed to being Métis. First, many participants identified the practical benefits such as employment equity. Second, for some participants one's Métis identity provides an important connection to one's community, not just in terms of geographic location but also in terms of a sense of acceptance similar to that described by the CASW (1954) survey and Sealey and Lussier (1975). Third, as Tajfel (1981) proposed, for many participants one's Métis identity contributed to a positive sense of self, through strong feelings of pride associated with their identification as a Métis person. As for the negative characteristics, participants overwhelmingly identified features such as Racism similar to those identified by Sealey and Lussier (1975) However, unlike Sealey and Lussier (1975), who report that few Métis of that time harbored hatred towards White or Aboriginal stating it would be futile given that the Métis are of both of these worlds, responses from participants in this study revealed a significant degree of external disdain directed towards White and Aboriginal groups for

the negative treatment, prejudice and racial discrimination experienced by participants in this study.

Evaluating the Métis as a group – the group level

At the group level, no clear similarities or differences emerged amongst participants' responses. Interestingly, the commonality that did arise was the lack of response to the question designed to explore what is negative about the group. Of the few participants that did attribute a negative feature to the group it appeared to be strongly connected to their own personal experiences. Individual views such as Gladys's perspective that the Métis are more politically extreme than she is "personally" comfortable with "as an individual." According to Tajfel (1981), one would expect such a finding; the lack of attribution of characteristics deemed negative about the in group by self identified in group members is typical as human beings try to achieve or preserve as positive a self image as possible, hence, the attribution of negative connotations to the group to which one identifies would contribute to a contemptuous view of self, thereby constituting a significant psychological dilemma. For Tajfel (1981), the psychological dilemma occurs if conditions that would allow for the preservation of one's social identity in positive terms is not provided by the group, the individual leaves it psychologically, objectively or both. In other words, a social group can fulfill its function of protecting the social identity of its members (thereby also protecting their member's self images) if it maintains or is able to create a positively valued distinctiveness for its members from other groups (Tajfel, 1981). This may be the case for the Métis participants in this study, who primarily evaluated the group in positive terms.

Only one participant reported internal disdain as a negative characteristic about the Métis as group. This feeling was connected to her own experience of racial discrimination from within the group as well as having been an observer of discrimination occurring amongst in group members based on skin color and one's ancestral geographical descent. The participant continued to remain a member of the in group, which according to Tajfel's (1981) theory is likely due to the group's ability to provide a positive evaluative distinctiveness. A review of this participant's responses revealed a balance between positive and negative evaluative characteristics attributed to the group. Further, a review of the evaluative component of the conceptual framework developed from all participant responses also revealed a balance between positive and negative ascriptions.

On a positive note, exploration of participants' views of what is positive or good about the Métis as a group revealed "social support" as one of the primary positive factors attributed to the group. For these participants, this sense of support is connected to practical benefits such as financial assistance for educational pursuits as well as the supportive nature of the community as a whole. This characteristic attributed to the Métis people by participants in this study and further identified by Sealey and Lussier (1975) who report the Métis as accepting of people and their life choices.

Tajfel (1981) reported that identifying the evaluative characteristics attributed to one's in group and one's membership in it is important because it tends to occur in comparison to a relevant out group(s), with the general result of a more positive evaluation of their in- group in comparison to out-groups. Although this researcher did not directly explore or request participants to evaluate the Métis as a group in comparison

to the Caucasian or European and Aboriginal groups this clearly occurred as evidenced in participants' responses to the research question requesting them to positively and negatively evaluate the group and their membership within it. Participants offered candid accounts of their experiences which revealed the out groups perceived as racist, un-accepting, and discriminatory for example, and the in group primarily described in more positive terms such as supportive, accepting, and welcoming for example. Tajfel (1981) proposed that this process of evaluation of the in group in more positive terms in comparison to the out groups fulfills two main functions. First, at the group level, it contributes to the continuation of the group as a positively valued distinct social group within society and secondly, on an individual level it contributes positively to one's self image.

In this study, participants' emotions emerged as they discussed and expressed their experiences as a Métis person. Although the researcher felt that the majority of participants possessed an evaluative investment in their group memberships that was enhanced by their emotional connections to the evaluations, SIT posits it is important to explore group members' emotional investment separately (Tajfel, 1981). Thus, exploring and operationalizing the components of the theoretical framework also entails examining feelings associated with participants' membership within the group specific to the emotional component of the framework.

The third research question that follows served to operationalize the emotional component of the conceptual framework through exploration of participant feelings of belonging or not belonging to the Métis as a group.

Research Question Three: Do Métis adults feel like they belong to the group?

Tajfel's (1981) conception of a group contains an emotional component that is linked to in- group members' emotional investment in their group membership and may be representative in descriptions such as like or dislike feelings of belonging or not belonging directed towards one's in group. In this study, this researcher chose to focus the exploration on participants' feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group rather than any other emotions. According to Tajfel (1981) the feelings of common membership or belonging are a psychological characteristic of ethnic groups.

Belonging

According to Tajfel (1981) the feelings of belonging one has towards their group may come long before an individual group member is able to construct for themselves a cohesive and organized group on a psychological level, or able to develop special modes of characteristic informal behavior for their own use. In fact, it is often an interactive process occurring between identifying criteria of in and out group membership, the conditions that lead to feeling a member of the group, and behaving according to group beliefs and attitudes.

