Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Mobility:

Meanings of Home, Community and Belonging in a Secondary Analysis

of Qualitative Interviews

by

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a secondary analysis of individual and focus group interviews from the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health research project (Ristock, Zoccole, and Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole, & Potskin, 2011). This was a community-based qualitative research project following Indigenous and feminist methods, involving two community Advisory Committees, and adopting research principles of Ownership Control Access and Possession (OCAP) (First Nations Centre, 2007). This analysis reviews data from 50 participants in Winnipeg and Vancouver and answers: How do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people describe home, community and belonging in the context of migration, multiple identities, and in a positive framework focusing on wellbeing, strengths and resilience?

Findings demonstrate how participants experience marginalization in both Aboriginal and gay communities. Their words illustrate factors such as safety required to facilitate positive identities, community building, belonging, and sense of home. For participants in this study home is a place where they can bring multiple identities, a geographical place, a physical or metaphorical space (with desired tone, feeling), and a quality of relationships. Community is about places, relationships, participation, and shared interests. Belonging is relational and interactive, feeling safe, accepted, and welcome to be yourself. Detractors interfere with positive meaning making and are identified in examples of contemporary effects of historical trauma. Also included are participant recommendations for community building, descriptions of holistic wellbeing, and examples of many ways urban Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people are creating communities of Two-Spirit vitality and resurgence (Simpson, 2011).

Acknowledgements

Bringing this work to fruition has been a collective labour of love and commitment. I am indebted to my Advisors, Kim Clare and Janice Ristock. Janice, your research knowledge has been awe-inspiring and challenging (in a good way). Your thoughtful questions have provoked me to become more considerate and articulate. Despite my bashfulness, I have come to consider myself a "researcher". Kim, your steadfast support, and keen social work eyes and warm heart have helped me come around the block with my MSW work the long way, with more than a "Master's" worth of learning. Together, you two are a demanding, nurturing, knowledgeable and fierce tag team! Thank you both.

To my thesis committee: Deana Halonen, Eveline Milliken, Kiera Ladner, and Marjorie Beaucage… I appreciate your expertise, willingness to participate, and your pointed comments and questions. This study has grown better and has potential to reach farther thanks to your collective efforts.

To the community Advisory Committee members: the patience, knowledge and good faith you shared with your participation are gifts you gave not only to the project but also to me. Thank you.

Finally, to the participants who shared their stories: without you, none of this could have come to fruition. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, feelings and hopes about what home, community and belonging mean to each of you. I hope I have represented what matters to you in good ways.   I accept responsibility that any mistakes in representation or otherwise are my own.

Now closer to home:

My family has been a cornerstone for me during the seven long years I have been in graduate school. They have offered financial, emotional, nutritional, parenting and other supports. It takes a community to raise a grad student … and the Passante and Kuryk families are part of my community. My parents, Tino and Marlene Passante, in particular, always emphasized the importance of hard work, learning to do a good job (and doing it), and the value of education. They, along with my sister Adriana, were my first teachers. Thank you.

To my partner, Jackie, I know your patience with my schooling wore out long ago. Despite that, you have been a good sport. You are my rock and my love in life. You have always been where I belong. Thank you.

To my daughter, Ruby, you have helped me become a better person from the moment you moved from the dream in our hearts into a real live person. And now, we welcome our newest family member, little Leonie. You two girls bring new meaning to *home* everyday and give me many chances to practice being well, and being more of the parent I want to be. Thank you.

As a community member, I am thankful for all of the peers, teachers and friends I have worked with over the years in common cause. I count many of you among my chosen family and value the belonging I have experienced in your collective presence. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is very little research that has been done with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people that focuses primarily on the impact of mobility and on people's sense of home. Research that has been conducted is usually from the view of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ participants as people living with infections (such as HIV and Hepatitis), as street-involved people (at risk for exploitation, infection, substance abuse, homelessness, etc.), or those in need of support and "intervention" (for example, see Linnebach & Schellenberg, 1997). This is apparent especially in the social work literature, where as a service-based discipline we have developed the field by focusing in many ways on articulating deficits and challenges experienced by specific groups of people (Heinonen & Spearman, 2006; LeCroy, 1992; Lundy, 2004). To address the gap created by problem-focused or needs-based approaches, I completed a secondary analysis of individual and focus group interview transcripts of the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health research project conducted in Winnipeg and Vancouver from 2008-2010 (Ristock, Zoccole, & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011).

To clarify terms, *Two-Spirit* is a contemporary English concept referring to sexual and gender variation among people of Indigenous North American descent. Two-Spirit people may also self-refer as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer). The term Two-Spirit has multiple contemporary meanings and highlights historical aspects of roles of Two-Spirit people in their communities, spiritual being, and place in the sacred circle (Beaucage, 2010; Brant, 1994; A. Wilson, 1996). There are some academics and many community members and workers using the term and

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doing so in political ways (Brant, 1994; Walters, Evans-Campbell, Simoni, Ronquillo &

Bhuyan, 2006, for example) but the term is contested by some and not accepted

homogenously across or within cultural or nation groups. Furthermore, this lack of

acceptance of the term is seen by extension as a lack of acceptance and in the

marginalization experiences of many Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Despite these experiences of marginalization, there is evidence that Aboriginal Two-

Spirit and LGBTQ people know themselves, feel good about their identities (Cameron,

2009), and are often thriving in their communities, sharing their gifts (such as

capacities, strengths and potential, see McKnight & Block, 2010) in connection with

others (Buffalo, 2005; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004; Scofield, 2005; Walters et al.,

2006).

In this study, I focus on exploring the meanings of home, community and

belonging as reported by participants in the migration project to increase Indigenous

and non-Indigenous understandings of the hopes, values, concerns and interests of

Aboriginal people who identify themselves as Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ. **Specifically,

my main research question is "How do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people

describe home, community and belonging in the context of migration and

mobility?"** To get away from the perspective of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ

people as service users in need of intervention, I address the main question **in the

context of participants' multiple identities and in a positive framework focusing on

wellbeing, strengths and resilience**. To explore my focus, I bring together data from

two research sites (Winnipeg and Vancouver) and note similarities and differences in

participant responses.

The term *Aboriginal* refers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples (as per the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982, cited in First Nations Centre, 2007). This includes Status, Non-Status, and people of blended ancestry that self-identify as Aboriginal (Guimond, 2003; Siggner, 2003a and 2003b). I also use the term *Indigenous* somewhat interchangeably with the term Aboriginal, to refer to a location's original peoples.[1] When using this term however, I am describing 'Canadian' Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island (i.e. North America). Some people self-identify as Indigenous and many are more familiar with using the term Aboriginal. I use the term Indigenous to refer to original peoples, their descendants and what we can learn from Indigenous teachings. The term Aboriginal is understood as 'local' in a Canadian context. When reviewing writings that are dated, or written by authors in another context, I use the language they use (such as 'American Indian' or 'Native').

In this thesis, I outline the rationale for this secondary analysis; locate myself in relation to the project; offer a background summary of the larger Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health Research Project from which this secondary analysis emerges; review literature related to my focus on home, community and belonging; review my research methodology and methods used including objectives, data collection, analysis, community involvement, and credibility; include comparison of similarities and differences among Winnipeg and Vancouver; share findings and a summary analysis and discussion; offer strengths and limitations,

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[1] As terms have political, cultural and social ramifications (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p. 13) I will state that I prefer the term Indigenous. I believe that this term is more respectful of Indigenous sovereignty, since it was not created or institutionalized in the context of the Canadian nation-state. It can be used to refer to specific and/or generalized knowledge (Hart, 2009).

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relevance and applications in the field of social work; and consider reflections on myself in relation to the project.

Rationale for a Secondary Data Analysis

The Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health research project focused on migration and impact on health and wellbeing. I was touched by hearing how acceptance and chosen, created connections among people inspire feelings of community, make a place feel like home, and keep people there. These stories motivated me to think more deeply about descriptions of home, community and belonging as sources of personal and relational strength, closely affiliated to peoples' sense of wellbeing.

As a non-Indigenous person who is LGB, I could relate to community seeking and feelings of isolation (in not wholly belonging *anywhere*) shared by many of the participants that I sat with in individual and focus group interviews. I see that there is little in the literature in regards to these themes particularly for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. This is a largely invisible group, in some ways due to its specificity, in other ways due to compounded marginalization. That being said, participant stories were also filled with humour, insight, and examples of how they were actively engaging with creating meaningful homes, community spaces and connections within which belonging was experienced (Ristock, Zoccole, & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). I interpreted participant examples as demonstrations of capacity that merited further exploration and could exist as research from a positive, strengths-focused perspective.

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Locating Myself

Feminist research ethics suggest that locating oneself in relation to a research project is a necessary component of contextualizing the findings (Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006; Ristock & Pennell, 1996). In outlining transparency and reflexivity in Indigenous methodologies, Kovach (Cree, Saulteaux) says, "We know what we know from where we stand" (2009, p. 7). Therefore, how do I come to this research? I will do my best to share the many ways I come to this project and the spirit I hope I have carried through its completion.

Professionally, I am a Manitoba-trained and practicing social worker. I work across the education system. Currently, I am working in the Pembina Trails School Division with children and families attending elementary and middle schools, and with the University of Manitoba as a consultant regarding student threat-making on campus.

Personally, I am a White woman living in a same-sex relationship. I am a mother to a preschooler, and six plus months pregnant as I finish this writing. I am the daughter of a Sicilian immigrant and a third-generation German-Canadian woman of White settler ancestry. I am cousin and legal guardian to a man living with cognitive and physical disabilities. Upon graduating, I will be the first person in my extended family to have a graduate degree. I am among cousins in the first generation of my family to be University educated. Before my daughter was born, I was an active member of the LGBTTQ community as a volunteer, facilitator and sexual and gender diversity/anti-homophobia educator in multiple roles. I continue to do some of this community work in a limited capacity. These examples demonstrate how I hold

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multiple positions and exist within many relationships among the component parts of my identities.

I approach this research from the perspective that too much research has been done "on" groups of people that are stigmatized, disenfranchised, ignored and/or othered (such as women, LGBT, Indigenous peoples, poor folks, people living with disabilities, immigrants etc.). I first came to this awareness as I learned about feminism, and then this awareness expanded to include queer interests and has grown progressively since to include all groups systematically oppressed - but also into an analysis of how power works beyond group membership to maintain and enforce structures that impact potential and participation. I pay attention to how interactions among people replicate on a more intimate level structural violence and oppression occurring at macro levels.

To create space for many voices to be heard, I bring my values as a queer-positive feminist social worker invested in social justice. For me, social justice means identifying and changing the social structures that systematically oppress some groups of people while simultaneously advantaging others (including myself as a White, University-educated person). Social justice also means practicing more respectful ways of being – that limit harm and increase common good (McIntosh, 2009a). I see myself as an ally[2] to groups in which I don't belong. I need allies too.

My first real conscious learning about Indigenous interests and concerns happened within a BSW course, Aboriginal Perspectives in Social Work (a required

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[2] Bishop (2002) defines an ally as "A member of an oppressor group who works to end a form of oppression which gives her or him privilege. For example, a White person who works to end racism, or a man who works to end sexism" (p. 126).

course for all BSW students at the University of Manitoba). I took this course

sometime prior to 1998 when I graduated. I remember feeling appalled and duped –

like some terrible wool had been pulled over my/our collective eyes in regards to

Canada's colonial history and its impact on Indigenous peoples and nations. I felt

responsible to *do something* as a social worker (but what?!) I also had a whiff of what

this meant for me – but only a whiff of the privilege and unearned advantages

(McIntosh, 2009b) that come with my social location and identities.

Post-graduation I worked at Marymound (a girls' treatment centre), Village

Clinic (street outreach with male sex trade workers), Probations, the Youth Emergency

Education Services (of the Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System), and then as a

School Social Worker and Community School Networker. I have continued the work as

a School Social Worker and also did a concurrent series of terms (four years) at the

Student Counselling and Career Centre at the University of Manitoba.

More recently (about the past 7 years) I am more aware of my biases and

shortcomings in living in community and working with Indigenous peoples. My

experience had been limited to the marinade[3] we are all exposed to that does not

account respectfully or appropriately for Canada's colonial past and critique our

colonial present. My awareness grew however in working with Indigenous peoples – in

paid work with colleagues and service users; in unpaid community work, and also in my

neighbourhood and friendship circles. I have two friends in particular that I have

witnessed seeking more information about their Métis roots and their families'

knowledge and silences about what parts their identities include.

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[3] Thanks to social work friend and mentor, Lisa Seymour, for introducing me to the apt term *marinade*.

A friend of mine once said it is not her job to educate her oppressors. That always struck me and I remember her words – it is my responsibility to learn about the people sharing community with me. Consequently, I have undertaken a course of study for personal and professional reasons that has included volunteering at a mainstream Aboriginal organization (United Against Racism, Aboriginal Youth Circle at Ka Ni Kanichihk (2004-05); taking a course on Aboriginal Education at U of M (2006R) as part of my Post-Baccalaureate in Education; participating in the Educational Equity committee of the Faculty of Social Work, learning and listening from Indigenous peers and mentors (ongoing since 2005); and a summer course on Indigenous Ways of Healing (2009).

Through the relationships I have experienced in these roles, in getting to know people, I have grown. I understand better the importance of worldview to Indigenous ways of being. I believe I better understand in real life terms the impacts of colonization in peoples' lives today, and the impacts of privilege in mine. I see firsthand the strength, resiliency, and vibrancy Aboriginal people live out and share in their families and communities. I see how social work relationships have potential to deconstruct negative power relationships, but more often, reinforce oppressive conditions. My understandings are a work in progress.

I see the diversity of experience that exists among Indigenous peoples in Winnipeg. There is no one way to be Aboriginal (or Cree, Ojibway, Dene…), as there is no one way to be L, G, B, T or Q. I am growing and I am very aware of how I have much more to learn. In fact, I often have moments where I have put my foot in my mouth (by not using the best language for instance, or in asking ignorant questions) and

have to shut up and listen, but I am willing to do that. In fact, I know I need to, and I value the patience and persistence of friends, colleagues, and service users in putting up with my ways. I understand that sometimes they have to, because we are already in relationship together (in the case of my close friends), we have common overlapping interests (in the case of community work), or in that I am their only link in accessing what they need (in the case of service users).

I feel this project picked me - I got a mass email about the position through one of my e-loops. I happened to run into Janice and asked a few questions about it. (I knew Janice already from an evaluation she had done of a program at the Rainbow Resource Centre a number of years previous. She had interviewed me about that, as I was a Board member at the time and supervising a social work student there.) I thought the experience of working as a research assistant with Janice would be amazing, and thought I would not be an appropriate candidate as a non-Aboriginal person. She encouraged me to apply. I shared my concerns, said I would think about it, and we left it at that. I am not sure what happened next. I do remember running into her again, asking about it, and Janice stated at that time she had not been able to find someone for the position, and if I would be interested as someone who had worked in LGBTTQ community education and advocacy.

I was not looking for work. I was supposed to be working part-time on my thesis research, as well as just over half time in my paid employment. I had however stalled out on my original thesis topic, despite years of reading and writing. (I have learned about myself that I am much more responsible to a collective.) I went home and talked the migration project over with my partner. I spoke some more with Janice and

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Kim, who both indicated I could potentially move my own work along concurrent to the migration project. I had no idea what this might look like, but knew the learning would be valuable and my thesis would be a bonus if I could link the two.

And so… I took the position, and got reconnected or in acquaintance with people in the community as part of the consultation process. I have learned immensely. I have not moved my thesis along more quickly, but things unfold as they need to. I needed to be inspired and moved to do something worthwhile that had relevance for community members, and I believe that this secondary analysis is it.

So, as someone that is making sense of what it means to be an ally, I am working hard to listen to my friends, colleagues, and the migration project participants and community advisors to hear what matters for them and what needs to be heard more loudly. Being who I am with a Master's thesis to complete, I hold some power and privilege, and have some energy to expend with purpose. There are Indigenous scholars and community activists engaging in research and writing to advance Indigenous perspectives and promote Indigenous self-determination (Anderson & Lawrence, 2003; Hart, 2002, 2009b; Kovach, 2009; S. Wilson, 2008). I draw upon their strength, conviction and academic foundations in my aim to participate in "mainstreaming" Indigenous knowledge building.

