

It Needs to Be Said: Exploring the Lived Realities of the
Grandmothers and Aunties of Métis Scholarship

by

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Dedication

The work is dedicated to the grandmothers and aunts that have walked before us.

Abstract

Through visiting with 13 self-identifying Métis women born between 1949 and 1969 whose work began to appear in the late 1970s and raising our awareness of their contributions, connections, motivations, and scholarship, we can enhance our understanding of how the Métis grandmothers and aunties shaped their fields in Métis scholarship and have created space for future Métis women to thrive in the academy. Using a *wahkootowin* theoretical framework and the intertwining Michif methodology that combines the *Keeoukaywin*, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk* methodologies, 11 points of erasure were identified by the grandmothers and aunties in their lived experiences. These points include colonial attempts at erasure through experiences with colonial education, racism, whiteness, and the pressure to hide; constantly being measured by a colonial yardstick assessing whether the grandmothers and aunties were Métis, Indigenous, or educated enough; and colonial institutions' power to silence through Indigenous umbrella publishing, the struggle to publish Métis-specific research, and issues obtaining research funding for Métis-specific projects. As an act of *wahkootowin*, the grandmothers and aunties have advice in their role as knowledge keepers 1) disregard colonial pressures, they shared that permission to refuse and relocate for the betterment of their families in dire situations that will not change is inherently Métis, 2) the importance of connecting with other Métis scholars and helpers, especially Métis women, 3) be empowered by who you are through staying true to yourself, including your ancestors, embracing your teachings, looking after yourself, and loving what you do. The grandmothers and aunties within this study knowledge have empowered subsequent waves of Métis women in the academy by showing what is possible while arming them with strategies to persevere.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the women who have come before me and strived to create space for us in the academy.

I acknowledge the grandmothers and aunts Emma LaRocque, Lorraine Mayer, Rita Bouvier, Verna St. Denis, Brenda Macdougall, Jean Teillet, Céleste McKay, Kim Anderson, Christi Belcourt, Jeannine Carrière, Verna DeMontigny, Heather Souter and Sherry Farrell Racette for making this work possible.

I acknowledge my grandmother for providing a model that anything is possible despite societal norms and challenging archaic systems that exclude women is our family tradition.

I acknowledge all the waves of Métis women who have worked towards lifting up our people, whether in the academy, community, or both.

I acknowledge the support network of women whose words of encouragement and love provided the light needed to persevere.

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List of Abbreviations

CCL	Canadian Council on Learning
GDI	Gabriel Dumont Institute
MMF	Manitoba Métis Federation
MNC	Métis National Council
MWA	Métis Women's Association
NAHO	National Aboriginal Health Organization
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
SUNTEP	Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program

Definitions

Educational sovereignty: an inherent right, power, or authority to exercise control over education without the interference of another governing power. In First Nations self-government, sovereignty includes the authority to create programs, set standards, draw up curricula, to establish educational equivalencies and teaching methodologies, and to evaluate education systems and the training and certification of teachers for students from preschool through postsecondary stages. In this study and its Métis context, it is a provocative attempt to exercise control over curricula and the scholarly narrative when discussing Métisness to shift the academic understanding of who we are.

Erasure: 1) the exclusion of a minority group or group member from the historical record and in this dissertation generally refers to Métis women; 2) the replacement or whitewashing of Métis women or representations of Métis women's contributions or silencing their contributions from the collective consciousness of the academy; 3) the denial of an individual's or group's Métis identity, or the misidentification of Métis by outsiders.

Grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship: self-identifying Métis women in the generation born between 1949 and 1970 who identified with the term grandmother or auntie and contributed to the scholarly discourse; their work began to appear in the late 1970s.

Indigenous: refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and international Indigenous peoples with distinct societies and/or nations who are the original inhabitants of the lands on which they live.

Indigenous Umbrella: refers to work that is not nation-specific but rather all-encompassing of First Nations, Métis and Inuit in a Canadian context or encompassing all Indigenous nations in a global context.

Positionality

Daañ lii Michif leu teeraeñ d’niikinaahk eekwaa Daañ lii Anishinaabeg, lii Krii, lii Oji-Krii, lii Syoo pi lii Dene nishtam leu peeyii, lii kampos d’yuniversitii di Manitoba ashteewa.¹ The University of Manitoba campuses are located on the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation; this is where I live, work, and study. I also want to acknowledge that the power provided to write this dissertation was created in Treaty 5 territory and that the water in my tea came from Shoal Lake. It is crucial in Indigenous studies to locate the researcher in relation to the research (Absolon, 2011; Graveline, 2000; Kovach, 2009, 2017, 2021; McGregor et al., 2018). Positionality is addressed through the location of our nations, cultures, lands, and personal experiences (Absolon, 2011; Moreton-Robinson, 2017). Kovach (2009, 2017, 2021) stresses that knowing these details about a researcher makes biases explicit and adds credibility.

This dissertation adheres to traditional Indigenous ways of being and current Métis academic protocols. Following the model of Métis scholars like LaRocque (1975, 2015a), Acoose (1995), and Adese et al. (2017), a Métis introduction begins this paper to more fully describe the researcher and contextualize the conversation: Laura Forsythe d-ishinikaashon. My name is Laura Forsythe. Ma famii kawyesh Roostertown d-oshciwak. My family was from Rooster Town a long time ago. Anosh ma famii Winnipeg wikiwak. Today my family lives in Winnipeg. Ma Parentii (my ancestors) are Huppe, Ward, Berard, Morin, and Cyr. My ancestors worked for the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. My ancestors once owned Lot 31, the site of Rooster Town. I am descended from buffalo hunters. I am descended from voyageurs. I am descended from the victors at Frog Plain. I am descended from farmers, ranchers, teamsters, seamstresses, and tradesmen; I come from the working class that built Manitoba and the Métis Nation.

I tell you this to demonstrate the significance of my recent academic experience. I am the only one of my siblings to have graduated high school. I am one of only two cousins in our entire lineage to have earned a degree. I am the only one to have completed a master’s degree or to earn a doctorate. I am not descended from a long line of academics. I am not descended from doctors, lawyers, and engineers. I tell you this not out of personal pride in my accomplishments but as a

¹ Southern Michif.

demonstration of the total anomaly it is that I, Laura Forsythe, am writing this at all. I share this to establish my experience in the academy as foreign, with no emotional or financial support from my family of origin and no one in my kinship ties to ease the culture shock of being in a space dominated by the educated (Forsythe, 2021).

Chapter 1: Introduction

A reflection on what future generations of Métis scholars can glean from the experiences of the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship is perfectly timed because of the unprecedented number of Métis women enrolled in postsecondary education in Canada. For the purposes of this thesis, the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship are defined as self-identifying Métis women in the generation born between 1949 and 1969 who contributed to the scholarly discourse with work that began to appear in the late 1970s. Arriagada's (2021) study, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada, explores Indigenous women's postsecondary achievements from 2006 to 2016 and notes a 5% increase in Indigenous women enrolled between 2009 and 2016. Métis-specific data indicate that 59% of Métis women aged 25 to 64 had earned a postsecondary qualification and that 16% of Métis women had earned bachelor's or more advanced degrees (Arriagada, 2021). Data on the Canadian population show that only 56% of those aged 25 to 64 had earned a tertiary educational qualification in 2016.²

Despite the increase in the number of Métis women pursuing advanced degrees, analysis of Statistics Canada data in Forsythe (2022) demonstrates how rare it is for Métis individuals to have relatives with experience in the academy; 44.5% of self-identifying Métis had no postsecondary education, 25.6% had a college education, and 6.9% had started an apprenticeship. This lack of kinship ties in the academy speaks to the need for mentorship. Through storytelling, Métis women have intergenerationally taught Métis history to their communities, including traditional knowledge, community history, ancestor biographies, and ways of life (Anderson, 2000; Campbell, 2012; Préfontaine, 2003). As Métis people, we seek knowledge and wisdom from our grandmothers and aunts, our teachers through history, and our teachers today.

The Métis are currently living through a historical development in Métis postsecondary support from the federal government and Métis governing bodies. The signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Postsecondary Education Sub-Accord in 2019 aimed to close the attainment gap between Canadians and Métis learners by supporting Métis students. This agreement followed the Métis National Council (MNC) and the Government of Canada signing the Canada-Métis

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710013001>.

Nation Accord in 2017 to ensure a stable nation-to-nation governance relationship (Forsythe, 2022). In Manitoba, these and other agreements translate to a) Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) sponsorship of \$9 million annually through the MMF Postsecondary Education Support Program; b) a \$12 million endowment through the Louis Riel Institute, which provides over \$2 million in bursaries and scholarships to Métis students, and c) the MMF Métis Employment & Training program, which invests \$16 million each year, with a certain percentage targeted to those in the final year of a postsecondary degree. The number of Métis pursuing degrees is projected to increase with this substantial support from various portfolios of the federal government. Sharing stories from the Métis women who walked before us and strived to make our voices heard in the academy is even more critical to inspiring and motivating today's young Métis and ensuring that they follow our path to success.

The Aim of the Study

This dissertation seeks to uncover the attempted points of erasure of the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship. Combining interviews with 13 self-identifying Métis women and analyses of their academic work as knowledge producers, this study shares their journeys, motivations, and advice for future generations of Métis scholars. We see the obstacles that could have prevented their success; however, due to their tenacity, they persevered. The three themes of erasure explored are 1) colonial attempts at erasure, 2) attempts to make Métisness invisible, and 3) power structures' attempts to silence Métis voices. For this work, the term erasure means the exclusion of a minority group or group member from the historical record—in this dissertation, Métis women—the replacement or whitewashing of Métis women or representations of Métis women's contributions, silencing their contributions from the collective consciousness of the academy, the denial of an individual's or group's Métis identity, or the misidentification of Métis by outsiders.

By creating awareness of the contributions of the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship and demonstrating the community connections that drive their motivations and scholarship, we can enhance our understanding of how they shaped their fields. The grandmothers and aunts shared three core pieces of advice: 1) disregard colonial pressures, 2) create connections, and 3) be empowered by who you are to thrive in the academy.

Research Questions

Searching for the lived realities of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship required exploring multiple stages: past, present, and future. Therefore, the driving research questions for this study are as follows: 1) *What motivated these women to pursue or not pursue postsecondary education?* 2) *How did they determine their research focus or focuses?* 3) *How do they see the impact they and their contemporaries had on shaping the academic understanding of Métisness?* 4) *How have colonial institutions impacted their ability to produce and share knowledge?* 5) *What advice do they have for those following in their footsteps?*

Preliminary Discussion

As part of my comprehensive exam preparation, an exploration of the canon of Indigenous Studies revealed the immense contributions that Métis have made to the field. Through that research, I formulated a way of understanding and classifying Métis women in the academy into four waves: grandmothers, second wave, third wave, and newcomers, highlighting each group's contributions and knowledge production (Forsythe, Under Review UMP).

Through a chronicle of the first wave of Métis scholarship, I explored Victoria Callihoo, a prairie historian who lived the experience, Anne Anderson-Irvine, who wrote one of the first Cree dictionaries, Emma LaRocque, who advocated for and then started the second Indigenous Studies department in the country, Audreen Hourie, who was instrumental as a community historian, and Maria Campbell, a Métis theorist who began the conversation about *wahkootowin* as a methodology. These are some examples of the contributions to Métis studies and other disciplines, starting in the 1950s.

The second wave of Métis women as contributors came with the generation of women born after 1949, whose work began to appear during the 1980s. An in-depth exploration of the work of Janice Acoose, Kim Anderson, Marilyn Dumont, Brenda Macdougall, Jean Teillet, and many more demonstrate contributions to law, cultural studies, Canadian poetry and literature, social justice, women, and gender studies that helped redefine our understandings of Métis or Métissage.

The Métis women in the third wave were born after the 1970s; their work began appearing after the turn of the millennium, with many obtaining a Canada Research Chair or

departmental or institutional power and authority; their publishing records directed the narrative of the future. The newcomers—born after the 1970s and whose work has come onto the scene in the late 2010s—comprise a large cohort of Métis women researching a wide range of topics, the full scope of which will only be known in the fullness of time.

Métis women academics and their contributions have been championed by the Métis community and by some in Indigenous Studies. The issue from the 1950s through the 1990s was that the broader academy did not recognize their work. However, there has been an intellectual and social shift over the past 30 years resulting in numerous faculty hires, research chair appointments, and other accolades earned by Métis women. By exploring the lived realities of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, we can see that Métis women and their contributions to the academy have been present for decades and have changed the nature and content of knowledge production from the inside.

Background

In 1978, Marlene M. Doxtater, the provincial organizer and executive director of the Métis Women's Association (MWA), published a chapter in *The Other Natives the-Les Métis Vol. 2 1885-1978*. Her chapter provided a brief sketch of MWA as a process of gaining recognition and funding. One of the MWA's first proposals discussed the causes rather than the symptoms of their problems as women. Their proposal was entitled "It Needs to Be Said" and spoke to several issues to dispel myths of women being held up by our nation, who in the 1970s publicly claimed that Métis women were our matriarchs, but privately Métis misogyny and patriarchal views of women held Métis women back in both Métis politics and the broader workforce. The proposal also called out social disintegration, stating the need to organize women separately and raise awareness about education. This speaking of truth was followed by action in the nation to support the MWA. By speaking truths through this research project, the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship began to confront the erasures and work toward surviving and thriving in the academy.

It took me years to uncover the truth about other Métis women and our shared experience in the academy. Métis women at institutions throughout the country have for decades asserted their presence through knowledge production that has directed the academic narrative in numerous disciplines. However, despite my Bachelor of Arts in First Nations Studies, a Bachelor

of Education in Indigenous perspectives, and a Master's in Native Studies, I had read very few texts by Métis women. I heard very few lectures by Métis women. I was wholly unaware of the magnitude of the contributions of Métis women theorists and academics to scholarship. Not until I began my role as the Métis Inclusion Coordinator at the University of Manitoba—which aims to create awareness of Métis culture historically, linguistically, politically, and academically—did I realize how many Métis women surrounded me. Over the five years since being invited to join the network of Métis scholars, our conversations have made me realize the magnitude and impact of our presence in the academy.

In terms of relevance and community need, two experiences come to mind. First, almost every grandmother cited Maria Campbell as a Métis woman whose contributions to the academy have enhanced our understanding of Métisness; at the same time, few could name many others. This research project was inspired by the lack of awareness in the Métis community, let alone the broader academy, of the contributions of dozens of Métis women to the academy, starting in the 1970s. Virtually no assigned readings in the courses that were part of my degrees were written by Métis women. Despite having three degrees focused on Indigenous Studies, my experience did not include Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973). It was also absent from the reading list for the University of Manitoba's comprehensive exam for a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies until I insisted it be added. Over my time as Métis Inclusion Coordinator, I was introduced to numerous Métis women scholars and community educators. I realized that their erasure resulted from not speaking about their accomplishments through conversations with legal scholar Brenda Gunn. Through casual conversations with other Métis women in a circle I run, I realized that we needed to lift up Métis women whose work had influenced all aspects of our lives. This research had to be undertaken to honor those before and inspire those to come.

“Self-Identifying Métis”

In the context of this research, each woman in this dissertation who has shared her Métis family names and Métis community and asserted Métis identity is a “self-identifying Métis.” Due to the MMF demand through the Manitoba Métis Community Research Ethics Protocol to refer to all the women in this dissertation as self-identifying Métis if they did not hold an MMF Citizenship card, despite historical ties to the Métis nation, this term will be used throughout. According to the MMF constitution, “Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of

historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation” (MMF, 2022). This definition differs from the Supreme Court of Canada: “Self-identification, ancestral connection, and community acceptance are factors which define Métis identity for the purpose of claiming Métis rights under s.35” (*R. v. Powley*, 2003). Due to the inclusion of Sherry Farrell Racette and Verna St. Denis, who honor both sides of their kinship ties and carry status cards, and Christi Belcourt, Kim Anderson, Brenda Macdougall, Rita Bouvier, and Emma LaRocque, who qualify but for various reasons do not currently carry a Métis citizenship card, this dissertation aligns with the 2003 Supreme Court definition. More importantly and outside colonial understandings of Métis, all the women are accepted by the Métis community, have historical ties to the Métis Nation, and self-identify, demonstrating peoplehood. This broader understanding of who Métis are outside contemporary politics allows for recognizing all our kin (Adese, 2016, 2020; Anderson, 2014, 2021; Gaudry & Andersen, 2016). The other grandmothers included in this dissertation are Heather Souter, Lorraine Mayer, Jeannine Carriere, Jean Teillet, Celeste McKay, and Verna DeMontigny, registered citizens of the MMF.

Significance of Speaking to the Grandmothers and Aunties of Métis Scholarship

This project’s scope is the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, defined as self-identifying Métis women in the generation born between 1949 and 1969 and whose contributions to the scholarly discourse began to appear in the late 1970s. In this dissertation, I first profile and then interview 13 such women: Verna DeMontigny and Heather Souter, whose work sought to revitalize Michif, one of the languages of the Métis; Emma LaRocque, who advocated for and initiated the second Indigenous Studies department in the country; Lorraine Mayer, the first recognized Indigenous philosopher in Canada; Rita Bouvier and Verna St. Denis, whose work in Indigenous education reframed how decolonial teaching is approached; Sherry Farrell Racette and Brenda Macdougall, both instrumental as community historians; Jean Teillet and Céleste McKay, whose work redefined our understandings of both Métis and international law; and Kim Anderson, Christi Belcourt, and Jeannine Carrière, each of whom helped introduce Métis ways of knowing of gender, art, and kinship to the academy. These 13 women exemplify the contributions to law, cultural studies, linguistics, Canadian literature, critical social justice, and women’s and gender studies that have helped redefine our understandings of Métis.

Sharing their work and influence impacts and empowers subsequent generations of scholarly Métis women. A complete list of the waves of contributors to Métis scholarship born after the 1970s and whose work began appearing after the turn of the millennium is too long to be included here. Instead, I want to highlight Métis women such as Chelsea Gabel, Janice Cindy Gaudet, Jennifer Adese, Shalene Jobin, and Jennifer Markides, who hold Canada Research Chairs, and Allyson Stevenson, who is the Gabriel Dumont Research Chair in Métis scholarship. With dedicated time, funding, and vision, Métis women in positions of prominence in the academy have the power and resources to create lasting bodies of work in their fields, asserting educational sovereignty by helping direct future narratives. There is also insufficient space here to discuss the academic work of Métis women who are currently Assistant, Associate, or Full professors across Canada, like those in my circle: Elizabeth Fast, Chantal Fiola, Lynn LaVallée, Vicki Bouvier, Cathy Mattes, Lucy Fowler, and Zoe Todd use their positions not only to conduct and publish research but also to develop courses and whole teaching units, curricula, and degree programs that assert educational sovereignty. Most recently, I generated a list with over 100 Métis women in the academy today, making listing them all in this space difficult. Métis women, most still graduate students, whose first publications emerged in the late 2010s researching a wide range of topics include Tanya Ball, Alexandra Nychuk, Chelsea Vowel, Molly Swain, and Angie Tucker. These women have been elevated by the work of the 13 Métis women interviewed to ensure that they pass on a rich understanding of who the Métis are and how infusing Métis knowledges into many disciplines can have an impact both inside the academy and beyond its walls.

Acoose (1995) states that powerful voices can be heard over the influence of “white Christian Canadian patriarchy” (p. 13). The body of work produced by Métis women in the academy demonstrates that their voices are powerful and testify to their resilience, tenacity, and birthright. Métis women have been adaptive, cunning, driven, and essential in supporting their communities throughout history, and those skills have long been extended to the academy. The work of the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship transforms the consciousness and understanding of public discourse. For generations, Métis women have served as influencers outside colonial gender norms and provided the basis for Métis scholarship. By highlighting the work of these women, this dissertation demonstrates that, while the academy struggles with a gendered approach and perspective that have long been supported by patriarchy, Métis women

have nevertheless persevered to contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge and thus directed narratives and asserted sovereignty through their knowledge production.

Beyond raising awareness of Métis women and their contributions throughout the academy, this dissertation should increase the reading of other Métis scholars, thus providing a sense of belonging for Métis students and scholars alike. In addition, highlighting and expressing the importance of Métis women's contributions to the academy offers a rich and diverse experience for those in Indigenous Studies and throughout the disciplines to which Métis women's work contributes: social work, health, law, political science, and many more.

Due to the siloed nature of the academy, with one Métis scholar often alone in a department or faculty for decades, our presence is hidden, and the stories we tell one another are that there are no Métis women here to cite or lift up, even as casual gendered humor of our absence is accepted. As a result, the total possible impact of this research project, the words of the grandmothers and aunties, and their ability to create space for our understanding of Métisness have yet to be seen.

Why Métis-Specific Matters

Métis scholars have criticized the academy for its pan-Indigenous approach (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Campbell-Chudoba, 2019; Gaudry, 2013; Scott, 2020, 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, when not homogenous, there are also issues of misrepresentation with scholars such as Logan (2008) stating “the colonizer’s voice dominated Métis research, especially in the areas of history, anthropology and socio-political analysis” (p. 88). Gaudry and Hancock (2012) affirm that non-Métis scholars have broadly defined Métis scholarship to meet Canadian interests, bringing Haig-Brown’s (2018) question of whom this serves to the fore. Logan (2008) cites the adage that knowledge is power but highlights that “lateral violence becomes quite evident again as Métis groups fight for this power” (p. 94).

Maud (2021) states that “contemporary scholars, academics and government agencies continue to use the generic term Aboriginal or Indigenous when, more often than not, their work is First Nations specific” (p. 5), which highlights how Métis do not see themselves labeled as such in research or wonder whether a given use of a term applies to them. Although numerous studies have documented the shared experience of all Indigenous faculty, there is a lack of Métis-specific experience. Simply having research on all nations does not tell the story of how Métis

women experience the world. Those who simplify their experiences as similar to all women's experience of resistance in the academy do not account for the experience of those who are also racialized and dismisses the intersectionality of colonialism with their gender. Not providing space or funding for research for Métis women is akin to this experience.

Scott (2021a) stresses that “current institutional practices, which do not differentiate Métis identity from First Nations or Inuit identity, significantly impact the experiences that Métis students have in university education and affect their learning” (p. 7). A lack of data limits the development of appropriate, culturally specific, and practical programming, according to R. Monchalin (2019), who was reflecting on the lack of Métis-specific research conducted with the Métis community. Logan (2008) insists that “Métis-specific research should be tailored to view Métis lives through a Métis lens” (p. 90). Binn et al. (2021) champion the need for Métis-specific research, stating that “researchers need to apply particular considerations when conducting research with Métis people. The research must be able to clarify that Métis research is different from other Indigenous research because of the unique experiences of the Métis people” (p. 40).

Change begins when those like the grandmothers and aunties decide to focus on the Métis while beginning to demand space, funding, and emphasis on Métis ways of being, doing and knowing in the academy. To honor the Métis scholars who walked before them and those who will come behind, Métis scholars who want to produce work on their histories and contemporary realities must be enabled in all the ways that count: intellectual, social, and financial. The courage to break free from Indigenous umbrella research makes Métis visible in the literature, resulting in forward movement in policy and programming. The Métis spent generations fighting for their recognition as a distinct people in the eyes of all levels of government. In the academy, there needs to be a continuation of that fight for distinct recognition, resulting in Métis-specific research that will impact Métis communities directly and purposefully.

Delimitations

The women interviewed in this study were all born before 1970 and self-identify as Métis. Each has been widely cited in academic publications. Their work has demonstrated the ability to add to the body of knowledge through publications of books, journal articles, and grey literature in academia and to inspire younger researchers. Not all participants have a doctorate or credential from a postsecondary institution. Instead, the research participants' expertise is

honored due to the inherent merits of their scholarship in the Métis community and relied on by those of many backgrounds in traditional academic institutions. Although many qualify under these criteria, eight other Métis women intellectuals were asked but could not contribute to this project for various reasons. Future work will need to include the impact and legacy of their voices and bodies of work in the collective understanding of the impact of Métis scholars in and on the academy. One limitation of the present study is that none of the Métis women profiled work in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines due to the focus on Métis issues in the social sciences and humanities than in the sciences. Still, law, social work, education, art, history, literature, Indigenous studies, and other social sciences are represented. Despite the limitations, the study presents a body of work highlighting Métis women's journeys inside and outside the academy.

General Overview

It needs to be said that there is still a gap in the literature concerning Métis women's experience in the academy. The literature review in chapter 2 presents existing studies in an Indigenous context, including Métis and Métis-specific studies that explore women's experiences in leadership, as faculty, and as graduate students. It provides the historical background of research conducted with Indigenous women and uncovers the comparative scarcity of Métis-specific research. It identifies the concepts studied and the lens each scholar uses, demonstrating the relationship between the present study and those that have come before. In chapter 2, I demonstrate the lack of Métis-specific resources and research into the experience of Métis women in the academy through a review of the existing literature.

It needs to be said that more Métis-specific methodologies are required to embody our cosmologies and epistemologies accurately. Chapter 3 introduces the intertwining Michif methodology, which intertwines three Métis methodologies 1) *Keeoukaywin*, 2) *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and 3) *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk* under a *wahkootowin* theoretical framework to isolate a Métis-specific research paradigm, epistemology, ontology, and axiology. A discussion of the principles of ethical Métis research in practice and the Métis R's of research demonstrates the intertwining Michif methodology in practice is included.

It needs to be said that despite attempted erasures, these 13 grandmothers and aunts have successfully published their knowledge for decades. Chapter 4 introduces the reader to the

grandmothers and aunties. Each speaks to her contributions and publications, with analyses of their journeys provided for context. Finally, the impact of the grandmothers and aunties on their respective fields in shifting the collective understanding of Métisness in a wide range of disciplines is presented through the stories of the grandmothers and aunties. An analysis of the hundreds of works by the women mentioned will provide readers with the foundation of how a paradigm shift has occurred since Maria Campbell's (1973) autobiographical novel is primarily due to their contributions. In chapter 4, I dispel racist tendencies to dismiss the women's stories of erasure by including their triumphs despite their obstacles.

It needs to be said that there are 11 shared experiences in the academy that result in the symptoms of erasure of Métis women. Chapter 5 of the dissertation reveals these 11 points of attempted erasure, which they have shared through examples in their lived experience. They include colonial attempts at erasure through educational experiences, racism, whiteness, and the pressure to hide. Stories of constantly being measured by a colonial yardstick and assessing where the grandmothers and aunties were Métis, Indigenous, or educated enough were shared at the virtual kitchen table. Invisibility due to lack of recognition, acknowledgment, or awareness of one another added to Métis erasure, as did colonial institutions' power to silence through Indigenous umbrella publishing and the struggle to publish and obtain research funding for Métis-specific projects. In chapter 5, I thus identify the 11 symptoms of erasure experienced by Métis women in the academy of the past and the present day.

It needs to be said that the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship have shared their words of wisdom on succeeding in the academy. In chapter 6, when discussing disregarding colonial pressures, they shared that permission to refuse and relocate is inherently Métis in dire situations that will not change. The grandmothers and aunties stressed the importance of connecting with other Métis scholars and helpers, especially Métis women. Finally, they shared the need to be empowered by whom you are through staying true to yourself, including your ancestors, embracing your teachings, looking after yourself, and loving what you do. In chapter 6, I argue that despite institutional pressures, Métis women academics must put their communities and themselves before the academy to succeed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

It needs to be said that there is still a gap in the academic literature concerning Métis women's experience in the academy. Métis, according to an Indigenous Services Canada 2020 report to Parliament (2020), make up 32% of the Indigenous population in Canada and attend postsecondary institutions at a higher rate than First Nations and Inuit. According to Arriagada (2021), a higher percentage of Métis women pursue postsecondary education than the overall Canadian population at 59%. With 16% of Métis women studying for degrees above the bachelor's level (Arriagada, 2021) and Indigenous faculty being hired at an accelerated rate (Vescera, 2018), knowing the experiences of Métis women who are faculty, student, and staff in Canadian higher education institution would benefit the academy.

This chapter examines and reports on studies exploring Métis-specific experiences in the academy. It provides the historical background of research conducted with Indigenous women and uncovers disparities between Indigenous umbrella and Métis-specific research in the literature. To ensure thoroughness, material that employs "Indigenous" as an umbrella term for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit is included. This chapter presents existing studies in an Indigenous context, including Métis and Métis-specific research that explores the experiences of Métis women in academic leadership, as faculty, and as graduate students. It identifies the concepts studied and the lens each scholar uses, demonstrating the relationship between this study and those that have come before. The chapter highlights work in areas like Indigenous leadership, faculty experience, graduate student experience, and institutional inclusion efforts, using the stories of Indigenous women, whether Canadian or international. This synopsis is followed by an account of the limited amount of Métis-specific research that highlights Métis women's experience in the academy at all levels: student, faculty, researcher, and leader. In this chapter, I demonstrate a lack of Métis-specific resources and research into the experience of Métis women in the academy.

The Lack of Métis-Specific Research

Historically, Canada has "downplayed Métis indigeneity or only recognized Métis rights and title to extinguish them" (Gaudry, 2018a, p. 1). Madden (2015) asserts that Métis have been excluded from Crown consultations on their rights and denied access to programming despite including Métis in section 35 of the constitution, which recognizes Métis as Aboriginal people.

Isaac (2016) called for a “greater understanding of Métis distinct issues” (p. 26) in his report on Métis reconciliation. Métis rights extend beyond land claims to inclusive education. Álvaro Pop Ac was quoted by The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as follows: “Efforts should be made to ensure that Indigenous peoples have access to education that is culturally and linguistically appropriate” (2016). These words stress the need to address barriers such as the stigmatization of Indigenous identity and discrimination. Educational discrimination is addressed by UNESCO (2019) when discussing the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); discrimination “includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference” (UNESCO, 2019, p. 4). According to the United Nations, access to education and freedom from discrimination at all levels of education are Métis rights. Métis exclusion is a form of discrimination, and the lack of our inclusion in research and educational programming in higher education due to the assumption that we fit nicely under the Indigenous umbrella is unacceptable.

A review of the literature reveals a lack of Métis-specific research. Poitras Pratt et al. (2014) put it bluntly: “Métis-specific issues simply aren’t talked about, nor does publicly available disaggregated data exist to facilitate such a discussion (p. 12). Kumar et al. (2012) list several literature reviews highlighting the underrepresentation of Métis in research regarding Indigenous peoples, stressing that the Métis-related items that had appeared over the previous three decades were pan-Indigenous and did not provide Métis-specific findings. Ferguson (2015) refers to a “lack of research involving Métis students” (p. iv). Scott (2021a) emphasizes two issues in expressing concern about the lack of Métis-specific research; one in her area of expertise is the absence of scholarship on Métis students in higher education, while the other is the lack of a “formal literature that defines Métis knowledge as a worldview” (p. 5). Chartrand et al. (2006) assert that “Métis are underrepresented in the literature and in some cases, references are almost non-existent” (p. 61). Continuing in that vein, Logan (2008) insists that “Métis-specific information or academic study is in high demand; it is rare and often hard to find, even today” (p. 93). Poitras Pratt (2019) acknowledges being “initially perplexed by the lack of previous scholarly work in this area to help guide my study with the exception of a scant few studies” (p. 47) in seeking to decolonize through digital storywork. Beaudin-Reimer’s (2020) literature review reveals a “lack of research recognizing the significance and perspectives of Métis populations” (p. 246). Poitras Pratt (2019) feels that Métis scholars are

“standing largely on their own designing what they hope to be appropriate” in reflecting on creating methodologies that are Métis-specific while admitting that this is an “opportunity to learn and build on best practice of Aboriginal research” (p. 55).

In terms of specific disciplines, A. LaVallee et al. (2016) find that Métis people have largely been ignored as a distinct population in health research, stressing the “little information on Métis-specific research paradigms and methods” (p. 170). Evans et al. (2012) report that the lack of Métis-specific research in health was as indisputable as it was troubling, asserting that research guidelines must address the needs and circumstances of the Métis while acknowledging that there are differences in both historical and contemporary Métis communities and the broader Indigenous population (p. 57). They further call for Métis-specific research and funding. Porter (2013), meanwhile, asserts that “there is very little Métis-specific research” (p. 19) in discussing lateral violence affecting Métis women. Flaminio et al. (2020) seek to highlight Métis-specific methodologies, epistemologies, and pedagogies, noting “the limited research by Métis women and with Métis women” (p. 55). Their research context is not academic realities but community research with women. They also highlight a “lack of research on Métis women’s wellness especially led by women themselves” (Flaminio et al., 2020, p. 55). Burke and MacDonald (2020) describe the mentorship relationship between a Métis professor and a Métis student to add to the emerging literature on Métis experience in the academy. With racism and oppression surrounding Indigenous graduate students, the need for mentors is explored, but the findings acknowledge that self-identifying Indigenous make up only 2.1% of total faculty, so there continue to be obstacles (Burke & MacDonald, 2020).

Métis-Specific Research Focusing on Métis Women in the Academy

Métis-specific research on Métis women’s experiences as leaders, faculty, researchers, and students does not have the breadth in the Indigenous umbrella literature. Therefore, this section is not as robust as the Indigenous umbrella sections of this dissertation but does include the literature that does exist.

Métis Women in Academic Leadership Research

Even though there are many Métis women leaders, presidents, vice-provosts, and vice-presidents in academic institutions across the country, research focused on their experiences as

Métis women in these roles are lacking. Therefore, no Métis-specific studies that include the stories of these types of women leaders can be cited. However, studies conducted on Métis women in the academy are included, and studies addressing Métis women's experiences in research on other topics include Métis women sharing lived experiences as tangents. This inclusion following a deep dive ensures that our voices can be heard – at least to some extent – despite a history of being neglected, ignored, or treated as if we are not distinct by both First Nations and non-Indigenous people.

Métis Women as Faculty Research

The multiple roles demanded of Métis faculty members include research, teaching, and service, all of which are affected by Métis identity, resulting in many speaking directly to their relationship with their identities. Although most contemporary scholarship begins with an inclusion of a positionality statement, research into the identities of Métis women outside of exposés outing non-Métis scholars is lacking. Todd (2018a) briefly refers to her experience in anthropology as a “white-coded Métis woman” (p. 162) and the unsettling space of attempting to decolonize a discipline when seen “as the exploitive white researcher” (p. 163). However, her work does highlight storytelling as a Métis methodology. Devine (2010) states that as a Métis woman, her heritage affected her approach to research and the inspiration to find more about her heritage spurred her academic career: “I would not have become an academic at all had I not become so absorbed with trying to answer the numerous questions ... [about] the experience of Métis people” (p. 202). The balanced approach she strives to adopt comes from monitoring her work to ensure her biases in favour of the Métis are in check, and she is thankful for the peer review process in this regard. Devine (2010) speaks to being afraid of “being rejected by other Métis people” (p. 192), echoing the words of others not feeling Métis enough to assert their ancestry publicly despite having ties to the Métis Nation. She admits that claiming to be Métis in academia “continues to be an awkward experience” (p. 203) due to not being raised in a traditional Métis culture.

Métis Women as Researchers

Although there is no Métis-specific research to consult on Métis women as researchers, a close reading of articles on various topics can help reveal at least some of their experiences.

Researchers can gain insights from these asides, which are tucked into papers focused on other matters. However, no studies explicitly interviewed Métis women about their experiences as Métis researchers. Below, a selection of Métis women's publications that includes stories of their experiences is featured in place of these works.

Métis women scholars have produced works that mention their experience as Métis women in the academy. LaRocque (1986a, 2010) has published pieces on her identity as a professor; when confronting the process of exposing the issues of Indigenous stereotypes in her work, she admits, "I tried to be subtle rather than explosive, but I think such a concern was more of a mark of my colonization than my liberation" (2010, p. 18). LaRocque (2010) also speaks to struggles with taking up the colonizers' language and cites Joy Harjo, saying that "we attend to the task of "reinventing the enemy's language" (p. 21). LaRocque articulates the insider/outsider tension after teaching in the academy for three decades, stating that the only time feels like an insider in the academy is when she is "mentoring grad students or meeting with colleagues" (2010, p. 27); this emerges after she has spent decades in the institution. Thirty years after entering the academy, LaRocque (2010) asserted she has been battling the image of the Indian created by western myth with her scholarship.

Farrell Racette (2008a) spoke to the experiences as an Indigenous research warrior at an international conference 25 years earlier, stating that "our struggle to revitalize and protect our cultural traditions is still just that, a struggle. We continue to be marginalized" (2008a, p. 63) as she shared the struggle to be funded and the work yet to be done. Supernant (2021) demonstrates her commitment to reframing archaeology from a Métis perspective and creating a framework of relationality, commenting on her feelings as a Métis archeologist. Through ethnographic work, Poitras Pratt (2011, 2019) seeks to decolonize education through a Métis approach to research that uses stories; hers is the rare project dedicated to the Métis in education. Poitras Pratt (2019) has sought to create an "ethical space for the stories of the Métis to be heard" (p. 7) in the hopes that her research would empower the community, demonstrating the importance of the lens that Métis women bring to research and the broader academy.

Métis Women Teaching in the Academy

Markides's (2020a) autoethnographic sharing of doubts, vulnerability, and strengths in her academic learning journey as a doctoral candidate and instructor sheds light on the travails of

becoming an assistant professor. Markides (2018) questions feelings of inadequacy as not being Indigenous enough or educated enough to teach at a postsecondary level while contemplating the potential harm done by teaching Indigenous histories. Due to the recent “backlash of resistance [that] suggests that *Indigenous Education courses are contested spaces and sites of potential harm*” (Markides, 2018, p. 37), she grapples with the responsibility of being at the front of the class as a Métis woman tasked with an enormous responsibility. Markides (2018) provides a critical reflection of teaching as a Métis scholar but prefaces it as an Indigenous teacher to reach a wider audience, much like Devine (2010).