According to Tajfel (1981) one's feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group may be imbued with positive or negative emotions. For example, one's feelings of belonging to the group may revolve around the experience of racial discrimination shared by members of the group; hence one's feelings of belonging may be imbued with negative emotions, such as anger or shame for example. Results from this study indicate the majority of participants in this study feel like they belong to the Métis as a group. Further, participants identified their feelings of belonging to the group as primarily

connected to feeling accepted by the Métis community, the acceptance at group level induced feelings of pride and self-acceptance on a personal level. Examining participant responses to other interview questions revealed that feelings of belonging to the Métis as a group are also connected to the experiences of negative treatment or discrimination from out group members. As one participant described, “Because I have more Aboriginal look, I can identify with the (negative) way that Aboriginal s may be treated”. Thus on an emotional level, the feelings of belonging are primarily negative, associated with a painful frustration; she is Métis and identifies as such but she cannot change the color of her skin, to the outside world she is seen as Aboriginal and she cannot stop the negative treatment experienced by the Aboriginal population, or the fact that she is “categorized” by others as one of them.

Not Belonging

Three participants reported that they did not feel as though they belonged to the Métis as a group for reasons such as not being involved in the group at the cultural or political level. This non-involvement was linked to one’s personal choice not to be involved as well as other’s choice as many participants described being “kept from the culture” while growing up. For two these participants the feelings of not belonging did not appear to be associated with negative a emotion.

One participant described feelings of not belonging in purely negative terms of internal disdain. For this participant, the experience of prejudicial treatment from out groups as well as from in group members left her feeling like she does not belong; that she does not possess enough of the characteristics she believes are valued by the in group to belong, such as dark skin, or the ancestral heritage of purely French and Aboriginal.

Interestingly, despite the negative impact her membership has produced in her life she still chooses to self identify as Métis. Tajfel's (1981) theory would contend that for this group member, there may have been an internalization of a negative self perception; however she did not appear to possess self-hatred. Tajfel's (1981) theory would further contend that this participant has likely engaged in "behaviors" (such as assimilating into another group or creatively re-defining her in group characteristics in more positive terms) in order to keep as much of a positive self-image as possible to avoid or ameliorate living with a contemptuous view of self coming from within or other people. Interestingly, she developed a preference for one of the out group(s) and openly reported actively engaging in the culture of the out-group.

In order to truly understand the unique position of the majority of Métis participants in this study being a part of two identified out groups(s), not feeling accepted by either group, and experiencing negative treatment and discrimination from both, it is important to explore what "beliefs and behaviors" Tajfel (1981) contends are available to the group to preserve as positive a sense of self as possible.

Section 3: The Psychological and behavioral effects of being a member of the Métis

group

Tajfel (1981) states that individuals are born into society and by virtues such as their skin color, ancestry, or gender, they fall into some categories and not others. According to Tajfel (1981), the Métis are a minority group with common problems specifically, that they are the objects of certain attitudes and treatment from the dominant society. The positive or negative impact one's social identification has on their self

perception is connected to the extent to which they internalize societal beliefs about the group(s).

In general, the dominant society's view of the Métis is described in several historical texts such as Sealey and Lussier (1975), Sawchuk, (1979), Harrison (1985) and St. Onge (2004) which describe that the Métis share common negative treatment of prejudicial treatment and discrimination and according to Sealey and Lussier (1975) are considered to be socially and intellectually inferior to the dominant race which for the most part is due to the lack of educational and social opportunities. Further, according to St. Onge (2004) and Harrison (1985), being Métis meant to be poor, to live in poor housing conditions, to have little formal education (CASW, 1954) an "undesirable half breed" which according to Sealey and Lussier (1975) evolved from a descriptive term to one of scorn and disdain. This negative evaluation of the Métis as a group and likely internalization of the negative views according to Sealey and Lussier (1975) has brought about a desire by many to escape into the Aboriginal or European Canadian groups.

According to Tajfel's (1981) theory, the experience of being Métis as described by Sealey and Lussier (1975) in the 1970's had primarily negative evaluative connotations. Bound to the social context of that time, one's membership within the Métis as a minority group resulted in an evaluation of the group in primarily negative terms and may have lead to lower self esteem or an internalized negative view of self. According to Tajfel (1981) this state of self regard is generally psychologically unsatisfactory and serves to mobilize individuals to try and remedy it according to beliefs held by the group regarding group member's ability to move about socially in and out of different groups and social change, in terms of the inability to change the inferior

position of the group. For many Métis people who were of this generation, as described by Sealey and Lussier (1975) and candidly represented in participants in this study's reports of their parents' and grandparents' experiences, the desire to escape into Caucasian or Aboriginal society became a reality.

Tajfel (1981) identified two broad belief structures about the boundaries of a social group: social mobility and social change. A belief in social mobility holds that in general, the boundaries between social groups are permeable allowing individuals to pass from one group to another. Realistically however, Tajfel (1981) reported that it is very difficult for minority group members to pass successfully into the dominant group whereby they cast aside their minority identity with its negative evaluations and material inferiority in favor of the advantages and positive evaluation of the dominant group. Social change is connected to the belief that the boundaries between groups are rigid, fixed, and therefore impermeable, leaving a minority group member stuck with their negative, inferior group membership (Tajfel, 1981). In the case of a belief in social change the only way to ameliorate the unacceptable negative view of self and group is through the pursuit of strategies aimed at improving the group's social status.

If a minority group subscribes to a belief structure of social mobility, they may ameliorate the psychological problem(s) connected to being a member of a minority through the psychological process of assimilation. According to Tajfel(1981) there are four kinds of assimilation; First there exists no constraints to social mobility imposed by in or out groups, second, a few individuals are able to assimilate into dominant society choosing to shed the negative attributes associated with their inferior minority status however they have not been fully accepted by the majority and are seen as typifying

some of the negative characteristics of the minority group from which they came and at the same time are viewed as “exceptions to the rule”, third, this form of assimilation represents the “passing” from one group to another; in this case minority group members identify with the majority or new group and reject the old one – they “pass” and constantly face the danger of being “unmasked”. Lastly, the fourth kind of assimilation involves the incorporation of accommodation and social competition where minority group members attempt to retain their distinctiveness as a separate identity and at the same time become more like the majority in access to opportunities of achieving goals like education and social status for example. Tajfel (1981) indicated that two conditions are necessary in order for this fourth form of assimilation to occur; 1) that there was previous successful assimilation by some members of the minority group which did not result in improvement to the views or negative attitudes towards the group and 2) that there exists strong cultural norms and traditions within the minority group that members are not willing to give up. Further, this last form of assimilation, movement towards being equal but different according to Tajfel (1981) is closely linked to social competition and social creativity described previously, such as the redefinition of the group in more positive terms.

