

**Towards a Definition of a Healthy Urban Aboriginal Community in Winnipeg:
Urban Aboriginal Perspectives**

by

Devin Dietrich

A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of City Planning

Department of City Planning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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Abstract:

This practicum explored the experiential perspectives of a small group of Aboriginal Winnipeggers on what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. The goal was to discover the potential links between these perspectives and the healthy communities movement as described in the planning literature. The research was designed to apply an Indigenous research methodology, building relationships with the participants through undertaking a talking circle and employing a phenomenological approach to identify their lived experiences. Participants were asked to relate their experiences of a healthy community in Winnipeg. From this, six main themes were identified: Aboriginality – what it means to be Aboriginal; community descriptions; descriptions of dysfunction; the idea of giving back to the community; healthy communities; and urban planning concepts.

The Aboriginal participants in this study clearly articulated many concepts of a healthy community, as well as a keen understanding of the planning issues that their community faces. Combine this with the desire to give back to the community, expressed by the participants, and it is clear Aboriginal community in Winnipeg is ready to work with planners to develop a healthy community.

There were many similarities as well as some differences in the priorities expressed by the participants in comparison to the healthy communities movement. Eleven practical ideas were proposed that could potentially lead to and maintain a healthy Aboriginal community in Winnipeg based on the lived experiences of the participants.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

Health and well-being in the Aboriginal population in Canada have become important topics for researchers. Aboriginal conceptions of what health is and what makes a population healthy are different from mainstream society (Maher, 1999; the Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2003; Bartlett, 2005). However, there is very little research (the Canadian Population Health Initiative piece notwithstanding) that has been undertaken on the concept of being urban and Aboriginal and what that means to Aboriginal perceptions of community health and well-being. Evelyn Peters (1996; 2002) has done some work on the subject of what it means to be urban and Aboriginal in Canada and my research will build on her work and the work of many others in the urban Aboriginal field.

My research will focus on Aboriginal conceptions of a healthy community in Winnipeg. For the purposes of the research undertaken, the concept of community health is intended to be expressed as a holistic vision of health. This means that it includes the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health of the community; it is not solely focussed on the bio-physical health of individuals but the health of the community as a whole. This is consistent with Aboriginal conceptions of health and wellness which are sometimes expressed using the 'medicine wheel' (Bartlett, 2003; Quantz, 2001; McCormick, 1996). The holistic view of health and the medicine wheel are explored in greater detail in the literature review section of this research project.

This leads into the next item, the Aboriginal worldview. The term ‘Aboriginal worldview’ has been used many times in this research project and it is important to define it here and discuss how it differs from Western worldviews. In general, an Aboriginal worldview values harmony with nature, the importance of the community over the individual, and a time orientation that privileges the past; compared to a Western worldview that values the goals of the individual, conquering nature, and the importance of the future (Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2002; Wolfe, 1989). With this in mind it is important to understand that Aboriginal peoples are diverse and that this worldview may not be relevant for all Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Wuttunee, 2000).

I feel I must stress the importance of the diversity of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. Too often researchers have made the mistaken assumption that Aboriginal peoples in Canada are a homogenous group. The fact of the matter is that even beyond the three specific classifications that the federal government of Canada uses to describe Aboriginal peoples living in Canada: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit; there is considerable diversity within these groups based on geographical location, language and traditional practices (Dickason, 2002).

1.2 Project Statement

I undertook this research because there is a need for greater understanding of what forms urban Aboriginal communities can take and what forms are the healthiest. More importantly, it is imperative that Aboriginal experiences of what makes a healthy community be ascertained. Although this research will not go into great detail into the

diversity and complexity of urban Aboriginal communities in large urban settings, it can potentially add to the general knowledge available in this area.

This is an important topic for two reasons: first, Aboriginal peoples are younger and growing at a faster rate than non-Aboriginal population groups in many major urban centres, including Winnipeg. This leads to the logical conclusion that they will have an increasingly important role to play in the future of this city. Second, understanding Aboriginal experiences on the health of their urban communities could be the first step toward successfully planning healthy communities with them.

The key questions that this research will explore are:

- *How do urban Aboriginal people of Metis and First Nations descent in Winnipeg define their urban community?*
- *What are the features or themes that are consistent among the diverse Aboriginal peoples living in Winnipeg that are imperative for a healthy community?*
- *How can Aboriginal experiences of community health inform planning theory, and what is the potential for synergies between these perspectives and the 'healthy communities movement?'*

When these questions are answered it may be possible to use this knowledge to assist planners in moving beyond mainstream Western rationalist definitions of urban Aboriginal communities. Depending on the results, it may also be possible to use this knowledge to help inform future urban Aboriginal planning needs for Winnipeg's

Aboriginal communities. In addition, the planning knowledge gained may be in some part transferable to other large urban centres in Canada that are experiencing significant increases in Aboriginal peoples residing within their borders.

1.3 Significance of Proposed Research

This project has the potential to contribute to the scholarly planning knowledge.

Although there is considerable literature on the healthy communities concept (Hancock and Duhl, 1988; Boothroyd and Eberle, 1990; Witty, 1998; Fitzpatrick and LaGory, 2000; de Leeuw, 2001; Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2006), there is little with a specific focus on urban Aboriginal communities. The potential knowledge that can be gained may be very useful considering the growing importance of Aboriginal peoples as key members of Canadian cities in the present and especially for the future. Keeping with the principles of community planning, it is important for urban Aboriginal peoples to define, from their experiences, what they envision as their healthy urban community so that this vision can help to motivate and guide the community-building process.

From a professional practice context, this vision of a healthy community can help guide planners to shape long-term planning efforts with urban Aboriginal peoples.

This project has the potential to make it clear to all planners that traditional rational-comprehensive planning is not a successful paradigm for planning with Aboriginal peoples in general and in the urban setting in particular. By conceptualizing the idea of a healthy urban Aboriginal community next to the 'Healthy Communities Movement' there

is the potential that many gains can be made and that both ideas can be informed by the other to the benefit of communities across Canada and to the benefit of the planning profession.

This research may also, through the use of the talking circle method, provide evidence of a more successful communication method for planning with Aboriginal peoples in urban and rural settings in Canada. This talking circle method can potentially be of use to planners in future research who wish to be sensitive to Aboriginal cultural norms when attempting to discover Aboriginal perspectives on a specific issue. Similarly, this research will help to determine the appropriateness of phenomenology as a research strategy when trying to understand Aboriginal people's experiences of planning concepts. Phenomenology is a research method that attempts to understand the lived experience of an individual (Morse and Field, 1995). The ultimate purpose of phenomenology according to Morse and Field (1995, pp. 22) is "the study of phenomenon and the appearance of things, and the discovery of their essence." Phenomenology guided this research in that I was attempting to understand the lived experience of the urban Aboriginal individuals that participated in this study. With this in mind I chose research methods, such as the talking circle and semi-structured interviews, which allowed the participants to tell their story from their experience. A detailed description of phenomenology occurs in the research methods chapter (chapter 2) of this research project.

1.4 Biases and Limitations

There is potential that my being Aboriginal may in some part lead to bias on my part in the analysis of this research. My being Aboriginal may also be a strength and all researchers have bias and I am acknowledging that here. I have attempted to be impartial and believe that this has not been an issue.

It is possible that I may know one or more of the potential participants in the study and that this may constitute a bias. It is also possible that their participation in the research may be affected by an existing relationship with me. My role will be to facilitate discussion, not to contribute to the perspectives that will be gained. In this sense there should be no problems with bias associated with an existing relationship with any of the respondents. However, if this concern arises it may be necessary for me to hire an outside facilitator to do the data collection portion of this study.

The first and most important limitation of this study is related to diversity. The urban setting changes the relative level of diversity within a specific Aboriginal population. On a reserve it can be expected that the population will be relatively homogeneous in cultural upbringing and particular First Nation of origin. However, a city like Winnipeg attracts and is home to Aboriginal peoples from all over Canada, but more numerous from the prairie provinces and northwest Ontario. This leads to a significantly diverse group of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, categorized into three specific groups, Inuit, First Nation, and Metis. They can also come from many different geographical areas and cultural

groups. This makes it difficult and unwise to apply a comprehensive research ethic and agenda intended to work for all groups. For instance, research protocols developed to be sensitive to First Nations cultural norms and needs may not be transferable to a Metis person living in Winnipeg. The best strategy may be to be respectful of protocols that are developed by using them properly, but to not be close-minded to other strategies that may come up during the research process.

This study is limited in its transferability to the whole urban Aboriginal population of Winnipeg. The size of my study group was limited to six participants due to the availability of the participants and the relative scope of this research as a Masters practicum. This means that I will not be making any sweeping conclusions on what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community, but I will be documenting the experiences of these particular urban Aboriginal individuals. Their experiences are valid and valuable and the interviews produced plenty of data for the purposes of this study, but it must be noted that the sample size is small. This sets up an opportunity for further research on this topic that may look at this topic with a larger sample size.

Also with regard to the sample population, it may not be representative of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. The participants all came from the Aboriginal Relations Council (ARC) at the United Way of Winnipeg. This group of Aboriginal Winnipeggers are all highly educated middle class professionals with a level of experience in business, administration, healthcare, and the education system than may not be typical of the average Aboriginal person living in Winnipeg.

One potential limitation of this study is that this research could be too general in nature to be of much use in action. Boothroyd and Eberle (1990) make the claim that concepts such as health and community have so many meanings that their use can lead to inaction. They cite sustainable development as an example of another term that is too general and can lead to inaction. My hope is that by capturing a snapshot of a healthy urban Aboriginal community, this research can be used as a tool to aim for and/or direct future community development actions or lead to further research on this subject.

Another limitation is the fact that youth are underrepresented in this study given the younger demographic of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. This means that although the ARC has a youth member of the council, the voice of youth will be somewhat underrepresented in this study. Urban Aboriginal youth perspectives' on the health of their community is an area that definitely has potential as a topic in need of future research.

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 outlines which research methods were chosen for this study and why they were chosen. The first section explains the demographic and cultural requirements of the participants necessary for this study. The Aboriginal Relations Council of the United Way of Winnipeg will be introduced as an urban Aboriginal group of key informants. The chapter also describes the reason qualitative research was selected for the study, introduces the research instruments and the process of data analysis.

Chapter 3, the Literature Review, describes concepts of community and health, what it means to be urban and Aboriginal, Canadian conceptions of Aboriginal peoples, demographic data describing the Aboriginal population in Canada and Winnipeg in particular, previous work from this field including the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and the Canadian Population Health Initiative's Urban Aboriginal Communities Reports. Planning theory as it relates to urban Aboriginal peoples, and the healthy communities movement is also reviewed.

Chapter 4, Research and Analysis, describes the process of the research collection and analysis. In particular, the data description section of this chapter organizes the data collected during the interview phase of the research into six key themes that are described in great detail, including some minor narrative designed to help the reader understand the experiential context of the data. A graphic representation of the themes is displayed in Table 1, following this discussion section.

The conclusion, Chapter 5, reviews and responds to the research questions that were posed for this research project. The first section describes the myriad of ways that the urban Aboriginal participants in this study define their community. The second question is tackled in the next section with eleven practical ideas sifted from the participant's experiences put forth as key ideas. These practical ideas are put forth as having the potential to lead to or maintain a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. The third question is split into two distinct areas, lessons for planners and linkages with the healthy communities movement. This is followed by a description of any limitations and

biases that were unforeseen. The last section of chapter 5 deals with potential directions for future research in this field.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

2.1 Introduction

Participants in this research were asked to provide their experiences on what community means to them and what makes it healthy. In keeping with the research ethics of Aboriginal peoples outlined by Brant Castellano (2004), participation in this study was entirely voluntary and the findings of this study will be shared wholly with the research participants and the larger urban Aboriginal community¹. The participants were given the opportunity to view the themes that were generated from their experiences and to let this researcher know if their thoughts were accurately portrayed. Consent forms were handed out and completed before the research was undertaken. The identities of the respondents have been kept confidential.

The research required that a sample study be undertaken. There was a need to study Aboriginal individuals that have come from diverse backgrounds and who currently reside in Winnipeg. For simplicity, those chosen were of Metis or First Nations backgrounds. Although the Inuit people are an important group of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, they are relatively few in number in urban centres and Winnipeg is no exception (Peters, 1996; United Way, 2004). Their numbers are low enough to make it probable that a large enough sample would not be available for this study. For this reason they were not included in this study.

¹ The dissemination of this research to the greater Aboriginal community in Winnipeg will be determined through consultation with the Aboriginal Relations Council.

The second criterion that was considered in the sample for this study was gender. It was my desire to have a fairly even representation of both male and female participants in the research process. However, the resulting participation was three quarters female and one quarter male. It was assumed that both men and women have different perspectives on the issue of healthy communities and that both perspectives were valid.

Fortuitously, this research coincided with the forming of the Aboriginal Relations Council (ARC) at the United Way of Winnipeg. The Aboriginal Relations Council is the newly formed (summer of 2005) governing body for the United Way's Aboriginal Relations Strategy aimed at connecting the United Way with Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. The members of the ARC, a group of key members of the Aboriginal community, were chosen for their interest and dedication to the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. They represent a varied demographic with balance in ages and gender, as well as being from many different disciplines. The ARC's purpose according to the United Way (2007) is:

“The Aboriginal Relations Council leads a strategy that contains, at its core, three pillars—building and enhancing knowledge, building and enhancing relationships, and building and enhancing capacity within and between the Aboriginal Community and Winnipeg's community at large.”

I have repeatedly heard it expressed in my contact with members of the Aboriginal community that Aboriginal people have been “studied to death.” This led to some concern that there would be some sensitivity issues by the researcher and to expect suspicion by the respondents of additional research being undertaken with them. I believe that because of my Aboriginal heritage and my connections in the community and

because this research was aimed at eliciting their experiences of a healthy community that there were no issues with this concern. The nature of the Aboriginal Relations Council as a group of leaders in the Aboriginal community, led to the conclusion that they are not a vulnerable group of respondents. By not vulnerable I mean that their level of experience and education makes them more prepared and able to understand the purposes of the research being undertaken and their role in it. The finding of this research can possibly benefit the Aboriginal Relations Council in their work. In fact, they expressed interest in this work, hoping that it may inform their work for years to come.

I have chosen to use the qualitative research tradition of inquiry for this research because it is the most appropriate strategy to gain the insight I was seeking. Creswell (1994, pp. 1-2) states that the qualitative research tradition is:

“defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.”

In the context of this research, the problem is the need to document experiences that may lead to an understanding of what factors contribute to and define a healthy Winnipeg Aboriginal community from the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples. A complex holistic picture of a healthy urban Aboriginal community was formed from the literature and the perspectives of the research participants by reporting their experiences in great detail. The talking circle method that occurred at the United Way of Winnipeg was held during a scheduled meeting of the Aboriginal Relations Council. I met the members of the council in locations chosen by them so as to meet them on their own ground so as to make it as natural a setting as possible for them. The interview portion of this research

occurred in various locations to accommodate each of the participants. This was typically a location of their choosing or at their preference a neutral location for the purposes of maintaining their confidentiality. The next section will explore phenomenology as a research method and how it guided this research

2.2 Phenomenology

This project attempted to apply phenomenology, the study of lived experience during the research phase undertaken. This means that I aimed to discover the participants lived experience as it relates to their knowledge of their heritage and their community.

Creswell (1994) claims, in his book on research design, that this is the appropriate method of inquiry when engaged in exploratory research as is the case with this research.

Phenomenology has its origins in philosophy (Creswell, 1994; Morse & Field, 1995; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005) coming from the works of Husserl and Heidegger who were attempting to understand the nature of lived experience. Creswell (1994, pp. 12) defines phenomenology as a research process: “human experiences are examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied.”

Phenomenology is aimed at gathering a research subjects’ moral and ethical views that are not normally articulated to the world, in other words, the way they experience a thing not what they think about it (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) suggest that the aim of phenomenology is to understand the meaning of the experience of a person and to be able to describe that experience. Van Manen (1990, pp. 36) claims that

the aim of phenomenology is to “transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence.” With this in mind I told each participant during their interview that I was interested in their lived experiences rather than their intellectual ideas. Therefore I asked them to respond to each question from their own experiences and to refrain from telling me what they thought about the phenomenon in question.

It is important to point out that when using phenomenology, individual experiences are accepted as knowledge and are taken from the perspective of the research subject (Morse & Field, 1995; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Researchers using phenomenology should not bring any preconceived notions, expectations, theories, or frameworks into the research process (Creswell, 1994; Morse & Field, 1995). In the research and analysis of this study I did not bring any specific preconceived ideas of where the research direction was going to go. I cannot make the claim that there were no preconceived expectations or theories floating around in my consciousness but as much as humanly possible I attempted to not bring these into this work.

Another important facet of working with phenomenology is that “the goal of phenomenology is to describe accurately the experience of the phenomenon under study and not to develop theories or models” (Morse & Field, 1995, pp. 23). For the record, the phenomenon under study in this research is the experience of a healthy community by the urban Aboriginal participants. During the analysis portion of this research I attempted to

follow this goal by providing a detailed description of the lived experience of the participants represented by their responses in the interviews that were undertaken.

2.3 Literature Review

In addition to the research undertaken with human subjects, it was necessary to research the urban Aboriginal context in Canada and Winnipeg in particular and the healthy communities concept from the planning literature. This literature review section helps to set the stage for the perspectives of the respondents of this research. It also provides a theoretical and practical basis for this research and offers opportunities for comparison although it should not be used to frame the research questions in qualitative research (Creswell, 1994). This section explores concepts around what it means to be urban and Aboriginal; conceptions of community; the Aboriginal worldview and conceptions of health; examples of previous work on this topic; and the healthy communities movement.

2.4 Participant Demographics

I administered a small questionnaire to each individual participant containing simple demographic questions to determine the nature of the sample chosen. Questions around the age, gender, community of origin, and other relevant demographic categories were included on the questionnaire. This questionnaire was necessary to provide opportunities to analyse data gathered and make comparisons between demographic groups. Identities were kept confidential as respondents were not required to put their names on the questionnaire. (*See Appendix A for the Demographic Questionnaire*)

2.5 Indigenous Methodology

Steinhauer (2002, pp 72) cites Martin from an unpublished manuscript identifying several main theorized features of an Indigenous research methodology:

- “Recognition of our world views, our knowledge and our realities as distinct and vital to our existence and survival. This serves as a research framework;
- Honouring Aboriginal social norms as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal people in our own lands and when in the lands of other Aboriginal people;
- Emphasizing the social, historical and political contexts which shape our experiences, our lives, positions and futures;
- Privileging the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands;
- Identifying and redressing issues of importance to us.”

With regards to the research undertaken here, I believe that trying to understand what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community is an attempt to identify and address a subject that may be important to the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. Also, I attempted to ascertain Aboriginal perspectives on this topic and therefore privileging the experiences of Aboriginal peoples and recognize the importance of an Indigenous worldview for the Aboriginal community. Also, the talking circle approach that was undertaken in a portion of the research is respectful and consistent with Aboriginal traditions of communication and cultural values.

Confirming the accuracy of the interpretation is also necessary when doing research with Aboriginal peoples. The necessity of this is because Aboriginal communities have become disenchanted with research in their communities. Research as it had been undertaken in the past has gained a bad reputation among Aboriginal peoples. Various concerns have been expressed. Many researchers have come into their communities, done research, leave, and never come back to share the results of the study with the community, never mind confirming their accuracy (Steinhauer, 2002; Brant Castellano, 2004). There have even been instances where outcomes end up being harmful to the community under study (Brant Castellano, 2004). The interpretation of this type of research is often put forth through the filter of the western scientific paradigm and much of the value of the Aboriginal perspective is lost (Steinhauer, 2002). Aboriginal people have also become concerned that their intellectual property rights to their Indigenous traditional knowledge are being misappropriated. This traditional knowledge has often been misused for the economic gain of non-Indigenous peoples (Brascoupe and Endeman, 1999). To alleviate these concerns the process of 'following-up' with the research participants is described in detail in section 2.9

2.6 Talking Circle

One of the methods of gathering information, the talking circle, was chosen to respect Aboriginal traditions of communication. I chose to undertake a talking circle as a method for two reasons. First and foremost it was an opportunity to build trust and a relationship with the participants of the study. Secondly, it afforded me and the participants the opportunity to start thinking about experiences of a healthy community. This method is

generally accepted as an appropriate method of inquiry when doing research with Aboriginal peoples (Running Wolf and Rickard, 2003).

This Talking Circle method is described by Bartlett (2005) in her study of the health and well-being of Metis women and by Paulette Running Wolf and Julie Rickard (2003) in their discussion of its applicability as a research and therapeutic tool. This method according to Bartlett (2005, pp 23) uses “symbolism grounded in Aboriginal culture.” The process involves holding a symbolic object when speaking; in the case of Dr. Bartlett’s research, a rock. Participants are then asked if it would be all right if they were to hold the object while they speak. The object, traditionally, would have a connection to the land and be selected through traditional means that I, unfortunately, due to a lack of literature on the subject, do not have knowledge of how to do (Wuttunee, 2006). Sometimes a “talking stick” is used, but the important idea is that the object gives the speaker the floor. For the purposes of this study, I used an eagle feather that has been used in other talking circles with the permission of the possessor of the feather. Returning to the process; the facilitator poses a question to the group, asks for a volunteer and then passes the volunteer the symbolic object. The volunteer then has the floor and expects to have their say without interruption until the object passes on. When the object passes on, the new speaker is reminded of the original question and is asked to answer this question and not to respond to the previous respondent’s commentary. Respondents may pass if they wish and this is acceptable and will not be treated negatively. This process ensures that everyone gets the opportunity to have their say if they wish to speak and the process ensures that what they have to say is respected.

One talking circle was undertaken with the ARC to develop a relationship with the participants and to start everyone thinking about their experiences of a healthy urban Aboriginal community. It was also hoped that the discussion from the talking circle would lead to direction in determining what additional key questions needed to be posed in the interview phase of this research. There were four members of the council that attended the talking circle. I acted as the facilitator for the talking circle. Keeping with tradition I prepared a tobacco bundle that was presented to the chair as an offering for their help with this research project. The Chair accepted and we got started with the meeting. An agenda outlining the purpose of the talking circle was provided and a short presentation introduced the research topic to the ARC. I chose an eagle feather that had been used in previous talking circles with the permission of the person that this feather belonged to. I explained this to the participants at the time and asked if there were any objections to the feather as the object to be passed around as well as whether there were any objections to the talking circle process that I outlined for them (based on the following rules), there were no objections.

Ground rules for the talking circle were synthesized from the example set by Bartlett (2005, 2003), Hartmann (2005) and Sakschools (2005) and were as follows:

1. The person who has the object has the floor and should not be interrupted.
2. The respondent may pass if they wish and this is considered acceptable and will not be treated negatively. They will be given the opportunity to answer later if they desire.

3. The respondent should comment on the question at hand and not react to previous responses. If it is absolutely necessary to respond to a previous comment it should be made in a positive manner and be aimed at the question at hand. This rule is in place to prevent the talking circle from becoming a focus group with argument going back and forth among the participants. Each person's view is valid and should be taken as so.
4. Respondents may ask the researcher to repeat the question at any time and the researcher should repeat the question occasionally in any case in order to keep answers directed at the question.
5. What is said in the circle stays in the circle. This means that confidentiality is assured and comments cannot be attributed nor repeated verbatim in this research. The general ideas that come out of the talking circle can be used to formulate the questions for the interview phase and help with the analysis of that data.

Each respondent was given an opportunity to respond to the question as the object went around the circle. When finished, I attempted to the best of my ability, to summarize what was said. Then the next question was posed and the process started anew. (*For talking circle questions see Appendix B*)

2.7 Semi-Structured Interviews

General insights about a healthy urban Aboriginal community were gained through the talking circle process., There was a need, however, to gain more in-depth insight into the participant's experiences of a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. With

this in mind, a series of semi-structured interviews were undertaken with six individual members of the ARC who chose to participate further in the study.

The intention of these interviews was to elicit the lived experience of the participants as it related to their experiences of a healthy community. The perspectives gained from the talking circle process, in combination with the general research questions that this study aims to answer, were used to design the questions that were posed in the interview portion of this research (for the questions that were used in the interviews see Appendix C). I stressed to the participants, during the introduction to the interview, that it was their experience that I was after rather than their opinions on the various subjects that came up.

Morse and Field (1995) explain some general rules to conducting a good interview. They suggest that it is important for the participant to be comfortable and to therefore allow them to choose the location, provide comfortable seating, and to engage in small talk at the beginning to relieve tension. They also suggest that consent forms and demographic surveys should be undertaken before starting the interview process. Lastly, Morse and Field explain that it is important to allow the respondent to guide the interview and not to interfere with this by following a rigid set of questions. During the data collection phase of this research I gave the participants the option of doing the interview in a place of their choosing or at a neutral site on University of Manitoba grounds. The demographic survey was undertaken at the end of the Talking circle process or at the beginning of the interview process immediately following the signing of the consent form. I made an effort to engage each participant although there was not any apparent tension involved in

any of the participant's participation. Lastly, the interview questions that were used were broad and intended to allow the participant to take the interview in the direction of their experiences.

The semi-structured interview technique was the most appropriate to undertake for this research. This is because the semi-structured interview is most appropriate to use when the researcher cannot predict the answers that the respondent will give but knows the questions that should be posed (Morse & Field, 1995). In this case, I prepared a set of open-ended questions that the participant could take wherever they chose. Morse and Field (1995) suggest that a series of general questions, some of which can serve as prompts, can be ideal for eliciting a participant's experience on a personal phenomenon. Following the principles laid out by Morse and Field (1995), I broke the interview into two general question areas: a question aimed at discovering the participant's experience of community with the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg; and a question designed to elicit their experiences of a healthy community. Included within these two general questions with some prompts to guide them if they were having difficulty engaging this topic and some key points that I was listening for. These key points were not intended to be presupposed ideas about a participant's responses but as general ideas related to the question at hand.

2.8 Data Analysis

Creswell (1994) makes the claim that skilled qualitative researchers engage in several simultaneous activities while analysing qualitative data while newer researchers may find it helpful to look at these activities as steps. They collect it, categorize it, form a big picture view of it, and write the analysis. Morse and Field (1995) suggest that qualitative analysis has four parts that are essential: comprehending; synthesizing; theorizing; and re-contextualizing. They suggest that comprehension has occurred when (pp. 126-27) “the researcher has enough data to be able to write a complete, detailed, coherent, and rich description.” Morse and Field (1995) explain synthesizing of the data as forming it into “aggregate stories.” This is not unlike Creswell’s categorizing stage. The purpose of phenomenology is to document lived experience and not to develop theory. Therefore, I have not developed theory that would occur during the theorizing and re-contextualizing stages outlined by Morse and Field. For the purposes of this research, I collected the perspectives of the respondents through interviews. I also took the data and formed categories or themes in order to reduce the amount of data to a manageable amount. From this process of reduction or de-contextualization (Creswell, 1994; Morse & Field, 1995) it was necessary to form a larger picture or story from the data explaining the collective perspective of the study group. I grouped the data into eleven categories which I did not try to predict and which eventually became six general themes. Creswell also suggests that displaying the coded data in matrices gives a systematic visual representation of the data. A detailed description of all of the themes is presented in chapter 4, where I clarify what came out of this research. I also provide a graphic representation of the final general theme areas that emerged which can be viewed as

Table 1, at the end of the data discussion section in Chapter 4. This can potentially be used as a starting point to gaining an understanding of some of the ideas of a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

2.9 Follow-up Session:

After the research process was completed, and the results were categorized and presented in themes, it was necessary and desirable to check with the participants to ensure accurate portrayal of their experiences. Each member of the Council that participated in the interview process was afforded an opportunity to comment on the interpretation of the data. Each participant was provided with a copy of the data description, highlighted their contributions in their copy and asked them to comment on their contributions only. They were asked to comment on whether or not their experiences were taken in the correct context and accurately portrayed. This allowed respondents the opportunity to make any concerns known and to point out misunderstandings between what was said and how it was interpreted. I reserved the right to final editorial opinion for the discussion of the research implications because this is where I attempted to analyse the participant's experiences to try and draw some conclusions on what a healthy urban Aboriginal community may look like for them. Additionally, this may allow me to determine how planners can use this information to plan better communities with Aboriginal Winnipeggers.

It is my intention that the results of this study accurately represent the perspectives of the participants and that the results can be used by the urban Aboriginal community to assist

in the development of healthy communities. With this in mind it is intended that I meet with the ARC after the completion of this research to explore the possibilities of dissemination of the findings to the greater Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. The participants, and the council members that did not participate, will be asked about their ideas for the best way to share the findings of this study with the Aboriginal community.