Métis Faculty and Service Research

Devine (2010) commented on the demands on Indigenous faculty to act “as role models, as mentors, as sponsors, as committee members, and as experts on all things Aboriginal” (p. 203), which leads to burnout. She asserts that disclosure of ancestry should be up to the individual but has been commodified as individuals become “the token Aboriginal representative on a committee, regardless of whether his or her knowledge or training is relevant to the work at hand” (p. 203).

Métis Women Graduate Students’ Research

Scott’s (2021b) doctoral dissertation serves as an example of the future of Métis-specific research and raising awareness about the lived reality of Métis women in the academy; she interviews 12 Métis women students attending postsecondary institutions to understand their experiences. She discusses how higher education had impacted their understandings of Métisness, the role of Métis-specific knowledge, and Métis perspectives on reconciliation. She concludes as follows:

If Métis learners are to believe in Canadian universities’ commitment, where Indigenous initiatives and programs are advertised as available and advancing reconciliation efforts is a stated priority, then there remains more work to be done to be inclusive of Métis people. (Scott, 2021b, p. 229)

According to Scott (2021a, 2021b), the Métis women she interviewed were negatively affected by history and culture presented as pan-Indigenous; she calls for a validated Métis space inside institutions.

Due to the scarcity of Métis-specific research beyond Scott (2021b), I read pieces written by Métis women on a range of non-Métis-related research in the hopes that they would share their thoughts about their experiences in the academy or when conducting research. Below are excerpts of times that Métis women worked on a wide array of topics and shared a piece of themselves and their journeys in the academy.

LaRocque (2010) spoke about her experiences as a doctoral student in 1990: the patronizing words of a professor colleague in her Ph.D. reference letter stated that she suffered from “too much introspection and the facts of her own biography,” adding she was “remarkably talented” but was an “undisciplined scholar” and suggesting he could help her reach her “full potential” (p. 28). LaRocque (2010) asserted that this experience was common in the 1990s, and in my experience, it continues to this day. LaRocque’s holding a full professorship allows her to share her experience candidly.

Markides (2018) recalls the push and pull of both colonial and Indigenous expectations of her as a doctoral candidate as she “walked in two worlds” (p. 35), navigating both sides of her lineage. In their autoethnographic work, Sanduliak (2016) and Devine (2010) reveal their intimate thoughts on identity and their place in the academy in passing. Sanduliak (2016) defends the ethics of an autoethnographic approach in reflecting as a Métis student: “My reclamation of a Métis identity through my auto-ethnographic and genealogical research is, in essence, claiming and attaching an identity not only to myself but to all of my ancestors” (p. 364). Devine (2010) speaks about her experiences with autoethnography and the tensions she felt during her graduate work to tell her story that way, ultimately admitting to framing her work to appease a broad audience (p. 202) while also sharing that “holding oneself out as Métis in academia continues to be an awkward experience” (p. 203).

Ryan-Schmidt (2020) speaks to the trauma she experienced in postsecondary education and social work practice as a Métis student and professional. In an article regarding the trauma, Indigenous social workers may face in postsecondary programs, and during practice, Ryan-Schmidt (2020) divulges her ancestry: “I am of mixed Métis, Irish, Russian, and German ancestry” (p. 12). Like many Métis scholars, after asserting her ancestry, she returns to the Indigenous umbrella language to speak of her time studying at the University of Victoria. Connecting to the worries of Markides (2018) around content affecting students, Ryan-Schmidt (2020) states, “discussing the impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities can be heavy

and exhausting heart work for Indigenous students. Indigenous students cannot close the book on these topics; the work follows them home when class has ended” (p. 13). As a student in social work, Ryan-Schmidt shared in detail the struggles of students and practitioners as helpers.

Leclair (2002) states that teachings in the institution conflict with the teachings of her Elders; she sought their help throughout her time in the academy in a piece meant to address Gerhard Ens’s understandings of Métis in the 19th century. As a Métis woman raised with tradition, Leclair leans on the Elders for assistance to reconcile her academic experience: “Our elders urge a balance between Aboriginal and Canadian education. To be balanced in education means to keep in mind that books ought not to be our only teachers” (Leclair, 2002, p. 161). When speaking of Métis realities, Leclair (2002) claims she does not use the language taught at the institution, such as “ordinary discourses of self-representation, essentialism, naïve empiricist methodologies, pretheoretical, postmodernism, and monoculturalist multiculturalism” (p. 162), which is echoed in LaRocque’s (2010) commentary on the use of language foreign to Indigenous ways of being. Leclair (2002) states that using the common language of English is “no guarantee of common understanding when we speak of crucially important concepts” (p. 164). She relies on Elders’ teachings: “When I find myself in conflict with what I learn in the academy, I talk with an elder or someone wiser in our ways than I am” (p. 165).

Phenix and Valavarra (2016) speak about their experience as both undergraduates and graduates in occupational therapy while attempting to Indigenize the profession. Their article speaks to the level of education that has led to connection and disconnection with their identity as Métis women:

We were provoked into embracing our history and identity. On a personal level, it can be difficult to grieve the impacts of generations of colonial policies and practices—including family experiences such as low education levels, addiction, mental illness and incarceration. (p. 17)

Reflecting on their experience, they remained hopeful that the university’s occupational therapy department could change and align with the TRC Calls to Action. A faculty of social work and the experiences of its Métis students were explored by Burke and Robinson (2019), who reflect on their doctoral research in social work by exploring their connection to Métissage as a research praxis that they claim “provides space for Métis researchers ... hoping to honour diverse realities (p. 151). Both scholars quickly clarify that “Métissage is not a Métis concept or even an

Indigenous concept” (p. 152). Robinson highlights the growth she experienced while studying that allowed her to connect to her identity. Burke tells of her joining the academy late in life after 20 years in practice, noting that it was important for her “to figure out a way to genuinely bring together my personal lived experiences as a Métis woman, mother, and community member” (p. 153). These admissions appear in a piece on Métissage as a research praxis.

More of our stories are being told with more Métis women pursuing graduate studies. Advanced degrees completed by Métis women are shifting our understanding. For example, Legare’s (1996) master’s thesis reflects on the words written by Métis or Mixed women, including Maria Campbell, Emma LaRocque, and Legare herself, and discusses their impact on identity. Her doctoral work (2007) focuses on the lived stories of Métis women, while Leclair’s (2003) doctoral dissertation includes personal reflections on bringing Métis environmental knowledge into the academy and addresses Métisness, identity, and research methods. Richardson’s (2004) doctoral dissertation provides a sense of the Métis self through interviews with 12 Métis and demonstrates walking in two worlds. Finally, A. LaVallee’s (2014) doctoral dissertation on the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan develops a research paradigm to understand tuberculosis while also providing the reader with a glimpse into the work of Métis women and the processes of developing a Métis methodology to meet community needs. These works are essential in and of themselves yet not directly related to the focus of this study. The central conclusion is that Métis women must learn about themselves as academics in material primarily focused on tuberculosis, social work, environmental education, and literature.

Indigenous Umbrella Women’s Experiences Research

This section discusses Indigenous umbrella academic leadership research, focusing on women’s voices in Canada and internationally. While Métis women scholars are included, the approach is pan-Indigenous, meaning a collective approach under the umbrella of Indigeneity that brings in the voices of women from various Indigenous experiences. Another form of publication is edited collections featuring various Indigenous women speaking from their place and positionality in specific chapters. Recently published collections such as *Decolonizing and Indigenizing Education in Canada* (Cote-Meek & Moeke-Pickering, 2020), *Women Negotiating Life in the Academy: A Canadian Perspective* (Eaton & Burns, 2020), and *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* (Henry et al., 2017b) demonstrate a shift

in academic publishing and reveal the growing demand to hear stories stemming from the reconciliation and equity movements over the past 20 years. One of the grandmothers, Verna St. Denis, with Amanda Gebhard and Sheelah McLean, released an edited collection *White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions* (Gebhard et al., 2022), where anti-racist scholars speak to the issues in education, justice, social work, and health that they witnessed, issues that are supported by whiteness. This trend demonstrates a willingness among publishers and editors to publish Indigenous umbrella experiences; there is not yet such a publication that is Métis-specific. In 2023, *Métis Women's Contributions to the Academy: Looking Beyond the Patriarchy*, a collection I edited with Jennifer Markides, is due to be released; it will provide insight into the research and experiences of Métis women in the academy.

Indigenous Umbrella Academic Leadership Research

In terms of individual studies, the doctoral work of Mushkego Cree scholar Brunette-Debassige (2021) features interviews with 12 Indigenous women administrators at Canadian universities to begin filling the gap in the literature regarding Indigenous women's leadership. Taking an autoethnographic approach, Cote-Meek (2020), an Anishnaabe-Kwe scholar from the Teme-Augama Anishnabai, describes her journey to becoming vice-president of equity, people, and culture at York University. Finally, Métis scholar L. LaVallee (2020) critiques the performance on display at institutions to allow Indigenous women to lead, including the drivers of firings, resignations, and toxic work environments.

On the international front, multi-year studies highlight educational leadership, such as T. Fitzgerald's (2006) three-year project involving administrators from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, who report feelings of being in a triple bind of gender, race, and navigating two worlds while navigating the academy. A similar study by T. Fitzgerald (2010) shared the voices of 13 women in K–12 leadership positions. In Australia, Coates et al. (2021) conducted 76 qualitative interviews to review, compare, and evaluate Indigenous leadership across Australia by both men and women.

Studies from the United States include Warner (1995), a Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma member who reports how American Indian female administrators have faced misogyny, racism, and institutional issues throughout their careers. An enrolled member of the Coharie Tribe of

North Carolina, Faircloth (2017) explores American Indian administrators' and faculty members' struggle to reconcile their identity with institutional priorities, values, and issues that have persisted for decades. Santamaría (2013) delves into Native Hawaiian women's educational leadership, using Indigenous ways of knowing as the framework for speaking about the problems of bringing them into the academy.

Indigenous Women Faculty Experience Research

The stories of Indigenous women academics speaking about their struggles to obtain assistant or associate professor positions, contributions to reconciliation efforts, and successes despite systemic discrimination and white fragility are expressed in the research described below. However, colonialism and Eurocentric beliefs remain powerful, and Canadian and international scholars' experiences are strikingly similar. In the literature, it does not seem to matter if one is Indigenous from Australia, Norway, Canada, or the United States; Indigenous scholars face the same issues.

The Haudenosaunee scholar Monture-Angus (2009) is a champion of speaking out on the treatment and experience of Indigenous women in the academy; she discusses whiteness and the treatment of the racialized in institutions, issues about her seeking tenure, the problems of peer review, and her career to date. Monture-Angus (2010) also shares her experience surviving the university as a Kanien'kehaka woman in Canada and advises others on how to survive. Monture-Angus (1995) offers a collection of essays documenting her experiences in the academy over several decades; reading it now highlights how little things have changed. Speaking about classism, racism, and sexism, Monture-Angus (1995) states that we "get qualified as disadvantaged" (p. 13) when using the "white middle-class yardstick" (p. 13), which connects to the words of the women in this study and their feelings of not being enough. Recalling a memory of having to stand up for her people at her institution, Monture-Angus (1995) reports that she "felt brutalized, violated, victimized—all those things—but not silent" (p. 21), a reality experienced by many Indigenous scholars, including me, to this day. LaRocque's (1996) powerful essay, "The Colonization of a Native Woman Scholar," praises Indigenous women's role while calling colonial institutions to task for their subjugation of our voices and methodologies. In her reflection on decades of teaching in Native Studies, LaRocque (1996) addresses the reality of faculty: "not only do we study and teach colonial history, but we also

walk in its shadow on a daily basis ourselves” (p. 12). The dominance asserted by the academy toward our identities and scholarship continues our subjugation, according to LaRocque (1996), resulting in a “great toll on women” (p. 11), who are forced to live in the colonizer/colonized dichotomy, as seen through policies, biases, and violence in the academic community.

Janice Acoose is an Anishinaabekwe-Métis-Nehiowe academic who speaks out in “Deconstructing Five Generations of White Christian Patriarchal Rule” (1993). Acoose’s work in the 1990s speaks to the perseverance and tenacity of Métis women in demanding inclusion in the academy, despite the efforts of agents of patriarchy; she might have been even more acclaimed had her work appeared two decades later. Acoose’s examination of literature resulted in *Iskwewak: Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws* (1995) and its second edition, *Iskwewak kah’ki yaw ni wahkomakanak: Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws* (2016), which have enjoyed continued success. Acoose was inspired to create and update the work by her experiences with racism and sexism in the postsecondary context as she worked on her master’s thesis (1992), which was later published. Acoose (2001) analyzed her experience as a Saulteaux and Ninankawe Marival Métis as both a Ph.D. candidate and a professor teaching at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Acoose (2016b) outlines her choices as an educator in course creation; she privileges Indigenous knowledge keepers over the white canon to teach, citing the memory of her own educational experience, devoid of her people. As Métis scholars began securing positions in the academy, they could influence the learning of new scholars.

Using an autoethnographic approach and a Plains Cree and Saulteaux lens, Kovach (2010a) integrates the experiences of struggle that come with being Indigenous in the academy. The chapter moves beyond questioning the problematic nature of western institutions and speaks to distinct struggles, including Indigenous scholars' vulnerability to the academy's assimilative effects and its inhospitable nature in the face of their presence. Kovach (2010a) states that Indigenous scholars are being tasked with Indigenizing and decolonizing, resulting in increased hiring, and although there is danger in introducing more scholars to the institution, she sees hope for the future. A decade later, Kovach and Stelmach (2020) profile their journeys and contemplate the construction of their professorships from Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux (Kovach) and Ukrainian (Stelmach) perspectives, expanding on previously shared experiences. Their chapter asks about the impact of the academy shaping, misshaping, and reshaping women scholars at its whim, which runs the danger of their finding “themselves unintentionally complicit in a regime

that holds them in tension” (Kovach & Stelmach, 2020, p. 54). Another scholar using performance autoethnography, Pedri-Spade (2020), an Anishinaabe, shares the lived struggle of Indigenous women in the academy after five years as an assistant professor, where she relates feeling both emotionally and physically unsafe through intentional acts and stresses the need for space to be created for Indigenous scholars to be open about their experiences.

Works featuring multiple voices include Pete-Willett (2001), whose ethnographic case study depicts the stories of five Indigenous faculty members in Canada and the United States, reflecting on their dissertations and the cultural negotiations in participating in the academy. Archibald (2009) interviews five First Nation female academics and highlights their influence on the academy, stating that “social and political events and reality” are directly impacted “with their ideas” (p. 3). Four social work academics speak about their experience in graduate school and the issues of colonial institutions in Johnson (2013). In addition, Mi’kmaq scholar Lawrence and Métis scholar Kim Anderson (2005) conclude that Indigenous scholars experience marginalization and detail how Indigenous women bring their communities into the academy, use Indigenous frameworks, and address community needs with their work.

Indigenous women as educators have the arduous task of educating while attempting to Indigenize, as seen in Louie et al. (2017), who discuss decolonizing the classroom by having Indigenous educators using the 25 principles outlined by L. T. Smith (1999). Ryan-Schmidt (2020), whose work seeks to help Indigenous students through social work education using Indigenous ways of being, attempts to balance western knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing. The heavy emotional, physical, and spiritual price paid by these faculty members is a common thread in all the above accounts. All of them spoke about safety, workload, and trying to create spaces for those that come behind them. Undoubtedly successful on numerous counts, these Indigenous women have navigated the colonial patriarchal system, which had taken a toll on them. LaRocque (2002) discusses the difficulty of introducing Indigenous literature into the mainstream through publication and teaching in Indigenous Studies.

Non-Indigenous lead scholar Henry’s work in collaboration with others shaped discussions on racism for decades, including Henry et al.’s (2017a) report on a four-year study demonstrating that four decades of equity policy had failed to transform the academy. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined a national survey and interviews, the authors conclude that Indigenous faculty have remained low in numbers, power, prestige, and influence. Henry et

al. (2017b) identify the university as a central locus of racism. In that same year, Henry and Kobayashi (2017), using informal interviews about everyday racism, found that Indigenous faculty feel that “racism is part of the normative fabric of life in the academy” (p. 117).

Internationally, Moreton-Robinson (2000a, 2006, 2021) expresses how Indigenous scholars experience hardship at the hands of white academics, with little change other than terminology over the two decades between her publications. Moreton-Robinson (2015) demonstrates the power dynamics between white and Indigenous scholars in the academy and shows how white possession and power operate through myriad practices. In a statement that grounds much of her future work, Moreton-Robinson (2000b) asserts that “patriarchal whiteness surreptitiously works to support white feminists” in the academy (p. 351). A Sámi perspective on the academy provided in Kuokkanen (2000) reports similar findings. Moeke-Pickering (2020), a scholar of the Māori of the Ngati Pukeko and Tuhoe tribes, shares critical reflections of women in academia and their journeys to becoming full professors as Māori women while also asserting their impact as Indigenous scholars. Finally, Carlson (2020) uses an autoethnographic lens to recount her perspective as an Aboriginal woman from D’harawal Country in Australia. She describes her experiences while earning a doctorate and working toward an appointment as an associate professor.

To highlight a wide range of voices, the Pasifika scholar Naepi (2020) incorporated the stories of 27 Indigenous Polynesian Pasifika women and their experiences in navigating the academy as racialized bodies. These women experienced issues with othering, expectations of excess labor and intelligibility, instances of infantilization, and hyper-surveillance by the institution. Early-career researchers considered agitators of change in Australia participated in semi-structured interviews in a longitudinal study by Locke et al. (2021); the results show their commitment to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing to be both valid and valued in the higher education sector. The high workload expectations in terms of teaching, decolonizing, and researching mirror that of Western institutions in North America. The first author in Thunig and Jones (2021) is a Gamilaroi *yinarr* (woman) who highlights much of the work done on Indigenous academics while condemning the academy for the experiences of Indigenous women academics, stressing a sentiment that is found in accounts of Indigenous women in scholarship from around the world: “This all comes with a great personal and collective cost” (p. 413). All the women spoke about excessive workloads.

Research on Indigenous Women as Researchers

This section's purpose is twofold: 1) to demonstrate the current literature engaging in the experiences of Indigenous women as researchers across the globe, and 2) to establish a base of knowledge to compare to the stories shared by the Métis grandmothers and aunts in the present study. The research presented below speaks to the experiences of Indigenous women as researchers navigating the academy, attempting to bring collective ways of knowing into the space through a diversity of Indigenous research methodologies and lenses.

In Canada, the Indigenous scholars Cidro and Anderson (2020) explore Indigenous women's experiences as community health researchers by interviewing 10 Indigenous women who use Indigenous research methodology, conduct community-based health research, and provide advice for the women who will follow them. The article stresses the investment each woman makes in her community and explores challenges created by administrators. The Inuk scholar Karla Jessen Williamson (2014), Canada's first tenured Inuk professor, contrasts the rigor required by academic writing and the dynamism unleashed by writing poetry, which can be "likened to a release of stored energy" (p. 138). Monchalin and Monchalin (2016) communicate the story of two sisters navigating the academy in health and criminology while grounding themselves in Indigenous teachings. Each expresses her motivations for entering academia with hopes of effecting change for her community. Finally, Indigenous scholars share their sisterhood practices to survive and thrive in the academy while describing their approach to research in Shotton et al. (2018), outlining their need for connection inside the academy. Eger and Müller (2020), although they are non-Indigenous researchers, offer one of the only examples of research that does include the voices of Indigenous women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine; their interviews of 99 women reveal the gender disparity that runs through these disciplines.

Many Indigenous women researchers have focused not on women but entire communities, ethics, and methodologies. For example, Kovach (2009, 2010a, 2015, 2017, 2021) has advocated for changing research methodologies in the academy to align with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. A study by Kovach et al. (2013) describes an all-Indigenous research team holding a talking circle, highlighting the impact and importance of self-location in research projects, which is common practice for most researchers incorporating Indigenous methodologies into their work. The Métis scholar Smylie's (2005) work considers the research

ethics involving Canada's Indigenous populations. It condemns two studies for unethical practices, such as lack of consultation with Indigenous communities, even though the results would inform policy developments that would govern Indigenous lives. Métis and Beardsley's and Okemasis First Nation scholar St. Denis (1992) discusses the aspects of practice for Indigenous participatory research stemming from her master's thesis. Through several publications on community-based and participatory research with Indigenous participants, Gaudet (2016) attempts to Indigenize and decolonize research by providing insights into how Indigenous methods are grounded in Indigenous epistemology. Métis scholar Gaudet (2014) begins with a preliminary conversation of the process and reflections on the Indigenous methodologies' literature at the beginning of her doctoral work. Later, Gaudet (2018) reflects on her doctoral work with Moose Creek First Nation and offers the Indigenous theoretical framework *Keeoukaywin*, which "inspires social values, kinship, an understanding of women's contribution, and self-recognition in relation to the land, history, community, and values" (p. 47).

Focused on women's experiences at the international level, Hilden and Lee (2010) provide an autoethnographic account of how two Indigenous feminist scholars reclaim, reread, and rearticulate Indigenous issues in the academy. Yaqui and Chicana scholar Archuleta (2006) adopts a feminist lens and a Latina perspective to speak to the presence and theory of Indigenous women in the academy by highlighting the work of Indigenous scholars, including Métis Janice Acoose, Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Emma LaRocque. Finally, three Indigenous scholars, including Unanga scholar Eve Tuck, highlight the five central challenges that Indigenous feminist theories and their intersections face to interrogate academic participation in dispossession and critique women's and gender studies in Arvin et al. (2013).

Research on Indigenous Female Graduate Students

Having reviewed the autoethnographic and qualitative studies, I now turn to how students' voices convey their struggles and successes in the academy. To ground this section, one must consider a government note in which Balfour (1973) outlines the issues hindering the success of First Nations and Métis postsecondary students. After surveying the population numerous times, Balfour (1973) criticized government action as short-sighted, resulting in educational attainment gaps that remain to date (Forsythe, 2018). According to Arriagada (2021), 31.7% of non-Indigenous women pursue a degree above the bachelor's level, compared to 13.6%

of those with Indigenous identity and 15.9% of Métis women. At the University of Manitoba, 239 Indigenous students pursued graduate studies in fall 2021, making up 6.9% of overall graduate enrollment (University of Manitoba, 2021). The experiences of how the few who attend graduate studies are othered, underrepresented in their faculties, and overworked due to the demand for Indigenous instructors and change agents in the academy are explored in this section.

Dunning (2019) explains her experience as an Inuk in postsecondary education and the perceptions of southerners, exposing the barriers hindering her success. The study revealed obstacles between the siloed nature of the institution and funders, causing stress on the students interviewed, alongside issues of racism, lateral violence, and the perceived nature of the docility of Inuit students hampering their success. Lindstrom (2020) shares the journey of First Nations students through the academy, beginning with her undergraduate experiences of anxiety, isolation, and a lack of sense of belonging coupled with the intergenerational trauma of colonization, stressing her lived realities daily. Lindstrom graduated and pursued a doctorate, ultimately seeking the ability to create her sense of belonging in a space for other Indigenous students. The Innu scholar Baker's (2010) master's thesis explores Indigenous women's work in the academy from the perspective of a sense of place. It speaks to the power of writing about Indigenous women's experiences and the effect those words have on those to come while also revealing issues of isolation and racism in the academy. Métis scholars have conducted research under the Indigenous umbrella, recounting experiences and seeking solutions for Indigenous women more broadly in the institutional context. For example, A. Lavallee (2007) shares stories of Indigenous women's pursuit of higher education using a wellness paradigm in her master's thesis and later continues the journey into her doctoral studies (2014).

In a critical review of Indigenous graduate students' experience in Australia from 2000 to 2017, the 13 papers examined in Moodie et al. (2015) explore successes and issues and compare them to First Nations research communities, ultimately finding that there is insufficient research exploring the experiences of Indigenous graduate students. Bishop (2021), an Aboriginal scholar, uses autoethnography to describe encountering whites, navigating the academy, and criticizing the Australian education system.

Indigenous Stories of Women Indigenizing and Decolonizing Research

In this section, the efforts at Indigenizing and decolonization outlined by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) will be discussed through research sharing Indigenous women academics' contributions to approaches to changing the institution. In addition, studies from Canada and abroad reveal the issues in embedding our methodologies, theories, and epistemologies in colonial institutions. For example, Potlotek First Nations scholar Battiste's (2005, 2011, 2017) work acknowledges the Indigenous knowledge and strategies used by scholars, stating that "a generation of Indigenous scholars has successfully exposed the Eurocentric prejudices against Indigenous ways of knowing" (2005, p. 3).

McGregor (2005, 2007) speaks to the struggle of an Anishinabe assistant professor to walk between two worlds and have an Indigenous worldview accepted in scientific disciplines. Herrera (2011) also refers to walking in two worlds as an academic attempting to Indigenize. Seniuk Cicek et al. (2021) examine the process of Indigenizing 25 engineering programs while walking in two worlds. Finally, Ray (2016) discusses beading as a methodology congruent with Indigenous worldviews and the experiences of implementing this framework.

First Nations scholar Richmond's (2020) autoethnographic approach to Indigenization in health research relates to the journey of addressing the complexity of contemporary Indigenous health inequities. Hunter (2004) reflects on teaching practices and attempts to increase Indigenization in the academy. Saulteaux and Anishinaabe scholar Ottmann (2013) reflect on 17 years in the academy and ask why they are both spending time Indigenizing the academy. Cree perspectives on scholarship, Indigenous knowledge, the process of inclusion, Indigenization, and *Wakohtowin* are all presented in Settee (2011). Brulé and Koleszar-Green (2018), a Métis and Franco-Ontarian and citizen of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, respectively, feature an Indigenous women's collective reflection on Indigenizing the curriculum and what that means for Indigenous students. J. Ward et al. (2021) examine reconciliation through a gendered, critical Indigenous women's lens that involves learning from other women in the academy. Jessen Williamson (2014) questions, from the perspective of an Inuk from Greenland, using the Inuit philosophy of equity to pursue academic achievement while honoring and expressing other women's educational experiences, stressing the need for collaborative work to decolonize the academy.

In Louie et al. (2017), four Indigenous professors speak about their actions to decolonize at the University of Calgary, while Korteweg and Russell (2012) highlight decolonizing environmental education. Wilson (2004), a Dakota scholar, speaks about decolonizing the academy and her personal experience in creating a language program. Anderson et al. (2019) have four Indigenous scholars (Elena Flores Ruíz, Georgina Tuari Stewart, Madina Tlostanova, and Kim Anderson) share their truth and discuss embodied Indigenous approaches to re-narrating colonial institutions by questioning their processes, including Tlostanova speaking to decolonizing using a feminist lens. Internationally, the Sámi scholar Kuokkanen has dedicated much of her career to the academy and student experience issues. For example, she shares Indigenous knowledge with the academy (2007a, 2007b), describes the icy reception extended by the academy to Indigenous people (2008a, 2008b), and explores ignorance, benevolence, and imperialism in institutions (2010). The Māori scholar Stewart's contribution to Anderson et al. (2019) speaks to how the mere presence of Indigenous scholars in the academy Indigenizes that space. Asmar and Page (2009) interviewed 12 women and 11 men of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent regarding their role in Indigenizing the academy while teaching. More recent work (Asmar & Page, 2018) explores an Indigenous Australian partnership to transform institutions' degrees to be more in line with Indigenous ways of being. Finally, the Oklahoma Choctaw scholar Mihesuah (2003) reflects on the tensions between Indigenous feminism and the act of writing, reviewing, and reading using her lens as a point of Indigenization. All these Indigenous women scholars' work speaks to the toll that Indigenizing and decolonizing can have on those seeking to create a better space for future generations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined and reported on studies, scant as they are, exploring Métis-specific experiences in the academy. Because of that scarcity, the chapter presents existing research in a pan-Indigenous context, including Métis and Métis-specific studies that explore the experiences of Métis women in academic leadership, as faculty, and as graduate students. It provides the historical background of research conducted with Indigenous women and uncovers the comparative lack of Métis-specific research. To ensure thoroughness, material that employs “Indigenous” as an umbrella term for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit was included. It needs to be said that there is still a gap in the academic literature concerning Métis women’s experience in the academy.

Chapter 3 Using Métis-Specific Methodologies

It needs to be said that more Métis-specific methodologies that embody our cosmologies and epistemologies are urgently required. This chapter introduces the intertwining *Michif* methodology, which combines three Métis methodologies—*Keeoukaywin*, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*—under a *wahkootowin* theoretical framework— while isolating a Métis-specific research paradigm, epistemology, ontology, and axiology. A discussion of the principles of ethical Métis research in practice and the Métis R's of research are explored to demonstrate the intertwining Michif methodology in practice.

Acknowledging the diversity amongst the multiple nations and ways of knowing that shape Indigenous Studies as a discipline reveals the need for multiple expressions when speaking to knowledges and epistemologies (Million, 2013). The problematic nature of the very term “Indigenous” has been discussed by L. T. Smith (1999). It seeks to collectivize numerous Indigenous nations under one umbrella, even though Métis people have a distinct history, culture, and linguistic dialects; applying that term to the Métis is an erasure of these realities. By contrast, plurality is stressed throughout Indigenous Studies (McGregor et al., 2018; M. Walter & Andersen, 2013). Indigenous Studies and its approaches to “research [are] as complex and multiple as Indigenous people themselves” (Evans et al., 2014, p. 179). Métis-specific approaches are beginning to emerge through scholars such as Fiola (2021b), Gaudet (2018), Gaudry and Hancock (2012), and Poitras Pratt (2011, 2019). The complexities, multiplicity, and contention that pervade Métis scholarship as a discipline permit no absolutes.

“Walking in two worlds” describes the ability to thrive in both the Indigenous community and the academy (T. Fitzgerald, 2006; Herrera, 2011; Markides, 2018; Styres et al., 2010). However, as a Métis scholar, I find that the concept of only two worlds does not represent my truth. According to Henze and Vanett (1993), the two-world notion is a myth for all Indigenous scholars based on five assumptions: that internal uniformity exists, that all intend the same meaning in using a phrase, that a bicultural existence is possible, that there is an ability to excel in the best of both worlds, and that colonial institutions are capable of mediating both worlds. Métis scholars often recognize the flawed nature of the reasoning behind these five assumptions (Henze & Vanett, 1993) and question where we fit in this context, as we have long argued against mixedness in all facets of our lives (Anderson, 2014; Gaudry, 2018b; Giroux, 2018,

Martel, 2018). Scholars such as Richardson (2006) speak to Métis as the third space derived from postcolonial theory and explain for many the space we occupy in the academy, asserting us as distinct.

For decades, Indigenous scholars have championed Indigenous methodologies in the colonial institution (Kovach, 2009, 2017; Moreton-Robinson, 2017; L. T. Smith, 1999). This approach generalizes each nation's epistemologies, cosmologies, and ways of being seen as legitimate in the eyes of the academy or disguises the various nations' ways of knowing as a pan-Indigenous approach applicable to all nations. The Anishinaabe scholar L. B. Simpson (2011, 2017) brings a Nishnaabeg-specific theory to the academy; it depicts the power of articulating the specificity of one nation when speaking to epistemologies, ontologies, and axiology in scholarship. The existence of this scholarship may signal the end of an era in which only the Indigenous umbrella or general Indigenous scholarship was funded and supported. Additionally, Métis-specific statements receive pushback in my lived experience with letter-writing campaigns, complaints to the colonial institution by both First Nations and non-Indigenous people, and refusal to support Métis-specific programming experiences further explored in Forsythe (2022). For a time, Indigenous umbrella work was needed to create the space for individual scholars to assert their theories. However, we are now in a place where relying solely on colonial or Indigenous umbrella methodologies is not the right fit for all Métis scholars, making it the responsibility of individuals seeking to explore something critical to their community to craft a methodology for that purpose. Individual scholars from independent nations with their own cosmologies and epistemologies are free to write from their perspectives, adding to our knowledge through their diversity. Although this has been the practice for decades, it burdens scholars to expend this extra labor to answer research questions as they must also theorize methodologies. Métis scholars should have more access to literature written by Métis scholars about and for them. Non-Indigenous scholars use decades-old methods created and deployed through a colonial lens, simply following a multi-step process to actualize their tried, tested, and true methodologies. Dissertation guides such as *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing and Defending Your Dissertation* (Roberts, 2012) lay out a multi-step process to dissertation success for researchers not participating in Indigenous research. No such dissertation guide exists for scholars of Métis subjects, and it should.

Further, much Métis research speaks to the lack of Métis methodologies (Adese, 2020; Fiola, 2021b; Flaminio et al., 2020; A. LaVallee, 2014; Maud, 2021; R. Monchalin, 2019). In this chapter, Métis research paradigms, methodology, epistemology, ontology, axiology, and the R's of research from a Métis-specific lens are explored and contrasted with Métis realities as they pertain to this dissertation.

Métis Research Paradigm

With the dramatic shifts in the Indigenous paradigm over the past three decades, which most recently saw the emergence of an Indigenous nation- or culture-specific research, it is a natural progression for Métis researchers to find their own space. Research involving Métis histories, languages, and stories has long been narrated in the colonizer's voice (Gaudry & Hancock, 2012; Logan, 2008). Many scholars speaking about Métis realities view Métis as part of the larger Indigenous worldview (A. LaVallee et al., 2016), neglecting the specific Métis experiences of colonization. This homogenization served Métis scholars and prevented lateral violence in an era of a resurgence of educated Métis scholars, with many feeling that they could “it may be easy transpose Métis research into one of the popular Indigenous methods in order to suit the needs of the Métis” (Logan, 2008, p. 97). As Métis researchers entered the academy, creating and using pan-Indigenous approaches for Métis research became commonplace. During this time, lacking a Métis-specific research paradigm, Métis researchers benefited from Indigenous and mainstream methods (Logan, 2008) by what A. LaVallee et al. (2016) describe it as adapting and adopting Indigenous methodology. Unfortunately, years of this practice resulted in a significant issue; Logan (2008) notes that it was evident that the Métis were once again academically marginalized due to the proximal location to the mainstream and pan-Indigenous centers but also to the homogenization of losing oneself.

Intertwined Michif Methodology

As a researcher to enhancing a Métis-specific research paradigm built by other Métis scholars working on Métis-focused research is another step in my commitment to be part of the future of Métis scholarship. This is accomplished through the intertwined Michif methodology based in *wahkootowin* and actualized by combining *Keeoukaywin*, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*, three Métis methodologies theorized by Métis women.

The act of intertwining is inherently Métis, as witnessed through the creation of our language, Michif. The linguist who first documented the Michif language with the help of some of the grandmothers, Bakker (1997), describes the process of creating Michif, which has French nominal and verb stems combined with *nêhiyawêwin* nouns. Our language is an example of how two sufficiently different languages can create one in a Métis context where the “grammatical affixes cannot be separated from the verb stems” (p. 27). In the intertwined Michif methodology, the three methodologies are genetically related to each other, but like the language of Michif, the methodology does not fit into a family tree model; it does not have one parent but three, and it depends on all of them.

The intertwined Michif methodology combines three Métis methodologies—*Keeoukaywin*, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*—created by Métis women. Lindquist et al. (Under Review UMP) state that Métis women’s research methodologies are kinship-centered in all three intertwining methodologies used in this dissertation.

Keeoukaywin

Métis theorists Gaudet, Flaminio, and Dorion conceptualize *Keeoukaywin* or *Kiyokewin* for academic purposes as “the process of meeting over tea, listening to and talking with one another and understanding each other’s point of view” (Flaminio et al., 2020, p. 58) and as integral to Métis methodology. As an embodiment of Métisness derived from our ways of being, Gaudet (2018) clarifies that

Keeoukaywin was and still remains at the heart of how my mother, grandmothers, aunts, and sisters anchor a sense of belonging, a sense of self, and sense of responsibility to family, community, and land. The giving and receiving of this gift was made possible through visiting. (p. 51)

Keeoukaywin guides how the 13 grandmothers, aunts, and I sat within the formal constructs of this dissertation and described the time spent with some of them long before this study was even conceived. Through informal discussions over the years, we have built relationships and acted to ensure Métis inclusion in the academy. Keeping with my theoretical framework, *Keeoukaywin* is a “living expression of *wahkootowin*” (Lindquist et al., Under Review UMP, p. 157). This

methodology was used to realize the need for this dissertation. Its use began long before the project was envisioned, and from visiting many other reasons, this study emerged.

In re-centering Métis ways of knowing as a methodology, *Keeoukaywin* incorporates practicality and meaning (Gaudet, 2019). In an act meant to disrupt the erasure of Métis women's contributions to the breadth of knowledge in the academy, *Keeoukaywin*'s re-centering and authoritative nature allow for knowledge transfer that begins at the grassroots level (Gaudet, 2016). Kulchyski (2000) speaks to the ethical heart of Indigenous studies, which aligns with Flaminio et al.'s (2020) understanding of *Keeoukaywin* as an ethical way to honor our relationships in the community while visiting with Métis women.

Lii Taab di Michif

Keeoukaywin, as an extension of Farrell Racette's (2004) Métis kitchen table theory, demonstrates the interconnectedness of Métis thinking and methodology. Farrell Racette is cited in Lindquist et al. (Under Review UMP) as regarding it as her responsibility as an academic auntie to mentor the next generation at the kitchen table. Mattes and Farrell Racette (2019) toured together, speaking at a series of events that spoke to the Métis kitchen table methodology as a place to gather research by providing a space for discussion of Métis ways of being (Holmes et al., 2020). Like *wahkootowin*, *Keeoukaywin* ideally allows everyone's voices to be heard without power dynamics (Loyer & Loyer, 2021). It also positions women to reclaim space (Gaudet, 2019) while providing room to sit and drink tea (J. Ward et al., 2021).

