Honouring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols

By

Monica Cyr

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Department of Food and Human Nutritional Sciences

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

ABSTRACT

In Canada, Métis cultural restoration continues to advance. Food practices and protocols, from the vantage point of Métis women who were traditionally responsible for domestic work, qualify as important subjects worthy of study because food and food work are integral components of family health and well-being. This qualitative grounded theory study explored Métis cultural food in Manitoba, Canada, with the intent to honour Métis women. Twenty-one in-depth interviews were conducted with Métis residents of urban Winnipeg and southern rural Manitoba. Results indicate that women were traditionally the keepers of culinary knowledge and practices in Métis families, and were highly resourceful in feeding large families and often other community members. Traditional foods were often land-based (wild and cultivated), and frequently enhanced by market foods. There is a strong sense of history, pride, identity, and desire for revitalization through cultural activities such as food; however; there is a gap in associated knowledge translation or "teachings". While some Métis families are rooted in their culture and practices related to Métis foods, others are not as connected to the foods and recipes they grew up with. There is, however, a desire to reestablish family recipes and food protocols, and increase access traditional foods which are perceived as beneficial for Métis people. Results of this thesis will provide Manitoba Métis people with opportunities for critical reflection on food and their identity as Métis; food origins; the role of food in our lives; and how ecological and political structures affect the production and consumption of food. In addition, this project will provide educators with an alternative discourse as it relates to food. Rather than focusing on nutrients and contemporary foods available in retail stores, culturally-based food education provides an important holistic approach to overall health and well-being that is self-affirming and strength-based.

Key Words: Métis food, Canada, foodways, identity, traditional food, Indigenous

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Overview of the Problem

Honouring Métis women for the food work they do in the home qualifies as an important component of overall health and well-being for Métis people. Métis women are the culinary vessels in their homes and food is essential to sustaining life; and yet, neither subject has been empirically explored, therefore, a cultural-health gap exists.

Métis people are one of three recognized Indigenous groups in Canada under Section 35(2) of the Canadian Constitution Act (Canadian Constitution, 1982, s35(2). Elder Tom McCallum shares the Ojibway word for Métis as "Wisahkotewinowak", which interpreted means "[we] were the new Nation, the new shoots that [came] up from the ground from Mother Earth" (Métis Centre -National Aboriginal Health organization (NAHO), 2008). Between the 1600s - 1800s Canada's fur trade heavily influenced the biracial interactions between European traders and Indigenous women whose children came to be known as the Métis (Shore, 2006). Métis culture is a fusion of French, English and Indigenous customs, and because of the unique combining of cultures, the Métis were able to function in both Indigenous and European societies (Saul, 2006). The best of both Indigenous and European worldviews is what makes Métis identity exceptionally unique; however, the negative impact of colonialism had dispersed the Métis and sent many into hiding suppressing their heritage.

Nationally, Métis people are shedding the layer of shame that has inflicted our people over the last century; and instead, we are choosing to collectively stand in solidarity with pride, consciously vocalizing, a readiness to (re)embrace cultural roots. It was the same "group

consciousness" which gave birth to our new nation in the late 17th century (Préfontaine, Dorion, Young, Farell Racette, 2003, p. 3). Understanding the dynamic complexities of the Métis peoples, the first children of Canada, is a subject that deserves further consideration because the Métis are distinct in culture, language, heritage, art, and customs; however, due to a series of historical colonial events that have negatively impacted the overall cultural posture of all Indigenous peoples of Canada including the Métis, many traditional practices are yet to be (re)membered (re)learned and (re)vitalized.

Historically, Métis families were matriarchal in stature, and women's roles were paramount in the negotiation of surviving the Canadian way of life (Barkwell, Dorion & Hourie, 2006). Despite arguments that suggest matriarchal societies were not real because of lack of historic evidence (Eller, 2011), Indigenous societies, pre-contact were matriarchal. During the fur trade, Métis women played a pivotal role in not just family life, but also in the advancement of political, social, and economic domains (A. Gaudry, personal communication, January 6, 2017). Unfortunately, colonial governance swept through the frontier and as result, matriarchal societies were pushed aside in favor of patriarchal ones. To date, archivists have voiced their struggles in piecing together intricacies of women's roles in society because writers, dominantly white European men at the time, did not view such labours as valuable and therefore we are not represented in the recorded literature (Van Kirk 1980; Brown 2008; S.Farell Racette, personal communication, October 12, 2015). For the reasons mentioned above, coupled with the continued oppression against Indigenous women in Canada, the existing references highlighting Métis women's roles in society are disturbingly few.

Paradoxically, Manitoba is the homeland of the Métis Nation (Shore, 2006) and 75,345 of the 1.4 million Canadians who have self-identified as Métis reside in Manitoba (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015a); yet, with Manitoba's large concentration of Métis, Evans et al.,

(2012) point out, that Métis research in the literature is grossly underrepresented compared to First Nation research because of lack of funding from national organizations such as Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). The lack of Métis health research continues to pose as an upward battle for Métis, which negatively impact Métis representation, self-determination, and cultural identity.

Lastly, the disproportionate number of health inequities that exist for Métis populations in Canada compared to non-Indigenous Canadians is a matter that requires an immediate call to action (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). Scholars, health professionals, and Métis Indigenous Elders agree that modern market foods, which are heavily processed and chemically laced, are in part responsible for the loss of cultural food practices within the home. If measures are not taken to address such harms, Indigenous peoples, especially youth, face not only adverse physical health risks, but also, loss of cultural knowledge, which is equally devastating to health (Métis Centre - NAHO, 2008; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Canadian Feed the Children, 2014; Dietitians of Canada, 2015). In summer of 2015, the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* into the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system was released (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), 2015). Of the 94 recommendations found within the report supporting Indigenous groups, such as Métis people in urban centres in a way that recognizes our distinct needs as individuals, supports autonomy and greater health outcomes (TRC, 2015). Creating spaces that support Métis research, albeit currently lacking, has the potential to circumvent further erosion of physical and cultural Métis health, which is a step forward towards reconciliation (Mass, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore cultural food practices among Métis people living in urban Winnipeg and southern rural Manitoba, with specific intent to honour Métis women for their roles in food work. The data gathered will be translated into a meaningful collection of Métis cultural food practices, traditional dishes, and customary protocols that can be adapted and shared in various urban community organizations including school programs. Ultimately, this knowledge will be used to increase overall Métis and other Indigenous groups' health and wellbeing, particularly in Winnipeg's inner-city.

Significance of the Study

The legacy of colonization and the Residential School System has left Canada's Indigenous communities socially and economically marginalized, including exclusion from traditional food systems, leaving Indigenous communities food insecure. According to Health Canada (2015), food insecurity means that an individual or family is uncertain where or how they will access enough food to sustain basic health. Alarmingly, food insecurity for Indigenous peoples living on and off-reserve are as high as 80%**,** compared to 3% to 9% for non-Aboriginal Canadians (Canadian Feed the Children, 2014). Therefore, the significance of this study is to understand how food practices and traditional foods, as defined by Métis people, may increase food security.

Furthermore, food security is a key social determinant of health and well-being (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010) and will be achieved when Indigenous peoples attain sovereignty over their own food systems (Food Secure Canada, 2011). Elaine Power (2008) explains "Cultural food security is another level of food security for some Aboriginal people, beyond

individual households" (p.95). Powers is referring to the integrity of Indigenous health and ecosystems known as Indigenous food sovereignty.

Indigenous food sovereignty is a movement, which speaks to rejuvenating human health by upholding an inherent connection to the earth and its natural systems (e.g. water, animals, forests, rocks, and lands) this includes rebuilding social structures around the procurement of food (Bell-Sheeter, 2004). These social structures and associated meanings, among Métis woman, are an important component of Indigenous identity, and a form of wisdom, which can be passed to youth and others through formal and non-formal educational programs (Kuhnlein, 2015). Importantly, women when in each other's company, have the ability to empower one another through sharing stories, capturing recipes, and cooking all of which exercises cultural well-being, health and spirit.

Lastly, scholars have not yet identified *traditional* foods or cultural *teachings* associated with modernity for Indigenous groups, including Métis people who reside in urban spaces. For example, scholars perceive "traditional Aboriginal foods" to be "wild" foods (e.g. hunted game), (Kuhnlein, Receveur, & Chan, 2001; Willows, 2005; Kuhnlein, 2015) without considering the natural process of how food evolves throughout generations. These blanketed versions of what constitutes traditional foods have been used to characterize all Indigenous diets, which can contribute to feelings of alienation and marginalization. Therefore, the research focus I pose for my Master's thesis in Human Nutritional Sciences is exploring histories and dialogue with the Métis community that will lead to an expanded scope of traditional foods and food teachings, thereby, making them more accessible to the community.

It is expected that integrating this research into programs and other community processes (spiritual gatherings, celebrations, events) will contribute to increased food security, women's health, and greater understanding of Métis foods and protocols.

Research Questions

1. Which woman in the family did the majority of food preparations & cooking within the household?

2. What do urban and rural Métis people consider traditional foods/dishes?

3. How are these traditional foods linked to Métis identity and well-being?

4. What important cultural teachings/protocols/spirituality is associated with Métis traditional foods?

5. How can traditional foods be (re)learned, (re)membered and (re)vitalized in rural southern Manitoba including urban Winnipeg?

6. What are potential barriers/opportunities to accessing and consuming Métis traditional foods?

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is structured as a paper-based manuscript and includes the following chapters which follow the introductory.

Chapter 2 presents a critical review of the literature pertaining to Métis identity and cultural food literacy. Part 1 of the literature review presents the relationship between Indigenous cultural worldviews and food. Part 2 of the literature review presents a historical summary of Canada during the Fur Trade and responds to *who* the Métis people are. Part 3 of the literature review presents a summary of oppressive acts against Métis people. Part 4 of the literature review presents the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people's diets and strategies that speak to revitalizing Métis foodways.

Chapter 3 includes a comprehensive explanation of the qualitative methods used for this research project. This chapter provides in-depth detail of the global methods used for the overall project and abbreviated methods sections are included in each manuscript.

Chapter 4 includes the three constructs which make up the theoretical framework that underpinned the research perspectives.

Chapters 5 and 6 are written as complete research papers. They include introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections. The methods are abbreviated versions of overall methods section. The two papers are formatted such that they may be submitted as publishable manuscripts.

Chapter 5 titled “Honouring Métis Women” includes the qualitative results pertaining to Métis foods and cultural protocols that have survived intergenerational knowledge transfer. This paper addresses Research Questions 1 thru 6.

Chapter 6 titled “Grounded in My Métis Rootedness - Stepping Outside the Boundaries of Academia”. This paper challenged the boundaries of academia. This paper is written in the first-voice and is representative of the experiential research journey utilizing a positionality and self-reflexive lens.

The final chapter in this thesis provides a general summary of the overall research findings and ties Chapter 5 and 6 together, linking the theoretical framework to the research. This chapter also includes the limitations of this study, future implications, and a brief conclusion.

Briefing Note on Terminology

There are a number of terms used to describe Indigenous peoples. These include Indian, American Indian, First Nations, Native, Native American, Aboriginal, and Indigenous. For the purpose of this research both Aboriginal and Indigenous were used throughout the paper.

Aboriginal - is a term most commonly used in Canada, although it is seldom used in other countries. The term came to use in the 1980's when the government of Canada selected it as the term to use to codify the rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit under section 35 of the Constitution Act of Canada.

Métis – is recognized as one of the three Aboriginal groups in the Constitution Act of 1982, Section 35(2). Métis are of mixed French or English European and First Nations decent. The word Métis was a term originally used by the French-speaking population, to describe the mixing of heritages. Métis people are an identifiable group who aspired to nationhood. In 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada set defined Metis as:1) someone who self-identifies as Metis; 2) has an ancestral connection to the historic Metis community and; 3) is accepted by the modern community with ancestral connections to Métis historic communities.

Indigenous – is the term most often used around the world and it is the term used in international human rights instruments such as United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. No negative connotations or associations are attached to the word Indigenous.

Aboriginal or Indigenous – The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are both collective terms encompassing all the original peoples of the land in Canada. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are all Aboriginal or Indigenous peoples.

People or Peoples – The word people is ambiguous. The word is singular, referring to a nation or society, as in the Métis people. When referring to the final 's' in "peoples" it is representative of a universal word that connects multiple nations who have experienced the fate of colonialism,

who seek self-determination and who are in their own right distinct. It is a plural word used when talking about more than one Indigenous nation.

Racial Terms - It is also important to note, terms such as "mixed race", "mixed blood" and "half-breed" are avoided as they are inherently racist terms and appear only in cases of direct quotation.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Food is important to Indigenous peoples because of the deep connection to their culturally determined foodways that are rooted in ancestral knowledge (Kuhnlein, 2015); however, as a result of the ongoing systemic process of colonization in Canada that has dominated and suppressed Indigenous peoples for generations there has been a profound loss of traditional food-related identity. The reasons for this include the Residential School System, Indian Reserves, and urbanization (Elliot et al., 2011). These factors have led to marginalization, extreme poverty, and food insecurity. For Indigenous peoples of Canada, food insecurity is complex and associated with an array of factors rooted in socioeconomic challenges making them a vulnerable group who are grossly disproportionately impacted by health disparities (Skinner, Hanning, Desjardins & Tsuji, 2013; Bhawra et al., 2015). According to Health Canada (2015), food insecurity means that an individual or family are unable to sustain basic health because of uncertainty related to access of food. Food insecurity for Indigenous peoples living on and off-reserve are as high as 80%**,** compared to 9% for non-Aboriginal Canadians (Canadian Feed the Children, 2014).

Unless cultural food practices are restored, and people are given the opportunity to reestablish connections between culture, food, and identity, Indigenous peoples will continue to suffer. This concept of sharing and passing food knowledge is a means of increasing overall health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. As Power (2008) so eloquently states, "Cultural food security is another level of food security for some Aboriginal people, beyond individual household and community security" (p.95). Food is medicinal and when cultural knowledge associated to foodways[1] are shared among communities, food, has the capacity to heal and nourish the human spirit, which is why further research and discussion on the matter is necessary.

To be clear, the subject of food knowledge as it pertains to First Nations and Inuit populations who reside in the north is well documented (Wilson, 2003; Damman, Eide & Kuhnlein, 2008; Skinner, Hanning, Desjardins & Tsuhi, 2013; Dietitians of Canada, 2015); however, food and existent cultural connections for Indigenous populations residing in urban locales is a new area of research yet to be explored (Willows, 2005; Cardinal, 2006; Elliot et al., 2012). This is particularly true for Métis people. For Métis residents who live in and around urban locales, the subject of cultural food beliefs has, to the best of my knowledge, not been empirically studied, which was a driving factor behind this research.

In the case of this study, (re)membering (re)learning and (re)vitalizing Métis traditions as they relate to food are anticipated to have positive impacts on Métis health by affirming identity, and as such may reduce health inequities for Canada's growing urban population. This inquiry is important because half of the 1.4 million Canadians who identify as Indigenous live in urban

[1] Foodways - the production, preparation, serving and eating of food (Parsons, 2014)

spaces (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015b). Of that population, more than 75,000 have self-identified as Métis in Manitoba (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015a).

The overarching objective of this literature review is to discuss the chronological legacy of food identity and insecurity for Indigenous peoples in Canada, with a specific focus on the Métis people.

Part 1: Setting the Context of Indigenous Diets

For centuries Indigenous peoples, the original inhabitants of Canada, have linked good health with understanding, respecting, and learning about food selection which has shaped their identity. For generations, the inhabitants successfully survived by acquiring the ecological knowledge necessary to hunt and gather, which became an inherent part of cultural practice for Indigenous people. The respect and guardianship for the land were inextricably linked to the sustainability of the land through knowledge systems. Traditional food knowledge contributed to physical and spiritual health for the individual and community.

Cultural Identity

Indigenous people share a deep admiration and respect for their environment and all life in it. Relationships were formed between human and non-human life on the basis of respecting boundaries within each world. This view of life was based on the belief that unseen powers existed in every facet of life including the rocks, waters, and plants (Beck, Walters & Francisco, 1977). In this respect, nature's teachers nurtured the survival of the people. This cultural belief is

vocalized by an Elder[2] of the Navaho nation when he stated: "The Elders and the oral histories tell us that long ago we could speak the language of animals and that our survival depended on maintaining the relationships between animals, plants, rivers, and feeding grounds." (Beck et al., 1977, p.12). A spiritual and kincentric relationship existed among all things, and their power to influence the success and well-being of humans has been an integral part of Indigenous cultures. Scholars acknowledge the integration of the "secular with the spiritual, of the past with the present, and of all parts of the living universe, people have a sense of spiritual and practical respect for their lands, waters, and all the environmental components that they recognize" (Turner, Ignace, & Ignace, 2000, p. 1279). Ancestral relationships tie all beings together in communities; this ensures the survival of ancestral knowledge. Concerning how traditions are passed, Métis Elder Tom McCallum states "We can say we are sharing the words of our ancestors. These are the teachings of our ancestors. Our ancestors taught us to do it this way." (Métis Centre-NAHO, 2008, p.7). Typically, knowledge of the world was passed orally, mostly through storytelling, but it was also shared in more formal settings, through ceremonies, symbols, and songs (Beck et al., 1977). Sharing knowledge ensured the knowledge was passed down throughout the generations.

Food and Medicine

Archeologist, David McLeod (1987) reports that Indigenous people inhabiting the region in what is now Manitoba had a diverse diet of plants and animals. Adaptation within the boreal forest and the vast bodies of water and rivers in Manitoba allowed for Indigenous groups to

[2] The terms Elder and healer are used interchangeably since traditional teachings are considered "healing for the mind". Elder is another term attached to traditional healing that is discussed in the Gathering Strength Volume of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The report states that Elders are "Keepers of tradition, guardians of culture, the wise people, the teachers. While most of those who are wise in traditional ways are old, not all old people are Elders, and not all Elders are old" (ibid) (as cited in Martin-Hill, 2009, p. 27).

flourish. Artifacts such as largely boned spear points dating from the Early to Late Prehistoric Period indicate that animals such as bison were the main food source (McLeod, 1987). As more innovative tools were created such as animal skin bags, birch bark containers, earth-lined pits, and the bow and arrow, the scope of diets became more varied with animal and plant species such as elk, wolf, fox, rabbit, goose, clams, hackberries and cherries (McLeod, 1987). Other frequently hunted animals used for food and shelter included: moose, deer, caribou, and antelope. All of these animals were essential in the diets of Indigenous people.

The animals that ran wild across the plains of Manitoba were invaluable food sources as well as other resources. For example, the buffalo provided all of the essential resources needed to make life possible for the Indigenous people of the Plains. The animals' tanned hide was used for clothes, blankets, robes and for shelters in portable homes called tipis. The bones made tools including sharp needles that made sewing possible (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015b). No part of the animal was wasted because that would be considered a disrespectful act against the animal who gave its life for its many served purposes (M. Hart, personal communication, May 15, 2015).

Wild meats largely enriched the diets of the Indigenous Plains people throughout the millennia, however, so too, did vegetables and plant life. Everything eaten comes directly or indirectly from plants, and it can be said, "The diversity of physical environments in Canada has provided an array of ecologically determined food systems for Indigenous Peoples "(Kuhnlein & Turner, 1991, p.3). Throughout human history, approximately 7,000 different plant species have been used as food by people (Hinterland Who's Who, 2015). For instance, the Chippewa Cree nation, who originally migrated south of Canada from North Dakota, used a variety of plants, roots, flowers, fruits, and buds including hemlock, Jerusalem artichokes, mountain mint, grape fruit, wild rice, maize, wild fruits, pumpkin, squash and sugar maples throughout the Great

Plains and Northern Minnesota region (Densmore, 1974). Similarly, many traditional Indigenous plant foods (in Canada) are comparable to those available in an average market today. These include root vegetables, green vegetables, fleshy fruits, seeds, nuts, and grains, and mushrooms. Indigenous peoples also have taken advantage of more exotic plant foods such as algae, lichens, flowers and the bark or inner bark of trees. (Kuhnlein & Turner, 1991, p.6).

In addition to the number of wild vegetation plants that have been used for food, plants have provided numerous medicinal uses. Indigenous medicinal knowledge developed over centuries of observing and understanding ecological systems — systems that were taken into consideration as a natural part of daily life and decision making. Indigenous medicines have always played important roles in the local healthcare system. According to the 2011 Aboriginal Peoples Survey approximately 34 percent of Indigenous peoples living in urban areas had access to traditional medicines (Statistics Canada, 2012). From an Indigenous perspective, holistic health care is an expression of identity that seeks to balance the mind, body, and spirit and is deeply rooted in our belief systems.

In summary, there is a great diversity of cultural ecosystems that sustained Canada's Indigenous peoples throughout history, and hence, there is a great variety of Indigenous foods and medicines that continue to contribute to our collective human knowledge (Kuhnlein & Taylor, 1991). Indigenous peoples have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. Furthermore, by recognizing and fully supporting Indigenous identity, culture, and interests, government and Indigenous partnerships have the ability to nurture effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development of ecological landscapes (Food Secure Canada, 2011). Through ongoing communication and an understanding of traditional and environmental knowledge, education for a sustainable future can be achieved.

Although returning to a *pre-contact* diet is not necessarily desirable or possible, capturing the teachings, stories, and food practices with respect to natural foods, traditional and perhaps neo-traditional[3] dishes are possible. In fact, Elders are eager to teach and share the wisdom that had been passed down to them through the ancestral line (Métis Centre -NAHO, 2008). Increasing cultural food capacity will revitalize Elder roles and Métis customs that can help restore health and well-being.

Part 2: Historical Context of European Contact, Fur Trade Expansion, and the Introduction of Government

It is necessary to preface the next section with a brief history of European contact, the fur trade, and European political advancement in North America during the fur trade, because it was during the fur trade a new nation was born –The Métis.

In North America, and what is now called Canada, there were several diverse cultures, languages, and races of Indigenous peoples that inhabited the vast continent prior to European contact, which can be traced to around 1500 AD in Canada (Préfontaine et al., 2003). With the arrival of French and British explorers, settlements quickly followed. Initially, the relationship established among the Europeans and Indigenous people revolved around trade. The Indigenous peoples traded furs for European goods. Historically, a network of competing rivalries from Europe pushed to expand and dominate the New World. European superpowers (Britain and France) began to migrate scores of settlers in order to establish colonies, support commercial enterprises, and monopolize the fur trade (Préfontaine et al., 2003). Inevitably, European fur traders and First Nation women developed relationships and had offspring, and these children created a unique cultural group that came to be known as the Métis people of Canada.

European Contact

[3] Neo-traditional foods are market foods

In the 16th century, the European monarchs relied on expansion and trade in new territories around the globe. This included setting sail to North America and arriving at the eastern coast of what eventually became known as Canada, where they were met by various Indigenous groups already inhabiting the land. First, the French came followed by the British who prevailed in their conquest of Canada (Shore, 2001).

According to Don McLean (1987) an expert archivist on the subject of Métis history, trading was not a new concept to the Indigenous peoples, as they were highly skilled hunters and fishers who, traded among each other long before European trade commenced (McLean, 1987). Historians acknowledge "The success of New France was inevitably linked to the Aboriginal population who already inhabited the land. The French profited well from the trade and as a result, it did not take long before other European powers began their pursuit of competing over territory in North America. Expansion and wealth were the driving forces for both the French and British, who "quickly became the dominant powers" (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015b, para 4). Greater control of lands meant increased profits; thus developing alliances with the Indigenous peoples would become a crucial asset to the expansion of the fur trade.

Government

Governments officiated in Canada, beginning with the French crown (1534-1760) (Préfontaine et al., 2003) followed by the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) who, both parties established land claims that were not negotiated with the Indigenous peoples (McLean, 1987). As the fur trade flourished, British rule continued to expand, so too did the number of settlers that migrated from Britain and France. HBC and other fur trading companies were establishing trading posts at every opportunity, spreading throughout the interior of the Northwest, which is

how European and First Nations groups coalesced so that Métis children were born (Sealey & Lussier, 1975).