Background

From Fall 2007 to Fall 2010, I worked as a research assistant and coordinator for a research project entitled "Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health". This project was part of a larger national research project, entitled SVR –

Sexual and Gender Diversity: Vulnerability, Resilience (funded by the Canadian

Institutes of Health Research). SVR is a cross-Canada research endeavor designed to

explore health issues pertinent to sexual and gender diversity and multiple oppressions

(SVR, 2010. See www.svr.uqam.ca). The migration project was under the direction of

Janice Ristock (Women's and Gender Studies, University of Manitoba), Art Zoccole

(Executive Director, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, Toronto) and a community

Advisory Committee in Winnipeg. The project was engaged in two sites – Winnipeg

and Vancouver. There was also a research assistant connected to the Vancouver arm of

the project, along with a community Advisory Committee.

The Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health project

explored experiences of migration and the impact on health and wellness for Aboriginal

Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. We were interested in any mobility including to and

from reserve, urban, rural and Northern communities, as well as movement within one

location. We were also interested in the intersection of Indigenous cultural, Nation, and

sexual and gender identities within Canada's colonial context. We asked about

participants' interactions with health and social services (including mainstream,

Aboriginal and LGBTTQ services) and for their recommendations regarding services.

We hoped to generate new knowledge that could lead to future research and funding

proposals that would benefit LGBTTQ and Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal service

providers and health and social service agencies (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010;

Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011).

This was a qualitative, community-based research project following feminist and

Indigenous ways of being in research and practice. After a series of community

consultations, the Research Team (including Janice Ristock, Art Zoccole, myself in

Winnipeg, research assistants Cindy Holmes and then Jonathon Potskin in Vancouver,

and the Winnipeg and Vancouver community Advisory Committee members) adopted

the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP, First Nations

Centre, 2007) and used focus groups and individual interviews to gather information

from Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people about their experiences of migration.

What we learned in the community consultation process was solidified as the research

moved forward – that despite many similarities, there were also differences in the

experiences and contexts for Vancouver and Winnipeg participants. I discuss the

contextual differences here.

Urban Contexts of Winnipeg and Vancouver

Winnipeg and Vancouver are different urban settings. Each city has their own

set of urban Aboriginal-serving agencies and LGBT community spaces.

In Winnipeg for instance, there are no Two-Spirit specific services, but there are

some agencies for which Two-Spirit people are included in their mandate (formally or

informally). These include three community health clinics (Nine Circles, Klinic and

Mount Carmel) with programs targeting street-involved people and/or those living with

HIV. Some of these programs are culture-based (such as a drumming circle). Services

also include at least one Aboriginal organization, Ka Ni Kanichihk (Those Who Lead),

with youth leadership programs, and the Rainbow Resource Centre, serving Winnipeg's

gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and Two-Spirit communities (with phone line,

counselling, and library resources). Winnipeg gay bars mentioned in the study include Club 200, Gio's, and Desire (currently closed).

In Vancouver, there are two Aboriginal organizations with specific services for Two-Spirit people. The Aboriginal Wellness Program has a Two-Spirit group focusing on mental wellness and addiction programs. The Urban Native Youth Association had a youth drop-in that ran for about two years but recently closed due to non-attendance. Vancouver Coastal Health has counselling services available to LGBT people and include Two-Spirit people in their targets. Healing Our Spirit is an Aboriginal agency working to prevent the spread of HIV while also offering care and support to those living with infection. Vancouver also has a GLBT Centre called "Qmunity", and two bars were mentioned as Two-Spirit gathering places – the Dufferin (closed) and Castle Pub.

Despite aims at inclusion and appropriate services, most participants indicated they have not felt welcome at mainstream Aboriginal or LGBT organizations in both Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Literature Review

Two-Spirit writings on home, community, belonging. There is little academic writing on Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples and less on their experiences of the meanings of home, community and belonging. As mentioned, social work has built much of its theory and practice around deficits, pathology, and problems. Social work sources tend to focus more on members of marginalized groups as service

users, inherently flawed or weak (Saleeby, 2002) thus I have strayed from the general

social work literature into literature that is multidimensional and multidisciplinary (Lee

& Brotman[4], 2011) to address the intersections in the lives of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and

LGBTQ - into Indigenous, feminist, LGBTQ and social sciences sources in general.

Much early scholarly writing about Indigenous variations in gender and

sexuality has taken the form of anthropological review to validate the historical

existence of this diversity among tribal groups (Roscoe, 1998; Williams, 2004). This

research was done predominantly by non-Indigenous people and is criticized for

romanticizing the role of the "berdache", conflating sexuality and gender (on the basis

of gender presentation), and imposing Western/European meaning onto observations

thereby missing important cultural context (Jacobs, Thomas & Lang, 1997; see also

Kinsman, 1987; Trexler, 1995).

In my review, I begin my focus primarily on limited sources written from

Indigenous perspectives. Although not specifically considering home, community and

belonging, there are important points made in these selections regarding identity and

community with implications in the other areas that bear mention here. As well, since

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people are relatively silenced and invisible in both

larger Aboriginal and LGBTQ literatures, any writing from the perspectives of

Aboriginal Two Spirit and LGBTQ people themselves deserves preferential

consideration as context for the purposes of my investigation. I have organized this first

section chronologically according to date of original publication to offer an historical

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[4] Of note, Lee & Brotman are social workers utilizing a critical and intersectional analysis.

overview of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ sources and to illustrate their development over time.

One of the first and most known lesbian writings from the perspective of a North American Indigenous person regarding LB/Two-Spirit women is Allen's (1992). She writes about American Indian women's identities, roles and relationships, economic and sacred powers of women in traditional societies, in the past and as they extend into contemporary lives and communities. She states that she aims to "explore lesbianism within a larger social and spiritual context as contrasted with its occurrence as an individual aberration that might show up on occasion but that has nothing to do with tribal life in general" (p. 246). Allen emphasizes that women lived and worked in same-sex/same-gender groups and that the likelihood that women formed what she calls "affectional alliances" (p. 246) are enormous. In noting the lack of commentary or knowledge regarding women's same-sex sexuality, Allen asserts that lesbianism is invisible, and that history of Native America is selective – matters contradicting a western patriarchal worldview were selected out.

Allen (1992) writes that she believes that heterosexual women and lesbians would have lived lives more connected in tribal settings than in contemporary settings. Women who did not have children because of constitutional, personal, or Spirit-directed disinclination would have other ways to experience spiritual instruction, exercise power, and be mothers in what Allen calls "spiritual kinship" (p. 251) according to matrilocal lineage and gynecentric systems of clan membership. Thus, the people that Allen refers to as lesbians would have been embedded and connected tribally through spiritual and biological kinship relationships – and perhaps also as members of a given medicine

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society or in shared consciousness of a certain Spirit. Their identities as lesbians would have been destined and nurtured by nonhuman entities and therefore would be acceptable within a tribal community context. Hence, using Allen's descriptions we can conceptualize home, community, and belonging as deeply interconnected concepts practiced within relational and cultural contexts.

Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality and Spirituality (1997) is a collection of writings edited by Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang as the result of two conferences hosted with the purpose of bringing Native American and non-Native academic and community scholars of gender studies and sexuality together. Conference aims included interrogating researchers on their "motives, interests, experiences, and ambitions in investigating Native American gender diversity and sexuality" (p. 8) and to engage in dialogue and raise concerns. These concerns involved continuous misuse of the derogatory term *berdache* (a French term which means 'kept man' or male receptive partner), lack of thorough research on traditional roles of Two-Spirit people, contemporary gay, lesbian and Two-Spirit people, and contemporary gender diversity and sexualities in Native American communities.

Using a cultural lens, the authors draw the reader's attention to nuances not otherwise explained in the larger LGBTTQ, Aboriginal, or 'berdache' (sic) literature. As previously mentioned is the conflation of gender and sexuality. For example, in some cultural traditions third-gender male-bodied people do not generally have sex with each other. They are more likely to have sex with heterosexual men. This is different from men who identify as gay and may have sex with each other (and understand that this behavior is accepted meaning of the word 'homosexual' according to Western

cultural concepts). "This is a critical issue for understanding the difference between gay males and those whose cultural framework contains an active contemporary concept of third gender" (Jacobs, Thomas & Lang, 1997, p. 12).

Similarly, Blackwood (1997) thematically and effectively summarizes difficulties existing in current research and writings regarding Two-Spirit people: using Western constructs of biology as it informs gender (thereby conflating); over-generalizing about Two-Spirit people as a group (and generalizing across Indigenous cultures, losing local specificities); and attributing Western gender markers to Two-Spirit people (such as 'effeminate' or 'housewife' that are inappropriate and get lost culturally in translation). She asserts that an adequate understanding of gender relations in specific groups is required to gain insight into Two-Spirit gender variations.

Overall, Blackwood's most important point is to expose the difficulty describing and defining an identity as complex as that of being Two-Spirit. She references Tafoya (1997, in the same volume) in reminding the reader that as one gains a descriptive definition, one loses context and conversely as one gains context, the ability to define becomes blurred. Rather than defining and universalizing, Blackwood encourages anthropologists to think about diversity rather than definition and to pay attention to what Two-Spirit people say about their lives (1997). This secondary analysis offers what Blackwood is suggesting. I attempt to hold both definition (or description) and context in balance.

Just as in the previous example, writings by authors of Indigenous sexual and gender diversity are often contained in anthologies or special editions. *Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men* is one such example – a

collection focused on documenting a written history of Two-Spirit and American Indian lesbian and gay people to illuminate service needs.

Within this collection, Champagne (1997) highlights uniquely Indigenous perspectives from which to consider Two-Spirit people. He emphasizes the sacredness of being and the importance of each person's personal spiritual journey in discovering their gifts from the Great Spirit.   Across differing nations, "Alternative gender roles were respected and honored (sic), and believed to be part of the sacred web of life and society" (p. xviii). In this way, Indigenous traditions provide cultural resources to support belonging, and for contemporary reevaluation of sexuality and gender diversity and relations. Champagne contrasts this with Judeo-Christian traditions, which he states are much less open to variations in sexuality and gender. This puts GAIs (gay American Indians) in a solid position from which to rediscover and recreate honour for Two-Spirit people.

Champagne asserts he is not suggesting a return to roles or relations of the past:

Certainly our continuous knowledge and appreciation can inspire the recreation of respect, honor (sic), and sacredness of alternative sexual being, but this must be done for the present historical period, under present social, political, economic and cultural conditions. The sacredness of being teaches the honoring (sic) of the present world as a given sacred gift from the Great Spirit, and it is in this present-day world that spiritual warriors must achieve their sacred life tasks… (1997, p. xxii-xxiii).

Thus, it is imperative that researchers, community members and activists heed the need to balance knowledge and appreciation of traditions with creating meaningful, relevant, contemporary sacred understandings of what it means to be Two-Spirit and the connections people can have with themselves and others in community.

Brown (1997) offers a refreshing perspective on North American Indigenous historical commentary and interpretation of literature and customs regarding (American Indian) people of varying genders and sexualities. He begins by refuting writing of early European claims that Indigenous people taking on the dress and customs of another gender would have been an institutionalized form of homosexuality. Rather Brown discusses how sexuality was not determined by gender.

> American Indians had very simple beliefs about human sexuality and those beliefs were based on their experience. … sexual expression between women and men was essential for survival of the group; procreation was important. However, sexual expression was also fun and enjoyable irrespective of the partner's gender (1997, p. 7).

Brown (1997) asserts that bisexuality was and has been common among American Indians for men, women, and those special people taking the dress and customs of another gender (not-men and not-women). Same-sex sexual expression was accepted and the only prohibition would have been sex among not-women and each other (and not-men with other not-men). In response to these special persons being called transgender, Brown comments that transgender people in the current medical psychiatric definition are dissatisfied with their bodies and may change them to fit their experienced/felt gender. Instead, he states that there is no evidence in historical records indicating desire to change one's body – rather, acceptance of different bodies and differing gender roles. He states,

> The many ways researchers have tried to explain these special people usually avoided the most obvious explanation: that these individuals were simply different and had preferences for dress, work, or behavior (sic) that deviated from the norms at the time (1997, p. 11).

Like Champagne and Allen, Brown (1997) reminds the reader that these people would have been accepted and experienced belonging within their tribal communities. Their uniqueness was attributed to a spiritual calling that no other person would interfere with.

Little Crow, Wright and Brown (1997) demonstrate how despite being seen as a homogenous group by U.S. society, the Dakota and Lakota tribes have distinct and complex institutionalized norms and mores regarding gender and sexuality. Namely, the Dakota historically accepted men taking on more womanly roles, however also assigned them to a "periphery social station within the formal kinship structure of the tribe" and abandoned them to find acceptance among strangers (i.e. another tribe) (p. 23-24). The Lakota on the other hand, assigned men taking on women's roles the status of a non-heterosexual person, and classified them into four types based on their talents and abilities - including healers, performers, wizards, counsellors/advisors and (female) craftspeople. In these examples, we are reminded of historical and contemporary divergence that exists among and within tribes.

Jacobs and Brown (1997) review their qualitative study undertaken in urban California. In this research, the authors were breaking ground in the 90s by offering a current look at lesbian and gay American Indians (GAIs). In rationalizing need for their research, they challenge historical writings as distorted products of priests, missionaries and researchers and note how existence of contemporary GAIs has been almost completely covered up due to pressure from dominant colonizing society and adoption of Christian beliefs by Indigenous tribes.

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Jacobs and Brown (1997) hoped to uncover relationships GAIs have with their families, communities, partners and themselves, as well as any special status or role as a result of being gay or lesbian. The authors interviewed five male and three female participants of varying ages (23-42 years), education (high school graduation to PhD.), and parenting status. Commonalities within the small but diverse sample that Jacobs and Brown emphasize are related to 'outness' and acceptance. All except one respondent indicated being out to family, friends and their tribal community - whether or not they had openly talked about their sexuality. All participants agreed that the American Indian community in general was more accepting of homosexuality than general society, and all lived in an urban setting.

Jacobs and Brown (1997) note that on the whole this group of participants does not appear to be different from other gays and lesbians. Participants identified no special role or status, although most reported some activist work related to HIV/AIDS or gay and lesbian rights issues. The authors conclude their writing by noting the existence of American gays and lesbians, and participants' positive sense of acceptance in their tribal communities. Unfortunately, that participants reported discrimination in larger American society for being gay or lesbian, as well as American Indian means they experienced their share of oppression. Jacobs and Brown interpret participants' continued ability to thrive despite discrimination as testament to the strength of American Indians.

Also connecting understandings of identity to informing service provision, Walters (1997) notes that Indian identity has been shown to be a positive predictor of mental health and cultural continuity and survival. She emphasizes that the experiences

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of American Indian gays and lesbians however are not accounted for. Walters reviews a model of urban GAI identity development and includes acculturation levels, cultural values and conflicts in allegiances. In Walter's model (an offshoot of her work on American urban Indian identity development), identity is formed in the context of a person (self-identity), group (group identity), social environment (urban environment) and the group's historical relationship with dominant society (dominant group environment and institutional responses).

In moving towards a GAI identity development model, Walters (1997) cites minority ethnic gay and lesbian identity development models and emphasizes the need to attend to impacts of colonization and urbanization in repressing Indian traditions that incorporated multiple gender roles and same-sex sexuality. In short, Walters asserts that acculturation accelerates in an urban environment for GAIs, leading to exposure to more negative attitudes and erosion of traditional (positive) values towards GAIs. Walters says, "The denial of the existence of GAIs among some more acculturated Indians contributes to the invisibility of positive cultural referents for same-sex relationships and affects GAI identity" (p. 49).

This in turn causes GAIs to feel they have to choose to align either with the gay and lesbian community or their tribal community. Walters (1997) states, "Walking in multiple worlds requires a delicate balancing act that demands crossing many boundaries and multiple social roles" (p. 54). As such, conflicts and tensions across communities increase feelings of estrangement for GAIs in both communities.