Our relational obligation or responsibility (Gaudet, 2019) is seen in this intergenerational space-sharing that has occurred for more than two centuries. I recall sitting while my mother, auntie, and neighbors would chat about everything. My role in that space was to listen intently. Thus, I reflected on the sentiment that we must "listen deeply" (Gaudet, 2019, p. 60) to produce knowledge when visiting. The time spent with the grandmothers and aunties reminded me of those moments of my childhood—knowing my intergenerational place yet being empowered to ask questions and seek knowledge freely. Understanding my role in that space speaks to *Lii Taab di Michif*, as our roles are taught to us as children, which are "not scripted and asks something of us collectively and individually" (Gaudet et al., Under Review UMP, p. 185). This acknowledgment of how I was to be in that space adheres to Gaudet's (2019) assertion that *Keeoukaywin* "promotes self-recognition" (p. 55), for, although it was unspoken, I knew my

place as the researcher. The remembrance of my family home echoes Fiola's (2021a) view that reflexivity is a decolonial approach to our research—bringing our ways into the academy.

A further extension of the kitchen table theory theorized by Gaudet (2020) is *Lii Taab di Faam*, which translates to “Métis kitchen table.” Gaudet et al. (Under Review UMP) summarize their view as follows:

Lii Taab di Faam as the practice of sovereignty is guided by four principles: 1) learning from our female Métis Matriarchs; 2) reclaiming Métis women's kitchen table authority; 3) visiting with one another; and 4) appropriately sharing the gifts of what we know. (p. 170)

In visiting for the formal colonial data collection process, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif* was invoked by learning from our female Métis matriarchs. Grandmothers and aunties sat with me to reclaim Métis women's kitchen table authority, focused on our role as Métis women who are knowledge producers and theorists visiting with one another, sharing the gifts of what we know. This sharing is how we can continue building relationships and being present in our research (A. LaVallee et al., 2016). We sat together not in the hierarchy created in the academy of graduate students and junior or senior scholars but rather in a space where we both brought our knowledge; at times, they commented that I would know more about specific questions due to the nature of the study. In this space, we learned the particular roles and responsibilities assigned to us by *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, as it “is the simplest and most profound way to support the energy of Keeoukaywin, a way of being in relation that operationalizes our kinship ways” (Gaudet et al., Under Review UMP, p. 177).

Our sharing began with their invitations to sit with me, with my describing what I am called and where my people come from. To uphold the Métis traditions outlined by Gaudet et al. (Under Review UMP)—our grandparents engaged “in conversation by asking ‘Who do you belong to?’; ‘Who are you related to?’” (p. 177)—the interviews began with each grandmother sharing these essential aspects of her identity. This introduction was crucial to our ways of being but also an attempt to “situate ourselves by ensuring that our Métis kinship connections are respected and, in doing so, we unsettle the power structures of the academy” (Gaudet et al., Under Review UMP, p. 177).

Gathering with the women to share with me and the act of our listening to each other demonstrates our valuing of one another (Gaudet et al., 2020). Storytelling was invoked through a series of semi-structured questions, which prompted sharing stories about their career journeys.

Special considerations were taken for the grandmothers and aunts who would be sharing potentially triggering stories and may be vulnerable due to their age, health, and the impacts of colonialism and residential school systems. An essential element of this study's recruitment and consent involves recognizing colonialism's impacts on the Métis community and how it has uniquely impacted Métis women. Therefore, the grandmothers and aunts were treated with the utmost respect and compassion. As a Métis woman, it was essential to follow Métis protocols when approaching the women, such as explaining my family connection to the Métis Nation and where my Métis ancestors are from. All protocols are outlined in Appendix A and the Ethics approval of HE2021-1055 (Appendix B).

The interviews took place in January and February of 2022. After speaking to the grandmothers and aunts throughout the winter, it was decided that the interviews would be around a virtual kitchen table to protect all of them. Due to the potential exposure to COVID-19, a highly contagious virus flying to meet with all of the grandmothers and aunts would have put them at considerable risk. Maria Campbell cautioned, “now is not the time to gather” (Personal Communication, January 5th, 2022). We were heeding her words for the interviews with the grandmothers and aunts to be completed through the zoom platform. We have become accustomed to a continuation of virtual meetings since March 2020 in our community work for the semi-structured interviews we met online. The semi-structured questions at the virtual kitchen table reported to ethics were:

1. Are you Métis?
2. Where is your family from?
3. Are you a registered citizen of the Métis governing bodies?
4. Are you considered an Elder?
5. When and how did your journey with the academy start?
6. What did you choose to focus your research on, and why did you choose that topic?

7. Do you feel that your academic contributions have changed how people engage in work and intellectual discussions in your field?
8. What role did you play in building our understanding of Métisness in the academy?
9. What role did Métis women play in building our understandings of Métisness in the academy?
10. Do you think there is an erasure of Métis women within the academy?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the role of Métis women?
12. Do you have any advice for Métis women today who wants to contribute to the academy?
13. For only those who have waived anonymity, what name should we use when referring to you when writing up the research?
14. Do you consent to this interview transcript being shared with the MMF for its archives?

As our time together was guided by the conversation, the questions flowed in the same order for all 13 women but varied depending on their relevance to our conversation. The structure of the questions adhered to Flaminio et al.'s (2020) guidance that informal interviews are “grounded in a Métis-specific way of visiting and conversing” (p. 58). This approach allowed for free-flowing thought around their specific experiences inside or on the periphery of the academy. The questions also enabled the experiences of Métis women to be told from different positions by creating space for third-person storytelling and relating; Richardson (2004) emphasizes the importance of third-person storytelling as a space grounded in pride.

The relational grounding of research in Métis ways of being “mandates that when storytelling is used in research, the research is relationship driven” (Flaminio et al., 2020, p. 19). According to Gabel and LaVallee (Under Review UMP), relationship building before collecting stories through research is critical, which speaks to the work done in the community for years before embarking on this study. Sharing knowledge through stories nurtures that relationship and demonstrates interconnectedness (Flaminio et al., 2020; Gabel and LaVallee, Under Review UMP).

Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk

Honoring the reciprocal relationship in which we share experiences, stories, and family history is necessary for our community (A. LaVallee et al., 2016). In the collection of this sharing, the final methodology, *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk* (learning from listening and paying attention), I have built on listening methodologies described by Métis women such as A. LaVallee (2014, 2016 et al.) and Richardson (2004) who build on the Indigenous methodology that is known as storywork (Archibald, 2008), storytelling (Kovach, 2009), or re-storying (V. Bouvier, 2016). However, *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk* is specifically about the art of listening to story. Gabel and LaVallee (Under Review UMP) remind us that research “is within the context of a real person doing real research in a real community” (p. 64). In my adherence to *wahkootowin* principles of being a good relative, I must honor the grandmothers’ and aunties’ words.

Listening to the stories of these women as they invoke memories of their time in the academy serves as intergenerational transmission of the knowledges embedded in those stories (Roy, 2016). The give and take of telling and listening in sharing stories is a form of reciprocity (A. LaVallee et al., 2016) because storytelling is embedded in Métis culture and is historically a way of grandmothers and aunties transmitting information to younger generations (Richardson, 2004). Stories in the Métis context and the act of listening, according to R. Bouvier (Under Review UMP), “provided a pathway for renewing relationships with ourselves, our ancestors, and our environments” (p. 28). While sitting with the grandmothers and aunties at the virtual *Lii Taab di Michif*, I was immersed in their words, best described by A. LaVallee (2014) as listening “with my whole being, body, mind, and spirit” (p. 77). As a witness of those teachings, I share them with all who seek the knowledge to honor my commitment to the grandmothers and aunties beyond colonial research requirements or credentialing exercises. Gaudet et al. (Under Review UMP) state that stories demonstrate our wisdom while breathing life into our ways of being.

In communicating the stories shared with me, I follow the lead of Métis scholar Richardson (2004): “I will tell a story and let the reader take from it what is most revealed at the time” (p. 7). As a story listener, I heeded A. LaVallee’s (2014) caution that “it is up to the story listener to piece together parts of the story to learn the necessary lessons from the story to apply to one’s life” (p. 77). Knowing what I would be listening for or the themes that could arise from

my listening arose due to my inquiry as an act of sitting at the Métis kitchen table, I note sharing that is similar from different grandmothers and aunties by connecting them to what I have heard before. Gabel and LaVallee (Under Review UMP) state that our stories have defined us as Métis people, and this extends into the academy; the stories shared with me add to what I know, think, and feel (p. 64). Through my storytelling in this dissertation, I am acting as a good relative and living up to my responsibility in the act of reciprocity. *Wahkootowin*, or reciprocity, “is one of our responsibilities as learners and educators” (Ferland, Under Review UMP, p. 192). As my role of listener ends, I transition into a storyteller who understands the importance of each parent methodology and the interplay between each in the formulation of the intertwined Michif methodology in the development of this study as they exist under the *wahkootowin* theoretical framework.

Wâhkôhtowin, Wahkhohtowin, or Wahkootowin as Métis Theoretical Framework

Thanks to two of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, *wahkootowin*, as a Métis way of being, was awakened in the academy. Maria Campbell and Brenda Macdougall brought the Cree concept into the collective Métis consciousness. In discussing Cree ownership, Macdougall (2010) clarifies that its origins in the Cree language infuse the Métis philosophy with our “dominant maternal ancestry” (p. 7), just as some Michif dialects are ancestrally tied to Cree. *Wahkootowin* is inherited from Cree thought and is often equated with “all my relations” (Adese et al., 2017; Gaudry, 2014; Macdougall, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2017c). Macdougall (2010) states that this translation reduces the meaning to only literal relatives. From a Métis perspective, Campbell (2007) asserts that it meant the “whole creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and interconnected to all things within it” (p. 5). Adese (2016) highlights the work of Métis scholarship grandmother Macdougall on *wahkootowin* as the foundation of Métis ways of being, stating that it is a “world view that “privilege[s] relatedness to land, people (living, ancestral, and those to come), the spirit world, and creatures inhabiting the space, later describing it as based on a “broadly conceived sense of relatedness with all beings, human and non-human, living and dead, physical and spiritual” (Adese, 2020, p. 112).

Wahkootowin and the relationality principles of ways of being are taken up by the Cree scholars Wildcat (2018, 2020a, 2020b) and Lindberg (2018). I adopt this perspective to present this dissertation through Métis eyes. In research, *wahkootowin* dictates how we must behave; as

Campbell (2007) states, “from birth to death, our responsibilities and reciprocal obligations” (p. 5) must be upheld, including how we conduct ourselves in the academy. As a theoretical framework, *wahkootowin* dictates behavior while providing a clear worldview; as Macdougall (2010) puts it, *wahkootowin* is grounded in *nehiyaw tahp sinowin* or Cree philosophy, which depends on being related to one another and implies a strong embodied feeling of belonging to a Métis collectivity (Gaudry, 2014, p. 1). *Wahkootowin* requires researchers to “behave in culturally appropriate ways” (Macdougall, 2017a, p. 8) while ensuring that we look out for one another. My obligation to these women is to include their voices as my relatives and honor their words through my analysis.

The grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship examined in this dissertation upheld a responsibility through the concept of *wahkootowin* by agreeing to be included. As Maria Campbell, cited in Macdougall (2008), puts it: “Family [to our old people] meant sharing all things ... wealth, knowledge, happiness and pain” (p. 9). Each woman freely shared triumphs, obstacles, and advice for future generations. Flaminio et al. (2020) maintained that upholding *wahkootowin* means to “transmit Métis knowledge and identity to our younger Métis relatives” (p. 58), and each of the grandmothers and aunts answered the call to share their journeys. O’Reilly-Scanlon et al. (2004) state that within the confines of adhering to our obligations through *wahkootowin*, we must “go beyond personal benefit to a place of collective responsibility” (p. 41). In this dissertation, it is through both participant sharing and gifting advice that this obligation is met. My interest in telling the stories of the grandmothers and aunts goes far beyond any credential or publication gained through the process but is for the community, the grandmothers and aunts themselves, and future Métis postsecondary students. Although the grandmothers and aunts may personally benefit from having their work and contributions featured, any such gain is likely to be minimal, and their agreement to be involved in this dissertation stemmed from their sense of responsibility to those who walk behind them. As Gaudry (2014) reminds us, “*wahkootowin* also encouraged individuals with specific skills to contribute to the well-being of their relations” (p. 91). The words they have collectively shared as advice for future scholars can help ensure that all walk the path through the academy informed and with a sense of wellbeing.

As a Métis ontology that informs the theoretical framework of this dissertation, *wahkootowin* embodies the principle of kinship and relatedness grounded in reciprocity and

responsibility (Adese et al., 2017; Gaudry, 2014; Todd, 2018a), one in which we project our worldview and act in ways that personify being a good relative (Gaudry, 2014; Hancock, 2021; Macdougall, 2010). Throughout this dissertation, my treatment of the grandmothers' and aunts' words displays respect beyond simply aggregating the data, which would erase their contributions. Their journeys will be presented to ensure that their teachings are available for future generations. Macdougall (2006) reminds us that *wahkootowin* "is a theoretical and conceptual, rather than a literal construct that explains the Métis style of life" (p. 434). Macdougall (2008) takes the concept of family into a theoretical framework that guides all the decisions made and the treatment of knowledge collected due to my obligation to the women. I also adhere to Hancock (2021): "as researchers, we also have to find a way to live up to these ideals in current settings both in relationships with our ancestors ... and our relationships with our families and communities" (p. 57). As a Métis woman, I am privileging the work of Métis scholars, followed by the First Nations scholars with whom we are in relation, to ensure their words and theories are known in the academy while honoring my Elders and those who walked before me by shedding light on their accomplishments. By embarking on this study, I am honoring the generations before me and those that will come after by building into the interviews a moment to share advice for future generations on navigating the academy through the voices of Métis relatives with diverse backgrounds and lineages across the homeland.

Allowing the women profiled in this dissertation to self-identify with their ancestral ties to the Métis despite colonial divisions adheres to Campbell's (2007) plea for upholding our responsibilities despite the "accepted separation of our people into categories of Status, Non-status, Halfbreed, Métis and Bill C-31" (p. 5). This act of inclusion of all women and not only card-carrying Métis adheres to Vowel's (2022) claim that we must work to repair kinscapes through *wahkootowin* and restore our reciprocal obligations. By welcoming all to state their Métis family names and assert their belonging, I meet "the responsibility of being related to other beings as family, embodying collective obligations to one's relatives, as well as an ever-expanding network of kin" (Gaudry, 2014, p. 78). This sentiment is supported by Scudeler's (2016) declaration that *wahkootowin* is kinship beyond the immediate family or state of being, which branches off from Macdougall's (2008) conceptualization of *wahkootowin* as an obligation to all relatives—no matter how far removed—"to provide social, economic assistance and hospitality to one another" (p. 23). The women in the dissertation, through being honest

about their connections to the Métis, also embody Ball and Lar-son's (2021) assertion that *wahkootowin* "requires that we move forward in a good way and look out for one another as we would for a relative" (p. 208). The inclusion of their work as grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship, regardless of their current Métis political status, upholds our ways of being, decolonizes this research, and exemplifies Hancock's (2021) call to "do the work of determining our relationships and obligations" (p. 58) beyond those of the colonial state or contemporary Métis governance structures. It is assumed that all study participants answered interview questions openly and honestly. I honor their words and assertions of Métis ancestry regardless of whether they hold a Métis citizenship card from any of the five governing bodies. Due to the complexity of Métis identity and the fissures created primarily by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, and colonialism in general for all the women interviewed, their declaration of Métis ancestry and broad recognition of that ancestry among other Métis scholars are sufficient for their inclusion in this work. The mutual trust between me and the 13 women in asserting who we are and our purpose for creating this body of knowledge together is an act of *wahkootowin*.

Embarking on a relationship together through *wahkootowin* "means the act of being related to one another, implying a sense of relatedness, and the potential to make outsiders part of one's family" (Gaudry, 2014, p. 1). *Wahkootowin* "contextualizes how relationships were intended to work within Métis society by defining and classifying relationships, prescribing behavior patterns between relatives and non-relatives, and linking people and communities in a large, complex web of relationships" (Macdougall, 2010, p. 180).

The relationships built and the rediscovering or reconnecting with women in my kinship ties provide the basis for using *wahkootowin* in my research and how I walk. By building relationships, the Métis women I have had the privilege of working with have joined me in creating a network of interrelated responsibilities toward our advancement in the academy. I honor our relationship by using my voice and position to recognize their contributions and by providing publishing and presentation opportunities to the Métis women in my circle. As Flaminio et al. (2020) put it, "our *wahkootowin* obligations are deeper because we are in lifelong relationships with Métis relatives" (p. 57). Campbell (2007) writes that honoring and respecting those relationships is *wahkootowin*.

My future success will be built on my years of relationships with these women. My reputation as a "relation" precedes me in the community; I have strived to work for my

community in the best interest of those in the myriad web of kinship ties that blanket the country. In my dissertation, I rely on the grandmothers' and aunties' generous sharing of knowledge to incorporate the genealogy of Métis women's work in the academy through the *Wahkootowin* theoretical framework.

Métis Epistemology

The Métis scholar Emma LaRocque (2010) demands that Indigenous Studies scholars have “an Aboriginal epistemological ethos in addition to their Western academic training and credentials” (p. 11). Publications speaking to Métis-specific epistemologies, such as Flaminio et al. (2020), contribute to our understanding of them in practice. Adese (2020) asserts that centering Métis peoplehood beyond racialization is crucial and can be accomplished using Métis epistemologies in our practice. Van Bower (2020), whose work uses *Métissage*, states that defining Métis epistemologies is an “impossible task given the complexity of Métis identity and experience” (pp. 11–12). This complexity is witnessed through the diversity of the 13 grandmothers and aunties interviewed in this research, who are geographically, linguistically, and politically different—yet all are still Métis.

Despite the struggle to define Métis epistemology in this work, an attempt to answer the call from Elders stressed by Saunders and Dubois (2019), we must reconsider the stories we tell one another regarding Métis ways of knowing free from Eurocentric ways of knowing. As K. Bouvier (2016) asks, what can Métis stories reveal? Through sharing Métis experiences and stories at the kitchen table, we are practicing spiritual and emotional elements of Métis ways of knowing (Auger, 2019; Sanquins et al., 2013). Due to the recent release of works speaking to this development in academia and the fracture of the Indigenous umbrella methodologies serving as our only tools as Métis, this dissertation will adhere to Métis epistemology through the sharing of stories; that is how I walk the earth as a Métis woman, immersed in my community and ways of being and relying on the limited Métis-specific literature that articulates our reality.

Métis Ontology

The importance of ensuring that Métis ways of being, also referred to as Métis ontology, are recognized as distinct is highlighted by Supernant (2021), for we have a different perspective; our experience with colonization differs from First Nations and Inuit. Supernant

(2021) states that Métis ontology “centers geographies, mobility, daily life woven together as relation” (p. 369), creating peoplehood and our ways of being. The aspect of relationality grounds Bearskin et al.’s (2020) work: our ways of being are “rooted in relationships within ourselves, families, communities of the land” (p. 4). Adese (2021) speaks to Métis identities as a web of relationships tied to place. Adese (2014) describes Métis ways of being as a balance of reciprocity and relationality, guiding how we walk differently from the nations around us. She adds that “living in balance through understanding relationality and practicing reciprocity is key to Métis ways of being in the world” (Adese, 2014, p. 58). As a people, we create a “Métis collective consciousness” (Adese, 2016, p. 69) that is seen through Métis ways of being.

As a researcher born and raised in the heart of the homeland surrounded by Métis, my ties to this land and its people ground this research. The call to speak of the ways of being that honor the role Métis women play both in the academy and community connects to Adese’s (2020) review as a center of Métis ontology. Conducting Métis-specific research to uncover Métis women’s contributions and lived experiences recognizes the important words shared by Supernant (2021): “The Métis brings a different perspective to studies of the responses and consequences of colonialism” (p. 371). Métis ways of being need to be reflected and honored within our research.

Métis Axiology

Métis-specific axiology or ethical considerations of values in research emerge in the literature. After decades of Indigenous umbrella work, the awakening of our own research ways is beginning to lead to increased publications. Several critical factors in Métis axiology are mentioned in Vizina’s (2010) master’s thesis, which stipulates that research should be grounded in culture while contextualizing new knowledge. Hutchinson et al. (2014) emphasize the need to address “who is doing the gazing” (p. 10); with Métis, that will be reciprocal, while Leddy and Miller (2020) indicate that addressing one’s relationship to the land is paramount. Articulating collective understandings of Métis axiology through publication is in its infancy; however, critical conversations began in 2010 and led to the Principles of Ethical Métis Research adopted by the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO, 2010). Although developed for health research, they are applicable in other disciplines.

Research Approach Following the Principles of Ethical Métis Research

This section delves into how this dissertation considers the ethical principles outlined by the think tank of Métis researchers, students, and organizations at the NAHO's Métis Centre. I speak about how my values, in alignment with the principles of ethics, were actualized in my journey.

Principle 1: Reciprocal Relationships

Reciprocal relationships stand in accordance with *wahkootowin* (Adese et al., 2017; Todd, 2018a), demonstrating its importance to Métis ways of doing research ethically. According to NAHO (2010), relationships are crucial and established in three distinct phases: 1) involvement in the community, 2) earning community acceptance over time, and 3) and eventual community involvement following the development of a trusting relationship. I have followed this three-step process before issuing invitations to participate in this dissertation. However, it may be surprising for those not working in an Indigenous context that this process began years before I entered my Ph.D. program. My involvement with the Manitoba Métis community started in 2016 upon my return from earning two degrees at Simon Fraser University. While working on my master's degree at the University of Manitoba, I became involved in MMF politics, establishing a local at the University of Manitoba to ensure Métis citizens would have a voice in their government and that institution. Shortly after that, I took on the role of Métis Inclusion Coordinator at the University of Manitoba. My job description included advocating for Métis inclusion linguistically, culturally, academically, and politically.

With each pillar, I strove to bring opportunities to the Métis community to learn from those already in the academy, starting Métis Awareness Mondays both on campus and through social media campaigns. During this time, I met and worked with many Métis women from around the country, using my position as an opportunity to disseminate their work, promote their research publications, and strengthen their connections with the Manitoba Métis community. Over time, deep reciprocal bonds were developed, and our relationships flourished. By having the Métis Inclusion Coordinator role for over four years and openly and honestly sharing knowledge and opportunity with all who seek it freely, I have been accepted as a Métis woman who advocates for our community with successful programming and opportunities for

publication. My acceptance can be seen through edited collections (Forsythe & Markides, 2021, Under Review UMP; Markides & Forsythe, 2018, 2019). Hundreds of authors have trusted their work to me. In the most recent endeavor, *Mawachihitotaak: Let's Get Together*, over 113 presenters showcased their work at the inaugural University of Manitoba Métis symposium.

Further to this dissertation, when I reached out to the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship, they agreed to sit with me and speak about their journeys. I reached out to 21 Métis women from across the homeland, and 14 accepted the invitation to sit with me between January 9th and February 9th, 2022. Eventually, one had to step away due to health concerns. Those unable to participate for schedule reasons were profoundly apologetic, and I assured them of future opportunities to be featured in other iterations of this work. Due to our adherence to reciprocal relationships, those interviewed shared freely, knowing that I genuinely wanted for myself and for all Métis to hear these stories and that I would represent them honestly. According to NAHO (2010), the reciprocity of a partnership carries with it equal benefit and responsibility; this principle is enacted throughout this dissertation.

Principle 2: Respect For

In this principle, I consider the grandmothers and aunts collectively and individually respecting their autonomy, identity, gender, personal values, confidentiality, practice, and the NAHO protocols (2010). The “local community” refers to the MMF Winnipeg Region, whose ethics are overseen by the Manitoba Métis Community Research and Ethics Protocol division of the Office of President David Chartrand (see Appendix C). Scholars interested in engaging Métis citizens must request permission for research engagement from the MMF. Through this process, all the study participants and I, as the researcher, communicate with the nation. I indicated that the proposed research aimed to uncover and explore the role of Métis women in the academy through their publications through individual interviews and secondary literature exploration. I was stressing that as a Métis woman in this community, I was seeking only the MMF’s endorsement of the project and that I would provide copies of the final dissertation to the new MMF Heritage Centre upon its completion. The MMF granted me permission with only two amendments: I was to ask each participant if the MMF could have a copy of their transcripts to keep in their archives and was required to use the term “self-identifying Métis.” Understanding the diversity of Métis governing bodies, when asking each participant for permission to share

their transcripts, I offered to give their transcripts to their local representation if they preferred. These amendments demonstrate my respect for the governing bodies and the ethics protocol set up outside the colonial institutions by the MMF itself.

Individually, respect and the concept of consent outlined by NAHO (2010) were obtained through the colonial approach of individual consent forms, including the option to be anonymous. However, due to the nature of the work, all participants waived anonymity. With this development, all individuals' views on the community were solicited in interviews that respected each grandmother's positionality and asked how she identified to ensure the utmost respect. Commitment to this principle throughout the process includes the individual presentation of their words, free from aggregation and coding.

Principle 3: Safe and Inclusive Environments

In creating this research project, including all Métis voices, regardless of educational attainment, discipline, sexual orientation, and age, was employed to create a safe space for sharing many perspectives. This approach adheres to the NAHO (2010) principle of safe and inclusive environments for Métis research. Thirteen Métis women from nine disciplines with educational attainment ranging from high school diplomas to doctorates accepted the invitation to speak with me about themselves and the women around them in the academy. In the range of women interviewed, many would be considered young for grandmothers and aunties, while others accept the term Elder as a moniker. To continue my commitment to including Métis voices, the deliberate inclusion of those who do not identify as cisgender heterosexual females resulted in having women who identify differently. A balance of community grassroots contributors and academics was sought, resulting in a range of women from different walks of life.

Principle 4: Diversity

In honoring the diversity of the Métis community, the 13 Métis women interviewed who were born throughout the homeland were invited to participate. All were provided space to express their roots in the Métis homeland and where they grew up. In addition, women from all

five governing bodies under the MNC before 2021³ were deliberately invited: Métis Nation British Columbia, Métis Nation Alberta, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, MMF, and Métis Nation Ontario. As a member of the Métis community with many women in my academic kinship ties, invitations were sent to 21 women with differing ties to the governing bodies. Their affiliations are written in past publications and shared in the interview process. In addition, Métis women with no affiliation to the current political system of Métis or with Indian or Treaty Status who also have ties to the historic Métis nation were invited to participate to ensure diversity, in accordance with principle four.

Due to the diversity of experiences, the interviews of the grandmothers and aunts were semi-structured; the questions varied, with follow-ups to learn more about each woman's contributions to the academy. All the grandmothers and aunts were provided the opportunity to describe their journeys by choosing their own timeline after situating us in their reality in space and time.

Principle 5: What Research Should Be

According to NAHO (2010), this principle is paramount in speaking to the specific outcome required for the research to be ethical. The think tank that created the Principles of Ethical Métis Research outlined that research must be relevant, be identified by the community as a need, accurately report the words gathered, benefit all reciprocally, be responsible in accreditation, and protect Métis knowledge. This principle aligns with the R's of research discussed below, but each study request is addressed to uphold my commitment to Métis-specific ethics.

To follow NAHO (2010) principles regarding accurately reporting the wisdom from the community in the treatment of the stories that have been shared with me, the individuality of each woman's journey remains intact in sharing, followed by brief moments of bringing in the secondary literature.

As one researcher discussed in NAHO (2010), the benefit is beyond credentialing or publication for me as a Métis woman scholar. The words shared with future generations are beyond any benefit the women in this study received. The process of recognizing their

³ The MMF withdrew from the MNC September 29, 2021, following a resolution at the MMF Annual General Assembly in 2019 due to disagreements regarding citizenship of those in the east.

contributions is carried out in chapter 4, highlighting their works and illuminating how their thoughts have influenced other scholars to further their theories. It is my attempt at reciprocity as a researcher. This project began with the intention of recording the legacies of this generation, and it was with this intention that all decisions in its development were made.

The research design is deeply embedded in safeguarding Métis knowledge and ensuring responsible accreditation. The words taken from the personal journeys of Métis women are treated with respect. It is essential to convey each grandmother's and auntie's sentiments in retelling her experiences in the academy and respective field(s). Exercising caution not to interject in hopes of meeting preconceived notions of erasure is critical to this study because conventional misunderstandings of feminist concepts, including voices, were paramount, as I was uncomfortable speaking for them. This study reports what they have shared without interference by presenting direct quotes from the women.

Principle 6: Métis Context

As a Red River Métis raised as a Métis with ties to the dispossessed Métis community of Rooster Town and an elected member of an MMF local executive, I am all too aware of the relevant history spoken of in principle six, which states, “understand history, values, & knowledge; advance Métis methodology & include Métis experts; straddle worldviews; & insider-outsider perspective” (NAHO, 2010, p. 1). Understanding Métis history, values, and knowledge was crucial in shaping the research process and design. My years of experience teaching Métis histories, my service as a Métis Inclusion Coordinator, and my knowledge of Métis contexts and histories have helped me navigate the political and geographic complexities that NAHO (2010) cautions can arise. However, this knowledge I carry has encouraged diversity and inclusion while accepting the fluidity of Métis consciousness. I have seen the diversity of women on the political, geographic, disciplinary, and educational attainment spectra who, as grandmothers and aunties, have raised our awareness of Métisness.

Although the six principles outlined by Métis researchers, students, and organizations are not a set of “enforceable rules that must be followed” (NAHO, 2010, p. 1), this research study and its design adhere carefully to each one. Poitras Pratt (2019) discusses the principles in-depth and has informed my process of articulating my own experience in developing this project.

The Métis R's of Research

Isolating Métis voices who have used or theorized about the R's of research from an Indigenous umbrella focus, such as Gaudry's (2011, 2015) addition of resurgence to our understanding of how to do research appropriately, is not the focus of this section. Instead, it concerns Métis scholars who have isolated Métis ways forward for Métis-specific analyses such as this dissertation. In this effort, responsibility, relationship, reciprocity, relevance, respect, and resurgence from a Métis-specific lens are discussed using the words of other Métis scholars' views of Métis-focused research and studies.

Responsibility

Responsibility beyond *wahkootowin* discussed in Métis-focused publications involves the Métis kinship responsibilities of researchers to individuals and communities (Flaminio et al., 2020; Macdougall, 2010). At the same time, recognizing our role as Métis scholars is our responsibility to one another (Gaudry, 2015; Poitras Pratt, 2019) while upholding the ethical principles and acknowledging the commitment to work ethically in the community (A. LaVallee et al., 2016). Despite the constraints of the colonial institution, we need to balance that responsibility to the community (Fletcher et al., 2017) and advocate for the needs of our communities (Hancock, 2021). Through my work knowing and embodying the words of Métis scholars before me, I have heeded them in the design and implementation of this research study, ensuring that my responsibility to the legacy of these women's contributions and words is upheld.

Relationship

According to Richardson (2006), a relationship is ingrained into the very foundation of who we are as Métis: "Métis identity is created through a process of social interactions and dialogic relationships" (p. 57). Métis research must be grounded in relationships (Gaudet, 2019; Gaudry & Hancock, 2012), a view supported by Adese's (2014) statement that "relationships are central to Métis ways of being" (p. 64). In keeping with our ways of being, our research must include creating and maintaining relationships with those we enter into research with (Auger, 2021a). A. LaVallee et al. (2016) stress that our relationship must be maintained beyond a given study because "we have a duty to uphold this kinship by maintaining contact with the community

and helping if we are called upon” (p. 172). The interviews for this dissertation began and ended with off-camera visiting, whether I had known the participant for a long time or we had just met. Maintaining ties with all 13 women is paramount. My obligation to these women extends into all facets of life, beyond the academy and into the community.

Reciprocity

Although also documented in *wahkootowin*, reciprocity has been discussed by other Métis scholars outside that theoretical framework, methodology, and philosophy as integral to Métis-focused research. In the Métis research community, reciprocity can take many forms, including sharing oneself, gifts, and giving back to the community. Reciprocity in any form is “integral to research” (A. LaVallee et al., 2016, p. 172), critical in forming relationality because it is at the heart of our peoplehood (Adese, 2014, 2020), and embedded in Métis ethics (Fiola, 2021b). According to A. LaVallee et al. (2016), reciprocity involves “sharing stories, life experiences, events, and family history with individuals involved in the research—the act of storytelling and story listening” (p. 172; A. LaVallee, 2014, p. 75). The act of sharing the research journey and experiences is featured in Adese (2014): “as a respect for their sharing, I think it is important to enter into a relationship with them and their words” by sharing one’s self (p. 51). Gaudet (2019) speaks to the action of visiting as an opportunity to exchange knowledge, ideas, and emotions. During our visits before and after the research interviews, I shared my experiences leading to this inquiry along with my journey, especially as the Métis Inclusion Coordinator, with the women and answered any questions they posed.

Scholars like Gaudet et al. (2020) speak to reciprocity as gifting tobacco to participants as an act of continuing a relationship. Giving as reciprocity after consultation with Elders in 2017 revealed that in the Manitoba Métis community, it is preferred to gift tea over tobacco; therefore, all subsequent research projects I have conducted shared this way. In this project, tea and beadwork were sent to all participants.

Oosman (2012) states that respecting reciprocity is carried out by returning knowledge to the community through knowledge dissemination. After carefully considering the places and spaces where their stories need to be heard, I crafted a multi-faceted research dissemination strategy. It will include conference presentations such as the *Mawachihitotaak: Let’s Get Together Métis* symposium in May 2022 and others, a chapter in an upcoming book on Métis

women's contributions to the academy published by the University of Manitoba Press, and a monograph dedicated to their work and stories. The possibility of a digital museum dedicated to a hundred Métis women whose work has changed our ways of knowing is also being explored. Negotiations to present to the MMF Infinity Women's Secretariat during their leadership seminar or at the MMF's Annual General Assembly are underway to adhere to the responsibility to engage outside the academy, as Hancock suggests (2021). For each grandmother of Métis scholarship currently working at an institution, I will contact their communications team to arrange a notice on their institutional communications' online platforms or newsletters. Reciprocity as dissemination is delicate, as it is impossible without the researcher engaging in self-promotion. However, when that sharing comes from *wahkootowin* and intending to act as a good relative, it can also be understood as a motivation to preserve these women's legacies.

Respect

With Gaudet et al. (2020) urging that gifts are a sign of respect as much as examples of reciprocity and A. LaVallee et al.'s (2016) assertion that respect develops through relationships, all the R's with in-depth research become a circular conversation of one intertwining with the others, due to the interconnectedness of Métis ways of being. Respect is a non-verbal agreement that is concluded through trust (A. LaVallee et al., 2016) that is also demonstrated through university ethics consent forms which, according to Roy (2016), establish trust and respect for the words shared with researchers. In my study, I have walked alongside many grandmothers and aunts for years, and we have developed a relationship of trust. There is a non-verbal agreement to treat their words respectfully and employ formal checks and balances. Each received a consent form and the research instrument with all semi-structured questions beforehand, along with the opportunity for review at the beginning of our interview session. Another assumption is that all participants can remember their perceptions and experiences of their time in the academy and publishing. Therefore, an opportunity to add to their recollections, once transcribed, was also afforded to all participants to ensure they could include everything that they could recall. After being recorded, all the recordings transcribed by a transcriptionist were sent to the grandmothers and aunts for examination before any analysis of their stories was undertaken. Thus, informal and formal actions were taken before beginning work to share their journeys in this dissertation.

Regarding our cosmology or spirituality, respect is seen as interconnection and “commitment to being non-hierarchical” (Fiola, 2021b, p. 178). As in practice with visiting the community, both researcher and participant approached the interview as Métis women coming to chat and share stories of their work. Connecting over our common pursuit to bring Métisness into the academy and share the lived realities of our people appropriately, we met without colonial hierarchical interference: two women meeting for tea.

Respect in research requires acknowledging Métis diversity (Gaudet et al., 2020), which is certainly true of the women highlighted in this study; they are in different walks of life and have a wide range of educational backgrounds, birthplaces, and experiences in the colonial state in terms of recognized identity. The values of respect-centered beliefs while grounding the journey researchers and participants embark on together (LaFrance, 2021) are emulated in this study, as I show respect for them and their contributions. My actions and conduct throughout the process of story gathering and highlighting their journeys demonstrate my commitment to teachings that “allow us to have clarity, compassion, respect, and honesty with those around us” (A. LaVallee et al., 2016, p. 171).

Relevance

Like all Indigenous research, relevance to the community is critical. Chapter 2 refers to the need for Métis-specific or focused research around Métis women and their experiences in the academy. Through my lived experiences and time in my Métis community, speaking of these women and their accomplishments while they are still with us is not merely a matter of fulfilling my desire to recognize them. The third edition of *Women of the Métis Nation* (Barkwell et al., 2019) highlights hundreds of women, including some of the grandmothers and aunties profiled here, and remains the most comprehensive recognition of the accomplishments of Métis women. However, it features only a few paragraphs and lacks the inclusion of their voices; the women featured in the Barkwell et al. (2019) collection was not consulted.

Because it is not an academic work, the collection is not held by university libraries, including those at the University of Manitoba or the University of Winnipeg. As this is one of the only publicly available pieces on Métis women and does not include many academics, there is a need in the community to have these women’s stories told. There is also the institutional need to

celebrate the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship and bring their journeys to current and future Métis students, staff, and faculty to give them a sense of belonging in the academy.