Fur Trade Expansion

The westerly expansion of the fur trade in the 17th century was made possible by Indigenous peoples' extensive knowledge of the lake routes, acting as guides to the Europeans (Préfontaine et al., 2003). According to Canada's Federal Government "the long-established indigenous trade routes of the Interior" is how the fur trade was able to expand across North America (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015b, para 6). As business flourished, the need to establish territorial French and British fur trading posts and military forts along the interior routes was necessary.

The fur trade was so lucrative that power struggles often broke into wars between the French, British, and Indigenous partners. The demand for knives, guns, and axes were a driving economic commodity in the fur trade, which provided the British with substantial wealth. According to McClean (1987), "the new industrial technology, in turn, provided a further growth in national capital" (p.17). It was the national capital proceeds of the fur trade that allowed the British to build an empire whose militia was more powerful than their French opposition. The Seven Years' War of 1756–1763 would determine the fate of the French leaving the British Crown to govern the New World (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015b). Inevitably, the fall of New France meant that Canada began to become more British by the mid-1700s (Canada in the Making, 2015). The fur trade continued to flourish even after the British gained

primary power, paving the way to colonialism. With British hegemony, the Indigenous peoples suffered immeasurable attacks on their culture, identity, and way of life that have had profound negative impacts on indigenous health and well-being, including food well-being.

The Rise and Fall of a New Nation

The Métis are one of three distinct Aboriginal peoples of Canada, recognized under Section 35(2) of the 1982 Constitution Act of Canada. The historic Métis Nation Homeland, consists of parts of what are now the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario; however, a focus on Manitoba will be provided here. Fiercely independent, the Métis were instrumental in the development of western Canada. A brief history will be offered because it is important to grasp how the merging of two cultures created a new and unique culture that stood out socially, economically, and politically. Equally important were the roles of Métis women, and emerging cultural and food practices that contributed to Métis identity. As the Métis community continued to grow, they became an autonomous unit whose social, economic, and political self-governance made them a powerful group; however, as history has unfolded, the Métis way of life changed dramatically.

Métis Strong

The Métis are a people born of North American Indian and European ancestry who formed a distinct nation in the northwest in the late 18th century (Manitoba Metis Federation, n.d). Early European explorers and traders were virtually all men, and for many of them, the fur trade presented an opportunity to settle down and start families with First Nations women. The children born of their interracial lineage form the basis of Canada's Métis population. Métis

ethnogenesis is estimated to have emerged after French Canadian voyageurs[4] and coureurs du bois[5] reached the area of the Great Lakes in the early 1600's (Shore, 2001, p.72).

Métis provenance emerged for the most part at the Red River settlement (now Manitoba), which is where a large proportion of Métis colonies grew and established fundamental economic and political deeds that advanced western Canada. The Métis men were considered a "powerful group" in trade because they acted as the middle-men between European and other Indigenous groups, trading, selling and shipping fur goods on large "cargo-canoes" (Driben, 1985, p. 21). According to Lawrence Barkwell, a Métis historian expert, in his pamphlet *Contributions made by Métis people* (2015), the York boat, Red River cart, and pemmican were innovations attributed to the Métis that greatly influenced commercializing business transactions. Barkewll goes on to state that encouragement from Missionaries, along with their European fathers' status, afforded many Métis men an education. It was this education which allowed the Métis to become involved with mainstream politics in a variety of capacities (2015). The Red River became a vibrant and booming Métis community because the people were ambitious, educated, intelligent and highly organized.

The high levels of organization seen in the Métis political and community life were also observed in the buffalo hunt organized in a remarkable militia-style manner (Louis Riel Institute, 2015b). Presidents, captains, and police would await the signal before charging. The success of each semi-annual hunt provided enough meat to sustain all Métis families involved but also, for transportation and trade. According to Macdougall & St. Onge (2013), several 21st century scholars have concluded that Red-River Métis governance systems and political ideology

[4] Coureurs de bois : Early French and French-Canadian fur traders who ventured into Canada's interior to secure trade and make alliances with the Indigenous people. The term means runners of the woods.
[5] Voyageurs: French and French-Canadian fur traders that traveled westward in search of trade with the Indigenous peoples.

stemmed from the militaristic precision of the buffalo hunt. However, the hunt was more than just food and a formal-hunt-style regime; it was also an important social event (Louis Riel Institute, 2015b). The hunts involved hundreds of Métis family and kin, each with specific roles that involved incalculable strategic plans that ensured a lucrative hunt from the droves of buffalo. The team efforts to accomplish such an undertaking were the workings of strong familial bonds rooted in the complex dynamics of Métis families (Dobak, 1996). The solidarity established in the buffalo hunts were one of several characteristics that were exclusive to Métis identity.

Another aspect that made the Métis predominately a distinct people was the unique combination of both European and Indigenous language. The resultant language, called "Michif", is a mixture of French and Plains Cree and today is still spoken by Métis (Manitoba Metis Federation, n.d). Barkewll (2015) stated that music was also an identifiable distinction for Métis by combining "Celtic folkstyle" with Cree and Ojibwa beats of the drum. He proudly proclaims the 'Red River Jig' fiddle tune and its unique step-dance are known across North America (p.2). The customs and cultures of the Métis people had developed them into a society that was thriving and becoming well known for their innovative disposition.

Adopting cultural practices from both worlds, the Métis community stood out among their Euro-Canadian counterparts. This is especially true for Métis women. One of few books published on the roles of Indigenous women in the 18th century, was *Women of the First Nations* (Miller & Chuchryk, 1996). Throughout the book, Métis women are accredited for their physical, mental and emotional strength because, for an Indigenous woman living under patriarchal rule, she was often politically and socially ostracized, and yet, she still maintained her presence in the spaces of an unjust society. Although Métis women's role in the fur trade was of paramount importance, few accounts have been captured in print. Reasons for this were because women's roles were not viewed as important as their husband's, and as a result, were not recorded. (Miller

& Chuchryk, 1996). Furthermore, women were busy attending to the needs of the home which often left little time to record their daily lives, and even if they wished to do so, most were illiterate (Payment, 1990). Consequently, food knowledge and cultural teachings from the perspective of Métis women were not recorded. Nonetheless, without the presence of Métis women during the fur trade, it would not have been as successful as it was.

Métis women provided the traders with food and "were trained in the skills that made life possible in the North" (McLean, 1987, p. 29). Thus many of these alliances were arranged for the simple motive of survival and commercial success (Sealey, 1975). A Métis wife secured the traders' survival and the success of the fur trade by assisting in the duties of trapping, hunting, and transporting goods for the fur companies. In addition to those tasks, a Métis wife also was responsible for gardening, farming, fishing, harvesting wild rice, building carts, making clothing, collecting limestone, maple sugar, salt, and seneca root (Manitoba Metis Federation, n.d). Payment (1990) asserts that Métis women taught newly arrived Euro-Canadian and European women to prepare and preserve wild game and other foods which were needed to survive the harsh winters. In time, however, Métis traditions and cultures were suppressed by the predominantly Catholic and French-Canadian traditions. In the years following the fur trade, the eastern influx of European immigrants pushed the Métis people further west.

The Fall

The Métis uprising would inspire the historical Red River Resistance of 1870 that took place in present day Manitoba, led by the infamous Métis leader-politician Louis Riel. As a result of that resistance, today, Louis Riel and his comrade provisionary government are acknowledged and honoured for having negotiated the Manitoba Act into Confederation (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2015). Riel fought for, and won recognition of Métis existing rights to land and governance; however, Prime Minister McDougall did not uphold promises negotiated

by Riel and his provisionary government. After the Northwest Resistance of 1885, and a second failed attempt to resist government oppression, McDougall ordered Louis Riel's arrest and eventual execution for treason (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). The Métis were powerless and eventually pushed off their lands by the influx of immigrants from Ontario, the United States and Europe (Manitoba Metis Federation, n.d). What followed was an enduring period of dispossession, injustice, and impoverishment that caused the denigration of the Métis' political and social structure.

Part 3: Cultural Genocide

As the natural world became less important to the Capitalist Canadian colonial-settler state, and land became more valuable, the fate of Canada's Indigenous peoples began a dark downward turn (McLean, 1987). As a result of racist, social, and economic policies, the Métis, First Nation and Inuit peoples' of Canada have endured immeasurable and for some, unforgiveable acts directed by government policies. The collaborative efforts of the Federal Government and Church officials sought to eradicate the cultural core of Indigenous heritage forever. History shows they accomplished their job all too well by enforcing colonialist practices such as the Indian Act, Indian Reserve system and Residential School System, which destroyed countless families, perpetuated systemic racism, induced food poverty, and wide spread food insecurity, and created a marginalized people in their own homeland.

Colonialism

Colonialism still lingers today. This has brought countless problems to Indigenous communities on a global scale, including in Canada. In the article *Challenging the New Canadian Myth: Colonialism, Post-Colonialism and Urban Aboriginal Policy in Thompson and Brandon, Manitoba* (2011), the authors voice an impactful assertion by stating "by the time the

first settlers of the colonial powers set foot on the territory now known as Canada, the first and perhaps one of the most lasting colonial acts was already complete" (Moore, Walker, & Skelton, 2011, p.xxxi). What the authors meant was that inevitably, the visitors were not leaving and with them came a set of lamentable European ideologies that proved to detrimentally clash with the perspectives of the original occupiers of the land. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) argues in her groundbreaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous peoples* that colonialism and imperialism are interchangeable positions; and that, "economic expansion….and subjugation of others" have been the underlining principles of European colonialism (p.22). Smith takes the argument one step further when she blatantly exposes an even darker side of the calculated colonialist process where she states the chronological events of Europe's invasion were the result of "discovery, conquest, exploitation, distribution and appropriation" on Indigenous populations worldwide (p.22). The bottom line is, colonialism has always been about seizing wealth and land, regardless of how it is done, or its impact.

The Indian Act

The Indian Act was one of several policies that segregated Métis people from other Indigenous groups and raised issues related to identity. In 1876, when the Indian Act was first passed the Métis people were not included in the act. In Jennifer Brown's (2008) *Core and Boundaries,* she begins her article with quotes from Paul Chartrand and John Giokas, which state Métis became a residual category of people left over "at the irrational boundary of federal Indian definition" (as cited in Brown, 2008, p. 2). Brown asserts that for Métis people to have been left out of the Indian Act, "for whatever reasons", has created a space of 'identity limbo' (p.2).

Métis Lands

The Government of Canada passed the *Half Breed Land Protection Act* in 1873, which promised 1.4 million acres of land to all Half-Breed Métis adults and children (Payment, 1990). Only 660,000 acres of that land has actually been distributed to date. The loss of Métis entitled lands left families, who relied heavily on fisheries, agriculture, hunting, and farming as a way to sustain life, desecrated and homeless (Shore, 2006). This has had a direct impact on Métis foodways that persist to the present day.

Residential School System

For over a century, the Canadian government in partnership with religious organizations operated schools across Canada whose aim was to rip Aboriginal children from their parents in hopes to *civilize* the children - these schools were called Residential Schools (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). Residential Schools severed culture, language, dignity, health and at times innocence from the Aboriginal children who attended these schools, which tore families and communities apart. For Métis survivors of the Residential Schools System, their experiences were similar to that of First Nation's children; however, the racism they endured was different. According to The Legacy of Hope Foundation (2015), an organization whose purpose is to raise awareness of the impacts from Residential Schools, have documented, Métis children were assimilated to the degree of certain characteristics such as skin tone and family cultural background. For example, if a Métis child had dark skin, enrollment was compulsory, however, if the child had fair skin or came from a family whose religious beliefs were Christian based, then the child was admitted and only expected to attend school during the day returning home for the evening (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2015). The idea was, the less the child resembled an "Indian-like" upbringing the more likely Department of Indian Affairs

was satisfied thus, attention was diverted to other less "assimilated" children. In the early years of Residential Schools, Métis admittance was tolerated as a means to fill seats; however, the government tightened its policies, denouncing financial responsibility for Métis children, imposing an annual fee for any Métis child whose parents wanted to send their child to Residential School (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

Because Métis families were never fully accepted as European or Aboriginal, they were frequently ostracized from the rest of Canadian society, leaving scores of families marginalized and impoverished, unable to afford much, let alone school fees. Furthermore, public schools were unwilling to admit Métis children; consequently, many were denied an education because of systemic racial policies which unfairly disadvantaged Métis families.

For Métis children who attended Residential Schools, they were caught up in a complex racial web. For example, for Métis children who were forcibly placed in Residential Schools, their fate was similar to that of First Nations children, where cultural ties were severed and family relationships broke down (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). Yet, for Métis children whose parents willingly enrolled their child, their experience was no doubt different. The racial dynamics between groups were seen through indifference pinned among the groups of children. The Legacy of Hope Foundation (2015), through interviews with Métis Residential School survivor's reports that, racial slurs, such as "half-breed", "mixed blood" or "mixed race" were often directed to Métis children as an attack on their identity. Métis children were shamed for having come from "illegitimate breeding", which cast them as "outsiders", segregating them from the First Nations' students (p.5). Systemic marginalization and the Residential School experience have left lasting impacts on the lives of Métis families. In 1996, the last of the 150 federally funded schools were permanently shut down.

Part 4: The Impact of Colonialism in Present Day

Urban Winnipeg

The largest number of Indigenous peoples live in Ontario and the western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta & British Colombia) (Statistics Canada, 2011). The majority of Manitoba's Indigenous population lives in urban Winnipeg, and this number is projected to increase within the next 20 years with Indigenous youth contributing largely to the growth, according to Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (2012). Winnipeg has the highest proportion of Métis people in Canada, at 6.5 percent representing 46,325 people (Statistics Canada, 2011). In part, migration patterns for Métis families are the result of colonial expansion in the 1920's. Adjusting to city-life was difficult for most of them because of the century-long impact of marginalization and residential schools (Silver, 2010). Intergenerational poverty, racism, and exclusion are the inflictions that Indigenous peoples faced (Silver, 2010). These issues are still a concern for Indigenous families.

Racism

Indigenous peoples in Canada are often subjected to racism because of socially constructed ideologies (worldview) about race which in turn undermines cultural identity (Loppie, 2015). The concept of race as a category of identity did not emerge until Europeans began to colonize other continents. In general, people racialized as 'White' are afforded better treatment and more opportunities than people who are categorized as 'Black,' 'people of colour,' or 'Aboriginal, Indigenous, or Indian' (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

For Métis people, the colonial institutions and practices were similar in some regards and different in others. The Indian Act introduced a system whose mandate was to identify and classify Indigenous title, and having not been included in the act, the Métis have suffered from

not being recognized as Indigenous ((Bhawra et al., 2015). On the one hand, Métis people were told they are too "white" to be considered Indigenous and on the other, too "Indian" depending on the color of their skin (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2015). The complexity of "in-between-ness" continues to contribute to deeply embedded colonist racist views and perspectives. Emma Laroque (2001) stated, "To a large degree, the Métis have been defined in terms of who they are not, instead of who they are" (as cited in Froman, 2007, p. 31). Froman (2007) goes on to assert that the Métis are a distinct group, who according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), are "neither First Nations or Inuit" (p.32). She summarizes her thoughts on the matter with a quote from Laroque (2001) who points out "However, stereotypes, government policy, politics and the tendency for the historical record to deal with the Métis as individuals rather than communities has resulted in the confusion and perceptions surrounding Métis identity (as cited in Froman, 2007, p32). The complexity of Métis identity continues to perpetuate stereotypes and racism.

Poverty

According to Canada Without Poverty (2016), a charitable organization, Canada is a developed country, yet 1 in 7 people live in poverty. For Indigenous peoples, they are disproportionality burdened with ill health as a direct result of poverty (Kuhnlein, 2015; Castleden, Sylvestre, Martin, & McNally, 2015). Such disparities stem from the long-rooted history of colonialism and residential schooling that has caused irreversible trauma that has adversely affected Indigenous spirituality, traditions, cultures, languages, and connections to the land which are vital to health (Kolahdooz, Nader, Yi, & Sharma, 2015). Poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities - a violation of human dignity. Poverty is a term that encompasses a wide range of social determinants of health such as income, housing, and education level, all of which are disproportionately *in*accessible to Indigenous families causing

severe adverse impacts on families in both rural and urban communities, situating them far below the poverty line compared to non-Indigenous Canadians (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). In Winnipeg, many Indigenous families rely on government benefits as their main source of income, and is insufficient to fund the basic necessities, particularly food (Statistics Canada, 2010). For many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, poverty is a direct link to food insecurity.

Food (In)Security

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security, as existing "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996). Definitions of food security typically emphasize access, availability, and utilization of food security (Halseth, 2015). These definitions are often developed in non-Indigenous contexts and fail to take into consideration the unique cultural dimensions of food security related to the harvesting, sharing, and consumption of country or traditional foods. For Métis and First Nations people in urban areas, the experiences of food insecurity are different from those of non-Indigenous Canadians because Indigenous groups have specific food preferences, coping strategies, and the perceived connections between food and the environment (Bhawra et al., 2015, Power, 2008). In recent years, nuanced research has begun to unveil ways in which Indigenous groups, living in urban centres, are tackling food insecurity related issue through means of food sovereignty principles (Cidro, Adekunle, Peters, & Martens, 2015). For these reasons, it is necessary to further investigate ways in which traditional food practices increase health and well-being, in a modern context.

Nutrition Transition and Nutrition Status

As a consequence of food commodification that has occurred with industrialization, urbanization economic development, and the globalization of markets, the nutrition transition for Indigenous peoples' diets have had tremendous adverse effects on their health. For Indigenous people, colonization began the gradual process of the "nutrition transition", which as the term suggests, is a transition of culturally appropriate and preferred foods such as natural whole foods from "Mother Earth", and wild meats, to a diet that is heavily chemically charged, nutritiously inadequate, and is high in added sugar, salt, and fat (Damman et al., 2008; Kuhnlein & Chan, 2000). Nutritional knowledge and food skills have been lost in many Indigenous families because children of residential schools were away from their families; and therefore, did not receive the cultural training necessary to properly care for themselves.

Scholars agree the impact of westernized diets for Indigenous peoples is disturbingly high, causing poor health status and chronic disease (Skinner et al., 2013; Damman et al., 2008). For the past 10-years, The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) has been collecting information regarding the nutrition and health status of Indigenous Canadians in Northern Communities throughout Canada. The First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES, 2010) report indicates that in Manitoba, nine rural communities interviewed, the most commonly consumed market foods included: soups, eggs, pasta, potatoes and white bread. In addition, excessive salt and fat were prevalent in their diets; whereas, fruit and vegetables along with whole grains were low compared to Canada's Food Guide recommendations (Chan et al., 2010). As a result of consuming inexpensive, simple carbohydrate-rich market foods, chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, overweight/obesity, and malnutrition have negatively impacted Indigenous health (FNFNES, 2010). Willows (2005) states, that for many Indigenous people returning to a traditional diet would benefit health on a physical and cultural level; however, to date there is no

one accepted definition of *traditional* foods. Just as Indigenous groups are unique, so too are their diets, and therefore, what constitutes as a Métis traditional diet is yet to be understood.

Willows (2005) defines traditional food to be "culturally accepted foods available from local natural resources that constitute the food systems of [Indigenous] peoples" (p. 32); whereas, Elaine Power provides a detailed list of traditional foods as opposed to a definition. She states traditional food is "primarily wild-harvested food such as wild meat, fish, birds, sea-mammals, berries and other plants" (p. 95). Still, Ritenbaugh and Goodby (1995) conclude that diets are not static and consumption of new foods is inevitable due to changes in accessibility, availability, and geographic location creating unavoidable nuanced neo-traditional dishes.

Neo-Traditional Foods

The term neo-traditional, in the context of this paper, means 'new' traditional foods or recipes that have evolved in Canadian food systems. Neo-traditional foods may or may not be Indigenous to the land, however, have been minimally processed, introduced as market foods, and have entered communities often through global industrially sponsored retail outlets becoming part of the cultural diet. Neo-traditional foods have particular importance for urban-Métis families because foods that have been hunted, gathered or grown, have been combined with market foods creating neo-traditional dishes and have become part of Métis identity. For example, hamburger soup made with wild meat or beef, pasta such as macaroni, tomatoes, and onions. Some researchers argue that unless food is derived ecologically from its originating environment and free from a manufactured process then it cannot truly be coined a traditional food (D. Mihesuah, personal communication, November 29, 2015). However, other scholars would argue that conceptualization of identity, as it relates to food, in fact, evolves during the span of one's daily food activities (Bisogni, Connors, Devine, & Sobal, 2002). This is to say, that if the food/dish has become a part of the regular meals served and consumed or takes special

significance then, it attributes to food-related identity and may become “traditional” over time. Exploring ‘new’ dishes created in the kitchens of Métis families is a subject worth delving into because Métis culture is unique and recipes that have come to be understood as traditional in the mosaic of Métis cuisine deserves recognition.

Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge

Identity & Food

We symbolically consume identity through our food and drink choices (Almerico, 2014). For the Métis nation, a number of food dishes have become a part of the cultural identity and are expressed in reflection to Michif, the Métis language. Michif is the blended language of French and Cree (Bakker, 1997). Examples include li gallette (bannock), meatballs (boullettes), barley soup, soup au pois, soup au bean, wild rice, prairie chicken (partridge), boulette soup, tourtiere (meat pie), Indian Relish, and pemmican (Louis Riel Institute, 2015a). Questions arise, however, such as, are Métis people still cooking Métis cuisine? Is it widespread? Do people who identify as Métis recognize these foods? What culinary techniques are used and are there any cultural teachings associated with such meals?

Reclaiming Métis Food Knowledge

Reclaiming Métis culinary traditions is a step towards honouring and respecting the traditions of such a unique community as to ensure the knowledge is kept and passed down. Métis Elders are eager to share traditional knowledge in every aspect of Métis identity because there is a fear that the knowledge is becoming scarce (Métis Centre-NAHO, 2008). The importance of acquiring culinary knowledge from the women who carry the cultural knowledge

can be seen in a passage written by Jeanette Armstrong, the Keynote speaker for The National Symposium on Aboriginal Women of Canada, at the University of Lethbridge in 1989:

"We find our strength and our power in our ability to be what our grandmothers were to us, keepers of the next generation in every sense of the word – physically, intellectually and spiritually. We strive to retain our power and interpret it into all aspects of survival on this earth and in the midst of chaos" (as cited in Miller & Chuchryk, 1996, p. xi).

Research Gap

The existent Métis research available in the literature, which pertains to Métis culture and more specifically Métis food culture, is sparse. Recently Halseth (2015) released a comprehensive 108 meta-analysis scanning the available research and its existent gaps with respect to Métis and First Nations people who reside in the North. The report is titled *The Nutritional health of the First Nations and Métis for the Northwest Territories: A review of current knowledge and gaps,* and in this report, the nutrition transition with respect to First Nations and Métis people residing in the North West Territories is documented. For First Nations and Métis residing in an urban setting, such a document has not yet been written.

The report examined the effectiveness of Knowledge, Syntheses, Translation, and Exchange (KSTE), as a theoretical model in order to improve overall health for northern Canadian Indigenous peoples (Halseth, 2015). A key finding was the lack of research available on Métis and First Nations people in urban locales.

Halseth et al., (2015) points out that the majority of the publications reviewed were related to Dene and northern Indigenous peoples, with only a small fraction of research relating to the rest of Canada's Indigenous population; whether that fraction includes Métis, it is unclear.