Walters (1997) finishes by offering recommendations for clinical practice, research and mental health service delivery. She suggests a focus on GAIs' strengths,

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resiliencies, and coping. She recommends an assessment of clients' (sic) acculturation

levels, corresponding cultural values and conflict in allegiances to help direct

intervention (sic) needs. Walters advises helping clients find culturally relevant ways to

come out that do not deny or split off one part (i.e. gay, lesbian or Indian) of the self.

Further, she suggests it is time to expand the service competence schema

> … to include the within group diversity of American Indian communities, and to
> include gay and lesbian American Indians in our research and direct practice
> efforts… to glimpse the multidimensionality of identity … and enrich our social
> service delivery system… (so that) … we can create a safe place for urban GAIs
> to explore their identity issues and confront the daily challenges to GAI
> continuity and survival (Walters, 1997, p. 62).

Also informing service needs, Wright, Lopez and Zumwalt (1997) review poetry

and literature written by American Indian authors to highlight matters of concern for

social service providers. The authors select issues that arise from lived experiences, and

blend the social and the personal. Topics include cultural discontinuity, homelessness,

alcoholism and tensions arising from relationships with non-Indian lovers.

On the social level are the Indians' (sic) encounters with cultural

misunderstanding and miscommunication - common experiences when living in urban,

non-Indian environments. Of note in relation to the migration project, is a section in

this chapter on homelessness. Wright et al. state that they could more appropriately

refer to the term as "wandering" (p. 73) because many American Indians move from

place to place in no specific pattern looking for viable work or housing.

The authors indicate that wandering is an accepted social phenomenon among

American Indians and must be understood within the evolution of American Indian

history. Further, many tribes have histories of migrations across New Mexico, US and

Canada - even those that lived in established cities, citing archaeological documentation of permanent, seasonal and hunting campsites. As well, the authors note that boarding (or residential) schools and relocation programs contributed to mobility history of American Indians (Wright, Lopez & Zumwalt, 1997). That being said, this does not account for unique experiences of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people that leave their home communities seeking belonging inclusive of their sexual and gender identities.

More recently, Fiona Meyer-Cook and Diane Labelle (2004) address elements of belonging and community building and discuss the roles of gender-diverse people prior to colonization (including a range of sexual and gender variations). "Rather than being a taboo, or a reason to ostracize or isolate, what was different and unique about Two-Spirited people historically was often embraced, as their qualities were seen to add value and contribute to life within the communities" (p. 30). Meyer-Cook and Labelle (2004) note the term Two-Spirit was adopted to provide a modern way to regroup Aboriginal people with other (i.e. not gender conforming or heterosexual) gender and sexuality identifications and most notably reaffirm and awaken the spiritual nature of roles these people can play in their communities. The authors emphasize that difficulties arise in seeking out old knowledge regarding Two-Spirit people and traditions because of the stronghold some arms of the Christian church have in particular communities. This makes it hard to speak about sexuality in general, and even harder to seek out buried traditions about sexual and gender variation.

Those people whom we now may call Two-Spirit would have had to go underground to survive, which means many teachings are lost. As well, the authors

note that years of practicing silence is a difficult habit to reverse. When pre-colonial understandings are absent, Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people have been accused of making up a positive history. Combined with factors such as racism, poverty, and multi-generational trauma, this experience of questioning by one's own cultural group can make a person more vulnerable to the strains of multiple oppressions. Meyer-Cook and Labelle (2004) consider multiple identities and intersecting oppressions that impact the lives of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, and how these oppressions are experienced differently in original/Indigenous communities or relocated in urban centres.

For example, the authors note that when acceptance is not present, Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people move away from their original communities to larger urban centres, only to succumb to multiple oppressions – like racism, homophobia and sexism with poverty, isolation and suicide along with them. Meyer-Cook and Labelle (2004) highlight how important it has been in their organizing efforts in Montreal to connect Indigenous Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people together. In addition to more formal organizing, such as developing a video resource, they worked informally to simply gather - enjoying food together, sharing stories, crafting, attending Pride, and planning for social and spiritual events. Thus, their organizing efforts fostered belonging and a sense of community.

Similarly, Buffalo (2005) reviews the history of the Greater Vancouver Native Cultural Society as a Two-Spirit institution. Since 1978, the Society has offered fellowship and support to Two-Spirit people in the area, aiming to increase members' knowledge of First Nations traditional cultures and assist people with the transition

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from original community to large urban centre. The Society is a non-profit, charitable

organization registered under the British Columbia Societies Act and is run by a Board

of Directors, elected annually. In addition, a "Chief" and "Princess" are elected each

year to act as ambassadors at a variety of social events raising money for charities that

help sustain the Society and also benefit the First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQ

community and people living with AIDS.

In collecting data, Buffalo (2005) met with members of the Society, attended

events, and reviewed video and written materials from the Society's activities over the

years. In chronicling its history, Buffalo focuses on the activities, structure and function

of the organization. To reflect cultural mores actualized within the Society, Buffalo

uses male and female pronouns alternately throughout the paper, making reference to

the "gender trickster" enacted by members at Society events (p. 7).

Buffalo (2005) notes that there is a give-and-get component to the Society's

structure. Members attend and perform at drag events, gaining status, celebrity and

even financial gain in some cases, while also raising money for charity. This

philanthropic contribution is seen to break down barriers and build bridges among the

Society, the gay community and larger society as well. Buffalo notes that these bridges

are needed as First Nations drag queens are marginalized as gay people and also as

Natives, being on "the fringe of the fringe" (p. 9).

Buffalo (2005) observes that involvement in the Society offers members a

surrogate family, thus building a sense of community and belonging maintained through

social activities to assist in identity development and buffer experiences of racism and

heterosexism. Further, Buffalo notes how drag queen culture has come out of a

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shameful past into a spotlight focusing on human rights and empowerment with a distinct political agenda. Through the years, the Society has maintained these social, cultural, chosen family and political aims.

Of note, is the Society's inception story and longevity. In 1978, after an experience of racism at a mainstream LGBT event, Laurie McDonald (a Cree drag queen from Alberta) along with three others formed the Society on the principles of creating unity for First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and to provide a safe outlet for fellowship and fun. Additionally, the Society's ambassadors show a presence in the larger LGBTQ community, which helps maintain awareness that members of the Native population are also LGBTQ (Buffalo, 2005). The Society has survived all these years on the continued relevance it offers to the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ community in helping people adjust as they move into the city, but also in offering the opportunity for chosen family connections as people live out their lives in new urban territories.

Further east, Teengs and Travers (2006) consider youth migration experiences to Toronto and risk for contracting HIV infection. The authors note that migration is common among Aboriginal peoples and found in their research that Two-Spirit people and Aboriginal PHAs (people having AIDS) experience increased pressures to leave their communities due to homophobia, stigma associated with HIV, and lack of health and social services. In their study, youth spoke about moving to Toronto to get away from violence, oppression and anti-gay discrimination in their families and communities. The youth reported seeking a safe, supportive, somewhat anonymous place to live out their lives.

Unfortunately, many participants reported that they were ill-prepared for life in an expensive city and shocked to experience racism (in housing and employment for example), sexual exploitation and isolation. Many reported practicing unhealthy coping mechanisms to get by such as sex work, using alcohol and drugs, and sleeping around to secure shelter and food. Further, Two-Spirit youth in this study reported experiences of homophobia in Aboriginal agencies and racism in the LGBTQ community. Rarely were they referred to appropriate services (such as 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations).

Of note, is Teengs and Travers' (2006) account of how Aboriginal Two-Spirit peoples present with heightened HIV vulnerabilities - not due to individual shortcomings, but rather to social and economic inequalities experienced by those who migrate, rooted in legacies of colonization.

> Aboriginal communities experience a wide range of challenges including poverty, violence, suicide and hopelessness. The legacy of residential schools has also left many with negative assumptions about same-sex attraction. The widespread sexual abuse that occurred makes it difficult for many to have a healthy view of sexuality. Instead, sexuality has become a source of shame and pain. Complicating matters is that community members might even perceive people with same-sex attractions to be potential perpetrators (p. 23).

Walters et al. (2006) also consider experiences of multiple oppressions. They review life stories of Two-Spirit women as shared in qualitative interviews. The authors were interested in exploring what it means to be Two-Spirit for individuals within their communities. Sixty women were interviewed. Themes included the incorporation of participants' identities within Indigenous worldviews, (be)coming out, and experiences of oppression including racism, sexism and heterosexism.

Walters et al. (2006) review the history of the term Two-Spirit to affirm sexual, gender and Indigenous nation/tribal identities as well as organize politically against

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continuing colonial erasure, misrepresentation and oppression. Participants shared making sense of themselves holistically as interconnected spiritual beings and as people that have much to offer in service to their communities. As well, the term Two-Spirit is used to assert oneself in the face of White and middle-class hegemony in larger LGBTQ and feminist communities.

Walters et al. (2006) note the way women spoke about making sense of themselves and sharing this information with others – a process of "becoming" or becoming out rather than "coming out" in community (p. 136). Participants spoke about coming into themselves, sharing with others what they have always been, and how the Creator made them that way. Non-Indigenous people can misread this way of being/becoming because they are not accustomed to Indigenous ways of being (which may include more subtle, non-verbal communications) or have myths and stereotypes in mind, rooted in the anthropological record or a Western lens. Connected to experiences of misunderstandings by non-Indigenous people, participants reported feeling belonging more soundly in their Indigenous communities on the basis of shared culture and heritage, even when fearing rejection as Two-Spirit people.

Alex Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) speaks similarly to Walters et al. about identity development for Two-Spirit people. Wilson (2009) begins by stating that the language of her home community (Swampy Cree) has no word for homosexual and no gendered pronouns. Instead, her people distinguish between what is animate and inanimate. She states a fundamental truth of her language and culture – that "every living creature and everything that acts in and on this world is spiritually meaningful" and Wilson follows with the assertion therefore that those using the term *Two-Spirit*

acknowledge themselves as spiritually meaningful people (p. 82). Wilson experiences

her own identity as empowering and describes research she has done to better

understand what identity means for other Two-Spirit people and how empowered

identity appears within an ongoing context of racism, homophobia and sexism.

Wilson (2009) undertook this qualitative research guided by Cree and Ojibway

teachings. She emphasizes that her design includes recognition of the communality of

knowledge, relational accountability, reciprocity and holism. She invited participants to

collaborate in all stages of the research process. Wilson interviewed eight people in

Winnipeg and Northern Manitoba in individual and small group settings. The

participants represented a continuum of gender identities and were 18 to 50+ years of

age. Wilson describes a common narrative that emerged from the stories of

participants.

> Early in their lives, they had been relatively comfortable with who they were.
> Around or soon after they reached school age, their sense of self began to
> fragment and they responded by cutting themselves loose in some sense.
> Eventually, a more integrated sense of self began to return and, finally, they
> came into their identities as two-spirit people (p. 84).

Wilson (2009) notes that participants revealed understandings of their identities

in which their sexualities, families, histories, place, communities and spiritualities are

connected and understood in a whole life context. She connects the impacts of

residential schools in individuals, families and communities to experiences of racism,

sexism and homophobia experienced by participants, often acted out and beginning in

their family homes. Wilson states that for some participants, sustained discrimination

separated them from their families and diminished their confidence in themselves and

their place in their worlds.

Wilson (2009) reviews the ways participants reclaimed an integrated identity by first escaping to safety. She says that some did this in their home communities, through creative arts and developing support networks. Wilson says however that most did not feel safe enough to explore their sexuality until they left their communities. She notes the tensions in coming to an unfamiliar urban culture. Although overwhelming, it may also be a place where people find the means to explore themselves through supports and opportunities. She shares participants' stories showing how their understandings of themselves – in their sexuality, gender, spirituality and "traditional" culture "emerged and merged", becoming more integrated over time (2009, p. 87).

Wilson (2009) calls the final process by which Two-Spirit people make sense of their identities *coming in* (p. 88, compared with "coming out"). She says that this is when people begin to take responsibility for and control of the meaning of their own identities and experiences as interdependent. This means understanding one's relationship to and place in their own family, community, culture, history and present-day world - and being present as an Aboriginal person who is LGBT. Using Wilson's descriptions then home, community and belonging are concepts embedded within one's identities, family, spirituality, history and place.

As suggested by these writings, many Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people who discover Indigenous, queer-positive spaces and Two-Spirit teachings feel affirmed. When communities affirm, respect and accept differences, Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people experience belonging. They are able to live out their gifts (i.e. strengths, capacities and abilities as in Hart, 2009b; McKnight & Block, 2010; Saleeby, 2002) and share themselves in community, organizing alongside their non-

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Two-Spirit counterparts for positive community change. We cannot remove the experiences of home, community and belonging from Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples' experiences of their identities and contexts (Brant, 1994).

Aboriginal writings on home, community, belonging. A search of Aboriginal literature on home, community and belonging inevitably brings up human connections to geography, territory, land, the environment, and human relations. In most cases, it is difficult to tease out elements specific to this study's purpose. Therefore, I review general literature on themes of home, community, culture and identity and also consider the context of wellbeing this literature is connected to.

Generally, Indigenous sources emphasize the importance of land to peoples, the relationships peoples have with Mother Earth's land and animals, and the important connections among people as exemplified in their roles and relations – with people (past, present and future), communities (Adelson, 2006; Allen, 1992; Anderson, 2003; Four Winds Development Project, 1988; Henderson, 2000b; Kovach, 2009) and bioregional habitat (Guerrero, 2003 cited in Hart, 2009). In sum, *home* traditionally is most tangibly about geography and territory (Ramirez, 2007). A more abstract sense of home, as well as *community* are exemplified in ways of being with the land and in relationships with spirits and spiritual energy, oneself and each other (Hart, 2009b). Further, relational connections are built upon practices of shared history and memory (Ortiz, 2010) passed on orally in stories, teachings, ceremonies (Ellerby, 2005) and in writing (Brant, 1994; Womack, 1999a). There is also a sense of shared identity in

resistance against White, European colonial regimes (Brant, 1994; Kovach, 2009; Ramirez, 2007).

Ortiz (Acoma, Indigenous American) assists in understanding the persistence of culture and continuance of peoples over time. He leads the reader through connections between land, culture and community and emphasizes that memory is the medium to connect these three. Daily practices of making connections among them are spiritual in nature and maintain the culture. He says, "To continue we need memory that is solid" (2010, p. 144). Through these deeds and daily practices, one's role in a community is created and bound to the whole in reciprocity and responsibility (Ortiz, 2010). This speaks of belonging.

Ortiz (2010) also speaks to the importance of territory or land base in maintaining a sense of identity, community and culture. In speaking specifically about human relationships to land, Ortiz speaks about how the Creator brought his people to "that place" (p. 146). This collective memory of coming to their home territory is knowledge that has been passed through generations and has sustained (and continues to sustain) Acoma identity, resistance, and continuance. Ortiz states, "Memory and history have gathered us in the present" (p. 151). Thus he connects land, culture, community and belonging in collective identity – historically and presently. Similarly, Brant (Mohawk, mixed-blood, urban, lesbian) says, "We write as members of an ancient, cultural consciousness" (1994, p. 10).

Likewise, Kovach (2009) describes how Indigenous ways of knowing assume a holistic approach that finds manifestation within the personal expressions of culture.

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She connects place, identity, culture, individuals and community across time when she

states "Place links present with past and our personal self with kinship groups" (p. 61).

Many Indigenous writings present culture, community, territory, language,

relationships among people and creation, as well as history and the present holistically,

as all related. Understanding this interrelatedness within Indigenous cultures is grand

and simple at the same time, and is probably most difficult to understand for non-

Indigenous readers (such as myself). This review represents my best attempts to bring

together teachings that I know are beyond my experience. At the same time, I have

immersed myself in Indigenous writings in an attempt to ground this project and my

understandings in Indigenous worldviews (to the best of my abilities and limitations).