Tajfel (1981) identified two such strategies aimed at improving a minority groups social status; first, social creativity involves a strategy such as the positive re-evaluation or redefinition of traditionally negative characteristics attributed to the group, such as “Black is Beautiful” (Tajfel, 1981). The second strategy, social competition, occurs when the minority group conceives of cognitive alternatives to their situation, thereby calling in to question the “status quo”. In such a case, social change is possible; the

means of bringing this change about is through events like civil war, revolution, terrorism, or passive resistance.

Findings suggest that the Métis described by Sealey and Lussier (1975), and the majority of participant's parents' or grandparents' appeared to have subscribed to the belief in social mobility adopting the third form of assimilation described as passing from one group to another in order to ameliorate the psychological problem(s) associated with being Métis; such as racism, social and economic inferiority for example. Interestingly, it appears as though the participants in this study primarily have chosen the fourth form of assimilation in order to ameliorate the psychological problem connected to being a member of a minority; retaining the importance of knowing the cultural traditions and the defining the group as distinctly separate from Aboriginal and Caucasian society however at the same time, they strive for equality with the dominant groups in terms of access to and attainment of social and economic opportunities which in the recent past have only been available to dominant group members. However, it is important to note that many have also reported that on occasion they retained the option to pass as a member of another group; such as White when they feel it is necessary as described by Jo "The odd social interaction I get a sense when speaking to someone that I don't say I am Métis and I don't say I am not". This sense seemed to be related to her perception when interacting in a social situation that racial discrimination was present, or may occur. Her description provides a clear example of choosing to pass as "not Métis" in order to avoid a direct experience of racial discrimination and the resultant feelings associated with it. In speaking with this participant it was interesting to discover that she also became affected when the discrimination was directed towards Aboriginal people as well.

During times of racial intolerance, the Aboriginal people were not seen as an out-group, the recognition of one's ancestry as "part Aboriginal" and feelings of connection to the Aboriginal group were ignited, a common thread amongst the majority of participants whether they appeared visibly White or Aboriginal; any racial discrimination directed towards the Métis or Aboriginal groups was met with disdain.

The changes represented by the majority of participants in this study in comparison to the Métis of a generation ago according to Tajfel's theory (1981) are many. Although the past generation described by Sealey and Lussier (1975) and by many participants in this study chose to cope with the psychological problems associated with their membership in the group by choosing to pass as either White or Aboriginal, the participants in this study retained the right to assimilate or pass into White or Aboriginal groups when they chose. However most desire to have the best of both worlds; the retention of traditional values and distinct Métis culture on the one hand and the social and economic potential generally reserved for the dominant society on the other.

Section 4: Chapter Five Summary

Chapter five presented the discussion of the results of the research study. Findings were delineated from data analysis utilized the processes of conclusion drawing and verification of data collected; through the application of the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) which involved asking a number of questions of the study's findings.

The chapter was divided into four sections. Section one provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study, section two discussed the results of the three main

research questions guiding the study and was sub divided according to the questions. Each sub section also discussed the major themes discovered through the process of data analysis. Further, section two also incorporated the link between the research questions and the cognitive, evaluative and emotional components of the conceptual framework through the theoretical interpretation of the findings. The third section discussed the uniqueness of Métis as a social identity, exploring the psychological and behavioral effects of being a member of the Métis group from Tajfel's (1981) perspective and lastly, the fourth section contains the chapter summary. A summary of the findings are presented below in Table 7. This table represents the conceptual framework that is specific to Métis adults who participated in this study, graphically displaying the conceptual framework operationalized with participant responses. This revised framework expands Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group incorporating information about the group as a part of the cognitive component of the framework.

Table 7

Revised Conceptual Framework – Métis Identity as a Social Identity with the proposed expansion of the cognitive component to contain information about the group.

Cognitive Component

<u>Knowledge of one's Métis identity</u>	All participants self-identified as Métis.
<u>Definition of Métis</u>	<u>In-group</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone who is of part Aboriginal descent • A Culture <u>Out-Group(s)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White • Aboriginal
<u>Behaviors/Activities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiddling/fiddle music, Jigging, square dancing, hunting, participating in community or family gatherings, participating in cultural celebrations, eating wild meat, eating bannock.
<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Traits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness/jolly, teasing/poking fun, proud, individualistic <u>Physical features</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark skin, high cheek bones, light skin <u>Value/belief</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping each other out in time of need, sharing, respectful of elders, respectful of women, accepting of people <u>Symbols</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Métis flag, the sash

Evaluative Component

<p>Participants evaluation of their membership within the group and in group attributes</p>	<p><u>Positive Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical benefits - employment equity, Financial assistance for education, • Socialization opportunities • Connection to community • Positive sense of self • Supportive • Political activism • Métis culture <p><u>Negative Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal disdain • External disdain • Racism • Hierarchical structure within a local MMF • Political activism
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Emotional Component

Feelings of Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance – community acceptance, self acceptance, • Pride
Feelings of Not Belonging are connected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being active in Métis culture or politics • Internal disdain • External disdain

Chapter six provides a summary of the study's findings. It incorporates a review of the lessons learned, a discussion of the importance of this research for the field of social work and identification of future research potential.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

Relationship amongst the components of the Conceptual framework – A Summarization of the Conceptual and Thematic Findings

The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of Métis as a social group identity as constructed by Métis adults in Manitoba, as well, this study aimed to contribute to a gap in research through the use of qualitative methods to study social identity. A third goal of this study was to apply Tajfel's theory of group to Métis identity. Tajfel's (1981) conception of a group provided the foundation for the development of a conceptual framework unique to Métis adults in this study. The conceptual framework was operationalized utilizing information provided by research participants in their responses to research questions designed to specifically explore the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components of the framework.