2.10 Summary

This research methods chapter has explained the process that this research project followed and why this process was chosen.

Proper ethical guidelines were followed for this research and documentation of such is available in Appendix D. How the participants for this study were chosen and the subsequent relationship with the Aboriginal Relation Council from the United Way of Winnipeg is explored. It was important to have participants that were First Nations and Métis; as well as male and female.

This research project followed was qualitative in nature. The research followed the phenomenological method of inquiry and therefore it was stressed to the participants that it was their experiences of a healthy urban Aboriginal community rather than their intellectual opinions on the subject that was to be gathered.

The purpose and general strategy of the literature review for this research project was explained. The purpose of the demographic survey for this research was outlined. An

Indigenous research methodology as found in the literature was undertaken with the intention to be sensitive to an Aboriginal worldview. The purpose of the talking circle was explained, outlining the need to build a relationship with and start a dialogue with the research participants. The use of semi-structured interviews as an exploratory tool to elicit lived experience was explored. The appropriate method to analyse the data given the phenomenological design of this research and was explored and this explained the necessity of allowing the participants to see the themes generated and let this researcher know if their experiences had been taken out of context. This now leads into Chapter 3, the literature review where various topics related to this research are explored.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

An extensive literature review is necessary in order to gain a general picture of the urban Aboriginal experience and its relation to health. It is also necessary to determine what the gaps are in the literature on the topic of healthy urban Aboriginal communities. With this in mind this literature review covers several key topic areas.

First, definitions of community are drawn from the literature. Following this, perspectives from the literature on what it means to be urban and Aboriginal are examined. This sets the context for my chosen subject, the urban Aboriginal population group in Canada and specifically in Winnipeg. Next the literature is reviewed for perceptions and images of the nature of Aboriginal peoples as they relate to urban areas. This section breaks down mainstream society's social construction of Aboriginal peoples as non-urban in nature. This leads into the next topic area: a demographic breakdown of Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. This section helps to legitimize the claim that urban Aboriginal peoples are a growing voice and a key piece of the future in Winnipeg.

It is important to look at work that has been done to improve the position of Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. Specifically, two pieces of community consultation relate to the health of the urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. First, the "Urban Aboriginal Strategy" produced by the Province of Manitoba in the late 1990's, is important to explain some key concepts around Aboriginal concepts of health. I examine these concepts, concentrating on the medicine wheel and Aboriginal people's holistic view of

health and well-being. The second community consultation piece, “Urban Aboriginal Communities: Proceedings of the Roundtable on the Health of Urban Aboriginal People,” which was put together by the Canadian Population Health Initiative in 2003 is explored in the next section. This piece represents the opinion of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg on the health of their community.

The healthy communities movement (HCM) is the topic of the next section. The HCM was explored for potential synergies with Aboriginal concepts of community health and well-being. The holistic nature of the HCM is of special interest because of its potential links with the Aboriginal worldview.

The next section of the literature review examines theory from the planning literature as it relates to Aboriginal peoples. First, Aboriginal peoples and their experience of planning their own communities is examined. The dominant planning paradigm of the 20th century, rationale comprehensive, is explored to measure its compatibility with the Aboriginal worldview. Following this, arguments for a new planning paradigm of Friedman and Sandercock on mutual learning and diversity, respectively, are reviewed. I also outline the Integral approach and explore its appropriateness for planning with Aboriginal communities.

3.2 Concepts of Community

Community is a word that has many different meanings to different peoples and cultures. Sandercock (1998) argues that community means different things in different contexts and the meaning of community is often assumed and taken for granted. She further argues that the concept of community is the basis for many conflicts because it breeds an 'us against them' mentality. Boothroyd and Eberle (1990) define community from a broad and narrow perspective. Broadly they define community as "a collection of people who have something in common" (pp. 6). They describe community in a more narrow way as "a group of people tied together by love and personal knowledge" (pp 6). The Oxford dictionary (Fowler, 1967, pp. 233) defines community as "the people living in one place, district or country." As is clear from these examples, community can have many different definitions or meanings at the same time. For the purposes of this research and until the participants of this research define their own community, I shall define the urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg as all Aboriginal peoples living within the borders of the city of Winnipeg. In an urban Aboriginal context it has been difficult to find a definition for community. This may be because of the diversity of Aboriginal peoples in urban settings, or as Wuttunee (2004, pp. 53) states when writing about the Winnipeg Aboriginal community, "making community meaningful in a setting that is usually anonymous is a daunting task."

3.3 Urban and Aboriginal?

Exploring what concepts there are among urban Aboriginal peoples about their community has never been more important than now. Peters (2002) argues that urban Aboriginal peoples need a collective cultural identity and that community-building is essential to accomplishing this. However, it is important to note here that as Walker (2003) points out, Aboriginal peoples are much more diverse in an urban setting than on reserves or in rural settings. Any potential cultural identity that may be representative of all urban Aboriginal peoples needs to take this into account and not be too singular in its orientation. Peters (2002, pp. 64) argues that “community building can contribute to economic development and begin to address the pressing poverty of many Aboriginal peoples living in cities.” She goes on to claim that Aboriginal urban communities will need to be adaptable to a diversity of Aboriginal cultures, while at the same time responsive to the ties people have with their communities of origin. Peters (2002) also points out that economic disparity and marginalization work counter to successful community-building. Therefore, there is a need to provide resources to Aboriginal peoples in cities for community-building. The question that remains however is, who or what will provide these resources and how will they be provided? Defining what a healthy urban Aboriginal community looks like would be the first logical step toward successful community building.

Urban Aboriginal people often go unrepresented in political arenas. When it comes to discussion about current issues like self-government, urban Aboriginal peoples are often not represented and are certainly not represented in the same manner as those that live on

reserves (Peters, 1992). Examples of organizations that may represent Aboriginal peoples in urban areas in the political arena are the Manitoba Metis Federation which advocates for Metis rights in Manitoba and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, which represents Aboriginal Winnipeggers (Wuttunee, 2004; 2000). The diversity of Aboriginal peoples who come from many different home communities makes the prospect of self-government in the urban area a significantly more difficult proposition. Self-government is an entire topic on its own and it will not be discussed in any great detail in this work.

3.4 Images of Urban Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal peoples have traditionally been viewed by mainstream Western society as non-urban and their traditional culture has been unwelcome historically in cities. Letkemann (2004) points out that Aboriginal peoples have historically been forced onto reserves in the rural landscape, often on land that has little value, where they were supposed to be assimilated into Canadian society. Peters (1996) explored four 'white' writers' views on Aboriginal peoples in urban areas and she concluded that, at least from their perspective, being Aboriginal and urban are contradictory. She goes on to further claim that Canadian society views Aboriginal peoples as mystic and noble in the rural setting and drunk and degraded in the urban setting. In other words, authentic Aboriginal peoples, those imagined by tourists to be historically accurate, belong in a rural setting not in cities because Aboriginal people are inherently non-urban. This is clearly outlined by the following statement by Peters (1996, pp. 49): "Social construction of aboriginality maintains that the authentic Aboriginal is historic and non-urban."

Peters (1996) points out in this review of the 'white' literature that Aboriginal culture is incompatible with living in an urban setting. One theory was that Aboriginal culture works against adaptation to urban living for Aboriginal peoples. Another theory pointed out by Peters argues that Aboriginal culture has been destroyed and that non-Aboriginal people must build up Aboriginal institutions for Aboriginal peoples to use in a spatially separate setting. Peters (1996) argues that it was consistently suggested that a separation of Aboriginal space from non-Aboriginal space was necessary. This does not sound like a movement toward a healthy integrated population. Separation and social isolation are strategies that were applied in the past by governments with regard to Aboriginal peoples and are strategies that were not successful (Letkemann, 2004).

Peters (1996) critiques the beliefs of other authors around the idea that Aboriginal culture is necessary to ensure a healthy urban Aboriginal population. Peters criticises them because they present Aboriginal culture as successful only in non-urban settings. In direct opposition to this idea is the Aboriginal view of their urban culture. Peters (2002, pp. 61) states that "Aboriginal people have argued that supporting and enhancing Aboriginal culture is a prerequisite for coping in an urban environment." Aboriginal culture is only viewed as authentic in a rural setting and not appropriate in an urban setting.

Historically speaking, many Indigenous peoples from the Americas were urban earlier and more advanced technologically and socially than many of the European and Asian

societies. Mann (2005) in his book on the histories of Indigenous peoples in the Americas before Columbus makes this argument several times. Two examples follow:

“At the time of Columbus... They [indigenous peoples of the Americas south of the Rio Grande] were not nomadic, but built up and lived in some of the world’s biggest and most opulent cities (pp. 17)”.

“Tenochtitlan [historically found in present day Mexico] dazzled its invaders – it was bigger than Paris, Europe’s greatest metropolis [in 1519 a.d.] (pp. 140).”

Mann also makes the point that what he calls the “America’s first urban complex” (pp. 204), the ruins of which can be found north of Lima in Peru, has been dated approximately 2600 years old defying the idea that Indigenous peoples were all nomadic and non-urban. Hudson (1993) also makes this point (although at a much later point in history and much further north from present day Peru) while detailing the travels of the explorer De Soto. He provides De Soto’s description of the Indigenous settlements that he saw when crossing the Mississippi River in 1541 a.d. into what now would be Arkansas:

“A land thickly set with great towns, according to the accounts, two or three of them to be seen from one. Each city protected itself with earthen walls, sizeable moats, and deadeye archers (pp. 108).”

Jojoba (1998) and Mann (2005) make the argument that Indigenous peoples had sophisticated forms of governance and planning in place before the arrival of European explorers. This idea will be covered in greater detail in the section on planning theory in this literature review.

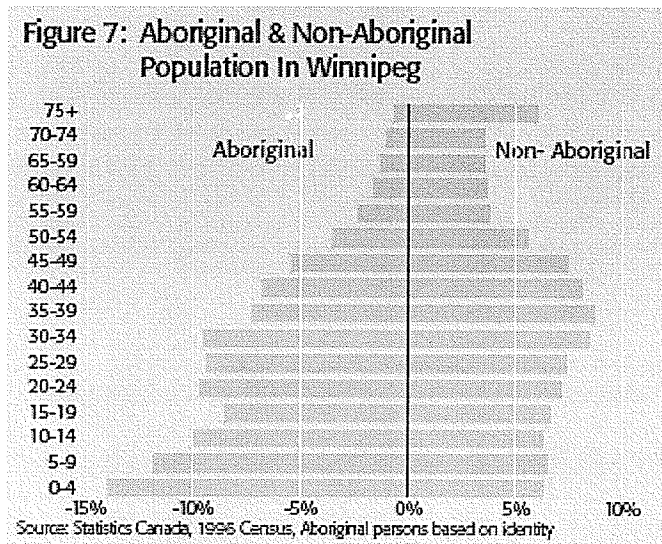
Peters (2002) argues that those Aboriginal peoples that have not already adapted to urban life, can adapt in their own way and that this will be beneficial to them and to the urban

centres that they live in. Letkemann (2004) claims that Aboriginal peoples who move from rural to urban settings are able to maintain a key understanding of their culture and heritage. In fact when Aboriginal culture is strong in an urban setting it is often met with fear from the general public (Peters, 1996). This is similar to the racism and territoriality that new immigrants from any culture may face when entering a foreign city to join society and the workplace (Lee & Westwood, 1996). However, the Canada West Foundation (2001) points out that although both new immigrants and Aboriginal peoples face transition problems when migrating to a large urban centre the response by government is not equitable. The federal government of Canada spends annually \$13.4 million on Aboriginal urban transition compared to \$256 million in funds geared towards immigrant settlement and integration.

3.5 Demographics: the Aboriginal Population of Winnipeg

Aboriginal people are becoming more prominent players in urban settings, in politics, business and culture; especially in Western Canada and in Winnipeg in particular. The census of Canada reports that between the 1996 and 2001 census Aboriginal populations in Canada grew by 22.2% compared to 3.4% growth for non-Aboriginal populations (Statistics Canada, 2004). At the time of this study about 50% of Aboriginal peoples in Canada lived in an urban area and 25% lived in one of the 27 census metropolitan centres defined by a population of at least 100,000 (Statistics Canada, 2002; Statistics Canada, 2004). As noted, on a national scale, 50% of all Aboriginal peoples lived in cities, many of whom have never lived in a rural or reserve setting and likely never will (Newhouse, 2000). Urban Aboriginal peoples have reached the critical point where they can grow as

a population in cities from natural growth. They are no longer dependant on in-migration from rural and reserve settings (Newhouse, 2000). Winnipeg was chosen as the test site for this study for several reasons. Winnipeg is consistently the city with the highest population of urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada with approximately 55,000 Aboriginal residents in 2003 (Peters, 2002; United Way, 2004), making up approximately 8% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2004). The 2001 census shows that between 1996 and 2001 the total population in Winnipeg grew by 4070 people (United Way, 2004). A closer look showed that the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg grew by 10,005 persons compared to a decline of 5,935 non-Aboriginal persons (United Way, 2004). This shows that without the growth of Aboriginal peoples within Winnipeg the city would be losing population. The Aboriginal population in Winnipeg is also much younger than the rest of the population with an average age of 24.7 years compared to 37.3 years (United Way, 2004). A faster growing and younger population will have an obvious impact on the future of Winnipeg both in terms of employment and leadership. The City of Winnipeg itself is well aware of the growing importance of Aboriginal peoples to the future of the city. Winnipeg's long term planning document, "Plan Winnipeg" (2001) prominently includes Aboriginal people in several sections dedicated to partnerships and improving the current situation. Plan Winnipeg also predicts that 25% of the workforce in Winnipeg will be Aboriginal sometime in the next two decades (see figure 1).



The City of Winnipeg also produced a secondary plan dedicated to Aboriginal peoples living in Winnipeg called “First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways” (2003). This secondary plan was truly unique when it was first brought forth because

Figure 1: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population in Winnipeg (City of Winnipeg, 2001)

jurisdiction for Aboriginal affairs is a federal responsibility. The City of Winnipeg appears committed to improving relations with the Aboriginal community and to helping improve conditions for them. This plan outlines what the City of Winnipeg can do for Aboriginal peoples in the form of programming options and encourages collaboration between the city and the Aboriginal community. Peters (2002, pp. 51) notes that “Winnipeg appears to be among urban centres with the most developed set of urban Aboriginal institutions.” These organizations cover an eclectic variety of issues that are important to Aboriginal peoples at this time, including health, politics, business, and culture. The United Way (2004) lists many of these Aboriginal institutions in their document, the Eagle’s Eye View. These are many of the reasons why it is important to understand how Aboriginal Winnipeggers conceptualize their community and a healthy community.

3.6 The Urban Aboriginal Strategy

In the late 1990's the provincial government of Manitoba, as part of its series of round tables on the environment and the economy, undertook the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). The UAS was put together with the intention of improving Aboriginal people's well-being in the city of Winnipeg (Manitoba Round Table on the Environment and Economy, 1998). This public consultation, which included six public workshops and over a thousand participants, produced Aboriginal perspectives on the urban Aboriginal community including a vision of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. This vision included several key objectives that are important to the research being undertaken here (Manitoba Round Table on the Environment and Economy, 1998):

- *Empowerment and self reliance* – control over issues and decisions that affect the lives of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and may affect the ability of these people to determine their own destinies;
- *Participation* – Increasing Aboriginal participation in politics, the private sector, and in the greater community, as well as in the implementation of decisions that affect them;
- *Communication* – greater access to information that pertains to the Aboriginal community and better communication between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Winnipeg including government;
- *Settlement* – There is a need to “build a greater sense of community... support the Neeginan² concept of greater community involvement and participation” (pp. 11);
- *Health* – “To improve the health status of Aboriginal people” (pp. 12).

² Neeginan is the Cree word for “our place” and refers here to the unified vision for the redevelopment of the North Main St and Higgins Ave area in Winnipeg (Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, 2008).

This vision of the urban Aboriginal community put forth in this strategy represents the perspectives of more than a thousand members of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and is important to this research for three reasons. First, this lends legitimacy to the concepts of empowerment, communication, and participation as ideas that are consistent with the Aboriginal world perspective. These are ideas that have a prominent place in this research and efforts have been made to make certain that this research is respectful of the Aboriginal world view. Second, in the settlement section it is suggested that research that helps to build a greater sense of community is welcomed by the Aboriginal community. Eliciting an Aboriginal perspective on the health of the community can potentially assist in building a greater sense of community within the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. Third, the idea of looking at the health of the Aboriginal community is described in a holistic manner by the participants. The strategy states that the main objective that the participants wanted was to (pp. 36) “use holistic approaches to achieve their full health potential and to improve the general well-being of the Aboriginal community.” Studying Winnipeg Aboriginal community health can build on this research and may in some part contribute to improving the health and well-being of the Aboriginal community by reporting their perspectives on what factors contribute to their community’s health.

3.7 A Holistic View of Health

The medicine wheel is an integral part of life for some First Nations groups in Canada. In the area of health and well-being the medicine wheel has been used as a framework to describe a holistic, Aboriginal view of health. Aboriginal peoples believe that health is about more than just disease and injury (McCormick, 1996; Quantz, 2001). The medicine wheel outlines four components or directions as they sit on the wheel of health: physical, emotional, mental (or intellectual according to Bartlett, 2003; or psychological according to Quantz, 2001), and spiritual (McCormick, 1996; Quantz, 2001). It is the balance between these four facets of health and well-being that determine the overall health of the individual. There appears to be many different labels for the third component, mental, intellectual or psychological. I will use the term intellectual put forth by Bartlett (2003) because the other two terms can be viewed in a negative manner with mental and psychological relating to ideas of mental illness. Both Quantz (2001) and McCormick (1996) point out that although the components are separated into categories it is important to remember that they are interconnected. If one area is affected it will affect the person in all facets of their being. Balance among the four directions of the medicine wheel is essential to the health of the individual in some Aboriginal perceptions of health. I am looking at the health of a community not the health of an individual so the nature of the four directions may or may not be slightly different. This may be determined by the participants during this research because this is an exploratory study.

3.8 Canadian Population Health Initiative: “Urban Aboriginal Communities.”

The purpose of the study devised by the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) was to find out what makes urban Aboriginal communities healthy on a national scale by bringing together Aboriginal leaders from community, politics, and academia in a workshop setting to discuss this concept (CPHI, 2003). This report supports the idea that any attempt at improving the health of urban Aboriginal peoples must embrace the holistic concept of health. The participants in this study came up with what they called the key elements of a healthy urban Aboriginal. They came up with 9 key elements which I summarized here from their report:

- Healthy Physical Environment – e.g. housing, homelessness, safety, and infrastructure;
- Successful Ongoing Holistic Treatment – e.g. spirituality, health care, and multipurpose centre;
- Healthy and Equitable Quality of Life – e.g. Aboriginal professionals, social support, recreational opportunities, and reduced health inequalities.
- Integrated Economic Community that Provides Good Employment Opportunities – e.g. Visible economic activity, economic participation, and meaningful employment opportunities;
- Intergenerational Educational Opportunities – e.g. Educational achievement, youth educated, and lifelong learning;
- Strong Cultural Base – e.g. Strong cultural connections in schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods, strong identity, sense of community, and pride;

- Healthy Involved Children and Youth – e.g. healthy children and youth and their involvement in their communities;
- Healthy Holistic Autonomous Community Leadership – e.g. Strong Aboriginal institutions, leadership, ownership, and control of their communities;
- Successful Interactive Participation in Greater Community – e.g. consultative process, inclusive, and must have impact.

The most important idea that came out of this work, for the purposes of this research, is that one of the priority areas identified by the Aboriginal participants is to establish what the determinants of health are for the urban Aboriginal community in Canada. Although it is not the intention of my research to identify determinants of health, the CPHI study is in line with my research in the Winnipeg context. The CPHI study provides an example of what Aboriginal peoples in urban centres think is necessary for their community to be healthy on an intellectual level. The main difference between my study and the CPHI's is that my study is interested in discovering the experiences of a healthy community from urban Aboriginal participants. In other words, the CPHI study asked the Aboriginal participants what they 'thought' were the key factors to a healthy urban community whereas my study asks them to describe their experiences of a healthy community. Their experiences will be articulated so that the community can build on or learn from these experiences to the benefit of the future health of the community. A comparison of this study and the CPHI's study should provide a more holistic understanding of the concept of urban Aboriginal community health. The next section, where I take a look at the

Healthy Communities Movement can also provide a benchmark and context for this research.

3.9 Healthy Communities Movement

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Healthy Cities Project, initiated in Europe in 1986 and still on-going, was an attempt to take a holistic viewpoint of health and well-being (de Leeuw, 2001). In 1984 the WHO defined health as (Boothroyd and Eberle, 1990, pp. 2):

“The extent to which an individual or group is able, on one hand, to realize aspirations and satisfy needs; and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, a dimension of our “quality of life,” and not the object of living; it is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities.”

Fitzpatrick and LaGory (2000, pp. 228), in their description of the healthy cities project, claim that the focus of it “is on improving the physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being of urban residents.” They also outline the healthy cities guidelines put forth by the International Healthy Cities Foundation. Included in these guidelines is a demand to define health in a broader sense including physical, mental, social, and spiritual components. Another guideline that is important to mention for this research is that diversity and inclusion are keys to any community process. It is clear that it is possible to draw some favourable comparisons between the guiding philosophy of the healthy cities movement and the Aboriginal worldview.

The healthy communities movement (HCM) is the Canadian version of the healthy cities project. Witty (1998) notes that the HCM was formed in Canada as a joint project between the Canadian Public Health Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and, (led by) the Canadian Institute of Planners. Boothroyd and Eberle (1990, pp. 7) in their discussion on the healthy communities movement in Canada define a healthy community as, "a community in which all organizations from informal groups to governments are working effectively together to improve the quality of all people's lives." Whereas, according to Witty (1998, pp. 214-15), Hancock and Duhl (1988) define a healthy community as:

"...one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing themselves to their maximum potential."

Thus it is believed that the group that works the best at solving collective problems and supporting each other in a society is by definition a healthy community.

The mission statement of the healthy communities movement in Canada was thus (Witty, 1998, pp. 217):

"The aim of the Healthy Communities concept is to enhance the quality of life for all Canadians by involving municipalities and their citizens in ensuring that health is a primary factor in political, social and economic decision-making."

This makes the clear connection between health and urban planning. As far as being beneficial to the planning practice, Witty (1998, pp. 214) argues that "healthy communities may offer that linkage to provide a means for planners to work more closely with communities."

The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (2006), on their website, has a useful description of what they consider to be the principles of a healthy community:

“Healthy Communities are based on the following principles:

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.
Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health and are inter-related.
- People cannot achieve their fullest potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their well-being.
- All sectors of the community are inter-related and share their knowledge, expertise and perspectives, working together to create a healthy community.”

These principles would appear to be consistent with the Aboriginal worldview emphasizing a holistic view of health with physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health needs. The above principles also indicate that the healthy communities movement emphasizes the need for self-determination, which is also a key need of the Aboriginal community according to the Manitoba Round Table on the Environment and Economy (1998).

3.10 Urban Aboriginal Peoples and Planning Theory

The idea of planning communities is not something that was introduced to Indigenous peoples by colonizers. Jojola (1998) explains that Indigenous peoples in the new world had, in many cases, sophisticated forms of governance and planning in place.

Additionally, there was evidence that many areas populated by Aboriginal peoples

showed signs of planned towns and villages. Mann (2005) points out that Indigenous peoples in different parts of the Americas had planned and produced roads, causeways, canals, dikes, reservoirs, botanical gardens, aqueducts, markets, mounds, raised agricultural fields, and possibly ball courts. Clearly these Indigenous societies were capable of planning their communities and altering their environment to suit their needs. Jojola (1998) argues that Aboriginal concepts of planning were buried and replaced with the modes of the colonizing powers that took their lands from them. Mann (2005) suggests that the current view of the histories of Indigenous peoples has been passed down through our education system and reinforced the idea that Indigenous people were inferior in technology and society at the time of contact.

“The supposition that Native Americans lived in an eternal, unhistoried state – held sway in scholarly work, and from there fanned out to high school textbooks, Hollywood movies, newspaper articles, environmental campaigns...(pp. 13)”

Historically, those in power used the argument that Indigenous peoples could not plan for themselves to take their land and power. Jojola (1998, pp. 104) makes a convincing argument that colonizers used modernity’s reliance on scientific method to undermine Aboriginal ways of knowing:

“Historical revisionists gave an allegedly scientific basis for categorically eliminating the role of Native America in the process of nation-state development, and this was widely employed by policy makers to dismiss tribal leadership and their abilities to plan for themselves.”

This is just one example of how the rational-comprehensive planning model has had a negative effect on Aboriginal peoples in Canada and in Canadian cities. The next section will discuss the negative effects of the rational-comprehensive model as portrayed by various authors.

Rational-Comprehensive Planning:

One thing that is clear from the literature is that rational-comprehensive planning, which dominated the last half of the 20th century, is not compatible with the Aboriginal worldview (Wolfe 1989; Nilsen, 2004). Brant-Castellano (2004, pp. 103) makes this point in an Aboriginal context:

“Leroy Little Bear coined the phrase “jagged worldviews colliding” to describe the encounter of Aboriginal philosophies and positivist scientific thought. Aboriginal world views assume that human action, to achieve social good, must be located in an ethical, spiritual context as well as its physical and social situation. Scientific research is dominated by positivist thinking that assumes only observable phenomena matter.”

Sandercock (2003, pp. 6) explains that “the social sciences (including planning thought) have been dominated by a positivist epidemiology which privileges scientific and technical knowledge over an array of equally important alternatives.” Sandercock further argues that there is a need to explore different ways of knowing that may be more appropriate when planning with culturally diverse communities. Wolfe (1989, pp. 74) states that “the conventional planning paradigm is an expression of a particular western, culture-bound value orientation which emphasizes, among other things, mastery over nature, the primacy of the goals of the individual, and future time orientation.” Wolfe further claims that this is essentially opposite of the Aboriginal worldview which values harmony with nature, the community over the individual, and emphasizes the importance of the past. However, it is important to remember that traditional Aboriginal values are not necessarily the values of all Aboriginal peoples (Wuttunee, 2000).

Friedman-Mutual Learning:

According to Sandercock (2003), Friedman argued that there was a gap growing between planners and citizens. This gap or “growing polarity” as Sandercock (2003, pp. 65) puts it came about because planners have expert scientific based knowledge and citizens rely on experiential knowledge. She claims that this experiential knowledge is discounted by planners and is not given any weight in planning discourse. This bears striking similarity to the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada that have a rich history of experiential knowledge that has been discounted by Western culture. According to this theory, neither side has all the answers and the key to solving this divide is to bring together both sides in “a process of mutual learning” (pp. 65). A transactive style of planning is put forth by Friedman, emphasizing dialogue, human worth, and reciprocity (Sandercock, 2003). This strategy for future planning would seem to be in line with Aboriginal values outlined earlier by Wolfe (1989).

Sandercock-Diversity Theory:

Sandercock (1998) makes a compelling argument that Indigenous peoples have been systematically kept out of the planning arena by the dominant planning paradigm. She explains that colonizers used rational scientific methods to clear Indigenous peoples from valuable lands for settlers and resource extraction. In Canada, this was accomplished by spatially segregating them into reserves. She also makes the claim that Indigenous peoples are breaking free of their colonial past and seeking to empower their people through the reinstitution of Aboriginal ways of knowing. She (1998, pp. 18) makes the

bold statement that “if the voices and desires of Indigenous peoples are to be respected, acknowledged, and honoured, the foundations of the modernist planning paradigm itself must be abandoned and replaced.” Sandercock (2003) in her book “Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities,” argues that a change of the planning paradigm from scientific modernity to a system based on diversity and experiential learning is occurring. The City of Winnipeg’s Municipal Aboriginal Pathways document would be one example of planning that is taking into account diversity and experiential knowledge. Sandercock makes the argument that modernist planning has outlived its usefulness when being employed to help planners deal with the many diversity issues and the rise of Indigenous peoples in a period of history referred to as post-colonialism. She (2003, pp. 209) also explains that there is a need for a “more normative, open, democratic, flexible, and responsive style that is sensitive to cultural difference.” Sandercock (1998, pp. 125) introduces us to the concept of cosmopolis, which she defines as “a city/region in which there is a genuine connection with, and respect and space for, the cultural other, and the possibility of working together on matters of common destiny, a recognition of intertwined fates.” There is not a better expression than “intertwined fates” to describe the situation of the City of Winnipeg and the Aboriginal peoples that live there.