Notably however, Indigenous worldviews may have some shared elements

across nations, but are also local and specific (Hart, 2009b). Any knowledge,

experience and expression must be considered within its cultural and nation context

(Ellerby, 2005; Kovach, 2009; Womack, 1999a). Due to the emphasis placed on the

connections among everything and everyone, it is difficult to tease out single elements

of Indigenous worldviews (such as meanings of "community"). All aspects of health

and wellbeing are related (for example, see Adelson, 2006 for a study of Cree

wellbeing). Home, community and belonging are values and concepts embedded within

holistic teachings about culture.

In terms of understanding how these values get communicated within

communities, aspects of Indigenous culture, worldview and ways of life are

communicated in and via relationships through oral and demonstrated or experiential

teachings. Teachings offer lessons about home (in geography, information about plants

and animals, histories of nations and peoples, and ways of life) and inform identity and

belonging. Storytelling is an important part of the educational process and the

transmission of values and cultural knowledge (Allen, 1992; Anderson, 2003; Brant,

1994; Ellerby, 2005; Kovach, 2009; Little Bear, 2000). Thus, home, community and

belonging are concepts taught with *content* elements, but also within community

processes and practices (Kovach, 2009).

In some ways, the themes of home, community and belonging are more easily

understood in the context of popular rather than academic literature. Womack

(Muskogee Creek and Cherokee) speaks about Native American writings and how the

period of time from the late 1960s – 2000 has been called the Native American literary

renaissance (1999a). This time evidenced a proliferation of poetry, short stories,

autobiographies, and fictional novels written by Indigenous Americans (and Canadians

such as Tomson Highway, 1988, 1998; and Gregory Scofield, 1996, 1997). These

media have become complementary forms by which cultural teachings about

communities and communal life, values and concerns are communicated in

contemporary ways and demonstrate cultural vitality. Womack states, "In a short time,

Native writing has come a long way toward legitimizing tribal experience as an

appropriate subject for writing and, most importantly, toward assuming tribal life will

continue in the future" (1999a, p. 6).

Womack (1999a) locates literature as a place that not only speaks to elements of

community culture, but also to politics – in nationhood autonomy, self-determination,

and sovereignty (see also Brant, 1994). Although perceived as "softer" than academic

discourse, Womack indicates that imaginative literature can be a more accurate gauge of

experienced cultural realities than the historical or anthropological record. For example,

stories and personal and communal development are connected. Maracle (of the Sto:lo

nation) describes this process:

> In my society, story creates discourse around healthy communal doubt, which
> inspires us to face ourselves, to grow and transform ourselves through the
> augmentation of the house (a metaphor for clan knowledge) by adding rafters to
> the house, and it calls us to create myth from the new and transformed being.
> The process of gathering together to find what is new and being born, to learn as
> an ensemble, to discover as a group is the appropriate process for Salish people
> to examine story. The purpose for examining old story is first to understand it;
> second, to see oneself in the story; and then to see the nation, the community,
> and our common humanity through the story and to assess its value to continued
> growth and transformation of the community and nation (Maracle, 2010, p. 85).

Thus stories, storytelling and individual and collective interpretation are means to build

a sense of shared identity, belonging and community.

As demonstrated, complex components of worldview (such as values and ways

of being) are informed, embodied and shared through language and stories (for

example, those of Highway, 2001, 2002, 2003). Little Bear (2000) speaks about how

for the most part, Aboriginal languages are "verb-rich languages that are process or

action-oriented" (p. 78; see also Duran and Duran, 2000 and Hart, 2009a). Little Bear

connects language to ways of being that emphasize getting along with one another and

how something occurs, again *process* rather than product or outcome. This approach

places importance upon maintaining relationships, balance and harmony within a

community or group (see also Hart, 2002 and 2009a). On a positive note then,

discriminatory or exclusionary practices are not supported in many nations' teachings

(Ballatyne, 2009; Beaucage, 2010).

What is honoured and valued regarding wellbeing and building positive communities is considering a person and/in community holistically. In this, the circle is a symbol among many Indigenous nations for wellness, wholeness and for the dynamic sum of the constant motion that is the passing of seasons, migration of animals, and life stages exemplified in renewal songs and stories. The circle is also used to represent parts of the self as exemplified in the Medicine Wheel (Four Winds Development Project, 1988; McCormick, 1995).

The *spiritual, emotional*, *physical* and *mental* are parts of the whole person represented in the Wheel. In the centre of the circle is *volition* or will, which is the force that helps us make decisions and act to carry them out. Volition provides the drive for each person to live up to their potential and work towards their vision. For wellbeing, we must use our will to strive for balance among our parts, and in balancing the self and community (Four Winds Development Project, 1988, pp. 14-19). We are all connected and dependent upon Mother Earth where the continuous and repetitive processes of creation occur (Allen, 1992; Little Bear, 2000). Everyone has a place in the community circle (Ballatyne, 2009; Beaucage, 2010). Thus everyone can belong.

Another *process* element valued is collective decision-making regarding how something comes to be and requires seeing all community members as interconnected. Each member's perspective and contribution is equally important (Hart, 2002). "The function of Aboriginal values and customs is to maintain the relationships that hold creation together" (Little Bear, 2000, p. 81). Responsibility and reciprocity are acted out in community roles, contributions and connections in relation to the whole (Kovach,

2009; Ortiz, 2010). Thus belonging comes through acting and functioning within a community context.

Indigenous worldviews can be used to promote more holistic understandings of wellbeing and I see them as useful for working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Hart (2002, 2009a) has outlined an Aboriginal approach to helping using sharing circles as a medium to promote respectful interactions, personal responsibility and healing. Overall, he conceptualizes his work with people and communities as a process he calls "seeking mino-pimatisiwin", the good life (2009, p. 35). Hart emphasizes Indigenous relational worldviews and philosophies – in particular the Medicine Wheel and understandings of what he refers to as respectful individualism and communitism, balancing the individual and collective, as well as wellbeing including a person and balance among their parts (physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual). Hart holds spirituality as a central pillar grounding his model and includes the concepts of balance, relationships, harmony, growth, healing, respect and sharing in living and being with each other in a way that promotes a good life for everyone in the community.

Written for a non-Indigenous audience, Ellerby (2005) defines *community* specifically and somewhat differently in describing the contexts within which Elders work. He delineates community as a closely settled group of people (like in a small town or reserve community). When speaking of an Elder's community, the reference is made in two ways - to their home community, or the group of localized people s/he most consistently serves. Understandably, these two communities may not be the same.

Further, Ellerby (2005) indicates an important distinction – "different Elders serve different notions of community, and all are equally valid" (p. 14). He describes

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how some Elders serve their home communities only, some serve a region (such as the

Prairies), and others may choose to work in specific settings, such as correctional

facilities or hospitals. An Elder may work at a local, regional, national or international

level exclusively and some work cross-culturally, while others work only with

Indigenous people. These distinctions come to be through a variety of circumstances,

most importantly an Elder's gifts, personality and the opportunities presented to them.

From Ellerby's description, it seems that one's identity and role as an Elder is

developed in response to community feedback and definition - understood and

unspoken in many cases. That is simply the way it is, and the way a person gets called

upon and shares him or herself. One's character within a community context is

demonstrated through practice and community approval and opinion (Ellerby, 2005).

Ramirez (2007) also connects Native people with each other in place, and also

across spaces. Ramirez (of Ojibway, Winnebago and White settler ancestry) speaks

about how in the Unites States, Native peoples and their dispersed communities are not

as easily identifiable as other ethnic neighbourhoods. That said, they are not exiles,

assimilated or stuck between traditional and modern worlds, without culture.

Rather, Ramirez speaks to the term *hub*, originally coined by Laverne Roberts

(of the American Indian Alliance, an urban organization in San Jose, California).

Ramirez states, "The hub offers a mechanism to support Native notions of culture,

community, identity, and belonging away from tribal land bases. Moreover, it describes

a Native woman's notion of urban and reservation mobility, and it suggests a political

vision for social change" (p. 1). Ramirez discusses Roberts' articulation of urban

Native people as travelers - from urban centres to their reservation communities, and to

other centres and communities. Travel can be a purposeful way to transmit culture,

maintain identity and create community that can support positive changes overall for the

Native American community across the country. A "traveler" (p. 2) then, is a carrier of

knowledge who enables change by weaving relationship networks across distances.

The hub is a geographical concept, which can represent actual places, cultural

events (powwows, ceremonies), or "portable" created spaces (for meetings, events, or

gatherings) (Ramirez, 2007, p. 3). Therefore, the hub indicates how landless Native

Americans maintain a sense of connection to tribal homelands and urban spaces through

participation in shared cultural activities, circuits, and social networks. The hub can

thus foster Native identities, a sense of belonging, and community in collective political

awareness and power in common ground, bridging tribal differences so that a variety of

Indigenous groups organize together to struggle for social change.

To avoid losing specificity in pan-tribalism, Ramirez (2007) calls Native

American travelers *transnationals* (p. 14) to direct attention to the experiences of living

at the interstices of social and political communities. Ramirez also emphasizes multiple

narratives to enhance understanding of the histories and contemporary realities of

Native peoples living in the Silicon Valley. This context includes forced relocation to

the area (by nation-state) of federally acknowledged Native groups from other areas. It

also includes non-recognition of Indigenous peoples local to the area, as well as the area

as a collecting ground for illegal Indigenous migrant workers from Mexico. These

realities cause tensions across Indigenous groups, complicating attempts at solidarity.

Despite tensions among groups, hub-making allows a means of bringing back

together parts of the past and contemporary experiences torn apart by colonization

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(Ramirez, 2007 citing Delgado-P, 2002). This remembering brings people to their cultures as well as themselves. Ramirez reviews how the term *diaspora* has been used to describe maintaining a sense of connection between one's homeland and current residence, to where one is presently at and where one is from. She adds to this concept when she articulates the *Native diaspora* (p. 11) as not only referring to landless Native Americans' imagining and sustaining connections with tribal nations, but also to the creation of inter-tribal connections across and within nation-states, therefore across Indigenous cultural and national formulations (Ramirez, 2007).

In describing a more fluid and flexible urban Native identity creation, Ramirez (2007) emphasizes she has no intention to contest Indigenous relationships to ancestral homelands, rather that "Native Americans bring their own sense of culture, community, identity, belonging and rootedness with them as they travel" (p. 12). Interactions with each other in the city and reservation can rejuvenate and transform tribal identity. Ramirez acknowledges multiple social and political communities, therefore full membership and belonging requires the right to be treated with dignity and respect across all identities such as federal recognition (or not), race (sic), class, gender, sexuality and age as well as other variations. Ramirez connects collective concerns and individual effects when she states, "Belonging is, therefore, not only a very contested concept, but also an extremely complicated issue for Indigenous peoples" (p. 16).

In summary, when Indigenous people know they are a part of their relations, with a space in the circle, they belong. When people are safe to know and be themselves, they can then share themselves in community. A sense of home,

community and belonging present themselves intrinsically in positive terms, and fundamentally build a sense of wellbeing, creating a good life (Hart, 2002, 2009a).

Wellbeing then must be considered holistically, and in context. A positive sense of oneself in the fabric of social relations is paramount. A sense of home, community and belonging is essential for wellbeing. When people are misunderstood or discriminated against on the basis of sexual, gender, or Indigenous identity, this shakes their connections to their communities (including complementary geography) and their sense of themselves, and may result in their rejection or withdrawal from their territorial lands. These and other experiences of oppression, disconnection or dislocation can be devastating for health (Teengs and Travers, 2006; Walters, 1997), cultural continuity (Kovach, 2009) and identity (A. Wilson, 2009; Womack, 1999b).

Of note, what we see in the general Indigenous literature is no mention of the specific impacts of loss of cultural continuity for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, or how contemporary Two-Spirit and LGBTQ create their own hubs, imagine new ways of being and may connect differently (or not at all) with original homelands or communities.

LGBTQ writings on home, community, belonging. Weston (1991) states that sexuality is embedded in kinship in ways that everyone knows but may be cautious about speaking. Being closeted may mean we can hide details of the bedroom, but hiding kinship connections (such as parenting roles, or in-law relationships connected to primary sexual relationships) is much more difficult. Weston was the first to write about the experiences of gays and lesbians based on research about their experiences in

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family – biological and *chosen*, thus coining a term that has been used since. She also

completed this work at a time when discourses about the/a gay family were emerging.

Weston sought to voice complexities and differences in experiences of gay family. She

speaks about the rejections and fear of rejection faced by many people coming out, but

also the desire for gays and lesbians to remain connected to biological families, sources

of support and nurturing outside of those (i.e. chosen kinship ties) and desires of

couples to create their own families in parenting children.

Weston (1991) relates her own experiences and those of others in building what

she refers to as an extended family relationship within close friendship circles and how

this chosen family became a source of kinship over time. Weston discusses kinship in

relation to the concept of gay and lesbian *community*, a term that emerged with the rise

of an activist gay movement – highlighting institutions, geographic areas, and

emphasizing commonality in identity and experiences of isolation and marginalization.

"Community" thus came into being in the context of specific political and social

changes occurring at the time. Weston speaks about migrations to large US urban

centres, and notes that validation in community or in relationship recognition is a

privilege that has not been accessible to all gays and lesbians equitably (based on

ethnicity, skin colour, poverty, ability, etc.).

In a Canadian urban context, Kinsman (1987) similarly traces the development

of gay communities in Toronto specifically to organizing within gay and lesbian

liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s. With aims to challenge the dismissal of

homosexuality to the private sphere, gays and lesbians were encouraged to come out

and gather in public, community spaces. Gay commercial sites blossomed, including

bars, baths, clubs, restaurants and bookstores, alongside professional services, such as law practices. Patrons of these businesses helped delineate and strengthen a sense of gay identity and gay community.

Kinsman (1987) notes that with the flourishing of a "gay market" (p. 183) in the 1970s, a White, gay, male consumer culture emerged. This consumer culture excluded working poor, people of colour, and lesbians and the phenomenon reflected "a process of class differentiation within the gay population itself, which excludes working class gays from positions of power and influence" (p. 184).

Despite earlier attempts by Gay Liberation Front groups to work together across subordinated groups and incorporate a feminist analysis of sex and gender, Kinsman (1987) reports that tensions exploded between gays and lesbians. Thus, gay liberation became and remained a male-dominated movement. Within this early organizing we see tensions with meaning in our current context – differences and intersections that continue to challenge LGBTTQ people, communities and organizing.

More recently, Fortier (2003) seeks to unravel how *home* is deployed in gay and lesbian migration narratives. In doing so, she argues that queer migrations are more than against the childhood home (as in the narrative of moving away to liberate a true gay self). Rather, she asserts that queer migrations are a means by which to reprocess (make new sense of) the childhood home or place where one comes from. Fortier cites James (1998) in describing home as a space or spatial setting where identities are processed. Identities of home, then are continuously reimagined and redefined, similar to Ramirez's discussion of the hub as it offers a place and relationships within which landless urban Natives can connect with themselves as Native cultural beings.

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Fortier (2003) reviews different approaches to considering home in the context of queer migration. She includes Sinfield's narrative of loss of home occurring in childhood, due to realization of difference and the impossibility of fitting into the heterosexual culture of the home (2000, as cited in Fortier, 2003). This loss is experienced before one ever leaves, and migration is triggered by becoming a stranger at home. In this narrative, the gay community then figures as an idealized space of comfort and "homo-geneity".

Next, Fortier (2003) reviews Cant's notion of two-mindedness for lesbians and gay men, which speaks to the work of translation they must do in navigating a world as both insiders and outsiders. Fortier sees the strength of Cant's approach as an openness to multiple belongings, since identity is not based solely on one factor (such as sexuality) (Cant, 1997 in Fortier, 2003). For some a sense of home and family are connected such that a person returns to the relationship attached to home, or that home represents. In reviewing writings about home, Fortier emphasizes that there is no fixed notion of home. She states,

> Rather than isolated sites of (un)belonging, 'homes' are locations crisscrossed by a variety of forces the authors had to negotiate again and again. Though all the texts begin with a story about the 'original' home, it soon becomes one among many other places that could be called 'home', even temporarily. … In these stories, remembrances of home at once empty it of any definitional and absolute status, while they continuously *attach* the ideal of home to places that acquire meaning in the process (p. 122).