Just over half of the 108 Indigenous health-related studies generally focused on levels of food consumption, nutritional assessments, and levels of contamination in food sources. Finally, Halseth (2015) notes more research should focus on Indigenous youth in order to address nutritional deficiencies. In addition, the need to better understand factors that affect access and availability of food as it relates to geographic location. Both are excellent points, and if addressed, would benefit the urban Métis community in Winnipeg. Understanding traditional knowledge and cultural food acquisition in urban centres for Métis people is the beginning of a larger, overdue, discussion regarding Métis identity and our cultural footprint.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Perspectives

This research was informed by three theoretical perspectives: Métis, Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR) and Decolonization. The first perspective, Métis methodology (Métis Centre-NAHO, 2008)) encapsulates Métis research protocols used throughout this research; the second, Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR), advocates taking action from the standpoint of the disadvantaged. Thirdly, by utilizing the two aforementioned perspectives, the participants and researcher enter a space from which the process of decolonization can be nurtured. Importantly, this research will be used to (re)member, (re)learn, and (re)vitalize Métis food traditions as a way of honouring Métis women and cultural capital.

Métis perspectives are based on Métis cultural values and principles that have been laid out by Métis Elders. Over the past decades, collaborative research *with* Indigenous groups has been a primary focus. This is because, Indigenous people are fed up with unjust and unethical research practices that they have in no way benefited from (Smith, 2012). As a result of such injustices, governments, academic institutions, and organizations have developed codes of ethics

representative of the rights and dignity of Indigenous groups. Such codes of ethics are to be implemented prior to and throughout the research process with Indigenous groups. Around the same time ethical codes were being developed, a wave of Indigenous methodological frameworks were also being created, by Indigenous scholars. According to several Indigenous scholars, Indigenous epistemological frameworks speak from an outside perspective, opposite from that of the dominant positivist Western frameworks in use (Wilson, 2008; Brant Castellano, 2004; Webber-Pillwax, 2004). For example, unlike Western epistemologies that rarely focus on accountability to interviewees or communities from which 'data' is exhumed, one of the foundational Indigenous epistemological views are to ensure that in some way the community involved in the research process will benefit from the research being done (Wilson, 2008).

Importantly, although each Indigenous group has its own set of unique epistemologies, there are shared commonalities among Indigenous groups. Because of these shared commonalities, I will first discuss the broader subject of Indigenous methodologies, in order to lay the foundation of similarities within groups. This is not an exhaustive list.

In Margaret Kovach's (2012) work, entitled *Indigenous Methodologies*, she explains how the methodology was born and what separates its epistemologies from other methodological epistemologies. Her argument is based on the distinctiveness of a tribe or clan. According to Kovach (2012), the term *Indigenous methodologies*, refers to a knowledge system and set of methods unique to Indigenous epistemologies. She states that unlike Western epistemologies, Indigenous methodologies, are about naming "ancestral interrelationships" from which the knowledge stems (p. 37). She goes on to acknowledge that it is equally important to assert which tribe or group the knowledge stems from. Kovach's (2012) assertion, regarding acknowledgement, is embedded in values of respect and honour. According to Kovach (2012), Indigenous worldviews are unique to each tribe, and therefore the "identity" of the tribe should

be honoured (p.37). Lastly, Kovach (2012) concluded that although the vast majority of Indigenous epistemologies are similar, there are differences in protocols and therefore, such protocols need to be acknowledged and adhered to. Kovach points out the importance of differentiating protocols from varying groups (2012), which is why; I have included the Métis philosophies listed in Table 1 that has guided the methodologies of this research.

Table 1: Métis Philosophies

- knowledge must be shared
- seek the knowledge from those who have the knowledge
- Métis are encouraged to learn the Michif language from oral histories and traditional knowledge
- to acknowledge the person who shared the knowledge is to honor the person and their oral traditions
- learn and record the Métis cultural protocols in order to pass the knowledge down
- women are the life-force behind the centrality of family

The Métis philosophies mentioned above are derived from research obtained by The Métis Centre of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (Métis Centre-NAHO, 2008) who, between 2003 and in 2006, invited a number of Métis Elders from each Métis region in Canada to assist with knowledge gathering in order to ensure sustainability of traditional Métis knowledge and protocols. As a result of this important work, a book titled *In the Words of Our Ancestors: Métis Health and Healing* was published in 2008. This compilation is a leading source of Métis knowledge, stories, teachings, and cultural protocols and one from which I draw the Métis methodology that informs this research.

The second perspective that informed this research was Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR). A feminist lens has its basis in the assumptions that men and women have different experiences and as such, different perspectives, which take on new meaning. Generally speaking, feminism is a holistic perspective whose aim is to allow space for women to express their beliefs, circumstances, and struggles in a way that is unique to women (Fertaly, 2012). Conversely, Mouchref (2016) asserts the only commonality between Indigenous and Western feminist scholarship is the word "feminism" (p.91). Rejecting feminism, for Indigenous women or women of color, has largely been bolstered because of colonial and racial ideologies which Mouchref (2016) argues oppresses and disempowers women who are not *white.* However, Verna St. Dennis, an Indigenous scholar who, at one point, also rejected feminism has come to identify with feminism and states that, "there is much to be gained by Aboriginal women's and Aboriginal men's exploration of feminist scholarship." (p. 34). St. Dennis (2007) positions that feminism is highly complex and ever evolving, which is why feminist analyses from all women of varying races is adding to the richness and uniqueness of women's experiences. Hence, utilizing the space of feminism while at the same time combining Indigenous epistemologies will create a rich platform to honour the women and grandmothers who have taken the time to cook, share, teach, and nurture their families by way of their culinary contributions to family.

There is a plethora of literature on the subject of feminism, however, because it is beyond the scope of this research, I will not delve into the vast discourse of Marxism, Postmodernism, or Poststructuralism along with some of the other contested issues related to the justification of *women's truth*, which underpin FSR as debated by other scholars (Devault, M. 1990; Ardill, A. 2014). Rather, I will take a similar stance as Anna Buehring and Teresa Waring (2001) did in their approach with FSR, where they listed the main elements of the theory, quoted originally from Griffin (1995) to include: women's research alone is a basis for research, as is developing a

theoretical framework from it; the researcher is accountable for her actions to participants and the larger feminist constituency; the personal or private realm is political and; reflexivity is an essential aspect of validating knowledge.

Moreover, the activism approach within the FSR framework will allow me to exercise a fundamental aspect of Indigenous research which includes *giving back* to community and to the individuals who have agreed to venture forward on this journey with me. Kovach (2012) reminds researchers that Indigenous and Western thought are different; the latter being more favoured, and as a result of this dominating ethnocentric lens within the academy, political challenges still exist. However, by utilizing Métis methodologies coupled with FSR, I am better situated within the academy to carry out my research as planned.

Lastly, FSR like Indigenous methodologies is grounded in the perspective that research should encompass social benefits for those who are involved in the process (Brant Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2012; Lambert, 2014; First Nations Governance Centre, 2007). Although a distinct nation, "Métis people are often forgotten about" (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2015, p. 3) which possesses a unique threat to an already disadvantaged group who may not realize their cultural identity is at risk, and therefore counteractive measures must be taken. FSR argues that research should start from the standpoint of the disadvantaged and work towards social change (Sosulski, 2009). The social change in this research involved *consciousness raising*, a concept found within the FSR paradigm (p.262). Consciousness raising means creating awareness of oppressive systems at play that otherwise may not have been obvious to the people participating in research, and then assist in the generating of solutions to navigate such systems (Sosulski, 2009). The idea is who better to make sense of and find solutions to problems of social inequality, than from those who experience such inequalities first hand. For this research, consciousness raising served two-benefits, the first, sharing stories created awareness regarding

Métis food ways and protocols which directly qualified the second benefit - the pursuit of decolonization and resurgence within the larger infrastructure of Manitoba, Canada.

The final perspective, decolonization, encompasses undoing what has been done as a result of violent colonial efforts, which sought to dismantle and eradicate Indigenous identity (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014). Decolonization is, unequivocally, the necessary collaborative venture that must be journeyed, if Indigenous peoples are to *re*posture cultural, spiritual, and political identity within the assemblage of Canadian society. The compilation of these perspectives, synergistically work to encapsulate how Métis food and culinary knowledge connect to and strengthen Métis culture; thereby furthering, the resurgence of Métis female identity.

In 1999, Linda Tuhiwi Smith, a Maori scholar from New Zealand wrote *Decolonizing Methodologies,* which transformed the fields of educational research and critical epistemology. Smith's work is an excellent contribution to Indigenous research in that it provides practical knowledge that unveils the problems which have manifested as a result of research conducted within Indigenous communities by non-Indigenous researchers using Western methods. Within her book, Smith also challenges the academic power of institutions whose thought continues to revolve around a colonialist worldview imposed on others (Smith, 1999). Scholars such as George Schmidt (2014), side with Smith stating, she purposively evokes the reactions of non-Indigenous researchers. Schmidt (2014) goes on to state that Smith, unpacks the imperial ideologies at work within the Western academy by denouncing the all-too familiar methodological practices of parachuting into an Indigenous community, and extracting information with little accountability to the participants of study or the community at large, as so often seen in the literature. Since Smith's publication, the subject of constructing Indigenous

frameworks and concepts continues to be established. For my research, working as a partner with the Métis community at each level is a priority, and pursuit towards decolonization.

Decolonizing Indigenous research within academic institutions is at the forefront of conversations regarding social change for Indigenous peoples by Indigenous peoples. As a result of unethical, prejudicial, and harmful research related outcomes involving Indigenous research, many Indigenous peoples have cried in protest "We have been researched to death" (Brant Castellano, 2004). Resisting the ways in which Indigenous knowledge is collected, analyzed, and interpreted in the eyes of those who are trained in Western colonist discourse marks the beginning of a long journey towards the decolonizing process. In *Research as Resistance* (2005) authors Leslie Brown and Susan Strega state, that for Indigenous peoples, protecting Indigenous knowledge has been a critical undertaking and a first step of many towards self-determination and governance (Brown & Strega, 2005). They boldly assert "We push the edges of academic acceptability not because we want to be accepted within the academy but in order to transform it" (p.1). It is clear that new dialogue perpetuates new practices and space for innovative emancipatory research which includes non-traditional ways of knowing, learning, and sharing knowledge that can push social justice forward for groups who have otherwise maintained a marginalized and objectified status.

The three paradigms from which my research was guided, Métis methodologies, Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR) and the process of decolonizing, were woven amidst one another from the outset to (re)member, (re)learn and (re)vitalize Métis food traditions. It is these perspectives that guided my actions in order to provide a space for Métis people of urban and rural Winnipeg to speak about food and food traditions, and ultimately pass down important cultural knowledge according to Métis protocols.

CHAPTER 4

Methods

The Qualitative Research Paradigm

Qualitative research is the study of humanness and its numerous elements of perceived life. For example, according to Polkinghorne (2006), applying a systematic methodological approach of people's personal encounters, allow researchers to study human experiential phenomena in the social sciences. This interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world is used to construct socially perceived realities (Hallberg, 2006). In essence, qualitative researchers hope to capture the point of view from the perspective of the person who is *being studied*. That is why qualitative research is the best option for this research, because if I am going to understand Métis perspectives as they relate to traditional foodways, then I must begin with an approach that nurtures the concept of perceived thought.

Qualitative research is exciting because it is a legitimate form of scholarship that analyses data through words rather than numbers and more so, it captures behaviours and internal cognitions, which in turn inform multiple versions of reality. For example, Braun and Clarke (2013) state, that qualitative research is unique because it seeks to generate theory through an inductive process where interviews (data) are compared to one another, purposely looking for patterns to emerge, creating themes of reality. It is the combined themes that create theory. In addition, they acknowledge that qualitative research remains subjective and introspective. Both characteristics reflect the personal involvement of the researcher in the research process. In this study, qualitative research enabled a rich understanding of Métis families' food landscapes, food roles and relationships within families, food heritage, identity, and cultural well-being, as well

food-systemic opportunities and barriers. More so, I was able to convey Métis perspectives as they relate to traditional food practices and protocols in a way that nurtures the concept of *perceived thought* through words, which was a priority for this study, rather than numbers, as seen in quantitative research.

The subject of quantitative research is mentioned because historically this has been the dominant paradigm which has steered the *truth* of Western scientific inquiry (Braun & Clark, 2013). Before the 1960's, prior to the emergence of qualitative research, research involving Indigenous peoples was conducted *on* Indigenous people rather than *for* them utilizing quantitative epistemologies. The results collected were devastating for many communities. As Smith (2012) famously puts it, the word *research* is probably one of the dirtiest words in the hearts and minds of Indigenous peoples' vocabulary. According to Kovach (2012) "qualitative research offers a space for Indigenous ways of researching" (p.24); however, and most importantly, she points out that although there are commonalities between qualitative and Indigenous methods, such as process and content, qualitative research is still rooted in Western constructed processes. She goes on to state that only until Indigenous research is guided solely by Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies then qualitative research will "have to do" (p.25). Until I better understand such Indigenous epistemologies I will rely on the methodologies of qualitative research, as I have done so, in this research.

Qualitative research has since its inception exploded with various methodological frameworks afforded to interested researchers. Scholars agree that although a wide range of qualitative research methods and theories exist, no one approach is more superior than the next (Hallberg, 2006; Pollginghorne,2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013). Moreover, Grounded Theory methodology is the most common and popular analytic technique in qualitative research due to its systematic methodology, and abundance of literature written on it (Braun &Clarke, 2013).

Grounded Theory (GT) methodology will inform this research because GT generates new knowledge about a topic, in a given place and time, that has never been explored this way. This research is Métis specific, in that, a Métis researcher has asked other Métis people about their food experiences. Therefore, this research has the potential to create conversations surrounding food, food work, and the roles of Métis women who are cooking. To date, to the best of my knowledge, an empirical study has not been conducted in the Métis community about Métis food or food work.

GT methodology served as the forefront of the qualitative revolution. It originated from the work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss' influential book from 1967 The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Hallberg, 2006). However, since GT's conception there have been multiple versions of GT methodologies situated in various epistemological frameworks including a constructivist mode developed by US sociologist Kathy Charmaz (2006), former PhD student of Strauss, and leading expert on Grounded Theory methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, this research will be informed by Charmaz's (2006) *Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology*.

Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology

The constructivist GT approach was chosen for this study because it favors a narrative lens rather than theory alone, and insists that the researcher remain reflexive throughout the process (Charmaz, 2006). Both of these terms are described in the upcoming sections. In the article titled, *The "core category" of Grounded Theory: Making constant comparisons* (2006), Lillemore R.M Hallberg' concisely summarizes Kathy Charmaz's Constructivist GT methodology as follows: a) there is no "one truth" in social realities rather there are multiple truths; b) data must be constructed based on an on-going interaction between researcher and

participant; c) actions and meaning are woven interchangeably within each other; “meaning shapes action and actions affects meaning”; d) researcher must exercise reflexivity during the interview process; e) how the interview questions are asked and how the interviewer looks, acts, and sounds affects how the participant perceives him or her and how the interaction continues and f) in order to enter the world that is being studied we need to learn from the “inside out”. This requires full participation (i.e. active listening) during the interview process. These characteristics aligned with aspects of my theoretical perspectives and have allowed me to connect with participants on a level that felt comfortable, which ultimately set the stage to share stories that would provide greater understanding to the larger goal of this study, and by extension, explore a deeper understanding of Métis culture and how it relates to foodways.

The following sections will provide detailed instruction regarding recruitment, data collection, analysis, and ethical proceeding.

Métis Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment utilized purposive and snowball sampling, both of which are processes specific to Grounded Theory methodology. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) purposive sampling, also known as *theoretical sampling*, is deliberately seeking out individuals who possess certain characteristics of interest. In the case of this research, that included people who self-identify as Métis, are eighteen years and older, and are acknowledged for their understanding of Métis culture (see Inclusion/Exclusion Table 1). Snowball sampling is an approach to sampling where new participants are invited from networks of people who have already taken part in the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Essentially, snowball sampling is *word of mouth* connections. The initial snowball stages of recruitment began with my personal network of family and friends. However, it was my encounter with a well-known and respected

individual within the Métis community that led me to the larger Métis community in rural Manitoba. I refer to this person as the gatekeeper because his role in my research facilitated acceptance or rejection in the larger Métis community. According to Flick (2009), gatekeepers possess deep connections with people in their community, specifically the people whom you, as the researcher, seek to get close to, and therefore have the power to grant meaningful access to such participants. For this research, not only did he connect me with knowledgeable participants but he also edified my research endeavors, which was evident during introductions. For example, on more than one occasion when I had met a participant, they had casually stated that they had already heard of me and my quest for knowledge through this individual; hence, their willingness to participate. Weber-Pillwax (2004) acknowledges that familial connections are helpful during the recruitment process however remind researchers that ultimately *people talk*, and therefore, being a person of integrity with good intentions is the only way to earn trust within the circles you are trying to penetrate. She goes on to state that such "trustworthiness" is a key factor in Indigenous research (p.86). Although I am Métis, which privileged me to insider access, it was the forthright trust afforded me by this person that ultimately propelled my research forward and further compelled me to conduct my research in a good way. Once participant recruitment gained momentum, it did not take long to complete the data collection. The interview process was completed in 5 months.

Twenty-one people were interviewed, three males and eighteen females. Eleven people resided in urban-Winnipeg; whereas, the other twelve lived in rural areas surrounding Winnipeg including locations such as Lorette, Stonewall, St. Laurent, Ste. Anne, and St. Malo. (see Figure 1)

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	**Exclusion Criteria**
Identify as Métis	Other Indigenous groups
18+ years	Non-Indigenous groups
Reside: Rural & Urban Winnipeg, Manitoba	
Select Two: Do you have knowledge regarding Métis culture? Can you speak Michif? Are you the primary cook in household? Have you ever attended Métis festivities such as jigs, ceremonies, or family/community gatherings?	
For female participants – Must be the primary cook in household	
For male participants – must reference the primary female cook in the family/ household	
Have an understanding of ancestral knowledge as it pertains to food recipes/traditions/cultural protocols	
Attend cultural festivities (jigs, cultural ceremonies, family gatherings)	

Figure 1.

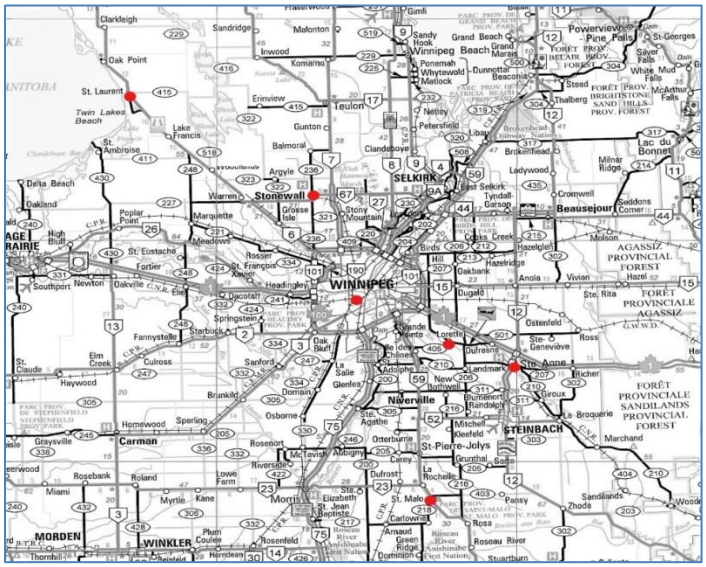

Figure 1. Map of southern Manitoba. The surrounding rural towns of Winnipeg: St. Laurent, Stonewall, Lorette, Ste.Anne & St. Malo. Adapted from Google Maps http://ontheworldmap.com/canada/province/manitoba/map-of-southern-manitoba.html

Data Collection Procedures

Four participants were interviewed individually and the remaining seventeen participants were interviewed with family present. Three dyad groups included mother and daughter; brother and sister; and cousins. One group of three consisted of a mother and her two daughters. Lastly, one group consisted of five females, whom four are Elders. A semi-structured questionnaire was generated with the help of Métis community members and my advisors prior to data collection (see Table 2). Prior to the interviews, participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). The purpose of the questionnaire was twofold; firstly, to ensure the criteria from the inclusion/exclusion were met; and secondly, to capture socio-demographic information such as age; sex; place of birth; home community and contact information. The demographic questionnaire allows the researcher to reflect on the relationships among participants and provide further insight into the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In addition, participants were asked to name the women in their lives who have had the most impact in their families as it relates to culinary preparations, food knowledge, and cultural protocols. This was to ensure that these women are honoured for their culinary contributions. A brief description explaining *why* they had chosen these women was also asked. This information will be elaborated upon in the discussion section.

Table 2. Sample: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What are your most powerful food memories?
2. Can you describe the kind of food that was prepared for celebrations?
3. What would you consider a Métis food and why?
4. What would you like this research to do for the Métis community?

The interview process adopted a kitchen table reflexivity approach, which involved conducting interviews in the homes of participants at their kitchen table where conversations use every day talk and are richest (Khol & Mccutcheon, 2014). All interviews took place in participant's homes. When offered, I accepted tea and/or other refreshments from participants because doing so is viewed as respectful and invites a relationship to form (S. Farell-Racette, personal communication, October 23, 2015; Smith, 2012). Interviews ranged from one hour up to three hours, not including time spent getting to know each other. All interviews, but two, were tape recorded; conversely, the dyad of brother and sister preferred not to be digitally recorded. They were however, comfortable with note-taking during the interview. With permission from participants, notes were taken during all interviews. Body language, linguistic congruencies and foods were memoed.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by either me or a trained transcriber and replayed whilst re-reading the transcriptions for accuracy. Within hours of the conducted interview, detailed field notes in a journal were recorded which contained personal reflections.

Data Analysis

Coding

In qualitative research, coding begins with the first interview, which means as interviews proceed, data is simultaneously being analyzed while collected. Coding is a process that identifies aspects of your research that relate to your research questions(s) (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is the basis for emerging themes. For this study, I utilized open and complete coding, followed by constant comparative and axial coding. Open coding is the initial process to begin assigning codes (labels) to excerpts whereas complete coding is the process of assigning labels to the entire data set (every excerpt) (Charmaz, 2006). The two approaches work in tandem with

each other. For example, all sentences, one at a time, in the transcription were carefully scrutinized all the while asking myself "what is going on here?" and "how does it relate to my research questions?" Coding should focus on data related to actions and processes. For example, using words that end in 'ing' help describe actions and processes, rather than state outcomes alone (Charmaz, 2006). Asking questions of my data and focusing on actions and processes proved to be an effective strategy during the development stages of the coding process. I initially began open coding by hand which then transitioned to NVivo10 International Software. Utilizing software to organize data sets, which at times are quite large because of the number of interviews conducted, becomes a great way to save time. Importantly however, software does not analyze data sets; rather, its main function is to create view and interpret data in a way that may have otherwise been overlooked (Janesick, 2016). Software in this study assisted primarily to organize data sets.

The constant comparative approach, also viewed as the "core category" of GT refers to comparing data sets to data sets in order to explore variations, similarities and differences which help move core categories into themes and sub-themes (Dick, 2000). The more I flipped back and forth among the data sets the more distinct were the themes from the core categories. Themes are the *central organizing concepts* that have answered your research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Finally, axial coding serves to connect relationships between themes and sub-themes based on similarities in the categories (Hallberg, 2006). This can be interpreted as unveiling the story. For this research, four themes and eleven sub-themes had emerged.

Memo Writing

According to Charmaz (2006) memo writing is the first step between analysis and write-up. Analytic insight which helps the researcher explain complex thoughts in depth is referred to as memo writing (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Memoing should take place throughout the analysis to assist in the development of ideas (Dick, 2000). The memos of this research are located in my journal scrap book and on a word file.

Reflexivity

Constructivist grounded theory insists the researcher remain reflexive throughout the entire process of her research. Reflexivity begins with journaling. However, Charmaz (2014) argues that in order to truly be reflexive a level of self-consciousness is required that will purposely dissect personal "worldviews, meaning and language" (p. 36). She urges researchers to continually identify their role as an active participant in the research process. "Meaning shapes action and action shapes meaning" is a phrase frequently found in her articles (Charmaz, 2006, 2014, 2017). The phrase is understood to mean that social interactions and reactions trigger an inevitable web of complex processes between researcher and participant beginning from the moment they first meet. As a result, capturing how your presence in the research affects the research is essential. Kovach (2012) offers a similar analysis with respect to reflexivity which she coins "self-in-relation-analysis" and states if Indigenous epistemologies are to advance then locating oneself in research becomes a vital approach (p. 21). I began early reflexive-journaling in order to provide more depth and breadth within this study. In addition, any thoughts and feelings of interest worth pursuing were also written down because I knew that this research would impact me on a personal level. Such impacts will be explored in further sections.