Integral Approach:

The integral approach is a relatively newly formed theory based on the philosopher Ken Wilber. The term integral is described by the Integral Institute (2006) as:

“Integral means inclusive, balanced, comprehensive. The Integral approach may be contrasted to other methods—mythic, rational-scientific, pluralistic—which, as they themselves announce, *exclude* other approaches as being inferior. They are thus, by definition, partial and incomplete. These latter methods, although widely

accepted and dominant in the world's cultures, tend to generate partial analysis and incomplete solutions to problems. As such, they appear less efficient, less effective, and less balanced than the Integral approach.”

Hochachka (2005 pp. 39), describes the framework produced by Wilber as (the framework itself can be seen in Table 2):

“The integral approach, is based on Wilber’s all quadrant all-level framework (AQAL), which maps out “the interior and exterior of the individual and the collective.” The upper and lower right- hand quadrants deal with objective, empirical forms (such as behaviour, biology, social systems and institutions, political economic arrangements and technology). The Lower-Left includes the values, meanings, worldviews and ethics that are shared by any group of individuals and that form the basis for culture. The Upper-Left quadrant includes the entire spectrum of human consciousness, from bodily sensations to mental ideas to soul and spirit, and is the domain of psychological development and/or spirituality. These four quadrants can be reduced to three: the “It/Its” of science, the morals of “We”, and the aesthetics of “I”, or the Big Three.”

Figure 2: Methodologies included in the Integral approach to research and understand different aspects of a given situation or moment.

<p>UPPER LEFT: Self and Consciousness</p> <p>Subjective data-collection; Often embodied, qualitative, and self-reflective knowledge.</p>	<p>UPPER RIGHT: Action and Behavior</p> <p>Objective data-collection; Often quantitative, empirical and scientific.</p>
<p>LOWER LEFT: Culture and Worldview</p> <p>Inter-subjective data-collection; Often qualitative and co-created through dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration.</p>	<p>LOWER RIGHT: Social System and Environment</p> <p>Objective data-collection; Often quantitative, empirical and scientific.</p>

Figure 2 (Hochachka 2006, pp. 5)

The Integral Institute (2008) argues that the quadrants are a complete way of looking at anything. In other words, they postulate that the integral model takes into account all possible views or perspectives for any situation.

“It shows the “**I**” (the *inside* of the *individual*), the “**it**” (the *outside* of the *individual*), the “**we**” (the *inside* of the *collective*), and the “**its**” (the *outside* of the *collective*). In other words, the four quadrants—which are the four fundamental perspectives on any occasion (or the four basic ways of looking at anything) (pp. 25)”

The integral approach may be one theory that will be successful for planning with Aboriginal communities as well as for the planning practice to use as a framework for planning communities with Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The reasons for this are that the integral approach values a holistic integration of social, cultural, physical, and economic factors. This is emphasized by Hochachka (2005, pp. 38):

“An *integral approach* goes slightly further by integrating environmental, social and economic needs as well as the complex and varied needs of the human psyche and human cultures.”

3.11 Summary

There are many different definitions of community and the concept of community can have positive and negative outcomes in practice. It has been learned that Aboriginal peoples are diverse in an urban setting which can make defining community difficult. There is a need for an urban Aboriginal identity to facilitate community development. However, because of the diversity of the Aboriginal population in cities, this identity may be difficult to determine.

The 'medicine wheel' is important to understanding Aboriginal concepts of health and of their holistic view of life and in particular of health. I have learned that all parts of a person (physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual) are interconnected in the Aboriginal view of health and it is a balance among these factors that is important to being healthy.

Historical, and in some cases contemporary, stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples and their chosen way of life place them in rural settings, not in cities. However, Aboriginal peoples are urban and they have been for quite some time. Historically, they had many highly developed urban centres with a strong urban planning culture. It has been stated in the literature that maintaining Aboriginal culture may play a positive role in adapting to urban life for some Aboriginal peoples. It has also been pointed out that transition to urban from rural/reserve is a pressing issue that is under-funded by the Federal government.

It has become clear by looking at current demographic data that Aboriginal peoples are growing faster and are younger than the population of non-Aboriginal people in cities.

By taking a look at the "Urban Aboriginal Strategy" and the "Urban Aboriginal Communities: Proceedings of the Roundtable on the Health of Urban Aboriginal People" I discovered that the idea of what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community has been explored from an intellectual standpoint. These studies aimed to discover what Aboriginal people thought about their community, whereas I aimed to discover their

experiences of a healthy community. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy attempted to articulate a vision of the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg. The CPHI, with a selection of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants from all across Canada, came up with what they called the nine key elements to urban Aboriginal health. This latter study was more focused on individual health and the translation of that to community health, whereas my study was exploring experiences of healthy communities.

I have taken a detailed look at planning theory and how it relates to urban Aboriginal peoples. I have discovered that, historically, Aboriginal peoples have experience planning their communities. According to the literature there may be a paradigm shift occurring from modernity to a paradigm that may work better when planning with Aboriginal communities, a shift towards valuing experiential learning. It has been argued that the modernist paradigm does not work when planning with Aboriginal communities because of a difference in values and worldviews. I have explored the possibility that Friedman's *mutual learning*, Sandercock's *diversity* theory, or the *integral approach* may be more appropriate planning strategies to use when planning with Aboriginal communities.

There are many barriers to developing healthy communities in urban settings. Aboriginal peoples are seen, by Canadian society, as naturally non-urban and when they do urbanize they are expected to assimilate into mainstream society. However, it has become clear from the literature reviewed that this has not occurred and that there is a need for Aboriginal people to bring their culture and heritage into the urban setting in order for

them to develop healthy communities. Answering the question of what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg may help to move along the process of community-building for Aboriginal communities in Winnipeg and this may be transferable to other municipalities experiencing similar growing pains with urban Aboriginal communities. There has been much said in the literature review about the lack of value given to experiential knowledge in planning and research in general. It has also been determined that a planning model that values experiential knowledge and differing worldviews may be more appropriate for planning with Aboriginal communities. These ideas, and the earnest desire to follow an Indigenous methodology, led to my choice of design for this study. I chose to use the phenomenological approach to try to get the participants experiential knowledge of a healthy community because there was a clear gap in this knowledge. The Canadian Population Health Initiative tackled this topic with a selection of the Aboriginal community in Canada but they asked the participants for their intellectual ideas to improve the health of the urban Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. This was a very Western driven hunt for information.

As far as the research questions that were asked for this study, we have not discovered yet how Aboriginal people in Winnipeg define their urban community. I have discovered some of the themes and features of a healthy community consistent among a selection of diverse Aboriginal peoples from the literature. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy and the CPHI's "Urban Aboriginal Communities: Proceedings of the Roundtable on the Health of Urban Aboriginal People" have outlined some key features of a healthy urban Aboriginal community. However, these are incomplete, as they are based on the

intellectual responses of the participants in these respective studies. The third question asked: How can Aboriginal experiences of community health inform planning theory, and what is the potential for synergies between these perspectives and the 'healthy communities movement? The lack of experiential data available in the literature on this subject made it impossible to fully answer this question. However, the guiding principles articulated in the literature on the healthy cities and communities movements seems to indicate that they share many similarities with the Aboriginal worldview. The Aboriginal worldview, according to the literature cited, emphasizes a holistic view of health with physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health needs. The HCM principles also point to a holistic model that claims that health is made up of physical, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental aspects. Both views also point to a need for self-determination. This led to the need to do qualitative research aimed at discovering key urban Aboriginal experiences of a healthy community.

Chapter 4: Research and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4, the analysis, contains the results from the demographic survey, the talking circle process, and the interviews. The section on the demographic sample provides the reader with a general idea of the sample group. The talking circle section covers the details of the talking circle, including the process, highlights and results. The semi-structured interview section introduces the interviews, explains the process, describes the highlights and the results. The data from the interviews is presented in themes, with some narrative summarizing ideas, generated by this author and checked for accuracy by the participants. These themes are then presented in a summary Table 1. The data analysis section reviews the research questions posed at the beginning of this research project to determine how they can inform planning theory and practice for the future.

4.2 Demographic Sample

A small demographic survey was administered during the talking circle as well as during the interview phase to those that did not participate in the talking circle. I have split the results up into two groups: Talking circle participants and interview participants.

Although some of the participants are the same in both I thought it was important to differentiate the groups. See Appendix A for the survey.

Talking Circle Group:

Sex: 1 Male; 3 Female

Average Age: 40

Aboriginal Designation: 3 First Nation; 1 Métis

Living Location: 0 Rural; 0 Reserve; 4 Urban

Average Number of Years Living in an Urban Centre: 18; **Range 7-35**

Interview Group:

Sex: 1 Male; 5 Female

Average Age: 45.5

Aboriginal Designation: 4 First Nation; 2 Métis

Living Location: 1(*) Rural; 0 Reserve; 5 Urban

Average Number of Years Living in an Urban Centre: 21; **Range 7-35**

(* This participant lived in a rural setting but worked in an urban setting.)

4.3 Talking Circle Introduction

The talking circle process was undertaken for several reasons. First, it was an attempt to do research with an Aboriginal group of respondents that was respectful of the Aboriginal worldview as identified in the literature. This worldview may or may not have been shared by the participants, but they all expressed that it was a positive experience for them. Second, doing the talking circle was a way to get to know the members of the Aboriginal Relations Council and for them to get to know me. In other words, it was an attempt to build relations and understanding with them. This will be especially important when I attempt to work with them and the United Way of Winnipeg to come up with the most appropriate method to disseminate the findings of this research to the Aboriginal community here in Winnipeg. Lastly, the talking circle process was undertaken to provide some direction for the questions that would be asked in the interview process.

One particularly difficult part of the talking circle with regard to doing research is related to the rule: “What is said in the circle stays in the circle.” The obvious advantage of this rule is that people will be open and honest as well as feel comfortable. The clear disadvantage was that I could not use any of the data gained in that process here in this research other than draw some very vague themes and use these to help with the formation and analysis of the interview questions and data. Therefore, the talking circle was more about process, developing appropriate questions, and relationship building than about getting any usable data.

4.4 Talking Circle Process

The talking circle process occurred in a board room at the United Way of Winnipeg on Thursday June 29th 2006. There were four participants in total. The low turn out was probably a reflection of the member’s busy schedules as well as a somewhat unfortunate choice of date for the event. This date in June likely meant that many of the participants had left early for the long weekend or were on, or starting, summer holidays. All of that aside, the four participants had enough to say answering the three questions to take up almost two hours (see Appendix B for the questions).

The process started with a PowerPoint presentation designed to introduce myself, explain the consent forms and the talking circle process that would be used. The presentation also laid out the background and purpose of the study. Phenomenology was also explained as the study of lived experience. Trying to gain an understanding of the

participant's experiences has guided the research being undertaken by influencing the choice of methods to reflect the desire to gain their experiences. This also influenced the way the data was analysed (see chapter 4).

Next, the presentation laid out the role that the Aboriginal Relations Council members would play and what was expected of them. I explained their participation in the talking circle, an in-depth interview and a follow-up session to confirm the results at a later date as their role in the research. I also presented the opportunity to work together on a plan to disseminate the findings to the greater Aboriginal community.

The rules of the talking circle were explained during the next part, as well as its purpose: to provide some general ideas for the interview stage of research.

After everything was explained in the presentation the first question was projected onto the screen and a volunteer was asked to start by answering this question to the best of their ability and comfort level. From there, each participant answered the question in a clockwise fashion. At the end, I attempted to summarize what was said by the group collectively and then changed the projector to the next question and proceeded anew. This process continued as planned other than when one of the participants came late. I allowed this participant to answer all three questions consecutively with the blessing of the group.

4.5 Talking Circle Highlights

There were several highlights of the talking circle experience. The first highlight was the real connection that I felt with each of the participants by hearing their experiences in relationship to the questions. The second highlight for me was related to the interaction between participants. The rules of the talking circle process that I used discouraged each participant from commenting on what others said, but encouraged them to merely answer the question that was asked. However, there were some instances of participants using comments of others to guide their own comments. I did not view this as a negative because they were using these comments to jog their own memories and the new comments were never used to contradict or argue with the views of the previous participant. In that sense, I thought that was a very positive example of collective collaboration. Lastly, I was approached by one of the participants after the talking circle was completed. This participant explained to me that they were surprised by how valuable the talking circle process and the research in general were to themselves and the council and that this person was looking forward to the next phase of the research.

4.6 Talking Circle Results

The main result of the talking circle was the working relationship built with the Aboriginal Relations Council. In that sense it was a success. Those who participated were more positive about wanting to be involved in the research further.

The talking circle method was successfully used to undertake research with an Aboriginal study group. This is a valuable example for the greater planning practice of a successful

method to work with an Aboriginal community. However, from a research and a planning practice standpoint it may be wise to make some alterations in order to come out of the process with useable data especially the aspect of 'what is said in the circle stays in the circle.' I think that many of the aspects of the talking circle that make it an appropriate communication method for Aboriginal peoples could be adapted to other methods like the focus group for example. Allowing the participant to have the floor and discouraging argument between participants may help make a focus group more appropriate for research with Aboriginal groups. This is definitely an area that needs more research.

The discussion that came out of the talking circle was rich with good ideas of what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. I did not want to lose these ideas because I was unable to use the data for writing purposes by the rules of the talking circle that I had chosen to use. As a result, similar questions were asked during the interview phase of this research.

4.7 Semi-Structured Interviews Introduction:

The type of exploratory research undertaken in this study required a large amount of rich experiential data. The semi-structured interview method was chosen for this research because it could elicit the experiences of the group chosen to study, fulfilling the phenomenological design of the research. With this in mind, I formed questions that were deliberately vague in order to allow the participants to use their own experiences to share what makes a healthy Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. Two questions were

designed and administered. Prompts were also designed to help the participant get started but these were used as sparingly as possible. For the interview questions and prompts see Appendix C.

Six interviews in total were completed. I had aimed to do as many as ten, but six were all that could be arranged given the time frame of the research portion of this study and the busy schedules of the members of the Aboriginal Relations Council. As it stood, six interviews provided ample data to study this topic.

4.8 Interview Process

Each interview started with the completion of a consent form and a short reminder/introduction to the topic. As well, I answered questions that the participants had about the research and the process being undertaken. I also made it a point to mention to each participant that I was interested in their lived experiences, rather than their intellectual responses to each question. The first question was then asked and the participants were given plenty of time to respond before prompting them if necessary.

The interviews varied in time between thirty five minutes at the shortest to one and one quarter hours at the longest. Each of the interviews was done at the respective workplaces of each participant at their request.

4.9 Interview Highlights

There were many highlights of the interview process but two in particular stood out. First and foremost, it was a privilege and an honour to share in the experiences of this group of committed Aboriginal professionals. Their enthusiasm and optimism for the future of the Aboriginal people in Winnipeg was inspiring and made me feel proud to be an Aboriginal Winnipegger. The second highlight for me was the consistency among responses to the research questions. Many of the same themes emerged. On the flip side of that point, there were many themes that came out that were issues to the Metis participants and not the First Nations participants and vice versus.

4.10 Interview Results

The interviews produced nearly five hours of transcripts that were transcribed into text. The qualitative research program NVivo 7 was used to take the text and form it into eighty six nodes. From there the nodes were condensed into eleven tree nodes or themes. These eleven tree nodes were further reduced to six major theme areas. Saturation of data (i.e when the same ideas are being stated by multiple participants) can be reasonably said to have occurred based on the consistent themes that came out of the collective interviews. The next section, 4.11 data description, explains the process in great detail and provides a comprehensive description of the themes that were formed from the interview data.

4.11 Data Description

The data collected from the interviews of the participants was broken down into six key theme areas. Within these six theme areas were many related sub-themes. This section

will describe each theme and describe the sub-themes contained within them. It is important to note here that the phenomenological direction of this research emphasizes reporting on results of the data as opposed to trying to fit it into a theoretical framework. The themes are not presented in any order and are not hierarchical in any fashion. All thoughts and experiences presented have equal value. The titles assigned to each theme area were chosen as those thought to best represent the experiences given by the respondents. Many positive and negative experiences are represented in the data. From this data I identified tangible ideas to improve the health of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. These have been collated into sections and are presented in the last section of this discussion chapter.

Theme # 1 Aboriginality: What it means to be Aboriginal:

There were five sub-themes categorized under the first theme described as Aboriginality as determined by this researcher. These ideas were categorized together because they were all related to meanings associated with being Aboriginal. The five sub-themes were Aboriginal culture; Aboriginal values; Aboriginal identity; cultural competency; and language.

Aboriginal Culture:

Within the Aboriginal culture sub-theme there were experiences of the importance of Aboriginal culture and tradition to the social health of the people. Participants gave accounts of how they were introduced to their culture and traditions, whether through their upbringing or through programs provided by diverse organizations, both Aboriginal based and not. Some mentioned that they had not had these traditions growing up. All the responses on this subject were positive about learning about lost culture with varied outcomes from enjoying reconnecting to feelings of healing. One participant talked fondly of an opportunity to attend a youth/elder conference when they were younger that allowed them to reconnect with their Métis culture.

“But one opportunity I remember, when I was 16: we were invited to Brandon to participate in a youth/elder conference. I was a teenager. So that – being in the City here had given me the opportunity to get reconnected and learn about our culture; whereas I think I wouldn’t have had that if I’d stayed in my Metis community – not back then, anyway. And so, that’s when I first learned about our traditional teaching ceremonies and so on” (R2).

“But those Youth Elder conferences that they have in Brandon are kind of what started this movement at reconnecting with elders and learning about our spirituality” (R2).

This participant also related a story about how their parent's search for healing led to their continued desire to reconnect with their culture.

"Native Alcoholism Foundation, because she was a recovering alcoholic: They would visit different Aboriginal groups across the provinces of the West. And that's where she had learned about the ceremonies and so on. So when she learned that, she took all of us – all of her kids – to attend these ceremonies. And as a result of that, we continued going. So that was our introduction to the traditional ceremonies" (R2).

Another experience that was shared involved bringing traditional Aboriginal culture to the people and helping to initiate a "cultural awakening." This participant explained how reawakening the Aboriginal cultural traditions had a positive outcome on their success later in life.

"There is a lot of stuff happening out there and one of the most positive developments I have seen out there is this cultural awakening. They are awakening your culture and finding strength in their own culture" (R3).

"So we set up the new nation chanters and dancers and it was really good, it's amazing one of the group later became chief of his reserve. Another person from that group later became the Elder here now" (R3).

Another positive outcome was that being reintroduced to Aboriginal culture and cultural teachings allowed one individual the knowledge to defend their cultural beliefs against attacks from those claiming a moral superior ground.

"You know, all this cultural awakening and the fact that people are starting to wake up and be proud of their culture and they're standing up to defend it" (R3).

Although there are many other factors that could have resulted in these positive outcomes it is impossible to ignore the potential positive effect of reclaiming culture that was lost.

"There is a lot of people in that initial group that I run into that have done very well for themselves and are still involved in the community, that are still working with the community and trying to better the community. I think that they all carry

the, those teachings that we got from the Elders that time about, when we were, we were experiencing our cultural awakening, you know, I think that was what was happening to us there was uhh, we became very aware of, through the Elders, of where we were coming from and we had a lot of pride in that" (R3).

One participant talked about having pride in their culture and confidence to defend it when needed and how the reconnection with this culture gives them the strength to do this.

"I think it will work, I'm confident, I think, you know, when I see stuff happen at the university level, when I go to the colleges and even at the community level, I see this resurgence of pride. You know, Metis pride, First Nations pride, whatever pride, it's there. And more and more, Aboriginal people are starting to realize that "hey there is absolutely nothing wrong with my culture," unlike what the priest or the nuns said. You know, because when our Elders come to talk to us they say – the circle gives everybody equal authority, equal chance and equality on this world" (R3).

This participant gives the example of how in the past they were told that their beliefs were wrong and because their cultural base was taken away they did not have the ability to defend their beliefs. This is changing according to this participant.

"If a priest was to come up to me today and tell me that the Mediwin society is heathens, I would be able to defend it. I would be able to say, what has the Mediwin done and compare it, for example, to what the Roman Catholics, what have they done in the Aboriginal community. Who was the oppressor, who was the real oppressor?" (R3).

A continuation of this "cultural awakening" may be beneficial to the urban Aboriginal community as a whole. An important place to provide cultural teachings and therefore knowledge is in the schools and workplaces of the city. This leads to the next experience of Aboriginal culture: culture in education. Some of the participants talked glowingly of the current process of bringing Aboriginal culture into schools and workplaces.

“Because they are where they are they give kids the opportunity in the inner-city to celebrate culture and recognize the importance, but also they are getting a great education that is embedded in their own culture so they are comfortable” (R1).

“Having lunch programs as well is a part of it and having a culture of acceptance of students and keeping them involved and parents” (R1).

Learning about Aboriginal culture, can be beneficial to Aboriginal peoples and communities as well as those other communities involved. Teaching students, in their schools, about Aboriginal culture can only benefit those involved.

“We provided opportunities for the whole school to attend different reserve sites. So we took – when I was at (?), we took a group – one group – out to Sandy Bay First Nation and to Peguis First Nation to experience what it was like on the reserve. And then, when I moved over to (a different school), we took a group out to Broken Head. And they had an opportunity to attend a sweat at a teaching lodge. So we were in a position to help people learn about our culture” (R2).

“And try to convey that to my staff in how to do that, I guess, is another success for me, too - to be able to help my non-Aboriginal counterparts to be able to work within that community, to be able to create that invitation, that welcome and just by invitation and by being consistent in your behaviours of inviting people and having the flexibility of not always, you know, “You should not be doing that.” Because you know what? In some communities, that’s just a way of life.” (R6)

Similarly, educating adults in their workplaces can have a similar positive effect.

“We have a two day cultural awareness session here now. To try and create a healthy community with (my workplace) because it’s not right now because there are too many old school thinkers. And we are trying to make it more contemporary thinking” (R3).

Aboriginal Identity:

One participant talked about Bill C31 and how women were getting back their Aboriginal status but that this resulted in generational loss of status and identity. This participant described the process as ethnocide. Bill C-31 is an amendment to the Indian Act, introduced by the Government of Canada in 1985 with the purpose of correcting the

gender based discrimination within that Act (Assembly of First Nations, 2005). The Assembly of First Nations (2005) quotes Phil Fontaine, then Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, as saying: “The Bill has not resolved any of the problems it was intended to fix and has in fact created new problems. Significant gender discrimination still remains, control over Indian status is still held by the Crown, and the population of status Indians is declining as a direct result of Bill C-31.”

“What they didn’t tell people was that they didn’t take, sure they gave her back her treaty status, but three generations down, we are going to take her grandchildren’s status away. That was the deal. That’s the deal today. So, if I have the treaty status, I can’t pass it on to my kids. Now that’s ethnocide, your killing me, my ethnicity. I will still be walking around but I will not be recognized as a First Nations person anymore by the government” (R3).

Another participant talked about their experience of being Metis and why that is important for this person. They related how Metis people may experience people who try to categorize them as either First Nation or White.

“Well, part of it is that I am so tired of being pushed into being First Nations or to being European. I say to people “I am not a European and I am not an Indian, I am both.” And, you have to accept me as exactly as that, I shouldn’t have to walk with a foot in two worlds and when I am facing you I have to act one way and when I am facing you I have to act another way” (R5).

Further to this point, this participant clarifies that they feel Metis people need to have their Metis identity in order to feel connected to their community and engage in participation.

“I think that’s why it is important to be able to say, as a Metis to be able to name who you are. Because, if you can’t say who you are you are going to have this cognitive dissonance in being who you are and being in the world and deciding “where do I participate?” Where am I going to feel comfortable in giving, in providing and in being a part of the community? I think that those are all kinds of things that I have experienced over the years” (R5).

The next quote describes a situation that helped to instill in the participant a sense of identity with their Metis community. It required being recognized as a contributor to the community to make this respondent feel that they belonged and were connected with their community.

“I think that another one of the key parts was, after having graduated, the MMF having us at their annual meeting and presenting us with a (recognition honour). That was something, I didn’t really have a formal connection to the Metis other than having an MMF membership and voting but it didn’t seem to connect you in that way” (R5).

Aboriginal Values:

There were many values that the respondents spoke of from their experiences. The first of these values was being open and honest. The reason for this was that it was important to be honest even if the answer is not what the other person wanted to hear because it builds a trusting relationship.

“So if you’re open with people, saying, “Hey, you know what? I can’t be there” or “Hey, you know, I’m having a bad day. Maybe I’ll chat with you later” or “You know, I’ll connect with you later because, right now, I just can’t.” You know? So being open about your availability, especially in the world of being a helper. You can’t say ‘Yes’ to everything. And it’s okay to say ‘No’ to some things, too, and being able to be okay with that. I’ve learned that big time with working with my communities I’m trying to help” (R6).

The next value that is described by the participants is the importance of giving, being helpful and sharing. The idea of giving back to the community is a theme in itself and the experiences of the participants on this subject are documented in great detail in a later theme discussion. Some of the participants talk about being a giving person as ingrained; it was something that was unspoken.

“you’re giving – giving in the sense of: you know, whatever I have that I can share, I will give them – through my work – and I know that there are volunteers

in that community centre or in that program; I will freely give it because it's there for them to be able to help them or just, you know: "Hey, you're here. This is great. Here, have this. It's part of this activity or it's part of ... you know, we have extra. You're here all the time. You volunteer." So that's a bit of a reward, whatever it might be" (R6).

"You lived in an environment, it is never spoken, it is just unspoken that you know that you share everything, that you don't live in a world of competition, that people are different, period" (R5).

One participant talked specifically about how they would always help 'if asked' but they would not push their help on others.

"It was always like that, there was always that expectation that, um, you are a helper. That if someone asks you, you always help, you don't say no. But you don't put yourself out there; you don't push yourself on other people" (R5).

The next value described by the participants was respect or being respectful. The key to this concept of respect was that each person is entitled to their beliefs and each person should respect others beliefs because there is room for more than one idea. One participant gives the example of allowing multiple genesis stories.

"Each one of the nations that are represented in that healing circle has a genesis story and according to our teachings we are supposed to respect it. Not change them not say "ours is better than your genesis story," no we are supposed to respect theirs. And as a result of respecting theirs, in turn, you would expect them to respect ours" (R3).

Another participant relates this idea of respect as a value to personal relationships and accepting people for who they are.

"Being respectful in many ways. That's the other piece of it, too: respect. "Respect who I am. I will respect who you are" (R6).

A third participant related their desire to have respect systemically. They felt that individuals should respect individuals regardless of whether or not they play the part or go to ceremonies.

“I just felt like there needed to be a way to look at the world in a framework that says, this, no matter who you are and how you choose to live you should be respected, period. It shouldn’t be about whether you act in a certain way or whether you go to ceremony or no matter what you do. To me it didn’t make a lot of sense to do that, you know” (R5).

Another value that was given was forgiveness. One participant talked about their experience of forgiving the past and looking forward.

“And you know what? Whatever you’ve done in the past is in the past. I really don’t need to hear about it. Wherever you’re going forward and it’s going to move forward and move the group forward and move this community forward and you’re willing to give this piece of it, then you know what? I will help you move forward” (R6).

Being cooperative was another value that came out of the description of a participant’s experiences. One participant explained how they try to be cooperative in everything and how they expect cooperation in return.

“And then, the other piece of it being cooperative. Cooperative in everything that I do. “If I can cooperate here by following this or following that, you know? My expectation would be, hopefully, that you’ll be cooperative, too.” And it usually works” (R6).

Putting the benefit of the community before personal benefit was another value that came out in this research. One respondent talked about how they learned growing up that everything that you do has to benefit beyond yourself.

“It was partly that, growing up knowing that whatever you did in the world is not just for yourself, it has to be for something beyond yourself” (R6).

“Okay, I’ll do that, then. That’s – if it’s going to benefit for, not just me, but everybody else, then, great. Well, then, let’s work towards that. That’s what helps to guide me, move me in the things that I do here at work, as well as in my community” (R6).

Cultural Competence:

A single participant brought forward the idea of cultural competence from their experience as a necessary concession by society towards working with Aboriginal peoples in a meaningful way. This means that non-Aboriginal individuals, organizations, and governments need to learn the historical reasons for the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada

“Being culturally competent means that your staff have some sense of the history, when you have someone sitting in front of you that is experiencing absolute poverty and has a whole lot of issues going on, you need to, competency means you have to have some sense of why is that person sitting in front of you. Because if you don’t know where they have been you can’t possibly know what you could do to help this individual sitting in front of you” (R5).

“Even in the Aboriginal community, I have heard more than once “we need cultural competency not cultural sensitivity” and “feathers and beads is not enough.” Saying that you are open to the Aboriginal public because you hang Aboriginal art and stuff like that on the walls isn’t enough! That’s being culturally sensitive” (R5).