Fortier's descriptions of motions of attachment are about homing desires (imaginings and movements towards creating sense of home and longing to belong, citing Brah, 1996 in Fortier, 2003) as well as attachments in remembering experiences of home. She concludes that home can be a space of multiple forms of inhabitance, and

belonging can be lived through attachments to multiples homes, for queer people and others (Fortier, 2003).

More generally, there are LGBTQ sources that impact meanings attributed to home, community, and belonging without necessarily specifically attending to the topics. For example, there is much writing about LGBTTQ peoples' experiences of stigma, oppression, violence and more subtle forms of heterosexist discrimination with ensuing health and economic impacts (Banks, 2003; Janoff, 2005; Kanuha, 1998). There are narrative sources offering personal stories of leaving, seeking, and finding a place to call home (Clare, 1999). There are writings on how visibility and being out may impact a sense of identity in community (Weston, 1991; Peace, 2001), how LGBTTQ migration has been traced in HIV and AIDS epidemiology (Patton, 2000), and how gay urban geographies can be mapped (Bell, 2001; Peace, 2001).

Across all of these writing are tensions in taken for granted understandings of who fits under the umbrella of "community". When one examines more closely the differences in experiences that are as much a product of one's upbringing, geographic location, economics, ethnicity, specific family views, faith background, presence of role models, etc., the picture becomes more complicated. We see that there is no one queer community, and no one way to be part of any category in the acronym of LGBTTQ.

For instance, in complementary qualitative SVR research on intersecting identities and migration, Lee & Brotman (2011) consider the experiences of sexual minority refugees in Canada and their experiences of migration and wellbeing. Specifically in regards to community and belonging, they note how many refugees in their study encountered experiences of racism in queer communities and homo/

transphobia in their racialized communities, resulting in complicated intersectional

experiences of rejection.

In addition, Lee & Brotman (2011) note how trauma can affect identity and

trouble how sexual minority refugees come to understand belonging. The authors state,

> How sexual minority refugees negotiate their interaction within communities reveal encounters with intersectional forms of marginalization and exclusion. However, just as belonging (or not belonging) can be linked with trauma and isolation, so to can it be linked with connection and solidarity. Therefore an integral aspect to how sexual minority refugees survive and thrive may be the *degree to which* they establish support networks within affirming communities (p. 259).

Participants in Lee & Brotman's study identified the importance of building and

maintaining distinct queer racialized communities. Furthermore, the authors note that

links to queer racialized communities *as well as* mainstream queer communities *and*

racialized communities were able to help participants "push back against structural

barriers and intersecting marginalizing experiences" (2011, p. 261).

What have become more apparent to me over time is the nuances informing

identities. When I first came out, it seemed simple. I looked for stereotypical

identifiers, and signifiers of "dyke". I fashioned myself after these markers (created by

whom?) so that I could be identifiable, seen by potential friends and partners. What I

found is that I was visible to those looking for the same markers I envisioned and

remained invisible in other ways. These notions also prevented me from seeing

additional ways of being and becoming bisexual, dyke or lesbian. Within my own

experiences, "identity" and "community" therefore have also been developmental

processes more than nouns, of growing into and building a sense of myself in

relationships over time – akin to the description of (*be)coming out* (Walters et al., 2006) and A. Wilson's *coming in* (2009).

What we can see from the writings of Two-Spirit, Aboriginal and LGBTQ people is that home, community, and belonging are not isolated or stand-alone ideas. They exist within contexts of values, culture, identities and communities. The collective and individual are connected socially and relationally. Thus, finding a sense of home, community, and belonging happens alongside finding a home within us. To do so, we must honour all of our identity's component parts.

These are the words of poet and community worker Gregory Scofield on making sense of his multiple identities and finding home within himself (as an urban gay person of Cree, Métis, and Jewish ancestry).

> … to be able to claim the bones. Those of your own body, your ancestors, your experiences, the historical landscape that you've come out of, even the urban landscape that you've come out of. It's about honouring your spiritual home, to sing those bones into a place within the universe that is magical, that is healing, that is profound (2010, p. 296).

This quotation speaks to the wholeness that can be discovered in integrating one's identities and finding a place of belonging, a positive sense of home, and communities in which to bring oneself. I offer an example in this secondary analysis of bringing all of these concepts together in an integrated (although not uniform) way in describing the meanings Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people attribute to home, community and belonging.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Research questions

Extending from the work of the migration project (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011) I focus on the following questions in this secondary analysis. My primary question is "How do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people describe home, community and belonging in the context of migration and mobility?"

Contextual questions include: "How do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ make sense of these terms (home, community and belonging) in relation to their Indigenous and sexual and/or gender identities?" and "How are home, community and belonging connected to wellbeing?"

The foundation for this secondary analysis was laid in the primary migration project. That said, in carrying out this study, I have planned, articulated and clarified a research methodology extending from the groundwork in the original as follows. In addition to my research questions, I include the development and assumptions of my theoretical framework, and methods - encompassing research design, data collection and analysis, and comments on credibility and my reflective processes.

Theoretical framework

Methodology is described as a general, overarching term that refers to the logic and theoretical perspective of a research project. Methodology informs the research methods selected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Methodology has also been described as a set of norms or a culture that outlines sanctioned practices for carrying out research

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(Ristock & Pennell, 1996). Kovach (2009) uses the term *Indigenous methodologies* (plural) to refer to theory and method of conducting research that flows from Indigenous epistemology. She uses the term interchangeably with *Indigenous research frameworks*, and *Indigenous inquiry*, thus blending outlook and method (pp. 20-21).

In clarifying where we stand as a starting place, Kirby et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of locating one's assumptions at the beginning of any research undertaking and describe methodology as it outlines the relationship between theoretical approaches and methods. I use and understand the term methodology to refer to theoretical perspectives as they inform my theoretical framework, which in turn informs my analysis of the research findings.

I am informed by basic anti-oppressive practice and empowerment research perspectives. In planning this secondary data analysis, I drew from Indigenous, feminist, critical and intersectional sources to develop my theoretical framework and research design and methods.

Anti-oppressive and empowerment perspectives in research. Mertens (1998) notes that anti-oppressive perspectives are also called *emancipatory* paradigms in some settings. An emancipatory paradigm emerged as a dissatisfied challenge to the realization that much psychological and sociological theory had been developed from the perspective of White, North American, able-bodied, heterosexual academics and male subjects. Mertens indicates that feminist and ethnic minority psychologists believed that researchers purporting to study their communities (i.e. reporting on women or people of colour) did so without an understanding in context of the

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experiences of women or people of colour, and without caring about those communities (see also Code, 1995; S. Wilson, 2008).

Regarding the political implications of methodological choices, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) note that in the history of qualitative inquiry, researchers have "both extended the power of some groups over others, and resisted this power" (p. 14). These authors state that that qualitative methods have been useful and attractive to researchers who have been excluded from, or in studying perspectives of those excluded from the mainstream. In this sense, qualitative methods are enlisted for their ability to help researchers describe and account for multiple perspectives and attend to complexities of social conflicts. When one has a goal of social transformation, qualitative methods are useful to draw upon for their transgressive possibilities in addressing issues of inequality or injustice (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, Kirby et al., 2006). Ristock and Pennell (1996) call this an "empowerment approach to community research" and "thinking consciously about power relations, cultural context and social action" (p. 2).

An empowerment or emancipatory research paradigm believes in the existence of multiple realities shaped by cultural, social, political, ethnic, economic, gender, sexuality and ability-related values (Farganis, 1994; Mertens, 1998; Ristock & Pennell, 1996). This worldview accounts for knowledge as socially and historically situated, and assumes there is an interactive link between the researcher and participants (see also Hart, 2009b; Kovach, 2009; S. Wilson, 2008). Contextual and historical factors are described in research, particularly as they relate to experiences of oppression (Kirby et al., 2006). Most importantly, inquiry into the lives of oppressed people means that the privileges of oppression must also be considered, owned and accounted for. Values are

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made explicit in the research; findings are created inductively in the process and shared (Mertens, 1998). Research is a product of the values of researchers and cannot be perceived independently of those values (Kirby et al., 2006; Kovach, 2009).

Indigenous approaches to research. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) wrote a foundational critique of traditional western research that has occurred on Indigenous people by outsiders. Although she writes predominantly in Australian and New Zealand contexts, her points are well made and transferable - very similar practices have occurred in North America (S. Wilson, 2008). Smith says that Indigenous peoples have been the most studied group of peoples and reviews colonial practices of Europeans studying Indigenous peoples out of context, objectifying them as exotic others and inferior people. The results of such research were used historically to further subjugate, regulate, subdue, contain and assimilate Indigenous peoples.

Smith (1999) finishes by advocating for research done for and by Indigenous peoples, according to local priorities, customs, and honouring the practices and worldview of the participants. Research in this way cannot be understood if removed from its community and outside of its cultural context.

Shaun Wilson (2008), a Cree scholar, represents an Indigenous research paradigm including ontology (worldview, nature of being), epistemology (ways and ideas of knowing), methodology and axiology (values, morals; what we accept as truth). Wilson describes the concepts blending into and being inseparable from each other. He notes, "the whole of the paradigm is greater than the sum of its parts" and uses a circle to exemplify this (p. 70).

S. Wilson (2008) describes the foundational, shared theme that runs through ontology and epistemology as relationality - "relationships do not shape reality, they *are* reality" (p. 7). The shared theme that runs through methodology and axiology is accountability to relationships. Relationality and relational accountability are practiced through choice of topic, data collection methods, form of analysis and information sharing. He emphasizes that the work must benefit and be relevant for Aboriginal communities.

Hart (2009b) outlines what he calls working towards an *Indigenist* research paradigm - for, by, and with Indigenous people. The paradigm includes a core element of reciprocity, of "give and take" in relationships. We are all learners and knowers, engaged in experiential insight. Additional key values in Hart's paradigm include: Indigenous control over research, which includes approving the research and methods; respect for individuals and communities, their diversities within and between each other, and the gifts and contributions citizens of that community bring; reciprocity and responsibility, the nature of which is determined by the community; the researcher considers what is said within the context of the speaker and the worldview of Indigenous peoples; honouring what is shared and being faithful to the relationship within which it was shared; awareness and connection between the logic of mind and the feelings of the heart; and self-awareness and transparency in subjectivity (2009b).

In consideration of this secondary analysis, my topic selection arose directly and distinctly from the words of participants. In discussing my interests with the community Advisory Committee members and asking for their approval before moving along, I believe that I took OCAP principles seriously and demonstrated this by

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respecting their ownership of the data and their interests in the project (represented also in Hart, 2009b). OCAP emphasizes participation, shared power and decision-making, as well as meaningful communication of findings that makes sense and will benefit community members (First Nations Centre, 2007; also in Hart, 2009b).

Kovach (2009) outlines that Indigenous methodologies are rooted in Indigenous knowledges and ways of being (acknowledging shared commonalities and tribal diversities). Thus, Indigenous research attends to both content and process. Any variety of these methodologies and methods flow from Indigenous worldviews and again, cannot be separated from their context.

Kovach (2009) discusses how each generation is responsible to the next in transmitting knowledge. Indigenous research is a means for Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous allies to attend to academia's colonial past (and present) and decolonize the academy, little by little. Kovach states that the most natural connections among mainstream research perspectives and Indigenous methodologies exist with qualitative approaches – in that both are interpretive, acknowledge the role of the researcher's location and subjectivity, and in terms of feminist and critical approaches, must be useful and aim at social transformation.

Ethics in Indigenous methodologies outline "conducting research in a good way" and position *reciprocity* as an ethical starting place (Kovach, 2009, p. 19). Kovach indicates that research must be examined from the perspectives of governance, methods and community relevance. It is only through conducting more Indigenous research that homogeneity of the academy can be transformed. I believe we need greater diversity in research approaches and definitions of knowledge to make all sites

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of learning and teaching (including academies) better. In describing this phenomenon,

Kovach states,

> The infusion of Indigenous knowledge systems and research frameworks informed by the distinctiveness of cultural epistemologies transforms homogeneity. It not only provides another environment where Indigenous knowledges can live, but changes the nature of the academy itself. Indigenous methodologies disrupt methodological homogeneity on research (2009, p. 12).

Kovach (2009) indicates that there can be some difficulty in combining

Indigenous and Western methodologies. She starts that Indigenous languages structure

fluidity and motion into tribal knowledge. This makes it difficult in English because

language limits the connections that can be made. The second difficulty is that Western

and Indigenous frameworks have philosophical underpinnings that are often in

contradiction. "Indigenous methodologies are guided by tribal epistemologies, and

tribal knowledge is not Western knowledge" (p. 30).

With attention to these comments, I continue to include Indigenous perspectives

in my orientation and have done my best to incorporate elements respectfully into my

methods.

Feminist approaches to research. Feminist theory and philosophy are

explicitly connected to, developed congruently with, and support political goals that

have always been present in women's movements. Nancy Hartsock (1998), a known

feminist standpoint theorist states in the introduction of her collected essays that she

sees "feminist theory as a collective political practice" around which to build

knowledge, organize and strategize (p. 1). Research as knowledge building is

connected to and again another means of supporting feminist political social change

goals (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1995).

There are many feminist viewpoints on research and how to account for and

make sense of varied experiences of women while advocating for greater justice and

equality for women and other marginalized groups. Feminist approaches to research

challenge academia's traditional monopoly on knowledge production and critique and

expand the concept of *objectivity*, thereby also addressing questions of philosophy and

epistemology (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1995; Code, 1995; Hartsock, 1998; Kirby et al.,

2006). Mertens (1998) quotes Harding,

> Knowledge claims are always socially situated, and the failure of dominant
> groups critically and systematically to interrogate their advantaged social
> situation and the effect of such advantages on their beliefs leaves their social
> situation a scientifically and epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating
> knowledge (Harding, 1993 in Mertens, 1998, p. 17).

Thus, feminist objectivity requires accounting for oneself in the research and

locating the sociopolitical context(s) among others in explicating the findings (Code,

1995; O'Neill, 1995).

Critical approaches to research. In general, critical social theory is traced to

the Frankfurt School and refers to a cluster of theories sharing common features,

foremost being "critical of social organization that privileges some at the expense of

others" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 21; Mullaly, 2008). Critical theory is a macro

theory of society that examines structures, institutions, social processes, and practices,

and as such offers an explanation for social problems. Antony and Samuelson (2007)

define social problems as "behaviours and conditions that (objectively) harm a significant group of people and behaviours and conditions that are (subjectively) defined as harmful" (p. 5). The function of a critical theorist is to provide alternatives to mainstream social theory – with a practical vision of liberation, and attempts to move to emancipation those on the margins (Mullaly, 2008).

Connected to this, and similar to feminist and Indigenous approaches, critical theorists see research as a political and ethical act that always benefits a specific group. They would prefer that research be used to benefit those traditionally marginalized over those traditionally privileged, with goals of self-definition (Antony and Samuelson, 2007), empowerment, social transformation (Kinsman, 2007), and justice (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Fook, 2002; Mullaly, 2002; see also Orsini & Smith, 2007).

Qualitative researchers informed by critical theories are often interested in how certain groups of people experience social phenomena. Areas of study include how social values and organization get reproduced and maintained in educational and social systems and how people make sense, construct, and resist in their choices and actions. Similar to standpoint theory, sociodemographic identity categories like race, class, and gender are often used as starting points to critique and resist dominant views represented by the state, professions, and popular culture (Kinsman, 2007). These identity markers are seen as a primary means for differentiating (and therefore analyzing and changing) power in society (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Orsini & Smith, 2007).

Critical theory encourages self-awareness and reflexivity, being "self-conscious and self-critical" (Mullaly, 2008) and as such furthers its congruence with feminist,

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Indigenous, and anti-oppressive research practices. It also encourages a critical understanding of how social problems get constructed and conceptualized – and in social work practice, critical theories inform approaches aimed at social transformation (Mullaly, 2008).