Resurgence

Inspired by Gaudry's (2015) work in research highlighting resurgence, this study attempts to capture the contributions of the 13 Métis women in this project and their lived experiences as resistance by documenting it over the last 40 years. The concept of a resurgence in the Métis community is ingrained in our survival; however, scholarly work has only begun to address this reality over the past two decades. Devine (2000) cites the rise of Métis consciousness as leading to a Métis resurgence in the younger generation. Supernant (2018) attributes this awakening to the increased assertion of our rights as Métis people, aligning with Fiola's (2021a) hypothesis that the Métis people themselves will ultimately play an essential role in their resurgence. Giroux (2016, 2018) attributes the dynamism of the Métis collectivity politically, academically, and musically to a resurgence that speaks against multiculturalism, an aspect that the present study hopes to emphasize by disseminating the words of Métis women, Métis scholars, and Métis-focused research. Finally, according to Auger (2021a, 2021b), our unwavering resilience has resulted in a resurgence of Métis connectedness among Métis academics and the wider community.

Gaudry (2021) states that Métis scholarship provides a "more accurate and empowering narrative of Métis survivance and resurgence" (p. 220). The work by Métis scholars is noted by Carrière and Richardson (2017), who observes that Métis people are vocal in the literature. Métis scholars such as A. Hanson (2016) say that "resurgence work" gives their research "purpose" (p. 7), a sentiment that fuels this study's effort to bring to light the work of the grandmothers and aunties. Voth (2020) states that due to the resurgence, we are beginning to hear the voices of politically marginalized Métis women. Still, this study aims to ensure that Métis women are recognized for their commitment to the community and the Métis understanding of Métisness. Following a 2018 symposium, *Ways of Knowing: Promising New Directions for Métis Research: Promoting Métis-Focused Scholarship*, there was talk of a future edited collection on Métis-specific or Métis-focused research methodologies and theoretical perspectives, but no publication has yet appeared.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter addresses the need for Métis-specific methodologies that embody our cosmologies and epistemologies while introducing the intertwining Michif methodology, which combines three Métis methodologies—1) *Keeoukaywin*, 2) *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and 3) *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*—under a *wahkootowin* theoretical framework, the highlight of Métis-specific scholarship in a research paradigm, epistemology, ontology, and axiology. The chapter contains an exploration of the Métis R's of research and a discussion of the principles of ethical Métis research in practice demonstrating the intertwining Michif methodology in practice and also expresses that it needs to be said that we require Métis-specific methodologies that embody our cosmologies and epistemologies for future scholars to use and build up.

Chapter 4 Introductions of the 13 Grandmothers and Aunties and Their Publications

It needs to be said that despite attempted erasures, these 13 grandmothers and aunties have prevailed, successfully publishing their knowledge for decades. In this chapter, we explore the grandmothers' and aunties' impact on shaping our understanding of Métisness through their published works. To combat the academic literature's lack of acknowledgment of Métis women's scholarship and raise our general awareness of its existence, this chapter serves as comprehensive documentation of the contributions to the academy of each of the 13 Métis women included in this study.

The women in this study were born between 1949 and 1969 and contributed to our understanding of Métisness through their publications; they are considered grandmothers and aunties in accordance with Métis ways of being, knowing, and doing through *wahkootowin*. Their role as the first generation of the four discussed as waves in the academy situates them as grandmothers and aunties. Campbell (2007) conveys the role of grandmothers as our first teachers. According to Iseke and Desmoulins (2011), the grandmothers “reflect Métis sensibilities and move beyond the roles of child rearing and carrying families” (p. 24). This reality is true in the sense that the women in this dissertation do not all have children but have all birthed ways of thinking about the Métis. The words shared by the 13 Métis women adhere to Iseke and Desmoulins's (2011) assertion that grandmothers share narratives as community historians expressing the confidence and pride of our people vital to those who walk behind. Flaminio et al. (2020) and Hodgson-Smith and Kermaal (2016) speak to the role of grandmothers in *wahkootowin* in transmitting knowledge. Speaking of the role of grandmothers in sharing their stories connects to the aims of this dissertation. Welsh (1991) describes the power of grandmothers' words: “affirmation of the importance of women's experience; affirmation of strength, courage, resilience of our grandmothers; affirmation of our ability to speak both of our past and our present to make our voices heard” (p. 24).

In hearing the experiences of our grandmothers and aunties in the academy and the long history shared by Macdougall (2017a) of being taught about Métis identity, traditions, and cultural practices being sustained and nurtured by their stories. We continue Métis ways of being through *wahkootowin*. Our grandmothers are of the utmost importance, and their words are revered as they teach us how to be (Anderson, 2011; Ferreira et al., 2021; Iseke, 2009; Iseke &

Desmoulins, 2011). Through these stories, we will know how to survive and thrive in the academy. R. Monchalin (2019) shared that uncovering our ways of being includes honoring our grandmothers and heeding their words. As Métis women enter the academy at higher rates, we must consider Anderson's (2011) caution that "no nation ever existed without the fortitude of our grandmothers, and all of our teachings have to somehow be recovered" (p. 3). This need extends into the academy; the grandmothers and aunts who started in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are still working in the academy today and carry stories that will assist those who walk behind them. Not only do we learn from our grandmothers' concepts of beading, hunting, and food sustenance, as discussed by Flaminio et al. (2020), but we also learn about oppression and resistance from our grandmothers, according to Campbell (1973), who shared instances of that learning from her *Cheechum* (grandmother).

The grandmothers and aunts shared three themes of erasure that threatened to silence their work: 1) colonial attempts to erase the Métis can be found in education curricula and a lack of teacher training, racism, and whiteness, which culminated in Métis people feeling the pressure to hide in plain sight; 2) invisibility through a lack of scholarly acknowledgment, acceptable credentials, recognition, and awareness of one another's existence, all of which caused the grandmothers and aunts to feel unseen and appreciated; and 3) colonial power structures continue to silence Métis women by supporting Indigenous umbrella rather than Métis-specific publishing and withholding resources for Métis-specific research.

Despite these erasures, all the grandmothers and aunts contributed significantly to understanding Métis identity, culture, language, and history. Each has contributed outside their scholarly publications and consequent citations; however, their involvement with Métis and institutional governance, teaching and curricula, and the community are only briefly noted due to space constraints. Instead, a mention of scholars' works and some of the scholars who cite their words are included.

Contributions of the Grandmothers and Aunts of Métis Scholarship

The women are presented in order of birth from 1949 to 1969. As many of the grandmothers and aunts have contributed to numerous disciplines, following thematic or traditional disciplinary boundaries would not sufficiently convey the importance of their accomplishments.

Emma LaRocque

Emma LaRocque was born in 1949 into a Cree-speaking Métis family in northeastern Alberta, between Edmonton and Fort McMurray. Her family names are Desjarlais, LaVallee, Quintal, Berland, Bourque, and LaRocque. She could not start school until the age of nine due to “no public schools available to Métis ... until the late 1940s” in her community, and when she did, it was a two-mile walk to a one-room school house. For middle school, LaRocque had to travel to Anzac School, a dormitory run by Mennonites, and spent high school in a private right-wing Christian school in southern Alberta. This course led to higher education immediately after high school; she attended Goshen College in Indiana and earned a Rockefeller Fellowship to study theology at Princeton University, where she completed her first master’s. At the University of Manitoba, she completed her second master’s (in history) and an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in history, English, and gender studies in 1999.

For over 40 years, she has been a significant academic presence at the University of Manitoba, furthering Métis scholarship in myriad ways. She began teaching the Introduction to Native Studies course in 1977 when Raoul McKay (Celeste McKay’s father) approached her and asked if she would teach it. LaRocque credits him with helping her find her calling. LaRocque taught the introduction course for over 23 years.

Her first publication, *Defeathering the Indian* (1975), assessed the classroom experience of Indigenous people in the 1970s and spoke of her experience in both K–12 and postsecondary contexts. In many respects, that text could also describe the postsecondary climate in the 2020s. The book resulted from a report created in 1974 for the Alberta Department of Education, and it was her supervisor took it to a publisher without her knowing. According to LaRocque, “before I knew it, I received a pile of books called *Defeathering*.” This summer position resulted in a publication and a fascination with colonial representation, which can be seen throughout LaRocque’s career, taking archival and popular culture into her research to expose stereotypes about and misrepresenting Indigenous people.

LaRocque’s work through the 1980s spoke to Indigenous literature (1984) and Métis identity (1986a). In the following decade, LaRocque branched out and began to write about racism (1990e, 1991), violence in the community (1994b), and the colonization of women scholars (1996). By the 2000s, LaRocque had been researching for 25 years and continued to

expand her repertoire, tackling Aboriginal epistemology (2001a), feminism (2007), and—returning to concepts explored in her earlier research—identity (2001b), stereotypes (2004), and resistance (2010). In the last decade, she has contributed to Métis and Indigenous Studies with her reflections on resistance writing and teaching (2015b) and her contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature* (2016a).

Given LaRocque’s more than 90 publications, there is a need to delve into her work, her focus areas, and how her insights have been used in later academic work. In 1999, LaRocque completed her dissertation, *Native Writers Resisting Colonizing Practices in Canadian Historiography and Literature*, which interrogated Indigenous and settler depictions of Indigenous people and spoke to the work of numerous Indigenous writers resisting the traditional narrative through their publications. In her contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature* (2016b), LaRocque points to many examples of Métis literature: poetry, dramas, stories, and autobiographies. In its discussion of the various approaches to Métis scholarship, this section highlights the works of playwrights, authors, and poets who create the works that are the basis of many scholars’ approaches to Métis scholarship. LaRocque (2016c) asserts that avoiding identity in the treatment of Métis literature is impossible and thus necessary because of the complexities of Métis reality.

In addition to explorations of Métis perspectives, LaRocque has also written works that broadly support the field of Indigenous Studies. LaRocque published an Indigenous literature critique in 1983, speaking about Métis representation in English Canadian literature. LaRocque (1993) outlines the three conventional colonial approaches to Indigenous people through literature, influencing numerous academics who used the social problems criticized in the original piece to highlight colonial-settler issues (Cannon, 2012; Hudson, 1997; McHugh & Kowalski, 2011). LaRocque (2002, 2016b) also reflected on the act of teaching, which requires the acknowledgment of the harm done by imperialism, the need to decolonize, and the work already underway in Indigenous literature classes. LaRocque (2002) has been cited in works exploring the inclusion of Indigenous literature in K–12 and postsecondary education by Cote-Meek (2010), Eigenbrod (2010), Kim et al. (2012), and most recently, Brunette-Debassige and Wakeham (2020). LaRocque (2015a) states that “Native Studies, then, challenges dominant and hegemonic knowledge theories” (p. 9). LaRocque has dedicated four decades to teaching Indigenous Studies, so her core role has always been as an educator.

LaRocque has been invited to contribute to or edit several collections throughout her career, which has shifted the narrative in the collective understanding of Indigenous literature. An edited collection by Depasquale et al. (2009) features 25 emerging and established scholars, including another grandmother of Métis scholarship, creating space for emerging scholars. LaRocque (2009a) highlights Indigenous writers' cultural agency and accomplishments in a survey that outlined the shifting of narratives due to First Nations and Métis authors. Over the past 40 years, LaRocque has published a running commentary on the state of Indigenous literature; the popular language shifted from terms such as Native (1993) to Aboriginal (2009) to Indigenous (2015b, 2016d).

LaRocque's work has also been featured in volumes highlighting the Indigenous feminist call for decolonization; Green's (2007, 2017) edited collections interrogate colonial oppression and include a chapter by LaRocque (2007, 2017a). Written entirely by women, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Green, 2007, 2017) magnifies the need for intersectionality in the women's and gender studies canons while clarifying the pitfalls of patriarchy for Indigenous thought.

LaRocque (1996) speaks to the toll colonization has taken on Indigenous women generally and illuminates the personal experience of Indigenous women scholars. The ground-breaking pieces put into words what many in the academy felt but seldom shared publicly. Her views were then taken up in a series of publications over the next two decades in understanding Indigenous women concerning the state (Cairns, 2011), creating holistic frameworks (Kenny et al., 2004), survival (Anderson and Lawrence., 2012), feminism (St. Denis, 2013a), and work (McCallum, 2014b). LaRocque has been prolific as a scholar, but she also has a substantial catalogue of poetry published in the 1980s. She began formally attending poetry readings at the 1983 Women at Work conference; as the years passed, LaRocque was invited to multiple Winnipeg conferences, art galleries, and libraries to read her poems. Over the past 30 years, LaRocque has published her poetry in multiple journals and collections.

LaRocque's numerous publications and reflections speak to her experience as a Métis poet decades ago and the discrimination she experienced in receiving rejection letters for being viewed as inauthentic or "not Indian enough!" (LaRocque, 2016c, p. 51). One specific account of this experience emerges in "Here are our voices—Who will hear?" (1990c), which appeared in 1990 and was reprinted and heralded as a hallmark of contemporary Indigenous writing by

Macfarlane and Ruffo in 2015. LaRocque (2009) alludes to her poetry but is humble enough not to include her contributions to the field in this piece, reflecting on Indigenous women's writing.

For over 40 years, LaRocque's poetry has been published and republished. For example, the poems "Nostalgia" (1990d) and "Progress" (1990d) first appeared in *Canadian Literature Quarterly* in 1990 and were reprinted in 2016, when Tracie (2016) analyzed them, along with "Geese Over the City," (1990a). Tracie pays tribute to LaRocque's guidance and clarification on the treatment of Indigenous poetry while relying heavily on her work and critiques throughout the collection. "Geese Over the City" can also be found in English in two edited collections (Grant, 1990; Tracie, 2016) and has been translated into German, along with "Brown Sister" and "Eulogy for Priscilla" by H. Lutz (1992).

"Uniform of the Dispossessed," a LaRocque poem (1990f) that speaks to the remembering of our people's dispossession and feelings of helplessness, was first published in Perreault and Vance's (1991) collection and reprinted in Brooks's (2014) anthology. Other poems, such as "Long Way From Home" (1994a, 2001c, 2013b, 2017c), speak to how far removed Indigenous academics are from their community and ways of being in the academy. The poem was published in the following collections: Oakes et al. (2000) and Green (2017); it was reprinted in an academic journal in 2013. In addition, LaRocque (2010) includes excerpts of the poem in her postscript "Decolonizing Postcolonials," which reflects on the work of Indigenous scholars in the academy and insists on the need for more.

Another of LaRocque's poems, "An Evening Walk" (1986b), was first published in *Prairie Fire* and was used as an educational device for grade eight Language Arts in Barlow-Kedves (1999); it depicts a walk with her nephew and his puppy. The piece uses several literary devices to incorporate imagery for the reader, making it no surprise that it is used in classes throughout Canada. Finally, LaRocque's "My Hometown Northern Canada South Africa" (1992, 2017b) addresses the parallels between the oppressed under the colonial rule on two continents.

Although LaRocque has yet to release a collection of poetry, the impact of her words has still been felt. Nine of LaRocque's poems are in the *Anthology of Native Poetry in Canada* (1998), and 13 are in *Writing The Circle: Women of Western Canada An Anthology* (1991). More recently, three of LaRocque's poems appear in *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* (2012).

LaRocque and her contributions to the academy offer robust support for today's Métis by being in and surviving the colonial experience. LaRocque continues to teach, research, and contribute to the overall understanding of the Métis experience. She is an example of a Métis woman who, despite the patriarchy, has thrived in the academy.

Rita Bouvier

A sixth-generation Métis born and raised in 1950 in Sakitawak (Île-à-la-Crosse) in northern Saskatchewan and raised by her grandparents, Bouvier became a poet, educator, and scholar (Barkwell, 2013). Her family names are LeFleur, Gardiner, Daigneault, Morin, Paquette, Bouvier, and her grandfather Lavoie, who was accepted by the community. Bouvier had to leave Île-à-la-Crosse when she was 13 but has kept strong ties to the land and her family. Bouvier became the director of the Gabriel Dumont Institute's (GDI's) Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) in the 1980s in Saskatoon and began her mission to challenge the history being taught in schools. Verna St. Denis and Rita Bouvier co-wrote one of the "first anti-racist courses developed at the University of Saskatchewan."

Since her master's thesis *Specialized Training in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program: A Case Study* (1984), Rita Bouvier has published several articles on educational theory and practice, three poetry collections, and children's literature like "dear tap, c/o St Peter" (2006) and *Better that Way* (2007), showing other scholars what is possible.

In the 1990s, Métis educators like Bouvier fell under the Indigenous education umbrella, seeking impact for all learners. It was during this time that Bouvier began to publish with two other Indigenous women, Verna St. Denis (Cree-Métis) and Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaw), in two projects: *Okiskinamakewak, Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan's Publicly Funded Schools: Responding to the Flux* (1998). The work has profoundly impacted our understanding of the Indigenous experience in the Saskatchewan school system and stemmed from their trying to challenge what they saw. This success spurred future collaborations such as St. Denis et al. (2008), which updates the experiences of Indigenous educators, and Bouvier et al. (2016), which delves into Indigenous knowledge to valorize lifelong learning.

As a leader in spreading the experience of Indigenous educators, Bouvier co-edited *Resting Lightly on Mother Earth: The Aboriginal Experience in Urban Educational Settings* (A. Ward & R. Bouvier, 2001). The collection has attracted the attention of scholars for the past two decades

in works revolving around the Indigenous perspective (Martin, 2011), transformation in education (Donovan, 2011), healing (Goforth, 2007), oral history (Friesen et al., 2007), and filmmaking (Riecken et al., 2006).

Bouvier continued to publish throughout the first decade of this century, co-authoring a chapter (R. Bouvier & Karlenzig, 2006) on accountability and educational sovereignty; dozens of scholars have relied on this text to grapple with the changes that the educational system must undergo to successfully impact the lives of learners (Bopp et al., 2017; Cottrell et al., 2012; Johnson, 2011; Lamb & Godlewska, 2021; Pelletier et al., 2013). This influence on Indigenous educational theory and activism continued with her (2010) depiction of a vision of the potential for Indigenous learners cited in *Teaching Each Other: Nehinuw Concepts and Indigenous Pedagogies* (Goulet & Goulet, 2014), which is used in education classes throughout Canada. Her decades of work seeking to change the reality of Indigenous students in the public health system have led to numerous citations in other scholars' work.

Bouvier worked on The Canadian Council on Learning's (CCL) Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) models of learning in collaboration with the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, an asset used throughout K–12 education to this day. She continued work reporting to the CCL on ground-breaking Indigenous successes with work grounded in gaps. According to Bouvier, opportunities to work with the CCL ended due to governmental shifts and budget cuts; however, the legacy of the shift to positive outcomes for learners and the modeling they created remains a valuable tool in classrooms throughout the country.

After decades of supporting other scholars, educators, and politicians, Bouvier won the Indspire Award for Education in 2014, which cited her commitment to SUNTEP, the development of the Aboriginal Knowledge Centre, and her work with the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, along with her publications. Bouvier published with the Joint Task Force on Improving Educations and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis (2013), proposing and analyzing future directions for scholars, politicians, and learners and leading to her Indspire Award.

Bouvier also plays the role of academic auntie to scholars who often mention her in acknowledgments, like Owusu's *Les Michif Aski~ Métis and the Land: Perceptions of the Influence of Space and Place on Aging Well in Île-à-la-Crosse* (2020). She has also received

praise from those who have published alongside her for decades (Battiste, 2017; St. Denis, 2010).

Another arena of Bouvier's success is poetry. Throughout her life, mentors and educators encouraged her to memorize and write poetry; it was a university professor who encouraged her to publish her work, which evokes emotions spurred by an identity crisis, urbanity, diaspora, neglect, historical injustice, and migration. As a Métis poet, Rita Bouvier has made several contributions: *Blueberry Clouds* (1999) reflects an image of Métis culture. Macdougall (2006) uses the poem "Leaving Home" from that collection in her conclusion to demonstrate the loss experienced by the Métis in the 19th century, and Kearnan (2020) reads Bouvier's poems as written to assert a Métis poetic voice.

Her second book of poetry, *Papîyâhtak* (R. Bouvier, 2004), is a dramatic monologue expressing Métis wisdom and generosity; it has been cited by Vizina (2008) as an example of Métis culture, featured in Burnoff's (2018) Cree course guide, and celebrated as an exemplar of Saskatchewan's centennial best (Kral, 2005). Most notably, Osborne (2013) deconstructs the words of "Riel Is Dead, and I Am Alive" from *Papîyâhtak* (2004). Rita Bouvier's third book, *Nakamowin 'Sa for the Seasons* (2015), is a free-verse collection that addresses the Métis spirit and resilience in the face of racial oppression; it inspired Kearnan's (2020) master's thesis at the University of California, Berkeley. Bouvier's poetry's impact on scholars' lives at various stages of their careers and its inclusion in their academic work is notable. Her work has merited inclusion in an English anthology of Canadian Native literature, is featured in *Coming of Age: Celebrating the Saskatchewan Centennial through our Authors and Illustrators* (Kral, 2005), and has received praise from award-winning poet Marilyn Dumont (2015).

Lorraine Mayer

Born in 1953 in The Pas with roots in St. Ambroise and St. Laurent with the family names LaVallee and Ducharme, Lorraine Mayer was the first in Canada to receive a Master's degree in Canadian Native philosophy (Barkwell et al., 2019) and has impacted the collective narrative of Métisness in several genres and disciplines. Bringing a Métis perspective to postsecondary success for Indigenous students through a philosophical lens, Mayer (2007a) discusses the perceptual experiences of abused Indigenous women in the academy and their experiences in a postsecondary context. Scholars vastly underestimated the work's identification

of the systemic issues challenging Indigenous students and its focus on the intricacies of colonialism (Olsen-Harper, 2011) and the colonial roots impeding success in institutional decisions when citing Mayer (2007a). A more recent work (Mayer, 2020b) provides a frank account of the journey to becoming a full professor and Indigenous philosopher, providing tips for contemporary scholars returning to the ideas of Indigenous student success and hardship.

Scholars have theorized Indigenous methodologies in the past two decades using a series of R's. *Cries From a Métis Heart* (2007b) is a conversation in Indigenous philosophy from a Métis perspective that speaks to the 3 R's—respect, responsibility, and relationship—through poetry and prose. In the book, there are two stories: one a personal narrative exploring Mayer as a Métis woman and the other describing the struggle of the Métis nation for belonging and recognition. Individual account scholars like Norton-Smith (2010) weave it into their understanding of self in Indigenous philosophy, and McPherson and Rabb (2014) speak of the collaborative nature of Mayer's (2007a) expressions. More recently, Saunders and Dubois (2019) stress the importance of Mayer's call to listen to our grandmothers in *Cries From a Métis Heart* (2007a), a view that is reinforced in Mayer's (2013) piece on the importance of expressing Indigenous relationships and Elders' teachings.

In a collection edited by Tomsons and Mayer (2013), *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights: Critical Dialogues*, the pair invited Elders, community members, and scholars to explore sovereignty, ways of being, and the colonial state. The philosophies discussed have been deployed in works on law and self-determination (Christie, 2019), political theory (A. Stevenson, 2015), and issues of Indigenous citizenship (Vitikainen, 2021). The collection sparks new ideas and understandings in a discipline that needs more Indigenous inclusion, and Mayer paves the way for more Indigenous philosophers. As an invitation to non-Indigenous scholars and those who study Western philosophies, Mayer (2021) attempts to engage in Indigenous philosophy through the story of Wisakaychak, which explores epistemology and relational interdependence. One of Mayer's more significant roles in the broader academy is attempting to educate other academics on Indigenous ways of being and seeing.

Scholars have argued that one way to view the world is through an Indigenous feminist lens (Anderson, 2014; Nickel & Fehr, 2020; Spillett, 2021; Waterman, 2021), but some Indigenous researchers, including Mayer (2007a), have pushed back against this view. Others do not mention it in their work. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, the debate in Indigenous

feminist theory appears to revolve around the inclusion or exclusion of Indigenous thought in feminist theory, which has prompted the creation of Indigenous feminist theories and the adaptation of existing theories to meet the needs of Indigenous scholars. It is crucial to recognize that Indigenous feminist theory is not merely a “multicultural add-on to white feminist theory” (A. Simpson & A. Smith, 2014, p. 17). Mayer (2007a) reflects on feminist models and acknowledges her previous disdain of feminism before reconciling herself to allowing it into her thought and work. Feminism resurfaced in the 2020s, as with Park’s (2020) synopsis of Mayer’s (2007a) ability to unsettle feminist landscapes and address the combative nature of models of thinking, while Hall (2021) uses the piece as exemplary of the uptake of feminism by Indigenous scholars.

Walking the difficult path of Indigenous feminism in one of her most recent works, Mayer (2020a) describes her exposure to the feminist conference experience as a Métis scholar. Adopting a confessional approach, Mayer (2020a) needed to become engaged to see growth and inclusion, resulting in her helping to organize the Indigenizing and Decolonizing Feminist Philosophy conference. Bardwell-Jones and McLaren (2020) devoted a special issue of *Hypatia* to considering Indigenous philosophy and decolonizing methodologies, citing Mayer’s (2020a) work as a catalyst.

A full professor at Brandon University, Mayer is also the editor of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, which has published work on a wide range of issues affecting Indigenous people, thus demonstrating her commitment to knowledge production beyond her own work and mentoring efforts. Like many Métis scholars, Mayer conducts research and publishes in many fields; however, as a philosopher, she is concerned with postsecondary experience, sovereignty, feminism, and inclusion.

Verna DeMontigny

Verna DeMontigny was born in 1951 in Li Kwayn (the Corner), 7½ miles from Binscarth, Manitoba. However, her parents were from a community called Ste. Madeline on the Saskatchewan–Manitoba border, and her family names are Fleury, Ledoux, Gendron, LaPointe, and DeMontigny. Verna DeMontigny is a champion of Michif and has dedicated much of her life to its preservation (Barkwell, 2018). In the late 1990s, she was the Elder of the National Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (Barkwell et al., 2019). As with most of the Métis

grandmothers and aunties in the present study, DeMontigny's work in the community is mainly undocumented; however, Barkwell (2018) speaks to her decades of work teaching and documenting Michif, including at the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, and Brandon University. For 15 years, DeMontigny worked with Aboriginal Head Start programs and K–12 schools in Brandon to save a critically endangered language. Then, in 2010, DeMontigny spent five years coordinating the Michif Language Program in the MMF Southwest Region, serving Portage la Prairie, Minnedosa, Brandon, Turtle Mountain (Boissevain), Binscarth, and St. Ambroise.

DeMontigny has participated in several initiatives geared to saving Michif over the years, including becoming a board member of the Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Language Revitalization Circle, which uses the master-apprentice Indigenous language revitalization model to create fluent speakers of five Indigenous languages (DeMontigny, 2019b). In addition, DeMontigny has been crucial to the inclusion of Michif on the National Center for Collaboration in Indigenous Education resource website, with *Aakoota-kaawaapaamittin: The Michif Language* (DeMontigny, 2019a), and sitting for a recording during a Michif gathering at the University of Manitoba (DeMontigny, 2019b).

DeMontigny recently co-authored several linguistic articles surrounding Michif's nominal contact, phonology, and syntax. *Nominal Contact in Michif* (Gillon et al., 2018) documents language contact using DeMontigny's knowledge of the Michif language as the central knowledge keeper. It has been cited in works such as Sammons's doctoral dissertation (2019), academic articles by Rosen et al. (2019, 2020), Mazzoli (2020, 2021), Auer and Hakimov (2021), and O'Shannessy (2020). In addition, Michif is featured in *The Routledge Handbook of Language Contact* (2020). The recent success of that handbook speaks to the significant impact that Métis women who are fluent Michif speakers—women like Anne Anderson-Irvine, Rita Flamand, Grace Zoldy, and DeMontigny herself—have had in academia; the ability to help create successful careers for non-Indigenous and non-speaking linguists is documented through the publications above, as none of those authors speaks Michif.

Rosenblum and Sammons (2014), Rosen and Souter (2015), Sammons (2015), Cox and Sammons (2019), Rosen et al. (2019), and Mattes (2021) all acknowledge DeMontigny as a transcriptionist and translator for their work; all have their academic followings who are now taking up her knowledge. *Piikishkweetak aa'n Michif!* (Rosen & Souter, 2009b) is a teacher's

manual for Michif teachers that relies on DeMontigny's ability to speak Michif. Interestingly, Bakker (1997) and Bakker and Papen (1997) acknowledge many speakers but exclude DeMontigny, despite her being on the task force as a fluent Michif speaker. However, decades later, Mazzoli, Bakker, and DeMontigny worked together on a book chapter (2021).

DeMontigny also champions the remembrance of her home community, Ste. Madeleine, which the Government of Manitoba stole to provide pastures for farmers (Manitoba Museum, 2019). To preserve this history, the Ni KishKishin, I Remember Ste. Madeleine exhibition was translated into Michif by DeMontigny, whose parents were survivors of the razing in 1938. Sammons (2013) features DeMontigny's translations in *Leaving Ste. Madeleine: A Michif Account* articulates the experience of the 200 people affected by the government's decision to prioritize cattle over the Métis community.

Although now retired as a teacher, DeMontigny's contributions to academia appear to be only beginning. She is involved in a slew of Under Review UMP projects in collaboration with the Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Language Revitalization Circle, such as a new audio-video documentation project focusing on the activities and language functions of everyday life and Michif and Métis culture as lived by their family, ongoing master-apprentice work, Michif language videos for learners, Michif dictionary recordings, online Michif workshops, a translation of an Ojibwe book for language learners into Michif, oral translations of Michif radio recordings from 1985 to 1995 (from KEYA in Belcourt, North Dakota), beta-testing a verb conjugator, and guest appearances in Michif language classes at the University of Manitoba (Heather Souter, personal communication, August 16, 2021). DeMontigny's contributions to the revitalization of Michif demonstrate the strength and knowledge Métis women can bring to Métis scholarship and the Métis Nation as a whole.

Sherry Farrell Racette

Born in 1952 in Winnipeg from the complex lines of Red River Métis and Timiskaming First Nation in Quebec with Irish ties, Farrell Racette's identity is challenged in shared spaces, despite her family ties to the Red River and decades of work as a community member of the Métis Nation. Her family names are Polson, King, McBride, Obishawn, and Elson. Sherry Farrell Racette shared at the kitchen table the frustration of her family from Moose Factory being at the center of identity politics in the Métis Nation, stating they are all "cherry-picking the

historical record to support one political position or another.” Nevertheless, she intends to publish her book telling the story of the Métis of Moose Factory. Farrell Racette is an interdisciplinary scholar, renowned artist, and curator specializing in art history, resistance art, Métis beadwork, and women’s roles in material culture. To highlight her contributions to our ways of knowing, I focus on her contributions to Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy, Métis history, feminism, and Indigenous research methodologies.

Farrell Racette began researching for GDI in the 1980s; like the women before her, she lacked academic credentials but was guided by a purpose to provide her people with content about their history from the mouths of their Elders. During the 1980s, a lack of educational resources spurred much of the work done by Métis women in the community. This research resulted in her first publication, *The Flower Beadwork People*, published by GDI to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1885 resistance. The book contains Métis history, clothing, arts, transportation, and celebrations with translations by fluent Michif speaker Elder Norman Fleury. Thirty-seven years later, GDI still promotes the original text as a learning tool added to the Manitoba school curriculum in 2021, enabling connections to provincial outcomes for learners today. In addition, the GDI operates a virtual museum that contains dozens of research interviews with Elders conducted by Farrell Racette and in the *Stories of our People/LiiZistwayr di la Naasyoon di Michif* Series (Dorion-Paquin, 2001). This work is an unparalleled resource for researchers seeking to hear stories from those who lived authentically as Métis people.

Farrell Racette’s scholarship has had an impact since she completed her dissertation, *Sewing Ourselves Together: Clothing, Decorative Arts and the Expression of Métis and Half-Breed Identity* (2004), which expanded our understanding of beadwork and sewing in the Métis consciousness and has been downloaded over 10,000 times. Ray (2016) praises its ability to define the mnemonic devices that tell our stories through beads, Episkenew (2009) highlights the work of her mentor and friend, and, most recently, Supernant (2018, 2021) states that Farrell Racette’s work makes clear that Métis beading was distinct and culturally specific.

Farrell Racette’s scholarship is notable for the theme of celebrating women’s voices through artistry and history (2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2005, 2008b, 2009b); she speaks to the need to recognize women’s roles in our understanding of who we are as Métis people. In a collection she co-edited (Chavez Lamar et al., 2010), Farrell Racette and colleagues solicited work focused on

how we see traditional Indigenous art through a contemporary lens; her own chapter deals with gender, women, and art-making (2010). Farrell Racette (2012a) committed herself to write them into existence and argued for their acknowledgment in pursuit of correcting the erasure of Indigenous artists as professionals contributing to collective knowledge. Scholars largely ignored the piece inspired by bell hooks (1990), and most of the citations are from graduate students (Beavis, 2016; Riley, 2020; Wisnoski, 2017). Ironically, an article about art historians accused of ignoring women has been ignored.

Another dominant theme in Farrell Racette's research is resilience through resistance. For example, in the co-edited collection *Clearing a Path: New Ways of Seeing Traditional Indigenous Art* (Robertson & Farrell Racette, 2009), her chapter draws readers to the stories told in the other contributions and directs our gaze to the larger message theorized by Vizenor (1999) through the arts. Continuing in that vein, in both (2012b, 2016), she speaks to identity, land, and women's roles leading to survival in fur trade economies. In addition, the work refers to the power and value of women throughout the homeland (Wadsworth, 2020) and the fact that they were occupied with the daily running of Métis life (Voth, 2020).

Farrell Racette (2009a) reveals the lack of photographs taken by Edward Curtis and his contemporaries of children in the community due to their being taken to residential and industrial schools. The piece examines the stories of photographs taken for government reports, staff, and visitors or, in rare cases, the children themselves tell us about the lives of those who were stolen. Scholars such as S. R. Stevenson (2019), McCracken (2017), and McCallum (2014a) highlight the piece in their work exploring the lived realities of children in the residential school system. Farrell Racette (2011) challenges the reader to consider photography as a form of resistance, despite the colonizer's gaze captured in the photographs. Pedri-Spade (2016) adopted this philosophy and adapted it to an Anishinaabe lens. Skelly (2017) hones in on the sentiment of Farrell Racette (2011) that the camera is a "weapon to be seized" (p. 78) by Indigenous people to demonstrate their fight to keep traditional ways of living alive.

Farrell Racette is a multi-talented artist and curator who brings exhibits to life and inspires another facet of academic publishing. Curated art exhibits are highlighted in various disciplines, bringing attention to their impact on the humanities and art and design. For example, *Clearing a Path: An Exhibition of Traditional Indigenous Art*, an exhibit created in 2005 for the Saskatchewan centennial celebrations, toured 20 communities. That effort led to a 2009

collection edited by the art historian Robertson and Farrell Racette, which is cited in works by C. Hanson (2015) and C. Hanson and Griffith (2016) and in graduate students' work (Boyce, 2019; Usher, 2017). Similarly, *Bead Speak* at the Slate Fine Art Gallery in 2016 featured five female Indigenous artists based in Saskatchewan: Judy Anderson, Katherine Boyer, Ruth Cuthand, Catherine Blackburn, and Sherry Farrell Racette, which then inspired Robertson (2017) to write about space and beading through the work of the women and was included in Tritter's (2018) master's thesis as exemplary of actions of reconciliation.

The act of survival combined with seeking reclamation—on behalf of future generations—of our sovereign practices, which, according to Farrell Racette (2017), are rooted in our distinct traditions, is seen throughout her four decades of work. With a passion for understanding who we are, what is ours—and what is not—she has opened our eyes to art's possibilities for understanding the Métis.

Verna St. Denis

Verna St. Denis, a Métis from the Parklands and Beardy's and Okemasis Cree First Nation member, was born in 1958. Her family names are Ste. Denis and Cardinal. Currently the special advisor to the president on anti-racism and anti-oppression at the University of Saskatchewan, she spent decades as a scholar on various subjects, including feminism, Indigenous education, Ju/'hoansi, and most notably, anti-racist education.

St. Denis's early success stemmed from her master's thesis (1989) in community-based participatory research. Two decades later, her approach is common practice in Indigenous research, revealing the changes since 1989. In two follow-up articles, St. Denis (1992, 2004a) outlines the practical relevance of this practice, providing insights for Lapan et al.'s (2012) work on defining qualitative research, M. Bennett's (2004) risk-benefit analysis on community-based participatory research, and Koster et al. (2012).

St. Denis completed her dissertation at Stanford in 2002, arguing that Canada has normalized and naturalized inequity for Indigenous learners. She has dedicated much of her work to drawing the reader's attention to the many issues in the current education system and the frameworks we attempt to educate. St. Denis and Hampton (2002) provided a literature review on racism for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's national working group on education. The

piece influenced St. Denis (2004b), who looks at the obsession to create the authentic Indian through cultural revitalization in classrooms.

As noted above, in discussing the impact of Rita Bouvier and St. Denis's collaborations on Indigenous education, St. Denis et al. (2008) hold that only the inclusion of educators with a racial identity can begin to solve issues of racism in schools. This work looks specifically at Indigenous identity and its impact on the education system after a co-authored article (Soleil et al., 2006) assessed the practices in a rural Saskatchewan collegiate regarding identity and learning. In a later qualitative study, St. Denis (2010) looks at Indigenous educators' knowledge of and experience with teaching and how they can inform practices and policies to increase Indigenous success. Returning to the theme of her work in the 1990s, St. Denis's (2005a, 2005b) articles began to articulate the need for a shift in Indigenous education toward critical analysis and away from viewing culture through an anthropological lens in the classroom. St. Denis (2007a) continued the trajectory with a piece that combined her areas of expertise, Indigenous education, and anti-racist education, arguing that critical race theory should be applied to Indigenous education, as it provides social justice for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Finally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, J. Simpson et al. (2021) argued that institutions and their classes should not remain neutral but acknowledge the power they and their instructors can wield to address racial injustice. Most recently, St. Denis co-edited *White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions* (Gebhard et al., 2022), which speaks to the white professionals in education, social work, justice, and health who continue to uphold institutional racism while under the impression they are helping Indigenous people. St. Denis (2022) speaks about her own experience and how her family survived colonialism. Thirty years after her first publication addressing social justice and racial equality for Indigenous people, St. Denis continues to push the envelope.