Rigour

In qualitative research rigour is referred to as 'trustworthiness'. If qualitative research is going to be trustworthy then the process of rigour can only be achieved if a systematic methodological research design has been predetermined for every step of the process including the data collection, interpretation, and communication (Tracy, 2014). Triangulation, thick description and reflexivity inform rigour. Triangulation and thick description will be discussed here, except for the latter approach, because it was previously mentioned.

Triangulation is another facet from which qualitative researchers give attention to credibility in their findings. Triangulation is the use of collecting data with more than one method to get a richer or fuller story (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For example, for this research the use of interviews, memo writing and a demographic questionnaire were used so that comparisons and reflections can be made.

Thick description describes behaviour specifically; the detailed contexts of the interview process (Braun & Clark, 2013). The uses of direct quotes from transcriptions are embedded in the following results section in order to deliberately preserve participants' voices.

Study Ethics and Logistics

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Manitoba's Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. In addition, I engaged in collaboration with the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) on the development of formal mechanisms to guide and oversee research activities. Moreover, MMF provided me with a letter of support. Collaborating with Indigenous governing bodies is a necessary step that must be adhered to in accordance with Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Regarding Humans (2010) Article 9.2 and 9.4. (Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), 2010).

All participants signed a consent form prior to the commencement of the interview (see Appendix B for a copy of the form). Participants were given the choice to use an alias in place of their name however; none of the participants chose this route. On the contrary, participants were satisfied to use their own name in addition to naming the family member(s) who contributed culinary food work in their lives. However, although vocal permission was granted by participants to use names of family members who contributed to their understanding of food work, names will not be named. Instead, proper pronouns such as 'grandmother', 'mother', 'aunty' etc. will be used during thesis write up. This is because conflicting epistemologies between Indigenous and Western perspectives continue to conflict. For the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB), naming participants proved to be problematic, and therefore in the end, participant's names have been removed from the study.

All of the recorded data and consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room (418 Human Ecology Building). Data was accessible only to me and Dr. Slater throughout the duration of the project. However, upon completion of the research, consent forms, questionnaires, interview transcripts, and audio files are to be stored indefinitely and securely at the Manitoba Métis Federation at 180 Henry Ave in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Manitoba Métis Federation will secure the documents as part of their archival research repository as a means to ensure that Métis knowledge is shared and passed down.

An honorarium of $25.00 cash was provided to participants for their time. Five participants chose to decline. In addition, as suggested by advisors, I offered to provide tea or honey as a sentimental gift which is representative of "Métis pride in sharing" (S. Farell Racette, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

CHAPTER 5

Honouring the Métis Grandmothers Through Foodwork

Introduction

"We Métis carry the stories our grandmothers told. We carry them and we survive."

(Mayer, 2007)

In Canada, Métis cultural restoration continues to advance. In the 1960's, Métis people grew tired of the shadow cast over them by systematically oppressive policies meant to oppress them as a nation, and began the process of reclaiming their rightful place in Canadian society (Shore, 2001). Between 2003-2006, a number of Métis Elders[1] from all regions of Canada gathered together to provide awareness and guidance about Métis cultural perspectives, protocols, and traditional knowledge. The result was a book which spoke to Métis people because it offered practical advice from the perspective of Métis Elders concerning Métis knowledge (Métis Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO), 2008). Influential Métis scholars asserted that "Métis cultural restoration [had] become a priority among Métis organizations and individuals" (Préfontaine, Dione, Young & Farell Racette, 2003, p.8). This is because Métis people are shedding the layer of shame that was inflicted upon them and instead, are choosing to collectively stand in solidarity with pride, consciously vocalizing, and a readiness to (re) embrace cultural roots. It was this same "group consciousness" which gave birth to the new nation – Métis - in the late 17th century, a feat rarely seen in history (Préfontaine et al., 2003, p.3). (Re)asserting and (re)vitalizing Métis cultural identity were the important goals of these past pursuits which have paved the way for further exploration regarding Métis cultural health in Manitoba.

Manitoba, Canada is the homeland of the Métis Nation. According to the Statistics Canada (2011), Manitoba's largest urban centre, Winnipeg, has the highest concentration of Indigenous people in Canada (72,335) of which, Métis represent 57% (46,325). Furthermore, the Indigenous population is expected to grow (Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, 2012). With those statistics in mind, Winnipeg and its surrounding rural locales were ideal for this study.

However despite Manitoba's large concentration of Métis people, Evans et al. (2012) point out, Métis research is under-represented because of lack of funding from national organizations such as Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). The authors argue that to date, pan-Aboriginal perspectives have been assumed, hence, Métis people continue to be discounted in research, which negatively impacts Métis representation, self-determination, and cultural identity. To that end, Métis *cultural-specific* research is necessary to advance the discourse of the Métis philosophy.

Métis cultural food practices and protocols, from the vantage point of women's domestic work, qualify as an important subject worthy of study because food and food work is an integral component of family health and overall well-being. Yet, the subject of Métis foodways has not been explored in the context of empirical scholarship, and therefore, an academic and cultural-health gap exists.

Historically, Métis families were matriarchal in stature, a cultural practice gifted to us by our First Nations' mothers, and women are "powerful individuals in their own right" ((Barkwell, Dorion, & Hourie, 2006, p. 57). Métis scholar, Adam Gaudry confirms that there was a time in history, during the fur trade, where Métis women played a pivotal role in not just family life, but also in the advancement of political, social, and economic domains (A. Gaudry, personal communication, January 6, 2017). However, it was the ground breaking work of pioneer

feminist scholar, Sylvia Van Kirk's *'Many Tender Ties' Women in the Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada (1980),* which examined Aboriginal women's historical societal roles (Van Kirk, 1980). Van Kirk spent her career advocating for Aboriginal women in the sphere of political and social spaces (Iacovetta, 2012). It was her work that has inspired researchers, such as myself, to carry forward her important message that Indigenous women matter, and by extension, Métis woman's voices need to be heard.

As food is a central component of domestic life and cultural identity, this research focused on honouring Métis women for their unique role in nurturing family life, specifically in the domain of foodwork. The purpose of this research was to investigate Métis people's perceptions and experiences of food practices and foodways learned from the women in their families, specifically their mothers and grandmothers.

Theoretical Framework

This research used Métis philosophies, Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR), and Decolonization as the guiding frameworks. Métis philosophies are based on Métis cultural values and principles that have been laid out by Métis Elders. In this research, I have incorporated the Métis philosophies from In the Words of our Ancestors: Métis health and Healing published in 2008. The philosophies include but are not limited to, see Table 1.

Table 1: Métis Philosophies

- knowledge must be shared
- seek the knowledge from those who have the knowledge
- Métis are encouraged to learn the Michif language from oral histories and traditional

knowledge

- to acknowledge the person who shared the knowledge is to honor the person and their oral traditions
- learn and record the Métis cultural protocols in order to pass the knowledge down
- women are the life-force behind the centrality of family

Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR) utilizes an activism approach. Similar to Indigenous epistemologies, FSR includes 'giving back' to community and to the individuals who have agreed to venture forward on this journey with me. Kovach (2012) reminds researchers that Indigenous and Western thought are different, the latter being more favored, and as a result of this dominating ethnocentric lens within the academy, political challenges still exist. However, by utilizing Métis methodologies coupled with FSR, I am better situated within the academy to carry out my research as planned.

Additionally, FSR like Indigenous methodologies is grounded in the perspective that research should encompass social benefits for those who are involved in the process (Brant Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2012; Lambert, 2014; First Nations Governance Centre, 2007). Although a distinct nation, "Métis people are often forgotten about" (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2015, p.3) which possesses a unique threat to an already disadvantaged group who may not realize their cultural identity is at risk therefore counteractive measures must be taken. FSR argues that research should start from the standpoint of the disadvantaged and work towards social change (Sosulski, 2009). The social change in this research involved "consciousness raising", a concept found within the FSR paradigm (p.262). Consciousness raising means creating awareness of oppressive systems at play that otherwise may not have been obvious to

the people participating in research, and then assist in the generating of solutions to navigate such systems (Sosulski, 2009). The idea is, who better to make sense of and find solutions to the problems of social inequality, then from those who experience such inequalities first hand. For this research, consciousness raising served two-benefits, the first, sharing stories created awareness regarding Métis food ways and protocols which directly qualified the second benefit - the pursuit of decolonization and resurgence within the larger infrastructure of Manitoba, Canada.

Decolonization is the act of recognizing and reversing impacts of colonization. As Smith (2012) states, it is not about "rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge" rather, decolonizing is meant to provide an equal platform from which indigenous people can assert their understanding of the world around themselves for themselves (p.41). Another way to view the process of decolonization is to consider that whenever an indigenous person is engaging, learning, or speaking out loud about their culture, they are decolonizing (C. Hallett, personal communication, October 16, 2015). Decolonizing is the act of reasserting cultural posture, its resisting further degradation of cultural identity from authorities who meant to eradicate our Indigenous identities. Furthermore, I agree with scholars when they assert with decolonization comes empowerment (Arens, 2007; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wildcat, McDoanld, Irlbacher-Fox & Coulthard, 2014).

Methods

Study Design This qualitative research was informed by Constructivist Grounded Theory (GT) methodology to explore Métis foodways and cultural protocols while at the same time honor Métis women. Qualitative research allows researchers to capture the pint of view from the perspective of the person who is sharing their story. This is of particular importance for this study because research according to Wilson (2008) is ceremonial and begins with story-telling, a perspective I share. GT methodology, a powerful methodological framework, will inform this research because GT generates new knowledge, about a topic, in a given place and time that has never been explored this way. In the case of this study, a Métis researcher asking other Métis people about their Métis food experiences has, to the best of my knowledge, never been researched, and therefore, has the potential to further inform Indigenous philosophies.

Participants The population of interest for this study was Métis people who reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba and surrounding rural communities, the regions where the largest concentration of Métis people reside in Canada. Participants met the following inclusion criteria (a) identify as Métis (b) 18 years and older; (c) reside in urban Winnipeg Manitoba or surrounding rural communities (~1 distance by vehicle); and (d) have a basic understanding of Métis culture.

Participant recruitment utilized purposive and snowball sampling, both of which are processes specific to GT methodology. Snowball sampling is an approach to sampling where new participants are invited from networks of people who have already taken part in the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Essentially, snowball sampling is *word of mouth* connections. Utilizing a snowball technique aligns with Métis philosophies in that connecting with people who have the knowledge, requires me to ask people in my community who best to speak to about the subject of interest. Also, it becomes the responsibility of the person I am seeking, who has the knowledge, to share the knowledge with me so that myself and others can learn from it. The initial snowball

stages of recruitment began with my personal network of family and friends. However, it was my encounter with a well-known and respected individual within the Métis community who connected me to the larger Métis community in rural Manitoba. Although I am Métis, I am not automatically privileged to insider access. It was the forthright trust afforded me by this person that ultimately propelled my research forward and at the same time, further compelled me to conduct my research in a good way, as a way to be respectful of the integrity and reciprocity of our relationship.

Collection A total of 21 semi-structured in-depth interviews took place throughout rural and urban Winnipeg, MB over the duration of 5 months. Eighteen women and three men ranged in age from 37 to 79 years old. Eleven people resided in urban-Winnipeg; whereas, the other ten lived in rural areas surrounding Winnipeg including locations such as: Lorette, Stonewall, St. Laurent, St. Anne, and St. Malo.

Table. 3

PARTICIPANTS	N
Total	21
Male	3
Female	18
Elders	4
Age	
Mean	57
Range	37-77
Residence	
Urban	10
Rural	11

All interviewees were open to sharing stories about the women in their lives who made a positive impression as a result of acts of love through food work. All participants stated they either grew up in a rural community or had family living in a rural community whom they would

visit often. Some participants reported they grew up on a farm and had livestock. The majority of participants reported that they eventually migrated to Winnipeg.

Twenty-one people participated in nine interviews. Four participants were interviewed individually, and the remaining 17 were interviewed with family present. Three dyad groups included: mother and daughter; brother and sister; and cousins. One group of three consisted of a mother and her two daughters. Lastly, one group consisted of five females all of which are Elders except for one. A semi-structured questionnaire was generated prior to data collection. Prior to the interviews, participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was twofold; firstly, to ensure the criteria from the inclusion/exclusion were met and secondly, to capture socio-demographic information such as age; sex; place of birth; home community and contact information. In addition, participants were asked to name the women in their lives who have had the most impact in their families as it relates to culinary preparations, food knowledge, and cultural protocols.

All interviews took place in participants' homes. When offered, I accepted tea and/or other refreshments from participants because doing so, is viewed as respectful and invites a relationship to form (S. Farell-Racette, personal communication, October 23, 2015; Smith, 2012). Interviews ranged from one-hour to three hours, not including time spent getting to know each other. All interviews but two were digitally recorded; the dyad of brother and sister preferred not to be digitally recorded, however, were comfortable with note-taking during the interview. With permission from participants, note-taking was practiced during all interviews.

All interviews were conducted by myself, and were transcribed verbatim by either me or professional transcriber. Transcriptions were read while listening to the interviews for accuracy. Within hours of the conducted interview, detailed field notes in a journal were recorded which contained personal reflections.

Data Analysis Data analysis began with coding and as early as the first transcription, which means data is simultaneously being analyzed while collected. Coding is a process that identifies aspects of your research that relate to your research questions(s) (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is the basis for emerging themes. For this study, open and complete coding were used, followed by constant comparative and axial coding. Open coding is the initial process to begin assigning codes (labels) to excerpts whereas complete coding is the process of assigning labels to the entire data set (every excerpt) (Charmaz, 2006).

Initially, open coding began by hand which then transitioned to NVivo10 in order to organize data sets. The constant comparative approach, also viewed as the "core category" of GT refers to comparing data sets to data sets in order to explore variations, similarities, and differences which help move core categories into themes and sub-themes (Dick, 2000). The more analysis was conducted back and forth among the data sets, more distinct themes emerged from the core categories. Themes are the "central organizing concepts" that have answered the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Finally, axial coding serves to connect relationships between themes and sub-themes based on similarities in the categories (Hallberg, 2006). This can be interpreted as unveiling the story. For this research, four themes and sixteen sub-themes had emerged.

Ethics Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Manitoba's Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB). In addition, collaboration with the Manitoba Métis Federation on the development of formal mechanisms and bodies to guide and oversee research activities was established and a letter of support provided. This procedure was a necessary step that must be adhered to in accordance with Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Regarding Humans (2014) Article 9.2 and 9.4. (Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2010).

Results

Findings of this research were based on personal experience and memories of food and the important women in participants' lives. Five primary themes emerged from analysis. The first theme captures what Métis families were eating along a continuum of time, from childhood to adulthood. The second theme focuses on how women prepared foods for their families. The third theme focuses on relationships, among Métis women, attached to foodwork. The fourth theme describes food heritage, values and beliefs associated to food customs and well-being. The last theme is influenced by expressions of emotional turmoil with respect to current challenges faced with accessing preferred foods and loss of culinary knowledge and food traditions. Participants advocate for change in their food system.

I. Powerful Memories: Métis Food Landscapes & Meal Protocols
II. Métis Women at Work: Preparatory & Culinary Methods
III. Matriarchal Culinary Vessels on the Home Front: Roles & Relationships
IV. Métis Food Heritage and Culture create further insight into Métis Identity
V. We Want a Resilient Food System: Giving Rural & Urban Métis a Voice

I. Powerful Memories: Métis Food Landscapes & Meal Protocols

All participants in this study could vividly recall childhood memories associated with the foods and recipes prepared by women in their families. Participants described their personal or family food history over multiple generations. These memories provided a lens of the Métis "foodscape" in Manitoba.

Métis Foods For urban and rural participants, wild game, water fowl, fish, garden vegetables, berries, livestock and market foods were reported as foods that their mothers used to create recipes and meals which made up their families' traditional diets. Many ingredients were purchased from the store including flour to make breads and bannock, which was served daily. Urban and rural participants grew up consuming primarily the same foods. This is because, at one point or another, all participants had stated that they either lived with their families in rural communities or maintained ties with family members who lived in rural communities. It was not until after families migrated to Winnipeg where foods such as wild game, water fowl, and fish became less accessible. It was not made clear whether gardening was a continued practice for those that moved to the city however, it can be assumed it was not because participants report moving into apartment complexes and duplexes where space would have been limited. Moreover, as participants expressed frustration when, after her family moved to the city, they could no longer access unpasteurized milk and dairy products.

Wild game such as moose, muskrat, venison, and rabbit were reported as *traditional* meats as were water fowl such as duck, geese, and muskrat because of their presence in participant' diets. Three participants reported eating beaver in addition to other wild meats; however, the responses provided suggested that beaver was not necessarily a desirable meat and was consumed as a last resort over other meats. Fish such as jack, pickerel, sucker, and white fish were the most commonly mentioned fish that were consumed.

For Métis families, a large part of women's work was gardening. Although a variety of vegetables were viewed as an essential part of participants' diets, the term *traditional*, was used to describe only potatoes. Some families reported harvesting two gardens, and yet, for another family they had up to three gardens, producing potatoes, vegetables, and flowers. Contrarily, one

family reported that they did not have access to a garden and felt that only families "with money" had gardens.

For several participants, garden vegetables were often eaten right out of the ground as wholesome snacks. Eating produce straight from the dirt was viewed positively due to its freshness. For one woman, discussing garden foods reminded her of her grandmother's garden and the treats it afforded her.

"When I lived in St. Laurent it was my grandma's garden that was like the store. I liked her carrots and everything in the garden was like a treat…and we could go right into the garden and lift them up and eat them just the way they came out and eat them the way they were…well we had to get our goodies somewhere." [F, 47, Rural]

Saskatoon berries, raspberries, low bush cranberries, mossberries and strawberries were referred to as a traditional by several participants because they were often available, delicious tasting and reminded participants of their mothers. Gathering berries was laborious and that duty assigned to children.

"Well it[mossberries]was a little tiny tiny, it was almost like a tiny, really dark blueberry. But they were really small and you crawled around on your hands and knew, just like those strawberries. And you were on your hands and knees literally crawling on your hands and knees picking those little things." [M, 79, Urban]

Many participants reported living on a farm and raising livestock, which provided chicken, pork, and beef, ingredients in several family recipes. Chicken pot pies, cabbage pork soup thickened with flour, and pork stew were family favorites.

"She used to cook the pork, dice it up and put onions in it and potatoes, ya and flour to thicken it…that was so good! Cause we had pigs eh and that's what we did with the meat." [F, 70, Rural]

Cattle were of importance because they provided milk, cream for butter and beef ground into hamburger, ingredients for versatile recipes. For example, hamburger was used in soups, mixed in with gravy and poured over boiled potatoes, or made into meatballs known as *"les boulettes"* all of which are still viewed as family classics and enjoyed by some participants today.

Wild rice, a plant crop, was also referred to as *traditional* food. It was a dish that participants vividly remembered eating because of the rigorous process involved to harvest it. For example, one participant recalled:

"You have to get the chafe off and roast it before you store it. You don't just store it green and cook it…you harvest it and then dry it and then you parch it. So, parching is when you, over a high heat, you kind of scorch it a little, but you don't want to burn it. It's like heating it, it caramelizes some of the natural sugars but it also makes it easier to cook. So wild rice is designed to stay very wet and not fall apart and be no good to sprout as a plant next spring. So hat seed is very resistance, we used to cook it the day before. You soaked it all night and then you had to cook it for over an hour to cook it properly." [F, 58Urban].

Often participants spoke of combination meals that included everyday foods (grown, harvested, or hunted) that were often coupled with purchased goods such as dried peas, macaroni, rice, and processed meats and cheeses. These became popular 'go-to' dishes for many Métis families. These neo-traditional recipes, traditional recipes that evolved, were favored because of the volume they provided, inexpensive ingredients, good taste, and convenience they afforded busy mothers. These store-bought foods made up a number of dishes that had become

staple foods in the diets of Métis families and have since attained *traditional* status among Métis families. These store-bought foods made up a number of dishes that had become staple foods in the diets of Métis families and have since attained *traditional* status among Métis families.

"Yeah I don't understand it but his favourite is bologna and jam, bologna and strawberry jam. You cannot get more Métis than bologna and strawberry jam sandwich, like you can't." [F. 52, Urban]

Other purchased goods included fats such as lard, butter, and bacon which were used for baking and frying. Concentrated fat drippings were saved and stored in cans to reuse for spreads, re-frying, or flavouring. Often, warm grease was enjoyed with a slice of bread or bannock, the texture of the bread made it easy to soak up the fat.

"Oh talk about fat. My mother was one of the chief exponents of eating fat. She had a marrow bone, she would dig that stuff out of that bone and put it on a piece of bread and then she would say, you know what we used to do, we used to put lard on our bread and eat it." [M, 79, Urban]

For participants, discussing bread and bannock were positive memories associated with their mother or grandmother's delicious recipe. A recurring positive memory for many participants included watching their grandmothers leaning over a large table while making several loaves of bannock or bread for the week.

"*Oh but my grandma made the best bannock ever."* [F, 45, Urban]

A recurring positive memory for many participants included watching their grandmother's leaning over a large table while making several loaves of bannock or bread for the week.

"I remember my granny, she would always have like those really big tables. She's make em on there and she'd have them all rowed. She'd be standing there and she'd always rip a piece of the dough off and let me eat it." [F, 45, Urban]

For Métis families in this study, powerful childhood memories were associated to hunting, harvesting, gardening, farming, fishing and neo-traditional recipes that combined both land and market foods. Discussing memories for participants also revealed how certain *types* of foods or meals came to be understood as "traditional". The term traditional was connected to factors such as: if it were hunted; its deliciousness; familiarity; if prepared for special occasions, if prepared in abundance, and importantly, the stories attached to the recipes that our grandmothers told.

One health-conscious participant felt the foods she ate in her youth were unhealthy and attributed them to the poverty stricken single-parent home she grew up in.

"Well, we really poor growing up and so we ate lots of like soup or grilled cheese. That's what I made when we were little. And then as I got older she was all about like spaghetti and chili. Like things she could make on the weekend and pull out during the week….and then as I grew older I was like, that's actually not like healthy." [F, 45, Rural]

Métis Way - Three Squares a Day

Everyday dinner meals included a meat, vegetable, and starch usually potato accompanied with bread or bannock. Participants would often mash potatoes with carrots or peas, which was viewed "very traditional" and considered family favorites.

"Mashed potatoes and carrots you mix them up together, you mash it together, that's good, with ketchup." [F, 70, Rural]

Sunday dinners were sanctioned as special meals because it was the one time out of the week the family could dine together.

"To us a big meal was considered like a Sunday dinner which is basically when the whole family got together at the table and ate at the same time. Because during the week we didn't sit down as a family cause my dad worked different times cause he's in construction." [F, 70, Rural]

For lunches, participants reported that sandwiches of bread or bannock with peanut butter or jam were often served. Additionally, vegetables such as cucumbers, green onions and radishes were often sliced, salted, and layered between two pieces of buttered bread which attributed to filling and wholesome sandwiches. Egg salad and Klick™ (canned meat) sandwiches were also mentioned.

Breakfasts included porridge, toasted bannock, *le crepes* or purchased cereal such as puffed wheat. Le crepes are thin pancakes and most often eaten with berries on top.

Snacks were afforded to some participants, however, for the majority they were strictly forbidden because the extra food meant that the dinner appetite would be spoiled. For those who could snack, bannock, bread or grazing on berries from nearby bushes was available.