Language:

Language was put forward as an important issue for Aboriginal peoples in general and in Winnipeg as well. Aboriginal languages have been lost, or are being lost and are now trying to be recovered but it may be a long road for some. One participant explained how there are some communities that are still strong in their language while others have lost it entirely.

“There’s some communities out there who feel very strong about their language, like Sandy Bay First Nation. And they continue to promote that as their first language; whereas communities like Peguis have let it go when they moved” (R2).

For those who have lost their language it was often an attempt to fit in with Western society because there was a desire among these peoples to thrive.

“Because their community used to be located in Selkirk and I guess, at some point in their history, they moved the community to Peguis. And during that transition, they – I don’t know if the community thought it would be in their best interest not to speak a first language because, I guess, they just felt that, if you learn the English language first and not any other languages, it put you in a better position to thrive in the society.” (R2).

For some communities the road to recovering languages will be especially hard.

“So I know there’s movement in that community, now, to get the language back. But it’s going to take a long time. ‘Cuz nobody speaks the language, not even the elders” (R2).

Reclaiming Aboriginal languages is directly connected with providing a culturally appropriate education in urban schools.

“The community wanted a school to allow Aboriginal students the opportunity to learn about language and culture. So Children of the Earth opened in 1991 and I was one of the first teachers at that school” (R2).

Summary:

The first theme that was taken from the experiences of the participants was around Aboriginality, or what it means to be Aboriginal both within the Aboriginal community and as they are seen from without.

It was learned that there are diverse experiences of aboriginal culture, different levels of involvement with their culture, different times in their lives when they became

comfortable with their Aboriginal culture and how their knowledge of this culture came about. In general, the participants expressed a real sense a positive experience with having, and in some cases reclaiming, Aboriginal culture, spirituality, and traditional practices and beliefs. Specifically, this allowed them to grow as persons, prepare for the challenges of life and gave them the ability to defend their beliefs to those that would challenge these. It was suggested that Aboriginal culture should be taught in schools and workplaces in order to solidify this culture for future generations.

Aboriginal identity was suggested as an area that if it is strong can lead to a healthier Aboriginal community by creating a personal sense of connection to the greater community and through increased participation in community affairs due to this connection. Recognition of achievement and ceremony to celebrate this achievement was given as a method to increase sense of connectedness and therefore identity.

The participants shared many experiences on their values. The values expressed were diverse and included being open and honest in dealings with other people; being giving, helpful and sharing; not being pushy when offering help; being respectful of all peoples and their views which may be very different than your own but not less valuable; being forgiving and not dwelling on past mistakes; being cooperative; being community oriented not individualistic, the health of the community should come first and foremost. Many of these expressed values will be apparent in the experiences of the participants in several of the other main themes.

The idea of cultural competence was brought forward as necessary for the continued health of the Aboriginal community. Cultural competence is the idea that non-Aboriginal individuals and institutions need to have an understanding of the historical context of Aboriginal peoples in order to truly understand and be harmonious with Aboriginal peoples. I will suggest that this may also be necessary within the Aboriginal community itself due to the diversity of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, especially in larger urban centres such as Winnipeg. Being culturally competent within the Aboriginal context in Canada is by no means an easy feat nor will this occur quickly. This is an area that will require further study for planners and will likely involve lifelong learning by practicing planners to become competent.

The participants explained how Aboriginal languages are important to what it means to be Aboriginal and to having a good knowledge of Aboriginal culture and identity. The strengthening and recovery of Aboriginal languages is an essential step in community health from their experiences.

Theme # 2 Community:

The experiences of this theme centre on ideas of what community is, how they are connected with community and what forms it takes for different people. There were four sub-themes within the greater theme of community: Aboriginal community, Aboriginal rapport, community connections, and involvement in community.

Aboriginal Community:

The participants expressed optimism in the Aboriginal community as they see many positive things going on in the community that validates this optimism. Some of the participants see the rise in total population as a positive because of increased services as well as more opportunities to connect with Aboriginal people.

“So ah, that’s, the experiences with the community, I’ve been watching it grow, and it really is growing. I’m really happy with the way it’s been growing, like, the numbers are growing, the services are growing and I think in a few years we will catch up.” (R3)

“I got to know much more of the Aboriginal community per say from that perspective as well and, uh, because there is such a high population of Aboriginal people here and I got to know a lot of people and made a lot of connections to the community.” (R1)

Another participant talked about how the Aboriginal community is in a position to provide solutions to current problems and share positive ideas with the greater community.

“The Aboriginal community has lots of problems but I also think it has lots of solutions and not just solutions to problems, but I do think that it has a lot of um, positives that can be provided to other communities.” (R5)

Some participants related that the Aboriginal community has a growing middle-class that is increasingly becoming more prominent in community affairs.

“I think, the Aboriginal community here are some of the movers and shakers in this community.” (R1)

This middle class has an increasing purchasing power that they may choose to spend in the Aboriginal community, strengthening the Aboriginal community economically.

“They’re a purchasing power now, you know? So that also – as a community who is moving to middle-class, upper-middle-class – that type of stuff, all of a sudden, you can make choices in terms of where you’d like to spend your money, you know?” (R4)

“I drive up to The Pas all the time. So I have a choice: I can stop off at the gas station on the reserve or I can, you know, stop at the one across the street. Well, I always stop at the one on the reserve because I always want to keep – I want to always support economic development within my own community.” (R4)

One participant provided their experience of an Aboriginal community as coming together at a table to benefit the community.

“And I guess community to me, too: my definition of community – and it’s all centered around a facility or a common room or four, five, six individuals consistently come to that table because they want to come to that table – voluntarily.” (R6)

It was also suggested that a sense of the Aboriginal community can be found within the education systems of the city. The first example of this came from a feeling of community while attending university.

“I was very much was home bound and either dealing with university, which was fabulous, my connections there was very much an Aboriginal university community.” (R1)

This participant explained how there is a growing feeling of community that comes from the involvement in some of the schools in Winnipeg.

“Oh, one other thing I just wanted to add through that process, we have a very strong community in Winnipeg from a fundamental connection into our schools here and through the Children of the Earth.” (R1)

Some of the participants talked about their positive experiences of community on reserve as an example of strong Aboriginal community.

“When you are on reserve and you are part of a community you participate actively whether you want to or not, they drag you in.” (R1)

“Yeah. You know, there everybody visited each other and the soup’s always on; bannock was always (?). There was always – you know, that kind of stuff? And I think that – you know, healthy community: I think that would be, for me, my fondest, fondest memories. And to this day, I just love stopping in there (Reserve). When I’m driving, I’ll try and stop in all the time and visit my Aunt because it just brings back very positive feelings for me.” (R4)

One participant pointed to the feeling of welcome given on the reserves that they had visited even if they were not a member of that reserve as a positive Aboriginal community.

“I just came off a little bit of a road trip where I was in three communities, four communities in one day. And it was fabulous. I was 11 hours on the road; I was as tired as hell. But I went into all these communities and was totally welcomed and embraced. You know, people were laughing. And they don’t know me. But, you know, they know that I’m Aboriginal. They know which community I’m from and all that other stuff. So it was – I don’t know. I don’t know how to explain.” (R4)

For many, family was the first level of community. Sometimes family was the only level of connection especially when the person was new to the city.

“So as a part of the Aboriginal community when I first moved here it was more in relation to family and relationships because I wasn’t necessarily a member of the community.” (R1)

“My other experiences in the Aboriginal community have been about, well, the community from which I belong – so my peers, my friends, my family.” (R4)

One participant said that family provided strength and knowledge that helped them grow as an individual. This participant used the example of hardship experienced as a source of strength and the relationships to family that helped get them through that.

“People say, “Well, you came from (?). I mean, if you ever survived that environment, you could survive anywhere.” And I say, “Well, what are you talking about? That’s where I got my strength from – from that community because, while there were struggles and hardships there, I experienced some of the most wonderful things, like my relationship with my Grandmother.” (R2)

“So I, personally, think my success in life has come from, you know, my upbringing in that particular community and the family that I come from. And did we struggle? We certainly did. Because, like I said, we were on Welfare. My mother was an alcoholic and my Dad suffered from mental illness for a good part of his life. And it was hard but you have to look at that and rise above it.” (R2)

Another respondent talked about the support they received in their lives from relatives that did not even live in the city.

“A lot of them – if I think about where some of the best – my best childhood memories: it was always going back to the reserve. It was going home and being with our family outside of Winnipeg.” (R4)

Aboriginal Rapport:

Some of the respondents made a point of describing a phenomenon whereby Aboriginal people feel more comfortable around other Aboriginal people because they understand their worldview. This can occur in choices of retail services to go to.

“You’re starting to see that in – you know, I have peers that prefer to go to certain restaurants or stores because there’s Aboriginal people working there – you know, that type of stuff. And I think there’s a couple of things going on in terms of – not only do you feel that you can be serviced better in the Social Service sector, right?

Or if you have someone who identifies and knows and understands, that immediate rapport is there.”(R4)

This desire for Aboriginal rapport can have an influence on where individuals choose to work.

“I’ve met Aboriginal people who wanted to come and work for me. Because they’d been working at some different (places) and they really feel isolated and they don’t feel supported. And it could be real or not real; I’m not even saying that that’s the way it is out there. But sometimes they feel that they’re not being supported or they don’t feel useful and they don’t feel good about going to work and they end up leaving and going elsewhere.” (R2)

Lack of access to this rapport can lead to issues when using work related services like in the below example given by one of the participants about an individual who was seeking counseling through an employee assistance program.

“Do we have any Aboriginal counselors? Of course, no, there was none under this EAP service we had. And I said, “Why?” And he said, “Well, it’s not helping.” And I said, “Well, what do you mean, it’s not helping?” He goes, “I spent – “You know, you get an hour. “I spent 45 minutes trying to explain my Aboriginal-ness. Because the person can’t – is not on my level so they can’t – they’re not identifying. We’re not connecting. You know, there’s – so it’s not helping.” (R4)

Aboriginal people may also seek this rapport when looking for personal relationships especially when newly arriving into a new environment, in the below case transitioning to a move to Winnipeg.

“There was no family, either, here in the City. So whoever and wherever I saw an Aboriginal person, the acknowledgement was there to say, “Hey, hi.” And I was able to chat with them if it was in a line-up at a store, within the library or just in the immediate areas of where I was – you know, I’ve got to eat. I’ve got to get clothes. I’ve got to get my books. Whoever was in those environments, I’d be chatting with them, just: Hey, where are you from?” (R6)

“So, as I said, in 10 years and when I came into the City, it was school-related and where I was hanging. So if you were in my class and you were Aboriginal, then

you became that point of contact, that family or friend that I'm going to make – or not.” (R6)

Community Connections:

Being a part of the community and having connections with others in their communities was important to those that participated in this study. These connections can be through their work, schools their children go to, their community where they live.

“And so, it was partly that and it was partly to create a sense of belonging a sense of a place where you fit in, how you can be a part of society.” (R5)

“So I am in the community and I feel like I've always been part of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.” (R2)

One strategy to gain this sense of connection with community was by being with other people, other Aboriginal people in particular.

“So I sought out other Aboriginal people. And the way I got connected back with Aboriginal people was by hanging out at the pool halls on Main Street and by hanging out at the Bus Depot. So that's how I remained connected to Aboriginal people and met lots of new friends and members of, you know, all parts of Manitoba.” (R2)

Another participant talked about finding that community connection in the activities they did or in where they were in their life at that time.

“And I guess where I picked my friends and the people that I spent time with were people that wanted to do things. Because I was in school, you're doing the study, do the study groups and hang out with those folks that wanted to study. And then, when I had my family with me, it was looking at other families – you know, where their children were at and where they spent their time and close to your home.” (R6)

Another participant related how they found community through getting involved in organized activity or groups.

“So that was a very positive thing. Like I said, I got to meet lots of other Aboriginal people from the residential schools and we got together and formed this choir and, then, performed over a few days. Yeah, I met lots of people back then and I still keep in contact with them today.” (R2)

One respondent related how they learned to be connected while growing up, that this was behaviour that was passed down to them by their parents.

“I was raised as being, ah, the importance of being a part of the community was very much there and I was involved with the schools with the children with the parents so I was always a part of the community.” (R1)

A sense of connection with community through the contributions made with others toward a greater good was given as an example by one participant. This participant talked about being involved and making a difference through their work.

“Within my work: those communities that I serve, I’m a part of that community. Spend a lot of time in those areas. So I’ve assumed them as ‘my’ communities, part of where I contribute.” (R6)

“Within my work, and the different groups that I work in, and some of the special events that they host: I’m a part of it. If there’s spring cleanup, I’m a part of it. And you can see the outcome of cleanup. ‘Cuz the neighbourhood is clean and people feel good about, you know, coming together and working together. So that feels good.” (R6)

Another respondent talked about how it is important for individuals to feel that they are making a contribution to society because if they do not feel that they are making a contribution then this can lead to thinking that they are not valuable.

“If you constantly think that your group has no value and doesn’t contribute, and this is, I’m pretty sure that it is a human condition that people, not just Aboriginal condition, a human condition, that people want to belong and they want to give to and be part of what they are.” (R5)

Another idea that came out of the participants experiences with regard to community connection was related to being asked to participate. This participant described how being asked to provide their expertise on an issue of importance to the community led to their feeling connected.

“I think I first felt that sense of community in being asked to provide advice. You know I went to school for all those years and it was a real positive of being, of saying, I feel valued and that they will value my opinion.” (R5)

For one participant a sense of identity was important for them to feel connected to community and therefore to participate for the benefit of that community.

“I think that’s why it is important to be able to say, as a Metis to be able to name who you are. Because, if you can’t say who you are you are going to have this cognitive dissonance in being who you are and being in the world and deciding “where do I participate?” Where am I going to feel comfortable in giving, in providing and in being a part of the community? I think that those are all kinds of things that I have experienced over the years.” (R5)

A couple of participants related stories of connections they had to a particular neighbourhood that had reached out and made them feel welcome. The first involved being welcomed and feeling connected to an urban community.

“the community of R----- is a community actually, and it is a community of people that don’t look at, you know, I don’t know, they just looked at you as part of their community and want to make you feel involved in the community just because you live there.” (R1)

“I see that in R----- being a community too that always keeps my son engaged with. He’s still friends with all of them and they had a very positive influence on, they had positive influences on each other. I see the same kids that I saw when he was in Grade 2. He’s still friends with them. There are still relationships there even though we don’t even live in the neighbourhood anymore. And, those kids are all, they do things with their lives, they participate, they’re not out in gangs, they are not out getting into trouble. They positively influence each other to do the right thing versus getting into trouble you know.” (R1)

The second involved one individual's experiences of feeling connected to reserve communities and how that experience was very different than any urban experiences that they have had.

"Living (on reserve) was also a very – is as hard and as difficult as it was because I worked a lot of hours and all that other stuff. The sense of community there was: the community embraced us, being outsiders living there. Because I'm not from (that reserve). But they really embraced us and really – you know, my daughter grew up there. So that was a really positive experience in terms of community." (R4)

I'm experiencing that again, I think, with the role that I'm doing now. Because I'm starting to spend a lot of time with communities – First Nation communities – lots of travelling, and just that whole connecting again. I don't know how to explain it. I was trying to articulate it last night. I'm not sure how to – there's a very different sense of community." (R4)

The idea of sport and leisure activities came up as a source of connection to community. It was suggested by some that sport and activity can lead to greater interaction among Aboriginal peoples and between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples. The idea is that this interaction can lead to greater understanding between peoples.

"Having fastball tournaments, everyone knew when a tournament was coming and we all participated in those when it was an event." (R6)

"A good example is the American Indigenous Games that we had in 2002. Manitoba kicked ass! We did so well. And, you know, it was kids from all over Manitoba coming together." (R6)

Interactions that occur between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples during sport can go a long way toward building that sense of community connection between these two peoples.

"It makes the workplace a lot easier to prepare if these people have been already interacting together. Maybe they played on a hockey team together. A lot of guys I am always surprised like sports, being what they are, are very good grounds for interaction among the younger generation." (R3)

Celebrating Aboriginal community can also build connections.

“Recognizing the fundamental makeup of who we are and quite comfortable in the city of Winnipeg, in general, in saying that the Aboriginal community is huge and one of the best examples of that is, I think, the Pan Am games. And, in hosting the Pan Am games and how much the Aboriginal community was involved and celebrated as part of that.” (R1)

One participant mentioned the idea of social capital and how community connections have a value in of itself.

“I think it was, there was a professor at the University of Winnipeg and they studied a few of the neighbourhoods and they drew this kind of map of all of the linkages in this neighbourhood and a string between each contact that there had ever been. So you had this map with strings everywhere, strings connected everywhere and so it was all a part about being good neighbours and giving to each other but it is never really valued by society in the bigger sense. So it is basically social capital, I guess.” (R5)

There can also be a sense of disconnect with these varied communities. In one case, an individual had a hard time adjusting to moving into an urban area and consequently did not feel connected to the community.

“We moved to W----- which was very non-Aboriginal and so we had difficulty fitting in, in the community. We didn’t really feel a part of the community.” (R1)

Another participant talked about not being connected with the Aboriginal people in their neighbourhood and attributed this to being at different stages in their lives than those other Aboriginal people.

“And when I’m at home in my neighbourhood, there are Aboriginal families there but we’re not connecting. And it’s by choice and, again, it’s just – you know, they’re much older or really young and I’m in the middle where my children are a little bit older and they’re doing their own thing. And it just works that way.” (R6)

There can also be a feeling of not fitting in that can lead to a feeling of disconnection from an individual's community.

“What ended up happening is that, um, my kids had to take buses to school and they were not very happy at all in the schools that they were in. My kids didn't like, uh, my oldest daughter especially because she was in junior high in grade seven, really didn't fit in at all and looked Aboriginal like you know she had the look to her.” (R1)

Involvement in Community:

Many of the participants told stories of their positive experiences of being involved in their communities, whether it was where they lived, worked or played. One participant described how their neighbourhood would engage you to become involved and how this was a healthy experience for them.

“They have a strategic way of engaging you and trying to get you involved in the community whether it is through your children, through sports, through knocking on your door and welcoming you, they know who is in their community.” (R1)

This participant also described how they felt involved in their community growing up because their parents were actively involved in the community.

“When I was growing up I have some good memories of the community we lived in. I'm not sure if that's because both my parents were involved in the community.” (R1)

Another participant was motivated by a desire to help others who are in need. They learned this from their upbringing, that you always help those in need.

Looking at what my role is, I guess I have a view that and um, it has evolved over the years, but as a youth and as a person growing up in the family I grew up in, you got involved in the community to help out with others. (R1)

Further to this they describe their community of origin as having places and organizations that kept you actively engaged. From this person's experience involvement in the community doesn't just occur, it is actively pursued by individual and organizational effort.

"I do recall participating in the community and having ongoing... things we did in the community together as a community. You know like, I remember the church on Sunday and then having the whole ritual of everyone being there and the singing, gearing up for Christmas pageant, the gearing up for, you know, Easter Sunday and lent and everything and a lot of that had to do with the church at the time. But, even outside the church, community events like ball tournaments was huge." (R1)

Being appreciated and recognized for their contribution was important for one participant when it came to their involvement in their community.

"Just doing, that sense of being appreciated. That you know that all the hard work that you did was worth it." (R5)

There were many reasons given for becoming involved in communities, reasons that they became motivated to strive to improve their community. For one participant that reason was they were seeing too much racism and wanted to make a difference in this regard.

"I think another big reason I was involved in community work as I began to be more and more involved is because I started to see way too much intercultural racism." (R5)

This participant also pointed to a desire to gain a sense of place or belonging and for them this could be achieved through participation.

"So there are lots of reasons that I got involved and the big thing was to get a sense of place in where you are." (R5)

A third participant thought it was important to become involved in community because of their belief that the Aboriginal community needs to build itself from within. Furthermore, that it needs to move away from its dependence on the system and start to help itself become a strong community.

“What motivates me is: I feel that our community is – the only way we can develop and develop our community is that it has to be done from within. We have to do it ourselves.” (R4)

“We’ve become dependent on others. You know, we’re a community that’s dependent on the system or whatever the case may be. And I’m a strong believer that, until you can empower the people within your own community to build it themselves, then that’s what we need. So I feel that we can’t stay dependent on individuals to do things for us, that we need to step up as individuals and participate in our own community, at whatever level that is for individuals. So I think, if we’re going to move from the state of being the state of where we’re at right now as a community, we really need our own people to start doing things within our own community to develop us. I think it’s important.” (R4)

Barriers to involvement in the community existed for the participants. Some of the participants talked about being too busy with training, family, or work related responsibilities to become involved and how this could be a barrier.

“I was still (working) on reserves too and I, the first part I was going, first to my Masters, finishing up my masters degree, and then pregnant with my fourth child so I really wasn’t out into the community either so that was part of it, it definitely played a role.” (R1)

“Because there are other families but, again, we don’t get together with them. We don’t socialize with them the other families in those kind of places, like a school event. It’s just social functions that we meet and it’s very brief. I don’t engage. I don’t engage as much because I don’t have the time to get involved in all the little committees that they have. Because I have a whole bunch of other committees that I’m involved in at these other communities.” (R6)

Another participant related how in their experience there are many out there that would like to become involved but do not know how and how some may be scared away by internal politics that sometimes occurs in communities.

“As I said, I think that there are a whole lot more people out there who want to get involved and would like a method to get involved but they just don’t know how. And, if you get involved in a community agency or organization that has a specific mandate or they are in a battle with some other community agency or organization I think that that is probably worse than not getting involved because then you get the subtle indoctrination.” (R5)

A participant talked about how sometimes a community itself being involved together. This participant relates experiences where diverse members of a community will look out for each others welfare in a communal way. This would appear to be healthy behaviour for a community.

“So if it means street patrol or foot patrol or watching out for a particular gang, individual and where they’re walking, people all take a turn informing each other, “This is where they are. This is where he is. Watch out for this.” That’s success because they’re watching for each other, as well as the businesses in that neighbourhood. “Okay, heads up. He’s out of jail” or “He’s here. You know, be aware. Make sure you have your doors locked or make sure there’s extra eyes, you know? This is where he’s at.” (R6)

“So I’ve had that experience over in the S----- neighbourhood where there is that community watch, which is a success. And it’s everybody; that’s business owners, too - the community members that live in the residences there and the folks that do come to the Centre at (?) S----- and to sit around the table and be a part of the solution in helping their neighbourhood for safety or clean-up.” (R6)

Summary:

The second theme was a collection of the participant’s experiences with community.

Many of the participants talked about how they are seeing positive changes within the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg and beyond. These positives changes are: an increasing population base; a growing recognition that the Aboriginal community can

contribute to positive change through community level participation and that the growing middle class may be able to help provide this contribution; and that positive examples can be taken from educational settings and from reserves. For many, family is the first level of community and it can provide strength and knowledge.

The phenomenon of Aboriginal rapport came out of the participant's experiences in relation to community. Rapport, or the unspoken connection and understanding that may occur between Aboriginal peoples can influence where Aboriginal people chose to shop, work, interact, live, and play.

The participants shared their experiences of feeling connected to community and in some cases feeling disconnected. There was expressed a desire to be connected with the Aboriginal community and the general community. This connection was achieved in many ways including through involvement in activities, sport, the arts, and through involvement in the community (e.g. volunteerism, sharing expertise). A sense of identity can also lead to greater feelings of connection. For some this connection to community was passed down generationally while for others it can come from an outside entity (e.g. welcomed to a new community). Some participants did share experiences of disconnect. This sense of disconnect could come from an unwelcoming community, different stages of life in community, and a feeling of not fitting in.

Building on the last sub-theme around community connections is the participant's experiences with involvement in their communities. Motivations to become involved are

explored in theme 4, “giving back,” however, some are mentioned here as they relate specifically to being involved in community. The desire to make positive changes and to try to alleviate some of the bad experiences of Aboriginal peoples is one motivating factor. The desire for a sense of place is given as another example of a motivating factor for involvement. Being involved can be encouraged through neighbourhoods that keep you engaged, parents that set a positive example and encourage involvement in the community, and community organizations that keep you involved and recognize contributions. The participants also mention that there are barriers to involvement such as family and work responsibilities, not knowing how to become involved, and discouragement from internal politics in Aboriginal organizations.

Theme # 3 Dysfunction:

Although an effort was made to elicit positive experiences of a healthy community there were nonetheless many stories of dysfunctional or unhealthy communities. Dysfunction came in two general forms: systemic and individual.

Systemic Dysfunction:

Experiences of systemic dysfunction by the participants of this study came in many forms including: internal politics; governmental dysfunction; and economic dysfunction. We shall start with internal politics. One participant expressed concern over political infighting occurring in the Aboriginal community.

“I also got involved with the (organization) for that purpose; to say, is there a single organization out there that might provide a platform to work in a way that is comprehensive and not getting stuck in all these little factions that are going on in the community... Some of the factions are based on principle; some of them are just based on pure personalities that don’t get along.” (R5)

“It is hard to describe what is the community because there are so many, uh, factions. People are so just fighting each other all the time and it is very despairing to see that happening. And, it’s different, the different ways that people work and see the world.” (R5)

This participant felt that Aboriginal organizations were being misrepresented by a small minority that was fighting in a very public manner.

“So they fight and it becomes very public and it’s not great for the rest of the Aboriginal people in Winnipeg to see these fights become such public, I mean you are basically airing your dirty laundry in public essentially. And they become very public and they become not a very good representation of good work that is going on out there.” (R5)

It was suggested that one of the reasons for this fighting is finite resources. There are only so many government grants and other funding monies out there. Often times many worthy community organizations have to compete for these limited funds and this can lead to some resentment on the part of those that do not get funding.

“The FN Metis thing comes about because one group gets, has, you know, and one group has not. So it’s between the haves and have-nots. You see more and more FN groups politically denying Metis. Because from their perspective if the Metis get a foot in the door through (the federal government) and rights nationally then it means less for them. So that may be a resource thing.” (R5)

Government dysfunction is suggested as another barrier to a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. The process of colonization is suggested by one participant as a destructive force. One participant described how the government took away the Aboriginal peoples religion and then their children in order to convert them to Western culture.

“So the Mediwin went underground for a hundred years. The government, the church of the day, thought that the best way to colonize this country was to take over all the, get rid of all the religious aspects of these people.” (R3)

“They had done this before, they knew that if you take away the people’s religion they are going to get all discombobulated. You take away their kids and they will fall apart, and that is exactly what happened here in Canada.” (R3)

This participant also related an experience of learning that this had happened in other countries as well.

“Believe it or not, I found so many similarities, I met this Hindu guy on a plane and we were talking about his country, India and how, Canada, and how the British came in under the guise of friendship. And then they created treaties which gave them the power and then they never kept their part of the bargain but they were able to bring their armies in during the process. They did it the same way in India that they did it in Canada! Same way they did it in the States, same way they did it in China. Wherever they went they did it in the same way, and it worked because they came in under the guise of trust, as friends.” (R3)

Some of the participants have suggested that governments have resisted taking responsibility for the disparities between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of the Canadian population.

“So a lot of times the government, you can tell them the truth, but whether or not they will accept it is different. A lot of them don’t and a lot of them can’t and some of them don’t because they don’t know what to do with it once they’ve accepted it. They have to react, they have to do something. So they’ll either ignore it or they will challenge it as a misrepresented, that way they don’t have to do anything about it, you know.” (R3)

“Because the Manitoba Government would never put in Aboriginal specific stuff, they will not. The only way that we have gotten Aboriginal specific stuff is when the Federal Government puts it in and then the Manitoba Government hates it because they are then forced to continue it, right. You have Head-start, which was federal; CAP-C was under that. If it wasn’t for the federal government putting in these programs, Aboriginal people in Manitoba would be in exactly the same place that we were 25 to 30 years ago.” (R5)

Some of the participants see the Indian Act as a source of government dysfunction in its own right.

“So, government goes in and invests in market based housing but we still haven’t dealt with fundamental issues of the Indian Act and how communities are governed and overseen by this Act, you know antiquated legislation that doesn’t meet modern needs.” (R1)

“You know, as long as you have the Indian Act that suppresses, or oppresses people. Then you have a reserve system that forces people to stay on reserves and programs for Indians ON RESERVES! Then you have oppression and you have discrimination and it is very alive in Canada.” (R3)

Government instituted residential schools have been suggested by some of the participants to have led to dysfunction in Aboriginal communities. One participant suggested that there is an intergenerational consequence to the children of those that

suffered under the residential schools system and gives lack of parenting skills as an example.

“That the work they are doing in building in programming for the community members that were impacted by, directly impacted by residential school – will assist. But, what the gap is still going to be is that generation, my generation, who might not have attended residential schools but certainly were impacted by our parents who did. You know, and their lack of parenting skills that existed because of that.” (R1)

This participant then goes on to describe whole communities that were negatively affected by the residential school system. They describe how people have lost their way because they have no connection to the past.