Working alongside Richard Katz, who specializes in culture and healing, St. Denis co-authored "The Teacher as Healer: A Renewing Tradition" (Katz & St. Denis, 1988), which concerns experiencing the Kalahari Desert in a postsecondary program. St. Denis published two pieces, including one on the Kalahari Ju/'hoansi, one of the oldest societies in the world. Katz et al. (1997) explore the ways of living of the Ju/'hoansi and how modern life threatens their existence. St. Denis (2000) followed up this work by arguing that the attempted assimilation of the Ju/'hoansi threatens their autonomy and sovereignty as a society. Juxtaposing the experience

of those in the Kalahari Desert with our recent experience with colonization in a settler state, the work offers a valuable touchstone for all future work in a Canadian context.

After she returned to Canada, St. Denis and Schick (2003) shared observations about attempting cross-cultural education that scholars in several disciplines have taken up: Hatcher (2012) in environmental studies education, Wear and Aultman (2005) in medical education, and Killpack and Melón (2016) in STEM classrooms have all demonstrated the operating range of St. Denis's insights, which moves far beyond Indigenous Studies. Another co-authored paper, Schick and St. Denis (2005), cited in hundreds of academic publications, provides a base for other Indigenous educators, such as Dion (2007), Kovach (2010a), and LaRocque (2011), who seek to draw attention to critical race theory in practice. St. Denis (2011) reviewed Canadian multicultural legislation and argued the need to shift away from the status quo based on concerns about multiculturalism's ability to incorporate Indigenous perspectives successfully. The piece was republished (2013b) because of its solution-based approach to advancing the narrative.

A familiar approach for Indigenous women scholars is to wade into the Indigenous feminism debate, leaning on one side or engaging in pro/con feminism. For St. Denis, this journey began in 2004, when she favorably reviewed *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival* (2004c), which is based on Indigenous feminism; in St. Denis's published work, there is no record of her denouncing or even critiquing feminism. We read of the journey to a pro-feminist position in St. Denis (2007b, 2013a, 2017). She reflects on her original indiscriminate rejection of feminism and the guidance of bell hooks (2000) that "feminism is for everybody," while stating that feminism is flawed and complex. Although her feminist writings are limited in number, St. Denis's work informs Suzack's (2015) piece on Indigenous feminism in Canada, legal theory in Snyder (2014), Ladner's (2009) decolonizing gender piece, and McCallum's (2014b) history of Indigenous women and work. Her journey to feminism reflects similar trajectories in many Indigenous scholars in accepting Indigenous feminism as separate from how white feminism has developed.

Jeannine Carrière

Jeannine Carrière was born in 1952 in St. Adolphe, Manitoba; she was adopted in the Sixties Scoop. Her family names are Delorme, Courchene, and Carrière, and her communities include La Broquerie, Marchand, and Richer. The experience of being taken spurred her

academic career to explore the well-being of those in the child welfare system. Her dissertation, *Connectedness, and Health for First Nation Adoptees* (2005a), recount the stories of 18 participants who expressed that connection with their birth families, regardless of the complexities involved, was integral to their wellness. Her dissertation began to appear in other scholarly work, with R. Sinclair (2007) highlighting the influx of adoptees of the Sixties Scoop, completing theses and dissertations highlighting their shared experiences with participants. Richardson and Nelson (2007) likened the current child welfare system to residential schools and used Carrière's thesis (2005a) to describe the system's attempts to sever all community ties. Carrière (2005b) distilled the dissertation into an article taken up by child welfare advocates Blackstock et al. (2007) to demonstrate the long-lasting and multi-generational impacts on those in care. Carrière (2005b) stresses connectedness for First Nations adoptees by exploring the policy and legislative implications for First Nations. This exploration expanded to the Métis as the findings that natural family connections led to more significant wellness spawned other research efforts; the eventual shift in Métis Child and Family Services practices led to the creation of a Kinship Connectedness Department is a testament to their ground-breaking work. The agency works closely with Carrière to this day. Stemming from Carrière (2005b), scholars in the 2010s shored up arguments against the practice of clean-break adoptions by stating they are counter to the natural laws of connectedness (Di Tomasso & de Finney, 2015) and used her work to demonstrate the separation and disconnection experienced through the social welfare system (Carrière and Richardson, 2013).

Adding to the conversation around First Nations adoption, Carrière (2007) discusses what is known as promising practices for youth to maintain connection and a sense of self throughout the adoption process. Three outcomes of this article are worth noting here: 1) the methodology was taken up as an exemplar for qualitative research in cultural dynamics and the use of participants' perspectives in research (Shea et al., 2010); 2) resilience as the starting point for adoption with First Nations suggests that government policy should include cultural plans to maintain adoptees' connections with their community and culture (Kirmayer et al., 2009); and 3) an admission that reconnection can be positive or negative, stressing that spirituality plays a significant role in forming an Indigenous identity that can help support the child through the process.

In 2008, Carrière became more inclusive of all Indigenous people, including her own, in *Maintaining Identities: The Soul Work of Adoption and Aboriginal Children*, which questioned the ability of the child welfare apparatus to meet the complex needs of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations children in catering to their identities. Scholars used this call to support statements such as the child welfare system serving as a tool of assimilation, with placements occurring in non-Indigenous families; examples include Carrière herself (2008), Navia et al. (2018), and a doctoral dissertation by Burke (2018), who used many of Carrière's works. From a Métis perspective, the most notable was the use of Carrière's work (2008) in promoting a study funded by the Métis Nation British Columbia and the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, seeking the perspectives of parents, community representatives, and youth on maintaining connections with their Métis identity. Programming now offered by the Métis Nation British Columbia considers this placement aspect and makes kinship connections a top priority.

Another edited collection, *Walking this Path Together: Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive Child Welfare Practices* (Carrière & Strega, 2015; Strega & Carrière, 2009), prioritizes improving families' lives while demonstrating best practices for socially just child welfare policies. The work helps to integrate social justice into the system with concrete tools and processes (Swift & Callahan, 2009), identify core concepts beyond colonial understandings of care (Cocker & Hafford-Letchfield, 2014), and seek safety-first programming that considers families (Pennell et al., 2011)

The edited collection *Calling Our Families Home: Métis Peoples' Experience with Child Welfare* (Carrière & Richardson, 2017) highlights the Métis experience in the child welfare system, which has resulted in displacement and a loss of identity and kinship ties. At the time of publication, there had never been a national study on child welfare systems' effect on generations of Métis children. This collection symbolizes a shift in Carrière's focus from First Nations in general to a Métis-specific context. In addition, it demonstrates the need to speak to mental health and wellness, specifically in the Métis experience (Auger, 2017, 2019), highlights Métis over-representation in care while addressing the differences experienced by individuals in the child welfare system (Richardson, 2017), and shines a light on urban Métis women's experiences with accessing social services (R. Monchalin et al., 2019; R. Monchalin, Smylie, & Bourgeois, 2020; R. Monchalin, Smylie, & Nowgesic, 2020).

Carrière has also examined the depiction of Indigenous people in the mainstream media. For example, in “Nothing Short of a Horror Show” (Janzen et al., 2013), Carrière and her research group analyzed newspaper media coverage using 600 headlines involving women and sex work, concluding through Foucauldian analysis that these women were depicted as threats. The result prompted work around the criminalization of sexual commerce (Davies, 2015), the international discourse analysis of media representatives (Hart & Gilbertson, 2018), and a psychological explanation of hate speech toward Indigenous women (Richardson-Self, 2021). The work also led to another co-authored work for Carrière: “Never Innocent Victims: Street Sex Workers in Canadian Print Media” (Strega et al., 2014). It analyzes neo-liberal ideologies and the vermin-victim tension of Western conceptualizations of risky behavior. Scholars relied on this work to argue that this discourse controls Indigenous mobility (Morton, 2016) and that harmful racial and gender ideologies about Indigenous women stem from national media portrayals (Moeke-Pickering et al., 2018).

The last research area in Carrière’s long career is her inclusion in the canon of Indigenous research. Kovach’s (2009) text on Indigenous methodologies, which is used across the country and has been cited over 3,700 times, includes “A Conversation with Jeannine Carrière,” which highlights her use of story as a methodology, starting with her 2005 dissertation. Kovach (2010b) includes the conversational method as a way of interviewing in a good way. Carrière says that story evokes the holistic quality of Indigenous methods and is an in-depth qualitative method of inquiry. Throughout the interview, she shows herself to be an exemplar of an Indigenous methodology that considers the accountability needed to protect the community. Scholars have stated that this chapter called attention to respecting the importance of location (Feir & Hancock, 2013), served as a beacon to understanding strategies aligning Indigenous research, qualitative epistemology, and methodology (Knudson, 2015), and outlined the considerations around putting Indigenous paradigms such as talking circles into practice (Kovach et al., 2013).

Stemming from over a decade of work and practice, Carrière co-authored “Invitations to Dignity and Wellbeing: Cultural Safety Through Indigenous Pedagogy, Witnessing and Giving Back” (Richardson et al., 2017), which conceptualizes cultural safety in colonial educational experiences. In addition, the authors developed a cultural sensitization training protocol for child and youth practitioners in British Columbia. This work demonstrates that allies are needed to

interrupt narratives of racism (Jack-Malik et al., 2021) and has been influential in postcolonial social work (R. Lutz, 2019).

Jean Teillet

Born in 1953, the grand-niece of Louis Riel founded the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Native Lawyer Association and organized the first National Aboriginal Moot. Her family names are Riel, Grant, and Poitras. She lived most of her life in St Boniface and St. Vital on the riverbanks. The one-time dancer and actor went on to an illustrious legal career that has taken her to 10 Supreme Court of Canada appearances; Teillet has contributed to the academy for decades.

Her *Métis Law in Canada* (2013) is exemplary of doctrinal legal scholarship; the monograph explores a multitude of issues like the Métis identity from a legal perspective, harvesting rights under section 35, Métis title and land claims, Métis rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and constitutional interpretation more generally.

Through empirical social science and doctrinal legal scholarship, Teillet illuminates Métis lived reality and adds to Métis scholarship. From a doctrinal perspective, Teillet has analyzed Métis case law (2000), addressed Métis harvesting rights in *R v. Powley* (2001, 2007), exposed the relationship between the Crown and Métis through earlier decisions (Teillet, 2004a; Teillet et al., 2008), conducted Métis law summaries (2006), clarified Métis rights under section 35 (2012), and explained Supreme Court decisions (Teillet, 2005; Teillet & Madden, 2013). In *Métis Law in Canada* (2013), Teillet offers the most thorough review of the past, present, and future of the Métis. From a historical perspective, Teillet has explored the possibility of exonerating Louis Riel (2004b) and proposed theories of the origins of the historical and contemporary Métis in the Northwest (2008, 2019).

Teillet (2019) asserts that historical records created by white sources are biased and flawed and chronicle the various transgressions of white male scholars. For example, according to Teillet (2019), Marcel Giraud questions Métis morality, Thomas Flanagan calls Métis morally repugnant, Alexander Begg refers to the Métis as being wild, and George Stanley claims the Métis are “thoughtless and improvident, unrestrained in their desires, restless, clannish and vain” (p. xvii). These racist views become even more problematic when one realizes that precisely this

research has long underpinned the understanding of who is—and is not—Métis. After all, these are acclaimed historians and political scientists whose careers were built on exploring the Métis.

Teillet's work is cited by both Métis and non-Métis scholars, including Belisle (2006), Lischke and McNab (2007), Barman and Evans (2009), Dubois and Saunders (2013), Martel (2018), and Saunders and Dubois (2019). Each cites Teillet as the leading authority on Métis law and Métis identity. In terms of Métis law, Teillet's work is unparalleled and defies the notion of any patriarchal gender norm in the academy that ignores Métis women's scholarship.

Heather Souter

Souter, a language activist, working to revitalize Michif, was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1962. Her Métis kinship ties stem from Fish Creek, Fort di Plains, Slave Lake, and Lac St. Anne, Alberta, including her great-grandmother Julie Marie Belcourt. Souter married into the Camperville community decades ago and is now an MMF citizen working alongside the organization to revitalize Michif. Her family names are Belcourt, Campion, Sapin/Sapendit, L'Hirondelle, and Nipissing. Souter insists that she carries out this work from a grassroots perspective. However, her academic contributions to our grasp of Michif are profound when broken down into four groups: understanding the linguistics of Michif, documenting the language, mentoring, and teaching Michif.

Souter credits her language revitalization and linguistics expertise to her master's thesis, *Ti parii chiiñ? (Are You Ready?): Preparing Adult Learners and Proficient Speakers for the Challenge of Michif Reclamation* (2018b) and from years working with Métis matriarchs Grace Zoldy and Rita Flamand in both the community and the academy. After graduating, Souter co-authored several articles. For example, Brinklow et al. (2019) describe the historical and social context of Indigenous language technology in Canada and note the benefit of having the community work further to save languages. Kuhn et al. (2020) survey a project that assists Indigenous communities in Canada in developing software for language revitalization. Davis et al. (2021) focus on the computational modeling of Michif verbal morphology. In 2021, Davis, Santos, and Souter co-authored a piece that presents a finite-state computational model of the verbal morphology of Michif. Finally, Mazzoli (2021) uses unpublished material and cites it as Souter (2010); it includes an index of verb finals for Michif to increase our understanding of the morphology of Michif.

Written in partnership with Rosen (2009b), *Piikishkweetak aa'n Michif* is a teaching aid that affirms Michif spelling conventions and provides documentation of Michif possessives in French and hybrid systems. It served as a basis for several linguistic modeling efforts by Sammons (2013, 2019) and Mazzoli (2019, 2020, 2021). In addition, Rosen and Souter (2015) use the Flamand-Papen spelling system created by Rita Flamand and Robert Papen and provide affirmation for the way forward in conventional spelling for Michif.

Souter (2007) asserts the need to document the Michif language's status as critically endangered and informs readers that most first-language speakers are over 70 years old, making immediate data collection urgent. Souter has presented worldwide on the subject, and Rosen and Souter's (2009a, 2009b) work is widely cited because it speaks to multilingual communities like those in Ste. Madeleine (Sammons, 2013).

One of the roles grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship have played in the academy is mentoring emerging—and established—scholars, a principle of *wahkootowin*. Souter is acknowledged in Rosen's (2007) work documenting the phonology of Michif: "Heather Souter has pushed me to learn more about the Michif people and language and has been a source of inspiration, as she lives and learns the Michif language" (p. v). Huang's (2010) work discussing language revitalization and identity politics also thanks Souter for guidance. Mazzoli (2019, 2020) explores the challenges and celebrations in the revitalization of Michif in two papers that thank Souter for consultation. Sammons (2019), whose doctoral work outlines nominal classification in Michif, cites Souter heavily, including a tribute thanking her "for introducing and encouraging me to work on Michif" (p. vii).

Souter has provided translations for numerous mainstream publications. Her work with children's author Julia Flett in *Owls See Clearly at Night (Lii Yiiboo Nayaapiwak lii Swer): A Michif Alphabet* is cited in Newland (2022) and O'Brien (2015). Souter (2004) reviews a model for language revitalization that is the basis of the master apprenticeship program facilitated by the Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Language Revitalization Circle, a non-profit co-founded by Souter and Verna DeMontigny. The National Center for Indigenous Education published a video featuring Souter discussing the model (Souter, 2019).

Committed to more than the pursuit of academic achievement, Souter developed video resources to support independent adult language learning (2018a). Coming after other Michif language teaching tools, such as Rosen and Souter (2009b, 2015), the Michif textbook includes a

12-week self-guided lesson plan heralded by the Métis nation and scholars as an essential part of revitalizing Michif. Souter also created the Michif Verb Rummy game (2008) to encourage learners to spend recreational time in the language.

More recently, Souter created Michif.org, a website that houses two critical resources: an online Michif class and a new digital dictionary. First, Souter worked with 7000 Languages to create a free 20-unit, 61-lesson online course: *Southern Michif Course Aapachihtaataak li “Online Course”!* (Transparent Language, 2021). Second, the *Michif Mother Tongue Dictionary* (Mother Tongues, 2021) digitized Laverdure and Allard’s (1983) *Turtle Mountain Michif Dictionary*, adapting it to the Southern context by providing audio for over 15,384 words by using the voices of Verna DeMontigny, Connie Henry, Heather Souter and Grace Zoldy. Souter’s contributions to the academy and community have created space for revitalizing the southern Michif dialect.

Kim Anderson

Born in 1964 in Ottawa, with roots in the Red River stemming from Portage La Prairie and High Bluff, Kim Anderson’s family names include Sanderson, Landry, Harper, Mousseau, Gillis, Asham, and Anderson. She is a Métis scholar who contributes to our understanding of Indigenous and, by extension, Métis womanhood, masculinities, and experiences with colonial Canada. Her research revitalizes Indigenous relationships in family and land in urban settings.

Two decades ago, Anderson released *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* (2000), featuring 40 Indigenous women sharing their experiences in the aftermath of negative constructions of Indigenous women stereotypes and exploring the reconstruction of Indigenous womanhood. In addition to demonstrating her commitment to highlighting women, it provides readers with a glimpse into the legacy of colonialism. A second edition released in 2016 included literature appearing during the 13 years since the first edition that supported her initial premise and the development of increased Indigenous women’s activism. Scholars over the decades have sought out her work (2000, 2016b) as a foundation of resistance (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005) to expand the awareness of intersectionality across race, class, and gender through an Indigenous lens (L. T. Smith, 2005), and as an exemplar of qualitative research with the power to lift Indigenous women’s voices (L. Lavallée, 2009; L. R. Simpson, 2004). *A Recognition of Being* stemmed from her master’s thesis and has been cited over 700 times,

demonstrating this scholar's lasting ability to change the collective understanding and influence policy, frameworks, and public opinion.

The importance of a text is often underestimated when consideration of its ripple effect in the academy is ignored. *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* (Anderson, 2011) reveals the various stages of experience affecting Métis, Cree, and Anishinaabe girls in the mid-20th century. Discussing traditions that were thought lost to colonization, the work highlights the aspirational Indigenous notion of wellbeing to be again realized by reclamation. Through the teachings of 14 Elders, Anderson inspires scholars to include her work to explore the notion of Indigenous women's experience as mirroring that of the land throughout colonization (Ferris, 2015), restoring balance while addressing gender inequalities (Baldy, 2018), avowing Indigenous ways of being before contact (Fiola, 2015), expressing our ways of being on the land through harvest and meaning (Kermoal, 2016), and creating culturally-based theoretical frameworks (Gaudet, 2014).

Throughout her career, Anderson has co-edited several influential collections, each sounding the alarm for critical issues in the Indigenous community. Anderson and Lawrence (2012) present 17 essays capturing women's work to rebuild and revive the community. The collection edited by Lavell-Harvard and Anderson (2014) explores Indigenous women's distinct global roles in revitalizing their communities. As a researcher of gender, Anderson partnered with Innes to edit *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration* (2015), diving into the lived experience of men and the impact of heteropatriarchy and colonialism. Numerous edited collections focusing on Indigenous women in the Native Studies canon explore feminism (Green, 2007; Monture-Angus & McGuire, 2009; Suzack et al., 2010), while other monographs (Anderson, 2011; Cruickshank, 1990; Van Kirk, 1983) depict the stories of Indigenous women. However, work specifically on Indigenous men remains rare. Each collection provides the community and researchers with learning opportunities to reclaim, revive, and answer the call to action.

In 2018, Anderson worked with Maria Campbell and Christi Belcourt on *Keetsahnak / Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, which explores the diversity of Indigenous women and their experience in Canadian colonialism. In a reflection of Anderson's publications, numerous pieces have brought our attention to the systemic and purposeful collective brainwashing of Indigenous ways of being, especially surrounding the power of Indigenous

women. Each reinforces the scholarship that followed the community-based research developed through Anderson's relationships to enhance their work.

Anderson's "A Canadian Conversation" (2016a) is a performance art piece filmed, edited with voice-over, and added to the collection of the Truth and Reconciliation Response Projects housed at the University of Waterloo, which resulted in the removal of a Sir John A. Macdonald statue on campus. Her publications have inspired other performance artists, such as Moll's "Writing Names Project: UnSilencing the Number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" (2016), which involved writing over a thousand missing and murdered Indigenous women's names in Montreal. In 2017, a public art performance called *ACHoRD* took place on the steps of the Parliament Buildings in Victoria, British Columbia; inspired by Kim Anderson (2016a), it portrayed resistance, reclamation, and action (Murphy, 2018). Thus, the reach of Métis women's scholarship can be seen through many disciplines and media.

For decades, Kim Anderson has been adding to the academic understanding of Métis ways of being and knowing through the family. Her appointment in 2017 as a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Relationships was a further acknowledgment of the work done by women to further the scholarly field of Métis scholarship.

Christi Belcourt

Born in 1966 in Scarborough, Ontario, with ancestral ties to Manitou Sakhahigan (Lac Ste. Anne), Christi Belcourt is an artist, activist, theorist, and knowledge keeper; she is not an academic. However, the string of academic publications first-authored by Belcourt and their influence on various disciplines such as fine arts, Indigenous Studies, women's and gender studies, law, and ethnobotany, combined with the scholarly attention her work has received, ensure her a spot among Métis women directing the narrative in the academy. Her family names are Belcourt, L'Hirondelle, Letendre, Callihoo, and Moswâ.

In 2002, Belcourt's art was featured in *Biodiversity* with a brief description of the motivation and meaning behind the pieces. In addition, the short blurb contained teachings of interconnectedness and Métis identifiers in art. Although brief, it was a glimpse into the future teachings and narratives Belcourt would add to academia.

In partnership with the Métis Centre at NAHO, Belcourt released *Métis Cookbook and Guide to Healthy Living* (2006, 2008a), addressing the various health concerns faced by the

Métis, presenting case studies for healthy living, and offering Métis recipes. The first edition of this publication began the long string of non-art-related pieces produced by Belcourt. *Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use: Study Prints & Resource Guide* (Belcourt et al., 2007) continued her useful publications; this work creates a fusion between traditional Métis medicinal knowledge and artwork for the field guides. The work is cited in Kermoal's (2016) environmental knowledge piece and R. Monchalín, Smylie, and Nowgesic's (2020) healthcare discrimination essay, signaling the broad uptake of this work.

In a concentrated effort to influence our understanding of Métis identity, Belcourt's (2008b) commentary addresses the complexity of art created by Métis; she describes her beadwork patterns as a proliferation of all things Métis while citing other works that represent personal feelings about world issues. The piece inspired new Métis scholars Gillies's (2018) doctoral research and Mearon's (2017) master's thesis. This influence demonstrates the ability of Métis women's publications to inspire, encourage, and build the stories that future generations of Métis women will tell.

In *Beadwork: First Peoples' Beading History and Techniques* (2010), Belcourt adds to the growing movement to revitalize beading. Although the work was a catalyst to Belcourt's inclusion in later works such as Zhao (2018) and Nadeau (2020), it was also a stepping stone to the *Walking with Our Sisters* commemoration project. In 2013, the seven-year collaborative art piece traveled throughout Canada with 2000 vamps created and donated by community members, each representing a single missing and murdered Indigenous woman. In partnership with others, including Métis women scholars Maria Campbell, Kim Anderson, and Sherry Farrell Racette in the WWOS collective, Belcourt curated, promoted, and developed the traveling exhibit. One collective member, Bear (2014), features an interview with Belcourt about the ceremony dictating the procedures of the piece's travels; Sandals (2014) and Bell (2017) interviewed Belcourt about the memorial's creation and impact on the community. In addition, Belcourt co-edited the collection *Keetsahnak / Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters* (Anderson et al., 2018), which examines the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls. The book adds to scholarly work in the disciplines of Indigenous studies, with Dorries et al. (2019) depicting Indigenous resurgence in urban spaces, Jacob et al. (2021) addressing epistemic injustice in social work, and Johnstone and Lee (2021) tackling environmental justice through Indigenous cultural values. The influence that began with Belcourt seeing a resemblance

between a missing woman and her daughter (Sandals, 2014) has not waned; contributions to scholarship based on that notion and the power of Métis women continue.

In the late 2010s, Belcourt's work appeared in the collections *The Winter We Danced: Voices From the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (The Kino-nad-niimi Collective, 2014) and *Surviving Canada: Indigenous Peoples Celebrate 150 Years of Betrayal* (Ladner & Tait, 2017). The poem "Canada, I Can Cite for You, 150" (2017) moved many readers by bringing attention to Indigenous reality amidst the sesquicentennial celebrations of mainstream Canadians. The Onaman Collective, formed by Belcourt and Issac Murdoch, is a social justice and arts organization committed to language revitalization and environmental justice; it released the poem as a performative piece that has attracted over 18,500 views (Onoman Collective, n.d.).

Although admittedly "not an academic," Belcourt has been invited to keynote several academic conferences and gatherings. In November 2016, while at the Maamwizing Conference at Laurentian University, Belcourt delivered what she said would be her last keynote, "The Revolution Has Begun," which later appeared as a chapter in *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (2018). Like many of our knowledge keepers and Indigenous theorists welcomed into academia due to their wealth of knowledge and power to influence, Belcourt is in the fiber of not only Métis scholarship but is also responsible for wide-ranging and influential contributions to the academic literature more broadly.

Brenda Macdougall

The University Research Chair in Métis Family and Community Traditions at the University of Ottawa, Macdougall's origins are in Fort Edmonton and the parishes of St. Clements and St. Andrews in Red River. However, she was born in 1969 in Saskatoon. Her family names are Macdougall, Rowands, and Harriotts. Macdougall has devoted much of her career to providing an understanding of Métis origins with monographs like *One of the Family: Métis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (2010). Anderson (2014), among others, uses the text to explore identity, including the notions of the accented Métis vs. Metis in work, redefining our understanding of hybridity. Hogue (2015) relies heavily on Macdougall (2010, 2012) in *Métis and the Medicine Line* while reshaping our understanding of

the international boundary, and Goulet and Goulet (2014) home in on the concept of *wagootowin* from work by Macdougall (2006, 2017b).

Like the work of Maria Campbell, *One of the Family* profoundly impacted scholarly discourse, especially in the form of Métis scholars bringing it into conversations in a host of disciplines: Gaudry and Hancock (2012) in education, O'Toole (2010, 2013) using it in his political science dissertation like Gaudry (2014), Voth (2018) in political studies, Todd (2018b) in sciences, Supernant (2017) in archeology, Adese (2014) in sociology, and Hodgson-Smith and Kermoal (2016) in environmental studies. Macdougall's (2010) multi-faceted influence, which became visible in just a few years, rests on her exemplary research. Scholars referred to this as the "Macdougall Paradigm," as Brenda explained the phenomenon of realizing the enormity of the influence her work had on Métis scholarship.

Macdougall explores the ethnogenesis of the Métis through *wahkootowin* (a method also discussed by Maria Campbell) in *Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities* (2006). The work outlines connections and ways of being in which scholars can see themselves in their journeys and influenced later work by Barman and Evans (2009) to understand the British Columbia Métis experience and Baker and Baker's (2010) exploration of identity, relationships, and sharing epistemology between father and son. In "Wahkootowin as Methodology: How Archival Records Reveal a Métis Kinscape" (Macdougall, 2017b), a confluence of influential scholars work with the ideas of Macdougall, with Supernant (2021) creating new ways of thinking of Métis through archaeology, Nickel and Fehr (2020) stressing kinship for Indigenous feminisms, and Adese et al. (2017) dialoguing about mediating identity. These works depict a way of walking the earth and appreciating the female-centered webs of kinship highlighted in Ens and Sawchuk (2018), which owes much to Macdougall.

Like many other Métis scholars, Macdougall discusses a wide range of topics: the socio-cultural development of communities (2005), Métis culture (2012), Métis married life (2008), the Daniels decision (2016, 2021), and epistemological traditions (2017a). Macdougall co-edited *Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History* (St-Onge et al., 2012), providing space for both Métis and non-Métis researchers to express their findings regarding all aspects of Métis existence. She works with non-Métis scholars: Macdougall and St-Onge (2013) describe

Métis buffalo hunting brigades, while Nejad et al. (2019) speak to Indigenous urbanism spatial production in Winnipeg.

As an authoritative voice on all things Métis, Macdougall asserts her nationhood and ways of knowing throughout her scholarship, even as she works alongside many non-Indigenous theorists and historians. Macdougall's work has provided Métis scholarship with a clear sense of the community's genesis in Saskatchewan and elaborated on many theories involving her contemporaries while giving us a way forward as kin.

Celeste McKay

Born in 1969 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, McKay demonstrates Métis women's capacity to publish in academia while working on its fringes. Her Métis family names are McKay, St. Cyr, Belcourt, Piche, and LaVallee from St. Eustache and Roland, Manitoba. McKay earned a Master of Law from the University of Ottawa, focused on Indigenous women and international human rights. Dedicated to advocacy and human rights policy for decades, McKay worked for the Native Women's Association of Canada as the Director of Human Rights and Internal Affairs, as a researcher for Amnesty International, and as a consultant for the United Nations Permanent Forum. Throughout her career, McKay has published reports, reviews, and articles taken up in academia. From the first years of the millennium, McKay's publications have impacted scholarly work and policy development in justice, human rights, international Indigenous peoples, and oceans and fisheries.

In an article of which McKay was a co-author, E. Walter et al. (2000) suggested a revision to the Pacific salmon allocation system that infringed on Indigenous rights, which led to articles dealing with eco-stewardship (Chapin et al., 2009) and clarified the complexity of the Pacific Northwest (Turner & Berkes, 2006). For McKay, the article established a trajectory of specialization in arguing for Indigenous rights.

Years later, in partnership with Larry Chartrand, another Métis scholar, McKay published *A Review of Research on Criminal Victimization and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, 1990 to 2001* (Chartrand & McKay, 2006). This comprehensive study identified revictimization through colonial processes, underreporting issues, and the prevalence of domestic violence in the Indigenous community. Additionally, the review identified the research needs of the Indigenous population experiencing criminal victimization, leading to work by Bombay et al. (2009)

informing intergenerational trauma research, Hunt (2016) concretizing Indigenous mistrust of the justice system, and McGlade (2012) arguing that victims are an afterthought in the design of the justice system.

Shortly after that report appeared, McKay began working on reports for the United Nations Permanent Forum, the central coordinating body for matters concerned with the world's Indigenous population (McKay & Carmen, 2007). Their documentation of the sessions have allowed scholars like de Mesnard (2014) to incorporate the proceedings into their work on the discussion and progress of Indigenous rights at the UN level. In keeping with McKay's history of exploring the rights of Indigenous women at the international level, she and Benjamin (2010) shared a vision for moving forward with those indivisible rights, sparking conversations regarding the intersectionality of human rights and the gendered processes of self-determination with the work of the forum (Kuokkanen, 2012, 2016) and Herr's (2019) conceptual argument that women's rights are human rights, a point made powerfully in McKay and Benjamin (2010).

After a pause in writing, McKay had two publications appear in 2018, each dealing with a critical policy arena: justice and education. First, McKay and Milward (2018), in a case study of the Indigenous diversionary program Onashwewin, found a 30% lower recidivism rate among participants, thus demonstrating the viability of self-determination when dealing with Indigenous rehabilitation in the justice system. The work influenced Mussell's (2021) comprehensive international, intergenerational legacy study. McKay (2018) offers an account of the January 25–26, 2018, emergency meeting on Indigenous child and family services called by the Government of Canada in consultation with the Indigenous community. Her report has been used by scholars in numerous disciplines, with Milne and Wotherspoon (2020) building a case for schools being detrimental to Indigenous children (sociology), Choate et al. (2021) arguing that placing children outside the community is cultural genocide (law), and Ritland et al. (2021) exploring suicide rates among young Indigenous mothers due to child apprehensions (social work). McKay's contributions to scholarly thought demonstrate the myriad ways in which the work of Métis women works its way into the academy.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, it needs to be said that despite attempted erasures, these 13 grandmothers and aunts have successfully published their knowledge for decades. Given the scarcity of research explicitly addressing Métis women academics, the production of the 13 women enumerated above demonstrates their impact. Furthermore, the comprehensive documentation of the Métis women's contributions to the academy demonstrates their impact in various disciplines across the academic spectrum, starting in the 1970s.

This chapter introduced the grandmothers and aunts and spoke to their contributions in terms of publications, combined with analyses of the journeys of the grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship in the academy. Finally, it outlined the impact of the grandmothers and aunts on their respective fields in shifting our understanding of Métisness in a wide range of disciplines. Through an analysis of the works and how they have been used in scholarship, it is clear that the racist tendency to dismiss women's stories of erasure is unfounded in reality. These Métis women's oeuvres demonstrate their triumphs despite many obstacles.

Chapter 5 Learning from the Lived Experiences of the Grandmothers and Aunties

It needs to be said that there are three themes comprising of 11 points of erasure occurring to Métis women in the academy, which the grandmothers and aunties have shared: colonial attempts at erasure through experiences with colonial education, racism, whiteness, and the pressure to hide; constantly being measured by a colonial yardstick assessing if the grandmothers and aunties were Métis, Indigenous, or educated enough; invisibility due to a lack of recognition, acknowledgment, or awareness of one another; and colonial institutions' powers to silence through Indigenous umbrella publishing and the struggle to publish Métis-specific research and issues obtaining research funding for Métis-specific projects.

For this study, Erasure is defined as follows: 1) the exclusion of a minority group or group member from the historical record and in this dissertation generally refers to Métis women; 2) the replacement or whitewashing of Métis women or representations of Métis women's contributions or silencing their contributions from the collective consciousness of the academy; 3) the denial of an individual's or group's Métis identity or the misidentification of Métis by outsiders. In the stories shared at the kitchen table, the grandmothers and aunties spoke to the various actors that attempted to erase their work, and these actors differed depending on the story. However, to be explicit, the actors of erasure were colonial governments and institutions, Indigenous community members, and even members of their own Métis community. The attempt to silence Métis women at times through this research seemed all-encompassing, yet the women persevered despite these actors.

In the late 1970s, the Métis Women's Association of Manitoba spoke out against the treatment of women in the MMF of that day. Though their "knees, hands, and voices shook," they wrote the damning "It Needs to Be Said" (1978), outlining the various ways in which they had been mistreated. Inspired by this powerful work, this dissertation seeks to uncover the experiences of Métis women in the academy and state the 11 points of erasure. The literature review chapter highlighted the lack of research on the Métis experience in the academy, showing that the adage about the Métis hiding in plain sight continues to thrive in higher education. The methodology chapter spoke to the Indigenous umbrella approach to research, contributing to the lack of Métis voices and methodologies in the past two generations. Since then, Métis women have published theories and methodologies that make our theorizing visible to the academy. The

grandmothers and aunties became successful despite all the obstacles they encountered, for they had witnessed attempts at their erasure, confronted the obstacles placed in their way by institutions fraught with systemic racism, and honored their obligations to their communities through their lived experiences.

During my time with the grandmothers and aunties, they discussed points they felt were hindrances they had to overcome to achieve the success in publishing outlined in chapter 4. However, each grandmother and auntie experienced impediments that she had to overcome or endure. Using a combination of *Keeoukaywin*, *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*, and *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, this chapter retells the stories that have been shared with me in our interviews. The themes are drawn directly from the words shared at the kitchen table titled from direct quotes. Through visiting the kitchen table and listening deeply to the stories, shared similarities began to emerge. Some will sound similar to our Indigenous relatives around the globe working toward recognition of their ways of being and knowing. In contrast, others are uniquely Métis and told, as the literature review has demonstrated, from a perspective often ignored by or misrepresented under the Indigenous umbrella.

The following story has a complex plot with multiple layers of stories, including three related themes of erasure; those who lived these experiences might feel like they are on a quest with twists and turns with multiple antagonists. The three themes of erasure explored are 1) colonial attempts at erasure, 2) attempts to make Métisness invisible, and 3) power structures' attempts to silence Métis voices.

Colonial Attempts at Erasure

The documented experience of colonial powers attempting to erase Métis from existence feeds into the first form of erasure witnessed and attested to by the grandmothers and aunties. This story contains four complex issues: points of colonial attempts at erasure through education, racism, whiteness, and needing to hide in plain sight. Each played a part in the attempted erasure of the work of Métis women and the Métis people.

Colonial Education

From a Métis-specific perspective, the colonial narrative around Métis existence following the Battle of Batoche and the subsequent hanging of Louis Riel is one that the

grandmothers and aunts have attempted to rewrite in Canadian history, primarily due to having their existence challenged throughout the homeland. As a scholar in education, Rita Bouvier dedicated years to rewriting the social studies curriculum and its approach to our histories: “when our history is provided only in one paragraph as the history of the country, speaking metaphorically, ... that’s just not satisfactory.” Rita also spoke about the organization needed to combat this erasure: “I want to call them movements because although we did organize ourselves formally, here in Canada, there was a group of us who didn’t like the research that was being put out about our communities.” After decades of telling our stories as an act of decolonization, Rita spoke about the work done in the community and the academy to combat the Canadian curriculum of erasure.

The effectiveness of this attempted erasure is apparent in Emma LaRocque’s words when relating an experience at an academic conference in Ontario in the 1980s: “Nobody knew who the Métis were. I was flabbergasted. Academics didn’t know who the Métis were, but they knew who Louis Riel was, but I swear that they thought everybody died with Riel. That we weren’t here anymore.” According to the stories shared in most provinces, the story of the Métis in the social studies curriculum stopped with the end of the resistance to Canada, and the Métis were left out of contemporary history, resulting in our erasure.