In general, the results of this study emphasize the importance of defining the group from the perspective of in group members. As well, findings confirm the usefulness of Tajfel's theory, that self-identification as a Métis social group member taps into the individual's knowledge that they are a member of the group. Although it is not possible to directly measure, it is theorized that self identification also tapped into information about the group, participants' experience of being Métis within the larger social context, the positive and or negative evaluation of the Métis as a group and their membership in it, as well as their feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group. Information about the group was obtained utilizing the pre-designed research questions. Any participant

quotes used were selected for their ability to accurately highlight or accentuate a point being presented.

Section 1: Summarization of the Findings for the Cognitive, Evaluative, and Emotional Components of the Conceptual Framework

All participants openly identified as Métis to the researcher and defined being Métis and identified characteristics believed to be in common amongst members of the group. Defining Métis from group member's perspectives is integral to understanding the group from their perspective. In this study, participants defined the in-group in terms of one's ancestry; specifically that members are of part Aboriginal and Caucasian or European descent, with an emphasis placed on the Aboriginal component. The specifics of the ancestral information was not significant to the participants, it did not appear to matter whether the Aboriginal component was Cree or Ojibwe for example or whether the Caucasian or European component was French, Scottish or English for example. It was also clear that those who are not Métis are also defined based on ancestry, and appears to be entrenched in historical and present day inter-group relations.

In accordance with Harrison's (1985) contention, defining the Métis as a group on the basis of culture such as language may not be of benefit in terms of recognizing in group members. In order to fully understand the psychological realities of "feeling like" a member of a minority group, it is important to differentiate the characteristics of the group that are representative or ascribed to the group (Tajfel, 1981).

An important finding is that while participants self identified as Métis most of the participants are not actively engaged in activities or behaviors they identified as

characteristic of the group and don't see themselves as similar to other group members, even though similarities emerged amongst them in their responses that are of "the group" and not of "the individual self".

Tajfel (1981) theorized that if a social identity is meaningful to the individual he or she will contribute primarily positive ascriptions to the group that in turn contribute to their identity in a positive way. Exploring the evaluative component of the group occurred through asking participants about the positive and negative aspects connected to being a member of the Métis as a group as well as what was positive and negative about the Métis as a group. The results of this study support Tajfel's proposition that individual self-identification with social group may result in the evaluation of the group and one's membership in it in positive or negative terms. However, it is important to note that the majority of participants in this study evaluated their membership within the group in both positive and negative terms whereas the group itself was evaluated in primarily positive terms. This was a significant difference from past literature reviewing Métis history which identified and defined the Métis in primarily negative terms, both socially and economically. Concurring with past studies, this study found that evaluations occurred in comparison with the relevant out groups. According to Tajfel (1981) comparison with relevant out groups are rarely neutral and for the most part touch a chord for in group members that echo the past, the present, and possible future of inferiority, it is not surprising that emotions would arise in connection to these evaluations as it is expected to advocate for one's right to have as much self-respect and esteem.

The questions that explored the evaluative component further solidified the identification of Caucasian or European and Aboriginal as the two relevant out-groups. As noted previously, they are out groups not only for the purpose of defining who is not a Métis but because of the direct connection to participants' experiences of prejudice and racial discrimination from members of these groups. The implications of their experiences clearly represented in participants' evaluation of what is negative about being a Métis person. In this study, there was a tendency for participants to positively evaluate the Métis as a group in comparison to out groups as well as a tendency not to evaluate the group in negative terms when asked what they saw as negative about the group. It appears as though the reverse of ethnocentrism defined by Tajfel (1981) as the devaluation of in group members and their group was not identified amongst participants in this study. One participant described a sense of internal disdain or scorn for racial discrimination occurring amongst in group members for example, however there did not appear to be a belief in one's inferiority or sense of overall personal or in or out group hatred.

For the majority of participants in this study being Métis contributes positively to their sense of self through the attribution of meaning such as a strong sense of pride in one's identity and the right to access the benefit(s) such as employment equity, or financial assistance for one's education. Being Métis also means to have the support and acceptance of one's community, whether that community is where one grew up, currently resides or is represented by the local MMF. The discovery that some of the participants utilized their local MMF's as their reference group and community when responding to research questions appeared to be connected to those participants who experienced

having their heritage hidden or kept secret from them by their families of origin and who only recently became “aware” of their Métis heritage. For many their families continue to deny their Métis heritage and it is as though the local MMF has become their Métis “family”, “community,” and reference for “who or what a Métis group is”. For participants in this study the choice to openly identify as Métis coincided with when they became aware of their identity, and is a lifestyle choice. For others, it coincided with a decision to not carry a family secret any longer.

Section 2: Summary of the findings connected to the psychological and behavioral impact of being Métis.

Identifying as a member of a minority group brings with it psychological effects and feelings associated with the experience of being a member of the group such as negative stereotypes and prejudicial treatment (Tajfel, 1981). History has revealed that as a group, the Métis experienced significant and negative changes in economic and social conditions following the rebellion of 1870, changes which appear to have persisted well into the 1900’s resulting in the attribution of negative stereotypes and beliefs about the Métis from out group members and the internalization of these beliefs represented in the views that to be Métis meant to be for example a “poor half breed”. Like the generation(s) before them, the majority of participants experienced the impact of “feeling” like a member of the minority group; being treated negatively, experiencing racism with associated feelings of anger, frustration, and shame. Unlike the past generation where Métis people had chosen to shed their Métis identity to “pass” or assimilate into the dominant Caucasian and Aboriginal societies on a permanent basis,

the participants in this study do not evaluate the Métis group in primarily negative terms such as those found in the literature. Results of this study demonstrate a shift for the Métis participants in terms of beliefs they have about their social and economic conditions as well as their beliefs about the group that are in turn connected to their sense of self. Participants in this study hold the belief that they have the right to assimilate into dominant society if they so choose, further, they can “pass” in and out of Caucasian, Aboriginal and Métis groups. Some participants are able to pass with ease whereas others cannot because of the color of their skin, describing the negative mistreatment they’ve experienced as similar to what they perceive Aboriginal people go through.