Intersectionality. People exist in more than one sociodemographic category. Any analysis of power and social structures systematically marginalizing certain groups (such as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ) requires us to recognize how people are multiply located - and may exist in a number of groups experiencing oppression (Lee & Brotman, 2011; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004), or privilege and oppression at the same time (Bishop, 2002, 2005; Lundy, 2004). *Intersectionality* is a term of analysis used to convey the complicated tensions and interfaces existing when one considers the experiences of real people and attempts to account for those experiences that replicate social structures producing systemic disadvantage (and privilege) while contributing to the construction of social categories and concepts such as race, class, and disability, among others (Meekosha, 2006).

For example, we know that Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ may simultaneously experience racism in larger LGBTQ communities and also homophobia or transphobia in Aboriginal communities (Meyer-Cook, 2008; Teengs and Travers, 2006; Walters, 1997; and Kanuha, 1990, 1998 as well as Lee & Brotman, 2011 in relation to multiple identity experiences of LGBTQ people of colour). They may also experience privilege relative to language, education, Status, skin colour, community of origin, etc.

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In many cases, there is no framework or context for an Indigenous person who is also LGBTTQ to make sense of themselves in being a 'queer Indian' (in the words of Womack, 1996b). *Queer* and *Indian* may seem contradictory – and Indigenous people holding these identities may leave behind one or another parts of the self (for example in Womack's queer reading of the work of playwright Lynn Riggs, 1999b). Similarly, Walters (1997) writes about how gay American Indians may feel they need to choose between their tribal or the gay and lesbian community to cope with tensions and differences across communities, increasing feelings of isolation and estrangement in both (also represented in Meyer-Cook, 2008).

Experiences of discrimination or marginalization are experienced at the individual level, yet collectively their replication contributes to further production of ideas about what it means to be "White", "Aboriginal", "urban" and "gay" in a socially generated system of privilege and discrimination. Different types of oppressions (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, etc.) interact to have greater cumulative and interrelated effects that can be difficult to discern. Writers describe these phenomena of multiple intersecting identities or intersectionality in different ways.

Meyer-Cook and Labelle (2004) speak to *multiple discrimination* and *intersecting oppressions* (p. 36) experienced by Two-Spirit people. Walters (1997) refers to the *multidimensionality of identity* and within-group diversity that must be accounted for in understanding the experiences and needs of GAIs (p. 62). Walters et al. (2006) also incorporate a consideration of spirituality as an identity dimension in their discussion of the experiences of Two-Spirit women. Kanuha (1990) speaks about the *triple jeopardy* (p. 169) experienced by lesbians of colour. The triple jeopardy

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references their experiences of sexism (as women), racism (as people of colour) and heterosexism and homophobia (as lesbians). Kanuha states that compounding these interfacing oppressions, lesbians in battering relationships are further silenced by their experiences of violence.

Of note here, Kanuha (1990) emphasizes that it is the *combination* of marginalized identities that interferes with the writing and telling of battering experiences. Importantly, she challenges assumptions that all lesbians are impacted by heterosexism in the same way, stating that the assumption denies the existence of other identities that also impact experiences of homophobia (such as ethnicity, skin colour, age, class, religion, and ability). Kanuha exposes the vulnerabilities experienced by women of colour when identifying with the larger lesbian community – in that they are bound to other people of colour against racism. Connecting with a White lesbian community means they are exposed not only to homophobia, but also racism, with no safe refuge in their ethnic or sexual community. In neither place can the full range of marginalizing experiences be understood.

Meekosha (2006) speaks in the area of disability studies with relevance for this current discussion. She considers how language has been used in the categorization and creation of marginalizing identifiers.

> The use of language pertaining to fitness and ability has been used to categorize the population into distinct groupings, thereby acting as a form of social control and population control. Thus the social construction of disability can tell us much about deep power relations within societies and their cultural practices, understandings that extend far beyond simple relations between non-disabled people and disabled people (p. 165).

Similarly, the categories of LGBTTQ, as well as Aboriginal, First Nations, Status/non-Status, and Métis uncover the power structures that have informed their creation. People are labeled, organized and regulated according to these constructed categories. It is in the overlapping edges, or borders of these interfacing identities that possibilities for greater understandings and unraveling multiple oppressions exist (Anzaldua, 1999).

People connect, collect, and organize themselves across these categories to address individual and systemic/structural forms of oppression, but may find it difficult across multiple intersecting oppressions to find common ground. Carniol (2004) notes "the complexity and fluidity of intersecting, multiple oppressions which often reinforce sexual and gender oppression. Such intersections provide opportunities … for the development of alliances which are so necessary for long-term social change" (p. xvii). Therefore research using an intersectional analysis offers an opportunity to connect across differences in the process, but also in utilizing the findings in a way that may benefit multiple communities.

For example, the experiences of sexual minority refugees in Canada form a platform from which to advocate for changes in the way the Canadian government processes refugee claims. Lee & Brotman (2011) state,

> Articulating the ways in which the present day experiences of sexual minority refugees living in Canada have been profoundly influenced by transnational histories of colonialism and imperialism will allow for a historicized and context specific analysis into the particular consequences of dominant, interlocking systems of race, class, gender, ability and sexuality, indelibly marked onto queer migrant bodies and psyches (p. 244).

Thus, expressions of sexuality and gender are not fixed according to White notions of 'gay', but rather are context and site-specific, constructed through complex, enmeshed histories of indigeneity and colonialism (in Lee & Brotman, citing Duggan, 2003). This analysis clearly has impacts when considering the experiences of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in their quests for home, community and belonging in the context of migration.

My methodological assumptions. I believe that what we do matters. Social work practice is about being with people. Seen in the ways we are with people, it has political implications. Therefore, no social work practice (approach or method, clinically, in policy, or research) can be value-neutral (Hart, 2009b; Lundy, 2004). If the sources of a person's unhappiness come from experiences of oppression, we must use our personal and institutional resources to fight against oppression (Passante, 2009). These were my values heading into this research, and they have been clarified and deepened through experiences of working on the migration project, in the research process, and with all participating stakeholders (including participants).

Congruent with my values and beliefs, as stated in Indigenous, feminist, critical and intersectional approaches, no research perspective is value-neutral or free from political implications (Hart, 2009b). Data and findings must be examined within their context to be meaningful (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). Historically research findings represented a very narrow view, from dominant perspectives, and have been used to further oppress and marginalize Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2000), women and LGBTTQ. More recently, voices from the margins (Kirby et al., 2006;

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Ristock & Pennell, 1996) are being represented by researchers seeking to share the voices of previously unheard, often (relatively) powerless, mis/underrepresented people. This has particular relevance for those with multiple identities impacted by multiple forms of discrimination.

Further, the research process is being used by some in the "construction of knowledge as a political process" (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 6) to meet certain social change goals. I hope that this research can be used to inform social work practice and education by bringing the relatively unheard voices of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people to the fore, acknowledging strengths and wellbeing. I hope also that the process of this research project has been and will continue to be a relationship and community-building endeavour (Kovach, 2009) to expose intersecting oppressive forces challenging the lives of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

What do these theories bring to my topic, and how? In this secondary analysis, I draw from basic anti-oppressive, empowerment, Indigenous, feminist, critical and intersectional perspectives. I believe that theories that inform me complement my values and hopes, and can overlap with each other to inform methods chosen. Drawing on anti-oppressive practice and empowerment perspectives alongside Indigenous, feminist and critical sources means I have a theoretical foundation that is established and although not offering one proscriptive method per se (there are many good ways to do research from these perspectives), offer a value base and guidelines for approaching research and developing a project's methods.

Mainly, all of these approaches require transparency in the research process; involvement of participants/constituents who will be affected by the research; acknowledging and accounting for one's interests, entry point, and reflections on the topic (social location); prioritizing the values, interests and concerns of participants and community members; attention to historical and sociopolitical contexts and some level of discursive critique regarding the ways power impacts how social problems or concerns get defined.

All also being critical of mainstream approaches, they offer an interest and aim in doing research in a way that more appropriately and descriptively represents the interests of people it purports to. Further, Indigenous, critical and feminist perspectives also emphasize how the information will be used. I have utilized a means of member-checking (through community consultation), and have an openness to and desire for sharing the findings as directed by Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in ways that will benefit Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and communities at the end of this project. Completing relevant and meaningful research was a goal of the larger Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health research project and is very important to me in this secondary analysis.

Incorporating an intersectional analysis means all of the identity experiences of participants are seen and understood as interacting with each other, within a larger system of power and privilege that impacts peoples lives in the day-to-day, materially and socially. These material and social effects impact the abilities of participants to find places of home, community and belonging.

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Methods

Research Design. Details of the research design for the primary project directed by Janice Ristock and Art Zoccole are found in Ristock, Zoccole and Passante (2010). The project was a qualitative community-based project with two community Advisory Committees. The Winnipeg Committee consisted of seven members and Vancouver, eight. Members included those who identify as Two-Spirit people as well as those that do not but work with and within Two-Spirit communities. (Please see Appendix A for a list of Advisory Committee Members.) Principles of OCAP were agreed to (Appendices B and C). An ethics submission was completed and approval secured from the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba.

The research assistants in Winnipeg and Vancouver liaised with the Principal Investigators and Advisory Committee Members and facilitated the distribution of information about the project. Advisory Committee members helped promote the study with their community connections. Participants who were interested in being interviewed individually or in focus groups voluntarily contacted the research assistants via telephone with confidential voice mail or email.

The research design for my MSW thesis involved a secondary analysis of the individual interview and focus group transcripts from Vancouver and Winnipeg to explore a new question not directly considered by the first study. Specifically, how do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people describe home, community, and belonging in the context of migration and mobility? And how do Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ make sense of home, community, and belonging in relation to their Indigenous and sexual and/or gender identities and in connection with wellbeing?

My research aims are as follows. They encompass both content and process aims (congruent with emphasis by Kovach, 2009):

- To articulate experiential knowledge as shared by participants about how they make sense of home, community and belonging in the context of migration and their identities as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

- To document and share that knowledge in a way that includes the complexities, multiplicities and tensions that exist in Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples' lives.

- To use a positive framework to ensure that strengths, resilience, and wellbeing of Indigenous people and communities is honoured.

- To do so while remaining connected with the community Advisory Committees in Winnipeg and Vancouver (if possible).

In all, I hope this secondary analysis expands on the work of the migration project and is respectful of the people connected with the primary project and this secondary study (including participants, community Advisory Committee members, Thesis Committee members and Advisors). I hope to generate meaningful, relevant findings that are true to the stories and hopes shared by participants. I have also aimed to do good research and secure an MSW upon completion.

Data Collection. Criteria for participation in the primary study included people 18 (or 19 years in BC) of age or older who self-identify as Aboriginal and who also self-identify as Two-Spirit, and/or LGBTQ; with experiences of migration/moving; and a minimum of conversational English. The project recruited through community

Advisory Committee members, posters at key organizations, handbills distributed by Advisory Committee members and the research assistants at community events and word-of-mouth. All participants received a $25 honorarium and focus group participants also received food and drinks.

Individual and small group interviews were held in private rooms at a local library and focus groups were held in community sites of relevance for Two-Spirit people. After securing consent participants were given a copy of the information sheet and consent form (Appendix D) for their record, while one was kept for the research record. Participants then completed a set of background and demographic questions (see Appendices E and F), slightly different in each site. Individual and focus group interviews were audio recorded (for later transcription by an experienced and reputed third party affiliated with the University of Manitoba). (Please see Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010 and Ristock, Zoccole and Potskin, 2011 for more details.)

Thereafter a semi-structured set of discussion questions (an interview guide) was used to help facilitate the individual interviews or focus groups (Appendices G and H). These questions focused specifically on participants' experiences of migration and factors motivating them to move or stay in place, including experiences of community and belonging. The interview guide offered a framework with conversational flexibility (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Reinharz, 1992).

The discussion questions were provided for participants at the beginning of interviews and supplemental material included a map of Manitoba First Nations communities (in Winnipeg). An honorarium and a list of community resources were provided to each participant after individual and focus group interviews. Research

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assistants completed process (Winnipeg) and field (Vancouver) notes (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Kirby et al., 2006) after each individual and focus group interview to note informal conversation before and after the recorded portion of the meeting, as well as observations and reflections.

Differences in Winnipeg and Vancouver data collection. The Winnipeg and Vancouver background demographic questionnaires were predominantly the same, with minor variations. This occurred in response to direction from each of the community Advisory Committees. See Appendices E and F for samples of the questionnaires. One difference is that Vancouver asked participants for their Nation or band affiliation.

Although working from the same set of drafted questions, community Advisory Committees in each of the Winnipeg and Vancouver sites discussed, clarified, and massaged the interview questions to fit their setting. The interview guides are similar, although not the same. See Appendices G and H for examples of the city-specific interview guides.

When comparing the guides, readers will note minor variations in the ordering of questions, and in some emphasis. In Winnipeg, the study asked about perceptions of belonging, communities and home. In Vancouver, belonging and communities were addressed. In addition, a Vancouver question included connecting with others. In Winnipeg we began with "Where were you born and where are some of the places that you have you lived?" In some ways, this question addressed original community and nation and/or band affiliation.

Some questions asked in Winnipeg and Vancouver were exactly or almost exactly the same. These include "Why did you move?" (question 2 for both sites); problems experienced in each of the cities (question 5 in Vancouver and 4 in Winnipeg); positives about living in your city (question 6 in Vancouver and 5 in Winnipeg); the ability to move freely through different communities in your city (question 8 in both sites); impact of moving on health and wellbeing (question 4 in Vancouver and 12 in Winnipeg); family support (question 10 in Vancouver and 14 in Winnipeg) and recommendations for services (question 11 in Vancouver and 15 in Winnipeg).

Some questions were asked similarly, but were not quite the same. These include the choice of city (number 3 in both sites) and sense of belonging and community (question 7 in Vancouver and across questions 6, 7 and 9 in Winnipeg).

There are also some differences in questions used in each site. Vancouver asked about how participants reach out and connect with others (question 9). Winnipeg asked participants to define "home" (question 10) and how they coped with moving (question 13). In three questions, Vancouver asked explicitly for examples (questions 4, 8 and 10) and Winnipeg asked participants if there was anything else they would like to add (question 16). Overall, Vancouver's guide had 11 questions (some with sub questions or probes) and Winnipeg's guide had 16 questions (fewer with sub questions, some with probes).

This being said, overall, the predominant similarities allowed for sufficient comparison among the Winnipeg and Vancouver sites.

Data analysis. I proposed to do a thematic analysis (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Kirby et al. 2006) of the interview and focus group transcripts of the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health project's secondary themes related to home, community and belonging in the context of participant identities and in a framework of health and wellbeing, strengths and resilience. With permission (secured from the project's Winnipeg Advisory Committee in February 2010, and from the Vancouver Advisory Committee in September, 2010), I organized materials and reviewed transcripts, recordings and related materials of the existing data from both Winnipeg and Vancouver.

In Winnipeg, we had 14 transcripts available for review (24 participants over three focus groups and 11 interviews of one or more participants). As part of my work with the migration project, I facilitated the Winnipeg focus groups and interviews. I listened to these transcripts and corrected them, thus was very familiar with the Winnipeg data.

In Vancouver, there were 11 transcripts including 26 participants over three focus groups and eight interviews of one or more participants completed by the Vancouver research assistant, Jonathon Potskin. Accordingly, I was less familiar with the participants, recordings, and transcripts. To help familiarize myself with this data set, I listened to the available recordings while reviewing the transcripts.

In total the transcripts from both Winnipeg and Vancouver amounted to 484 pages of data (not including process or field notes, demographic questionnaires and other accompanying information). To begin, I did a simple reading of the transcripts (Review # 1) making minor notes and creating a preliminary list ("key") of main themes

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as I went, some of which I flagged. I identified first themes according to my main

research and contextual questions, as well as in response to emerging themes in the

transcripts. My research question(s) sought to look at how participants made sense of

home, community, belonging and how that intersected with contextual themes of

identities, wellbeing and resilience (including strengths).