Colonial education that does include the Métis portrays them as villains against the state, using terms such as “rebellion” to describe the various instances of Métis resistance to colonial subjugation. Christi Belcourt recalls her educational history and connects it to her daughters, whose experience demonstrates the continuation of this false narrative regarding Métis history, which is taught throughout the country:

In my grade five class, I remember in the history book we were using; it said Louis Riel was a “traitor.” In an entire textbook on Canadian history, there was only one page on First Nations and then half a page on Louis Riel, who was presented as a traitor.

With lessons like these taught in the Indigenous perspectives sections of teacher education, it is not surprising that educators would struggle when teaching about the Métis. Due to their colonial education, they lack the knowledge and do not have the tools to bring this content into their classrooms in a way that respects actual Métis history. Christi revealed some of the complex issues surrounding teachers’ abilities:

Do the teachers really know anything about Métis people or Indigenous people? Most don't really. While it may be a subject that is included in schools now, it mostly focuses around residential schools—which is good, but they still don't understand Métis people, and they always say, “Oh, Métis people were a mix of Europeans and First Nations.

Educators lack a basic understanding of who the Métis are, despite the scholarship produced by Métis. Verna St. Denis revealed that while “advocating for Native Studies and looking for research that wasn't so derogatory towards us and I mean that's why we organized Native Studies because you read Canadian history, it was so offensive and racist.” Educational outcomes are bound to be suboptimal with tools like these used to educate Canadian society. Sherry Farrell Racette reported that throughout her career, like Verna St. Denis, she was responsible for creating a new curriculum using primary documents “with Métis stuff; the only stuff that had been written was all Riel and badly”—explaining the experiences in classrooms when all the teaching tools are derogatory to the Métis. Emma noted her concern: “I have been troubled for quite some time about how limited both academic and administrative knowledge is about the Métis.” Although many grandmothers and aunties have worked for decades to combat this feature of Canadian society, and Emma spoke of reality 40 years ago, she continues to have these concerns:

Even today, you wouldn't believe how many students, including First Nations, and even some who claim Métisness, have told me they knew nothing about the Métis... How is it that so many people do not know who the Red River Métis Nation peoples are? And in Manitoba, no less!

Emma LaRocque was incredulous that the Métis presence could remain unknown in the Métis homeland. As an educator in Manitoba, I found it unsurprising to hear Christi Belcourt say that “in Ontario, nobody knows who Métis people are over here, so it's always a struggle, I find.” On the other side of the country, Jeannine Carrière, who teaches at the University of Victoria, echoed this sentiment:

When I came to Vancouver Island close to 17 years ago, Métis was not exactly first on the list of the hit parade in terms of people even knowing who we are, our history. We don't have a land base on Vancouver Island.

She found that sentiment replicated in the academy. The grandmothers and aunties spoke of attempted erasure perpetuated by the colonial education system throughout the Métis homeland in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

Regardless of geographic location, there is a prevailing ignorance of who the Métis are, which is why after decades of Métis scholars producing research that is prominently featured in this dissertation, I was encouraged to include a “Who we are” section outlining the basics, which aligns with Christi Belcourt’s reflections on her work in education:

I guess, of Canadian society being more aware, more intelligent, more conscious of Métis and who we are. I still am faced with the most basic of questions. And that leads me to believe the Canadian education system is really failing Canadians as a whole. Because if they were taught properly, we each generation of our people wouldn’t have to battle another graduating class of ignorant Canadians.

Contemplating this repetitive reality of generations ignoring the work done to provide resources and the endless hours of research and teaching is a form of erasure. The grandmothers’ and aunts’ work runs the risk of being lost to subsequent generations due to the continued erasure of the work done by Métis women and Métis scholars. Illustrating the importance of speaking about how those contributions have been muted and not reached Canadian society, Christi went on:

My daughter faces the same questions that I faced: same prejudices, the same stupid comments made, and we see that play out as each graduating class turns into adults that turn into people who sometimes take a position of power in government structures or within institutions where our people access. We are stuck in this loop of ignorance, and I don’t see that really having changed.

With many grandmothers and aunts working on curriculum development, teacher education, and general awareness of the Métis people, it is crucial to acknowledge their words. A remedy to this erasure is for educators, administrators, and curriculum developers to use the decades of contributions by the grandmothers and aunts that address these issues. Engaging and using the recommendations published over the past 25 years, starting with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), will help address the issues hindering Métis awareness among mainstream Canadians. By recognizing the ongoing systemic issues in both K–12 and postsecondary colonial educational systems, there is an opportunity for improvement and the possibility of inclusion of their publications to address their concerns.

Racism

The next layer in the attempted colonial erasure of Métis is racism, a practice that has long been known to affect Indigenous scholars and people throughout the academy. However,

the way it presents itself through the lived experiences of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship has remained largely unknown. Sherry Farrell Racette grounded our discussion by stating that racism aligns with ignorance and is “structurally and systemically created and vigorously defended. So, ignorance is not the absence of knowledge; ignorance is a conscious position that is created systemically and defended.” It is critical to note, despite decades of efforts of the Métis grandmothers and aunties to combat ignorance about the Métis, that racism was and is intentional and to document the attempts to drown out the efforts of these women. Her words can lead to reflection on how and why this ignorance prevails, and the grandmothers and aunties spoke to what they believed to be a driving force. Celeste McKay called it out directly: “I think systemic racism is alive and well, and I think that systemic gender racism exists and is alive and well.” Celeste’s assertion that this ignorance is intentional and an act of racism connects to Emma’s thoughts around decolonization and the homophobia, racism, and classism she has experienced throughout her life, along with the research time it cost her:

There are all the unsaid prejudices that can just eat at you in many ways. I think all this and more was one of the reasons why I didn’t publish as much as I could have or maybe should have; it’s draining—all the time it took to clear up crap that was always there.

These remarks vividly relate how racism attempts to erase the efforts of Métis women—or, more clearly—how racism detracts from their ability to produce knowledge that would combat racism. Sherry recounted her experience working at an institution and “dealing with a lot of racism and a lot of [pause] a profound amount of mind-boggling resistance from my students and so much disrespect.” Wanting to deal with the issue head-on, she sought assistance from her superiors by making an appointment with the associate dean to discuss the issue:

His response to me was, “and thank God they have you.” So, my presence was enabling them to wash their hands of responsibility and to avoid the very unpleasant, that they still cannot deal with how we deal with racism in the institution.

Sherry’s epiphany following the dean’s comment reveals the seemingly endless loop of fighting racism in a colonial institution not invested in saving itself and the decades of work that have attempted to reverse over five hundred years of colonization and racism that detract from knowledge production. One of the grandmothers and aunties who has devoted decades to the concept of anti-racist education, Verna St. Denis, noted “how difficult it is to do anti-racism in a country that denies racism is a problem” and admitted that she “was trying to expose a problem

that was buried.” An example of the vital work created by many grandmothers and aunts such as *Aboriginal Education and Anti-Racist Education: Building Alliances across Cultural and Racial Identity* (2007), the first anti-racist course at the University of Saskatchewan by Rita Bouvier and Verna St. Denis, and other Métis scholars who have attempted to dismantle racist Canadian understandings of mixedness and the Métis experience.

In their reflections, the grandmothers and aunts recounted their realization of the struggle and their attempts to combat the racism they faced. Celeste McKay, who works at national and international policy levels, described her commitment as follows:

I think the work that I have tried to do focuses on getting people in the academy or even in government to have a deeper understanding of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This also means that they have a deeper understanding of what being Métis is and who are the Métis as a nation. Why are they a nation?... Taking a distinction-based approach in the policy and legislative realms and academic realms; that’s how you create a deeper understanding of Métisness.

If the racism felt by Métis stems from ignorance of their positioning under the Indigenous umbrella or who they are, then work remains to be done to clarify Métisness for the broader Canadian society. Another theme expressed later in this chapter around being Indigenous enough complicates the racism felt by Métis students, staff, and faculty. Even if eliminating racism proves futile for Canadian society as a whole, it remains key to the empowerment of the Métis themselves. The time spent by the grandmothers and aunts to combat racism and ignorance has hindered their abilities to produce knowledge.

Whiteness

Another pillar in the story of colonial erasure is dealing with whiteness. In a review of Raka Shome’s *Outing Whiteness*, which offers a synopsis of critical race scholarship at the turn of the century, Liera-Schwichtenberg asserts that whiteness, as an “institutionalized and systemic problem, is maintained and produced not by overt rhetoric of whiteness but rather by its ‘everydayness’” (p. 366). Moreton-Robison (2004) states that whiteness is the “epistemology of the west; it is an invisible regime of power that secures hegemony through discourse and has material effects in everyday life” (p. 75). In the Métis understanding of the way forward for their truth and histories to be told, the obstacle continues to be whiteness and the continued colonial erasure of the Métis as a people with their own languages, cultures, governing systems, and

understanding of their relationship with the colonial state. Grandmothers and aunts dedicated to rewriting the history of the Métis people, like Lorraine Mayer, spoke to this calling: “I was waking up to ‘you guys aren’t telling the truth about us, and you people don’t even know who we are.’ We’ve got to tell them.” In this instance, “them” are the white scholars in the academy heralded as experts in Métis histories and culture, such as Jennifer Brown, Thomas Flanagan, Antonine S. Lussier, Donald Bruce Sealey, and Olive Dickason.

Other grandmothers and aunts agreed that Métis histories were being misrepresented. Jean Teillet observed, “It’s basically the old white boys’ school of telling history,” and warned of the excuses made by historians for their past transgressions: “we can dismiss all of that; it was the times. Well, [George] Stanley was writing in the 1960s, not the 1880s ... there is still a very entrenched old boys’ way of telling history in this country.” This admission speaks to several issues tied to Métis erasure under the colonial attempts theme. First, it identifies who perpetrated misinformation about the colonial settler narrative about the Métis and demonstrates the colonialists’ need to retell the stories reported by white scholars in the 1960s rather than the stories told by Métis scholars asserting educational sovereignty. As an act of educational sovereignty, the grandmothers and aunts have attempted to exercise control over curricula and the scholarly narrative when discussing Métisness to shift the academic understanding of who we are.

When reflecting on the work done by Métis scholars, Sherry Farrell Racette noted, “I think our writing is very different, but I think because the academy is still male-focused that the writings of men are just taken more seriously by historians that are mostly males.” There is a need to unpack the numerous issues in this assessment of the current state of postsecondary institutions, including misogyny and epistemic injustice, when the Métis attempt to write their own histories.

The grandmothers and aunts realized the need for Métis representation in the academy and those who create knowledge for Canadian society, as Celeste McKay insists:

It is true that it’s only through representativeness that you really get that understanding at a deep level. You have to have the ideological understanding, the basic principal foundations, and then you have to have people in the academy. ... If you don’t have those people representing Métis, Inuit, you can’t have that distinct voice come out any other way or without that component as part of it.

If the antidote to misrepresentation is, as Celeste claims, representation, why are colonial institutions continuing to devalue those who have lived Métis experience? For example, despite being a leading Métis scholar at her institution, Lorraine Mayer asked, “when they want a Métis expert, guess who they call?” According to her, they call on a white scholar married to a Métis despite having “two Métis on the second floor. Do they come to us with questions about Métis? No ... prioritizing a white woman simply because she writes about us and now that appropriation is huge, especially now since she’s the expert.” This grandmother reported struggling with this for years at her institution, which echoes other grandmothers’ and aunties’ experiences.

Listening carefully to the words of the grandmothers and aunties reveals multiple instances of epistemic injustices and the privileging of white voices. When institutions privilege white scholars over those who live and breathe Métis reality, this is a form of attempted colonial erasure achieved by covering Métis work and words with whiteness.

Colonial Pressure to Hide in Plain Sight

Another form of attempted colonial erasure is the Métis response of hiding in plain sight. As the grandmothers and aunties were born between 1949 and 1969, they have witnessed shifts in the community for many to live out loud as Métis. Their collective work has also contributed to the shift in Canada’s consciousness. Anti-Métis racism from the Canadian government and settler society stemming from the loss at the Battle of Batoche in 1885 created the need for Métis to hide, even decades later. Lorraine Mayer recalls growing up in a time where “being Métis was not a fun thing” and disclosed recollections of her mother internalizing settler-colonial racism:

We would have to walk down back lanes to go buy groceries. Why? Because my mom always thought she was never good enough to walk in the front or because she was ashamed to be seen. And this is the way it was all the time. She would put white makeup on, and like in *When She Cries*, well, you read that part, where she would put the makeup on, and I was like, “Why hide your beauty? My God, your brown skin is beautiful.”

As an act of survival, Lorraine’s family would hide. This act is echoed by Rita Bouvier, who commented on young people coming into SUNTEP not knowing their histories due to their families hiding their true identity: “because of what happened to us—because of colonization. Yes, some of us were able to blend in, but some of us could not.” This reawakening of our truths symbolizes the tenacity of the Métis people in the face of attempts to erase them and disconnect them from their communities.

Engaging in Métis cultures and feeling free to be themselves happened behind closed doors or in Métis pockets of town. Sherry Farrell Racette also highlighted the literal act of hiding in plain sight; when she grew up, “it was off the radar, for most white people didn’t know about it, because we didn’t invite them.” Sherry went on to share that she grew up in a “very racist town” that included a “vibrant Métis community” and recalls living in two different realities:

There was a split because of the racism between public and private performance; what you did when you were at school, what you did—I don’t know—at some public place, yes, you kept your head down. But there were dances and house parties and visiting, and I mean it was very vibrant, so I heard lot of stories. I grew up learning how to jig in someone’s basement, and it was just very vibrant, and people were an interesting combination of being ashamed and proud. You experience so much racism, but at the same time, people were proud.

Sherry mentioned a story about a daily visitor to an art exhibit in a small town in Saskatchewan. The man, a prominent local figure, visited the installation every day. He stood silently taking in the various works until a gallery employee finally approached him: “he just quietly said ‘I am Métis.’ And she had no idea. Because in order for him to move forward in his profession, he probably to even get accepted into the university he had to suppress that.” This reality is shared by many in the wake of colonial education, racism, and the perceived superiority of whiteness.

Heather Souter spoke about hiding her appearance and language as a form of survival, stating that “people were just trying to survive. They were listening to the so-called authorities ... it was colonial, and they were trying to assimilate us.” Some Métis attended residential or day schools, while others were spared due to circumstances that hid their language in pursuit of assimilation in their communities. This hiding is what Christi Belcourt calls “a common story across the country, across North America, and now we are facing a really serious crisis in the conflict between our education system and our loss of language.” Métis across the homeland were historically multilingual, with specific dialects depending on particular locations. The revitalization efforts led by many of the grandmothers and aunties were a direct response to the issues mentioned by Heather Souter, Christi Belcourt, and Verna DeMontigny.

Speaking about the need to hide their language and who they were, DeMontigny, whose work with language began in the 1970s with Michif Elder Norman Fleury and scholar Peter Bakker, recalled Métis people around her hiding and put it simply:

We went underground. Our language was slowly dying out; people weren't speaking it anymore because it is a white man's world and you have to get along in a white man's world. I hate to say it, but that was the mindset of the Elders back then.

In the 1970s, DeMontigny began traveling to the Turtle Mountains to teach Michif. She spoke to her Elders, who cautioned her to allow the Michif language to die and asked, "what are you going to do for? It's a white man's world. Speak English." These comments only propelled her to work harder: "that was the edge I needed to push me forward, and once I started, the momentum kept going." These community Elders advising Verna had succumbed to over a century of pressure to assimilate required to survive in the current climate of the 1970s. By contrast, she was driven to preserve Michif for generations and dedicated the next 50 years of her life to its revitalization. Inspired by other grandmothers and aunties such as Grace Zoldy and Rita Flamand, she strives to leave a legacy:

Rita is not here anymore. See, that's what I am talking about; she still has her work out there and she left a legacy. She left something. She left something for her family. She left something for her children. She left something for all the people out there. So, for me, that's what makes me happy.

The story DeMontigny demonstrates the power of a few who refused to succumb to the erasure of assimilation. Due to the efforts of these women traveling between Brandon and the Turtle Mountains in the 1970s and 1980s, hiding their actions, there is now a vibrant movement focused on Michif revitalization. Hiding their true selves from the world to fit in was a stark reality for several grandmothers and aunties.

In these connected stories, layers of the colonial attempts at erasure, the grandmothers and aunties recalled how Western society's superiority affected their childhoods and careers. At the same time, however, these four ways of attempted colonial erasure—colonial education, racism, whiteness, and hiding in plain sight—could not truly eradicate the Métis from the academy, as the stories of the grandmothers and aunties make clear.

Invisibility

Another story in the attempted erasure of the Métis falls under the theme of invisibility, whether that meant invisibility to one another, invisible work in the academy and community, or invisible authority. All 13 grandmothers and aunties reported multiple reasons for feeling that the

Métis were largely invisible to the academy, such as a lack of acknowledgment, credentials, recognition, and awareness of one another.

Lack of Acknowledgment

After centuries of non-Indigenous people claiming rights over Indigenous knowledge and words, it is not especially surprising that this phenomenon occurs, but there is still reason to be disappointed that it happens in today's academy. This thought leans toward Jean Teillet's assertion that erasure can be achieved through a lack of acknowledgment:

The erasure happens in two ways, so you can either consciously or you can just self-select who you want to cite, kind of how men cite men, and then over time, everybody thinks that it was only men there.

To Jean's point regarding gendered citation, Chris Andersen's (2014) foundational text exemplifies how to honor Métis women, as it cites over 100 items of scholarship by women. Sherry Farrell Racette credits Andersen's inclusion of Métis women's voices to his being "raised by Métis women." When I asked him about his upbringing, Chris stated, "Yes, I was raised by very strong Métis women - nemama, kokum, my auntie Linda and my auntie Shirley in particular" (personal communication, May 23, 2022). However, not all scholars have cited Métis women's contributions properly, leading to a lack of acknowledgment felt by the grandmothers and aunties.

Conscious choices are made in scholarship to cite original works or pieces that build on Métis women's work or continue to cite white scholars despite the decades of scholarship debunking their theories about the Métis. Unfortunately, many academics choose not to cite or otherwise recognize the contributions of Métis women in multiple disciplines, using devices such as plagiarism or denying Métis scholarship.

Many of the grandmothers and aunties spoke of a lack of acknowledgment. Each brought to this discussion a personal experience in which she was a victim or witnessed another Métis woman being treated as insignificant. Numerous instances of a lack of acknowledgment involved failing to acknowledge the contributions of women who worked on a research project, but some went as far as stealing work and publishing it without permission.

For instance, Jeannine Carrière described one of her first research experiences, which involved working with the MMF in the early 1970s. In her role at the Manitoba Métis

Commission, she conducted research that would inform one of the most influential books on the Métis, *The Genealogy of the Manitoba Métis* (Sprague and Frye, 1983). At the time, Jeannine recollected, “we all had a lot of passion, energy, and vision, and we really felt like we were part of a movement that was quite significant,” which was a perfectly understandable sentiment as the book became “really instrumental in changing people’s lives and making the connections that they need to make.” I recall finding our own family’s connections in its pages and felt vindicated by acknowledging our family’s lineage, an action shared by many Métis in the homeland. However, the 1983 publication neglects to mention the work of Jeannine—and indeed the entire commission’s contribution—acknowledging only funding from the MMF and others.

The experience of not being fully recognized in the academy has plagued Métis women for decades, as demonstrated by the work of fluent Michif speakers. Heather Souter, who has worked closely with knowledge keepers such as Grace Zoldy, Rita Flamand, Verna DeMontigny, and Anne Anderson, should be recognized for her work on language preservation. Heather Souter shared that “it is difficult to find ourselves unless there has been an acknowledgment from the beginning by researchers of the need to recognize the community and the culture from which these languages are coming out.” For years, their contributions might be noted in acknowledgments sections, but those works lacked numerous citations of their contributions, translations, and knowledge, which were the foundation of the written pieces. The work of these grandmothers and aunties is an example of direct plagiarism in instances where original ideas or research were used word-for-word without proper citation, or paraphrased plagiarism, in which scholars reworked the language of others without citation. Recent work involving one of the grandmothers and aunties indicates there may be a shift toward giving credit where it is due Heather Souter shared: “There are greater expectations of people now to recognize people as co-authors. And I have seen recently with Verna DeMontigny being recognized as a co-author.”

Other grandmothers and aunties, such as Rita Bouvier, had their stories stolen and published by others. In keeping with her role as mentor and collaborator, she said that I “share my draft papers sometimes with people, and I don’t know where they end up.” Rita challenged a close friend following another scholar’s printing of a story involving her and her mother. Rita recalled having a conversation with her mother regarding the concept of education as an act of love or *sâkihitôwin*, *nitanis*, *miyo-sâkihitôwin*. *Wastiyap* (Rita’s gifted name) revealed:

Somehow it found its way into the literature ... and the story was told the right way, but it was attributed to someone else, and I was like, “What?!” And I am not usually protective, but it was my mother’s story.

Another grandmother had a similar experience but could rectify it before the work in question was published. Lorraine Mayer used the term “perceptual reality” in a new way and was shocked, when reviewing a piece for a non-Indigenous friend, to find that the friend was speaking to this concept without proper citation:

So I contacted her and said, “Hey, you are using perceptual reality.” And she said, “Yes, I absolutely love what you did with that.” I said, “Yes, but you don’t cite me. You don’t say you got that from me (name).” “Oh, didn’t I? Okay, I will go do that.”

In this instance, Lorraine could have the omission dealt with before publication, but the grandmothers’ and aunties’ accounts show that this kind of “borrowing” happens too often in the academy. In reflection, Lorraine was hurt and questioned her relationship and that of scholars with Indigenous words:

Because we are friends, and that I am Indigenous, you think that it’s okay to do these things. ... Like because in the white world, that’s plagiarism. ... And I thought, what gives people the right or the notion that they have the right to just use what we say? What gives them that? Is this that sort of privileged world that thinks that it owns everything?

Entitlement and superiority complexes abound when looking at past scholarship on the Métis and are questioned by Sherry Farrell Racette when reflecting on white scholars’ work:

A lot of times, when you look at seminal guys and say, where is your citation? You are always ragging on us about citation. You are making sweeping conclusions; who are you talking about? Who are their names? Like seriously, name the names.

Lack of Credentials

Another form of invisibility is lack of credentials, which takes two forms: 1) being Métis enough and 2) being educated enough. This form of invisibility is caused by institutional attitudes to credentials and how discrediting the work of Métis women impacts our awareness of their contributions to ways of knowing. There are stories from several grandmothers and aunties about being questioned about being Métis, Indigenous, or educated enough.

Being Métis Enough

The frequency of being questioned about being Métis enough was discussed by Lorraine Mayer, who admitted, “seriously, a lot of discrediting is going on now, and even I do it when I am responding to people.” That comment stemmed from discussing an interaction with a senior scholar who questioned my Métisness due to my married name of Forsythe. It led me to explain myself and my marriage, which I now recognize as inappropriate. This interaction was not a casual conversation but rather a deliberate attempt to undercut my ability to organize a Métis-specific event. Emma LaRocque reflected on her being questioned regarding her Métisness by saying, “my mom was Métis, my dad was Métis, four of my grandparents were Métis on both sides; how much more Métis can I get?” When asked, “Who is your mom and dad?” Sherry Farrell Racette shares a similar response: “Someone asked me once, ‘Who are your ancestors, who are your Métis ancestors?’ Like my mom and dad.” These grandmothers and aunties’ roots are firmly in the Métis nation—their responses reflect the growing reality in the academy that many who claim to be Métis have distant ancestors who connect them and are thus unlike Emma and Sherry, whose immediate family are recognized as being Métis.

The feeling of not being considered Métis enough was expressed well by Emma LaRocque, who felt that “society is judging us as not really Indigenous because we are not First Nation! So, in that way, Métis are being erased.” Furthering that idea, Emma shared that

they [media and the university] tend to treat Métis people as not Indigenous or not Indigenous enough. Increasingly, I have gotten a distinct impression that I am not being treated or received as Indigenous. The irony is ... we grew up free, off the land, and we spoke only Cree/Michif.

Her concern connects to another form of erasure: a lack of Indigenous credentials due to being “only” Métis. Here lies the danger of a single term that belittles the existence of others that are grouped under the term. Many scholars, such as Martel (2018), MacDonald et al. (2018), and Burns (2020), are being to grapple with the sentiment of “only” being Métis – or not Indigenous enough in the eyes of First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians.

The reality of having to state and restate who Métis are to both Métis and non-Métis audiences is not only exhausting but also an act of erasure when those who do not align with the current citizenship requirements of the Métis governing bodies are excluded. The governing bodies’ ability to grant citizenship was determined in *R. v. Cunningham* (2010), which prevents

those with both Métis and First Nations ancestry from claiming both identities in the eyes of the colonial government. The Supreme Court has determined who is Métis, making those with status not eligible to be recognized as Métis. This constant need for reassertion is especially true when Métis organizations align themselves with the colonial government, allowing Métis to hold only a status card or a Métis citizenship card and denying grandmothers and aunties such as Verna St. Denis and Sherry Farrell Racette the right to acknowledge all their ancestral roots. Sherry remarked, “my mom was always joking that I am too much of an Indian for the half-breeds and too much half-breed for the Indians.” She also stated that, ideally, she could be both a band member of her community and a card-carrying Métis citizen. The Canadian government has consistently forbidden dual citizenship; therefore, some grandmothers and aunties have been forced to give up their political ties to the contemporary Métis nation. This act results in questioning their Métisness despite having ancestral ties and, in some cases, threatening to remove them from the collective body of Métis work. Some of the other grandmothers and aunties I reached out to for inclusion in this project declined, concerned about their perceptions of their presence in this dissertation due to their fear of being considered insufficient due to their ancestry. This quantification demonstrates the power of erasure of the specific lack of credentials of being Métis enough—their work is absent from this study, and their words are silenced. After much deliberation, I concluded that it would violate the principles of the intertwined Michif methodology I adopt in this thesis to discuss the work, despite its merits, of those grandmothers and aunties who declined to be interviewed.

In the interview process, I asked the grandmothers and aunties if they identified as Métis and if they were registered with any governing bodies to ensure that I told their stories and positionality to reflect their personal experiences. On reflection, after one of the grandmothers and aunties said, “I was hoping you wouldn’t be asking me that question.”⁴ I ensured that I reframed the conversation so as not to come across as if I were checking credentials but wanted to avoid assuming their realities, which are demonstrated in this dissertation by including seven non-registered Métis and six registered Métis citizens. To reassert, the women in this study have self-identified historical connections to the Métis, sharing their family names and historic communities. The Métis nation was established long before the current governing bodies were

⁴ The identity of this grandmother or auntie is being withheld.

established; indeed, all the grandmothers and aunties are older than the bodies themselves, except the Métis Nation of Alberta, which was established in 1928. The national council was established in 1983, and the individual provincial governing bodies such as the MMF began in 1967, followed by three bodies created in the 1990s; Métis Nation of Saskatchewan in 1993, Métis Nation Ontario in 1993, and Métis Nation British Columbia in 1996. Their decision to not be registered varied, but all possess the lineages required for membership or citizenship and are accepted by the community as Métis. The concept of not being Métis enough is an unfounded erasure created to silence and ignore them.

Being Indigenous Enough

Many grandmothers and aunties say the Métis are lost under the Indigenous umbrella. Using terms and telling stories for all Indigenous groups across the globe hides the truth that Métis are not being represented either through exclusion or homogenization. In addition, questions regarding who benefits from the term need to be asked. If the Métis become simply pan-Indigenous, who will gain? One grandmother insisted that “the umbrella term always serves conveniently for university administrations,” leading to further questions of why. The grandmothers and aunties provided instances when they felt invisible and saw their existence as threatened by the term. Emma LaRocque expressed concern regarding a 2021 move at her university to change the department name to the umbrella term:

I was upset when my department changed its name to Indigenous Studies. For one thing, it is so unoriginal, and everyone around the world is usurping the term “Indigenous.” I wanted to at least have a department name that specifically identified Métis, Inuit, and First Nations.

Both senior Métis scholars in her department debated the name change, stating their concerns about the ramifications of the umbrella term after working in academia for over 30 years; they regard using the umbrella term as agreeing to erase the diversity of Métis reality. Ultimately, the name was changed from Native Studies to Indigenous Studies, with much celebration by other scholars in the department. Emma views this kind of universalization and generalization and the very term Indigenous as “an act of colonialism and erasure of our specific identities, and it also serves as a huge generalization.” This sentiment is shared by many of the grandmothers and aunties. Jeannine Carrière describes the need for resistance to succumbing to blanket terms that

deny Métis existence: “We’ve had to resist being kind of taken into all Indigenous kinds of circles that we have had to resist; we’ve had to stand and say we are Métis.” Other grandmothers and aunties’ questions referred to the propriety of Métis being assigned to other Indigenous groups or the need to be one or the other, as Verna DeMontigny insisted:

We are unique, and we do things differently; we don’t do it exactly the way the white man does it, and we don’t do it like our First Nations cousins or brothers or sisters, but we do it a little bit different. It’s us.

The Métis are distinct and demand inclusion of our ways of knowing throughout the academy. Throughout their careers, all the grandmothers and aunties have had to stand up for their people in many ways. Brenda Macdougall speaks to advocating for inclusion while stressing the need always to remember relations:

So, it’s important to talk about ourselves and to be cognizant of who we are in relation to other people, but we are in relation to other people, so we can’t leave them behind. That always worries me because we are always, “I can only talk about First Nations things.” Why? That doesn’t make any sense to me because I am not asking you to speak on my behalf, but I need you to think that I am here and vice versa.

The other grandmothers and aunties shared these sentiments—the need for acknowledgment of Métis presence and ability. The danger of the umbrella term and treatment of all Indigenous groups in Canada is revealed in Jean’s words; she spoke candidly about her work on the national stage. Jean Teillet represented the Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, the MNC’s women’s organization, on the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) action plan and spoke to the MNC’s decision to leave that process: “eventually they pulled out because the First Nations people that were running it purposely—it’s a long story—it was bad. So, we pulled out.” This situation resulted in the publication of a separate Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak report funded by the MNC, and Jean had to “fight tooth and nail to get that report mentioned with the MMIWG report” in 2019. Fearful that Métis stories would be lost if Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak was not mentioned, the MMIWG report included a single chapter about the Métis that, in Jean’s opinion, was a “dreadful, dreadful attack piece.” Jean added, “that’s another place we get excluded. We are excluded from the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] by and large, and we are excluded from the MMIWG report by the way they handled it. Those are

serious problems.” Jean’s experience with the MMIWG action plan shows that the exclusion of the Métis is ongoing.

The Métis become invisible under the umbrella term, as our First Nations relatives often eclipse us. The term Indigenous appears synonymous with First Nations and not its original intent in a Canadian context: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Hogue (2015) uses “Indigenous and Métis” three times in his work on the medicine line; an example is his assertion that “fictive networks also bridged Indigenous and Métis communities” (p. 40). Other scholarship that uses the term “Indigenous and Métis” (Logan, 2015, p. 448; Nelson, 2021, p. 194; O. Fitzgerald & Ugochukwu, 2016; Scott, 2021a, p. 5, 2021b, p.228) discusses health, education, climate change, justice, and other fields; all perpetuate the false belief that Métis is not Indigenous enough. The GDI addressed the mislabeling or misrepresenting of our reality in 2020 with a news bulletin expressing the error of this terminology (Shmon, 2020), which had little effect. The media continues to participate in this practice, with news reports from the CBC including the phrase “Indigenous and Métis” (Panza-Beltrandi, 2022; Desmarais, 2022) as examples. The British Columbia Attorney General issued a news release featuring the phrase twice in April 2022, speaking to racialized community consultations. The release was also in numerous languages, none of which were traditionally spoken by First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. A Parks Canada feature for Jasper National Park posted in May of 2022 includes the phrase “Indigenous and Métis communities” (Parks Canada, 2022, para 2).

Kim Anderson speaks to this as a universal issue: the “invisibility of Métis versus First Nations is a thing that happens anyways in all sorts of domains. So, it’s not surprising that it happens in the academy.” Brenda Macdougall shared this sentiment as to the Canadian context:

But it still means at a department meeting that if we are teaching Indigenous political thought, it can’t all be First Nations. Our job actually is to speak about the Inuit as well, and we aren’t even putting that on the table, but at the very least, you could acknowledge our existence. And then they are like, oh yeah, we have to talk about you.

In the fight to recognize the Indigenous umbrella as an entity, those who have been subsumed under it have been erased, along with how their epistemologies and ontologies are individually significant. No one Indigenous nation has a shared way of knowing and being. Nevertheless, this is a “reality” that has been cultivated for decades. The grandmothers and aunties have witnessed

this development in numerous sectors and academic disciplines. They spoke to the danger of a single word. Lorraine Mayer charges the term Indigenous with having the power to erase:

That's the other thing; is the confusing of First Nations with us all the time, and that makes us invisible, right? That's how they get to erase us in academia. They get to say, "But we are doing this for Indigenous people." Well, sure, they are Indigenous people, but what are you doing for Métis-specific?

Asking questions about Métis inclusion and noticing the lack of Métis representation in both ceremonies and physical space at Brandon University, Lorraine fought to create a Métis Centre to ensure that "everybody is aware that Métis exist on campus." Years later, Lorraine recalls witnessing a Brandon University graduation and thinking as follows:

We aren't even visible here. They have got these Native people drumming on stage, and they have got this, and it's like, where the heck are we? They got flags for all of these nations, and it's like, WHERE ARE WE?! I always found us invisible.

Motivated to create a different reality for Métis graduates, Lorraine created a Métis cultural graduation at Brandon University, which she feels was one of her most significant contributions. Tellingly, that practice was halted due to the insistence on an Indigenous graduation celebration. With her event losing its purpose, Lorraine no longer supported the endeavor, as she feared that the Métis would again be invisible in that space.

The underlying issue is that under the Indigenous umbrella, there are questions—in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities—of whether the Métis belong or are Indigenous enough, as Jeannine Carrière shared:

We were so misunderstood, and the racists that we faced, not just settlers, from other Indigenous people. I think it was more hurtful because it was coming from other Indigenous people who didn't consider us Indigenous and didn't know who we were.

Lateral violence in the Indigenous community was casually mentioned in many interviews and is characterized throughout this chapter as not being included or not Indigenous enough. It is an issue that all the grandmothers and aunts dealt with in one form or another. In many ways, a society under the umbrella term "Indigenous" has told Métis people that they are not enough, either by not acknowledging them or, as the grandmothers and aunts related, in overt and racist ways.

Being Educated Enough

What knowledge is and who can create it has been widely, often hotly, debated for decades in the academy (Battiste, 2010; Stewart-Harawira, 2013). Heather Souter stated, “what can be accepted and acknowledged as knowledge has been a really big problem.” The issues of Indigenous knowledge keepers being dismissed or questioned by western institutions have long been discussed in scholarship (Arenas et al., 2009; Haig-Brown, 2000). The grandmothers and aunts shared stories of their own experiences as knowledge keepers and language teachers deemed unworthy due to their lack of postsecondary educational achievements. That caused some to reject the system, spurred others to choose their academic path cautiously, and forced others to “learn” skills they already possessed in order to have that knowledge recognized.

Due to the Métis community’s belief in and respect for knowledge keepers, many of the grandmothers and aunts featured in this dissertation do not possess colonial credentials. In the academy, a hierarchy of credentials demonstrates that expertise is intrinsically linked to educational attainment from a Eurocentric perspective. The desired level of credentialing differs depending on the grandmother or auntie, as they discussed different levels when sharing their stories. The publications and influence of the grandmothers and aunts signify their tenacity to overcome despite attempted erasure, primarily due to the fact that academic credentials were not a signifier of their ability to produce knowledge and support the community’s understanding of Métisness. Christi Belcourt, a prolific artist, author, language learner, and teacher, declared:

I’m not in the academy; I didn’t go to university; I didn’t graduate high school. So, my education is coming from different sources. Coming from the land and I am educating myself through that; I am getting educated through Elders; I am getting educated on medicines and on language. My form of education—I don’t consider it inferior; I consider it equivalent to at least a university education. But my “university education” is outside of that system. I think of myself as a lifelong learner; I doubt I will ever graduate.

Those without credentials are often ignored despite walking the earth with a wealth of knowledge, and the 13 grandmothers and aunts represented in this dissertation remain visible despite their attempted erasure; they speak to those who were not spared. Celeste McKay referred to the dismissal of many Métis women:

What those barriers do is create a subtle way of pushing, in this case, Métis women to the sidelines as if they don’t have the right qualifications, their community work doesn’t count. The measures in place don’t take into account cultural competency.

I share the story of Heather Souter, a Michif activist and educator who witnessed the diminishment of fluent Michif speaker Grace Zoldy, whom the University of Lethbridge rejected for a seat on her master's thesis committee due to a lack of academic credentials. The proposed committee would oversee Heather's special case masters in Michif morphosyntax, which in her mind required a first language speaker—and Grace would have been the only committee member who spoke the language. Heather shared the following:

I wanted to have someone on my committee who had a full grasp of the language. I wanted to have Ma Taant Grace (Zoldy) because she was the most fluent, the most proficient speaker of Michif alive at that time I knew of.

The rejection of Grace, whom Verna DeMontigny spoke about, was too much for Heather to bear. Following her supervisor's decision and the graduate school's rejection of her appeal, Heather withdrew, stating, "I left my first master's program because of lack of recognition of Métis women by academia." Heather would eventually complete a master's degree at the University of Victoria, demonstrating her resolve despite the very substantial efforts to erase Michif voices and Métis knowledge. In 2022, Grace Zoldy was honored at the MMF Annual General Assembly for her contributions to the Métis Nation with the Order of the Sash.