“It’s a perpetual syndrome of depression in those communities and it is almost like a whole community depression of mentality and because there is a lack of link back into the land and where things were and people stuck in the past and that whole disconnect from the residential schools that happened.” (R1)

The last form of systemic dysfunction that came out of the participants experiences were related to economics and came in many forms such as disparity, movement away from a traditional economy, and the welfare system. Experiences of disparity are detailed here first. One participant made the suggestion that in order for the Aboriginal community to become healthier there is a need to bridge the economic gaps that exist.

“Our community well-being, when you look at the gaps of our community, when comparing to other communities is quite significant. We’re closing that gap but in housing, income, in the labour force, in education, it’s huge, you know comparable to communities right next door. So, until we start to fundamentally work in addressing, some of those communities can’t get beyond looking at the positive things to give our youth opportunities, uhh, you know, when employment rates are there.” (R1)

“But I feel like a lot of the people in the community are still hurting from many, many years of their cyclical poverty and whatever contributed to that.” (R2)

One participant believes that it is best to help those that are most in need. Those that are most keenly experiencing economic disparity are the ones that most need help and should be given it.

“The other 25% are the one that you see struggling. Those are the ones that are always in the news, either getting into trouble for one reason or another or they are making noise for better service, because those are the ones that are having a hard time.” (R3)

“So we focus on the ones that aren’t successful, and those would be the young ones that come into the City.” (R3)

One participant talked about the lack of basic institutions and infrastructure such as banks or social services in areas that have a high concentration of Aboriginal residents in Winnipeg as a type of disparity.

“Well, not in the North End, though. In the South End, there is. But you know what I mean? There’s institutions; those places exist. But if you have families that have never had access to that, which – economic education is very, very important for many, not just being Aboriginal and the locations in which we live. So geographically, I think, you’re at a disadvantage because there may not be too many institutions around.” (R4)

“There’s the stereotype of: “Well, they don’t have money, anyway. So why would you give them a bank for that, you know?” And that’s why we don’t have institutions in the North End, right? Everybody moved out of Selkirk Avenue. There’s nobody with money there.” (R4)

One participant makes the point that the welfare system has had a negative systemic affect on Aboriginal peoples in two distinct ways. It was suggested that dependence on a monthly government allowance has changed traditional ideas of group sharing into individualistic behaviour.

“Because I still remember when someone killed a moose or a deer or whatever. It was shared among that clan or that family. And so, everybody would have that. And then, when people stopped hunting and stopped fishing, we relied more on the subsistence that was offered by the, I guess, community of the Welfare

authorities. And then, everybody became very individual because everyone had their cheques that they got. And there was not this interdependence on each other anymore.” (R3)

The second way that the welfare system has had a negative effect is related to the image it gives of Aboriginal peoples. One participant explained an upsetting experience of coming across research done ‘on’ Aboriginal peoples that puts the onus on them to “get off welfare” as a solution to socioeconomic issues. Additionally, this participant felt that research like this in the wrong hands could be counterproductive to healthy Aboriginal communities.

“A fellow out West and I wish we would have remembered his name. But he had a PhD in something. He’s Aboriginal. And he did all this research. His big conclusion, which kind of annoyed me to no end, was that - you know what? His whole thing was: “Aboriginal people – get off Welfare.” That was the conclusion. “Get off Welfare. Stop depending on the Government and do –“. That kind of attitude does not help us at all, at all.” (R3)

“There are racist people out there who love to hear that kind of thing and jump on that. And they say, “Well, you’re your own worst enemy. You’re the ones – you’re the reason why you’re on Welfare. You know, if you’d stop feeling sorry for yourself –“. You know what I mean?” (R3)

Individual Dysfunction:

The participants also talked about experiences of individual dysfunction and how these contribute to an unhealthy community. Individual dysfunction came in several forms: addictions, racism; and family.

Several participants talked about experiences of addictions in the form of alcohol, drugs, and gambling. They related how addictions can be damaging to the community itself.

“But the unhealthy side of that is I also remember the Alcoholism. Alcohol related to everything and I remember a lot of alcohol related deaths that happened in those communities too. So, you know, it’s a mix.” (R1)

“I know addictions play a huge part in the Aboriginal community. And that’s a real general statement to make. But because - if it’s not alcohol, it’s gambling or it could be any other type, any other form.” (R2)

One participant talked about how addictions can affect family and how it is learned from parents to their children.

“Well, in my own family, my mother was an alcoholic for a large part of her younger life. She only quit drinking when I was 18. But then, after she did that, she continued to go to bingo. So she still – and is bingo an addiction? I don’t know. It’s a mild form of it, I guess. It’s a way that she socialized. And then, now all my sisters and brothers go to bingo.” (R2)

Another participant related how addictions can destroy entire communities. The example of Alkali Lake³ is given as a community that had fallen apart because of rampant addiction.

It’s a constant job trying to keep it healthy. Some communities are succeeding better than others, you know. I mean some of these communities are famous for their dysfunction; we try not to get there. You have probably heard of Alkali Lake, well, we have Alkali Lakes in Manitoba where the whole community is dysfunctional because of drugs or alcohol. (R3)

Experiences of racism were diverse. One participant related their experiences of individual racism based on how they look and also related how they have had to adjust the way they do their work in order to manage people’s stereotypes.

“Working in the field that I’m in, and talking to people over the phone - They don’t know who I am yet. They’ve just heard my voice and heard what I’m talking about and bringing some good things. And if I go to meet them, at their site and everything else, I’m walking through the door and, depending on which site I’m going to, they’re like, “What are you doing here?” and “What are you

³ Alkali Lake has since turned around there community and become an example to other communities experiencing severe social and economic issues (Four Worlds International Institute, 2008).

looking for?” and “We’re closed.” Automatically, Boom! And I’m going, “Well, actually, I have a meeting with –“. You know, I’d make sure I have the name and the time and all that information. I still do that. If I’m going to someplace new, I make sure I have the e-mail that was sent to me. I make sure I know who the individual is and I make sure that I’m at the right spot. And then I show – I’m showing the paper, that: “This is who I’ve talked to and talked to; and I’m expected.” And then, the whole look on their face and the whole approach is changed after I’ve identified myself. And they’re going, “Oh.” You know, they’re taken back a little bit by “Okay. Nice to meet you. Sorry about that.” Then the apologies will come.” (R6)

Another participant described their experience with internal racism among Aboriginal peoples. This is where some groups of Aboriginal people may treat other groups poorly based on differences in, for example, Aboriginality, treaty rights, or skin colour.

“Where within the Aboriginal community if you didn’t dress a certain way, if you didn’t, you know, I don’t know there are just so many things that add so much fighting and stuff like this.” (R5)

Family dysfunction is a detriment to a healthy community according to some participants who provided experiences of unhealthy families or the lack of family supports in the urban centre as examples of an unhealthy community. For one participant, a healthy family is central to success in all parts of life. For this participant, an unhealthy family life can lead to dysfunction in everything else in an individual’s life.

“A healthy community involves, that you have to have a healthy family. Because if you don’t have a healthy family everything else is going to suffer. You can provide all those other services in the community but if your family is unhealthy it will not matter.” (R3)

“The struggling families struggle through everything. They struggle through school, they struggle with medical issues, they struggle with housing issues, they struggle with everything. Yet, across the street, maybe their cousin, who are a healthy family are dealing with all these issues that come to them. And the fact of the matter is that there are issues but it is in the matter that you deal with them, you know, that defines the end result or defines the person that is being challenged by these issues.” (R3)

One participant explains that many may not have an unhealthy family environment but may have no family at all in the place where they live. It is suggested that this is a hard situation for these individuals many who are young parents and do not have the skills to manage their and their children's lives without the support of family.

“It's the ones that came here on their own, single parent, with no supports, no family supports. Because agencies, God bless them, are just not family. And as much as they try to provide the services of a family, they're just not. They're just not there, they are not there at all in the night, in the home, at 3 in the morning, at nine in the evening, they will not be there when a baby is cutting teeth and the mother has been up for 3 or 4 nights already, you know.” (R3)

Summary:

Dysfunction, according to the experiences of the participants, comes in two forms, systemic and individual. The infighting that occurs between Aboriginal groups and organizations is one form of systemic dysfunction. This infighting can often be very public giving Aboriginal groups a bad name and is often related to competing for limited funds available for their respective goals. The fact that there is not enough available funding points to potential governmental dysfunction. Former (e.g. residential schools) and current (e.g. Indian Act) government policies are another form of governmental dysfunction. Disparity between Aboriginal peoples and other Winnipeggers in income and access to services (e.g. banks in areas of the city that have a high Aboriginal population) is still an ongoing issue. The welfare system itself has a very negative stigma and image attached to it and can create a dependency situation that may not be healthy in the long term for the Aboriginal community.

Theme # 4 Giving Back:

The idea of giving back to the community was a key theme that emerged from the participants experiences. I have broken this theme into three general sub-themes: why there is a motivation to give back; what forms this 'giving back' can take; and how participation could be made easier. What the motivations are to give back will be explained first.

Motivation:

There were many different reasons that the participants were motivated to give back to their community. Among these were: citizenship; importance of sharing; sense of responsibility; internal drive to improve community; strong sense of community; sense of obligation; sense of opportunity; learned to give back from upbringing; and giving back as strength. Some participants talked about having a desire to give back out of a sense of citizenship, of being a part of something larger and wanting to contribute to that.

“And now I certainly see myself as that and I have kind of moulded into that, thoughts of citizenship and civic-ness and as an Aboriginal person in giving back to the community of Winnipeg so that Aboriginal, the Aboriginal community can benefit.” (R1)

“I’m a strong believer that we’re a community that – first of all, I’m very passionate about giving back. I think it’s really important to give back. And I don’t just donate to those organizations; I also donate to others that are non-Aboriginal. So I feel it’s important.” (R4)

Feeling a sense of responsibility because they were better off and wanting to help others get to that point motivated one individual.

“And you know, I’ve always considered myself, even when I didn’t have a lot, having something more than so I had to help out and give back.” (R1)

“You need to feel like they, yes you have rights but with those rights comes a responsibility and a responsibility to your community through volunteering, through engaging, and through, you know, giving back.” (R1)

Another participant talked about recognizing that motivated individuals had been helped at some time in their life and it was likely this help that spurred them on to help their communities. This recognition motivates this individual to help out others in order to continue the importance of contributing to society to the next generation.

“Like the people in (Aboriginal Board), my colleagues in (Aboriginal Board), they are all those kind of people. Someone has vested in them this interest, this know how and this drive that puts them on (Aboriginal Board) and on half a dozen (*other*) committees.” (R3)

Another participant related how they were given opportunities in the form of education and participation and that they felt a responsibility to give back as a form of repayment for these opportunities.

“So it was that and a big part of it was always a sense that, having this incredible opportunity to go to school I had an obligation a moral obligation to give back.” (R5)

“The other was that sense of giving back, having had that incredible opportunity to be able to give back and to participate.” (R5)

Another participant suggested that they feel it is a part of their job to support their Aboriginal community whether through social events or solidarity for Aboriginal causes.

“Then you know, personally I feel that it is part of my job to go over there and help them to support that initiative, whether it is by paying admission to the dinner or the social or by volunteering or just being there, like when you have a, like when sometimes they call for these marches, these demonstration marches. I’ve been to more marches than I would care to talk about.” (R3)

As has been previously detailed there has been much said about learning while growing up that you help out and participate in the betterment of your community. For one participant this motivates them to give back to the community

“And that may be again where growing up where you are not expected or supposed to put yourself first, and again none of that was written, it was that sense that you don’t put yourself first but when someone asks you to do something you gladly do it.” (R5)

One participant made the suggestion that giving back is strength for them and that is therefore a self motivating behaviour.

“Yeah. That’s, I think, where that success is, where your strengths lie and where you’re able to go if your – the support’s there from your family and you have a leeway from your work that you’re able to give that time, to be able to give to that special event, to that -----.” (R6)

One participant explained that it is important when giving back to the community that there is a reciprocal reaction from those benefiting from the effort. If the other side does not make the effort to continue this benefit then maybe the effort is better used elsewhere.

“And where you give it: is it going to help them move further along the stream of their goal(?). If it’s not, then I’m going to say ‘No’. “I won’t give you that time. But if you’re with these folks and you want to really do this, then I will give you my time. But if you’re not going to honour that by saying that you’re going to follow through on your side, well, I’m not going to give it to you.” (R6)

What Forms Does Giving Back to the Community Take?

Volunteerism was the first form that came from the participants experiences. Their volunteer experiences were diverse and included general volunteering, sitting on Boards, and volunteering for Aboriginal specific organizations

“Through volunteering and through engaging and participating and also providing financially through contributions.” (R1)

“I have sat on a number of boards. I’ve sat on ----- Board – was one of them. I’ve been on other boards, like the (Board) was one. It’s a local newspaper. I sat on the board of the (Education Board) where I graduated from. I volunteered on various committees with the -----.” (R2)

“I also volunteer. That is where I volunteer my time, has been in organizations or groups that work with and for Aboriginal people.” (R4)

One participant also donated monetarily as a form of giving back to their community but they still volunteered because they felt this was important too.

“I’ve donated financially to different events. I have brought food. I have lent manpower.” (R4)

“I don’t always have the time so sometimes I feel guilty and donate money. Because I think time is more important, personally.” (R4)

Some participants used their positions of power, knowledge or influence to give back to the community in diverse ways.

“And so, now, I feel like I’m in a position to go and share with people who will listen, when people say, “Well, how can we help the Aboriginal community?” (R2)

“And the ----- Centre, at that time, too, used to have a Christmas party. When I was a kid, we’d all go over there every year and we used to get a Christmas present. So actually one of the things, when I worked at the -----, is: I was in a position of decision-making so I could make some decisions of where we donated money. So once I moved into that level, I donated it to the ----- Centre. And every year, not only donated some money but I borrowed some staff – some Aboriginal staff – and wrapped those presents because they would wrap, you know, something like 500 presents and give out to all the kids in the community.” (R4)

“And it’s mostly community gatherings and events where I’ve had the success, ‘cuz you’re working towards it and everybody’s taking a piece to make it happen. And I’m glad to give that little piece, you know, to make it happen, even if it meant just making a quick phone call to get a fire pit or to get the canopy or the coffee pot – the actual coffee pot to plug in because theirs broke and where do I call? I call my centres. “Oh, I’ve got 3.” “Oh, save the day. We’ve got coffee,” you know – just little things like that, the little successes that make that bigger picture even that much more fun.” (R6)

Ideas to Increase Participation:

Some participants made the point that one of the mainstream methods of community involvement is donating money to charity and that this method may not be appropriate for many Aboriginal peoples that have low income. It is suggested that other, less monetary forms of involvement may make it easier for these individuals to participate in the improvement of their communities.

“As an Aboriginal community we’re something like 62% of the population live on \$20K or less, it is pretty hard to fit the Western norm of giving which is through dollars.” (R5)

“But in a sense, culturally, that doesn’t fit anyway. Dollars isn’t enough. So to figure out what kind of mechanism needs to be put in place that can help people to give back, or, even to recognize how much people give back, you know. Like, everything is measured in terms of how much money you can give.” (R5)

One interesting idea that came out of the experiences of the participants was around the need for an invitation to participate. Providing a personal invite to participate in some way for the betterment of their community was necessary, according to some of the participants, for Aboriginal people to feel comfortable being involved.

“Like when I worked up north I wanted to get involved earlier but when I worked up north I really couldn’t. Once I was approached it was a lot easier like to, but, prior to being approached.” (R5)

“So for me it was that opening that opening that somebody asked me to be involved and once I got that I was able to move forward.” (R5)

“I guess that’s the big piece there, is the invitation: taking the time to invite people directly. “Hey, I know you. I know you like this. I want you to come out. You need to be aware of this, though. Why don’t we do this, if you’ll come. Say you’ll come.” And I guess that’s the nice piece there that I’m able to contribute because I’ve lived in that and worked in that neighbourhood and I know who’s been there for the long haul and that I would invite them to come to the Centre now.” (R6)

One participant suggested that many may have good ideas but may be uncomfortable pushing them on others. This is why inviting them to participate gives them the idea that their contribution is wanted and their ideas are valid.

“But, always, always it is upon someone asking it is not about saying “I have the greatest idea for you and this is what you should do”, it’s not that way it’s always in the asking, yeah it’s always an invitation. Somehow it is wrong to put yourself out front, and be out there and be pushing an agenda.” (R5)

One participant suggested that there are large numbers of people out there willing to volunteer and that providing them with an invite to participate could be a huge opportunity for the health of the urban Aboriginal community

“I think that the general Aboriginal, I believe that there are huge numbers of people out there who want to help but they don’t know how. And until they can have, they get this personal invitation and someone to walk with them until they are comfortable.” (R5)

Summary:

The small group of Urban Aboriginal participants that were interviewed were motivated to give back to their community by a strong sense of connection to that community, with these motivations coming in many forms such as an ingrained sense of citizenship; having learned the importance of sharing; a sense of responsibility and obligation; and a strong sense of community and an internal drive to improve that community. Others believed that giving back was an opportunity and chance to build on an existing strength.

Giving back came in many forms for the participants. They gave by volunteering their time, by donating money when appropriate, and by giving back through expertise and influence.

The next idea that came from the participant's experiences may be the most important idea to come out of this research project. What strategies can be undertaken to increase the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in cities? The participants suggested that concentrating on getting them involved through participation and volunteerism rather than canvassing for money may be more appropriate given certain socio-demographic realities at this time (i.e. disparity of incomes). Further to this it was suggested that a formal invite to participate may be the best method to get them involved because many will not get involved because they do not want to push their ideas on anyone. This links with the earlier discussion on values where Aboriginal people are willing to help and collaborate but may not be willing to provide this help without an invitation from those that desire the help.

Theme # 5 Healthy Community:

This theme covers the many facets of a healthy community from the experiences of the participants. This theme is broken into three general sub-themes: biophysical health; generational health; and healthy community.

Biophysical health:

Some participants shared their experiences of the physical health of Aboriginal peoples. Obesity and obesity related diseases were areas of concern for these participants and conceivably important to the health of a community. The participants relate their concerns over the physical health of Aboriginal peoples, some even noticing changes within their lifetimes.

“In a healthy community it is very hard to focus on physical, uhh, mental health too and the broader spiritual health without the physical health and part of that physical health is very much about where our communities are at and community well-being is not healthy right now.” (R1)

“And now, it’s kind of reversed. If you look around, no matter where I go, I notice the number of people that are overweight. You might see one or two people that are not overweight.” (R2)

“And I can’t believe the number of people that get cancer. In my own family, no-one ever got cancer. My mother died of cancer. My Dad died of a massive heart attack. He was overweight.” (R2)

A lack of access to traditional foods and poor eating habits and food choices as well as a decrease in activity levels are suggested as possible reasons for increased obesity in Aboriginal communities. Some participants described their traditional foods while they were growing up and note that they were likely healthier choices.

“And we didn’t have - all those really bad foods were not as easily accessible. So when we did have, say, candy, it was on a very rare occasion. So our diet was a

lot of – well, our fruits and vegetables came in the summer. But through the winter months, we ate a lot of meat, fish. Then when summer came again, we'd have lots of fruits and vegetables again, like fresh berries. And again, everyone had these huge gardens. My grandmother would make fresh bread all the time. So, in terms of what we ate, it was a lot more healthier. And my grandmother lived to be over 100 years old. She never died of any disease; she just died of old age." (R2)

"I mean our community, by and large is pretty healthy and it remained that way, because, ah, because of where we live, ah, this is a fishing community. So a lot of the people lived off the and, we had gardens, fishing, a lot of hunting, logging, a lot of outdoor kinda work." (R3)

Another participant talked about how their community growing up was a lot more active than what they see today in the community.

"But when I look at how we lived in ----- when I grew up there, most of the people led a very active life. Most of the people still, in order to survive, had to be active. There was still fishing, hunting, trapping. We didn't have running water so you had to go somewhere to get it. So you had to be – physically, you had to be very active." (R2)

One participant describes their family's poor meal choices and lack of exercise as the reason that obesity is common in their family.

"You can't stock your fridge with chips and drinks. And you can't teach your kids that, either." But it doesn't mean anything to them, even though I tell them that. So I'm very puzzled. "You're all teachers." Six of my siblings are teachers. So they've gone through the formal education and they know all about fat and they still don't put that into practice and I'm not sure why that is." (R2)

"There's eleven of us in our family – sisters and brothers – and I'm the only one of the eleven that exercises regularly. I don't understand why. And I tell them that. I said, "The reason why I haven't put on all the weight that you have is because you have to exercise regularly." (R2)

Generational Health:

The impacts of generational roots on health were suggested as important to the health of the community. What you learn from (or don't learn from) your parents and pass on to your children can have a healthy or unhealthy effect on the individual and the community. The residential school experience was put forward as an example of a source of a loss of generational knowledge and therefore health.

“The way that the community is set up in having it's roots established at some generational levels where the people in that community often times had lived there for generations and their parents lived there and their parents... So, I think a healthy community can build and grow by those generations.” (R1)

“So that made us different as individuals growing up and the impact we have had with our kids, the generational impact of that is they have a chance, much more of a chance, you know, we had a chance and then they had a chance because of that. So, I think that, you know, if you have that healthy intergenerational it does pass on, it's definitely there. The negative and the unhealthy see it on the other side. I can look at relatives, first cousins, who, you know, are completely different than perhaps someone who grew up in under (?), and the impacts, so.” (R1)

This participant related how it might be several generations before the damage caused by parenting skills not being passed down through the generations is alleviated.

“with them, I see that not being dealt with necessarily fully but there's some component and until we get beyond and get some good parenting, deal with the gaps, communities can't go on and I think it will be a couple of generations until you start to see some impact. will be a couple of generations until you start to see some impact.” (R1)

Another participant related how even if you have become successful in life there will still be many ways that you can be at a disadvantage. You have to learn things as an adult because your parents had no experiences with such things. This participant gives buying a house as an example of a new experience. There was no knowledge passed down from their parents.

“I’m the first person in my family to graduate from high school, to work in a non-Aboriginal community, to own a house. So if that has never been the cultural norm within your family, how do you get there? I remember going -- when I first bought my house, I had no idea what I was -- I worked for a bank and I still didn’t understand what the hell I was doing. And it took another Aboriginal friend of mine who had purchased a house before to kind of explain the process. But I had no idea ‘cuz I have no family. No-one in my family could say: “Well, this is what you need to do. You need a lawyer.” No, I didn’t understand all the things that I had to go through. And I worked in the institutions.” (R4)

Healthy Community:

This section describes the many different factors that can contribute to a healthy community from the experiences of the participants.

It was important to some of the participants to emphasize the positive image of the Aboriginal community. In other words, it is healthy for the community to recognize the healthy parts of the community. One participant pointed to the current state of the Aboriginal presence in Winnipeg and noted that this is movement toward a healthy community

“Like if you look at the Aboriginal Council and the building on Higgins and all the activity that goes on at the Aboriginal centre there along with the connection to the community itself and from that being right in there I think that my experience is that Winnipeg itself has been taking some very strategic directions into trying to engage the community.” (R1)

Another participant commented on how a healthy community would need to have Aboriginal people in positions of power that provide leadership by encouraging individuals to think of what they can do to contribute to positive change in the community.

“And I think people would feel better about what’s going on in the community, to know that we are a very resilient group of people and we’re going to survive.

And are some people going to die? Yes, we are and some people are going to commit suicide because it's so hopeless. Or they think it's hopeless. But I think we have a responsibility and a role in the community to give another message, and that message is: "There is hope and our job, for those of us that have been in power to make change and to do good things, is to teach other people that it's possible." (R2)

"Everyone can take some responsibility for what's going to happen to them. And I really think, if people started believing that, they'll feel more empowered to go out there and make really positive changes." (R2)

"But there's certainly some groups in the community that'll concentrate on all the bad stuff that's happened to us all our life. And where is that going to get you, really? If that's all you – you need to start thinking about some positive changes you can make personally. And I think that'll have an impact on the overall community as a whole." (R2)

One participant made the estimate that most of the Aboriginal people living in Winnipeg are succeeding at this point and are living quite well in all sections of the City.

"But, I think, 75% plus are on their feet, and they are going fine, they are doing good. I bet that 3 out of 4 Aboriginals that come into the City are doing just OK." (R3)

"You know it is not everybody, you can find Aboriginal people in all sections of the City, you know, they have bigger beautiful houses than anybody else you would ever know, but you wouldn't know it (Theme around the importance of a positive image for the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg), they are not going to come out there and brag about their success." (R3)

Another participant sees positive things in the future for urban Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. This individual thinks that the positive will soon outweigh the negative that is seen in the media and then that negative will become a thing of the past.

"I think we are on a cusp; on one side of the cusp are all those negative things in the media; and on the other side of the cusp are all the positive things going on. And, I think we are just going to head over that cusp and that negative side will just drift away." (R5)

"But, thirty years ago, all Aboriginal people were essentially invisible in Winnipeg, they became visible only for the negative parts you see on the street

corners and stuff like that. And, as we get more involved, not only within our own organizations, but within the mainstream organizations, I think that is where we will come over that edge. And, you start, to see the positive going on.” (R5)

One participant suggested that opportunities that deflect people from destructive behaviours can help to create a healthy community

“And if you can create something that’s positive and that takes a break a little bit from that – some negative things that they do with alcohol, drugs, prostitution or just the abuses of physical, you know: to take that bit of a break, I think that’s a nice thing. And if you can create that opportunity, then that’s a success.” (R6)

“Voting with your feet” or moving from an unhealthy environment to a healthy environment can be seen as a healthy behaviour.

“Even if you try to keep yourself healthy and one little family unit that those impact and sometimes you have to leave the community to go into broader, and, I’ve strategically taken my kids and my family to communities that I view as healthy and if I feel like they are threatened or they are not going to have a healthy environment then I will leave. I will move on and I will take them to where I think they will be surrounded by opportunities to be in a healthy environment.” (R1)

The impact of dedicated individuals on the health of the community cannot be underestimated. Some of the participants related from their experiences how dedicated individuals can help to make meaningful change. The examples below describe how one individual had impacted the lives of many children and how dedicated individuals can help to inspire others to similar dedication.

“in ----- and my mother was an educator in an inner city community in -----
- and she taught in that community for only five years but she has taught throughout the years and I think what makes a community healthy sometimes is having healthy individuals care about that community. Even though she hadn’t always lived in that community she came to care about the kids and so, her legacy, because of all of that, people still remember her from where we were when we were kids. People will talk to you and say that they remember my mother and how she made an impact in their lives and they have done positive things. And then

now, we went back for this Pow-wow and she has a park named after her there in -----.” (R1)

“I think a lot of the time when you go to those kinda deals you find the people who are really committed. They are there, they are supporting it and you can tell, and you can hook up with these people and they are easier to work with when you want to get some kind of initiatives started.” (R3)

Effective Aboriginal leadership within Winnipeg is an important factor for a healthy urban Aboriginal community according to the participant’s experiences.

“Healthy communities can be impacted by, even, good community leaders, you know, definitely make that difference.” (R1)

“So I think, as a community evolves, as people take on leadership – more leadership roles and get involved, then it seems to be moving us as a community to a healthier place.” (R4)

One participant makes the claim that Aboriginal leaders are moving the community toward a healthier path than was followed in the recent past.

“I think we’re on a path to healthy community. I think what we’re seeing now is: we’re seeing a lot of leaders within the Aboriginal community that are wanting to do things in the right way for the right reasons, which are moving the masses towards more of a healthy type of community and healthy development.” (R4)

Investment in economic, recreation and social programs in Aboriginal communities and movement towards having Aboriginal peoples delivering these services can be a factor in creating a healthy community. One participant gives an example from a First Nation in B.C. of a place where the community is moving toward being healthy by providing what is necessary for youth, adult and elder needs.

“I think we are seeing it in the communities like the Oosoyoos’ who have taken economies and invested into social programming initiatives to help move their community membership along, providing them with, not just jobs but providing them Elder centres you know, for Elders to be healthy, providing youth centres so

that the youth have somewhere to go. You know, it is that idea of communities getting healthy.” (R1)

One participant made a point to mention that many Aboriginal services are now being delivered by Aboriginal peoples. The importance of this relates to the need for those who are delivering your services to understand where you are coming from and to have an understanding of the historical context that many individuals come from.

“Specifically in Winnipeg – is for the first time ever, you know, there’s programming that’s – this is just – I mean, it’s newer. It’s been around for a few years but it’s still a newer phenomena: of Aboriginal people running and delivering services for their own. And, you know, there’s not too many organizations that have a long history of that, you know? There’s only a handful – or not even a handful; there’s only a few. But you’re starting to see more now and they’re in their infancy.” (R4)

Another participant gives the example of their own Reserve as having activities and places for people to use and be healthy.