"….and if we still wanted some, like bannock or homemade bread or something like that, but don't eat too much of it you're going to spoil your supper, you know." [F, 68, Urban]

During meal times, families adhered to strict etiquette guidelines with expectations of appropriate behaviour. These were often patriarchal and gendered, for example, girls had to set the table while fathers ate first. One male participant recalls the kitchen duties were often left to his sisters.

"Well I cook but if you had asked me at 5, 6, and 7 years old, come in the kitchen and cook, I'd say forget it. I mean that was a way we grew up though. I mean the girls did the stuff inside the house, we did the stuff outside of the house. That was the demarking point you know, the doors." [M, 79, Urban]

Celebratory Meals & Desserts

For participants, memories of celebratory holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's consisted of a great deal of food, which were symbolic of women's hard work and family togetherness. Celebratory meals meant that grandmothers were pulling out their best recipes. For example, one participant described her grandmother's special buns:

"She made the most wonderful, I guess one of the things that she did was she made dinner rolls that was always part of the festival, that feast, her dinner rolls." [F, 52, Urban]

Whereas for another participant, her grandmother's stuffing was the best part of her meal.

"I remember her stuffing, growing up it wasn't made with bread it was made with hamburger. Same way you would make stuffing now, instead of using bread use hamburger." [F, 45, Urban]

"Les boulettes" (oversized boiled meatballs) were deemed a Métis specialty by several participants and usually only served during holiday gatherings due to the amount of work required to prepare the recipe. Rabbit's brains, headcheese, and pea soup were also remembered as *traditional* specialty Métis foods. One female Métis Elder who resided in St. Laurent talked about blood sausage which was referred to in Michif as "boudan". It was a *traditional* family dish that was considered a delicacy reserved primarily for special occasions.

Additionally, holiday celebrations meant that specialty desserts were made. According to one participant, desserts such as pies were often made by a designated female baker in the family whose specialty was baking. For another participant, she firmly stated that she could only enjoy pies if her aunty had made them.

"My favorite was lemon meringue…but it had to be Linda's..even the crust was made from scratch." [F, 45, Urban]

The technique required mastering lemon meringue pie, from scratch, required specific culinary skills; hence, participants expressed that only woman who were deemed *great cooks* could successfully make meringue pie. Three families had expressed that the dessert was a family favorite but because of lack of skill, patience, or the recipe had not been passed down, lemon meringue pies were no longer made from scratch; rather, ingredients were purchased. For example, when asked if anyone knew how to recreate the pie from scratch, one woman expressed her inability in confidence to make the pie.

"Not on our side no, like I can make lemon meringue pie but I can't, I've tried the crust but it doesn't take. I just go buy the crust it's easier." [F, 45, Urban]

Some desserts, such as fruit cake, required months of preparation because the berries and currant required time to soak and the cake needed to age prior to freezing, which made them more special.

"Well when mom used to make fruit cake she'd make it a couple of months [beforehand]." [F, 69, Rural]

"Potato sac" or "pudding in a bag" was a favorite Métis dessert served during Christmas dinners, and included dried fruit such as raisins or currents. The sweet dessert had the texture of fruit cake and was eaten warm with *"brown sugar sauce"* poured over it. This was made from

brown sugar and butter, heated on the stove. Bread pudding was another cherished recipe made with brown sugar. The labour and process it took to make these desserts, in addition to their deliciousness is why they were deemed traditional specialty dishes. Bread pudding was another cherished recipe made with brown sugar. One participant described her grandmother's recipe:

"Bread pudding is just like …It's essentially bannock with like raisins in it and then she bakes it in the oven in this big like, 12 by, well, we have a huge family so she has huge things. Like it's probably like, 16x20 pan or like roasters. And so she would bake that and then she would make like a brown sugar. We always called it rum sauce but it never tasted like rum. Like, it was just like brown sugar. Some kind of liquidy stuff and she'd pour it over." [F, 69, Rural]

For one Métis family who grew up in Lac du Bonnet, their mother's pies were revered for being the best in town and therefore, duty was attached to pie-making. For instance, the expectation was that when the priest visited, who came to town once a month, he was served pie.

"What she had to do, if the priest was coming into town, she had to bake him a raisin pie and when he came into town he would drive in to town and he would stop at our place because it was the first sort of good Catholic family on his way into town. And he always knew my mother had a raisin pie for him because it was his first pie and he just loved raisin pie. So he'd walk through the door and she'd throw a raisin pie at him." [M, 79, Urban]

Tourtierre was another common specialty savoury pie served during holiday meal gatherings, however, the ingredients for what makes this pie traditional were controversial. Some participants argued that traditional tourtierre should only be made purely with pork, and never to include beef, whereas, others stated that a combination of beef and pork ingredients still constituted a traditional pie.

"When I grew up it was a big deal about meat pie was whether you put 100% pork in it which is the French recipe or if you mixed in the beef to cut the porkiness, and what percentage was the sweet spot if you believed in mixing the two and there was no other kind, like I was quite a bit older before someone snuck in an onion or a mushroom." [F, 58, Urban]

II. Métis Women at Work: Culinary Methods & Preservation

Food preparation, preservation, and storage were women's work. Participants described how their mothers prepared everyday foods and meals. Such knowledge provides insight into Métis culinary methods, which were described as laborious tasks and time consuming.

Everyday Meals & Culinary Methods

Large intergenerational Métis families meant women had to batch cook in large quantities to provide the food volume to meet their family's dietary needs. Bread and bannock along with vegetable or meat soups or stews were foods often made and in abundance.

"Eleven children, not counting the parents. Um, she used to have a big pot all the time." [F, 68, Urban]

Meats were often served with potatoes (boiled, fried or mashed) and a combination of other garden vegetables that had been boiled, preserved, or pickled. One family particularly enjoyed the taste of *"boiling the neck bones"* of a cow, a process that took several hours. This recipe was often served with boiled potatoes.

"You gotta suck the meat outta the bone…it's so good!" [F, 45, Urban]

Families caught their own fish, and it was a common dish prepared in several ways including to make sandwiches, fish cakes and soup. Fish soup was made by boiling the head of

the fish. Canned fish was prepared at home and mixed with mayo mayonnaise, a tasty sandwich filling.

"We used to clean the fish, grind it into small pieces and onion and make them into patties, like everything was round, mix it with, we used to mix it with flour, a little bit of salt and pepper and fry it in the frying pan." [F, N/A, Urban]

Women would prepare fish in several ways including smoking fish in outdoor smokers, baked whole with the scales removed, or steamed directly on top of potatoes.

"She used to boil just potatoes and onions, salt and pepper and then when they're just about done she'd drop the fish on top cause I guess it cooked fast. It was filleted like they usually do it was skinned whatever kind of fish it was and then they'd she'd cut it into slices like thick." [F, 70, Rural]

Participants remembered *"shore lunches"* to be particularly fun. These activities occurred during fishing excursions. Prior to leaving the house, mothers would prepare all the ingredients required to bread the fish by tightly securing eggs, cornflakes and flour in a travel tin making it easy to bread. Once the fish were caught, the egg was broken directly into the can then mixed and used to batter the fish.

"They would put the eggs in there so it wouldn't break. Yeah it was such a cool system and my mom never forgot it because you know, now the eggs won't break as you're bouncing along in the boat." [F, 58, Urban]

Families grew and harvested wild rice which is why it was often consumed. Various ingredients were added to wild rice dishes such as butter, onions, celery, mushrooms, and at times bacon. Bacon, a high cost commodity, was viewed as speciality item and therefore, held a prized status in dishes. For example, one participant explained that her family only purchased

bacon on pay days hence, representing relief from weeks of hardship. For example, one participant explained that in her family bacon was only purchased on pay days hence, it was a signifier of relief from weeks of hardship.

"Granny would put mushroom, celery, onions, mushroom soup... sometimes, uh bacon. It was always, we knew that she got paid if there was bacon in it." [F, 45, Rural]

Berries were gathered and eaten fresh or mothers preserved them into jams and jellies. They were enjoyed in many ways including used for topping ice cream, making pies or eaten with milk.

"Like we grew up on lots of blueberries…We ate them plain, we ate them with, well most of us ate them with milk because my mom preferred berries and milk." [F, 58, Urban]

Traditionally, mothers' cooked with only salt and pepper or minimal spices, which according to participants was considered the "Métis way of cooking". For some, this bland cooking is still preferred and has been maintained in adult life. It was reported that sometimes more flavours and spices were introduced later in life, usually by the children of families who moved into urban locales and had greater access to a wider range of foods.

Recipes – A Controversial Topic

The use of recipes was a contested subject for some participants. For example, for one daughter, who was the eldest in her family, she firmly stated that recipes were never used. The same participant goes on to acknowledge that avoiding written recipes is still a method practiced in her home as an adult.

"Nobody every followed a recipe. I still to this day don't follow a recipe. I can make beef stew and I'll never make it the same way twice cause I don't know what I put in last time or how much." [F, 45, Urban]

Yet, others had remembered their mothers using recipes. For instance, one female participant remembered her mother often referring to a recipe card.

Additionally, throughout the interviews it became evident that heritage dictated whether knowledge was transferred verbally or written. For example, Indigenous grandmothers did not use written recipes, culinary knowledge was transferred verbally whereas; European grandmothers wrote down recipes and transferred the recipes via recipe cards or books.

"She had all these recipes her mom had sent her when she first got married because she didn't know how to cook. And she had all this knowledge from granny Fox."[F, 58, Urban]

Preserving & Storage

House-life prior to electricity and fridges meant Métis families found conventional ways of storing preserves in various compartments in and round the house. Food that was stored in the basement of houses was referred to as 'root cellars', where it was cool and dark. It was also reported that snowbanks in winter were used for keeping foods cold or frozen. Storing butter and cream outside the house, in a well, was necessary for families who did not have built in fridge compartments

"We didn't have hydro so we used to hang stuff in the well. We had a big well and then the casing was big around it…all stones around it on the outside and then she would hang pails in there with the butter and the cream."

Prior to deep freezers, participants recall the use of ice boxes to store meat. A mother and her daughter describe the functionality of an ice box.

"We had a, didn't have a freezer we had whatchya call it an ice box. It's like a fridge, but the top on the thing is ice…put a block of ice in it to keep it cool." [F, 72, Urban]

Pickling, canning and cold storage were the most common preservation methods reported. Large harvests of produce meant that vegetables had to be preserved in order to keep for long winters ahead. Participants report that the process of preserving food was intensive work that took days to complete. Commonly, women prepared a variety of pickles such as dill, sweet, bread, and mustard. Other vegetables were covered and stored in cellars or cold storage rooms. One participant offered traditional tips his family practiced to preserve carrots, potatoes and tomatoes.

"The carrots were all covered with sand, the potatoes were bagged and the tomatoes…we'd spend hours wrapping them in newspaper and putting them back in cartons because by wrapping them you stop them from ripening so fast." [M, 79, Urban]

Meat and fish were also preserved through a process of canning in salt and vinegar. According to one participant, using vinegar to can meat was necessary to soften the bones of the meat.

"The vinegar would soften those bones and you would just eat them then, once it had been canned for a month. My mom would take it and mix it with mayo and make fish sandwiches. So you know, up until late in life, teenage life, I'd never eaten like tuna sandwiches but eaten canned meat sandwiches from our home." [F, 58, Urban]

The same participant stated that a high level of culinary skill was necessary to can meat otherwise, if done wrong, could cause illness. Additionally, whole, cleaned fish were preserved by freezing it in a milk carton immersed in water.

Berries were canned jars with sugar and often referred to as *"preserves"*. Berry recipes that did not gel properly they were used for other purposes such as syrup because food waste was rarely practiced. One participant referred to this un-gelled syrup as "*failed jam".*

III. Matriarchal Culinary Vessels on the Home Front: Roles & Relationships

Community building and family bonds were established and strengthened as a result of the workings within the kitchen, where Métis women asserted their territorial influence. Food teachings occurred through the complex web of intergenerational kinship among women and their families.

Party's in the Kitchen – Métis Women Embrace Family and Community

For Métis women, food work was a conduit to family connectedness and community bonds. Women, as the main family food providers, were busy from morning to night orchestrating the meals for family and friends. Cooking and kitchen socializing was deemed the place to connect, laugh and share stories. One participant recalls that all it took to begin the start-up of good conversation at her granny's home was the fresh aroma of bannock in the air, which signified the commencing of togetherness.

"Is that bannock done?" and then people would come in and have tea and then it would turn into a big storytelling and sharing and everyone could be in the kitchen then when things were cooked. So then the men would come in and tell their stories about like, you know, what they were fixing or what's going on." [F, 45, Rural]

Kitchens were community hubs, and food was the centre of this hospitability. Regardless of who you were or the reason for the visit everyone was welcome in Métis homes. Participants acknowledged that despite impoverishment of many Métis families, whatever food was available was shared with family and guests. Some participants felt that such gestures signified the "good old days".

"Oh they were good back then long time ago when no matter where you go they'd feed you…" [F, 65, Urban]

Cultural food mannerisms included staying to eat, regardless of how short the visit was intended to be. To decline an invitation would have been construed as rude.

"And you can't say no either, even if you go drop something off and you owed someone money and you'd go…. they're eating and it's like – oh darn they're eating…here's the money, quick and go. Nope you sit down here…oh ok I gotta eat." [F, 47, Rural]

Food roles created opportunities for bonding which were evident in the way participant's edified cherished recipes. For some, maintaining the memory of their beloved grandmother meant re-creating one of her *"secret"* recipes. Kitchen-time awarded to grandchildren was deemed prestigious and held in high regard because it was an opportunity to bond. Some participants expressed that they were considered a *"favorite"* grandchild, which was conveyed each time they were selected over others to partake in kitchen work. The time spent alone with grandmother in the kitchen, in silence, was representative of the strong relationships that existed between them.

"I would stay with her just to watch her…so it was like special time with granny. For me it was a really warm feeling and I loved being with her even if we weren't talking I could just watch her." [F, 45, Rural]

Additionally, family bonds were also evident in the role that an aunt played. Aunties were viewed as loving and nurturing individuals who provided foundational "glue" among families, often gifting desserts and other sweets to nieces and nephews. Many participants mentioned that their aunts provided culinary guidance in ways their mothers did not, and played a key part in the process of transmitting cooking skills. Auntie's were viewed as affectionate and gentle when answering food-related questions, whereas mothers', responses to foodwork were at times deemed strict or abrupt, thus participants described that they would seek culinary advice from an Aunty. Through the language of edification, it was evident that these women played an important role in transmitting culinary knowledge to nieces.

"My Aunty Catherine, every time we go to the table is just full, the kitchen the other side over there is just full of pastries, and she had different coloured cakes, the one's I liked was the pink cake." [F, 45, Urban]

"Grandma's Kitchen Was Her Domain"

Participants' personal accounts expose that kitchen territory was understood to be strictly the matriarch's domain, and kitchen access was granted according to age. Young children were not allowed in the kitchen and were often told to go play outside. The responsibilities of the more tedious tasks of peeling, chopping, and or washing dishes were assigned to older children.

"I guess I've been cooking since I was very young. Like I've been cooking for my family since I was 9 years old. It is because I'm the oldest". [F, 45, Rural]

Despite demanding workloads, one participant recalls her mother refusing help even when offered. Hence, a common perception for several participants was that they did not learn how to cook from their mother simply because they were not allowed in the kitchen.

However, some participants expressed negative emotions and feelings of inadequacy because of missed kitchen-work opportunities, due to dismissals. For example, one participant projected frustration towards her mother when sharing her personal experience of being ousted from the kitchen at a young age. Feelings of rejection, anger and disinterest in kitchen work which have manifested throughout adulthood.

"When I was growing up I remember trying to do dishes when I was three years old and I dropped one…never, ever allowed to touch dishes again. To this day I can't stand doing dishes and she gets mad because I don't like doing the dishes – 'you'll break it'! She would never let me touch the dishes growing up and I don't like doing dishes now." [F, 45, Urban]

Another participant felt that, had she been allowed to participate in the food work as child, she may have become a stronger cook as an adult and perhaps would enjoy the task more than she does. Her rationale is based on the differences she sees between herself and her sisters, who she feels are better cooks because they were allowed to help in the kitchen.

"I think so because in my family Karen and Noreen are the ones who are the best cooks. They're the ones that love to be in the kitchen and the rest of us don't because it's just like well we were told to go watch the little ones". [F, 48, Rural]

Some participants report that learning to cook was a skill developed later in life, after they had married, by cook books or other female kin in the family.

Interviewees reveal that only when their mothers became grandmothers and had more down time were they more likely to teach cooking skills, but to grandchildren. Participants, who were grandparents, believed that taking the time to teach their grandchildren culinary knowledge is an important part of their role, despite whether they were taught themselves as children to cook.

IV. Métis Food Heritage and Culture Provide Further Insight into Métis Identity

Study results demonstrated that Métis communities were diverse, and therefore, it was common to incorporate ingredients or swap recipes, learned by other women in the community. During interviews, some participants had expressed a sense of uncertainty regarding their identity because they lived in families where their Métis identity was hidden from them growing up. At times during interviews, participants would ask me questions, looking for clarification or affirmation when describing their Métis identity. Participants identified important cultural food values and beliefs rooted in land knowledge, hunting practices, and ceremonial practices.

Searching for a Sense of Clarity

Some participants expressed dual identities when discussing their food experiences. For example, participants would describe foods such as wild meats specific to their Indigenous heritage; whereas European foods were often connected to their European heritage. Because of their Métis heritage, people frequently categorized food as being from one world or the other. For example, when the interview process began for one participant she commented:

"Do you want me to access my Métis side through all of it?" [F, 45, Rural]

For another participant, he expressed uncertainty whether cucumber sandwiches, a food he grew up eating, could be classified as a Métis food because it was recognizable as European.

"Cucumbers though, we thought that was our English heritage not our Métis heritage." [M, 79, Urban]

Additionally, participants said they ate foods which are recognizable as Indigenous today, such as bannock, yet described them in the English terms as 'biscuit and bread'

"So we can call the baking powder biscuits a form of bannock because essentially that's what it is, it was just never called bannock." [F, 52, Urban]

Throughout interviews, at times, there was a pull from participants directing comments into either their Indigenous heritage, away from it, or towards their European heritage. For example, one participant tried to recall where her grandmother had learned a specific food term from, to which she concluded, it must have come from the "the native population" suggestive of racial dissociation.

"So I was wondering where my grandmother got that term. If she got it from her parents or the native population that she rubbed elbows with." [F, 58, Urban]

Contrary to that example, a female participant, discusses how for her growing up in Lorette, Manitoba, a Métis community, she was patronized for her French dialect because it was unlike the French spoken in her community.

"I didn't know it then, but we used to be made fun of by other people in the community because our French was 'different' than their French. I remember getting a pat on the head from one man who said "Ma petite belle", which basically meant that I wasn't speaking French correctly." [F, 64 Rural].

Fusion Cuisine

Several participants discussed how their grandmothers "borrowed" recipes from their neighbors or married into lineages that would introduce them to recipes from other heritages, typically European. This was the result of settler immigration to Manitoba from predominantly European countries, and living in close settlements in the Red River Valley. Participants who grew up in St. Laurent reported that holiday celebrations with community members included various Polish and Ukrainian dishes such as perogies[6] and holopchi[7]. One participant's family favored a dessert called vinatartar,[8] which originated from Icelandic traditions; she describes how the dessert came to be absorbed in her family

"…and on my Grandma's side because we lived in the Red River Valley and so there was lots of Icelandic people there back in the day. And so it was a delicacy." [F, 45, Rural]

Sharing of food knowledge and recipes took surprising routes because evidently European women absorbed recipes that were of Indigenous cuisine. For example, a participant thought it was humorous that her bannock recipe that she had acquired years earlier on was taught to her by a European woman, who in turn learned it from an Indigenous woman.

"…it's funny cause it was a German lady who told me the recipe how to make bannock. She got it from visiting an Elder." [F, 68, Urban]

[6] Perogies are a small dough dumpling with a filling such as potato or cheese, typically served with onions or sour cream.

[7] Holopchi are Ukrainian cabbage rolls. The dish calls for hamburger (or sausage), rice, and onion rolled into a cabbage leaf.

[8] Vinarterta is Icelandic cake made with multiple layers and filling in between.

Cultural land knowledge was lost, due to Residential Schools, for both First Nations and Métis people, which is why in part, relying on knowledge transfer between groups who still possessed such knowledge was essential if harvesting mechanisms were to be relearned. One participant, who possessed a vast amount of knowledge pertaining to her family's heritage and cultural ways, shared a story about her grandfather who worked with local First Nations groups in order to restore wild rice production in the region.

"they weren't making, harvesting the wild rice, sort of during the period of the residential schools and stuff they kind of, a lot of their learnings just fell off, they weren't transferred. And they weren't processing wild rice and he actually got together with a bunch of his native friends and chief of the band and went out and found people who knew how to harvest wild rice and who knew how to process it." [F, 58, Urban]

Food Talk

After a successful hunt, distinct wild meat tastes were described by participants, offering further insight into sensory properties of food choices. Although many participants reported the 'wild' taste of meat is what was enjoyed most, some did not share the same view. For some participants, wild meat could only be stomached if prepared in a specific way and/or by a specific person. One participant who enjoyed the taste described bear meat as a *"sweet"* meat and best served either marinated or candied with sugar. For participants who did not care for the gamey taste of wild meat, they offered alternative cooking methods they had learned to avert the gamey flavor. For example, it was suggested to boil the meat with *"salt pork to cut the wild taste"* [F, 77, Rural]

Additionally, strong smells such as fresh blood after a slaughter or boiling duck and geese carcasses were noted to be acquired smells and in some cases a turn-off. During one

interview, a participant was describing the difference in smell between animals from Sioux Lookout, Ontario compared to Manitoba which she stated:

"I noticed a huge difference from when we went to Sioux Lookout to here when you have your like deer or your moose, it was so much different." [F, 54, Urban]

For her, the foul smell was attributed to the animals' diet and thus required windows to be open when cooking.

However, despite some of the negative associations attributed to wild meat smells, for most participants, the smell of freshly baked bannock or bread was viewed very positively making these highly desirable.

Other food talk that surfaced during interviews were names that were made up, usually by children, to describe recipes that were unique to the family. Some dishes were named according to the ingredients used to prepare it. For example, *"Kraft-O-ham"* was a dinner meal made with Kraft Dinner™, hamburger and a can of tomatoes. *"Half and half"* was a mixture of spaghetti, pork and beans and tomato soup. Some recipes were named because of their appearance such as *"zebra cake"* a multi layered date cake, and *"rolled cake"* described as a very thin and flat pastry layered with jam and rolled up. Still, for other foods, texture dictated the foods' name. *"Hard tack"* was a hard, dry biscuit, and not particularly favoured.

Specific Michif food terminology varied depending on Cree or French lineage, which was evident in the pronunciation and spelling of the words. For example, the Métis Elders from St. Laurent, who fluently spoke Michif-French, referred to sausages as *"boudan"* and large meatballs as *"la grills boulette".* "*Grati"* was a term used to describe scraping and "*bowri*" described stuffing, referring to the way fish was scraped out prior to stuffing it with onions and

bread. The words above were spoken with French accents and are spelled in French, however, another participant who fluently spoke Michif-Cree, stated that *"naspic mushpigan"* (pronounced nas-spich-mush-pigan) which means "to have good food" was used in their family to describe a good meal. Michif-Cree accents and spelling are different from Michif-French.

When discussing meals and gatherings, *"Le celebration"* and *"Angles un celebration"*, were understood to represent gatherings around food. For one Elder, her family used the term "feast" to describe food gatherings, whereas, another Elder felt that term was First Nation centric and not customarily used in Métis families. *"Ayn-sawari"* (pronounced "en-sware-ee"), however, which means "evening celebration", was agreed to be the best term to describe a Métis involving food.