Most participants in this study of both light and dark skin have experienced prejudice from out group members, and one openly reported prejudicial treatment from within the group.

The color of one’s skin is a major theme woven throughout participant interviews. Although skin color is not a definitive indicator of one’s belonging to the Métis as a group, it is integral to one’s ability to “pass” as a member of another group such as Caucasian or Aboriginal thereby allowing one to keep one’s membership in the group a secret, in order to avoid racial discrimination for example. Further, it appears that skin color is not only connected to keeping one’s membership within the Métis group a secret but of one’s Aboriginal heritage in general, for many of these participants, dark skin represents one’s Aboriginal ancestry; and is connected to being identified, evaluated, and treated negatively by the dominant society.

Limitations of the Study

The conceptual framework developed in this study is a preliminary framework as this was an exploratory study with a small number of participants. Results from this study are not generalizable; and have not been generalized to the larger Métis population in Manitoba. The information presented is bound to the context of this study, providing a glimpse into Métis social identity from the perspective of the Métis adults who participated. Further, the information collected from participants may have been impacted by unknown factors such as circumstances in person's life at the time of interview. Further, the responses from participants may have been different if I were not a member of the in group, with many indicating during the feedback and debriefing component of the interview that they only provided the responses they did because they "felt comfortable doing so" because they "knew" I was Métis. However, this researcher is of the opinion that it is not "who" one is but "how" one conducts him or herself such as possessing the quality of unconditional positive regard that promotes a comfortable relationship between researcher and research participants.

This study identified the simplicity of Tajfel's cognitive component as a primary limitation of the theory. Consequently the researcher proposed expansion of the cognitive component of the framework to include information about the group such as behaviors, activities, and characteristics viewed as typical to the group. After completing this study, further limitations in Tajfel's theory were discovered. The first is connected to the evaluative component which emphasizes the importance of identifying relevant out groups. Tajfel (1981) contends it is the out groups that in group members compare themselves to in evaluating within group characteristics. However, the evaluative aspect

of Tajfel's theory is limited by not accounting for the finding that participants reflected more complexity in their self definitions and "make up", as those whose in group was also composed of the relevant out groups. A further limitation of the limitation in Tajfel's evaluative component of SIT is the lack of resolution to the potential impact(s) membership within both in and out group(s) has on a psychological and behavioral level. This researcher thus contends that until this aspect of Tajfel's theory is expanded and revised to identify possible resolution(s) to the dilemma of in group members who are apart of out groups, SIT remains limited in its research potential with groups.

A second limitation of Tajfel's SIT is connected to the impact of history on current inter group and within group relations. Tajfel acknowledges the use of SIT in research as bound to the time and context within which the study occurs and that these factors impact inter group relations. However, SIT does not address the impact of historical contextual factors on group(s) being studied as part of the of the conceptual framework. Current and historical inter group relations are important points for exploration, and this researcher proposes that the conceptual framework be revised to include these aspects in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the group(s) being studied.

In sum this researcher had identified these limitations to SIT and recommends that future research studies incorporate approaches to ensure these gaps are addressed.

Implications for Social Work policy and Practice:

It was through the process of constructing a conceptual framework unique to Métis adults that the meanings attributed to their Métis identity were revealed. For participants in this study, their Métis identity has a significant impact on their life experiences. Although the results of this study are not generalizable to the Métis population as a whole, the implications this study may have for the field of social work are significant, beginning with importance of understanding a self-identified Métis person from their perspective as an individual and as a member of the Métis group. Specifically, for participants in this study the results revealed the following implications;

In direct practice situations it is important to ask: Identification as a Métis person does not necessarily mean they are knowledgeable of or practice the culture or engage in the activities, behaviours or characteristics associated with the group.

Social workers must be aware of, and sensitive to the experience of members of the group and how that experience impacts their social behaviour. For example, a majority of the participants in this study identified the experience of racial discrimination and negative treatment by out group members. When in a social situation where prejudice is perceived, many choose to pass as “not Métis”, thereby impacting how they present themselves to protect as much of their self conception as possible.

The results of this study also indicate that many participants identify for practical reasons such as the benefit of employment equity or financial support for their own or their children’s education. It is important for social workers in direct practice situations to ask clients if they identify as Métis, to possess a respectful curiosity and ask what their Métis identity means to them; do they practice the culture, what activities are they

involved with if any, are they interested in learning about or becoming involved in the culture? Connected to this is the importance of possessing knowledge about the culture and resources available within the community to provide client centered linkages.

This study also has implications for schools of social work to provide students with a beginning foundation in education about Métis identity and issues related to the experience of being Métis in both historical and current contexts, ensuring that consideration is taken for the experience of being a member of a group which is composed of two out groups from which many have experienced negative treatment. Further, there is the opportunity for schools of social work to begin addressing prejudice within and from outside the group through education and discussion about prejudice based on skin color, ancestral origins and geographic descent for example. In addition, there is the opportunity for schools of social work to become advocates for policy that is representative of the Métis as a group, to advocate that policy is generated from in group perspectives and not simply driven from the perspective of dominant society, and that it not perpetuate in group prejudice and discrimination.