“We found that living in a healthy community makes it for a happier community all in all. I remember that we used to have field days or that the beach was always busy, there was always something happening. We had recreation directors out there doing stuff with the community. The kids were at the beach where they had activities and they had a drop in centre. My grandsons that live in the city, that live (in the city), have a drop in centre but they prefer the one (on Reserve) because it has more in it, because they have more friends up there. So in that case our drop in centre is better than the one (in the city).” (R3)

Affirmation of Aboriginal culture and history can be a source of strength for the community and this strength can come from the Elders. Teaching this in schools is one idea to make this happen.

“So, I think that is going to be the greatest source of a healthy community, our own culture, the healing circle. You know, the thunderbird house, if it gets away from its political woe’s and starts contributing.” (R3)

One participant believed that one of the key paths toward a healthy community is through exercising those core Aboriginal values of openness, honesty, respect and giving.

“Other things that make a healthy community, aside from being consistent and the invitation to members in the community, is just being sincere about your own – being open, honest, giving and respect.” (R6)

Some of the participants suggested that the cultural strength comes from the elders and that they are a resource that is becoming increasingly connected and sophisticated.

“I think that they all carry the, those teachings that we got from the Elders that time about, when we were, we were experiencing our cultural awakening, you know, I think that was what was happening to us there was uhh, we became very aware of, through the Elders, of where we were coming from and we had a lot of pride in that.” (R3)

“Elders connect. It seems like there is an Elders network that go on and there’s much more agencies that are dealing in and engaging in the Aboriginal community and I think that Winnipeg is growing in that area and will continue to grow.” (R1)

Elders also have a place in the school system according to one participant’s experiences.

Some schools in the City are also moving toward a model that is respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal culture.

“I worked in a school, they took some very strategic steps in working on language, on Elders, having them a part of the school atmosphere. And, having lunch programs as well is a part of it and having a culture of acceptance of students and keeping them involved and parents. And, I think it really had an impact in making the kids stay and at risk students staying involved. And I think that anytime you are looking at that (?) like co-op ED programs, you know, kids that weren’t necessarily academically geared towards, could take training and opportunities in other areas.” (R1)

This inclusion of Aboriginal culture in some Winnipeg schools came about by the school division working with the Aboriginal community to design an appropriate educational

model that would be respectful and inclusive for Aboriginal children. Included in this was the recovery and maintenance and of Aboriginal languages.

“The Division created this group called the Urban Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. And one of the tasks that committee had to do is develop a policy on Aboriginal education. And we did that. In that policy, we included a section on culture and a section on languages, to try and revive – maintain and revive our language. There’s something in the policy that says that these schools – (?) and Children of the Earth - would continue to provide language and culture as one of the main goals of the education system.” (R2)

According to one participant a healthy community includes schools that are holistic in their activities by including education with culture and recreational opportunities.

“I think that when you look at school atmospheres that those healthy communities that incorporate culture that incorporate beyond academic, training and sports and everything and have the well rounded opportunities for participation and geared towards actually getting the kids in and participating in a healthy environment.” (R1)

Community gatherings can be a sign of community health. One participant described a town fair from their childhood that brought the whole community together and was generally looked forward to.

“The Fair, the annual Fair of going into the town for the Fair you know, six o’clock my dad shutting down fishing and other people out there and you know, the whole community participated in the events and it was in the rural areas. I don’t know if they still, if it is still the same there but I certainly remember having that for the first part of my life and enjoying that.” (R1)

Another participant points to Aboriginal Day, an annual celebration of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. They believe that the effort put toward organizing this sort of large scale event is a sign of a healthy community.

“I mean I think, you know, I think the fact that people actually organize to come together for things like Aboriginal Day, I think that that is actually a sign of a healthy community.” (R5)

A third participant uses the example of a community clean up to illustrate a community working together and as a sign of a healthy community.

“Let’s see, some of the community gatherings ... the clean-up. The spring clean-ups, if it’s at (area 1) or (area 2) or (area 3), you really know who wants their community to be clean. They want to have that camaraderie and working together. That really comes out because, when the next issue comes up, it’s those same folks that come together around the table that want to address those issues, which leads to other events, you know? So if the clean-up is fun, whatever other party that’s coming up or issue, those same folks will come to the table.” (R6)

Community organizations that provide support to individuals in need can be a source of community health. This participant tells a story of how an Aboriginal service organization came through for them in a time of crisis and uses this as an example of how community can look after each other.

“We were driving back so I had 17 hours ahead of me of driving. You know, I just found out my father had a stroke and we didn’t know his condition – all that kind of stuff. So, you know, we were pretty upset. But I was determined we’ve got to get going. So she called her sister and her sister works for Mamawi. Mamawi called me as I was driving and said, “Just make it to Edmonton. We have flights booked for you. Leave your car in the parking lot. Someone will pick it up. Don’t worry about it.” So this was the community and that’s what Mamawi does. Mamawi is a family kind of centre. So they totally made all the arrangements. They flew us from Edmonton to Winnipeg so we could get here in time – you know, get here just in case it was really, really bad – and made arrangements for someone to bring my car from Edmonton. So that was pretty memorable ‘cuz that’s something – from a perspective - I’ve never had anybody do anything like that for me. You know, this is an organization where they’re really about creating successful families and helping people in the community. So that was really thoughtful and I think really helped us in a time of crisis and totally unexpected.” (R4)

Preparing youth for meaningful contribution to society was considered important to creating a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg according to several

participants. Some of the participants made the assertion that we need to invest in youth, get them involved in their schools because they are the future.

“I think you have to invest before, uhh, I see investing in the youth as a key and before, almost before Grade 9. If you don’t catch them by high school then you know, it can go this way or it can go this way.” (R1)

“And then, you know, there are opportunities through high school to change and impact and some direct influence might have them go one way or the other.” (R1)

“I think you have to start with the youth, this is where your future lies.” (R3)

Another participant suggested that youth need to see a future where they are involved in making a difference.

“And I just think that, particularly for youth, and I actually said this at the standing committee on social determinants of health recently, if our youth can’t see themselves as important contributors in society then they are not going to move forward.” (R5)

Providing access to resources for youth can be a contributing factor for community health.

One participant tells of their experience growing up in Winnipeg and of their neighbourhood having resources for youth. This participant described these memories as quite positive.

“So I have lots of memorable experiences growing up in the Centennial neighbourhood and, you know, hanging out at the Freight House, using the Boy’s and Girl’s Club. The Friendship Centre used to be, actually, the next street over. So growing up, that was my community. ‘Cuz I lived on Pacific. So the next street over was the Friendship Centre. Boys’ and Girls’ Club was operating out of the Freight House. Rossbrook House was just down the street. We didn’t go there very often but it was – there was this myriad of different things available, I think, to young people in our neighbourhood.” (R4)

This participant also explained how without youth related resources like the Boy's and Girl's Club they would have been unable to have these positive growing experiences due to their family situation.

"So I probably – you know, I got to go swimming once a week with the Boys' and Girls' Club. I got to do things like that. And they would pick up all the kids in my neighbourhood. So that would be predominantly Aboriginal children because that's where – you know, it was the area that we lived in. So I remember that precisely 'cuz I remember – you know, even going tobogganing – you know, doing stuff like that." (R4)

"My Mother couldn't do that. She couldn't drive. She was a single parent and, if it weren't for those types of initiatives, we wouldn't have been able to experience those things." (R4)

Having role models for youth and keeping them in the community can also be important for building a healthy community.

"They see the role models there of who they need to see there. I think that if you can have more opportunities for kids to engage in that that they would have more success." (R1)

This participant related how they were influenced in a positive way by role models and how they likely had an effect on the current success of this individual.

"But, I certainly, if it wasn't for people in my community, other than just my mother too, to give me that hand up that helped, that influence along the way, I could have gone one way or the other because of society's influences. You know, that's where kids and youth, they can go." (R1)

Keeping the role models in the community has been a challenge. One participant suggests that lack of quality housing options in neighbourhoods that need role models leads to their leaving the neighbourhood to the loss of the youth that need role models.

"So, the whole housing side of it is that people who actually have jobs and want to move off... the people who would normally make a community healthy and

create the role models leave the community because they can't meet their needs in that community.” (R1)

One participant has suggested that because there is more interaction of Aboriginal youth with non-Aboriginal youth in schools than in the past, that there is a greater understanding of each other than is found among the older generation. This could be considered to be a sign of a healthier future for both communities.

“What I am finding now is that, two guys will run into each other here, and Aboriginal guy and a non-Aboriginal guy and hey they went to high school together. So hey, there is a synergy there that was never there before, see. So that's where I am basing my belief into a healthy climate in a corporation like ---- -- on the fact that now the younger folk are starting to interact before they come to the workplace.” (R3)

“So I think the next generation is going to be more of that, there is going to be more interaction at the educational level between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. So once they come to the workplace, you know, they're gonna be able to collaborate in the same way they did on different teams in high school. So I think that this is gonna become a very healthy environment.” (R3)

Access to education and assistance in the form of funding and encouragement has been suggested as means to a healthy community from the experiences of the participants in this study. Two participants explain how their access to educational funding and support changed their life and the future of their children.

“If I think about my own education and the education of my children; if I hadn't had an opportunity I can guarantee that my children would not have gotten an education. And, that's an absolute, it is not like maybe they wouldn't, it is an absolute, if I hadn't had that they wouldn't. I would have been working as a waitress and it would have been the farthest thing from their minds, getting an education.” (R5)

“We all know that investing in post secondary education is important, and proper funding is the number one key issue for students. And, if we don't do that and provide proper funding... I wouldn't be sitting where I am today if I hadn't been able to access funding along the way. I was able to get bursaries my first two years and then my First Nation funded me, umm, I wouldn't be here to day if I

had had to take loans. I may have given up. I had children, you know, as a single parent trying to get through. We all know those, you can read any report and it is going to tell you the same thing, so government needs to respond to post secondary education on funding.” (R1)

One participant suggested that recognizing, supporting, and providing politically neutral ground to the emerging Aboriginal middleclass and Aboriginal professionals is important.

This participant related a story where they were impressed by the confidence and assertiveness of a group of Aboriginal professionals.

“So we had a focus group and it was quite amazing that there was, I was actually really proud of the community at that point, well whatever community means. We brought together a group of people and one individual, um, brought two people because they thought that they would engineer this meeting and basically to sabotage this meeting. The first person that spoke, and I don’t think that they sat themselves down next to the facilitator so that they could talk first. But, one of the things that often happens is that if people are not solid and sound in their personal integrity they can be led by the group, so the first person talks and sets “this” mood and often times it is a negative mood. And what happened in this group is that the first person did that, and really an angry, angry human being and set that mood. What was really interesting though was as it went around it didn’t stay there, somebody would say “well you know I’m very sorry you feel that way but in actuality this is how I think and no we don’t all agree with what you are saying.” And then it got to another individual that this person had brought and they tried to sabotage it, but the group of professionals put a stop to it; you couldn’t say something and then believe that it applies to everyone; and that was a really important thing.” (R5)

This participant also talked about a healthy community allowing their professionals to perform their tasks without worry of political interference.

“To me that’s a sense of moving to a healthier place where you can allow the professionals to come in and figure out for you what it is that you need based on good evidence, based on good experience and stuff like that, without constantly wanting the quick fix that will get you points politically.” (R5)

This participant also explained that sometimes there needs to be a neutral ground where individuals can work to the benefit of the greater community without being accused of

being on one side or another. This is, according to the participant, a very real problem that exists in the Aboriginal community.

“So, I think that there is just a critically important place whether it be the ----- or anywhere, to have some kind of neutral territory that says, “if I’m going to work with the community and I am going to work with this group, I don’t have to take sides.” And that’s an important thing whether it is the ----- or anyone else.” (R5)

Signs that the community itself is ready to start becoming healthy were suggested by one participant as a movement toward a healthier community. One participant pointed to their experience of a young man who was interested in becoming involved.

“He must have been about 22-23, walked up to the front desk and said “can I book to attend a wellness workshop,” and I think he wanted to see a traditional healer. To me that was a sign of a huge change in the community. Because, here you had a 23 year old who was not told that they had to go to the wellness... it was called the medicine wheel wellness workshop right, and usually, when you have men going to that sort of thing they have been told by the court to go or go to jail. And here was a young man who was not under any mandate to go yet he was searching for wellness.” (R5)

For this participant this was a sign of movement toward a healthier community.

“So, for me, that response from the community, to ask for that, is a really healthy response from the community because it says that we are willing to look at ourselves. Um, and that to me is an example of, that I’ve been involved with, sort of, what a healthy community could look like. And that it can accept that there is multiple dimensions and that there is a balance of the positive and the negative.” (R5)

Another participant explained the concept of an Aboriginal work ethic and how that relates to a healthy community.

“When I was staying with my grandparents, cause that was a part of the culture in my family, I would stay with my parents for a while and then go stay with my grandparents. When I was there my grandfather was a fisherman, and you would go out on the lake and it was still dark at night when we would leave or it was still dark in the morning when we would leave and we would come back at the end of

the day and it's dark. You know we spent all the daylight hours out on the lake fishing. And we traveled by dark, we traveled out to the fishing grounds in the dark. And when we finished we would come back by horses but it was dark." (R3)

"But that is the kind of work ethic that I learned and there is nothing wrong with getting up at 4 or 5 in the morning to get to work because we didn't start until about 8 am. You know when the sun was bright enough out there. So I learned that there was nothing wrong with getting up early and getting out there so that you are there when it is time to work, and you were staying there until it was finished. That's Indian time for you! That's the real term of Indian time, you get up, you get ready, you go to work and you don't come back until you are finished." (R3)

This participant goes on to explain that sometimes this way of thinking conflicts with Western ideas of punctuality and work ethics. An example is given by this participant that explains how they worked hard but used common sense to determine when they would do the work rather than religiously following a nine to five schedule that is common in the city.

"We bring that work ethic to the city here but you can't really apply it because here it is nine to five. And if you are not there at nine, holey Moses there is something wrong with your work ethic because you are not on time." (R3)

"And I had to deal with that when I first got into structured hours of working, because my first real job was in logging with my dad. There that was the same thing: you get up early in the morning, you work while it is cool. On a day like today, shit, we would have been up well before sunrise, when it was cool we would be working and then by about noon we would take a siesta. Just like Mexicans, I used to tease him "we are just like Mexicans, dad" we take a little siesta in the afternoon. And he would say "you want to work in weather like this in the middle of the afternoon?" So you take a break during the hot time of the day and then again in the evening you work some more. So we were kinda working a morning and evening shift in the bush and nobody told us to do that, you know, nobody told my father to do that that was just the right way to do it. This was just the way it happens from where we came from. Here, you can't do it here, that is the difference here. So making the adjustment to nine to five was difficult." (R3)

Recognizing the signs of an unhealthy community can lead to better choices for community health. One participant suggested, from their experience in their community, that economic woes generally lead to higher crime rates and a decrease in the health of the community.

“That is the kind of community I was raised in and by and large it was healthy; and not just by food wise, but it was healthy community wise. There was very little crime and we were still able to leave our doors unlocked. But lately, even though our community remains pretty much unchanged, the population remains the same, all of a sudden we have a police force a constable in town and we have RCMP there. It is probably not because of the growth of the community but it is probably because of the decline of the economy.” (R3)

“And, um, what we found in our studies, when I participated with the AGM, that the crime rate was pretty much as high as the unemployment rate. So if you have a 50% unemployment rate in your community that number will pretty much be matched by police calls you are going to get for that community. The higher your unemployment rate, the higher you police calls. So that was one of the reasons that the Aboriginal Justice inquiry (AJI) recommended for local justice systems so that we could look after local justice issues. Try to get the employment numbers higher to try to keep the police numbers lower.” (R3)

This participant also suggested that being able to deal with the unhealthy parts of your community is a sign of a healthy community.

“And part of the healthy community is dealing with, being able to deal with the un-healthy parts of the community.” (R3)

“So what we have to do is to make sure that we have healthy enough systems that the healthy part of the community is healthy enough, stays healthy enough to deal with these kind of issues.” (R3)

One sign of a healthy community that is suggested by this participant involved how well the community cares for its children.

“And usually you can gage your community supports by how all the children are looked after. If your children are suffering then everything else in the community will be suffering too. So, the community’s ability to look after its children is a good gage of how healthy they are as a community.” (R3)

Another participant suggested that individual resilience is a sign of a healthy community.

This is an example of a person engaging in unhealthy actions that is attempting to make a change in their life for the better.

“A woman coming in and was five months pregnant and was drinking for a couple of days and she came into the addictions centre at health sciences centre. And, when I did the history and physical, she voluntarily said “I have a mentor and I am in a fetal alcohol prevention program” and she said ‘you know what, I could sit here and say it’s all his fault, and that he forced me to drink, he made me do it but actually I have to take personal responsibility and I only drank for two days.” (R5)

The participant’s experiences suggest that the Aboriginal community should not believe that it exists in isolation from the rest of the Winnipeg community. A healthy Winnipeg is important to a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

“I do think that we have to think about not just the Aboriginal community but we have to think about Winnipeg as a whole, you know. And say, “In a healthy Winnipeg, you can’t have a healthy Aboriginal community inside of an unhealthy Winnipeg.” Because, we don’t live in isolation.” (R5)

“You know, it’s been - for the last couple of years, it’s been really good to be an ‘Indian’. I know I’ve heard that comment quite a bit. And I think, because what we’re seeing now, specifically in Winnipeg.” (R4)

“And lookout... we are not only looking at creating opportunities for our community but for the community of Winnipeg as a whole and I think there is much more of a connection there.” (R1)

Summary:

The first of the three general areas that were shared by the participants about healthy communities was around the idea of biophysical health. The participants, in their experience, had recognized the destructive effects of obesity and obesity related diseases that are prevalent in the Aboriginal community. There was concern expressed that they

are seeing these changes in their own lifetime. Two potential causes were given from their experiences. The first is that there is inadequate access to traditional foods specifically and healthy foods in general. This has led to poor food choices and consequently higher rates of obesity and related diseases. Second, the participants explained that they saw less physical activity in the community than they were accustomed to growing up. These two factors likely place a significant role in unhealthy biophysical health among urban Aboriginal peoples.

Generational health was the next idea that came out of the interviews. Generational health is health related behavior or knowledge that is passed down, or not passed down, from one generation to the next. The residential school experience is given as an example of how the knowledge that parents have to give to their children can be interrupted by an event, in this case a government policy. Those children that were separated from their parents lost knowledge of healthy behavior that had worked for generations. It is also important to mention that bad health behaviors can also be passed down to the next generation. It is also possible that needed knowledge may not be available generationally and the example of buying a house is given.

The participants had many experiences of what a healthy urban Aboriginal community can look like. Recognizing and celebrating the positive/healthy parts of the community and recognizing positive contributions made were important facets of a healthy community for the participants. Related to this, enabling dedicated individuals to continue to carry out their contributions to the community was an important step as well.

It was also suggested that the professional middleclass needs to have politically neutral ground to work on free of interference. Having strong leadership in important positions of power was necessary to move toward community health.

The participants thought it was a good idea to take examples from healthy Aboriginal communities. In other words, you do not have to reinvent the wheel; examples of communities that are healthy or are moving toward this health are out there (e.g. Oosoyoos as mentioned by one of the participants). Examples of a healthy community could also come from affirmation of culture, traditional values, and from Elders knowledge. One strategy may be to continue to provide and expand on culturally appropriate education in schools. Another strategy may be to continue to have community gatherings, projects, and celebrations (e.g. National Aboriginal Day and community spring clean ups).

The youth of today may be the most important vehicle towards a healthier community in the future. The participants suggested that there is a need to provide youth with guidance, resources, and opportunities to make a meaningful contribution to society because these factors helped them get to where they are today. They made a point to mention that investing in youth today may be especially important because they may be better able to interact and live harmoniously with non-Aboriginal people in urban settings.

Lastly, the participant's experiences tell us that recognizing and dealing effectively with the unhealthy parts of the community is essential to move towards a healthier community.

It is also mentioned that it is important to recognize the unhealthy (and healthy) connections between Aboriginal peoples and the general population in Winnipeg and to deal with these collaboratively.

Theme # 6 Urban Planning Concepts:

Many urban planning concepts were raised by the participants while explaining their experiences of healthy or unhealthy communities. I have divided these experiences into two general areas: structural planning concepts such as: housing or infrastructure concerns; and psychological planning concepts such as: sense of place or belonging.

Structural:

Adequate housing was suggested by the participants as a necessity if the community is to be healthy. Their experiences also lead to the assertion that adequate housing has an effect on many other facets of healthy living.

“But certainly, the stats are there and one of the biggest stats is housing and if you don’t have a proper home and shelter over people’s heads then how do you expect them to be healthy as a community, because it has all kinds of spin-offs to it.” (R1)

“But, a big component of that too is often housing and daycare. So when you look at housing, what I find, it is like this thread in everything you do.” (R1)

“You know and these are some of the conditions that our people are forced to live in. And those kind of housing conditions lead to all kinds of family dysfunction. In my own community overcrowded housing affected education, it affected the family dynamic, it affected a person’s ability to work, you know, it affects everything, it affects the student’s ability to study.” (R3)

One participant, while explaining their experiences with Aboriginal housing issues in Winnipeg, talked about problems of government funding and how this issue can affect housing initiatives

“Then the Aboriginal housing organizations themselves are constantly being robbed by MHRC so they can’t get ahead. And by robbed I mean, uhh, any profits that they, uhh, that the housing agencies get at the end of the year... instead of them being able to reinvest these profits into their own stock, the Province takes that money and puts it back into the general fund. So now when the housing, Aiyowin, wants to improve on its housing stock it would have to go back to the

government, hat in hand, and ask for money. And, most times, nine times out of ten, the government will say no.” (R3)

This participant further elaborated explaining that housing was built under a Western paradigm that did not meet the needs of Aboriginal residents.

“Sure it’s Aboriginal housing but it’s all geared, it’s all based on mainstream stuff you know, it doesn’t hardly accommodate the basic needs of the Aboriginal person coming into the City.” (R3)

While emphasizing the importance of housing in the city, one participant explained that failure to find adequate housing in the city would often lead to increased problems in their home reserve when they returned there.

“And a lot of times when they go home the house that they were living in was given to someone else and they have to move in with family or friends and that perpetuates the problem as they are in an overcrowded situation again.” (R3)

Leaving the reserve in the first place could be housing related as one participant notes.

“And, unfortunately in our communities too, a lot of the housing issues is because they’re social housing so people can’t, it’s like a vicious circle. If I am living in my community and I want to have a job, and I do have a job and I want to buy my own home, well I can’t necessarily do that because I can’t get the land to set it on or get a bank to mortgage it.” (R1)

This may mean that successful individuals leave the community leading to a loss of talent in the community.

“So, the whole housing side of it is that people who actually have jobs and want to move off... the people who would normally make a community healthy and create the role models leave the community because they can’t meet their needs in that community.” (R1)

Safety or perceived safety was another idea that came up in discussion with one participant leading to the choice of their children not wanting to visit the ‘unsafe’ neighbourhood.

“I have a brother and sister who live here but, again, because of lifestyle choices, we don’t hang. We don’t visit as much. And they live way over there or way over there in different parts of the City that - I don’t want to take my kids or my kids don’t want to go there because, “That’s not a nice neighbourhood. I really don’t want to be there. I’m going to stay home.” So they would stay home.” (R6)

Transitioning from rural/reserve to urban was an important sub-theme. There were many experiences of transition. The idea of transition was both a structural and a psychological urban issue for the participants. For the purposes of this study it was decided that it fit into the structural area and it is detailed here. Before going into detail about transition it is important to note that the participants provided a variety of reasons for individuals to move to Winnipeg from a rural or reserve setting. Finding employment is one reason.

“The only permanent jobs back home are businesses, and these are always family owned. And, you only need one or two cab companies, one or two gas companies, you have a school full of teachers, maybe ten, you know, you have a constable and after that there is not much to do. Everyone else has to find a job or something else to do. I didn’t want to run a gas store or pump, you know, I wasn’t interested in any other jobs that I could do in the community. So, since I was able to work I have always had to work out of town. You go where the job is you know.” (R3)

Getting an education was another reason that people move to Winnipeg.

“So coming to the City – and the purpose of coming to the City was going to school. And my focus, when I came, was studying.” (R6)

Opportunity in general was a key reason that Aboriginal people move from their reserve or rural community to a city like Winnipeg as this participant notes from their experience.

“Because, most of these kids, honest to God, most of these kids that I bring to the City here, have plans, they’ve got big plans, either to finish school, or to finish a career, or to start a career. None of them come here to fail, you know, come here, they don’t come here to live off the system, they come here to get something better than they have back home.” (R3)

“And a lot of these people, we are finding out, come to the City because there is really nothing for them to do up there. They come to the city here looking for opportunities, sometimes the opportunities find them and most of the time they don’t.” (R3)

Sometimes individuals are moving to the city to either leave an unhealthy situation or to seek out a healthier existence.

“Some of these people are taking the choice of coming to the city to look for that healthy environment that everyone wants so badly, just to carry on day to day.” (R3)

The participant’s experiences suggest that moving to the city from a home community can be overwhelming and have an isolating effect on individuals.

“Like one of the things I found out, one of the challenges of people as they come into the city. Like a lot of, it causes some family break ups when they come to the city because the challenges can be overwhelming, you know. And it’s a man and a wife sometimes because they start blaming each other, for example, they start blaming each other for the situation that they are in.” (R3)

“I think it was moving to the City away from (home town) and particularly away from this large extended family where you are never alone. And then all of a sudden I was in the City for four years, and just absolute isolation.” (R5)

One participant suggested that language issues and unfamiliarity with other cultures can lead to a resistance to interact with non-Aboriginal peoples in the city and therefore stunt involvement with the greater community.

“So for many – and I can speak for my Mom ‘cuz I know that she’s a really good example. She’s terrified of non-Aboriginal people. She won’t ask questions. And the only time when she isn’t terrified is: she’s mad. ‘Cuz then, she’ll be pissed off (at some of the stuff?), right? But if she were to – you know, if it was –

I could imagine her buying a house would be a really big deal and it would be really hard for her to ask the right questions, 'cuz she doesn't – it's like: how do you know what to ask? Do you know what I mean?" (R4)

"So it would be really, really tough for her and, you know, English is not her first language. For some people, that becomes another – you know, your listening, understanding and responding is delayed a bit. So there's – it's very different. I think it's very different for – they get intimidated by the systems." (R4)

For some, getting connected with people (and other Aboriginal people specifically) in the city was important to transitioning to urban living.

"I'd find that they'd been living in the City for already a number of years and I'm going, "Oh, okay. So where is the place to go? Where do you hang?" And I would hear where they're from, where they would hang or do their shopping – places that I, again, being new to the City at that time – that must be ten years now – I wouldn't know where that part of the City was, unless it was right in the immediate area of where I was living." (R6)

"Well, when I first arrived here in Winnipeg, I felt very disconnected from the community. So on the one sense, I can look at it and say it was negative because I felt isolated and I didn't have a sense of belonging. On the other hand, it gave me an opportunity to go out and meet a good cross-section of Aboriginal people from all walks of life. In that sense, I felt it was very positive." (R2)

Helping individuals that are experiencing difficulty with the transition from rural to urban was considered an important urban issue. One participant suggests that reaching out to individuals in need will be necessary because they will not likely search out help themselves. This is important information for urban planners who can take this into account when planning with Aboriginal peoples.

"What I've been hearing from other service providers, in the Social Service sector, is that Aboriginal people don't tend to reach out to the organizations. You know, they really have to try to develop relationship to entice them to use services." (R4)

Another participant detailed their experiences with services that are out there to help with transition. This participant gave the Friendship Centre as an example of a transitional service that was in place in Winnipeg.

“The friendship centre program was a migratory, was a migration peoples program, it was geared to people that were coming out of the country and into the city and it was geared to help them establish themselves in the city.” (R3)

This participant talked about an experience of knowing a person who helped individuals with transition as their job. This person was a go to resource that those experiencing a difficult transition could depend on to help them learn the ropes of urban living.

“We had referral services all the time, a good friend of mine was the referral officer; so if someone came in looking for a particular kind of help well then he knew where to go if it was CFS, if it was housing, if it was medical, if it was transportation, whatever, this guy seemed to know where all of these services were available so we had a referral system going off the start.” (R3)

This same participant warned that not helping those in need of transitional services can lead to problems. Some people who do not make it in the city go back to their community and pass on this negative experience to others in their community.