Rooted Land-Based Food Values and Beliefs

The analysis of Métis foodways and protocols showed that participants had strong intrinsic connections to the land, and by extension food practices. Many participants felt that spending time in the bush, whether picking berries, hunting, or cooking outdoors, evoked a sense of rootedness to a preferred way of living. For one of the elderly participants, her childhood memory of travelling far distances to a remote island which lodged her family's small cabin, meant staying connected to what was an important part of her childhood - outdoor camping and distant relatives. She expressed that, for her, those experiences in the "bush" were opportunities that were inaccessible in the city.

"I loved the fire thing cause I remember with the fire going and they had like a, metal thing's where you just ah, I guess where the pot of potatoes were cooking you just [hung] it up on this hook and the potatoes would cook in this open fire. And I thought that was so fascinating cause you don't do that in the city". [F, 68, Urban]

Deep embedded values and protocols revolved around respectful ways to honor all aspects of the hunting process including the tools required to hunt and the cultural processes adhered to after the animal was killed. For example, it was important to ensure that guns and ammunition were protected and securely stored. Also, it was important to avoid killing does (female deer) to ensure the life-cycle flourished. Several participants explained ways to utilize all parts of an animal to show the animal respect and honour for giving its life. For example, eyeballs could be used for fishing and bear fat could be used for baking or skin cream. Additionally, meat was never to be wasted, left to spoil, or sold, rather you took only what you needed to feed your family and gave away the rest.

"I mean cause you have to respect everything. Like, I mean like you don't want to waste, to say like bagging a moose and losing half the moose… like you never want to do that. You have to be respectful because you don't want to waste anything because that moose gave its life." [F, 54, Urban]

Participants expressed that living in rural communities, unlike urban centres, meant that its members took care of each other, knew each other by name, kept homes unlocked, and taught children hunting protocols. For example, children were taught to veer away from trap lines.

"…it's like all on a trap line so there's certain parts of the area you just knew that you were not allowed to walk on because, I mean because traps were there." [F, 54, Urban]

Additionally, participants unveiled important spiritual customs that governed food traditions during community gatherings, events, and holidays. Some participants had stated that they grew up in small towns referred to as Missionaries. Missionaries were designated Catholic rural communities, which is why some Métis families' faith is rooted in Catholicism. However, others revealed that they preferred to practice spiritual beliefs from their Indigenous heritage.

Still, one family felt most comfortable attending a Catholic church, in Winnipeg, which amalgamated both Christian and Indigenous beliefs. Regardless of which faith was practiced, giving thanks before a meal to show gratitude for food was a practice that the majority of participants partook in as children and still practice as adults. For example, some participants would make the "Sign of the Cross", a Catholic practice, before a meal, whereas one participant, stated that for her, she smudged[9] during preparations, cooking, and serving food for loved ones at a feast[10].

"But I would take everything out that I was going to use, and then I smudge it all – I wash it all, and prepare exactly what I was going to use for the feast. And then I had to smudge it all, before I cooked it. And then as I was cooking it, I was smudging everything….when I'm cooking it, I'm praying for all the people who are going to eat it. I'm praying um and thanking Creator for the gift of all of food…and then, before we ate it, I had to smudge all of it again." [F, 45, Rural]

Another Indigenous custom included how food was used at a funeral. For one participant, when someone died in their family, it was customary to light an outdoor fire, which was to burn continuously for four days, and on the fourth day, family and community members would prepare an abundance of food consisting primarily of the deceased's favorite dishes. Prior to anyone eating, a small portion of each dish was collected in a bowl by family members, and burned in the fire.

"You take a bit for yourself and then I take a bit and I put it in the big bowl for him. And then when they finish going through everybody and then they take that bowl of food and you throw that into the fire." [F, 54, Urban]

[9] Smudging is a First Nations ceremony, where sage is burned during the act of praying.
[10] A feast is First Nations term used to represent a food gathering.

Midnight Mass, an important Catholic tradition was another important food tradition. The Catholic service, attended the night before Christmas, was often celebrated with an array of desserts, dainties, teas, and tourtierre following the mass. The celebratory meal was either shared amongst community goers as a larger celebration or on a smaller scale with immediate family only. For one family, they believed that the tradition of eating a late-night meal, after midnight mass, stemmed from a Métis custom often practiced in French communities, referred to as a *"Reveillon",* which meant *"the dawn is breaking, it's time to get up."*

Additionally, Christmas, New Year's Eve, and King's Day referred to as *"Jourdri Roway"* (the seventh day following New Year's Day) were all considered important Catholic celebratory events by some participants, which brought families and community members together, hosted by an abundance of food.

V. We Want a Resilient Food System: Giving Rural & Urban Métis a Voice

For Métis participants, this research was a way to express their identity, as well as identify challenges and barriers in our modern food system. A strong desire to (re)learn, (re)member and (re)vitalize Métis food stories was expressed.

The Road We Are Walking

Some participants discussed barriers to accessing traditional land-based foods such as wild meats. Limited access to wild meat, within city limits, was a primary concern among participants who expressed feelings of doubt and despair regarding viable solutions that would otherwise overcome their grievances. For example, participants who lived in urban locales reported that in order to acquire wild meat or fish they rely on family members who lived out of town to bring it in when visiting. However, other participants complained that receiving meat

and fish was becoming more seldom as years passed and therefore accessing wild meat was difficult and costly within city limits. Additionally, one participant expressed feelings of frustration and helplessness at these restrictions to accessing unpasteurized milk and dairy products to which she felt to be the result of restrictive government policies.

"There was one lady we used to get cream from and the government stopped her from selling her cream because it was some kind of regulation, health regulation. I said what health regulation; I grew up on a farm. We ate dirt and we are still here! Yeah, it's very frustrating when it comes to that." [F, 68, Urban]

Participants identified health benefits that traditional land-based foods provide, yet expressed both concern and shame when discussing their current diets, which consist mainly of less than nutritious fast and processed market foods.

"I would say in these days it's really hard because so many families aren't cooking. I mean there's fast foods and they stop at McDonalds or they stop at A&W or you can stop at the store and buy a Michelina. In foods you can buy any kind of a frozen meal you want and you just throw it in the microwave." [F, 80, Urban]

Participants also expressed sadness, guilt, and regret because food work, recipes and cultural knowledge were being replaced with hectic schedules and loss of desire to "scratch" cook.

"I feel like I'm not doing a good job of transmitting food traditions to my kids. And I feel like there is just such a huge difference between how my mom cooked for her family because she was a housewife and home all day and the way I was forced to cook when I was raising my kids. It just seems like I had to adapt and everything." [F, 58, Urban]

Many participants were concerned that Métis food practices were not being taught to youth, and therefore felt that the fate of Métis foods and protocols prompted the need for immediate action. Some participants expressed the importance of wanting to engage their children in the transfer of food knowledge so that Métis foodways would be generationally passed forward. Others felt that the responsibility of teaching food skills should lay with parents whereas others argued that children must also be held accountable for the transfer of knowledge to be successfully maintained. One mother felt that the problem with today's youth is their lack of interest in cooking and are instead choosing to make processed market foods over taking the time to learn about traditional foods and cooking methods. The same participant, who was frustrated at her daughter's unwillingness to cook, felt defeated trying to teach her daughter to cook. One family expressed regret that they had not learned some of their favorite recipes from their grandmother prior to her death and felt those recipes were now lost.

"It's not that I can't teach her, it's that she doesn't want to learn." [F, 45, Urban]

One family expressed regret that they had not learned some of their favorite recipes from their grandmother prior to her death and felt those recipes were now lost. The family goes on to state that had grandparents foreseen the possibility of food knowledge diminishing, actions to preserve this knowledge would have been in place. The same participant speculated that the reason more effort into securing food knowledge was not established was because grandmothers from generations prior, most likely did not anticipate an era where home-cooked meals would be replaced by conventional food stuffs.

"Our grandparent's never thought our food was gonna die off with them but, you know what, but growing up you don't think of things like that." [F, 45, Urban]

In the same conversation, another participant reported that if only she had been old enough to learn her grandmother's culinary knowledge she would have taken advantage of the opportunity, which is now lost.

"I wish that I would've learnt that or been old enough where now cause I'm so interested in knowing and into food and baking and stuff I wish that I would have been old enough to learn when it was being taught. But now that everybody's older…passed away, you don't get that." [F, 37, Urban]

The Road We Want to Walk

Participants expressed the need to act, recognizing the importance of preserving Métis food work. As a measure to teach Métis recipes and share important cultural stories, several participants had offered their services to assist in reasserting Métis foodways through cooking, knowledge sharing, or hunting. As one participant put it, the solution entails women taking the lead.

"Get a bunch of women get together and teach the kids how to cook." [F, 47, Rural]

Acquiring Métis traditional recipes through the creation of a cookbook that adapts cultural recipes in order to make them more time efficient was suggested as a helpful strategy toward (re)vitalize traditional recipes. Other suggestions included creating spaces to hold workshops that would share Métis stories and teach Métis traditional cooking. Another participant firmly felt that the best way to (re)learn a traditional recipe was to acquire the original ingredients of the recipe to ensure the integrity of the recipe remains intact. This participant emphasized:

"follow the old recipes... Don't' change them that's all, just keep everything the same."

[F, 45, Urban]

Some participant's expressed the importance of actively becoming involved in their food system as evidenced by their desire to move away from packaged and processed foods, recognizing how impersonal the food process had become. One woman said she despised grocery shopping because for her, the idea of food as a commodity, transferred through several hands and venues was an unnatural process which left her feeling angry.

"Somebody made it, then they put it in a package…then moved all those packages and took them to the store and then somebody moved all that and put it on a shelf. And then I'm gonna get it and I'm putting it in here. Like how many times has this stuff been moved around? Like that just irritates me!" [F, 45, Rural]

Participants wanted to ensure that important messages such as *"cook with minimal spices"* [F, 45, Urban] and *"eat together"* [F, 58, Urban] were voiced to youth. For one elderly participant, her message to Métis youth was:

"Talk to people and don't be ashamed of you are." [F, 68, Urban]

This participant regretted the time she lost having spent many years of her life in shame, hiding from her Métis identity. It was her hope that people would assert themselves and ask for guidance in their pursuit of acquiring cultural food knowledge.

"Go out and see what, what they do… if you want to understand why do they eat this? Why do they eat that? Hey, go and see what they do and how they prepare it. You don't think its right, probably end up liking it if you give yourself a chance." [F, 68, Urban]

Another participant strongly felt that Métis culture must be reasserted in the mosaic of Canadian culture if dignity was to be restored.

"Basically to teach the young people and make them understand that this is our culture and if we don't continue it, eventually we'll be back to where, when people used to say, well, you're Métis, you're not Indian, you're not white so you're nothing. And we have to make them understand that we have to keep our culture going." [F, 56, Urban]

Averting illness, for one participant, meant a return to traditional foods, a hope she had for Indigenous peoples.

"Cause I think like, as Indigenous people we veered off of eating our traditional foods whether it be First Nations, Métis or whoever. And so I think that just, I think it's important actually to revitalize that because so many of our people are sick and a lot of it has to do with the food that we're eating." [F, 45, Rural]

Discussion

Relationships Built Upon Food

This research demonstrates the importance of Métis traditional and neo-traditional foodways in revitalizing Métis identity, and the interconnectedness among women (grandmothers, mothers, and aunties) in Métis families. Through remembering how the matriarchs governed food work, forging the bonds of family and community, a path is opened to relearn about Métis women's roles in the home and how such roles shaped families. Additionally, transferring knowledge means that questions about heritage can be answered and relationships can be established. Importantly, participants' love of their grandmothers was evident through memories of food work, which strengthened familial bonds. Children had fond memories of traditional foods being prepared but there were challenges with respect to how culinary skills were, and continue to be (or not to be) transferred.

Bonds among Métis women were multi-faceted and complex. Further exploration of bonds between female family members may provide further context into the reciprocity of food work between sisters and their children. Additionally, exploring the familial roles among Métis women would serve as an intricate element towards further understanding how women work within their own groups. For Indigenous women in Canada, reclaiming matriarchal roles, as was once practiced, would be of paramount service to self-healing and empowerment. Indigenous women, given the platform, have the ability to spearhead conversations of reconciliation within Canada, beginning within the necessary changes needed to advance familial and community healing.

Despite impoverishment, Métis women demonstrated that they were highly resourceful and capable of nourishing their families and communities. This sharing was how Métis communities were formed in the midst of the harsh social landscapes that tried to marginalize them. Métis identity was, in part formed, through the creation and sharing of food customs. Offering visitors home cooked meals was how women fused community and exercised neighborly good will. Bhawra et al (2015) determined that relying on family to share food was in fact a coping strategy used to mitigate food insecurity for urban-Métis living in London, Ontario. Such strategies are indicative of the tight-knit bonds within Métis families and the integral role of food.

For Métis families in this research, recipes and food work were associated with healthful diets; however, participants felt that urban living has negatively impacted access to preferred foods such as wild meat and other land-based foods. If colonization began with the intent to acquire land, then reconciliation with Indigenous peoples must include the restoration of land will to Indigenous peoples. In this way geographical space provides access to food, and food ways, thereby creating opportunities to restore cultural values important to Indigenous groups.

Traditional Foods – (Re)visited.

Traditional Indigenous foods, although no one definition exists, is rooted in the concept that food should be accessed from natural sources (Kuhnlein, 2001), consumed by a regional population (Kim, 2003) has been wild-harvested (Power, 2008) and culturally accepted (Kolahdooz et al., 2015). While these definitions satisfy in part how the Métis families of this research identify traditional foods, these definitions fail to acknowledge other important factors, which make up Métis food ways.

The rhetoric surrounding *traditional foods,* while important, is flawed. The literature suggests that traditional foods are solely cultivated from the land hence failing to acknowledge foods and recipes that have evolved into traditional meals throughout generations, mainly with the incorporation of bartered or purchased ingredients, such is the case with the Métis families I interviewed here.

Most likely, neo-traditional recipes have been purposely overlooked in the discourse of traditional foods because of the consequential link between health and negative outcomes for Indigenous people. There is a a plethora of literature that suggests energy-dense and nutrient poor foods have attributed to diet-related chronic diseases that disproportionally affect Indigenous populations compared to non-Indigenous groups (Nakano et al, 2005; Power, 2008; Bowser, Utz, Glick & Harmon, 2015; Bhawra et al., 2015). For several reasons, market foods for Indigenous people are associated with negative emotional consequences. For example, market goods namely flour, lard, pork and sugar were, historically, the rations provided to on-reserve First Nations people by government officials. This provided families with minimal and often sub-standard food, which many consider a form of "weaponized hunger" which left many emotional scars (Martens, 2016). More so, the same ingredients listed above, in addition to

alcohol, are better known as the “five white sins” according to Indigenous youth in British Colombia (Provincial Health Services, 2011). However these foods did become woven into the fabric of Indigenous, and in particular Metis life, representing the incredible resiliency that has been exhibited to overcome centuries of oppression. These foods cannot be dismissed, but must be understood in the context of Metis histories.

Additionally, the partisan definition(s) leave little escape from the stigmatization and prejudices associated to recipes and foods that are not otherwise acknowledged under the demarcation of the term. For instance, Devon Mihesuah, a highly acclaimed Navaho food activist argues that “Many Natives continue to act on their insecurities by making bad dietary and lifestyle choices” (p. 56). Although Mihesuah’s work underpins important necessary steps required to reconnect Indigenous people to ancestral land knowledge, thereby circumventing diet-related health problems, her message may be construed as offensive for Indigenous families who chose to identify nuanced recipes as traditional.

The last noticeable flaw in the discourse of traditional foods is there is no mention of shared-stories or lessons learned from the kitchen. The literature suggests, urges, and even demands that Indigenous people speak for themselves about themselves (Cardinal, 2006; Power, 2008; Smith, 2012; Kuhnlein, 2014). The discourse surrounding Indigenous food culture has only begun to uncover an array of untapped cultural recipes, knowledge, and stories from the kitchen. For the Métis participants of this research another story exists.

To honour the Métis participants of this research study, neo-traditional recipes, which include both land-based whole foods and purchased ingredients, coined as traditional were motivated by powerful memories of family togetherness, a mother’s love to feed her child(ren),

and to do the best she could with what she had, despite the negative connotations associated to some market foods.

Ultimately the question begs, can the two-worlds not coexist? That is, both land-based and market foods, which promote healthy diets and overall well-being, as once was? For the participants of this research flour, lard, and sugar, is demonized ingredients however, these same ingredients created cherished recipes such as berry pies, heartier soups, and baked breads. These recipes were made from scratch by women who worked hard to provide sustenance to their families, while at the same time building familial and community bonds. This work deserves respect and freedom from shame.

Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

As participants' stories unfolded, it became evident that women bore the brunt of food work making her an invaluable asset in the home. For example, although men often oversaw the hunt, it was not made clear who raised the livestock, but it was noted that wives butchered the meat. Wives were responsible for cooking, baking, gardening, harvesting and all preservation methods such as canning and pickling. Children were often assigned tedious duties. It was not made clear who raised the livestock however; it can be assumed that such a role was no less comparable to the other tasks women were responsible for, when husbands were away working or hunting. Women taking on multiple domestic roles when husbands were away have been previously documented in the literature (Thompson, 1991).

The performance of food work provided the opportunity for women to assert their power within the domain of their kitchen. Food work, as a conduit of power, adds a new element of gendered authority that "suggests women have more agency and autonomy than might otherwise be assumed" (D'yslvia & Beagan, 2011, p.285). Métis women were physically and emotionally

strong, which is evident in the way wives successfully accomplished overwhelmingly multiple tasks of rearing a home.

Prior to colonial settlement, First Nations societies functioned in matriarchal systems (The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2017). Indigenous women have stories to share that can change the minds, ideas, and, actions of those around her, given the space to do so. As one of the *Idle No More* activist's Nina Wilson (2014) puts it, "Kisikew Iskwew, the Women Spirit, is taking back her power, so the children will live" (p. 108).

From a feminist perspective, the constructed gendered role of women's domestic work has well been documented and scholars continue to argue against the rhetoric that portrays women's domestic labor as less than important, subordinate, and inferior work (Lewis, 2015; Tolleson-Rinehart & Carroll, 2006). In an effort to advocate for women's important domestic roles, Deborah Simonton in her manuscript titled *A History of European Women's Work 1700 to the Present (1998),* argues that stereotypes which demean women's work are a Western concept, absent of cultural ontologies and *women's* perspectives and therefore does not accurately represent the whole picture (Simonton, 1998). She argues that research linking domestic work and family from the perspectives of women, outside the economic domain, is relatively a new area of research. Research aimed towards Indigenous women, emphasizing her abilities rather than *dis*-abilities, is well over due and would serve as an excellent contribution to the literature.

Food, Well-being, and Identity

Métis food was an expression of this group's unique identity which, for the participants of this study, was directly linked to personal and cultural health and well-being. Many participants stressed the centrality of food to celebratory meals, which held significant importance because holiday celebrations were deeply rooted in family togetherness. Further,

when similar food practices arose in interviews that other interviewees also mentioned, participants felt this synergy was a cultural connection which reinforced Métis identity and belonging. These shared food ideologies reinforce a sense of belonging (Cantarero, Espeitx, Lacruz, & Martin, 2013; Woolley and Fishback, 2016).

For many participants, it became evident that the food stories that participants were sharing were distant memories and only once a public platform was provided for them to remember, could important cultural knowledge and viewpoints resurface, which reflected cultural pride. All participants felt the subject of transmitting Métis foodways to youth, viewed as a contribution to a greater cause, was important and therefore, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be interviewed. The importance of transmitting Métis food ways to youth was a direct reflection of cultural pride. Knowledge translation to retain cultural knowledge has been widely understood to be of significant importance for Indigenous communities (Kuhnlein, 2001, 2014; Power, 2008; Provincial Health Services Authority, 2011; Adams et al., 2012; Hammelman & Hayes-Conroy, 2015). Additionally, participants offered their personal services to teach hunting, harvesting and gardening practices, in addition to supplying family cookbooks and recipes, as a means to (re)vitalize Métis foodways and further Métis pride. This concept of participants who want to give their time and extend cultural knowledge, in order to carry forward Métis cultural practices, is directly related to the notion of community "consciousness shifting", which according to scholars, is the underbelly of food sovereignty in action, in urban centres (Cidro, Adekunle, Peters, & Martens, 2015)..

Furthermore, a deep embodied sociocultural value system that connected emotional health to food stories was conveyed through funny anecdotes. Having a good time during the interview process was not surprising as Métis people are notorious for their sense of humor (Barkwell, Dorion & Hourie, 2006). In some cases the banter of laughter was, in part, because

participants were able to bounce family memories off one another as stories were told. It should be noted that although some participants were contacted on an individual basis, upon beginning the interview process, family members in the house conjugated to the kitchen to join in on the interview which added an element of unexpected delightfulness and breadth to the research. For Métis families, interviewing in groups may be an indicator of strong kinships, an expression of family identity, and well-being. The subject is yet to be explored.

Asking Métis people to share stories related to their culture, inevitably draws out discussion related to identity, and for some, grappling with their identity. Reasons for the identity gap are directly related to Canada's oppressive historical acts of violence towards Indigenous peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). Many participants vocalized some form of displacement regarding their Métis identity whether it was directly related to parents' who masked their identity due to shame, or stereotypical patterned political and societal messages, that according to Bhawra et al., (2015) have excluded Métis as being accepted as either fully Aboriginal or European people. In many ways, this *inbetweenness* and uncertainty has left open wounds for some participants. Yet, despite the insurmountable attacks on identity and historical challenges that Métis have faced and still do, there is a strong pushback from Métis families and communities to remain grounded in their pursuit to restore Métis identity, and to do so with pride.

Food Terminology

Food language was used to link Métis cultural practices to naming recipes, language markers and heuristic characteristics of food. In Métis homes, it was common to personalize favorite dishes and also celebratory gatherings where food was a main focus. With unique Métis names, this at times reflected European sentiments and at other times more First Nations

characteristics/backgrounds. The names of the dishes and celebrations contribute to uniqueness of the Métis foodways uncovered in this research. As noted in the literature, recipes tend to be named based on ingredients extracted from the dish or features pertaining to the dish (Tachibana, Wakamiya, Nanba, & Sumiya, 2014).

Michif-French and Michif-Cree were two of the languages expressed throughout the interviews. Language affects the way cultural concepts and world views are perceived whereby binding perceptions, beliefs, and consciousness (Batiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Literally, the use of language has the power to reveal a lesson or life teaching that when spoken or heard in another language reveals an entirely different interpretation. Evidently, Michif, spoken in its various forms represented foods and dishes that unveiled different connotations. Michif along with many other Aboriginal languages are threatened and its loss is fatal to every affected community (Arens, 2006).

This study also responds to Elaine Power's (2008) call to further explore heuristic descriptions of food characteristics to better understand how Indigenous groups select, use, celebrate and avoid certain foods. Negative associations tied to the smell and taste of wild meat being cooked were, for the most part, the main factors that deterred participants from consuming the meat. As reported elsewhere, taste and smell represent the two most significant aspects of sensory modalities which underpin flavour and cannot be separated. Hence, if one of the two sensors are thrown off by either odor or taste judgments or a combination of both, the food is far more likely to be accepted or rejected (Delwiche, 2004).

Moving Forward

Overwhelmingly, the Métis people in this study expressed dissatisfaction regarding the disconnect between their current diet and the diet they grew up on which they felt was healthier

on multiple levels – for themselves, the environment, and their communities. Many expressed the need to have autonomy within their food systems, for example, wanted greater access to wild mat and unpasteurized food sources. Several reasons which affect the decline in accessing traditional food systems have been documented in the literature including: dwindling of species availability and harvesting areas; time and energy constraints due to employment which also interrupt knowledge transfer to youth; the influx of inexpensive low nutritional market foods that sacrifice quality over quantity (Kuhnlein, 2001); and ecosystem threats (Food Secure Canada, 2011).