As previously mentioned, results of this study indicate that some Métis identify as such to enhance the potential for social and economic opportunities through practical benefits such as financial assistance for education and employment equity: It is important that policy aimed at improving social and economic conditions continue and that it be specific to the Métis as they view themselves as a distinct group within society.

There results of this study point to the potential opportunities for family services organizations to become an important and positive preventative resource within the community; for many participants in this study being Métis means to have the support

and acceptance of one's community. For many participants in this study that community is their local MMF as their families continue to deny their Métis heritage and are unsupportive of their choice to be openly Métis; this can open the door for family services to also become a reference group for Métis people. At a prevention level there is the opportunity to provide a network of support and sense of community through programming that would provide education, and enhance community members' opportunities to support each other (such as a structured parent child play group) and enhance community members view of the organization as a positive resource within the community. Further, there is opportunity for family services organizations to become an important resource for families wishing to address their identity issues; for example, providing families the opportunity for therapeutic programming that allows for healing associated with intergenerational denial of identity, or impact such experience of denial has had on family members.

Recommendations for future research

Future Research Potential

Given the social and political changes the Métis have experienced in such as short period of time, and the difficulty this researcher found locating literature identifying current characteristics of the group; exploring the current characteristics of the Métis from their perspective is timely. This study provides a starting point to explore the applicability of a theoretical conceptual framework to aid in the development of research questions that lead to the development of a conception of the Métis as a group from the perspective of the group itself. However, the framework that was developed is preliminary. The results of the operationalized components are specific to the

participants in this study and are not generalizable to the larger Métis population in Manitoba. Therefore, further recommendations include the implementation of a research study to test and expand upon the SIT conceptual framework with a large random sample of Métis adults in Manitoba to gain a better understanding of the conception of the group and contribute to the literature on Métis Identity in Manitoba. In addition it would be integral to operationalize the conceptual framework with the responses from a representative sample of the Métis population. It would also be important to pre-test interview questions, as this would assist in evaluating their utility prior to actually conducting interviews. Although each question supplied this researcher with rich information for analysis, and participants reported that they found the questions easy to understand and straightforward, the researcher did not realize until the data analysis process that certain questions did not “belong” to the section in which they were placed, revealing content that was relevant to other sections designed to explore the components of the framework.

Further, and connected to the interview questions was limited information generated that was classified as group values and beliefs, which are an integral aspect of the conception of a group as they in turn provide the foundation for social behaviour congruent with the social identity. Hence, recommendations for future research include the inclusion of a direct question that specifically explores this aspect of the Métis as a group. Correspondingly, it also would have been interesting to explore whether or not group members actually do behave in accordance with the values and belief identified (i.e. through participant observation).

During the interview process this researcher discovered that some participants identified characteristics that are viewed as “symbols” that represent the Métis as a group, such as the sash and flag. Another recommendation is to incorporate a question that asks participants to identify symbols as this may have led to more information about their perceptions of the group.

Based on exploration of participants’ feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group it was apparent that it was difficult to elicit responses reflected by what the “feeling” was connected to. In addition the researcher recommends incorporating a question that specifically asks for descriptions of what the feeling is, or ask them to freely attribute a feeling “word” to their sense of belonging or choose one from a list of potential feeling words.

A key finding of the study was the discovery that the majority of participants reported they do not engage in the activities and behaviors they identified as characteristic of the Métis as a group, it is possible that the activities and behaviors participants identified do not reflect present day cultural characteristics. It is recommended that future research ask participants to identify historical and present day characteristics of the Métis as a group prior to exploring whether they engage in any of the activities or behaviors identified.

As discussed previously, this researcher discovered further gaps in Tajfel’s SIT that limit its potential with the reality of present day social groups such as the Métis. A key recommendation for future research is to expand upon the conceptual framework to include the historical influence on present day inter and within group relations, and revise the cognitive, evaluative and emotional components to reflect the in and out groups

whose self definitions are more complex; thereby allowing for the reality of being a member of in and out groups. Further, it is also recommended that research be undertaken to identify how members of ethnic, religious or gender groups for example (made up of out groups) resolve the potential psychological and behavioral implications of this reality.

After completing this research study and examining and verifying the findings two key questions remain, 1) is there a psychological dilemma for the Métis who experienced a familial attempt at assimilation into Caucasian society that was shrouded with such shame? 2) connected to Tajfel's SIT; how do the Métis reconcile their dilemma of external disdain directed towards out groups: Caucasian or European and Aboriginal both of which they are a part?

On a concluding note, of a more personal nature, if I were to do it all over again, I would choose the same path. This path has brought me into contact with the most brilliant of intellects, the most caring of human beings who truly believe in the possibility for all to be equal in this world, that the colour or lack of colour in one's skin does not determine your worth or your potential to be who you truly are. Above all else, I am grateful for this journey, it was in not knowing my own identity that I discovered who I really am, in that I found peace best encapsulated in the words of spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle (2005) who wrote;

If you can be absolutely comfortable with not knowing who you are, then what's left is who you are the Being behind the human, a field of pure potentiality rather than something that is already defined. Give up defining yourself to yourself and others. You won't die. You will come to life.

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Research Project Title: An Exploration of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and its Application to Understanding Métis as a Social Identity.

Researcher: Jennifer Halldorson, BA (Adv.) B.S.W.

Graduate Student, University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

Advisor: Grant Reid, Ph.D. Associate Professor

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My name is Jennifer Halldorson and I am a Métis Graduate student with the University of Manitoba Faculty Of Social Work. I am conducting a study called, "An Exploration of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and its Application to Understanding

Métis as a Social Identity”. The purpose of the study is to explore what it means to be Métis from the perspective of Métis adults in Manitoba.

Potential participants are being recruited by this researcher by means of asking Métis adults that I know if they would like to participate or if they know of any Métis adults who may be interested in participating in the research study. Participation in the study is voluntary; declining to participate will have no negative consequences. Should you be interested in participating in this study, you will be asked to partake in an individual interview that will only begin after you have given your consent. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be held in a location that is convenient for you such as your home.