While reviewing transcripts, additional themes emerged. Hence, my list of

themes grew to include culture (Aboriginal and queer); acceptance by others;

discrimination (or rejection) by others; violence by others; isolation;

people/relationships; space, place; identity, being myself; and safety. There were also

some sub-themes such as the manifestations of acceptance, rejection or violence

towards oneself (i.e. not just by others). This first list included 14 themes, with 14

subthemes (some categories had from one to three, while some categories had no

subthemes).[5]

Next, as an interim step for Vancouver only, I read transcripts and listened to

recordings to identify the participants, feel more connected to them, hear their

intonation, emphasis, laughter and verify and correct the transcripts as I went[6].

Then, I completed a review of each transcript (Review # 2), and systematically

used stickers and sticky flags of various colours to physically identify themes. Thesis

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[5] It can be noted that some of these themes overlapped with those of the original migration study. At this point, I wanted to make sure I had a complete understanding of the data, themes, and emerging relationships among themes such that I did not want to disregard anything before I felt confident in my understandings. As my confidence grew, I could push aside some of those covered in the initial study.

[6] This was a particularly arduous task as two of the focus groups had multiple participants (6 and 8). The facilitator discouraged people from using their names, and since I wasn't there, I had a very difficult time sorting out the seating arrangements, which participant was speaking when, and how they were connected to their demographic forms. This required repeated listening to each transcript.

Committee members had recommended colour-coding and sticky notes at the proposal review stage. I stuck these at the outermost/right side of each transcript page. I reviewed all of the transcripts once at this stage, colour-coding all identified themes and flagging as I went. At this point, the list of themes was refined as I proceeded to include 16 main themes and 19 subthemes. Main theme additions included politics and economics. Subtheme additions of note are support and common interests within the community theme, as well as historical trauma within culture.

As the process unfolded I noticed that there were circumstances and experiences that participants shared that either contributed to or took away from a sense of home, community and belonging. I began to look more intently for what those may be. This extended into my third review.

Again, I returned to the first transcripts and reviewed each transcript again (Review # 3), adding to and confirming the themes (categories and subcategories) and flagging as I went. This final list of themes included 17 main themes (with an addition of unexpected opportunity) and 41 subthemes. I wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything, and this extensive list of subthemes consists mainly of circumstances supporting or detracting from a sense of home, community and belonging. These themes would collectively become *facilitators* and *detractors*. As such, this final list of themes and subthemes was the most expansive. With the third flagging, I noticed that no flags were changed - nuances and subthemes added, but no changes. This process affirmed the main categories and the flagging I had done in the first and second review.

Lastly, I used a template (Review # 4) to organize the data and to assist with another review of each of the flagged transcripts (similar to the one used in the larger

migration project, see Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010). With feedback from my

committee at proposal stage, I had enhanced the template to emphasize the themes of

home, community and belonging *in the context of migration*, as well as included

recommendations for community building (rather than services, which were considered

in the original migration study). At this stage, I pulled out relevant participant

comments and quotations demonstrating the themes by cutting and pasting into the

template. One template was completed for each transcript.

After feedback from my advisors on my first draft I decided to reference the

context of wellbeing (and remove health). Impacts of migration on health had been

discussed in the original migration study. Wellbeing had also been referenced (Ristock,

Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011), and I offer an extension

of those considerations in this secondary analysis specifically as wellbeing relates to

developing positive meanings of home, community and belonging.   Further, addressing

wellbeing fits in considering participants within a holistic context (accounting for not

only multiple identities, but also multiple parts of self such as spiritual, emotional,

physical, and mental) (Four Winds Development Project, 1988).

Community consultation. Using the templates as a guide, I prepared a

presentation to share with the migration project's community Advisory Committee in

Winnipeg to get feedback on the initial findings and help in analyzing the themes. This

meeting occurred in October 2011 at Nine Circles in Winnipeg and was also attended

by one of my advisors, Janice. In preparing this presentation, I needed to do a

preliminary analysis of the themes to make them understandable to an audience.

This first organization and presentation of themes included participant descriptions of their identity/ies as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, and as such how they make sense of home, community, and belonging in the context of migration. I summarized the remaining extensive list of themes into two main categories: experiences supporting a positive sense of home, community and belonging; and experiences negatively affecting home, community and belonging.

I also included participant comments about health, wellbeing, strengths and resilience as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. I included these areas because this was part of the original context I had hoped to articulate – the main themes in the context of identities and migration and in a positive framework of health and wellbeing, strengths and resilience. I finished with participant recommendations for community building.

I asked the members to hear and respond to the findings (as consultants for further analysis and interpretation) similar to the consultative process we engaged in with the Winnipeg Advisory Committee in reviewing the larger project's data (see member-checking in Kirby et al., 2006; and "respondent validation"[7] under "credibility" in Bryman & Teevan, 2005, p. 150).

The feedback was largely positive, with suggestions to further articulate a comparison between sites, clarify between strengths and resilience, and summarize participant recommendations for community building.

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[7] Advisory Committee members were not participants therefore "respondent validation" is a misnomer. That said, they have been with the project from the beginning and due to their own identities and roles within the community, have expertise with which to consult. A more apt term would be "community consultant validation".

Demographic table. Following this consultation I undertook further analysis comparing the Winnipeg and Vancouver data sets. Advisory Committee members and Janice each had questions about similarities and differences in Winnipeg and Vancouver responses that I needed to go back to the data to consider. To assist in comparing participant responses from the two sites, I used a table Janice had created to sort demographic responses of the Winnipeg respondents. I added to this and included Vancouver respondents as well (Table 1).

Completion of this table provided me with a visual representation and an easy way to note differences. It also got me more in touch with any differences in the background questionnaires and guides. I used the table to complete a narrative summary of participant responses, which helped me further articulate the comparison.

As well, I completed another review (Review # 5) of the templates and some transcripts seeking Winnipeg- and Vancouver-specific references and noting general similarities and differences. When considering contextual information, I reviewed not only what has already been mentioned (i.e. demographic forms, transcripts and templates), but also any notes recorded in process/field summaries for each individual or focus group interview.

I offer demographic material first in the findings (Chapter 3), and the narrative comparison (which also includes responses to interview questions) later within that section.

Credibility. I call upon the work of Bryman and Teevan in their articulations of *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* as standards in qualitative research. Trustworthiness

encompasses credibility. Credible research is carried out according to the accepted

canons of good practice, *and* withstands submission of findings to members of the

social group in consideration (*respondent or member validation*). The process of

member validation ensures the researcher has correctly understood and interpreted the

data into findings that make sense to members of the group (Bryman & Teevan, 2005,

p. 150). In this case, I met with members of the community Advisory Committee to

share preliminary findings and request feedback – I call this process *community*

consultant validation.

Hart (2009b) describes *trustworthiness* in somewhat different terms, but also

very important in regards to this discussion. He roots the term in what strikes me as

relational accountability - being respectful as defined by all parties in the project,

committed to helping one another in a way that benefits personal and community

wellbeing and growth, and using one's self-awareness to participate subjectively in the

research process.

Bryman and Teevan (2005) also note that qualitative findings tend to be oriented

to the contextual uniqueness and significance of aspects of the social world being

studied. In that, a researcher demonstrates good practices when offering thick or rich

descriptions. Similarly, Babbie (2002) notes the illustrative power the words of

participants have. He states that observations and conceptualizations shared by

participants are valid in their own right, contributing to further qualitative research or

informing quantitative approaches as well.

In this case, I offer the words of participants to demonstrate their perspectives. I

have also included contextual elements (such as themes of identities and individual and

collective wellbeing) as much as possible. Further, I include a graphic (conceptual

model in Chapter 4) to show how I have connected themes in relation to each other to

make sense of participants' stories. I have also maintained an "audit" (Bryman &

Teevan, 2005, p. 150) of my processes and reflections throughout the research process

(described in more detail in the next section).

Finally, Bryman & Teevan (2005) also note that qualitative research must have

relevance with respect to the importance of a topic within the literature in its field of

study, and also to practitioners in that field (citing Hammersely, 1992). The need for

research of this kind has been demonstrated in the literature review. Further, as already

discussed in the approaches section, I draw strongly upon feminist, critical and

Indigenous sources that indicate community members as stakeholders in knowledge

creation must find relevance and application in research for it to be useful.

Kovach (2009) describes the experiential aspect of the research process as

researcher preparation. Her description includes elements of transparency in

identifying elements and choices grounded " in the inward knowing that arises from

personal experience" (p. 49). Kovach cites work by Cardinal and Hildebrandt when she

includes a Cree practice in researcher preparation that means "to go to the centre of

yourself to find your own belonging" (p. 49 citing Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000),

hence all we can know is our own experience. Hart (2009b) refers to these processes as

subjectivity (p. 160) and *self-reflection* (p. 163). To account for my limited knowing,

throughout this research and writing process, in addition to audit materials I have

attempted to be careful with my language, owning my opinions, beliefs and perceptions

while also descriptively using the words of participants to reflect what *they shared*

about their experiential knowing. I have paid attention to my social location and how my life experiences impact what I bring as a listener.

Reflexivity is the term often used within a variety of qualitative approaches to refer to the relational. It is the researcher's self-reflection in the process of meaning-making (Kovach, 2009, p. 32). Kovach reviews various definitions of reflexivity that include acknowledging bias, examining social location and privilege, emphasizing political and representational elements of research in knowledge construction, and enhancing a study's validity. Kovach notes that research resulting from a tribal-centred Indigenous methodology should have a strong narrative component as part of its methods and presentation of findings.

In this study, I have attempted to incorporate elements of Kovach's recommendations. I have located myself and my assumptions, acknowledged biases, privilege and limited worldview, and have attempted to the best of my abilities to ensure this study is true to what was shared by Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ participants. In utilizing a community consultation process, I have confirmed the findings make sense in community context. I have also used a narrative approach in locating myself, owning my limitations, and in sharing my final reflections.

Journal/Reflections. I have attempted to keep an "audit" (Bryman & Teevan, 2005, p. 150) of my research processes and reflections throughout. This audit collectively consists of electronic journal writings, emails and handwritten notes, lists and conceptual drawings. Despite my efforts to keep them contained, content, process and reflexivity elements have all blended together and into each other.

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I began these notes after my proposal was accepted to attempt to describe and explicate my own understandings of the main themes. In this early stage, I completed concept maps of each of the themes (home, community, belonging and wellbeing), as well as some narrative writing. Over time, I also began a reflective process journal, as well as a running record of tasks and observations. I used these notes to organize my thoughts, attempt to articulate intuitive/less conscious understandings, follow up on ideas, threads and wonderings, as well as remember things I did not want to forget (such as references, connected ideas and questions). I have then gone back throughout the process to my notes a number of times to sort, track, and make sure I followed up on some of those thoughts and see how they may have changed.

Of note, my conceptual drawings have informed the analysis, making explicit relationships among themes I had originally intuited. For example, I had identified themes of multiplicity, contemporary effects of historical trauma, community building and Two-Spirit cultural vitality and resurgence without having a sense of how they were related to other themes (in my head and heart, I just knew they were). It took responding to questions from my Advisors to get me thinking about the relationships and how to consciously decipher what insight had presented.

Thus, it was through drawing out my ideas that I understood how these themes emerged from the others, how they are related, and how they are relevant. I also realized in this process that I had missed a key theme of safety that only became apparent in creating the drawing. These connections are represented in the conceptual graphic I offer in the Analysis and Discussion section (Chapter 4).

Chapter 3: Findings

Demographic Information

In total, when combining Winnipeg and Vancouver data, there were 50 participants. Ten identified themselves as Métis, 40 First Nations, one Inuit and one Bill C-31. (In a couple of cases the participants checked more than one category, which is why the numbers add up to more than 50.) Participants reported a range of ages from 18 to over 60 years. In terms of gender, 22 identified themselves as female, 11 male, 13 Two-Spirit, 11 transgender, four transsexual, and two queer. Regarding sexuality, 24 identified as Two-Spirit, eight gay, eight lesbian, 10 bisexual, five straight, two queer, eight transgender, one poly and one butch. Again, in some cases participants selected more than one category.

Participants reported a diversity of education and sources of income. Some reported completing some grade school, while others graduation from college or University, with a range in between. Some were living on some type of state-sponsored assistance while others worked full-time, part-time or casual. Some received student funding or were self-employed, and others worked in the sex or drug trade. In respect to participation in traditional practices, 37 indicated "yes", and 12 responded with "no". In some instances, certain questions may not have been responded to, or answers were offered that did not fit within the parameters of responses represented here. These reasons account for categories not adding up to the total number of participants.

Winnipeg and Vancouver responses to demographic questions. Please see Appendices E, F and refer to Table 1 (next page).

Table 1: *Site-Specific Responses to Demographic Questions*

WINNIPEG	Participants (n= 24)	**VANCOUVER**	Participants (n=26)
Aboriginal Identity Métis First Nations	 6 18	*Aboriginal Identity* Métis First Nations Inuit Bill C-31	 4 19 Status; 3 Non 1 1
Language First language English First Language Indigenous First Languages Indigenous & English	 15 3 3	*Do you speak your traditional language?* Fluently Knowledge of some No	 6 13 7
Age 18-24 years 25-29 30-34 34-39 40-44 45-49	 6 4 5 3 5 1	*Age* 19-24 years 25-29 30-34 34-39 40-44 45-49 50-59 60+ Unspecified	 3 2 1 5 4 4 4 1 2
Gender Identity (check all that apply) Female Male Two-Spirit Transgender Transsexual	 14 3 2 8 1	*Gender Identity* (best describes) Female Male Two-Spirit Transgender MtF Transsexual Queer	 8 8 11 3 3 2
Sexuality (check all that apply) Two-Spirit Gay Lesbian Bisexual Straight Queer MtF transgender Poly	 10 3 6 7 3 1 6 1	*Sexuality (best defines)* Two-Spirit Gay Lesbian Bisexual Straight Queer Transgender Poly Other (Butch)	 14 5 2 3 2 1 1, 1 TG Female 1

Community: *Primary home* Winnipeg City Town Reserve community	20 2 1 1	*Community:* *Primary home* Vancouver City Town Reserve community	26
Community: *Secondary home* First Nation Rural Town Winnipeg	6 1 4	*Community:* *Secondary home* First Nation Rural Town Vancouver	3
Housing Rent house or Apartment Own home Rooming house Homeless	12 1 1 2	*Housing (last 12 months)* Rent house or Apartment Own home Room & Board Streets	22 1 5
Living situation With relatives With partner With friends Live alone	5 6 3 2	*Living situation (last 12 months)* With family/friends Sleeping on a couch Correctional Institution Hostel	3 1 1 1
Children Live with them full-time Live with them part-time No children living with them	4 3 17	*Children who live with me* Yes No Some of the time Kids confirmed?	25 2
Mobility *From First Nation or Métis settlement to city:* 2-4 times 5-9 times 10 or more times *Moves Within the City* 1-4 times 5-9 times 10-15 times	17 8 2 4 7 4 4	*Mobility* *From First Nation or Métis settlement to city:* 2-4 times 5-9 times 10 or more times *Moves Within the City* 1-4 times 5-9 times 10-15 times	16 7 2 6 3 7

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20 or more times	1	20 or more times	
		From another town or city	18
		1-4 times	10
		5-9 times	3
		10-15 times	3
		Unspecified #	2
From another province	11	*From another province*	17
1-4 times	10	1-4 times	12
16 + times	1	5-9 times	4
From another country	2 (both 1 time)	*From another country*	5 (all 1 or 2 times)
Forced mobility: Forced to move out of home community due to sexual or gender identity.	8 = 33%	*Forced mobility:* Forced to move out of home community due to sexual or gender identity.	16 = 62%
Child Welfare: Taken from biological parents.	13	*Child Welfare:* Taken from biological parents.	14
Adopted	4	Adopted	5
Foster care:	9	*Foster care:*	
Placed 1-3 times	5	Placed 1-3 times	6
4-5 times	1	4-5 times	1
6 or more	3	6 or more	5
		Abandoned by biological parents	7, 1 by one parent
Residential schools Self	3	*Residential schools* Self	5
Grandparents	10	Grandparents	14
Mother/Father	7	Mother/Father	17
Other relatives	9	Other relatives	14
		Don't know	3
		Yes, unspecified	2
Education (highest level completed) Some grade school	2	*Education (highest level completed)* Grade 9 or less	3
Some high school	12	Some high school	4
High school diploma	4	High school diploma	5
Some college/university	4	Some college/university	7