Importantly, participants were also very concerned with losing valuable cultural recipes and knowledge, if these are not passed down to the next generation. As one researcher put it, "cooking styles" of various global Indigenous populations are increasingly becoming threatened, in favour of mono diets, which inevitably will lead to adverse health impacts (Kim, 2003, p. 223). The need for immediate action cannot be overstated in this context.

The number of Métis youth is increasing, however, the Elderly population is declining, (Statistics Canada, 2011) and along with them invaluable cultural knowledge. The loss of Métis culinary knowledge is imminent for several reasons. First, because urban-Indigenous sociocultural and political paradigms are complex and relatively new to scholarship (Willows, 2005; Cardinal, 2006; Elliot et al., 2011), second; Métis people continue to be discounted in areas of research (Evans et al., 2012) and third, the over consumption of highly processed foods, lack of food literacy for youth, and fewer home cooked meals is responsible for the consequential impacts on health (Slater, 2013).

Furthermore, the discourse surrounding policy recommendations, community partnerships, food sovereignty frameworks etc. work towards ensuring that important aspects of

Indigenous culture are embedded in such models; however, retaining cultural recipes and culinary knowledge are most often left at the way side and not included in such frameworks (Ghosh & Spitzer, 2014), food insecurity models (Bhawra et al., 2008) or intervention models (Kuhnlein, 2014). I assert that Métis cultural food-knowledge is a necessary element in revitalizing and retaining cultural stories.

The push for transferring knowledge to youth was explicitly expressed and ideas for doing so were generated. Participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss the topic of Métis foodways and felt the subject was worth advocating for. Métis scholars assert that "Métis cultural restoration has become a priority among Métis organizations and individuals" (Préfontaine et al., 2003, p. 8). In this study, such a statement has proven to be the case. Creating Métis-centric health and cultural promotion activities such as cooking classes targeted to youth, and use of local traditional and neo-traditional food resources within urban centres can be an important gateway toward the adoption of other cultural activities that build reconciliation. Additionally, Métis reflections and stories regarding culinary and recipe knowledge should be considered in development programmes.

Limitations

Although there is much strength in this project there are limitations. This project interviewed 21 participants in Manitoba. Ideally, interviewing Métis people from another region, as a comparative study, has the potential to add a unique rich perspective to the literature.

Despite these limitations, this study served to advance the understanding of contemporary Métis cultural capital in an urban and rural setting. Opportunities and challenges were aired. Métis people were given a platform to voice their stories and their perspectives.

Conclusion

For the Métis families in this study, food from the land obtained through gardening, gathering, hunting and harvesting, and prepared by important women in their lives, was deeply connected to their sense of familial and cultural identity. This was reflected in their values, beliefs and intimate knowledge of the land which is central to Métis history and distinctiveness. The discourse of food, the way it was used, has long-established meaningful connections to Métis heritage. Despite their many hardships, Métis communities in and around Winnipeg had a wholesome vibrant food culture with celebrations, ceremonies and rituals, some, but not enough of which continue today.

Reminiscing, sharing stories, describing food roles, and honouring the important women in their lives, is a positive dimension of Métis history. For my study participants, family and food underpinned the role of the family matriarch, and food was, and powerful connector and symbol of identity. The intricate bonds established among kin through food work helps Métis better understand who they are.

As a result of historical policies of marginalization, however, Métis peoples 'migration to urban areas negatively impacted their diets, specifically through reduced access to traditional land and lack of space to grow gardens. Participants want solutions to reverse this. In addition, they are concerned about teaching cultural food knowledge to future generations. The matriarchal *culinary vessels* are passing away and traditional foodways and cooking are disappearing. Access to traditional land and food production methods, along with traditional food education strategies, are necessary to help Métis peoples maintain cultural food sovereignty, which will be further chipped away at if regressive policies and barriers continue to exist. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Recommendations, if upheld, become an integral and pragmatic step in a positive direction.

CHAPTER 6

Grounded in My Métis Roots - Stepping Outside the Boundaries of Academia

Introduction

This paper was written as an extension to my Masters Research project entitled *Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols.* In my research, I interviewed 21 Métis participants about their food memories and experiences. My project explored cultural food practices among Métis people living in urban Winnipeg, Manitoba, and surrounding rural communities, with specific intent to honour Métis women for their roles in food work. The results of my research are not located in this paper; rather, this paper focuses on the *processes* I experienced throughout the research journey, as a Métis woman and scholar.

What does it mean to be a Métis researcher doing Métis research in an urban setting? In short, it means becoming wholly invested in the research process, from start to finish and everything in between. In research, governments, academic institutions and organizations have for generations exploited Indigenous groups, and as an act of ongoing resistance, Indigenous scholars will no longer tolerate acts of invasion or violence from outsiders who hold no accountability to the group(s) they are researching (Brant Castellano, 2004). In *Research as Resistance* (2005) authors Leslie Brown and Susan Strega state, that for Indigenous peoples, protecting Indigenous knowledge has been a critical undertaking and a first step of many towards self-determination and governance. The authors boldly assert, "We push the edges of academic acceptability not because we want to be accepted within the academy but in order to transform it" (Brown & Strega, 2005, p. 1). It is clear that new dialogue perpetuates new practices and

spaces for innovative emancipatory research which includes non-traditional ways of knowing, learning, and sharing knowledge that can push social justice forward for groups who have otherwise maintained a marginalized and objectification status.

There is a growing body of literature around issues of positionality, relational accountability, and power in qualitative research (Love, B. L. 2012; Merriam, Jonson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001). According to Kovach (2012), "qualitative research offers a space for Indigenous ways of researching" because qualitative research creates space to assist researchers who seek to understand self in relation to their research (p. 24). However, and most importantly, she points out that that only until Indigenous research is guided solely by Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies then qualitative research will "have to do" (p.25). Until I better understand such Indigenous epistemologies I will rely on the methodologies of qualitative research, as I have done so, in Master's research.

The purpose of this paper is to share aspects of my vulnerability related to my growth as a Métis woman and researcher. Due to conflicting epistemologies between Indigenous and Western perspectives, I expose an ethical challenge that I had faced throughout my research journey using my three-pronged theoretical framework. In this paper, I utilized perspectives embedded within the frameworks to frame my understanding of positionality, relational accountability, and power relations as they relate to my obligations as an Indigenous scholar. I describe the experiential journey of my research and recount academic challenges I have faced by inserting detailed note of personal reflections I kept during the memoing process, which are key to the activist piece necessary in my research. This paper begins by describing the theoretical framework I chose for my Master's research; it was a driving force in my research process. I will then discuss my position in positionality, self-reflexivity, relational accountability, and power relations and how they intertwined with my theoretical frameworks. I end this paper with regards

to how the research process affected me and ultimately further shaped my identity as a Métis woman.

Disclaimer: All names included in this paper have been used with oral and/or written consent.

Selecting A Theoretical Framework

The intersection of the three theoretical frameworks, Métis philosophies, Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR) and Decolonization I chose for my Masters project formed the foundation of how I conducted my research.

Métis philosophies are based on Métis cultural values and principles that have been laid out by Métis Elders. In this research, I have incorporated the Métis philosophies from *In the Words of Our Ancestors: Métis Health and Healing* published in 2008. The philosophies include, but are not limited to, *see* Table 1. It is important to note that Indigenous methodological perspectives should encompass Indigenous beliefs, humanity, values, and cultural worldviews. For years, Indigenous scholars have worked very closely with Indigenous communities and Elders, developing strategies and principles that articulate how best to conduct research with Indigenous peoples to ensure the needs and expectations of the community are firstly met and the dimensions of their perceived reality are expressed (Brant Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2012; Smith, 2012; Lambert, 2014).

Table 1: Métis Philosophies

• knowledge must be shared
• seek the knowledge from those who have the knowledge
• Métis are encouraged to learn the Michif language from oral histories and traditional knowledge

- to acknowledge the person who shared the knowledge is to honor the person and their oral traditions
- learn and record the Métis cultural protocols in order to pass the knowledge down
- women are the life-force behind the centrality of family

Making room for Indigenous frameworks and methodologies is the only way Indigenous cultural perspectives and knowledges can take their rightful place in academic institutions (Brant Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2012; Smith, 2012; Lambert, 2014). As Smith (2012) famously puts it, the word "research" is probably one of the dirtiest words in the hearts and minds of Indigenous people's vocabulary. This is because for generations, in research, what may have seemed appropriate in the past such as collecting information *on* a community did not work *for* the community. With the emergence of Indigenous scholars in academia, now more than ever, Indigenous-focused methodologies have become a focus of paramount importance when conducting Indigenous research (Absolon & Willet, 2005; Wilson, 2008; Clark, 2016)

The second perspective that informed this research was Feminist Standpoint Research (FSR). A feminist lens has its basis in the assumptions that men and women have different experiences and as such, different perspectives which take on a new meaning. Generally speaking, feminism is a holistic perspective whose aim is to allow space for women to express their beliefs, circumstances and struggles in a way that is unique to women (Fertaly, 2012).

FSR like Indigenous methodologies is grounded in a perspective that research should encompass social benefits for those who are involved in the process (Brant Castellano, 2004; Kovach, 2012; Lambert, 2014; OCAP - First Nations Governance Centre (FNIGC), 2014).

Moreover, the activism approach within the FSR framework, would allow me to exercise a fundamental aspect of Indigenous research which included *giving back* to the Métis community and the individuals who have agreed to venture forward on this journey with me. Kovach (2012) reminds researchers that Indigenous and Western thought are different, the latter being more favored, and as a result of this dominating ethnocentric lens within the academy political challenges still exist.

The final perspective, decolonization, encompasses undoing what has been done as a result of violent colonial efforts, which sought to dismantle and eradicate Indigenous identity (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014). Decolonization is, unequivocally, the necessary collaborative venture that must be journeyed, if Indigenous peoples are to *re*-posture cultural, spiritual, and political identity within the assemblage of Canadian society. The compilation of these perspectives synergistically work to encapsulate how I have framed my understanding of positionality, relational accountability, and power relations as they relate to my obligations as an Indigenous scholar.

Positionality

I use the work of Kathy Absolon and Cam Willett (2005) in *Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research* to describe positionality. Positioning oneself, especially if you are Indigenous, is an essential part of an Indigenous methodology (Absolon & Willett, 2005). Positionality is aligned with stating who you are, your objectives, and your epistemological truth as you perceive it, right from the beginning of your research. The authors go on to state that people who are interviewed have a right to know *how* the research will benefit them, or their community. Furthermore, they assert that by positioning oneself, it avoids ethnocentric writing, as in "neutral" or "objective" writing (p.107). The premise behind this assertion is that as human

beings, we inevitably pack pre-existing biases, and therefore if research is to be conducted ethically, then the researcher should be personally connected to the research (Absolon & Willett, 2005).

Positionality allowed me to express the necessary steps that I had to take if I was to maintain my integrity, at the same time, proudly represent who I am – a proud Métis woman. As a Métis scholar conducting Métis research, I was particularly connected to my research because I believed that I could, even if in a small way, gather enough Métis knowledge through sharing stories that could further my peoples understanding of food knowledge. From the beginning of each interview, I was upfront with my participants about what we both had to gain from the interview, which was a win-win scenario for us all. I would increase my understanding of Métis food knowledge, and through the writing process, my project would become a conduit of knowledge-transfer for the Métis community.

Also, I asserted the importance of honouring Métis women during the process because Métis women's roles in the home are important, and such, little literature touched upon the subject. The feminist in me, prompted me to actively pursue a worthy cause that would give Métis women an opportunity to be heard. No doubt, it had been the guidance of women throughout my life that have moulded me in to the woman I have come to be, therefore, my research was a way to give back for what I had received, a life time of enduring advice from strong women. Lastly, by being upfront with my participants I knew that memories would surface and the very act of remembering is a step towards decolonization. Below I position myself in my research.

I am a Métis woman. Humility was the very first teaching I received when I learned my Spirit name, Yellow Wolf, many years ago. The teaching, given to me by my Anishanaabe Elder

was “I know nothing and understand even less”. I passed tobacco to receive my Spirit name, and as I understood, it was to be the name that would carry me throughout my life’s journey. I was also taught that the more I learned about the wolf the more my life would make sense to me. The teaching I was given with my name remains as true then as it does today. Throughout my research endeavor, every time I believed that the world around me made sense and that I had acquired the “truth” or “right path”, I would encounter a piece of literature or person who would, intentionally or not, provide an alternative perspective which quickly reinforced the teaching of my name. I share this aspect of myself because it relates directly to the way I carried out this research, which became an inseparable part of my identity as a Métis woman.

My family lineage stems from the Red River Métis of Manitoba, as I am learning. I say “learning” because growing up, the only phrase my brothers and sisters and I grew up hearing was that we were “Metis French!” (emphasis intended), as directed by my, now estranged father. Oddly, why we were informed about our Métis heritage, however, strictly kept from further inquire about the subject, is what I can only speculate, tied to the shame inflicted upon Métis families who went into hiding throughout the 20th century. None the less, it was in my adult and my university experience that propelled me to further explore my Métis roots.

My ancestors were Manitoba northern Cree-Métis including branches of the Lavallee’s, Mayer’s, Ducharme’s, Deschamps’, Beauchamp’s and Chartrand’s. My matriarchal grandmother, Dora Mayer grew up in Pine Bluff, a Cree reserve in Northern Manitoba, however, it was washed out by Manitoba Hydro dams, which is why they relocated south and eventually to Winnipeg. It is in Winnipeg and the surrounding rural communities of Winnipeg that my research took place.

My mother Rose, who also participated in my research, has been instrumental in my life. My mother lived a hard life and yet she managed to raise 7 children on her own, after she divorced my father. I have two brothers and four sisters. I do not know who I would be without them. My life is great, simply because I have my siblings by my side. Because I am the youngest girl in my family, I have always had the sense that my sisters were particularly forgiving and gentle teachers when it came to raising me. I am also a mother. My daughter's name is Sadie. She is the love of my life and is far brighter than I ever was at her young age of twelve. It is for my daughter that I work the way I do in order to provide her with cultural grounding and financial security - things I did not have growing up. My family was impoverished and we struggled.

I began university at the age of twenty-nine. University gave me a footing to provide my daughter a better life, as I was a single mother. In 2015, directly after acquiring a bachelor's degree in Human Nutritional Sciences at the University of Manitoba (U of M), I decided to venture forward and pursue a Master's degree in the same department.

Early on in my research, I started keeping a journal of the experiences and associated feelings I encountered during the research process. I did this because journaling adds to the rigor of qualitative research (Braun & Clark, 2013) and it provided the basis for this paper. Amidst the pages of my journal it became evident that two processes were emerging. The first was an internal dialogue depicting how my research was affecting me on a personal level, known as self-reflexivity, and the second was, the position I was taking as a result of conflicting ethical policies I was met with in my university.

Self-Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity is looking inside oneself to explain the realities of time and space in the moment. It is also part of understanding the interconnectedness of conducting research who according to Graveline (1998) is, "nisitohtamowin. Nisitohtamowin…a Cree word for 'self-in-relation' (as cited in Kovach, 2012, p.57). In the case of this research, seeking to discover and understand my Métis identity qualifies as a personal issue. A growing body of literature on the emotional dimensions of health and well-being in the social sciences are drawing attention to the researcher's self-reflexive inquiry into the interconnectedness between researcher and emotions (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2009; Pithouse-Morgan, Khau, Masinga & Van de Ruit, 2012). Self-reflexivity is the step between analysis and write-up (Charmaz, 2006). It is also used to capture strengths and weaknesses of each stage of the research (Engin, 2011). The concept of self-reflexivity is itself subject to critique (Skeggs, 2002) nonetheless is a critical component of qualitative work.

By remaining self-reflexive throughout my research, I was able to express a number of emotions which, for better or worse, allowed me to continuously fall back on the process of what I was experiencing. By going over the pages of my journal, I was grappling with the positionality of my stake in my research. In other words, I was mentally preparing how I would position myself in the pursuit of advocacy. It was seemingly impossible to escape, the accountability I had towards my participants and my research.

Relational Accountability

Relational accountability is an Indigenous epidemiological view, which seeks to understand how we, as humans, connect to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of life and the cosmos (Lavalleé, 2009). Relationality refers to the important relationships in a

person's life. Shawn Wilson (2008) describes relationality as the interconnected relationships of everything that surrounds us and links us together. He goes on to state that predominantly Indigenous people believe it is the "heart" of being Indigenous and therefore being accountable to your relations is imperative as a researcher (p.78). Mercer (2007) reported how traditional literature on research methods tends to gloss over the intricacies of insider research and proposes that insiders are not well-supported in their attempts to navigate hidden ethical and methodological dilemmas of insiderness. Although there are several Indigenous methodologies and frameworks available to guide research, explain and clarify Indigenous epistemologies for novice researchers like myself (Lambert, 2014; Wilson, 2008, Kovach, 2012) the literature available to tackle ethical challenges within the academy are limited and therefore a gap exists.

Utilizing an Indigenous framework, as I had decided to at the beginning of my research became far more than just words, rather, they, like relational accountability became promises to those who ventured forward with me in my research journey. I had made promises, to myself and my participants. I had every intention to be a woman of my word and that meant, I would find a way to honour my participants, as I said I would.

In the next section, I describe the ethical challenges I had faced in the institution, which had brought me to write this paper.

Power Dynamics

I believe Margaret Kovach (2012), an Indigenous activist, said it best:

"At present, there is a desire to give voice to Indigenous epistemologies within qualitative research, yet those who attempt to fit tribal epistemology into Western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the squirm."

In order to begin the process of interviewing, a researcher must obtain ethics approval from their institutions ethics review board. Prior to receiving ethics approval from the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board (REB), so that I could begin the interviewing process, I was told that I could not name my participants, rather an alias or number, would need to be assigned to participating interviewees in order to maintain anonymity in my project. The problem was that by asking informants to name their kin (grandmothers, mother's etc.) risks involving potential triangulation and secondary identification were at stake, which according to the REB, was construed as violating the rights of the people who would be named.

My position was that ownership of stories and narratives across generations belong to the person sharing the story, and although REBs may not fully understand the importance of naming people throughout Indigenous knowledge transfers, despite its complexity in academic institutions, does not make it is any less valid in Indigenous epistemologies. As outlined in the Métis framework selected for my research, acknowledging the person who shared the knowledge is to honour the person and their oral traditions.

Research ethics boards (REB) are in place to protect participants from harm, as indicated in the 2010 Tri Council Policy Statement (Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), 2014). Out of necessity, Indigenous peoples have had to develop and thrust protective policies into governmental and academic institutions as a means to prevent further exploitive research on themselves as a result of historical poor ethical adherence from the research community (Brant Castellano, 2004; Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2012; Wilson, 2008; Lambert, 2009; CIHR, 2014). The current policies that exist developed by Indigenous peoples are reflective of respectful cultural protocols including unique epistemological, ontological, and axiological perspectives. In Western institutions, it is mandatory that one acknowledge all information and inspiration from sources, phrases, and or another's words because failing to do so, is viewed as plagiarism and is

a serious offense (U of M Student Affairs, 2017). Protocols such as these are in place to protect individuals and ensure credit is given where credit is due however, these same academic protocols do not seem to extend to Indigenous peoples knowledges. As Kovach (2012) puts it, with cultural codes of ethics there will be challenges.

In the upcoming section, I include personal journal entries I had written throughout the process of the ethical dilemma I had faced during my research project. The end result was, that if I were to receive ethical approval to move forward with interviews in my research, results from my research could not be attached to names, instead, I had to agree to use proper pronouns such as grandmother, mother and aunty, to address the women who shared their stories. The emotional turmoil experienced cannot be forgotten.

"I am so upset right now! I feel defeated! Despite trying to negotiate my perspective on the matter, the final word is that I am not allowed to use my participants' names in my writing research rather I have to use proper pronouns like aunty, mother, and grandmother or a pseudonym when disseminating results. Well screw this then. I don't want to do this anymore then. What is the point in honouring my participants if I can't use their names!!? The Ethics Board, who the MMF also backed, say that although my participants have signed consent to use their names, the same consent has not been given by the participants' grandmothers, mothers and/or aunty's – the people I am asking my participants to talk about, and therefore, pseudonyms should be used to protect their true identity. I actually feel physically sick about this. I cannot even begin to explain how disrespectful it would be for someone to share their story only for me to go and hide it behind a false name. I can see if my research was incriminating, someone would ask for anonymity but I am conducting cultural research and therefore names are used. I am asking people about the food their grandmothers ate! My research is gentle and the whole point of it is to HONOR these woman - past and present! Why did I think that these institutional challenges that every single Indigenous scholar faces wouldn't touch me?"

June 1, 2016

"I spoke to my advisor about this more and she said that I should just keep going forward and we can deal with it in the future."

June 2, 2016

*"I have an idea. As I speak to participants I will ask them if it's ok that I use their grand*mothers, *mother's and auntie's name in my writing and if they agree, I will ask them to sign a consent form which I will have developed on my own, stating that I can. That way when the time comes to appeal the decision again, before I begin writing I will have signatures from my participants stating exactly that. The Director of the University of Manitoba's First Nations Centre for Aboriginal Health Research has informed me that ultimately it's what the 'community wants' that is to be upheld. The Director has stated I can count on a support letter from them when the time comes..."*

June 10, 2016

"I didn't get written consent from my participants regarding my plan for ethics but I did get verbal consent from a handful of them. The only reason I hadn't gotten verbal consent from everyone was because I forgot to ask at times in the interview - grrrt! For those I did remember to ask, I also asked them if in the future I had to come back to garner written consent could I? And, they agreed to it. I'm sure it won't be a problem for my other participants. Everyone I interviewed has been amazing and believes this research is important."

October 16, 2016

"I just finished crying. Today I want to be alone. My advisor and I just spoke about moving forward with the ethics issue. She said that our fight with the ethics board would be lengthy, time consuming and energy sucking all the things I don't have time to deal with because I have to be done writing before the end of summer. She told me that she would have my back and we would move forward in the pursuit together, if I truly wanted to, but that I should give it some serious thought, what with my deadline. She said that big issues like these are best tackled in PhD and that when I get there I can roll up my sleeves then. It was with a very heavy-heart that I decided, under the circumstances, not to pursue the appeal. My advisor has always done right by me, I trust her and love her and so, I know she is looking out for me when she presents this ultimatum. This means my participant's names will not be honored in my research."

April 12, 2017

Despite the pushback I had experienced regarding the inability to name my participants by name, attached to any results, I chose to look at the situation from a different lens. In fact, I had decided that at every opportunity, whilst sharing the results of my Master's project with whom ever asked, I would name names. As an Indigenous scholar, conducting research in a Western academy, my experience was not unique. I am simply reminded that there is more work to be done within the walls of post-secondary institutions. In the meantime, I exercise my right as

an Indigenous scholar and feminist to resist, even if in a small way, the hegemony of power exerted by the academic institution I find myself in, in the next section.

Honouring My Participants, I Must

I am accountable to my participants. I made that promise to them when I chose to delve into Indigenous research, utilizing an Indigenous framework, and therefore, with granted consent, I will use my participant's names in this section as an act of resistance within the dominant academic institutions. In the upcoming section I do not report on any results of my research as outlined by the ethical noose tied to my research; instead, results can be found elsewhere. The focus of this section is to honour the participants of Master's research project.

Judy Macdonald is my mom's best friend and Irene Macdonald is Judy's mother. They both are from Tannin, Northern Ontario. They live across the street from me which it made it easy to make them my first interviewees because I just walked over to them.

"I interviewed Judy and Irene today. Irene is so cute. She is quite elderly and kept falling asleep during the interview. Judy and I were giggling most of the time. She is so fun. She had a whole spread of food for me upon my arrival! My mom also joined us but I asked my mom not to chime in as I would interview her alone. It was interesting to learn about their experiences and comparisons from living in Manitoba versus Ontario growing up. I told Judy I had no idea that she was Métis. All these years, it was never brought up and I never asked. There was a point when sharing became very personal and emotional for Judy and Irene and I had to make sure to give them a moment. They told me if I needed anything else that they would be happy to help. I just love them"

June 18, 2016

Vanessa Kilowkowski is a dear friend of mine and was the second person I interviewed. She is highly knowledgeable with regards to Indigenous cultural protocols. Her family is from Peguis, Manitoba. I drove to her home in Stonewall to interview her.