Participants who agree to partake in the interview will be asked demographic questions such as age, gender, and to confirm their identification as a Métis person. The interview questions will investigate in more detail how participants define their Métis identity as well as exploring the circumstances behind their choice to identify as a Métis person. Further, the questions will explore participants’ perception of the activities, characteristics or behaviors typical to the group and whether they see themselves as similar to other Métis people. Lastly, the interview questions will look into whether participants feel like they belong or fit in to the Métis as a group. No part of the interview will be tape recorded. All transcription will be done during the interview by this researcher. After the interview is complete, participants will be offered the opportunity to discuss the interview experience. There is the potential that some information obtained may be of a sensitive nature; I can assure you that information received will be kept confidential. I will make every effort to protect participant

anonymity however it may not be possible to guarantee anonymity amongst participants, as the research will be conducted with participants who may know each other. All research materials will be handled by this researcher including participant contact information for scheduling interviews or receiving feedback of the study's results at a later date will be kept secure within a locked file cabinet accessible only by myself, the researcher within my home office, and will be destroyed by approximately September 2009, after the thesis is complete. You are offered the opportunity to receive a written summary of the study's results by mail or email by approximately September 2009.

In order to maintain confidentiality any information used in the final publication of the research will not be ascribed to any individual participant, and pseudonyms will be used. However, you should be aware that the details provided in the interview will be used within the final thesis; it may be possible for someone to determine the identification of a participant from the information provided in the interview. The thesis will be placed in the library of the University of Manitoba and may be made available to people in other forms such as a book.

If a participant discloses evidence of child maltreatment or a plan to harm himself or herself or someone else that information cannot be kept confidential and will need to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from

answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba's Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board have approved this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you for your records and reference.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Halldorson, BA (Adv.) B.S.W.

Graduate Student, University of Manitoba

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2008

Participant _____

Researcher _____

APPENDIX B

Request for Summary of the Study's Results

Would you like to receive feedback in the form of a summary of the study's results
by September 2009?

By mail? Yes _____ No _____.

By email? Yes _____ No _____.

Mailing address: _____

Email address: _____

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2008.

Participant _____.

Researcher _____.

APPENDIX C

Recruitment and Interview Script

Step 1: Introduction

The following script will be read to the potential participant in person or via telephone. "Hello, my name is Jennifer Halldorson and I am a Métis Graduate student at the University of Manitoba with the Faculty of Social Work. My own experiences of being Métis have led me to be interested in other people's experiences of being Métis. I am calling about conducting a study, the purpose of which is to explore what it means to be Métis from the perspective of Métis adults in Manitoba. I am recruiting participants by asking individuals I know as identified Métis adults if they or someone they know would like to participate in my research study, it was through this process that I received your name and contact information from _____. I would like you to know that participation in the study is voluntary and that declining to participate will have no negative consequences. If you choose to participate you will be asked to partake in an individual interview with myself and will take approximately one hour. The interview would be held at a location convenient to you such as your home. If you agree to partake in the interview will be asked demographic questions such as age, gender, and to confirmation of your identification as a Métis person. The interview questions will investigate in more detail how participants define their Métis identity as well as exploring the circumstances behind their choice to identify as a Métis person. Further, the questions will explore participants' perception of the activities, characteristics or behaviors

typical to the group and whether they see themselves as similar to other Métis people. Lastly, the interview questions will look into whether participants feel like they belong or fit in to the Métis as a group. Would you be willing to volunteer to participate in this research study? ”

If an individual is not interested in participating in the study the researcher will thank them for their time. If the individual is interested in participating the following steps will be taken;

Step 2: Set up time and place for individual meeting to review the letter of consent with each participant, outlining informed consent and confidentiality standards.

Step 3: Offer to answer any questions concerning the purpose or procedure. Ask if participant has any concerns about the study.

Step 4: Ask participant to sign consent form.

Step 5: Encourage participant to ask for clarification of questions throughout the interview.

Step 6: Begin interview.

Step 7: Offer opportunity for participant to discuss the interview experience.

Step 8: Thank Participant

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

I. Demographics - Demographic information will be collected to identify research participant age, gender, home community and to confirm their self-identification as Métis.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your home community?
4. Do you identify yourself as Métis?

II. Cognitive component of social self-identification. Asking participants to self-identify with a social category is useful in making their social identity salient (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Haslam et al., 1996; Haslam et al., 1998; Haslam et al., 1999). However, it is important to explore participants understanding of the meaning attributed to that social category as there may be significant variability amongst participants in their understanding of their social self identification (Verkuyten & Kwa, 1996; Jasinskaja – Lahti & Liebkind, 1999). The following research questions will be utilized to understand participants' definition of their identity as well as to explore the circumstances behind their choice to self-identify. It is expected that participant responses will contain knowledge that one belongs to a group and information about the group.

- 1). How do you define Métis?
- 2a). How long have you known that you were Métis? Tell me about the circumstances.

2b). How long have you chosen to identify as Métis?

2c). What prompted your identification?

3). Are there activities, characteristics or behaviors that are typical to the Métis as a group? Examples?

III Evaluative component of social self-identification. One's social identification is proposed to have an evaluative component, which is the tendency to positively or negatively evaluate in-group attributes (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) and may include emotions such as love/hate, like/dislike, directed towards one's own group and his or her membership in it. The following questions were designed to directly access information related to the evaluative component of participants' identification.

1a. What are the positive/good things about being Métis?

1b. What are the negative/bad things about being Métis?

2a. What are the positive/good things about the Métis as a group?

2b. What are the negative/bad things about the Métis as a group?