A lot of people that remain back home in poverty or just with nothing to do are just to damn scared to come here and try it, you know. Or else they have and they had to go back and they will bring that whole experience back and they will tell the whole family, “hey you don’t want to go to Winnipeg, you know there is nothing for you there, the services aren’t there, the supports aren’t there.” (R3)

It was even suggested that making it a priority to assist those in transition is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal peoples.

“That’s culturally appropriate for the Aboriginal community, your children, your baby, or the youngest one, or like I said the new arrival is the one you help. You focus on that, to try to bring them up to speed with everyone else.” (R3)

“Our culture says, you look after the newly arrived, and that is kinda what the friendship centre was doing and that is kinda what we do here at (workplace) with this employment equity department, you know, we look after the new arrivals, we make sure that they are looked after properly.” (R3)

Issues of the workforce and employment specifically were the next experience expressed under the structural sub-theme. Employment and opportunity as noted above are a driving factor for Aboriginal people to move from rural/reserve to the urban setting in the experience of the participants interviewed for this research. This has even created migratory Aboriginal workers that work in the city and live in the rural/reserve.

“And a lot of times, the men in the community had to go to different communities to – my own Dad never really lived with us when we lived in the country because he had to work in Winnipeg and, then, come back on the weekend. So we only saw him on the weekends.” (R2)

Aboriginal people migrating to work in an urban area can result in socio-demographic consequences such as, in this case, an absence of a parent for large portions of a child’s life.

“And my mother raised us on her own by herself during the week throughout the whole year, for the first ten years of my life, anyway.” (R2)

One participant suggested that there is going to be an increased presence of Aboriginal peoples in the workforce and although there will be roadblocks, Aboriginal peoples will be resilient and succeed.

“But more than ever, you’re going to see Aboriginal people in the workforce. They’re going to get there some ways. They’re going to be supported and they’re going to fight their way through. But wouldn’t it be nice if we could kind of just open the doors and get as many employed as possible?” (R2)

One of the reasons that this participant suggests that Aboriginal peoples have trouble getting employed is the culture of selling oneself on the labour market. This participant suggested that this may not be something that is learned during their upbringing.

“And I noticed the ones that really do get a lot of recognition are the ones that go out there. They’re very out-going and know how to sell themselves. But unfortunately, the majority of the community doesn’t know how to do that. Maybe their kids will know how to do that. My own kids know how to do that. When I started, I didn’t know how to do that.” (R2)

This participant relates a story of trying to help out those that don’t know how to sell themselves by explaining what one should talk about in an interview and how to prepare.

“When I see – when I don’t hire an Aboriginal person, I’ll say, “You know what? The reason you didn’t get this job is because, in the interview, you didn’t talk about all the things that you could do. You know, I know you got training in this and this and this and you never mentioned any of that. In your next interview, I would like you to make a list of all the things that you got trained in and the programs that you implemented. Then, when you go to the interview, you can refer to those notes and say, ‘This is what I’ve done’, and you can talk about them. There’s nothing wrong with that.” And they’ve used that strategy and it’s worked.” (R2)

Another idea is to institute culturally appropriate hiring practices. That is, try to be culturally competent in your hiring process and to consider having an Aboriginal person as part of a hiring committee who understands the historical and cultural context of the applicant.

“I really think there’s a disconnective, because the way you go out and recruit one group of people might not necessarily be the same way you recruit another community. And they haven’t figured that out yet.” (R2)

“And for myself in this position, I think one of the key areas is to get people more employed in all the different organizations. You need Aboriginal people in those leadership positions who know how to recruit.” (R2)

Psychological:

The psychological side of the urban experience of the participants revolved around how Aboriginal peoples felt about the places that they lived in and the way they interacted with other people.

One participant talked about the North-End and how some Aboriginal people feel ownership of it and are drawn to settle there and stay there.

“So I still – when I chat with people today: “Oh, you’re not in the North End. You’re over in the Northwest. You’re in the Maples area. That’s not the North End – the true North End.” So, you know, I learned, I guess, the ownership from the City perspective, from the Aboriginal people, other people in the City.” (R6)

“And where I’d been living since I’ve been here in the City has either been here in the Central area, because of school – when I had no children; and then, when I had children, I was living, again, sort of in the Central and North End area; North End being: I’m going to live in the North. I want to stay in the North. I live in the North. Because I’m from the North, I had that thought.” (R6)

One participant in particular felt that sense of place was important in order to solidify identity.

“You know, you get a little protective to say that Metis need to have this ‘space,’ where we can belong, where we can feel that we can be exactly who we are without the government or anyone else saying you should act like a FN person and gee you can’t be an Aboriginal person because you don’t look like this and so on.” (R5)

A lot of hard work went into producing Aboriginal places in Winnipeg and the benefits are starting to be seen with greater connection in the community. Specifically, some of the participants pointed to new places for Aboriginal peoples.

“And I thought that was just an incredible change and the fact that he had a place to go to find that. I mean such health and wellness places would not exist if it

wasn't for those of us that pushed and pushed and pushed, in positive ways, but for many years." (R5)

"Like if you look at the Aboriginal Council and the building on Higgins and all the activity that goes on at the Aboriginal centre there along with the connection to the community itself and from that being right in there I think that my experience is that Winnipeg itself has been taking some very strategic directions into trying to engage the community." (R1)

Many of the participants felt that having meeting places for Aboriginal people to come together to share and discuss matters was important for a healthy community.

"That there's a place that people can come together. I think that there could be more places." (R5)

"And umm, it was quite the place, I mean, I guess, now that we had a place to congregate we set up the new nation chanters and dancers." (R3)

The meeting places could be for the purpose of socializing and not feeling isolated.

"So we ended up going to the pool hall at a bus depot. And the other thing that – another place where we used to hang out is at the Friendship Centre. And the time that I started hanging around there was when the Friendship Centre was located on Princess." (R2)

Sometimes there were social organizations that provided the meeting places.

"There was another place that I used to frequent and it was called - a drop-in centre for youth – it was called Opportunities for Youth, I think it was called, on Portage and Furby." (R2)

"The building itself – Turtle Island: when it was built and why it was built, and the community and people that were involved that are still living in that community, that are still there, that have pictures; and they want to celebrate that. So that's coming up very quickly." (R6)

Some of the participants talked about the difficulty adjusting to the different way of thinking among urban dwellers. They felt that the sense of 'family' or 'community' was not as strong in the city.

“I found, in the City, it was so much more ‘every man for themselves’ – very fragmented. The sense of community was very different, very different, you know? We knew our neighbours. We played with the kids on the street. But it was not at that – it was not that same level.” (R4)

“That sense of family that I had when I was living up North in the smaller communities: it’s not here within the City. I don’t see that anywhere. I’ve not experienced that at all.” (R6)

Summary:

Many urban planning concepts came out of the discussions with the participants on their experiences of community and healthy communities. These were broken down into two sub-topics: structural planning concepts and psychological planning concepts.

The first structural concept was housing. The participants in this study were well aware of the links between adequate housing and health and wellbeing. They suggested that having housing that meets the needs of the user is an integral part to living a healthy life and to a healthy community because housing affects every other aspect of daily life.

They suggested that funding issues for housing in areas that have high concentrations of Aboriginal peoples are having a negative effect on this issue. There was also the suggestion that providing housing using Western paradigms are not meeting the needs of the intended users and there is a need to start planning for housing using a culturally appropriate paradigm. These are not necessarily new ideas but the fact that there is knowledge about these issues in the community may not be adequately recognized by planners.

The participants recognized that transition from rural/reserve to urban living for Aboriginal peoples is a key planning issue for Winnipeg today. According to the participants experiences, Aboriginal people move to Winnipeg for many reasons including: seeking opportunity and employment; educational advancement; and seeking healthier situations than exist in their home community. Transitioning to urban living can be difficult from the experiences of the participants. The reasons for this can include isolation from language issues and cultural differences as well as different worldviews and expectations of what community and family mean (i.e. community oriented versus individualistic). There was recognition that many individuals will need assistance with this transition and that there are some organizations doing this work but it is not enough. The participants also advised that it may be necessary to seek out those in need of transition services as they may not seek out help on their own.

The participants in this study were also aware that the Aboriginal population is becoming a strong force demographically with a growing population and what this can mean for the workforce in Winnipeg. They do however recognize that there are many issues and barriers to a strong Aboriginal workforce in Winnipeg. They related how there are some social issues related to Aboriginal peoples migrating to Winnipeg to work such as family being left behind and children growing up without a parent for long stretches of time. Another problem that was suggested is that many Aboriginal people did not grow up in the culture of selling oneself in the process of getting a job and may not have this skill. Culturally appropriate hiring practices may help to alleviate some of the cultural differences that occur (e.g. having an Aboriginal person on the hiring committee).

Planning concepts that fall on the psychological side are about the ideas of Aboriginal places and spaces. Sense of place was important to some of the participants for reasons of feeling at home with a strong sense of ownership for the North End in Winnipeg and for a sense of identity as it relates to place.

The participants also related positive experiences with Aboriginal spaces in Winnipeg explaining how they connect the community together (e.g. the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg). These spaces provide a place to meet, collaborate, and discuss important issues. They also provide space to socialize and gather together for ceremony and celebration.

Table 1, Themes and sub-themes of experiences of a healthy (or unhealthy) community, on the next two pages presents the themes in a user friendly way. The six main themes are across the top of the table with the sub-themes and the key points for each sub-theme located in the respective column below.

Aboriginality	Community	Dysfunction	Giving Back	Healthy Community	Urban Planning Concepts	Key Concepts
Aboriginal Culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing effect • Strength from • Regaining lost culture • 'Reawakening' to culture • Cultural teaching in education 	Aboriginal Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive change occurring • Growing middle class • Individuals coming together to make change • Community in schools • Some examples of strong community taken from Reserve. 	Systemic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal politics • Government dysfunction • Economic dysfunction 	Motivations to Give Back: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Importance of sharing • Sense of responsibility, community, obligation, and opportunity 	Healthy Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing healthy and unhealthy parts of community • Aboriginal leadership • Impact of individuals • Intercultural interaction • Investment in Aboriginal economy, recreation, and social programs • Affirmation and celebration of culture and history • Concentrating on youth, role models 	Structural: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - need adequate housing; - Aboriginal appropriate programs; - funding issues; - urban housing issues affect reserve housing and vice versa. • Safety • Employment • Urban transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunity related - isolating experience - language & cultural - need to reach out to those in need because they may not ask 	A key concept found in almost all themes was about contributing to the community seen in the desire to give back, involve the community to make connections, as expressed by the participants, and a healthy community.
Aboriginal Identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill C-31 • Métis Identity 	Aboriginal Rapport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared worldview 					Another key concept to the attention is that Aboriginal people are knowledgeable about planning their community.
Aboriginal Values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Honest • Sharing • Giving • Respectful • Forgiving of past • Benefit community 	Community Connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various forms it takes • Disconnect 					A last key concept highlighted here is the transition. Pre- and post-Aboriginal people cities for urban be an essential maintaining a healthy Aboriginal community. Sadly, funding transition is limited, a great deal less transition funding for new immigrants.

Aboriginality	Community	Dysfunction	Giving Back	Healthy Community	Urban Planning Concepts
Cultural Competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand history • Not just 'feathers and beads' 	Family as Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of strength and support 	Individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addictions • Racism • Family dysfunction 	What Forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism • Donation • Position of power 	Biophysical Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current health crisis – Diabetes, Obesity • Unhealthy Food Options & Lack of Traditional Foods 	Psychological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership of an area – e.g. North End • Sense of place –identity • Benefits of Aboriginal places and meeting places – e.g. Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg; • Different sense of family and community in the 'city'
Importance of Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovering languages • Link with schools 	Involvement in Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social connections • Desire to improve community • Barriers to involvement 		How to Make Participation Easier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide volunteer opportunities • Invitation to participate 	Generational Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy passed down • Unhealthy passed down • Residential school experience 	

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes of experiences of a healthy (or unhealthy) community.

The data description presented the data, organized into 6 main themes and documented the experiences of the participants. The following Chapter 5 discusses the importance of what came out of this research as well as makes recommendations from the data for planning related improvements to the health of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 explored the conclusions that were drawn from this research. This discussion section explored how the three core research questions were answered by this research. Following this, the next section explored what lessons planners can learn from the finding of this research and how existing planning theory is supported and complemented. Any limitations and biases that were not foreseen in the design of this research are discussed in the next section. Lastly, directions for future research are discussed.

5.2 Discussion

This discussion section will try to ascertain if the research questions that were posed at the beginning of this project have been answered.

Question #1: How do urban Aboriginal people of Metis and First Nations descent in Winnipeg define their urban community?

What does community mean to a select urban Aboriginal group in Winnipeg? The meanings of community were as diverse as the population itself and this came from a relatively small sample of individuals which is consistent with Sandercock's assertion that community means different things in different contexts (1998).

A definition was given in the literature review section of this research by Boothroyd and Eberle (1990, pp. 6) as "a collection of people who have something in common."

Consistent with this definition, many participants spoke from their experiences of feeling a sense of community just by meeting other Aboriginal people in the city, an instant rapport was established with these individuals.

“You’re starting to see that in – you know, I have peers that prefer to go to certain restaurants or stores because there’s Aboriginal people working there ... Or if you have someone who identifies and knows and understands, that immediate rapport is there.”(R4)

I liken this to the phenomenon experienced if one travels to a foreign country and meets a fellow Canadian. An instant rapport often occurs and because of that an instant connection. Most people do not want to be isolated or feel alone and meeting someone that has something in common with you (in this case being from the same country and sharing a lot of the same values, and in the case of this research, a shared worldview) can be a key step toward building a relationship and at some point a community. Shared values and in this case, worldview, is key to defining a community. This sense of community however can come from other sources and community can be defined by more than just Aboriginal rapport. Sometimes it is related to proximity and shared activities and life stages.

“Because I was in school, you’re doing the study, do the study groups and hang out with those folks that wanted to study. And then, when I had my family with me, it was looking at other families.” (R6)

Some of the participants related their experiences of being welcomed whether into the city, a reserve/rural community or an individual neighbourhood. To them, this welcoming was a key piece of what community is. To them, community should always make an extra seat at the table.

“I just came off a little bit of a road trip where I was in three communities, four communities in one day. And it was fabulous. I was eleven hours on the road; I was as tired as hell. But I went into all these communities and was totally welcomed and embraced.” (R4)

Community can also be organized. Several of the participants explained how from their experience, community could be found in things like the education system, sports and recreation, and organizations aimed at making a difference. Policies aimed at improving access to, and promoting these factors could go a long way toward building community for these participants.

For some, what defined community revolves around identity. The identity of a Metis person with a foot in the Aboriginal world and a foot in the Western world can affect their views on the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. For them, how community is defined is intricately linked to finding their own space and about legitimacy as an independent people.

Another idea of what community is for these urban Aboriginal participants involved contributing to community. The connection to community for some was defined by their involvement and contribution to community itself. Therefore, community is made up of contributing individuals dedicated to the health of the community. For some, this was a key point of their upbringing. This was an area that I had not expected. I did not know from my experience that there was a group of Aboriginal professionals out there (represented by the participants of this study but certainly not limited to) dedicated to making a difference for the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. To me this signals that

the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg is on the way toward creating a healthy urban Aboriginal community. As one participant notes, "I think, the Aboriginal community here are some of the movers and shakers in this community (R1)." There is no doubt that there are some serious issues still at work among Aboriginal Winnipeggers but the solutions to their problems may be well within the community's ability to solve. Indeed, the Aboriginal community may have the ability to provide solutions for the greater Winnipeg community.

"The Aboriginal community has lots of problems but I also think it has lots of solutions and not just solutions to problems, but I do think that it has a lot of um, positives that can be provided to other communities." (R5)

Related to this desire to give back to the community another participant talked about how from their experience the Aboriginal community is moving towards being a healthy community and one of the main reasons for this is that leadership is starting to make the right choices and aim for community health.

"I think what we're seeing now is: we're seeing a lot of leaders within the Aboriginal community that are wanting to do things in the right way for the right reasons, which are moving the masses towards more of a healthy type of community and healthy development." (R4)

This means that solid leadership that is proactive and prepared to aim for a healthier community is necessary not only within the Aboriginal community but within the general Winnipeg community as well. This is an area where planners are important. Planners can help leadership from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations to focus on achieving a healthy urban community by acting as a bridge between these two groups. These planners will need to be armed with an understanding of the underlying worldviews of each and some notion of how to compromise between them.

Question # 2: What are the features or themes that are consistent among the diverse Aboriginal peoples living in Winnipeg that are imperative for a healthy community?

There were many consistent ideas that came out of this research that could benefit the health of the urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. With this in mind, this section provides eleven practical ideas that can potentially lead to and maintain a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. These ideas have been taken from the experiences of the participants from this research project. Most of these ideas are not new but are presented here together in the context of the Winnipeg Aboriginal community. They are not intended to be a set of final solutions but rather a starting point from which future research and practice can be added.

The first practical idea to come out of the participant's experiences is to **Encourage and support reconnection with Aboriginal culture**. Some of the potential ways identified to make this happen included youth/Elder conferences designed to pass on knowledge of Aboriginal culture from Elders to youth in order to ensure the survival of this knowledge. Opportunities for language training could also go a long way toward reconnecting with culture and could be provided as a part of these conferences, obviously not to teach languages in whole but to ignite an interest in Aboriginal languages among youth that attend.

“But those Youth Elder conferences that they have in Brandon are kind of what started this movement at reconnecting with elders and learning about our spirituality” (R2).

Opportunities for language instruction do not have to be limited to conferences but could also be established through various Aboriginal service agencies as well as additional funds could be earmarked to enhance existing language programs such as those that exist already. Examples of these language programs include the Michif language program put on by the Manitoba Metis Federation (Canadian Heritage, 2008), or the Aboriginal language program offered by the Winnipeg School Division (1998) in some of their inner city schools. Fun cultural programs such as drumming and dancing groups have proved successful according to the experiences of the participants and are something that could be enhanced further through future funding programs.

The inclusion of ceremony in public events is another area that could promote the acceptance of Aboriginal culture in the mainstream as well as promote interest among Aboriginal peoples. The City of Winnipeg (2001, pp 20) has indicated they are committed to this idea by including it in their long range planning document “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision.”

“The City shall promote self-reliant Aboriginal communities by: Increasing awareness among Winnipeggers and visitors about the richness of the city’s Aboriginal cultural communities.”

There is little evidence on the City of Winnipeg’s website (City of Winnipeg, 2008) that they are doing this however. There is no mention of Aboriginal culture or communities on the City’s main web page, nor on its pages dedicated to visitors or arts and culture.

The participant’s experiences also told us that it will be important to expand and continue to teach Aboriginal culture in our schools and to provide Aboriginal cultural experiences

for school kids from all cultural backgrounds. The experience that this referred to involved taking school children out to a reserve and letting them attend a sweat lodge.

It will also be important to provide opportunities to learn about Aboriginal culture in the workplace in order to cultivate improved tolerance and understanding between cultures as well as to improve cultural competence at the organizational level.

“We have a two day cultural awareness session here now. To try and create a healthy community with (my workplace) because it’s not right now because there are too many old school thinkers. (R3)

The second practical idea that came from the participant’s experiences was to **recognize Aboriginal achievement and contribution to society**. One of the participants talked about how being recognized jump-started their involvement in the community and how this can provide this same jump-start for the future generation.

“I think that another one of the key parts was, after having graduated, the MMF having us at their annual meeting and presenting us with a (recognition honour). That was something, I didn’t really have a formal connection to the Metis other than having an MMF membership and voting but it didn’t seem to connect you in that way” (R5).

“Just doing, that sense of being appreciated. That you know that all the hard work that you did was worth it.” (R5)

The participants also talked about the connecting power of sport. The third practical idea was encouraging **sport and recreation**, which can provide a common ground for people of different cultures to learn about each other and become friends and eventually become members of the same community.

“Having fastball tournaments, everyone knew when a tournament was coming and we all participated in those when it was an event.” (R6)

“It makes the workplace a lot easier to prepare if these people have been already interacting together. Maybe they played on a hockey team together. A lot of guys I am always surprised like sports, being what they are, are very good grounds for interaction among the younger generation.” (R3)

The participants point out the successful examples from our recent past such as the North American Indigenous Games and the Pan Am Games. These kinds of events can bring people from all over the world in the spirit of camaraderie and harmony.

“A good example is the American Indigenous Games that we had in 2002. Manitoba kicked ass! We did so well. And, you know, it was kids from all over Manitoba coming together.” (R6)

Physical activity of any kind can have a positive effect on the physical health of individuals. A population that is experiencing problems with obesity stands to benefit from any sport programs aimed their way.

The fourth idea that was taken from the participant’s experiences related to the need to **promote and provide access to traditional foods**. There is an epidemic of obesity and obesity related diseases such as diabetes within the Aboriginal community according to some of the participants.

“And now, it’s kind of reversed. If you look around, no matter where I go, I notice the number of people that are overweight. You might see one or two people that are not overweight.” (R2)

Some participants suggested that a move to more traditional foods in combination with more physical activity may help to alleviate this problem.

“And we didn’t have - all those really bad foods were not as easily accessible. So when we did have, say, candy, it was on a very rare occasion. So our diet was a lot of – well, our fruits and vegetables came in the summer. But through the winter months, we ate a lot of meat, fish. Then when summer came again, we’d

have lots of fruits and vegetables again, like fresh berries. And again, everyone had these huge gardens. My grandmother would make fresh bread all the time. So, in terms of what we ate, it was a lot more healthier. And my grandmother lived to be over 100 years old. She never died of any disease; she just died of old age.” (R2)

“I mean our community, by and large is pretty healthy and it remained that way, because, ah, because of where we live, ah, this is a fishing community. So a lot of the people lived off the and, we had gardens, fishing, a lot of hunting, logging, a lot of outdoor kinda work.” (R3)

The fifth practical idea was the need for an **invitation to participate**. This very interesting idea that came from the participants experiences is an area that planners may not be aware of.

“But, always, always it is upon someone asking it is not about saying “I have the greatest idea for you and this is what you should do”, it’s not that way it’s always in the asking, yeah it’s always an invitation. Somehow it is wrong to put yourself out front, and be out there and be pushing an agenda.” (R5)

“I guess that’s the big piece there, is the invitation: taking the time to invite people directly. “Hey, I know you. I know you like this. I want you to come out. You need to be aware of this, though. Why don’t we do this. (R6)

If indeed there are many Aboriginal community members out there that want to participate but feel uncomfortable pushing themselves on those that need the help, then an invite to participate could increase the involvement of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

“I think that the general Aboriginal, I believe that there are huge numbers of people out there who want to help but they don’t know how. And until they can have, they get this personal invitation and someone to walk with them until they are comfortable.” (R5)

The sixth practical idea was to **celebrate the healthy parts of the Winnipeg Aboriginal community**. The participants related many healthy parts of the Aboriginal community in

Winnipeg (e.g. the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg, strong leadership, and a strengthening workforce and middle class). Celebration of these healthy parts of the community could be accomplished through government sponsored events like national Aboriginal day or Louis Riel day but should also come in more community based forms such as pow-wows, recognition ceremonies or community gatherings.

One of the interesting concepts to come out of this research is that the participants recognized that the contribution of dedicated individuals is an important part of any positive change. The seventh practical idea that came out of this concept is that everything possible should be done to **support dedicated Aboriginal individuals who aim for positive change**. Individuals can make a difference.

People will talk to you and say that they remember my mother and how she made an impact in their lives and they have done positive things. And then now, we went back for this Pow-wow and she has a park named after her there in -----
.” (R1)

These dedicated individuals are out there in the community making a difference, not always with much fanfare but they are committed to what they do.

“I think a lot of the time when you go to those kinda deals you find the people who are really committed. They are there, they are supporting it and you can tell, and you can hook up with these people and they are easier to work with when you want to get some kind of initiatives started.” (R3)

Related to this idea of supporting individuals that are making a difference is the idea of giving them freedom from political interference. One of the participants was adamant that infighting and taking sides in internal political fights among Aboriginal peoples and organizations has been destructive to the efforts of these individuals that are trying to

make a difference. It is suggested that some kind of neutral ground is necessary for these individuals to do their work.

“To me that’s a sense of moving to a healthier place where you can allow the professionals to come in and figure out for you what it is that you need based on good evidence, based on good experience and stuff like that, without constantly wanting the quick fix that will get you points politically.” (R5)

The eighth practical idea is not new by any means. It is well known that there is an urgent need to **invest in urban Aboriginal economy, recreation, and social programs**.

It is well documented that there exists a disparity between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canadian urban centres with lower incomes, educational levels, and employment levels than non-Aboriginal peoples (Siggner, 2003). The participants are also aware that these programs could better be delivered by Aboriginal peoples and in a culturally appropriate manner. The example of a healthy community in B.C. is given as a success story.

“I think we are seeing it in the communities like the Oosoyoos’ who have taken economies and invested into social programming initiatives to help move their community membership along, providing them with, not just jobs but providing them Elder centres you know, for Elders to be healthy, providing youth centres so that the youth have somewhere to go. You know, it is that idea of communities getting healthy.” (R1)

For many of the participants, **prioritizing Aboriginal youth** was a practical idea to create a healthy community, the ninth idea. This is consistent with the Canadian Population Health Initiative’s findings in their round table on the health of urban Aboriginal peoples (CPHI, 2003). Today’s youth is tomorrow’s future and doing our best to provide them with the tools they need to have a healthy community seems like a

significant priority based on the experiences of the participants. “I think you have to start with the youth, this is where your future lies.” (R3)

As mentioned earlier recognition of achievement is one strategy to encourage continued involvement of any individual and this would apply to youth as well. The participants also stressed the need to provide meaningful opportunities to youth if youth are to be expected to desire to keep the community healthy.

“And I just think that, particularly for youth, and I actually said this at the standing committee on social determinants of health recently, if our youth can’t see themselves as important contributors in society then they are not going to move forward.” (R5)

Another participant talked in great detail about their positive experience with youth oriented clubs and organizations that allowed them to experience all the things that children should be able to experience (such as organized sport or social situations with other children). However, because of economic or social circumstances many of these opportunities may not occur. This is a good example of why it is important to provide things like youth clubs or drop in centres and other youth related resources.

Making sure that role models are available for youth was also an important factor according to the participants. Role models can help to provide examples of positive achievement and behaviour for youth in general and especially for those that may not get this education in their homes. Keeping role models in the community where they are needed has been recognized as a challenge. This is because those successful individuals that would most likely take on the mantle of role model are often drawn away from the community by opportunities that their success affords them. Strategies to create

opportunities that may keep these individuals in the communities where they are needed would be necessary to ensure that there are enough role models in the community.

The tenth practical idea is to **support a smoother rural/reserve to urban transition a priority and link it to housing**. During the completion of the course work for the program in city planning that this research is being prepared for I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to speak with several Aboriginal people working to provide services to Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. One of the key issues that came out of these discussions was the need for support for urban transition. Aboriginal peoples come to urban centres for many reasons but the underlying motivation is opportunity. There are more opportunities for employment, education and social interaction in urban centres than are likely found in their home community.

Why the need for help with transition? Many Aboriginal first timers to Winnipeg do not have the skills or knowledge that those accustomed to urban living take for granted. Simple things like how to take the bus or how to open a bank account are not so simple if there is no knowledge of where to start. There are some things being done to help alleviate some of these logistical problems by providing this information through new or existing organizations such as transition centres, like E.A.G.L.E. Urban Transition Centre or organizations providing some transitional services, such as the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre.

Moving to the city, from a community that may be tighter knit, can be very isolating.

Providing networks of Aboriginal people in the city to help alleviate this isolation would be one idea that may help. As mentioned earlier, inviting newcomers to community events and activities may go a long way in bridging this gap.

“I think it was moving to the City away from (home town) and particularly away from this large extended family where you are never alone. And then all of a sudden I was in the City for four years, and just absolute isolation.” (R5)

The eleventh and last practical idea that came from this research is that it will be important to **provide space and resources for Aboriginal places and maintain existing ones**. The participants explained from their experiences that having culturally safe spaces to meet, share ideas and discuss issues is necessary in order to move toward a healthier community. This idea also provides space to have celebrations and ceremony both of which are mentioned earlier as essential for community health.

These spaces can also be used as a neutral ground to meet with other cultures and increase awareness of Aboriginal culture in the general community in Winnipeg.

Examples of successful Aboriginal places in Winnipeg are: the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg, the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Circle of Life Thunderbird House, and the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. These places provide safe culturally appropriate services, employment, governance in the case of the Manitoba Metis Federation, to name just a few of their purposes. These places are as integral to the community in Winnipeg as, for example, the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre is for the French community in St. Boniface and therefore must be maintained.