"I don't even think I can count this interview as an interview cause all we did was laugh! OMG Vanessa is funny! I love the way she explains things. She is so gentle and matter of fact in the way she speaks. This evening I have learned so much Vanessa."

June 26, 2016

The Kelich family were the third set of participants that I interviewed. Candice (Candi) Kelich, my best friend, along with her sister Shannon Langan and mother Barbara Kelich have always been my second family – I practically grew up in their home. It had been years since Candi and I have connected because time has a funny way of doing that. When I thought about people to interview, Candi, Shan, and Barb were at the top of my list. Like me, they grew up in the city however; their family is from Duck Bay, Manitoba and therefore they travel back and forth. Barb speaks Michif -Cree and Michif-Soto fluently but Candi and Shan cannot; however, they are able to pick up words.

"I interviewed Candi, Shan and Barb today. Although the years have passed since we have seen each other, nothing has changed – SO FUNNY! I think we got carried away more times than not just laughing and joking around. I sure missed them. I miss Candi. It's funny when you begin to talk to people about a subject that is focused, the things you learn. I thought I knew everything about their family the way they know about mine -but nope. I had no idea of the foods they grew up on or the cultural background because I just simply hadn't asked before. It wasn't important then. I told Barb I wish I could speak Michif and she said the same thing today that she said to us growing up – 'you don't wanna learn this language'. Oh yes I do. I asked her to teach me some words about food stuff and she did. I have them written here to"

July 1, 2016

My mother Rose Mayer was the second person I interviewed. I was very emotional at the time I was journaling this entry because my whole life, my mom never shared in the way she did when I had interviewed her. I came to learn that my family on my mom's side was from a reserve called Pine Bluff, Manitoba.

"As I write this entry, I am crying. I just had no idea. I had no idea about the details of my lineage and the stories about my family. Mom gave me such heart-felt teachings tonight – I didn't even know that was in her. I have heard similar teachings before but in only ceremony.

It's like the teachings were there just living inside her waiting to surface. My mom has been through so much and yet she remains so strong. Her years have made her more gentle".

July 4, 2016

Bella Kraska and her brother Philip Savoie were interviewed next on my list. I met them at a beading workshop held at Manitoba Métis Federation.

Ok, the strangest thing happened to me this evening when I went to MMF. From the minute I stepped into that room. I saw all those people there beading and I immediately felt like I was home. It was the strangest feeling. I felt warmth and love. A woman approached me with a big smile and started talking to me as if we were old girlfriends. I just fell into place. I was sitting there attempting to bead, which I have zero patience for, and I recognized the woman from Superstore who introduced me to her mom and uncle! How cool was that! I was able to get their numbers and they had agreed to meet me."

July 13, 2017

I drove to Lorette, Manitoba to meet Bella and her brother Philip at Bella's home. It was a beautiful summer day and the drive was lovely. Their family lineage stems from Lorette.

"Yesterday, I interviewed Bella, Phil and Carl. Carl was Bella's husband and he joined in on the interview. They didn't want to be tape recorded. That was a new one for me. I was quickly reminded of Dr. Racette's teaching she gave in class when she said that at times she would interview participants and never once carry a tape recorder. She said that at most she would jot down a few words on a napkin. She went on to talk about the importance of listening rather than recording. I know now exactly what she meant. She meant, it is far more important to capture the 'essence' of the story. Later on, when journaling what you write down IS the essence and is what was meant to be recorded. LOVE! Thank you Dr. Racette!! I asked them if it was ok if I took notes while we talked which they agreed to. Their house was so beautiful. They told me Lorette is full of Métis families. Their grandfather had a huge acre farm and so the town named a road after him. Now that's what I call roots. They were such nice people! They were offering me sweets and home-made jam! They even gave me recipes! It was so neat to listen to the stories back and forth between all three. Sometimes Bella would correct Phil on his memories and vice versa. At the end of the interview everyone was so happy. Phil said he felt like he had travelled down memory lane and even thanked me for the opportunity.

July 20, 2016

Nancy Galliguer assists Manitoba Métis Federation in the Beading Workshop. There are no ends to her talent as a gifted Métis seamstress and bead worker. Her family grew up in Northern Ontario.

"I feel like I could hang out with Nancy all day! She has so many stories and is such a gifted story teller. I spent hours with her this evening! She fed me tacos – yum. Mind you I came during their dinner time. Listening to Nancy talk feels like getting pulled into her story. I think my mouth was probably dropped the whole time. We spent well over an hour just going through her beautiful wardrobe that she sewed herself and decorated with thousands of beads. Also, she is an actor for Lower Fort Garry (LFG). Apparently, LFG stages a play depicting Métis 'historic suppers' for the public. Nancy to me is representative of a strong empowered Métis woman who knows her stuff. She has proved to be an asset to my research"

July 28, 2016

Gilbert Bourgeois was a connection I was given through Manitoba Métis Federation. He agreed to meet me in Winnipeg even though he lives in St. Malo where his family is from. He had stated that he was driving in for the MMF Annual General Meeting.

"I love Gilbert's strong French accent. Gilbert is super talented in the bead work department. His collection of beaded vests and moccasins was so amazing! How I wish for that patience. Gilbert is a bush man and hunter. It is clear to me that Gilbert is a loving pa pere. He talked a lot about his grandchildren. I really admire what he said about his Métis identity. He was firm, bold and proud. He truly embraces his identity. I thought that was really empowering."

September 24, 2016

The Barton family was another connection I met through Manitoba Métis Federation. Brian and Rose-Marie are siblings and Beth's father is Brian.

"I am journaling just a few blocks up from where I interviewed Beth, Rose-Marie and Brian. I had to pull over because I am overwhelmed and am emotional right now. I was so touched by this family. The way they were so gentle with discussion and the way they so openly wanted to share to ensure I received everything I needed. I feel like we could have talked for even more hours but its late now and I am exhausted. I think I am particularly emotional right now because I don't feel alone. It's just not the same to "read" about other Métis people who are searching for answers about their identity - it's an entirely other feeling to be face to face with it. There is something to be said about connecting with others who are searching for the

same thing you are. Like me, they are only now in their adult life learning about their Métis identity. Brian is the head of the family and he is spearheading the pursuit of discovery regarding their identity. He is literally knocking on doors, talking to people who might know, and researching. I want to do what they are doing. I wonder if we are related as we have a family connection down the line."

October 7, 2016

The St. Laurent Métis Elders were another connection I made through Manitoba Metis Federation. Patsy Millar, Agatha Chartrand, June Bruce, Lorraine Coutu and Andrea Rose were the group of ladies I had come to deeply respect. Andrea is Lorraine's daughter and not yet an Elder however, she was instrumental in the knowledge gathering for my research.

"My head is spinning! Wow, what an interview! I can't wait to hear this over on the recorder. Oh god, I hope the recorder caught it all! At first, like any encounter with new people things are cordial until the ice breaks and the talking gets going. I feel like I could probably write my entire thesis based on what these ladies have shared alone. It was crazy, when they said they were 'Métis-French', I couldn't help but think back to my childhood and remember those were the same words my father used to describe us. They spoke Michif-French and made it a point to tell me not to mix it up with Michif-Cree. Throughout the whole interview they were in and out speaking Michif-French and English. I feel sad yet again, that I can't speak my language. I feel left out. I bought their Michif-French dictionary though and will learn baby words as I go forward."

October 25, 2016

Esther Monkman and Beatrice Chartrand were another connection made through MMF. I met them at their church in Winnipeg and learned that they too grew up in St. Laurent.

"That was a very nice interview experience. Every time I meet someone knew I learn something new. A new recipe, a new food term, something. I feel so blessed. I have to remember to touch base with Beatrice because she is going to give me some of her grandmother's recipes. They spoke about similar customs that I had heard from the St. Laurent Elders which makes sense as they too grew up in St. Laurent."

October 26, 2017

Métis Identity

Conducting a Master's project, deeply affected me, and ultimately further shaped my identity as a Métis woman, and for that I am extremely grateful. I am a different person now compared to when I started my research endeavor two years ago. Although my research was meant to uncover, revitalize, and celebrate Métis foods and food protocols, it was my hope that by interviewing Métis people, it would in some way help me resonate and develop my understanding of my Métis identity, and it did. The participants named in this research helped further mould my identity. It was the way I was embraced during my visits and interviews that allowed me to experience firsthand an extension of kindness that allowed me to feel connected to the larger Métis community. Kindness is the underbelly of Métis ethics and relationality towards one another. Despite being strangers at first, distant friends, or even acquaintances, knowledges were shared and done so in a manner with open arms.

Importantly, entering the field as a Métis woman who wanted to honour other Métis women for their roles in food work I was aware there may be challenges. FSR is holistic in nature and whose aim is to allow space for women to express their beliefs, circumstances, and struggles in a way that is unique to women (Fertaly, 2012), which is similar to Indigenous epistemologies. Both FSR and Métis epistemologies provided the groundwork for me to find my voice when it came time to speak out on behalf of other woman. I owed that much to my participants because kitchen work is hard work, honoring the women and grandmothers who have taken the time to cook, share, teach and nurture their families by way of their culinary contributions to family is worth advocating for. Women empower me.

She-Empowered

"I didn't go looking for the gap, the gap found me."

Crystal Cyr
(My wise sister, personal communication)

I am empowered standing in my womanhood. I had no idea that two years ago as I began a research project about Métis-ness and food I would be impacted on the level I have been.

"I hardly doubt it was a mistake that for the entirety of my life I have been surrounded by strong women, in my family, academia, and as of late, the participants of my master's research - Thank you Creator".

November 17, 2017

In Canada, Indigenous woman are standing in solidarity leading the conversations of family and home. Attention is directed towards contemporary urban disenfranchisement. For me, it begins in the kitchen, it's about listening to the stories of women because that's where bonds are formed, lessons are learned, and memories are made.

"Our individual efforts should not be considered insignificant. Each of us count. What we think and say and do matters – we will never really know how much, - or to how many"

Sandi McNabb
(Manitoba Farm Women's Network)

Métis Resistance

"We don't' have to apologize for being scholars"

Dr. Harold Cardinal
(Influential Aboriginal Leader, January 27, 1945 – June 3, 2005)

I could not have said it better myself. Thank you Dr. Cardinal.

During the analysis stage, I felt a deep sense of dread because for me, I knew that if I could not find a way to honour my participants, by name, then I was failing on all accounts as a scholar. I found myself caught between two worlds, the Indigenous and Western spheres that I read so much about. I could see their faces and hear their voices; my participants were honoured to share with me their stories, and I had to find a way to reciprocate the same honour.

"I have decided that no matter what it takes, I am going to stretch the limits of my capabilities in my writing because I know, deep down, my intentions are guided by what is considered to be the right thing to do".

April 19, 2017

It is the legacy of colonialism that makes us activists (Rise Up Conference, Larocque, 5 March, 2016). I did not ask to be an activist but I am obligated as a Métis scholar in the 21st century to question, critique, and address the prevailing sociopolitical systemic value systems. I will not be silenced. The work I do today means the less work our children have to do tomorrow. These are the teachings that I have learned as a result of the work that others before me have taught me. I was 20 years old when I began to (re)learn who I was as Métis person, 17 years later, I am the sum of a collective voice that groomed me to be rooted in a journey which seeks to affirm my identity and by extension, help those who are also searching, as I have been. As a feminist, and committing to give back to my community, as represented in both FSR and Métis frameworks, it is within these spaces and time that I am able to act against social injustices.

"I have learned that struggles and resiliency are critical aspects of Métis health and well-being. It is within these spaces that I grow and veer down the next path of my journey. I know that Métis knowledges confront Western philosophies and I embrace both, as long as no one is oppressed".

August 17, 2017

Lastly, Indigenous research is rigorous, thoughtful, and is subject to the highest standards. Today's generation are deconstructing the political constructs of Western philosophy and this is in part by research endeavors. We are educating ourselves and we are communicating with one another. In 2017, more than 430 Indigenous students graduated from the University of Manitoba, the accomplishment was ground breaking (U of M Today News, 2017, May 5). Métis people are shedding the layer of shame that has inflicted our people over the last century; and instead, we are choosing to collectively stand in solidarity with pride, consciously vocalizing, a readiness to (re)embrace cultural roots. Our presence in the political landscape will no longer be ignored. I believe that the Métis Nation is on precipice of greatness, once again.

Conclusion

Only now as I near the end of my Master's project, did I realize the profound impact that the selected frameworks I had chosen for my research would have on me both personally and academically. Essentially, my theoretical frameworks became a source from which I would continuously draw total accountability from. Metaphorically speaking, my frameworks became my protective shield, one from which I would position myself behind. I am a Métis scholar conducting Métis research, I stand alongside the Métis participants of my research. Additionally, I am a feminist and for me that means the work I do is for woman. Women are the life force behind centrality of family, as stated in the Métis philosophies of my framework, and therefore women deserve a platform of respect and equality.

By connecting with other Métis people, unassumingly, I was embraced. It was in this embracement that I felt connected to something bigger than myself – I was connecting to the Métis community. I was no longer amidst the sole boundaries of my own family; rather, I found a place I could call home. Fair skinned or dark skinned, we were connected through stories. I

found people, like myself, who shared similar upbringings and ate similar foods. I found people who were also seeking to better understand their Métisness because like me, growing up the subject was not discussed.

It was the direct connection I had with my participants that grounded my reasoning to embark upon a role of activism, albeit, resistance an extension of decolonization, throughout the research process. Relationality is not just a word, it's a promise. My participants shared with me, time and stories, and in return I would fulfill my promise. I go forward and share what I learn and recount from whom I have learned what from.

Power relations between Western and Indigenous epistemologies continue to at times, conflict. It is my hope that through collaborative negotiations a common ground can be found that will satisfy the desires of both epistemologies, if that is possible. In the meantime, novice scholars such as myself will continue to pursue paths that forward Métis philosophies. Métis-specific philosophies must make room for contemporary ways of knowing, in addition to ancestral knowledges, as advocated by Métis scholar Dr. Chantal Fiola during a book presentation. (Fiola, 2015). I agree with Dr. Fiola. I also feel that as a Métis person, we are not First Nation nor are we European, we are both because we are ancestrally connected and therefore our presence and way of life will include elements of valuable perspectives from both worldviews. It will be my journey moving forward to walk with humility as I further learn about Métis epistemologies, while at the same work towards building bridges based on reciprocity between dichotomies of Western and Indigenous philosophies within the academy.

My position as a Métis researcher allowed me to conduct research in a space, with other Métis people, which provided a wealth of knowledge on Métis foodways, stories and friendships. By maintaining a self-reflexive methodical approach, I was able to go back in my journal entries

and see how my research journey had unfolded. In this way, I was able to reflect how research affected me on a personal and academic level which has proven to be an emotional journey. It is my hope that other Métis scholars venture forward in similar pursuits to add to the Métis ways of knowing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Oral Consent Form: Interviews

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences

310 Human Ecology Bldg.
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 688-6560
Fax: (204) 474-7592
Email: umcyrm@myumanitoba.ca

Research Project Title: "Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols"

Principal Investigator: Monica Cyr, BSc HNS, Master's Student

Sponsor: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives/Manitoba Research Alliance

You are being asked to take part in a research project titled "Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols". This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail or clarification about something mentioned here, or if you would like more information, please feel free to ask. Dr. Joyce Slater will conduct the proposed action research study with the graduate student, M. Cyr, and partner organizations. Should you have any questions or require further information at any point in the study, please contact Dr. Joyce Slater at (204) 474-7422 or by email (Joyce.Slater@umanitoba.ca) or Monica Cyr at (204) 688-6560 or by email (umcyrm@myumanitoba.ca).

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this study is to examine and identify cultural food dishes and protocols with respect to Métis traditional food with the intent to honor the women who are the culinary vessels in the home and family.
Through this research project, we hope to answer the following questions:

1. What do urban and rural Métis people consider traditional foods/dishes?
2. How are these traditional foods linked to Métis identity?
3. What important cultural teachings/protocols/spirituality are associated with Métis traditional foods?
4. How can traditional foods be (re)learned, (re)membered and (re)vitalized in rural southern Manitoba including urban Winnipeg?

5. What are potential barriers/opportunities to accessing and consuming Métis traditional foods?

Study Procedure:

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a one-on-one interview. The interview will be no longer than 1 hour in length and will take place in your home or a community-friendly space of your choosing (or at the University of Manitoba). The purpose of the interview is to explore your experiences, opinions, and perceptions of Métis food and culture and its meaning/importance in your life and the broader community. You will be asked a series of questions about Métis foods and culture as well as a few demographic questions (e.g., age, gender; place of birth, etc.). The interview will be recorded to help with data analysis. After completion of the study, you will receive $25 as a token of appreciation for your time and effort.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Each participant has the option to keep their interview/information confidential or have their data attributed to them. Some quotes may be used, and these will be properly referenced. This is to give honor to the participant for sharing their knowledge. However, if you so choose, your confidentiality and privacy will be maintained by the use of numbers to code your responses, perceptions, opinions and ideas obtained from the interview. All electronic data will be encrypted using True Crypt Software (2016). All of the recorded data and consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room (418 Human Ecology Building). Data will be accessible only to the Graduate student (Monica Cyr) and her advisor Dr. Joyce Slater. The transcripts, audio files, and consent forms will be destroyed on or before May 31, 2018.

Risks and Benefits for Participants:

During the interview, the researcher will do their best to create and maintain a safe and relaxed environment. The researcher will explain that there are no right or wrong answers and that participants can refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. Participants will be reminded that their responses are confidential and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or consequence. All data will properly referenced and will be securely stored, as described above. As a result of these precautions, the overall level of risk associated with this study is considered to be minimal. Potential benefits of this study include creating a sense of critical awareness and pride in community history, food and culture.

Sharing Study Results:

Results will be interpreted with, and communicated to, community partners and participants via agreed-upon, culturally-appropriate methods or sharing event such as feasting that will take place in fall of 2017. A report will also be generated which can be shared with community leaders and organizations, as a means of stimulating action to incorporate results into relevant programs and projects. The research will also produce Journal articles and a student thesis. Published manuscripts, produced collaboratively by the investigators, and any partner organizations, will also be available to CCPA/MRA. The theoretical foundations for this study include: community development; equity and food security; acculturation and enculturation with respect to foodways; and social capital. Results may also be presented at appropriate academic conferences. If you would like to receive a copy of the results summary, please complete the section at the end of this consent form.

Signature of Consent:

Your signature on this form will show that you understand the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to serve as a participant. This does not waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. This study is being conducted by committee lead advisor Dr. Joyce Slater and Graduate student Monica Cyr of the Department of Human Nutritional Sciences at the University of Manitoba (204-474-7422 or Joyce.Slater@umanitoba.ca or 204-688-6560 or umcyrm@myumanitoba.ca).

This research study has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Board of Ethical Review at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 474-7122 or by e-mail (Margaret.Bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Short-Form Written Consent
(to be used with oral consent form)

Research Project Title: "Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols"

Principal Investigator: Dr. Joyce Slater, RD, PhD. and M. Cyr, BSc HNS, Graduate Student

Sponsor: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives/Manitoba Research Alliance

I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, and the possible risks and benefits have been explained to me in full. Any questions I have regarding my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction and I am aware of who I can contact should I have any further questions during the study. I recognize that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I do not have to answer any questions I prefer to omit. I am aware that I can withdraw from the study at any time should I no longer wish to participate and can do so without prejudice or consequence. My signature below indicates that I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

FOR A COPY OF THE STUDY RESULTS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

_____

Name (Please Print)

I would like to receive the results by (check one of the following):

☐ **E-mail**

_____

E-mail Address

☐ **Regular Post**

_____

Street Address

_____

City/Town

_____

Postal Code

APPENDIX B

Guiding Questions for Interviews

Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols

Introduction:

Hello everyone. Thank you for coming today and participating in this interview. My name is _____ and this is _____.

You are here today to take part in a research study titled, "Honoring the Grandmothers through (Re)membering, (Re)learning, & (Re)vitalizing Métis Traditional Foods and Protocols". The purpose of this study is to examine and identify cultural food dishes and protocols with respect to Métis traditional food with the intent to honor the women who are the culinary vessels in the home and family.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions I am going to ask you. If there is a particular question that you don't want to answer, that is completely fine. You are free to refrain from answering any questions you don't want to. Also, if you don't understand a question and require clarification or have questions for me, that's okay too.

I am recording our conversation so that I can listen to it after and better understand what you have told me. To help with recording, please try to speak clearly and loudly. All information you share today will be kept anonymous if you would like; otherwise, I would like to show honor to you and the women in your family by referencing your name during the data analysis and the write up of my thesis. If you so choose, your confidentiality and privacy will be maintained by the use of numbers to code your responses, perceptions, opinions and ideas obtained from the interview to through the use of random numerical code (instead of your name) and all data will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room at the University of Manitoba.

You will be provided with $25 as a small token of appreciation for your participation in this study.

Lastly, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without prejudice or consequence.

(continued on next page)…

Guiding Questions:

1. What are your most powerful food memories?
2. What is a family favorite food?
3. What would you consider a home-cooked meal?
4. What were your grandparents cooking?
5. Are these family foods still made and if so by whom?
6. Which female in your family represents a strong cook and why?
7. Can you describe the kind of food that was prepared for celebrations?
8. What would you consider a Métis food and why?
9. Do you have trouble accessing any food ingredients to make these dishes you are speaking of?
10. What are some cultural practices that are associated with the dishes you've mentioned?
11. How can children get more involved with the cultural traditions you speak of?
12. What would you like this research to do for the Métis community?
13. How can Métis food traditions and protocols remain intact?

At End of Session:

Thank you all for sharing your experiences today. Your comments and opinions are very valuable. Do you want to add to or clarify anything you have said? We hope to have the results available in a few months and we do plan to share the main findings through some sort of community-based event to be held in spring 2017. Also, if you want your own written copy of the results of this study, please be sure that you filled out the section at the bottom of the consent form, with your email or mailing address. Thank you!

Materials:

1. Data recorder(s)
2. Markers and pens
3. Journal
4. Consent forms
5. Receipt books

APPENDIX C

Demographic Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences

310 Human Ecology Bldg.
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 688-6560
Fax: (204) 474-7592
Email: umcyrm@myumanitoba.ca

Background Questionnaire

1. Are you Métis (circle one): Yes No
2. Your Age: _____
3. Where do you currently live: _____
4. Place of birth: _____
5. Gender: _____

Please Complete Box Below

For **Females** Only (circle one): Are you the primary cook in the family?	Yes No
For **Males** Only: List the primary female cooks in the family: Briefly state why you have chosen this female(s):	
Have you ever or do you ever attend events such as (circle all that apply):	Jigs Sweats Pow Wows Funerals/Weddings

	Family gatherings/celebrations Baptisms Sundance

I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, and the possible risks and benefits have been explained to me in full. Any questions I have regarding my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction and I am aware of who I can contact should I have any further questions during the study. I recognize that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I do not have to answer any questions I prefer to omit. I am aware that I can withdraw from the study at any time should I no longer wish to participate and can do so without prejudice or consequence. My signature below indicates that I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

APPENDIX D

Research Ethics & Compliance Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Research Ethics and Compliance
Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Fax +204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

June 3, 2016

TO: **Monica Cyr** **(Supervisor: Joyce Slater)**
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Maureen Flaherty, Acting Chair**
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2016:042 (HS19712)**
"Honoring the Grandmothers Through (Re)membering, (Re)learning & (Re)vitalizing Traditional Metis Foods and Protocols"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). **This approval is valid for one year only and will expire on June 3, 2017.**

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- **If you have funds pending human ethics approval, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325) a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project Number: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0)**

- **if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.**

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans.*

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human_ethics_REB_forms_guidelines.html) **in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**