3. Do you see yourself as similar to other Métis? Why or why not. Example?

4. Do you engage in any of the activities or behaviors typical to the Métis as a group? Why or why not.

IV. Emotional component of social self-Identification - One's social identification is proposed to have an emotional component which includes feelings such as feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981). In order to understand what it means to be Métis it is important to explore the emotional impact of one's self identification with the group. The following questions were designed to directly access

information related to the emotional component of participant's Métis identity that are specific to feelings of belonging or not belonging to the Métis as a group (Tajfel, 1981).

1. What does being Métis mean to you?
2. Do you feel like you belong or fit in to the Métis as a group? Why or Why not? Can you give me an example?
3. Are there different contexts/situations in which you identify/don't identify as being Métis? Can you give me an example?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of being Métis?

APPENDIX E

Opportunity to Discuss Interview Experience Script

The following script will be read to participants after the interview is finished as Step 7 of the interview script.

Step 1: "Now that the interview is finished, I would like to offer you the opportunity to discuss what it was like for you to participate in the interview. Please feel free to share what the experience was like for you, including what you found to be helpful or unhelpful about the experience and the interview questions".

Step 2: Thank participant for sharing their experience.

APPENDIX F

List of Codes

Concept, Abbreviated Code, and Corresponding Research Questions Format

<u>Cognitive Component</u>	<u>CC</u>	<u>II</u>
CC – Defining	CC	II.1
CC – Reasons	SICR	II.2c
CC – Know/Time	SICKT	II.2a
CC- Choice	SICC	II.2b
CC-Group Content	SICGC	II.3
<u>Evaluative Impact</u>	<u>EVI</u>	<u>III</u>
EVI- Positive Personal	EIPP	III.1a
EVI-Negative Personal	EINP	III.1b
EVI- Positive Group	EVIPG	III.2a
EVI – Negative Group	EVING	III.2b
EVI-Similar	EIVS	III.3
EVI-Participation	EIVP	III.4
<u>Emotional Impact</u>	<u>EMI</u>	<u>IV</u>
EMI- Meaning	EMIM	IV.1
EMI -Belonging	EMIB	IV.2
EMI- Not Belonging	EMINB	IV.2
EMI- Context Identify	EMICI	IV.3
EMI- Context Don't Identify	EMICDI	IV.3
EMI-Other	EMIO	IV.4

APPENDIX G

Definition of Codes

Cognitive Component – CC

Cognitive Component – Defining Métis: SICD – Participants definition of their identity.

Cognitive Component – Reasons: CCR – Participants explanation as to why he or she identifies as Métis.

Cognitive Component – Know/Time: CCKT – How long participants have known that they are Métis. When participants became aware of their identity.

Cognitive Component –Choice: CCC – How long participants have chosen to identify as Métis. What prompted their choice to identify as Métis?

Cognitive Component – Group Content: CCGC – Participants identification description of activities/behaviors he or she views as typical to the Métis as a group.

Evaluative Impact – EVI

Evaluative Impact– Positive: EVIP – Participants description of the positive/good things about being a Métis group member.

Evaluative Impact– Positive Group: EVIPG – Participants description of the positive/good things about the Métis as a group.

Evaluative Impact – Negative: EVIN – Participants description of the negative/bad things about being a Métis group member.

Evaluative Impact– Negative Group: EVING – Participants description of the negative/bad things about the Métis as a group.

Evaluative Impact–Similar: EVIS– Participants perception as to his or her similarity to other group members.

Evaluative Impact- Participation: EVIP – Participants acknowledgement of and or identification of activities/behaviors he or she engages in that he or she views as typical to the as a group.

Emotional Impact – EMI

Emotional Impact – Meaning: EMIM – Participants description of what it means to be Métis to him/her.

Emotional Impact – Belonging: EMIB – Participants description and or explanation of whether they feel like they belong to the as a group.

Emotional Impact – Not Belonging: EMINB – Participants description and or Explanation of whether they feel like they don't belong to the as a group.

Emotional Impact – Context Identify: EMICI- Participants identification of contexts or situations he or she chooses to identify as a Métis.

Emotional Impact – Context Don't Identify: EMICDI- Participants identification of contexts or situations he or she chooses not to identify as a Métis

Emotional Impact – Other: EMIO – Identification, description or explanation of anything else participants would like to add about their experience of being Métis.

APPENDIX H

Conceptually Clustered Matrix:

Participant by Research Question Format

Research Question I – Demographic Information

<i>Particip- ants</i>	<i>Question 1.1</i>	<i>Question 1.2</i>	<i>Question 1.3</i>	<i>Question 1.4</i>
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4				
P5				
P6				
P7				
P8				

APPENDIX I

Conceptually Clustered Matrix:

Participant by Research Question Format

Research Question II–Cognitive Component

<i>Particip- ants</i>	<i>Question I</i>	<i>Question II.2a</i>	<i>Question II.2b</i>	<i>Question II.2c</i>	<i>Question III</i>
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					
P5					
P6					
P7					
P8					

APPENDIX J

Conceptually Clustered Matrix:

Participant by Research Question Format

Research Question III –Evaluative Impact

<i>Particip- ants</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Question</i>
	<i>III.1a</i>	<i>III.1b</i>	<i>III.2a</i>	<i>III.2b</i>	<i>III.3</i>	<i>III.4</i>
P1						
P2						
P3						
P4						
P5						
P6						
P7						
P8						

APPENDIX K

Conceptually Clustered Matrix:

Participant by Research Question Format

Research Question IV –Emotional Impact

<i>Particip- ants</i>	<i>Question IV.1</i>	<i>Question IV.2</i>	<i>Question IV.3</i>	<i>Question IV.4</i>
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4				
P5				
P6				
P7				
P8				

APPENDIX L

Conceptually Clustered Matrix:

Participant by Concept Format

Concept

Participants	Demographic Information	Cognitive Component	Evaluative Impact	Emotional Impact
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4				
P5				
P6				
P7				
P8				

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