Question #3: How can Aboriginal experiences of community health inform planning theory, and what is the potential for synergies between these perspectives and the 'healthy communities movement?'

The last research question posed two questions. The first part asked how the experiences of a healthy community by the participants can inform planning theory. The second questioned whether there were any potential linkages that could be drawn between Aboriginal experiences of a healthy community and the healthy communities movement.

Lessons for Planners

The first part of the third research question asked how the Aboriginal experiences of community health that are documented in this research project can help to inform planning theory and practice. These lessons are articulated here in this section.

I will recap what was learned in the literature about planning theory on this subject at this point. Sandercock (2003) made the argument that planning theory and practice that employs an inclusive community based planning process that values experiential knowledge will likely find more success when working with Aboriginal communities in an urban setting. In order to do this it will be important to understand a diverse set of Aboriginal values and definitions of community. Further to this argument she claims that this change is occurring. This can be partially seen in Winnipeg in the City of Winnipeg's stated commitment to the Aboriginal community as laid out in their planning documents

– “Municipal Aboriginal Pathways,” and “Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision.” Some activities laid out in Municipal Aboriginal Pathways have been implemented in community, economic and employment and training development as of 2008. However, there is no sign of the “Next Steps” document that was supposed to follow MAP in 2006 leading to the conclusion that the City does not think this is a priority area at this time (City of Winnipeg, 2008). The City of Winnipeg also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Manitoba Metis Federation and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs aimed at developing strategies to improve employment, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees at the City of Winnipeg (City of Winnipeg, 2008).

The integral approach to planning is postulated as a way to look at everything (Integral Institute, 2008). The integral approach tries to employ an inclusive, balanced and comprehensive approach to planning (Integral Institute, 2006), that integrates a holistic view of social, economic, cultural and physical factors (Hochachka, 2005). Obviously a balance among social, economic, cultural, and physical factors bears some resemblance to the holistic view of health ascribed by many Aboriginal peoples that the health of the individual is dependant on balance among physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual parts of that individual. At the level of community health, the participants of this study stressed the importance of physical factors such as obesity and obesity related diseases as well as physical solutions such as better food choices (specifically traditional foods were mentioned) and increased physical activity. The participants also stressed the importance of supporting a growing middle class and professionals to help to create solutions to economic and social issues that are occurring in the community. The participants also

suggested that the continuation of the reclaiming of Aboriginal culture and spirituality are strengthening the people from an emotional, spiritual and cultural standpoint. It is easy at this point to see how interconnected the integral approach and the holistic view of health can become. It is not however, the purpose of this research to create a new approach that might blend these two approaches together or adapt one or the other to work in this case. It is entirely possible that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada may not accept the integral approach because they have not had the opportunity to be involved in its genesis. Further research on this topic would be beneficial to planning theory and practice.

Another idea that came out of the participant's experiences that can help to inform planning theory is the value of giving that the Aboriginal participants talked about. The fact that the participants kept bringing up the concepts of giving back to the community and being a contributor to the community points to the idea that they are prepared to work with planners in a community planning process to plan their communities. A related idea that came up was around the need to provide an invitation to participate because Aboriginal peoples may not be comfortable initiating participation because they may feel that it is inappropriate to push their ideas onto others. Therefore, planning practice can make a concerted effort to provide formal invitations to Aboriginal individuals and communities to participate in planning the communities that they live in.

It is clear from the experiences of the participants that they are very aware of planning issues that affect the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. The questions posed during the interviews did not ask specifically about ideas like housing, urban Aboriginal transition,

or ideas of Aboriginal places and spaces yet these were brought forward by the participants while they related their experiences of a healthy community. This validates and legitimizes the ideas from the literature that Aboriginal peoples have historically planned their own communities (Jojola, 1998; Mann, 2005), complete with planning for roadways, reservoirs and canals using sophisticated forms of governance and planning. They were also aware of the factors that affect community health. What does this mean for planners in the field? This means that it is not necessary to attempt to plan Aboriginal communities from the top down because of the erroneous assumption that Aboriginal communities do not have the capacity to plan their own communities. This assumption was used historically by government to take away land and power from Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Jojola, 1998). The capacity to make thoughtful and knowledgeable decisions is there but where planners can be of most use is by providing technical expertise as it applies to planning communities and providing a bridge for working together with other communities in Winnipeg. This should assist planners in approaching Aboriginal communities in a respectful manner and with determining how to frame planning arguments when working with them.

In the literature review it was explained by Sandercock (1998) that the planning paradigm may be moving from a rational comprehensive model toward a model that is diversity based, stressing experiential learning. This research provides urban Aboriginal experiential knowledge on the topic of healthy communities that was unavailable from current literature. This research adds the experiential voice of a small group of Aboriginal Winnipeggers on the topic of their values, definitions of community and ideas of a

healthy community that may contribute to current planning knowledge. Having an understanding of the motivations and ideas behind community building among these Aboriginal Winnipeggers may help planners form new theory as well assist current practice when working with urban Aboriginal communities. This may provide an important source for planners to draw from in future research.

Planners can learn a lot from Aboriginal populations about being culturally competent (although, as previously mentioned, this is by no means a simple task nor one that can be learned in a short time period) from their experiential knowledge if that is truly the way that the current planning paradigm is headed. In the literature review for this research project Sandercock (2003) argued that a planning paradigm needs to be sensitive to cultural differences if it is to be successful in planning with these communities. This was echoed by the participants in this study by the need for cultural competence. Cultural competence is having an understanding of the historical and cultural context of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The quote below explains the meaning of cultural competence from the experience of one of the participants.

“Being culturally competent means that your staff have some sense of the history, when you have someone sitting in front of you that is experiencing absolute poverty and has a whole lot of issues going on, you need to, competency means you have to have some sense of why is that person sitting in front of you. Because if you don’t know where they have been you can’t possibly know what you could do to help this individual sitting in front of you” (R5).

As a start, planners could learn the history of how planning was used to take power and land from the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

In the literature review, Hochachka (2005) explains the integral approach to planning. One of the aspects of this was a holistic approach to planning, including social, cultural, physical (environmental), and economic factors. The writing of McCormick (1996), Quantz (2001), and Bartlett (2003) explored earlier in this research outlined the medicine wheel view of health that is prevalent among many Aboriginal groups. This view also believes that health (in this case individual health) is holistic in nature with physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual parts that are interconnected. If one part is unhealthy it will affect all of the other parts negatively. While not using the exact same terms one of the participants in this research project related from their experience the connected holistic nature of health for Aboriginal peoples when describing a healthy urban Aboriginal community.

“In a healthy community it is very hard to focus on physical, uhh, mental health too and the broader spiritual health without the physical health and part of that physical health is very much about where our communities are at and community well-being is not healthy right now.” (R1)

Another example of this holistic view of a healthy community is around the need for well rounded education for youth as detailed by one participant.

“I think that when you look at school atmospheres that those healthy communities that incorporate culture that incorporate beyond academic, training and sports and everything and have the well rounded opportunities for participation and geared towards actually getting the kids in and participating in a healthy environment.” (R1)

Clearly this participant understood that all facets of health are connected to each other. This ingrained way of looking at things in a holistic manner could mean that in the future, Aboriginal planners may be able to help advance the theoretical holism of integral planning and the healthy communities movement.

Lastly, planners can learn from the process employed in this research when doing research with Aboriginal peoples and/or when planning communities with them. It is culturally appropriate to build a relationship with an Aboriginal community planning communities with them. The talking circle method that was applied in this research offers a new approach to building these relationships. Planners, working with diverse Aboriginal groups, may find it valuable to alter this method so that data can be used. In the case of this research one of the rules of the talking circle approach that was used was that “what is said in the circle stays in the circle.” However, if permission is sought from the Aboriginal group involved in the research project and it is stated as such in the introduction to the research project, it should be reasonable to change this so that the data gained can be used.

Also, the process of listening to the lived experience of the participants of this study is a strategy that was successful and may be used successfully again in the future. The idea that experiential knowledge will benefit planning practice is certainly not a new one but this research provides a good example of its use. Next we turn to the healthy communities movement and attempt to find some linkages between it and this research.

Linkages between urban Aboriginal experiences of community health and the healthy communities movement?

As stated in the literature review summary, there were many linkages already apparent in the literature. A holistic view of health was articulated by Aboriginal authors describing

the medicine wheel view of health where all facets, physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual, were interconnected where positive or negative effects on one led to positive or negative effects on the others. This idea was echoed in the literature on healthy cities, the international version of the healthy communities movement (Fitzpatrick and LaGory 2000, pp 228).

“[Purpose of HC] is on improving the physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being of urban residents. They also outline the healthy cities guidelines put forth by the International Healthy Cities Foundation. Included in these guidelines is a demand to define health in a broader sense including physical, mental, social, and spiritual components.”

This came out of the experiences of the participants as well, with many of them talking about a diverse set of ideas that could lead to a healthy urban Aboriginal community. Ideas like supporting and welcoming each other or targeting social, economic, and environmental (physical and psychological) factors holistically. This leads to the assertion that, at least for this small group of Aboriginal Winnipeggers, the healthy communities movement shares many of the values of a holistic healthy community that are articulated in this research project.

The World Health Organization (WHO) healthy cities project outlined possible parameters (and indicators of such) of a healthy city in their series of papers of this subject (Hancock & Duhl, 1988). Included in these parameters were many that were shared by the participants of this research project. It was also interesting to note that many of the parameters and indicators outlined in the WHO's paper were not mentioned by the group of Aboriginal participants interviewed for this research and that these participants had some priorities that were not included in the WHO's list. I will explore a

selection of the parameters outlined by the WHO of each that were consistent among both works as well as those that were not.

One of the parameters that the WHO stated as important for a healthy city is the physical environment. Consistent with the WHO, the participants in this study talked about housing as important for the health of their community. There was an understanding that having or not having adequate shelter can affect the total health of an individual as well as the community itself.

“one of the biggest stats is housing and if you don’t have a proper home and shelter over people’s heads then how do you expect them to be healthy as a community” (R1)

The participants in this study did not, however, share any experiences of concern for the natural environments by talking about any of the other parameters laid out by the WHO such as pollution or sustainability. This may come as a surprise to many that attribute a connection to the natural environment as a key component of being an Aboriginal person in Canada, such as Wolfe (1989).

The WHO has three parameters: basic human needs; access to variety; and diverse city economy, that are all a part of one idea that the participants mentioned on several occasions – opportunity. The participants described from their experiences the many reasons that non-urban Aboriginal peoples move from their home communities to the city. The main reason was opportunity. Opportunity to basic human needs such as better shelter and incomes than could be found in their home communities.

“They come to the city here looking for opportunities, sometimes the opportunities find them and most of the time they don’t.” (R3)

Access to opportunities of variety of employment, entertainment and social interactions were also mentioned by the participants. Obviously the city, with its diverse economy and social scenes offers this to newcomers and according to the participants of this study they are coming into Winnipeg for opportunities related to education and employment..

The area that was probably the most important for the participants of this study as it relates to these parameters was not mentioned by the WHO at all – transition from rural to urban. The findings of this study indicate that successful transition from rural/reserve to urban is an indicator of a healthy community because lack of transitional services can leave individuals feeling isolated because of a lack of family support as well as a feeling of disconnection from the greater Winnipeg community. That feeling of belonging was not there for them when they first arrived in Winnipeg.

The WHO’s list of possible indicators of a healthy city indicates that a sense of connectedness is essential for a healthy community. This is one area that the participants of this study stress very strongly. According to their experiences a strong sense of culture and history are important to this sense of connectedness among Aboriginal people and this is consistent with the WHO (Hancock and Duhl, 1988). The participants talked from their experiences about how this sense of connectedness is integral to who they are. This is learned behaviour that is a part of a healthy community.

“I was raised as being, ah, the importance of being a part of the community was very much there and I was involved with the schools with the children with the parents so I was always a part of the community.” (R1)

In addition, they articulated that whatever they are doing or wherever they are they feel a need to connect with that community, to make community their own. This sense of connectedness to culture, history, and community is one of the great strengths of the participants that I interviewed and possibly of the greater urban Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. This is a strength that will continue to grow as the community continues to reclaim its history and culture; and as the community continues to grow in numbers and socioeconomic status.

The WHO outlines the need for high quality public health care services as an essential part of a healthy city. The participants from this study mentioned concern over obesity and obesity related diseases but in no way did the need for health care services come up in their shared experiences of a healthy community. This may reflect differences in worldview and the way these worldviews define health. Western views of health concentrate on fighting disease through biophysical medicine. A holistic view of health that many Aboriginal peoples believe stresses the understanding of the interconnection of all parts of ones being as being important to overall health.

“In a healthy community it is very hard to focus on physical, uhh, mental health too and the broader spiritual health without the physical health and part of that physical health is very much about where our communities are at and community well-being is not healthy right now.” (R1)

A western scientific medicine view might prescribe drugs to try to heal, control, or at least lessen suffering for an obesity related disease such as diabetes, whereas the

participants of this study explained the need for healthier choices in diet and level of physical activity. The participants thought that there was much less obesity in the past because they were a lot more active. This activity in concert with better food choices meant thinner healthier people.

5.3 Limitations and Biases

Several limitations or biases that were not foreseen in the design of this study became apparent during the process. One limitation that was unforeseen was related to the use of a talking circle methodology. Because of the nature of the talking circle as a relationship building and sharing exercise and the fact that whatever was said in the circle must remain in the circle I was unable to use any data from this process. However, it was a relationship building process first and foremost and that is what was accomplished. As well, the discussions that arose during the talking circle, helped shape the questions for the interview stage.

A second limitation was related to the number of total respondents that participated in this study. Although the value of each individual participant's experiences is not in question in this qualitative study it is difficult to make any definitive conclusions about the general Aboriginal population in Winnipeg based on six voices.

The last limitation was related to the timeframe of this research project and the changing nature of the Aboriginal Relations Council. During the time it took to complete this study there have been many changes to the members of the ARC as well as changes to

the staff position assigned by the United Way Winnipeg to administer the council business. This has not interfered with this research at this point but it could have an effect on the next step, the dissemination plan.

There were no new biases that were unforeseen in this research project.

5.4 Directions for Future Research

Tackling the potential linkages between an emerging integral planning theory and planning with Aboriginal communities (urban or not) would be an interesting area of research. The fact that the integral theory values a holistic approach and differing worldviews gives the potential for this theory to work well for planning with Aboriginal communities. A more detailed look at the potential links between the integral approach to planning and the holistic medicine wheel approach to health may have the benefit of producing a culturally appropriate approach to planning with Aboriginal communities. A further examination of the links and an attempt to fuse them or adapt one or the other may produce a system that is more holistic and integral than either are on their own at this time. Consultation would have to occur with diverse Aboriginal groups in Canada in order to determine if these links are enough to make it worthwhile to employ an integral approach when planning with Aboriginal communities. It is certainly no guarantee that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada would find the integral approach to their liking.

The fact that giving back, contributing to, and working for the benefit of the community rang so clearly from the experiences of the participants leads me to believe that this could

be an area in need of further research. Planners could benefit from an understanding of this phenomenon and use this knowledge to involve Aboriginal communities in urban planning more effectively.

It would be valuable to the planning profession to have a younger perspective on the concept of a definition of Aboriginal community and community health in an urban setting. This could be accomplished by using a similar approach as this research while interviewing younger participants.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Towards a Definition of a Health Urban Aboriginal Community in Winnipeg

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. The following is a short questionnaire with the aim of collecting additional information that will help to describe the Aboriginal Relations Council as a group that may not come out of our session in June. All information provided on this questionnaire will be kept completely confidential and it is not necessary to include your name on the questionnaire. You may, upon completion of it, return this questionnaire to me via E-mail at devin.dietrich@gmail.com or print it out and bring it to the June meeting of the Aboriginal Relations Council.

Socio-demographic information:

Sex: ____ Male ____ Female

Age ____

Aboriginal ____ Yes ____ No ____ First Nations ____ Metis ____ Inuit

Community of Origin _____

Where do you reside now ____ Rural ____ Reserve ____ Urban

If urban, how long have you lived in a city

Appendix B: Research Questions from the Talking Circle Process

Question # 1: When you hear the word community what comes to your mind?

Question # 2: What is it that you do that makes it feel like you belong to community?

Question # 3: What is your experience of a healthy community?

Appendix C: The Interview Form

Interviews:

The following questions are phenomenological in nature, i.e. they are aimed at eliciting and documenting a respondent's lived experience as it relates to a certain topic. The strategy is to allow the participant to respond to the intentionally vague question with little to no interference. However, I have provided some general guides such as: a purpose for each of the two questions; prompts to ensure that an adequately in-depth answer is given if possible; and a listing of what I will be listening for and making note of during the interview process.

Question 1 – *Aimed at discovering experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples that may help to give a picture of what community is to them.*

“Tell me about your experiences with the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.”

Prompts:

- Community events
- Traditional ceremonies
- Street life

Listening For:

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Definitions of community
- Supports
- Barriers
- Sense of belonging to community

Question 2 – *The goal of this question is to collect respondent's experiences as they relate to what are the potential features or themes that are consistent among the diverse Aboriginal population in Winnipeg that are imperative for a health community.*

“Can you tell me any personal stories about witnessing, or being part of, a healthy community?”

Prompts:

- Rural or Urban setting
- Winnipeg in particular

Listening for:

- Experiences of individual health
- Experiences of community health
- Repeated ideas or themes
- Experiences of empowerment.

Appendix D: Ethics Review Including Consent Form

HES Fax No. 261-0325

Protocol # _____

(Assigned by HES Admin.)

**Human Subject Research
Ethics Protocol Submission Form (Ft. Garry Campus)**

Psychology/Sociology REB ☐

Education/Nursing REB ☐

**Joint-
Faculty
REB
XXX**

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted **in quadruplicate** (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Secretariat, 244 Engineering Building, 474-7122.

If the research involves biomedical intervention, check the box below to facilitate referral to the BREB:

Requires Referral to Biomedical REB ☐

Project Information:

Principal Researcher(s): **Devin DIETRICH**

Status of Principal Researcher(s): please check

Faculty ☐ Post-Doc ☐ Student: Graduate **X** Undergraduate ☐ Other ☐
Specify:

Campus address: n/i Phone: **995-8665**

Fax:

Email address: **devin.dietrich@gmail.com** Quickest means of contact: **995-8665 (home)**

Project Title: **Towards a definition of a healthy urban Aboriginal community in
Winnipeg: urban Aboriginal perspectives**

Start date: **April, 2006**
year): **April to July 2007**

Planned period of research (if less than one

Type of research (Please check):

Faculty Research:

Self-funded ☐
(Agency)

Sponsored ☐

Administrative Research:

Central
Unit-based ☐

Student Research:

☐ Thesis Class Project **X**
Course Number:

Signature of Principal Researcher:

_____/Devin DIETRICH

This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

Name of Thesis Advisor: Dr. Sheri BLAKE

Signature _____

(Required if thesis research)

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

Ethics Protocol Submission Form (Basic Questions about the Project)

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be
UNAWARE that they are subjects? ___ Yes **X** No
2. Will information about the subjects be
obtained from sources other than the
subjects themselves? ___ Yes **X** No
3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a
position of power vis-à-vis the subjects? If yes,
clarify the position of power and how it will be
addressed. ___ Yes **X** No
4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain
the subject's participation? ___ Yes **X** No
5. Do subjects identify themselves by name
directly, or by other means that allows you or

anyone else to identify data with specific subjects?

If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition.

☒ Yes ☐ No

Name Identification

Subjects will be listed by name in relation to their interview during the research collection and collation phase. This will allow the researcher to follow up with a specific subject for clarification. However, their name will not be used in any materials for dissemination, unless that person gives written permission for a specific quote to be attributed to them.

Data Storage and Eventual Destruction

Results from the information collected by the researcher will be used for dissemination in professional journals and will be made available to the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and to the United Way of Winnipeg. All information will be treated as confidential and stored in a private and locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home, and destroyed at the end of one year after research is complete. If desired, subjects may request free copies of the researcher's work once completed.

6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies. ☐ Yes ☒ No
7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality? ☐ Yes ☒ No
8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design? ☐ Yes ☒ No
9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects? ☐ Yes ☒ No
10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give their valid consent to participate (e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems and/or cognitive impairment)?
If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained

from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects.

____ Yes **X** No

11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be intentionally misled about the purpose of the study, their own performance, or other features of the study)?

____ Yes **X** No

12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered in the course of the study? If yes, current laws require that certain offences against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying with the law.

____ Yes **X** No

13. Does the study include the use of personal health information? The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate provisions that will be made to comply with this Act (see document for guidance - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>).

____ Yes **X** No

Provide additional details pertaining to any of the questions above for which you responded "yes." Attach additional pages, if necessary.

In my judgment this project involves:

X minimal risk

☐ more than minimal risk

(Policy #1406 defines "minimal risk" as follows: "... that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater nor more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

____/____/____

dd mm yr

Signature of Principal Researcher

Ethics Protocol Submission Form
Required Information about the Research Protocol

1. Summary of Project

Purpose: I am going to undertake this research because there is a need for greater understanding of what forms urban Aboriginal communities can take and what forms are the healthiest. More importantly, it is imperative that Aboriginal perspectives of what makes a healthy community be ascertained.

Key Questions:

- *How do urban Aboriginal people of Metis and First Nations descent in Winnipeg define their urban community?*
- *What are the features or themes that are consistent among the diverse Aboriginal peoples living in Winnipeg that are imperative for a healthy community?*
- *How can Aboriginal perspectives of community health inform planning theory, and what is the potential for synergies between these perspectives and the 'healthy communities movement'?*

This is an important topic for two reasons: first, Aboriginal peoples are younger and growing at a faster rate than non-aboriginal population groups in many major urban centres, including Winnipeg. This leads to the logical conclusion that they will have an important role to play in the future of this city. Second, understanding Aboriginal perspectives on the health of their urban communities could be the first step toward successfully planning healthy communities with them.

2. Research Methods:

This research will include an extensive literature review, a socio-demographic survey and research aimed at discovering the lived experience of Aboriginal Winnipeggers. One talking circle was held on June 29th 2006 with the members of the Aboriginal Relations Council of the United Way of Winnipeg. A talking circle is an Aboriginal method to discuss issues that is consistent with Aboriginal values. In-depth interviews will be undertaken with the respondents that participated in the talking circle and any additional members of the Aboriginal Relations Council that wish to participate but were unable to attend the talking circle. This is a resubmission for ethics review for the interview phase of this research.

3. Research Instruments

A short socio-demographic questionnaire was administered to those members of the council that attended the talking circle phase of this research. Any council members that have not filled this questionnaire out will be asked to do so before their interview. This

questionnaire has the aim of collecting additional information that will help to describe the Aboriginal Relations Council as a group.

Questionnaire:

Sex: ____ Male ____ Female

Age ____

Aboriginal ____ Yes ____ No ____ First Nations ____ Metis ____ Inuit

Community of Origin _____

Where do you reside now ____ Rural ____ Reserve ____ Urban

If urban, how long have you lived in a city

Talking Circle:

Open-ended type questions were utilized to seek answers to the research questions during the talking circle. The questions were general in nature as the intention was to allow the respondents to determine the direction that this exploration will take. Three questions were asked at the circle. The talking circle was audio recorded. A hand held digital voice recorder was used to record information.

Questions:

Question 1 – When you hear the word community what comes to your mind?

Question 2 – What is it that you do that makes it feel like you belong to community?

Question 3 – What is your experience of a healthy community?

Interviews:

The following questions are phenomenological in nature, i.e. they are aimed at eliciting and documenting a respondent's lived experience as it relates to a certain topic. The strategy is to allow the participant to respond to the intentionally vague question with little to no interference. However, I have provided some general guides such as: a purpose for each of the two questions; prompts to ensure that an adequately in-depth answer is given if possible; and a listing of what I will be listening for and making note of during the interview process.

Question 1 – *Aimed at discovering experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples that may help to give a picture of what community is to them.*

“Tell me about your experiences with the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.”

Prompts:

- Community events
- Traditional ceremonies
- Street life

Listening For:

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Definitions of community
- Supports
- Barriers
- Sense of belonging to community

Question 2 – *The goal of this question is to collect respondent’s experiences as they relate to what are the potential features or themes that are consistent among the diverse Aboriginal population in Winnipeg that are imperative for a health community.*

“Can you tell me any personal stories about witnessing, or being part of, a healthy community?”

Prompts:

- Rural or Urban setting
- Winnipeg in particular

Listening for:

- Experiences of individual health
- Experiences of community health
- Repeated ideas or themes
- Experiences of empowerment.

4. Study Subjects

The Aboriginal Relations Council of the United Way of Winnipeg will be invited to participate. The council is made up of key members of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg who have a demonstrated commitment to improving conditions for the Aboriginal community.

5. Recruitment Strategies

The Aboriginal Relations Council of the United Way of Winnipeg has agreed to participate in this research and a recruitment strategy is therefore unnecessary.

6. Informed Consent

Before each focus group and interview session participants will be required to sign an informed consent form, explaining the purpose of the research, and that all information collected will be anonymous and securely stored.

7. Deception

No information will be deliberately withheld from participants and there will be no misleading information about the research or its purpose. There is no deception involved in this study.

8. Feedback/ Debriefing

Participants will also be given the opportunity to provide any follow-up information they deem necessary after the session is over. All participants will have access to the research findings upon completion of the research project. All participants will be able to access a final copy of the principal researcher's thesis. In order to ensure that research findings are made available to the Aboriginal community, copies of an abridged version of the research result will be provided to key Aboriginal organizations. A follow up session to disseminate results to the participants will also be arranged.

9. Risks and Benefits

There is little potential risk to individuals participating in this research. Participants will have the opportunity to express their lived experience as it pertains to the health of the urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. This research has the potential to have many benefits for the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and in Canada by providing an Aboriginal perspective on community health. The Aboriginal Relations Council has also expressed that this research could potentially be useful in the work that they will do in the future.

10. Anonymity and Confidentiality

The principal researcher and the principal researcher's thesis committee will have access to information collected. Several mechanisms will be used to ensure that the rights of all participants are upheld. These mechanisms include the following:

- Informed consent- participants will know their involvement is voluntary at all times and they will be provided with a thorough explanation of benefits, rights, and risks of involvement in the research.
- Providing opportunities to discuss the research and ask questions to ensure comprehension.
- In order to protect participants' right to privacy, their identity will be kept separate from responses.

- In terms of confidentiality, participants will be informed about the meaning and limits of confidentiality through written statements.
- All information collected and recorded will be stored in a locked filing cabinet to ensure confidentiality.

11. Compensation

No monetary compensation is being offered to the participants of this research nor is it necessary. This research will be disseminated to the participants and the Aboriginal community as a whole.

CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: **Towards a definition of a healthy urban Aboriginal community in Winnipeg: urban Aboriginal perspectives**

Researcher(s): **Devin Dietrich**

Sponsor (if applicable): **N/A**

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

Background to the Research

This research will explore Aboriginal perceptions on what it means to be urban and Aboriginal; as well as what makes a healthy urban Aboriginal community. This research also seeks to explore the potential relationship of Aboriginal perspectives of a healthy community with the 'healthy communities movement' articulated in the literature. You will be asked to provide your thoughts and opinions on a number of open-ended questions.

There is no risk involved in your participation in this research. The interview will take approximately forty five minutes.

There will be an opportunity to see and comment on the findings of this research after all of the research is completed and analyzed. Respondents will have the opportunity to confirm that their thoughts have been accurately portrayed and to comment on the analysis, although final editorial opinion is reserved.

Audio-Taping

The Interview session will be audio-recorded and transcribed at a later date for research purposes, so that analyzing the material at a later date will be completed with greater ease and efficiency. Such audio-recordings will be kept in a secure place, in a locked drawer in the researcher's home and destroyed after they have been transcribed. Your name or any other personal information will not be included in any publicly disseminated materials arising from the study. Where information occurs within a session transcript that will be included in the final project report, names and other personal information will be omitted, unless such permission has been explicitly granted.

Use of Data, Secure Storage and Destruction of Research Data

Results from the information collected by the researcher will be used for dissemination in professional journals and will be made available to community groups and government departments. All information will be treated as confidential and stored in a private and locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home, and destroyed at the end of one year after research is complete. If desired, subjects may request free copies of the researcher's work once completed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject at all stages of the research. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Name of Researcher: **Devin Dietrich. B.A., M.C.P.(c)**

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Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2**

Name of Researcher's Advisor: **Dr. Sheri Blake. B.E.S., M.Eng., D.Eng. M.C.I.P.**
Address: **201 Russell Building, Department of City Planning, University of Manitoba**
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2

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

Thank you for participating in this project. Your cooperation and insights are very valuable, and are greatly appreciated.