Heather is a leader in Michif revitalization, according to Verna DeMontigny: "the Michif language—she really puts her all in it." However, Heather recognizes that, despite being the leading expert in so many facets of Michif linguistics and acquisition, academia is still full of obstacles for her:

I dreamed of getting a Ph.D., and one of the reasons behind that is because I wanted my voice as a Métis woman to be heard. In the work I do now, I focus on things I can do where there is no need for us to have credentials. However, we need these Ph.D.s behind our names to be taken seriously, it does seem.

Heather also shared that she pursued a master's degree because she needed to be recognized and possess credentials after witnessing so many Métis women who have contributed to the revitalization of Métis languages be dismissed. This practice was due to a lack of credentials, as there is a "lack of recognition for what they are doing, even though it has an impact on academia." Celeste mentioned Maria Campbell, Verna DeMontigny, and Sharon Parenteau and their contributions despite a lack of academic credentials: "all these women are keepers and promoters of culture without credentials, yet their work is seminal to our people." Celeste's

sentiment is shared by eight other grandmothers and aunts who mentioned Maria Campbell as a champion of Métis scholarship and our understanding of Métisness despite her never having completed a Ph.D. The grandmothers and aunts also acknowledged that Verna DeMontigny, Jean Teillet, Heather Souter, and Christi Belcourt were champions of building the understanding of Métisness according to Western standards; all of them lack Ph.D. credentials. Bestowing honorary degrees on Métis women who have contributed to the body of knowledge in the academy has become more common in the past 20 years; this recognition from colonial institutions is a truth the Métis have long accepted.

Attempted erasure comes in denial and a lack of acknowledgment of research and writing skills due to a lack of credentials. This denial drove Kim Anderson to complete a master's degree. After being turned down for a role collecting oral histories from Elders, she thought

I have been doing this my whole life, and I was like, "damn you, you know I could do this work just as good as anybody else." So, I went to get my master's degree; if you want somebody that has a master's degree, I will go and do it.

Denying Métis people the ability to work in their communities without credentials because they are educated in Métis ways of being and are needed throughout academia to assist in research projects across the homeland. Community researchers are in high demand, and the colonial institution is starving for engagement; this gatekeeping hurts everyone. Kim became a prominent scholar in the institution, but this was not always the case.

Celeste McKay also realized that only certain voices with the correct credentials were being heard at the tables where she sat:

I was looking into taking my master's in social work and doing a social policy focus. But at the time I was participating in the RCAP discussions, I realized that all the people in the room who were actually talking about social policy were lawyers, and people are paying attention to them. ... I won't get my master's and go into law instead.

It is widely accepted that uneducated people are typically unheard of at policy tables, but the reflection that even someone with a master's degree would not be enough to carry weight at the RCAP is revealing. Celeste completed her law degree, works on the international stage at the United Nations, and has a consulting firm for national Métis politics.

Sherry Farrell Racette had worked for years teaching, creating curricula, and developing programs for a postsecondary institution with a master's in curriculum and instruction and was

granted an assistant professorship even though she did not have a doctorate. However, she did not get tenure like the others with colonial credentials; when she followed up, they informed her that the university had said: “that even if I had been in a Ph.D. program, they would have approved it, but I wasn’t.” Eventually, Sherry would pursue a doctorate and become one of the only Indigenous art historians in the country to secure tenure.

These stories reveal how aware these Métis women were of how they were perceived and the extrinsic value placed on postsecondary education, despite the abilities they already possessed prior to enrolling. Each struggled to be considered enough, whether Métis enough, Indigenous enough or educated enough. This constant questioning by colonial society, which in many instances resulted in the voices of Métis women not being heard, is a direct example of attempted erasure through the silencing of voices that have been found somehow wanting.

Lack of Recognition

Most grandmothers and aunts felt invisibility around Métis women’s work in the community and the academy. I want to stress that the language around lack of recognition is my own – none of the grandmothers and aunts demanded acknowledgment through awards or ceremonies. Instead, they shared their experiences in order to be heard. In the Métis community and academia, Métis women work toward a better life for their community and raise awareness of who they are; the stories below are ones we do not often hear.

The issue around measurable impact and contribution arises when work is invisible or known to only a few close to a movement or circle of those affected. Christi Belcourt revealed the root of this issue when speaking about the 30-year journey of bringing the MMIWG into the mainstream consciousness:

Many people see or are interested in the tipping points of historical events; not many realize the countless volunteer hours grassroots people made for decades before to create change. Many of the original leaders of movements never get recorded in the history books.

Shedding light on the hidden contributions in histories that are never told can be enormously challenging. Movements such as Verna St. Denis and Emma LaRocque’s commitment to creating Indigenous Studies departments at their respective institutions, Jeannine’s policy creation of kinship adoptions, and Christi Belcourt’s work with the MMIWG movement can

become lost over time. Nevertheless, we must seek out these stories and contributions if we are to understand the history of Métis women in the academy. The issue of invisible work in the Métis community is one of the connected stories I tell here.

The grandmothers and aunties mentioned examples of invisible work that they or other Métis women were doing. Emma LaRocque put it this way:

We have to do so much more than a regular academic, and so much of it is invisible because we don't flaunt it, we don't yell it – we don't say, hey, we did all of this. People don't know how much we do.

I found this to be true during my time with all the grandmothers and aunties; they were humble, causing me to emphasize the question about other women my questions acknowledging the teaching of humility and the open, honest conversation I needed to hear regarding how they thought about their work. However, the unwillingness of Métis to broadcast their accomplishments in an establishment that can often reward competition and even bombast can hinder their success and eventual promotion.

The humility that many Métis cherish as a value, combined with the work ethic exemplified by the Métis women discussed here, leads Brenda Macdougall to express the following:

My experience both working in community and in the university is that Métis women are the ones doing all the work. And I don't mean that First Nations aren't doing this, and I am sure they say the same thing about their women. It is women who are the staff, and it's women who have made it into the academy first. And so, as a consequence, they tend to be behind the scenes doing all of the work like the ducks on the lake when they are all serene, but it's somebody that is underneath working like mad.

Heather Souter also spoke to this phenomenon, stating that Métis women demonstrate servant leadership; they see their position as an opportunity to serve, share power, and measure their success by community growth and development rather than recognition:

Métis women are extremely generous with their time and provide an amazing amount of support for little recognition and little compensation. ... The hard work that Métis women do and their modeling of inclusivity and service regardless of the rewards per se shows their generosity.

Freely giving time for more significant benefits than personal glory and gain ironically means that much of the work Métis women do is invisible. Giving time freely ultimately impacts promotion due to the colonial institution not recognizing people's commitment to the Métis community. Kim Anderson described this as follows:

When you are working with community, that can often be invisible work, but it's really at the heart of the work of what many of us do. So that's an ongoing problem, I would say, and having that recognition of being able to build your career.

Gaining tenure or promotion in most disciplines at a university is built on peer-reviewed scholarship and the ability to demonstrate service to the institution; the percentage differs by institution and can be affected by an individual's ability to secure research funding. In the current system, a small fraction of service is allotted to community service. In Métis scholars' experience, much more community service is expected and given in their lived reality. Rita Bouvier also noted this pull from the community and our responsibility to give to them:

Because of the need of our communities, we also get pulled away. ... And we should be there, we should be in our communities; it is the right place for us to be. In fact, we should be there more so.

Rita revealed a conversation she had with another grandmother, Verna St. Denis, concerning Métis women who "are called to their communities so much, and there is just no recognition of that"; upon reflection, she revised her thoughts: "maybe I should have said ... less recognition and the fact that it is emotional and sometimes political work."

Brenda Macdougall has expressed her view that Métis women are the foundation and work hard on both the front lines and behind the scenes, a sentiment well documented in Métis scholarship (Anderson, 2016b; Farrell Racette, 2012; Forsythe, Under Review UMP). They do this work freely and as an act of *wahkootowin*, of being a good relative. However, that does not erase its impact on the ability of Métis women to publish and do the work needed to increase societal awareness of the Métis people. All the grandmothers and aunts spoke favorably of their work in the community and thought it was one of their most significant contributions to the Métis people. However, the aspect of the cost of this hard work and the toll it takes on Métis women is not often explored or even discussed. Rita Bouvier expresses these connections by referring to "not just our kinship in terms of our connections in our families but how we were connected to everyone else in the community and beyond." These connections, expressed in the academic work of Brenda Macdougall through kinship ties and *wahkootowin*, complicate and enrich Métis lives. Sherry Farrell Racette described the struggle of wanting to help learners in ways for which she will never receive recognition:

The thing is, having been a grad student without a single Métis person on my committee ... when Métis students ask me or an Indigenous student asks me, I find it almost impossible to say no because I am there; that's what I am there for. It's hard.

Métis give more than non-Indigenous researchers and professors to their communities. Kim Anderson stresses “attending to family and community and however that looks and however we define family and community ... that we support and that we serve where we carry responsibilities.” In a significant development, Kim reported that she knows someone who has their service to the community, family, and a Métis organization as part of their service commitment to their institution, which suggests a move toward recognizing the labor of Métis women in the academy. This adjustment is a necessary step in evolution when we consider grandmothers and aunts like Rita, who recounted her experience:

I think that the work we began in the early seventies and eighties is important work, and when I am invited to work with Indigenous communities, and whether that is Métis or non-Métis, I take that work up wholeheartedly to lend all of my skills to the community.

The relationships Rita Bouvier created 40 years ago remain, and her responsibility to them as a researcher persists decades later. Sherry shared a similar sentiment when discussing her connection with the GDI: “That’s a relationship that is over 40 years old.” Maintaining these relationships requires time and effort; when not recognized by the institution, they take away from Métis scholars’ capacity for promotion and publication. If the purpose of academic work includes the community, then there is no issue, but the contributions of the Métis grandmothers and aunts were often invisible to anyone outside that community.

The selfless nature of giving to the community extends to the academy for the Métis women profiled here. They see a need to create a safer space for their community members. Heather Souter articulates the work being done at universities. A grassroots language advocate, she teaches Michif at the postsecondary level and said, “I think that Métis women in academia are making changes for the better of all us Métis people, for First Nations people, and by extension all people.” This work is happening under the moniker of Indigenization, which is supposed to incorporate Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing into the university structure.

Sherry Farrell Racette spoke to her frustration with the volume of work she faces: “There is no end to it. I get tenure packages. I get book manuscripts. I get articles. I get grant reviews; I

mean, when you are one of the few tenured, senior scholars ... you do a tremendous amount of labor.” When the TRC was released, its members reached out to her. Sherry recalled ignoring them, asserting:

The TRC ... I didn't answer my emails ... I've got other things, I've got students, I've got grad students; like I've got books to write, art to make. I am unofficially mentoring a lot of people happily because it feeds me.

The TRC Calls to Action and Indigenization reflect trends that began in 2014; the grandmothers and aunties' work started long before we spoke of these two movements to aid postsecondary institutions.

Both Kim Anderson and Brenda Macdougall, who are heavily involved in Indigenization efforts at their institutions, used the term “kill” to describe their effects on Métis women. Kim's honest assessment of the current invisible work being done was, “let's be honest; like I am going to do all these crazy committees because of Indigenization and for all its wonderful things it's killing us, right?” Here, she is expressing concern for junior scholars and their workload.

Implementing the TRC Calls to Action has fallen to Indigenous scholars, according to Brenda:

Indigenization or decolonization, this whole response to Truth and Reconciliation, is the most exhausting thing I have ever been engaged in. I joked at the beginning of it that Indigenization was going to kill us all, and people thought I was kidding, and I thought I was kidding at the time—but I am becoming more conscious of the fact that it's actually what's going to happen.

In further conversation about the impact of this institutional direction taken in the eight years since the TRC, Brenda explained:

Somehow, we have become responsible for changing the institution when it doesn't want to be changed, so you are constantly having these fights about what's possible, what should be possible, how to make something possible, and it's all Native people that have to do this and then at the same time you are doing that you also have everybody that wants to hang out with you all of a sudden because it's good for them. ... But I don't think that they realize how much work they are for all of us.

Brenda speaks to the new relationships and collaboration requests from non-Indigenous faculty who want to gain funding and access to the community by including Indigenous faculty in their funding applications. This represents a shift in the perceptions of many ostensible allies of Indigenous people, as it is now trendy to work with and alongside Indigenous scholars. Despite the increased pressures caused by the TRC Calls to Action, universities leaning on Métis women

is not a new phenomenon; as Emma LaRocque noted: “There were greater, harder, and contradictory expectations of Native Studies and Native instructors both from students and the university; I certainly felt that, especially through the 1970s, eighties, and even into the nineties.” Verna St. Denis extended this timeline, reflecting on her experiences after the turn of the millennium: “when you are teaching six courses and doing everything else, it is hard.” Verna also expressed feelings of erasure attached to how the monotony of being “boxed into doing the same thing and it just killed me, teaching the same course ... I was confined to teaching... That really choked me off. Very frustrating.” Despite all the hardship, Verna continues to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the educational system and the entire country. The expectations for ground-breaking research while creating new spaces for learners and the administration have been an invisible responsibility for decades.

Despite all the long-fought battles, Jeannine Carrière commented, “those of us that are in place are trying to repair institutional racism that is very hard to address, as you know. I don’t think the battle is over by any stretch; it certainly has gotten better.” However, Sherry Farrell Racette says, “it’s very important to not accept responsibility for being the pill for a sick institution.” She went on at greater length:

Our biggest problem in universities was racism, and now it’s overwork because you are expected to do everything. I think I was on 25 committees at the U of M and that’s just grad committees; I’m sure it was in the twenties. Plus, all the other stuff. I mean, I was in two terrific departments, but we were also expected to shore up all the other faculties and departments who didn’t have faculty and had students who wanted to do stuff.

The lack of faculty and staff with the knowledge to do this work due to institutions holding off on hiring more Indigenous staff is causing those who already work in those institutions to be overworked. Many allies want to help and get involved, which has created more work for the grandmothers and aunts. What has happened is a collective awakening of non-Indigenous scholars, with Brenda Macdougall expressing frustration at a movement that has

made us into the people that “allies” need to get their very important work done, or it’s made us into the people who can organize ceremonies (think all the smudging or welcomes) or the people demanding special programs. Our labor is there for others and not our communities, and so universities, even when they’re well-meaning and intentioned, create an atmosphere where our intellectualizations are less relevant than what non-Indigenous people want for themselves. Those are the erasures I feel. And it’s not any different than before or after the TRC in many respects.

The grandmothers and aunts expressed frustration with the systems and methods used to implement the necessary policies primarily due to the universities' approach of tasking Indigenous people to do the work needed to redress years of colonization. For example, Verna St. Denis expressed frustration with a system rejecting an "anti-racist, anti-colonial perspective, and the students would get upset because they weren't used to having the mirror turned up to say well, maybe you are the problem." This issue extended to the universities themselves. They have realized that they have a problem, but Métis women cannot put their careers on hold to fix it for them; as Sherry Farrell Racette put it: "I am finding that the institutional labor that we have been expected to do is ridiculous, and we have enabled the institution to continue to basically wear diapers. ... They will never do it themselves."

Being expected to solve an unsolvable problem renders all efforts invisible. Every moment spent attempting to solve the problem of racism in the colonial institution detracts from the grandmothers' and aunts' work. Indigenization may ironically be one of the most significant contributors to their invisibility, as the hours spent in its pursuit do not contribute to contributions to knowledge. Even though a lack of recognition affected the grandmothers' and aunts' lives in myriad ways, we still know their names and work due to their tenacity and resilience.

Lack of Awareness of One Another

Are Métis women invisible? More pointedly, are they invisible to one another? These questions were explored with the grandmothers and aunts by discussing Métis women's contributions to the academy. In conversations about the contributions of Métis women to the collective understanding of Métisness, the grandmothers and aunts spoke of women they knew while addressing the phenomenon of being invisible to one another, some of the grandmothers and aunts in a questioning tone and others in a more charged way. In unpacking this type of invisibility, who is to blame? Whose responsibility is it to ensure that Métis women are visible to one another? Beyond the need to assign blame, there is a need to speak this invisibility into the world and address it.

It is essential to pay tribute to the grandmothers and aunts and their work in creating space in the academy for the Métis women who have come after them. Several grandmothers and aunts spoke to the ground-breaking work of Maria Campbell in terms of Métis identity, but I

want to take time to discuss Emma LaRocque, who has been in the academy for over 40 years, starting at a time when very few Métis women walked those halls. Kim Anderson aptly summarized Emma's contributions:

Emma LaRocque doing her thing so long ago, and I can imagine it must have been isolating trying to do that, so I at first recognize that Emma and other people had done that work where there weren't many of us around.

At the beginning of Emma's career, she was all alone. However, over 40 years later, with the numerous new hires that have been made, feelings of isolation are caused by the lack of awareness among Métis women. Kim approached this issue inquisitively:

Maybe it still feels like we are too few and far between and we don't have enough time to connect with each other or we are spread out across all sorts of disciplines and approaches and so on. And that could contribute to that invisibility.

Emma saw this isolation as a detriment to the ambition of rewriting histories and our inclusion in various disciplines. Sharing her frustration with the realities of the divides in academic institutions, Emma said that "we do not work as a collective—we work as individual scholars at different universities," before adding, "nor have we worked as a collective, certainly not in the sense of being concentrated in a location with projects." Despite the synergies involving Métis women over the last five years, Emma speaks about her long history of being in the academy for over 40 years.

Again, since Emma entered those ranks, there has been movement. Brenda Macdougall contemplated the current situation of Métis women on campus by stating that "I think that there are probably more of us in the academy than any other group of [Indigenous] people. But I think we are dispersed and spread out, and very rarely are we working in a collectively shared space." Here, Brenda is pointing out that academic hiring practices hinder the ability of the Métis—and of course, any other group that crosses disciplinary lines—to work as a collective. Brenda insisted that "universities just haven't hired us in the critical mass that would allow us to have the kinds of spaces where we could be self-generative in many respects." Although there are, according to Brenda, more Métis scholars than any other single Indigenous nation, the numbers remain too low. Despite the hires over the past few decades, Métis women in the academy continue to feel dispersed and isolated. Lorraine Mayer states that "we need more Métis women

out there. ... We need to know that there is a place in academia for us. And that's what I want: a place in academe for us. I am tired of invisibility.”

One of the grandmothers and aunts mentioned finding others in the academy and the consequent feeling of elation after years of loneliness. Jeannine Carrière spoke of meeting another Métis woman scholar at the University of Victoria and described their first meeting as follows: “Honestly, it was like a movie: Christine and I running to each other from across campus and hugging each other, and it was like, ‘Oh my God, a Métis sister, and that was rare.’” The joy, elation, and relief at finding another Métis woman in the academy continue today.

Power Structures’ Attempts to Silence the Métis

The third and final connected story is that of robust structures controlling access to the means of production in terms of resources and sharing work. With only a few Métis publishers and even fewer Métis-specific funding streams, the power to withhold opportunities is still in the hands of colonial institutions. Whether federal, provincial, or institutional funding sources are funded through a colonial system. Journals, academic publishers, and non-academic publishing houses are staffed with those whose upbringing and colonial education, as noted above, make their understanding of the Métis limited, ultimately leading to fear of funding or publishing Métis-specific research. Whether that arises from racism, ignorance, or budgetary issues, many grandmothers and aunts expressed the need to secure opportunities for Métis-specific research and publication.

Many grandmothers and aunts mentioned publishing when asked about how they felt their voices were erased or silenced. I share their stories in two emerging themes that demand we consider their words on the impacts of umbrella publishing and obstacles to Métis-specific publishing, followed by issues of obtaining Métis-specific funding.

Umbrella Publishing

Much of the scholarship published by the grandmothers and aunts would be considered umbrella publishing as it includes their relatives and is sometimes focused on First Nations. Those grandmothers and aunts whose work fits that category found that publishing came quickly; for example, Rita Bouvier, who has published on Indigenous education, stated, “I think I have told you that I have lots of papers that are published and that made it to various journals or

else part of [an] edited book.” These sentiments were echoed by other grandmothers and aunts working under the umbrella, such as Verna St. Denis and Kim Anderson. Their comments reflect the broader research and publishing opportunities that result from undertaking content that fits under that umbrella. For example, Emma LaRocque reflected on her prolific writing career:

Most of us don't just write on the Métis. I've written on issues that are very impactful for both First Nations and Métis, but because of the titles of our articles and books, I don't think we have necessarily made ourselves distinct as Métis in our writing.”

Further admitting that the titles were sometimes chosen obscure both the author and the content, Emma reflected, “even me: I look back, and I feel bad. Because I wrote a book called *Defeathering the Indian*, many people think I am Indian, as in the old, non-status sense.” As expressed throughout this dissertation, this misrepresentation led to the need for Métis to constantly assert their identity.

Titling and location were other modes that obscured the grandmothers' and aunts' work, as when Sherry Farrell Racette noted that “sometimes when things are published in kind of an obscure edited collection, then it doesn't get read as much as you like because the title isn't something that would draw an Indigenous scholar.” These acknowledgments provide one possible answer as to why some of the pieces of these prolific writers may be unknown in the community.

In a moment of deep reflection and honesty, Emma paused while she contemplated her impact as a scholar:

I ended up doing research on Indigenous women and of course, Métis identity, representation. The literature stuff kind of happened accidentally because nobody else was teaching literature in Native Studies in the early days, and they just kept on giving me these courses to teach. ... So that's kind of how I came to have sort of a hodgepodge of topics, but many times I have thought if I had focused on basically one area, which most scholars do and get known by, I think I would have accomplished a lot more than doing four or five topics.

Sherry Farrell Racette echoed Emma Larocque by saying, “my CV is a perfect example of someone who chose to write an article because someone asked them to, and they thought it was kind of interesting.” Like Emma, Sherry carried out her work across disciplinary boundaries. To quote Emma, their reactive nature to the community's Indigenous and academic needs has resulted in a “hodgepodge,” as they have tackled subjects based on their work responsibilities

rather than choosing a concrete trajectory. Sherry's and Emma's bibliographies are mainly Indigenous umbrella work—because the Indigenous community required this of them over the past 40 years. This fact drives home the necessity and survival mode in which the Métis grandmothers and aunts worked over the past four decades. Aware that knowledge needed to be created for all their Indigenous relatives, they were overwhelmed by content, resulting in the eclectic bibliographies described in chapter 4.

Métis-Specific Publishing

Issues arose when the grandmothers and aunts attempted to publish their Métis-specific work; in some instances, they faced rejection, loss of creative control, undermining of their voices, and misrepresentation through the editing process. For many grandmothers and aunts, the shift to producing Métis-specific publications was frustrating, especially for those who experienced success publishing under the Indigenous umbrella. Métis-specific research and publishing are vulnerable places for Métis to enter because they are about the Métis as people, and thus rejection affects them on a deeply personal level.

One of the grandmothers and aunts, Lorraine Mayer, spoke to feeling the lack of Métis-specific literature, especially in the 1980s: “I had a book by Maria Campbell; that’s all I’ve got.” She asked herself why:

I am reading about all of these strong women in the east and these strong women in the west or east coast, west coast, but I am like, “I am from the middle, and where the hell are we?” We were invisible. There was nobody.

As demonstrated by the literature review chapter and its clear demonstration of the lack of research on the Métis existence in the academy and the chapter on the publications produced by the grandmothers and aunts, it was not until the 1980s that there was an increase in Métis-specific publications. Lorraine said simply, “I didn’t see us in the literature,” a sentiment echoed by what Emma found when she began her journey in the academy. As a result, many grandmothers and aunts began to attempt to publish Métis-specific materials to fill this gap.

Some grandmothers and aunts who attempted to publish umbrella and Métis-specific works reported a challenge when approaching journals and academic publishers. Jeannine Carrière disclosed that

I think when I am publishing on topics such as kinship care or adoption or cultural safety, these topics that are relevant in child welfare and so I have not as much disappointment when I am trying to publish that work. ... If I am publishing on something Métis-specific, that's when it becomes challenging, and that's when there is a bit of eye-rolling around whether it is credible, authentic, useful, will it sell-kind of thoughts that go through the publisher's minds ... there is still a lot of ignorance around who we are. So, publishers are in the category of don't know either. It can be a struggle when you are publishing Métis work.

Here, Jeannine unpacks the multiple layers of issues impacting Métis-specific publications related to colonial erasure attempts, lack of awareness, and overall dismissal of Métis-specific projects. Other grandmothers and aunties shared this feeling of denial when reflecting on their publishing experiences with individual works, such as Jean Teillet's discussion of *The North-West Is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Métis Nation* (2019). In creating and publishing this book, numerous talking points were brought to the kitchen table. The first issue was that the initial draft ran over 1,600 pages; Jean said, "I tried talking the publisher into giving me two volumes, and they wouldn't do it." Jean estimated it would take nine volumes to write the history of the Métis from a Métis perspective and include all the documents she uncovered.

Having success getting a narrowed version of the fictional narrative *The North-West Is Our Mother* published, Jean considered how the academy received it, diminishing it to historical fiction. According to Jean, the reviewer, Christopher Dummitt from the History Department of Trent University "basically dismissed it entirely" and, due to her experience, stated of our work as Métis: "I don't think this will even make a dent in their thinking." This again links back to the colonial educational system and many Canadians' ignorance about the country's actual histories. As a lawyer, Jean sees an opportunity to rewrite the book through the lens of Métis law but admitted that "it would be really insightful of the law, but the problem is you would never get it published because who would care?" This admission comes from the woman who wrote the book on Métis law and speaks to the pervasive issue around publishing, awareness, and the way forward.

There are gatekeepers in publishing houses and journals that Métis-specific work must make it through to be published. One grandmother, who is also the editor of *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, was extremely passionate about issues in publishing. Lorraine Mayer insisted that

we need reviewers—our own reviewers—desperately because as an editor ... I have a really hard time finding reviewers that will actually do the work, and I know that we are overloaded, but you know, we have a responsibility. We should be the ones reviewing the literature written by Métis women.

The need to find Métis women to review Métis women's work stems from experiences such as editors and reviewers telling Lorraine throughout her career that “you can't say that, you can't say that, you can't say that; I can't stress that enough they love to tell us that.” She expanded her point, relating that they would tell her

you are being unfair to the white woman; you are too hostile towards white women, so I rewrote. Then it came back you are too nice to the white women. You know, five years of going back and forth with reviews, five years. And I don't know at one point, but I must have become stronger or something because I said I am not going to make a single change. I am either publishing it now, or I am taking it back, and finally, I published it. I am like, “why is it that they want the truth, but they want it softened?”

I have heard these same comments on my Métis-specific work speaking to white feminism and its effect on Métis scholarship. Lorraine shared, “So we are still getting non-Native people saying you know we still need to soften this up a bit, this is not acceptable to the reading public, they can't handle this or whatever. We need this.” It brings the issue of who the editor is, who the reviewer is, and when Indigenous publications will get Indigenous—let alone Métis-specific—editors. Lorraine also reported something I had never considered in terms of Métis publishing by Pemmican Publications, which the MMF controlled:

Pemmican had a board that determined whether or not they would accept the publication, but then we went to the white guy telling us how to write it. And he put stuff in there that I didn't want in there. I specifically said I cannot have this in this book, and it was put in anyway.

Until the closing of Pemmican, managing editor Randall McIlroy was non-Métis. Recalling the notorious example of *Halfbreed* (1973), Maria Campbell had a section of the book removed by the publishers due to its depiction of rape by a RCMP officer until the recent, fully restored edition (2019). Ultimately, Lorraine wondered, “how much of our voice is really being heard? That's what I want to know.” The issues with Métis-specific publishing range from rejection, loss of control, undermining of the voices of Métis scholars and misrepresenting Métis stories in the publishing process when *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*—that is, deeply listening

to the stories of these grandmothers and aunties who have been successful despite the obstacles—evokes thoughts of others whose voices were silenced completely.

Issues Obtaining Funding

In many academic fields, one must secure external funding to conduct research. However, for research to reach the point of being reviewed for publication, it must overcome another obstacle to Métis scholarship: departmental and faculty-level support, which brings us back to the issue of Indigenous umbrella versus Métis-specific funding. Jeannine Carrière cited a Chris Andersen presentation she witnessed:

Métis scholars are challenged when it comes to grant applications for research where other Indigenous scholars will get grants before a Métis scholar will. ... We have to work three times as hard to get those grants than other Indigenous scholars do. When Cathy and I wrote this short grant for the fourth time, and we are still refused, we were thinking it was accurate.

Through the stubborn denial of a Métis existence deserving of funding independent of the Indigenous umbrella, stemming from ignorance and racism and all the other obstacles Métis scholars must face, one of the powerful ways to impose silence is the denial of resources. Métis historically have struggled for funding from all levels of colonial government; examples in the 2020s include Métis not being eligible for the Federal Government's Postsecondary Student Support Program (Government of Canada, 2021). This exclusion ultimately stunts future researchers' growth and the struggles of the North West Territories Métis leaders accessing health care benefits (Desmarais, 2021) and the North Slave Métis Alliance accessing housing supports (Morritt-Jacobs, 2021). In considering the colonial governing bodies denying fundamental human rights such as education, healthcare, and housing to the Métis, the concept of withholding research dollars is unsurprising. In 2016, *Daniels v. Canada* determined that Métis were Indians under section 91 (24) and eligible for funding and support equal to First Nations and Inuit, the two other Aboriginal groups under the *Constitution Act* (1982). Federal research funding from agencies such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canadian Institute of Health Research, and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada technically includes Métis applicants and research on the Métis as eligible for funding. Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) selection committees are created to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion in the selection process. However, Métis scholars speak openly about the

struggles of receiving Métis-specific research funding. Despite being an individual point of erasure, it is connected to various aspects of the other themes discussed by the grandmothers and aunts. The reality is that research projects rarely move forward without funding, and therefore when grants are denied multiple times, as Jeannine shared with me, it delays the work in the Métis community and prevents that community from moving forward.

Another level of funding available to researchers is internal to their institutions. Every year, universities offer many funding opportunities at the institutional, faculty, and departmental levels, which ultimately gives the institution and its units the power to fund or not fund Métis-specific research. Brenda Macdougall mentioned her feeling of frustration with how her institution funded departments:

I feel ghettoized when we're told we can't have any resources, but they are going to give all of the resources that we should have to the political studies department because it is going to build this ground-breaking, high-level Indigenous theory thing, and then it fizzles out because nobody goes there. So that kind of erasure I feel all the time; it's a constant struggle for resources and for recognition, and even the TRC or the post-TRC world hasn't improved this.

Without funding, research and team-building opportunities among Métis faculty are lost, resulting in fewer opportunities to produce publications. This also connects to issues of feeling isolated and not working collaboratively with other Métis women and ultimately removes the ability to publish and enhance society's general awareness of the Métis.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the time I spent with the grandmothers and aunts allowed us to use the intertwined Michif methodology with a combination of three methodologies: *Keeoukaywin*, *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*, and *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*. Our conversations generated three significant themes 1) colonial attempts at erasure, 2) attempts to make the Métisness invisible, and 3) power structures' attempts to silence Métis voices. These are, in turn, divided into 11 types of attempted erasure that the 13 Métis grandmothers and aunts endured. First, colonial attempts to erase the Métis can be found in curricula and a lack of teacher training, racism, and whiteness culminating in Métis people feeling pressured to hide in plain sight. Through a lack of scholarly acknowledgment, acceptable credentials, recognition, and awareness

of one another's existence, the theme of invisibility surfaced; it caused the grandmothers and aunts to feel unseen and underappreciated. Finally, colonial power structures continue to silence Métis women by supporting the Indigenous umbrella rather than Métis-specific publishing and withholding resources for Métis-specific research. Following in the footsteps of our grandmothers and aunts who stood up to speak the truth about their treatment by the MMF in the 1970s, the grandmothers and aunts of today have spoken into the world about the 11 types of attempted erasure they have faced in the academy.

Chapter 6 Advice for the Next Generation

My advice to women is to go back to who we were at one time; we were very, very important ... if it wasn't for us, nobody would be here. You are the carrier, and you are the one who brings life into this world. You are the one who teaches and nurtures. You are the one who does all that.

Verna DeMontigny

The grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship have shared their experiences of challenges and successes in the academy. This chapter offers a synthesis and discussion of the grandmothers' and aunts' words for future generations of women entering the academy. This chapter fulfills their responsibility to the women who walk behind them and my responsibility to share freely the knowledge I have received.

When asked years ago about Elders, Lawrie Barkwell said, "Métis go to the one who knows," before adding, "that person changes depending on what you are hoping to learn" (personal communication, September 23, 2018). The 13 grandmothers' and aunts' advice, with their different walks of life and widely varied experiences with and in the academy, weaves a rich tapestry of ways to survive and thrive. To be good relatives, the grandmothers and aunts recognized the aspects of their practice that helped them and passed on that knowledge when asked to share advice for future generations. The words they have offered for that purpose can help ensure that all can walk the path through the academy informed and with a sense of wellbeing. Christi Belcourt boiled down a lifetime of wisdom into a simple reminder: "Always give back to your people and help; that's all."

How do Métis scholars survive and thrive in the academy while living up to that call? By listening to the words of the grandmothers and aunts. With over 100 Métis scholars who identify as women in my circle, these words of wisdom can instantly impact this generation and the next. The grandmothers' and aunts' reflections can be distilled into three core pieces of advice: 1) disregard colonial pressures, 2) create connections, and 3) be empowered by who you are.

Disregard Colonial Pressures

Under the theme of disregarding colonial institutional pressures to fix a 150-year-old problem that has created a wide range of urgent issues, the grandmothers and aunts gave the following guidance: prioritize, say no, decide which battles are futile, and recognize the freedom to relocate. When disregarding colonial pressures, two overarching stories emerged in what the grandmothers and aunts shared: the first is the permission to refuse; the second is that relocation is inherently Métis. By grounding their experiences in Métis history, contemporary Métis scholars' resiliency can learn from those who preceded them.

Permission to Refuse

With new demand for Métis scholars and the pressures placed on those in the academy in the wake of the TRC Calls to Action, the grandmothers and aunts warned of over-demanding institutions. In response, they suggested setting boundaries and realistic expectations. When contemplating pieces of advice, Kim Anderson stressed, “knowing you can just say no. It’s an important one, knowing that you can just say no. Focus on your own work.” Of course, that work can be deeply personal and consist of “research that builds on the strengths of your community,” as suggested by Verna St. Denis, but Emma LaRocque also cautions that “one should never feel pressured to have to always defend or produce works in one’s identity in order to fight erasure.” Many grandmothers and aunts spoke about being pulled in multiple directions and regretting not remaining fully focused on their research goals for the Métis community.

Métis scholars can be pulled in numerous directions, making every matter appear urgent. The call to aid their institutions will seem pressing, but Emma LaRocque offers caution:

I have seen a change since the 1970s—actually since about the mid-1980s. But development of specific Métis scholarship has been very slow. Recently, there have been some Research Chairs on Métis scholarship. And there is the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

The academy changes at a glacial pace; in chapter 5, the grandmothers and aunts shared how they have worked to effect such change, with racism taking them away from their ultimate goals. Sherry Farrell Racette reminds scholars that “this is not a short scrap; this is a lifetime, and so you need to look at the long game for yourself and what do you want to accomplish with the finite span of a career.”

As Sherry suggests, an excellent example of living one's truth is her former colleague Emma LaRocque, who has earned a full professorship and over 90 publications. She said, "I just don't do administration. I absolutely refused. I have been asked to be department head several times here and elsewhere and thought 'nah, I don't think so.'" Having decided what is important to her, Emma focuses on research and writing.

In choosing priorities, the grandmothers and aunties spoke about the difficulty of showing their institutions the damage western institutions and their systems were doing to the Indigenous community. As Verna St. Denis shared, "they weren't used to having the mirror turned up," and unwinnable battles can lie in that tension. Sherry Farrell Racette permits future scholars to "not assume responsibility for fights you can't win. And for the level of the institutional change that is going to take generations because you can get totally sucked into that, and it is soul-destroying."

Not only for personal preservation but also in the institutional hierarchy, there is a need to be guarded, according to Lorraine Mayer, who is head of the Department of Native Studies at Brandon University and the editor of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. She offered a cautionary note:

It's their way or the highway; be careful how you walk it. If you are strong enough, fight it. But if you don't have the strength yet, don't. I got that from a woman one time that said, "I am not going to fight your battles because I don't have tenure," and I realized, "You know, she's right."

This episode caused Lorraine to recognize—after decades in the system—that there is a danger for emerging scholars without the protection of tenure in pushing back against the institution:

Don't put a young Métis scholar at risk by having them join all the battles. Let the older Métis women or ... the older Métis women that have been in academia a little longer fight for you until you get what you need behind you and the protection you need. Because they are brutal; it is brutal, that's for sure.

Awareness of the institutional landscape is essential to the success of new scholars and lends itself to another theme in this chapter: creating connections and using mentors. Nevertheless, Lorraine's words first caution Métis scholars to recognize their power and privilege in an institutional hierarchy.

Relocation is Inherently Métis

Although Sherry Farrell Racette points to Métis ancestors' experience and ability to survive, she reminds us that Métis history is rife with relocating and starting again in new lands with new people: "my advice would be if you are in a toxic environment, don't wait around because you will get gaslighted into believing that it's our fault or our responsibility and it's not." However, admitting defeat and finding a new position is sometimes necessary; throughout her career, Sherry has changed institutions before relocating to the University of Regina to be close to her grandchildren.

Knowing oneself and one's career and life expectations is crucial to weigh the advice given by Christi Belcourt:

If your soul or your spirit is not jibing with what you are doing, then your instinct will tell you and just go ahead and move and do something different. Don't feel obligated to stay in something that is not fulfilling your spirit because, at the end of the day, that is what you are here for if you are on your own journey.

Métis scholars are not obligated to stay, and the demand for Indigenous scholars is so high in the early 2020s that the transition is far easier than in previous decades. However, Métis scholars must continually assess their priorities and ask whether their current reality is the right fit.

In disregarding colonial institutional pressures, Christi Belcourt, Lorraine Mayer, Sherry Farrell Racette, Verna St. Denis, Emma LaRocque, and Kim Anderson focused on prioritizing, being selective, avoiding unwinnable fights, and recognizing other opportunities. By grounding themselves in the experiences of Métis history, Métis scholars can emulate the resiliency of their ancestors by permitting themselves to refuse and realizing that relocation is inherently Métis.

Be Empowered by Who You Are

In the theme of being empowered by who you are, the grandmothers and aunts offered advice that is broken down into five themes: 1) stay true to yourself, 2) include your ancestors, 3) stay strong in your teachings, 4) look after yourself, and 5) love what you do. In the colonial institution built on white supremacy historically geared toward assimilating Métis into the broader body politic, Métis scholars must remain empowered by who they are.

The grandmothers and aunts spoke passionately about being empowered by who you are. Sherry Farrell Racette shared that the Métis presence in the academy empowers others: a

student once commented to her, “I love how you disrupt the academy just by being yourself,” prompting her to suggest that “I think it’s really important to be true to yourself and just be yourself; be your messy half-breed self and be an unapologetic half-breed self.” Staying true to herself was an essential pillar for Sherry, who demonstrated it throughout a 40-year career in the community and the academy: “being true to yourself is really important and not feeling like you have to become different.” Christi Belcourt speaks to beating your own path, grounded in who you are. Brenda Macdougall asserted, “I have never worked from a position where I didn’t see myself as a Métis person or Métis scholar,” offering one effective model for future scholars.

A crucial aspect of being who you are is speaking your truth. Jeannine Carrière encouraged scholars to be true to their voices by saying, “don’t be afraid to say things that might have someone thinking. I think we are complex people, and we bring that complexity to our academic work, and that’s a good thing.” In being assertive and committing to your truth, Brenda Macdougall stated, “you have to decide not to be the wallflower and just do what you are going to do and say what you are going to say because it’s important.”

Practically honoring who one is can mean ignoring one’s age. Many grandmothers and aunts came to the academy later in life, including Lorraine Mayer, who started her undergraduate program at 34, Heather Souter, who completed her master’s at 54, and Kim Anderson, who started her Ph.D. at 40. Jean Teillet, who went to law school at 40, said, “one of the first things I would say is don’t worry if you aren’t there when you are 20 ... it doesn’t matter; you can be in the academy when you are 60. It doesn’t make any difference, and you will learn a lot in between.” All the grandmothers’ and aunts’ careers, community influence, and publication records demonstrate that age need not be an impediment. Emma LaRocque put it simply: “just be really good scholars; really put effort into being good scholars, and the rest will follow.”

Include Your Ancestors

Celeste McKay reminds us that “it’s important that you acknowledge the knowledge keepers, acknowledge the people who take care of the families, the grandmas that take care of their grandchildren so their daughters can do their work and that intergenerational support that’s there.” This acknowledgment pays tribute to those who walked ahead of and alongside the Métis scholars working in the academy and community to assert Métisness. Sherry Farrell Racette

reminds us of the difficult journey of the grandmothers and aunties' ancestors to survive and thrive and the need to bring them into the scholarship of today and tomorrow. Rita Bouvier echoes this approach in her comments on resilience:

Consider their actions of embracing and adopting what they needed for survival—a language that demonstrates ingenuity, kinship ties that transcend racialized divides, and a strong sense of place, relationality, and belonging to the land they were born into. We must carry this forward into the future as Métis and as global citizens.

Rita insisted that “we have a legacy to honor and fulfill. Like our ancestors, we too are imaginative and resourceful persons. Jeannine Carrière encouraged scholars and knowledge producers to “bring everything you are and your ancestors into your work, and you will be okay.”

Stay Strong in Teachings

In order to thrive, staying strong in Métis teachings is vital, and Christi Belcourt cautioned scholars not to allow institutions to enforce amnesia regarding Métis ways of being:

So when we are asking for something, we are always making offerings, and it means that you don't go into a community and extract, as you said. You go in, and you plan and figure out what you are going to give of equal value and importance to what it is that you are asking for and that works in a spiritual sense too.

Being grounded in Métis ways of being means adhering to Jeannine Carrière's advice to “stay strong in your teachings.” Christi shared a pragmatic approach to accomplishing that in terms of conducting research:

Always give the credit to where you got the story from. So, the traditional protocol around storytelling would be something like you telling the story of where you got it from and what circumstances you received the story. So, you always give credit to the person who is the one who told you the story, and whether they got it from someone else might be part of your story too. But you always give that credit, and you always say under what circumstances you got it.

Look After Yourself

The academy is a hard place to work and study due to the 11 symptoms of erasure discussed by the grandmothers and aunties. In thinking about how Métis scholars need to look after themselves under these conditions, the grandmothers and aunties shared practical advice

and the overall mindset needed to prevail. Sherry Farrell Racette painted a realistic landscape of Métis existence both inside and outside academia:

We've also had to balance that in ways that we can sustain ourselves. And so, I think with this at some point it's not going to be hard. No, it's always going to be hard. It has always been hard; it was hard for my mom, my grandma, my great grandma.

As many of the grandmothers and aunties recommended, this reminder is a grounding of the importance of looking after oneself, including practical needs around wellbeing, finances, family, and the larger community. Brenda Macdougall reminded scholars, "you have to make space for all of those things, and it has to fill you up because we put a lot out, so we have to fill ourselves back up somehow." Heather Souter, who left Camperville to complete a master's degree at the University of Victoria, cautions graduate students to "take good care of yourself in terms of making sure that you have the supports you need financially—particularly that."

Celeste McKay, who also studied at the University of Victoria, completed her law degree far from home and has worked internationally. She shared a specific piece of advice that she found beneficial: "Going back home during the holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter) was super important and helpful." Wherever research, work, or school takes a scholar, grounding oneself in the community is essential. As Rita Bouvier says, "it's important to remain centered in community, however you do that"; she stays connected to Île-à-la-Crosse despite leaving decades ago.

In reflecting on the current situation affecting Métis scholars throughout the country isolated in siloed departments or at institutions with few Indigenous hires, Brenda Macdougall notes, "I think you have to remember that while you may not have any other Métis people where you are, that doesn't mean you lose connection to people that are a part of you." This view fits well with the Métis tradition of families having long stretches apart but supporting each other when reuniting.

Love What You Do

The passion that fuels the Métis grandmothers and aunties is a love for research, policy, and the areas about which they have dedicated their lives to raising awareness. All the grandmothers and aunties spoke about their dedication to their written works. Each is energized by a love of her subject matter and a sense of responsibility to her community. Brenda stated,

“you have to do what you love. You can’t let someone else dictate what you are going to do; you can negotiate it, but you have to do what you love.”

The fight for language revitalization waged by grandmothers and aunts Verna DeMontigny, Heather Souter, and Christi Belcourt is fueled by their love of Métis languages. As Verna put it, “most importantly, I don’t care what anyone else says; you got a goal, you got a dream, go for it.” In the 1970s, revitalizing Indigenous languages was woefully underfunded compared to today, and there were no postsecondary institutions teaching them. Concerningly there is still a fight to retaining funding for Indigenous languages with many efforts being grassroots and unfunded. However, due to the passion and effort they have used to reclaim languages that were in danger of disappearing, there are now programming, funding, and language platforms available.

Emma LaRocque, Kim Anderson, Lorraine Mayer, and Brenda Macdougall have all worked toward altering the collective understanding of Métis history, and Brenda articulated the importance of identifying what fuels a scholar’s work:

I think you have to do what you love. Everybody wants you to do what they think is important, but if you don’t love it, you aren’t going to last. Whatever you do has to be yours, so you have to find your space, your voice, your sense of belonging; and once you find that, you will find comfort wherever you are.

The grandmothers and aunts Rita Bouvier, Verna St. Denis, and Sherry Farrell Racette started at SUNTEP and GDI working for educational reform. Sherry shared that

over time you will find the things you are really good at, that feed you, because there are things that only take from you. And even if you think that it’s a good thing for you to do, you need to have the balance of what feeds you.

All three know firsthand the struggle to change colonial education through the inclusive and anti-racist educational initiatives they have undertaken over the past 40 years. Their relentless drive, buttressed by patience with the incremental change they have helped make over the years, nourishes them, despite how draining that work can be.

Jeannine Carrière, Celeste McKay, and Jean Teillet are three grandmothers and aunts who have dedicated their lives to implementing policy and legislative changes on the provincial, federal, and international stages. Jean shared that there can be a desire to change the world and

find a niche that can be overwhelming to new scholars, but focusing on what you love, which in her case was Métis and the law, can help make things work out:

It's hard in the academy to find a niche and to find your own voice on what you want to write about and how you are going to think about things. And my own experience with that is you just have to sit down and write.

In the theme of being empowered by who one is, the grandmothers and aunties reinforced the need to be grounded in who one is—along with one's ancestors, communities, and teachings—while acknowledging that an individual's motivations are vital to surviving and thriving in the academy.

Connections

Beyond staying connected to the community through reciprocal obligations fulfilled by *wahkootowin*, there were two other connections that grandmothers and aunties thought were critical to surviving and thriving in the academy: 1) staying connected to other Métis scholars and 2) staying connected to other Métis women. First, to fight the invisibility detailed in chapter 5 as a symptom of erasure, Métis must make themselves known to one another as a step to creating community.

Connections to Métis Scholars

Work in the community extends to the academic community, as many grandmothers and aunties stressed collaborative research. Heather Souter said that “we need to have community, find community, and become part of the community. That's what will sustain us because the work is not easy.” However, Heather reaffirmed, “I also think it is important to find communities of heart, mind, and spirit.” The call to create community from the grandmothers and aunties is rooted deeply in Métis ways of being, as Christi Belcourt said:

I don't know how this is for everybody but for Métis people; we are community. We are community-minded, and we thrive in community; we hold things in the collective and the common, and a lot of our culture and our languages are collective and commonly held: our land use, our traditional knowledge, our art forms, all of those things that are a part of who we are.

In keeping with the theme of finding like-minded and motivated communities while staying true to Métis ways of being, Jean Teillet, who has worked on some of the highest-profile Indigenous law cases in history, stated the following:

A lot of my writing and thinking comes from being in the trenches and working on these things for years and years and years with what I have to say are some of the best minds in the country—people who have done extraordinary work—and I have been extremely blessed to be even in the room with these extraordinary people.

She attributed her successes to collaborative work with driven individuals and urged future academics to

surround yourself with as many people as you can that are doing good things because you will learn so much from watching how other people think. ... I believe in — very, very much in— collaboration and working together with people. ... I don't think life is meant to be lived by yourself and I don't think the academy is meant to be lived by yourself and if the academy is that, it's wrong.

In such teams, each person can bring different ideas and strengths to the work. As Celeste McKay states, “you need to work collaboratively.” However, she also shares from her experience in politics and policy on the international stage that many different players are needed on the team: “Ones who will take a punch publicly, negotiators who can see the other side, people who will break down barriers; and you need people willing to work in the academy because you have to be in those boardrooms.” In keeping with the different gifts needed for a community to thrive, others can be included if, as Rita Bouvier suggests, they are like-minded in their goals. Kim Anderson shares that in her experience of the amount of work required to survive and thrive, “you need people in the system to be able to move that along both Indigenous as well as allies’ rights. You have to find those people and work with them to make change in the institution.”

Connections to Métis Women

Beyond the need for connection to the community and working collaboratively is connections with other Métis women. Jeannine Carrière advised Métis scholars to “stay connected to like-minded people.” Métis scholars such as Monchalin and Monchalin (2016), whose work discusses navigating the academy as women, and Lindquist et al. (Under Review UMP), who speaks to academic aunties in the Métis community, are examples of emerging Métis scholars who embody this crucial advice from the grandmothers and aunties. Jeannine, who

shared her experiences of isolation prior to other Métis women like Christine Welsh and Cathy Richardson coming to the University of Victoria, stated, “connections to other Métis women in the academy; it’s really strong medicine for us.”

Celeste McKay shared that Métis student support helped her through law school by visiting another territory and recommending seeking “other Métis women who can support you when the times get tough.” Whether it is strength in numbers or camaraderie among those experiencing the same struggle, Jean Teillet advises: “for young academics and Métis women academics, I would say that you are not alone, and you need to be a part of this broader group.”

Although the demands on the grandmothers and aunts are great, as chapter 5 has made clear, there will always be a need for mentors. Kim Anderson emphasized that “having mentors is good; however that works, however you find them, maybe it’s not always straightforward in how you do that,” while Heather Souter recommended that academics “find yourself a mentor early on; preferably a Métis woman if at all possible.”

Staying connected to other Métis women scholars can create networks of support that enable reaching out to aunts and hashing over challenging situations with like-minded people who understand the complexities of being Métis in the academy. Strength can be found in working together, supporting, and relying on one another’s wisdom.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, as an embodiment of *wahkootowin*, this chapter fulfills the grandmothers’ and aunts’ responsibility to the women who walk behind them and my responsibility to share freely the knowledge I have received. These words uphold Brenda Macdougall’s assertion that “our job is actually to make space for the next group of people to come through.” The grandmothers’ and aunts’ experiences in creating space in various disciplines, coupled with sharing their wisdom, can help prepare future Métis women scholars to continue making progress and create space for those who will one day walk behind them. In the minds of the 13 grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship profiled here, surviving and thriving in the academy can be accomplished by following a three-step path: 1) disregarding colonial pressures, 2) creating connections, and 3) being empowered by who you are.

Chapter 7 Walking with Wisdom

Just always give back to your people and help, that's all.

Christi Belcourt

This chapter summarizes sitting with the grandmothers and aunties and the essential conclusions from our time together. It discusses the personal implications for Métis scholars and includes implications for the academy. Throughout this dissertation process, others questioning the validity of Métis-specific research and its relevance have hurt me deeply. From 2011 to 2016, I promoted Indigenous umbrella programming and was part of research teams working on Aboriginal education; not until I changed focus to the Métis people did I begin to experience the pain of the denial of acceptance and resources (Forsythe, 2021). I switched because I recognized that I had not honored my people through my work. I began to see what many grandmothers and aunties realized decades ago—Métis were missing from the narrative.

The present study aimed to seek knowledge and wisdom from our grandmothers and aunties, who, as Métis people, were historically our teachers. Through sitting with 13 self-identifying Métis women born between 1949 and 1969 whose work began to appear in the late 1970s and raising our awareness of their contributions, connections, motivations, and scholarship, we can enhance our understanding of how the Métis grandmothers and aunties shaped their fields in Métis scholarship and have created space for future Métis women to thrive in the academy. Following a framework created by the MWA in “It Needs to Be Said,” which spoke truths about their reality in 1978, this study strives to do the same for Métis women in the academy. By speaking the truths of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, we hope to know them and walk forward seeking to deal with our reality.

Using a *wahkootowin* theoretical framework and the intertwining Michif methodology that combines the *Keeoukaywin*, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif*, and *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk* methodologies used in this study, I have attempted to answer the following five questions: 1) *What motivated these women to pursue or not pursue postsecondary education?* 2) *How did they determine their research focus or focuses?* 3) *How do they see the impact they and their contemporaries had on shaping the academic understanding of Métisness?* 4) *How have*

colonial institutions impacted their ability to produce and share knowledge? 5) What advice do they have for those following in their footsteps?

This study attempts to use a Métis methodological approach to qualitative research to address the lived realities of Métis women who have been published in the academy but are often ignored by research. It asserts their unique experience outside the Indigenous umbrella and calls for a need to recognize them as a distinct Indigenous Nation with their own experiences of peoplehood and nationhood; in the academy, the aim is to help fill the research gap created by assuming all Indigenous experiences are similar. This study brings to the academy issues present in a wide range of disciplines and therefore provides a window on what is missing in the inclusion efforts in the strategic plans of many postsecondary institutions.

The present study's findings revealed several truths through the stories shared at the kitchen table and during the research process. The following statements using the framework gifted by the MWA in “It Needs to Be Said” represent the findings of this study.

It needs to be said that there is still a gap in the academic literature concerning Métis women’s experience in the academy. Métis experiences are hidden under the Indigenous umbrella in research, whether on students, researchers, faculty, or administrators, if considered at all. Focus and energy must be directed to Métis-specific research or delineated if an approach chooses to remain under the umbrella.

It needs to be said that more Métis-specific methodologies that embody our cosmologies and epistemologies are required. In the late 2000s, Métis methodologies began to emerge in the literature, with Métis theorists expressing our ways of being in research outside the umbrella – there is a need for future Métis scholars to embrace and refine these methodologies.

It needs to be said that despite attempted erasures, these 13 grandmothers and aunts have prevailed, successfully publishing their knowledge for decades. Findings of resilience and under-appreciated success were by extensive, substantial bibliographies in various disciplines: English, theatre and film, Indigenous Studies, fine art, history, law, linguistics, education, philosophy, political sciences, social work, and women and gender studies. The grandmothers and aunts who shared at the kitchen table persevered despite their erasure experiences.

It needs to be said that there are 13 experiences in the academy that reveal the symptoms of the erasure of Métis women. This study reveals 11 points of erasure identified by the grandmothers and aunts in their lived experiences: colonial attempts at erasure through

experiences with colonial education, racism, whiteness, and the pressure to hide; constantly being measured by a colonial yardstick assessing whether the grandmothers and aunties were Métis, Indigenous, or educated enough; and colonial institutions' power to silence through Indigenous umbrella publishing, the struggle to publish Métis-specific research, and issues obtaining research funding for Métis-specific projects. The grandmothers and aunties shared stories of their experiences using concrete examples of each type of erasure.

It needs to be said that the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship have shared their words of wisdom on succeeding in the academy. As an act of *wahkootowin*, the grandmothers and aunties have advice in their role as knowledge keepers. First, disregarding colonial pressures, they shared that permission to refuse and relocate for the betterment of their families in dire situations that will not change is inherently Métis. Second, the grandmothers and aunties stressed the importance of connecting with other Métis scholars and helpers, especially Métis women. Third, they shared the need to be empowered by whom you are through staying true to yourself, including your ancestors, embracing your teachings, looking after yourself, and loving what you do.

Connections to Literature

The study echoes the findings of collections such as Cote-Meek and Moeke-Pickering (2020) about Indigenization, Eaton and Burns (2020) addressing Indigenous experience, and Henry et al. (2017a, 2017b) about racialized experiences. It also acknowledges that Métis scholars have shared research highlighting the academy's reliance on the Indigenous umbrella (Acoose, 1993; Cidro & Anderson, 2020; Gaudet, 2016; LaRocque, 1996, 2002; L. LaV

allee, 2020). Connections in the literature can be made with individual comments about Métis experience or fleeting focuses on Métis experience in the academy prior to 2015; however, we are on the cusp of real momentum for Métis-specific research. The present study demonstrates that there is a shift to Métis-specific research conducted by Métis women such as Burke and Macdonald (2020), Flaminio et al. (2020), and Scott (2021a, 2021b). In the academy, there is a clear trend among Indigenous scholars to come out from under the umbrella, use their methodologies, and speak from their perspectives, free from the pressure to be rendered pan-Indigenous examples. Empowerment to speak our truths by focused research and stories of individual nations will highlight individual struggles in the academy. Although colonization is

often reported with universality, this erases the nuances of every individual experience. It allows the colonizer to only answer to one softened truth that fits all who walk the academy halls.

Scholars have demonstrated that point by conducting and publishing targeted research into the various points of erasure expressed by the grandmothers and aunts. For decades struggles have been caused by colonial attempts at erasure, such as the colonial educational system, racism, and whiteness have dominated the discussion surrounding the academy. The points mentioned by the grandmothers and aunts under the theme of invisibility include a lack of acknowledgment, recognition, and awareness of one another; all have been approached from a pan-Indigenous perspective and accord with what the grandmothers and aunts shared. Furthering the concept of invisibility about being enough in the eyes of colonial institutions is a shared issue among our relatives, with Indigenous scholars speaking to the struggle with being seen as Indigenous enough and educated enough like the Métis grandmothers and aunts who shared similar experiences in this study. Most Indigenous scholars have published under the Indigenous umbrella to appeal to publishers and funders while reaching a broader audience; this is a global issue facing many Indigenous scholars.

However, the experiences of not feeling specifically Métis enough, the pressure to hide, and the struggles to have Métis-specific research funded and published are unique. They show a universal approach to understanding the ongoing colonialism in the academy, not to account for their experiences. Although some of the erasure points are shared with our Indigenous relatives, the 11 attempted erasures documented in the present study are explicitly directed at Métis women. Refusing to give up, they continue to work for their communities to reclaim their histories, languages, and culture.

Implications for Universities

The present study was not undertaken to generate yet another list of recommendations for the academy, which can already be seen in the work of Arvin et al. (2013), Cote-Meek and Moeke-Pickering (2020), Gaudry and Hancock (2012), and Louie et al. (2017). However, the structural issues in Métis-specific publishing and funding must be acknowledged, which colonial institutions largely control. Due to the lack of Métis funding streams, publishing houses, and journals, Métis scholars continue to be met with trepidation about whether an audience for Métis-specific research is viable. Power structures that are primarily colonial thus control access

to the means of production. The work of Métis is viewed by non-Métis and evaluated for worthiness before being presented to broader society. There is no Métis journal or association; instead, one must seek approval from non-Indigenous or Indigenous umbrella journals. Publishers like Pemmican Publications operated for decades with regular support from multiple levels of government, but the MMF closed it in 2019. Another publisher in the 1980s and 1990s dedicated to Métis publications, the GDI, is only putting out a few new titles a year: they are largely reprints and educational tools and suffer from limited marketing and promotion. Therefore, those in the academic world must choose non-Métis and often non-Indigenous publishers. This issue will remain until the systemic change, and more Métis serve as editors and reviewers.

Regarding funding streams, Métis governing bodies do not solely fund many research projects but participate and partner in seeking federal and institutional funding. An important note of the stories shared by the grandmothers and aunties is that although some started in the 1970s, they are all still publishing and working in the academy, struggling with these issues. Therefore, Métis scholars must continue to seek funding from those whose views of the Métis stem from a largely ignorant and racist colonial education system that ranges between the complete erasure of our existence and racist lies about the demise of the Métis. Although only a few grandmothers and aunties brought this up at the kitchen table, it is one that the Métis nation needs to address. Until then, we must continue to ask for funding to uncover accurate histories and raise awareness of who we are. Until colonial awareness of Métis existence is seen as relevant, we will continue to struggle to have our voices heard loudly enough to emerge from under the Indigenous umbrella. Christi Belcourt's experience remains vivid decades later in my own experience; my child and her Métis cousins have had to defend their people during February in their social studies classes. February in Manitoba includes Louis Riel Day, making that month an opportunity to teach children about Métis history. Classroom assignments that ask pupils to debate whether Louis Riel was a traitor or hero can be found across the country. While attending Simon Fraser University as an undergraduate, I recall this being suggested as an acceptable activity when engaging in the history of the Métis. With this type of continued erasure, the level of awareness needed to shift the not-enough paradigm created by colonial institutions toward Métis will remain unchanged.

Implications for Scholars

The grandmothers and aunts, whose resilience and success in the academy stand as a testament to Métis perseverance, gifted us with nine pieces of advice to take with us in our work in the academy, none of which were recommendations on how to change the institution. After working inside or on the edges of the academy, their understanding of the glacial speed with which colonial institutions are willing to change has armed them with the wisdom regarding where to direct their energies. This study's implications for Métis scholars are a guide and permission from the grandmothers and aunts to put yourself and your community before the academy.

As scholars, we can embrace these words and create realities that connect the hundreds of Métis scholars across the country as a support network full of collaborators. Before this call for a connection, there are logical explanations for the general lack of awareness that Métis scholars had and continue to have of one another. With the lack of formalization of Métis scholarship as a discipline and Métis scholars, associations, and journals, connecting has been a struggle. My creation of the Li Rooñ por kaa-natonikeechik (The Circle for Those Who Research) in 2021 came from a place that saw this lack of connection as an easily overcome obstacle. Monthly meetings with various themes were held virtually to create a collective that eventually breathed life into a Métis-specific conference, *Mawachihitotaak: Let's Get Together*, in May 2022. Hundreds of scholars attended the symposium, including over 90 Métis graduate students, allowing us to learn about each other's existence. We know to walk with the wisdom of the grandmothers and aunts, which empowers us to continue to create a community of Métis scholars.

Recommendations for Future Research

With the realization of the lack of Métis-specific research in all disciplines and a need to further develop Métis methodologies due to the prevalence of Indigenous umbrella work, a recommendation to current and future Métis scholars is to shift to telling our stories using our own methodologies. Momentum is building to include our stories, which desperately need to be told.

In terms of research engaging Métis grandmothers and aunts, the present study has uncovered the need to speak to the multiple waves of Métis women who have worked in and on the edges of the academy for 40 years. All the grandmothers and aunts who sat at the kitchen table are still working and shared stories spanning their entire careers. In engaging the subsequent three waves of Métis academics—who entered the research arena in 1990, 2000, and 2010, respectively—the following research questions should be explored: 1) how do their stories compare and contrast with the grandmothers and aunts regarding the 11 points of attempted erasure? 2) What institutional changes have benefitted them and how? 3) What contributions of other Métis grandmothers and aunts unable to contribute to this study and those who came later need to be shared.

Chapter Summary

Sitting with the grandmothers and aunts illuminated the struggles and obstacles designed to derail their success, but their words—both printed and oral—stand as a testament to the tenacity and resilience of these Métis women. Their knowledge has empowered subsequent waves of Métis women in the academy by showing what is possible while arming them with strategies to persevere. It has also identified potential support sites for Métis governing bodies to ensure that those who can speak for us have that opportunity. For colonial institutions, it is a wake-up call that outlines areas of vitally needed improvement in the pursuit of reconciliation. We must all openly and honestly acknowledge the work of the grandmothers and aunts over the past 40 years to our understanding of the Métis ways of being.

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Appendix A



University
of Manitoba

Department of Native Studies

Native Studies
Room 215 Isbister Building
University of Manitoba,
Phone: 204-474-9266
Native_Studies@umanitoba.ca

Department of Native Studies

Statement of Informed Consent

Research Project Title: *Métis Women's Contributions to the Academy*

Principal Investigator: Laura Forsythe, Faculty of Arts
Department of Native Studies
University of Manitoba
Email: laura.forsythe@umanitoba.ca
Phone: 204-698-7479

Ph.D. Supervisor: Dr. Cary Miller
Office of the Vice President Indigenous
Department of Native Studies
University of Manitoba
Email: cary.miller@umanitoba.ca
Phone: 204-4746720

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 a 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 understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the Study

The proposed research aims to uncover and explore Métis women's role in the academy through their publications. This research is hoping to begin to

Appendix B



Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics - Fort Garry
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
T: 204 474 8872
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

Effective: December 22, 2021

Expiry: December 21, 2022

Principal Investigator: Laura Forsythe
Advisor: Cary Miller
Protocol Number: HE2021-0155
Protocol Title: *Métis Women's Contributions to the Academy*

Andrea L. Szwajcer, Chair, REB2

Research Ethics Board 2 has reviewed and approved the above research. The Human Ethics Office (HEO) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans- TCPS 2 (2018)*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

- i. Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in the protocol only.
- ii. Any changes to the protocol or research materials must be approved by the HEO before implementation.
- iii. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be reported to the HEO immediately through an REB Event.
- iv. This approval is valid for one year only. A Renewal Request must be submitted and approved prior to the above expiry date.
- v. A Protocol Closure must be submitted to the HEO when the research is complete or if the research is terminated.
- vi. The University of Manitoba may request to audit your research documentation to confirm compliance with this approved protocol, and with the UM *Ethics of Research Involving Humans* [Ethics of Research Involving Humans](#) policies and procedures.

Appendix C

Manitoba Metis Community Research & Ethics Protocol (MMCREP)

Request for Research Engagement

Please submit this form to:

4 October 2021

Georgina Liberty

Point of Contact for MMCREP
Director of Tripartite Self-Government Negotiations
Manitoba Metis Federation
gliberty@mmf.mb.ca

Name: Laura Forsythe

Email: laura.forsythe@umanitoba.ca

Do you self-identity as Metis? Yes No

Title of your research project:

Metis Women's Contributions to the Academy

Please indicate your affiliated program, department, institution and/or organization:

University of Manitoba Native Studies Department

Please briefly explain your research (strategy, methods, objectives, etc.):

This research will employ two methods of data collection: interviews of Métis women, and secondary literature review. The literature and background will be created to catalogue the work of 35 Metis women born prior to 1970 whose academic publications begin to appear in 1953 to 2021. The primary goal is to collect oral histories of the experiences and thoughts of Metis women publishing within the academy. Interviews will be conducted over the fall of 2021 throughout Metis homeland. Participants will be recruited for a primary interview and may require follow-up interviews depending on the duration and content of the primary interview. Although it is the researcher's intention to ask all semi structured questions at the primary interview, situations may arise (such as interviewee fatigue) where an interview maybe cut short and we will need to set a second interview to complete the questions. A follow up interview may also be necessary if upon further research we require clarification from the participant on their original contribution to the study. The interviews will take place via password-protected video conference platforms or telephone to ensure the safety of all participants during the current pandemic, as such face to face interviews are not part of the study design. The option of video conference or telephone will be presented to participants. The interviews will be semi-structured with several predetermined questions to guide the discussion. The interviews will involve both formal and informal interview techniques. The Principal Investigator will interview participants. The interviews will not have a prescribed time limit but are anticipated to last one to two hours. The interviewers will check in periodically (approximately every 45 minutes) with the participants to ensure that they are comfortable continuing. This will be especially important when interviewing Elders. Participants will be able to end or

take a break from the interview process at any time. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The participants will be notified of the recording of the interviews prior to the interviews taking place. If participants do not consent (Appendix C) to an audio recording, written notes will be used as an alternative. In addition to the 14 days to review the transcript of their interview, participants will be given 14 days to review a preliminary draft of the paper. After viewing the preliminary draft, participants will be able to provide feedback such as any clarifications to their interview, introduce new ideas, include other perspectives and comment if they have recollections prompted by others contributions. The researchers will consider all additional information. Participants will be anonymous, they will have the opportunity to choose to waive anonymity. For those participants that waive their anonymity, they will be presented with the option to provide a photograph of themselves to include in the data dissemination i.e presentations, publications. These oral histories will be complemented by secondary literature research.

Have you attached a copy or summary of your research/research proposal? Yes No

If your response is no, please explain why.

Purpose of the Study The purpose of the proposed research is to uncover and explore the role Métis women have played in the academy through their publications. This research is hoping to begin to understand the role of women to assert educational sovereignty for our people. A major part of this research is speaking to Métis women to learn the stories and histories of Métis women's contributions. The role women have played in the academy has been ignored by the institutions while simultaneously practicing an erasure, and this is particularly the case for Métis women. As these histories have often gone undocumented, this research project hopes to begin to document these histories.

If you are using questionnaires or pre-determined interview questions, have you attached them? Yes No Not applicable

If your response is no, please explain why.

Please indicate who/what/where/how many Metis participants you would like to engage:

Metis woman scholars who have published in from 1953 to 2021 born before 1970. Engaging 10-20 scholars who are featured in the secondary literature.

Will participants remain anonymous? Yes No

Do they have the choice? Yes No

Please explain choices regarding anonymity below and/or attach consent forms that will be used.

It is expected that participants will remain anonymous. However, participants will have the opportunity to waive anonymity if they so choose within the consent form Appendix C. If a participant chooses to remain anonymous, researchers will be careful when writing up research to ensure that identifying characteristics such as family connections, roles held in organizations or other information that may reveal identity are not included in writing up the research. Participants that decided to waive their anonymity will have option to include photos of themselves to be included in dissemination and publication. However, there will be no consequence to those who choose to either remain anonymous or choose to not share photos with the researchers. Although data from this research will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in an aggregated form, so it is not possible to identify individuals. Moreover consent forms, and email correspondence will be stored separately from the materials used a password protected computer file.

Please identify and explain possible research risks/benefits to participants and the Manitoba Metis Community (MMC):

A benefit for the participant includes the recording of their personal experiences and histories in a format that may be potentially available for future generations. It is the ability to preserve and uncover histories

that have not yet been shared with the Métis or academic community. This research project seeks to uncover and explore the role of Métis women played in the academy by interviewing Métis women. We believe this project works to promote, empower and enhance Métis women scholars by raising awareness to the contributions of Métis women in the academy. This project also seeks to preserve and safeguard women's historical and contemporary contributions highlighting our values, cultures, and traditions. A benefit of participants includes contributing to the recording and documenting of a part of Métis history yet to be researched or transcribed. s participants may have been directly impacted by violent colonial practices, and participants will be asked to share their personal experiences, there is a minor possibility of emotional or psychological distress during the interviews. No participant will be prompted or encouraged to explore negative experiences, though participants in response to general questions may raise such experiences. To reduce stress and fatigue, the researchers will provide the participants will clear opportunities to end or take a break from questions at any point during the interview. Participation will be at the interviewee's discretion. The researchers may provide participants with information on where to access appropriate counselling or crisis services should they request it. List of resources includes: Province wide assistance Klinik Community Health Crisis Line: 1-888-322-3019; Winnipeg Health Authority Adult Mobile Crisis Service 204-940-1781 or Crisis Stabilization Unit 204-940-3633.

Please explain how your research strategy reflects the distinction and diversity of the Metis Nation, which is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples in Canada:

The research will only speak with Metis women who self-identify as Metis and who are accepted by the Metis community. It is solely dealing with secondary literature review of Metis scholars recognized by the Metis community and nation.

Please indicate any advisor, committee members and/or employees involved in this research:

Dr Cary Miller University of Manitoba, Dr. Niigaan Sinclair University of Manitoba, Dr. Adam Guadry University of Alberta, Dr. Janice Cindy Gaudet University of Alberta

Has your research has been through an ethical review process? Yes No

If your response is yes, please attach all necessary documents to this form; if not, please outline the review process and timeline for completion.

It is currently being under review through the U of M ethics review board.

Is this research funded? Yes No

If your response is yes, please specify by who & any contractual agreements you may have.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Please describe your projected research timeline:

Ethics review October 4, 2021, Recruitment November, 2021, Interview women December 2021, analyse January, 2021, publish April 2021

What level of engagement are you requesting from the MMF?

- Endorsement only (i.e., a signed letter of support from the MMF)
- Endorsement & minimal engagement (i.e., MMF will facilitate contact with Regional VPs)
- Endorsement & moderate engagement (i.e., MMF will facilitate contact with MMC citizens through Regional VPs, MMF representative will be committee member)
- Endorsement & full engagement (i.e., MMF representative will be a member of research team, co-PI or co-investigator)

Please explain any engagement expectations you may have regarding the research:
An endorsement letter to provide to ethics to engage with Metis citizens

Appendix D



David Chartrand, LL.D. (hon), O.M.
President

MANITOBA MÉTIS FEDERATION

300 - 150 Henry Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0J7

Phone: (204) 586-8474 Fax: (204) 947-1816 Website: www.mmf.mb.ca

November 24, 2021

VIA E-MAIL

Ms. Laura Forsythe
Ph.D Candidate
University of Manitoba Native Studies Department
laura.forsythe@umanitoba.ca

Dear Ms. Forsythe:

Re: Metis Women as contributors to the Academy - MMCREP application

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for your research involving the Red River Métis in your project entitled "Metis Womens Contributions to the Academy".

The Red River Métis are descendants of the Métis people of the Red River Valley and others who can show their ancestral connection to the historic Red River Métis. In this regard, it transcends the common meaning of on site specific "brick and mortar" community such as a village or a town. The historic Red River Métis is comprised of a common identity, culture and history and, among other things, interconnected political, social, entrepreneurial, economic, and kinship networks.

The Manitoba Métis Federation (the "MMF") is the Government of the Red River Métis and, as such, promotes and protects the political, social, cultural, and economic interests and rights of the Red River Métis. Founded in 1967, the MMF joined together existing Métis community organizations and local associations across the Province. Some of these had direct roots with traditional self-governance systems and self-determination traditions originating at the Birthplace of our Nation – *the Nouvelle Nation* – the Métis Nation. Today, the MMF's governance structure includes over 120 Locals and more than 360 elected volunteer executives distributed across seven Regions. The MMF has an elected Cabinet consisting of 23 elected Members.

The MMF employs a centralized approach to engaging its Citizens in research and other activities in order to ensure the collective Métis interest is understood and respected. The MMF manages Métis data and research activities under the principles of the Manitoba Metis Community Research Ethics Protocol. The MMF's Home Office is the first point of contact for researchers.

The MMF maintains a commitment to work within an ethical research environment that:

- Protects the privacy and confidentiality of Métis Citizens;
- Oversees proposed research to ensure its Métis-specific cultural integrity;
- Supports a process to engage Citizens, Locals, and Regions in research effectively; and,
- Employs the principles of the MMCREP.

The Manitoba Métis Federation is committed to increasing both the number of Métis researchers and more specifically, research involving the Red River Métis. You have displayed a genuine intent to honour and respect the centralized research and ethical protocols outlined by the MMF in order to represent the distinction of Métis scholarships, unique to that of First Nations and Inuit. I appreciate your willingness to work with the MMF in partnership to conduct ethical research with the Red River Métis. We look forward to working with you in fulfilling your research endeavours.

Best regards,

Jasmine Langhan
Director of Engagement and Consultation
Manitoba Métis Federation

Cc: Zackarie Harder, Senior Policy Analyst; Policy Unit