University degree	2	University degree	1
Specialty certificate	1	College diploma	8
Health Concerns (check all that apply)		*Health Concerns (check all that apply)*	
Weight	8	Weight	5
Diabetes	5	Diabetes	1
HIV	5	HIV	12
Hepatitis C	4	Hepatitis C	8
STIs	3	STIs	1
Cancer	3	Cancer	1
TB	2	TB	
Other	2	Violence in	
Violence in		Relationship	24
Relationship	19	No health concerns	1
No health concerns	4	Lots	2
		Other	3 unspecified
		Menopause, old age	1
		Meningitis	1
Income (check all that apply)		*Income (check all that apply)*	
State-sponsored assistance	10	State-sponsored assistance	14, + 1 Disability
Disability benefits	1	Full-time employment	7
Full-time employment	4	Part-time	5
Part-time	4	Casual work	7
Casual work	3	Student Funding	4
Student Aid	1	Sex work	3
Sex work	9	Drug trade	
Drug trade	6	Supported by spouse	1
Pan-handling	1	Self-employed	3
		Other	1
Traditional Cultural Practices (all that apply)		*Traditional Cultural Practices (check all that apply)*	
Yes	17	Yes	20
Ceremonies	9	Ceremonies	18
Singing	8	Singing	12
Medicines	7	Medicines	13
Spiritual practices	7	Spiritual practices	16
Drumming	6	Drumming	11
Living on the land	4	Living on the land	9

Language	4	Language	10
Healing	4	Dancing	14
Dancing	4	Art	10
Art	3	Other:	
Cooking	1	Drum and regalia	
Pow wows	1	making, teaching;	1
		Aboriginal Men's	
No	7	Group;	1
		Workshop	
		Facilitation	1
		(Sensitivity)	
		Connect with Elders	1
		Teachings	1
		No	5
Relationship Among identifying as Two-Spirit and Participation in Cultural Practices		*Relationship Among identifying as Two-Spirit and Participation in Cultural Practices*	
No, Yes	5	No, Yes	5
Yes, Yes	11	Yes, Yes	15
Yes, No	1	Yes, No	2
No, No	7	No, No	4

Overall, the participants in the Vancouver and Winnipeg sites were very similar in their Aboriginal identity responses. Of 24 Winnipeg participants, six identified themselves as Métis, while the remaining identified themselves as First Nations people with Status. Of 26 Vancouver participants, four identified themselves as Métis, 19 as First Nations with Status, three Non-Status, plus one Inuit and one Métis person who also identified herself as Bill C-31.

Despite overall similarities in their demographic responses, the nation, cultural backgrounds, and territorial origins of participants from the two urban sites differ. Winnipeg respondents were largely from First Nations territories in Manitoba (i.e. all

except two participants, who came from Saskatchewan and Ontario respectively).

Winnipeg participants identified themselves on the demographic form or in focus group

and individual interviews as Cree, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Saulteaux.

Vancouver participants on the other hand were much more geographically

diverse in their origins. 14 participants indicated coming from communities in British

Columbia – largely the North and the Interior. The remaining 12 came from nations

and territories across the country as follows: three from Alberta, one from

Saskatchewan, three from Manitoba, one from the Northwest Territories/Nunavut (no

specific region), three from Ontario, and one from New Brunswick.

Regarding language, there were differences in the questions asked ("first

language" in Winnipeg and "knowledge of your traditional language" in Vancouver)

that prevent a direct comparison. In Winnipeg of those that responded, 15 participants

indicated that their first language is English, three Indigenous, and three that they

learned English alongside an Indigenous language. In Vancouver, six participants

indicated being fluent in their traditional language, 13 have knowledge of some of their

traditional language and seven responded "no". Findings seem to be similar (both

groups number six if we assume one is fluent in their first language).

The Winnipeg participants were younger overall as a group than the Vancouver

participants. Ten participants in Winnipeg were less than 30 years, while only five in

Vancouver were in this group. Eight Winnipeg participants identified themselves as

being 30-39 years compared with six in Vancouver. Six Winnipeg participants stated

they are 40-49, and eight Vancouverites did the same. We see the greatest distinction in

the next category – with no Winnipeg participants over 50 years, and four in Vancouver

and an additional one over 60 years. Two Vancouver participants did not specify their age.

Regarding gender, in Winnipeg we had more participants identify themselves as female (14, and eight in Vancouver). Conversely, more participants in Vancouver identified as male (eight compared to three in Winnipeg). Despite differences in the questions ("check all that apply" in Winnipeg and "best describes" in Vancouver) participants in Vancouver seem more apt to use the term *Two-Spirit* to describe themselves (11 compared with only two in Winnipeg). In Winnipeg we had eight participants identify as *transgender* (all Male to Female/MtF), and three in Vancouver (MtF). In Winnipeg, only one identified as *transsexual*, while three in Vancouver did the same. In the interview process (but not on the form) one Vancouver participant identified as FtM (Female to Male) *transgender*. Two participants in Vancouver identified as *queer*.

Regarding sexuality, 10 and 14 participants in Winnipeg and Vancouver respectively chose the term *Two-Spirit*. Three in Winnipeg and five in Vancouver chose the term *gay*. Six in Winnipeg and two in Vancouver chose the term *lesbian.* Seven in Winnipeg and three in Vancouver chose the term *bisexual.* Three and two participants identified as *straight* in Winnipeg and Vancouver respectively. One each in Winnipeg and Vancouver identified themselves as *queer*. In Winnipeg six identified as MtF transgender, and two in Vancouver did the same. One participant in Winnipeg identified as *poly/polyamourous* (i.e. openly with more than one partner at a given time), plus one in Vancouver also identified as *butch*.

As can be seen, participants chose a variety of ways to refer to their gender and sexuality. These self-descriptions may not match how someone else would describe them if asked to do so based on their physical representations, and/or based on their individual interview or focus group comments. For example, many participants (especially in Vancouver) described themselves as Two-Spirit. This offers no specificity in terms of gender or sexuality. Without overriding people's self-descriptions, we paid attention in the research process to attempting to get as much diversity as possible. To do this, we used our own descriptions of participants informally. In describing the participants, they could be described as Two-Spirit *and* gay males (12), transman/straight male (one), Two-Spirit and lesbian (eight), and (straight or bi) transwomen (five) in Vancouver. In Winnipeg they could be described as Two-Spirit if they used the term *as well as* lesbians (12), gay males (three) and straight or bi transwomen (nine) for research purposes.

Thus in Vancouver the sample was heavier in male representation, while in Winnipeg we were heavier in lesbian and transwoman representation. Unfortunately, we had only one transman participate. These generalizing comments do not account for the invisibility of bisexuality and I acknowledge the conflation of gender and sexuality that occurs with such generalizing.

Regarding living circumstances, 22 Vancouver participants rent their home or apartment, while 12 Winnipeg participants rent. One participant in each of Winnipeg and Vancouver own their home. In Winnipeg only one participant lives in a rooming house, while five in Vancouver do. Two Winnipeg participants identified themselves as homeless (compared to none in Vancouver). In Winnipeg five participants live with

relatives, six with a partner, three with friends and two alone. In Vancouver, three have lived with family and friends, one has slept on a couch, one has lived in a hostel and one has lived in a correctional institution in the past 12 months.

Due to the way we asked the question in both Winnipeg and Vancouver, it is hard to specify exactly how many participants may have children. That said we do know how many have children living with them all or some of the time. In Winnipeg, four participants have children that live with them full-time and three have children living with them part-time. In Vancouver, 25 participants indicated that they do not have children living with them and in the context of the focus group/interviews, two participants confirmed having children. We do not know how many others in Winnipeg or Vancouver have children that do not live with them.

Mobility has been addressed in each of the Winnipeg and Vancouver reports respectively (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). I draw attention to differences among Winnipeg and Vancouver participants. As mentioned above in more detail, overall Vancouver migrants are much more likely to be from out-of-province (12/26 vs. 2/24 in the case of Winnipeg).

Regarding community and participants' "primary home", all of the Vancouver participants indicated that they live in Vancouver most of the time, with only three indicating a secondary community. For Winnipeg participants, 20/24 indicated living in Winnipeg most of the time and four elsewhere; 11 indicated a secondary community outside of Winnipeg. This makes sense in terms of proximity when we consider that most Winnipeg participants (22/24) are from Manitoba. It would be easier for them to commute back and forth from another home.

At some point, 11 of the Winnipeg participants have moved/returned to Winnipeg after time in another province. 17 of the Vancouver participants have moved or returned to Vancouver after time in another province. Two Winnipeg participants have moved or returned to Winnipeg after time in another country. This is contrasted with five of the Vancouver participants. In summary, from responses to these questions on community and primary home as well as mobility, it appears that Vancouver participants are more mobile overall when it comes to travel further from their urban home. Winnipeg participants on the other hand are more likely to have communities and/or another home within the province they travel back and forth to.

Similar numbers of Winnipeg and Vancouver participants have had child welfare experiences. Slightly higher numbers of Vancouver participants indicated attending residential schools (five compared with three in Winnipeg). Regarding family members, Vancouver participants indicated knowing that parents (17) or grandparents (14) had attended, while seven and 10 in Winnipeg indicated the same. When considering other relatives, 14 Vancouver participants indicated this, while only nine Winnipeg participants indicated the same. I wonder if firsthand memories and/or access to this knowledge were more present for Vancouver participants because overall they reported being older (as previously mentioned).

Overall, the Vancouver group of participants indicated greater levels of education – with nine having university degrees or college certificates (and seven having some college or university), compared with three participants in Winnipeg (and four having some college or university).

Information offered by participants regarding their health concerns was varied. Of note, Winnipeg participants were more likely to identify weight, diabetes and TB as concerns (eight, five and two participants compared with Vancouver responses of five, one and zero respectively). Vancouver participants on the other hand were more likely to identify living with HIV and Hepatitis as concerns (12 and eight compared respectively with Winnipeg responses of five and four). The only other difference notable is regarding domestic violence. Responses were high in both sites, with 24/26 Vancouver participants indicating experiences of domestic violence compared with 19/24 Winnipeg participants.

Winnipeg and Vancouver participants stated a variety of forms of income/livelihood. Eleven (Winnipeg) and 15 (Vancouver) receive state-sponsored assistance of some sort (including disability benefits). Some work full-time (four in Winnipeg and seven in Vancouver). Some work part-time or casually (seven in Winnipeg and 12 in Vancouver). Some indicated receiving student funding (one in Winnipeg compared to four in Vancouver). More participants in Winnipeg indicated working in the sex or drug trade (nine and six) compared with Vancouver participants (three and none). A myriad of other responses were also offered – one in Winnipeg panhandles, three in Vancouver are self-employed, one in Vancouver is supported by a spouse, and one in Vancouver indicated another source of income without specifying what that is.

Many participants in both Vancouver and Winnipeg indicated involvement with traditional practices. At first glance, the numbers are similar – 17 in Winnipeg and 20 in Vancouver. When we consider specific practices however, more Vancouver

participants indicated multiple practices – sometimes two or three times more than Winnipeg participants, across all practices listed.

Findings from Individual and Focus Group Discussions

Within this section, I first review what participants said about their identities. Identities were addressed within the migration study (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010 and Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). I review and extend this information here as this is the perspective from which participants described and shared meanings of what home, community and belonging signify for them in the context of migration. I include descriptions of identities in general, meanings attributed to identities and end with comments participants made about having multiple identities.

Next, I move into the main themes of home, community and belonging, including the many ways participants described what each of the terms mean. After this, I focus on *facilitators* - factors supporting a positive sense of home, community and belonging; and *detractors* - examples of experiences negatively impacting home, community and belonging.

As Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, participants spoke about how a positive sense of home, community and belonging contributes to wellbeing in numerous ways. I include a section on wellbeing in various manifestations with examples of what participants shared wellbeing means for them. I end the findings section with a comparison of Winnipeg and Vancouver individual and focus group interview participant responses.

Where there is overlap presented here with the original research project on Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health, I have attempted to offer enough information to allow for understanding and context without undue replication. Where there is duplication (i.e. in describing the ways that participants spoke about their multiple identities), I have aimed to use different quotations and draw out different nuances to illustrate the themes. In most cases, I have attempted to use examples from both Winnipeg and Vancouver to illustrate the themes. In some instances however, quotations from one site best reflected the themes, therefore one site may be more well represented.

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Identities

Descriptions and meanings of identities. Participants described themselves in a multitude of ways and offered many understandings of what it means for them to be Aboriginal Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ people (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). For many, coming to an urban setting afforded them the opportunity to learn more about what it means to be *Two-Spirit*.

> *… like moving here from a small community to a big city, I found it hard to connect with other queer Aboriginal people. Like I was pretty young when I came here, and yeah, it was challenging to find other queer Native people and also have people to connect to, to understand who I was. But I think this is like a really, a really great thing that we can work with (being Two-Spirit). Yeah, and also learning more about myself, like what it means to be Two-Spirit and I think that, like the way it was described to me when I first talked to somebody about it, was he said, it's like a really new word for a really old feeling* (First Nations, Status, lesbian, female, 22, Vancouver).

In other cases, participants learned about themselves through supportive family or community members that have teachings to offer around sexual and gender diversity.

> *Two-spirited people are, are a word for the Indian people…like a Native word, a Native thing. My granny said, "You have two strengths, my boy. You've got two strengths. You've got one of a woman and one of a man, put together." I said, yeah, you know, to use it like that, no I don't think that people look at you different. They say you have two spirits. Like I have the gentleness of a woman and the sensitivity of a woman but the masculinity of a man* (24, male, First Nations, gay, Two-Spirit, Winnipeg).

In both of these examples, we see how participants needed connections with others to

help them make sense of themselves. In the second example, this participant has taken

what was shared with him and offers his own interpretation. This is congruent with

Indigenous ways of being in which a teaching (or information) is offered and it is up to

the listener to decide what meaning the information holds (Ellerby, 2005; Hart, 2009b).

For some in this study, the term *Two-Spirit* carries political weight (Cameron,

2009; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004). Further, some spoke about how using the term

informs an individual and collective sense of community and care.

> *… I believe in those causes because that's who we are, you know. We can support each other. We can stand up for each other. What's the point of us trying to say, come together and say we're First Nations and we're Two-Spirit people. … you know, we've come a long way. That's the thing I really respect and I really admire about our people, is that they, you know, people don't realize how strong, you know, we are as First Nations people. And they may think that they're defeating us, by splitting us all apart, but you know, I think that, in the long end, we're gonna gain what we have and what's our own, eh. So to me it's, no matter what the cause is, just a continuation of support and support each other through loss of housing, you know, loss of whatever, but I think we just need to continue supporting each other* (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 47, Vancouver).

> *Two-Spirit is a very, very new term. It only came to light in 1991 and prior to that people really didn't have a reference point as to how we wanted to identify because we weren't gay and we knew that we weren't gay. 'Gay' is too, it's too broad. It doesn't really define who you are as a person and one of our elders, one of our Aboriginal Elders now, had a vision that, she was told this is what we would be called and she gave it to us. … And so a lot of us took on the term Two-Spirit because we wanted to be identified as Aboriginal men and women. Yeah, but gay is too, it had nothing, the gay lifestyle had absolutely nothing to do with our spiritual sense of being. Yeah, so for us, for a lot of us that were there in the 80s and early 90s it was finding a*

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place and a name for ourselves, to identify ourselves (First Nations, transgender, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg*)*.

This second quotation emphasizes both the political and collective nature of the term *Two-Spirit* to convene and organize around, but also its sacredness, as gifted by an Elder. Participants shared that inviting and honouring the sacred for those who identify that way is very important in fortifying their sense of themselves and their connectedness to other Two-Spirit people.

On having multiple identities. As revealed in the Winnipeg and Vancouver final reports of the migration project, many participants acknowledged they have numerous components to their identities (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). Some participants indicated they hold the component parts of their identities together (all or almost all of the time), bringing themselves and including their multiple identities openly wherever they go. For those who are able to do this, they connected this ability to a solid sense of foundation and pride in themselves and their identities as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ people.

> *If people don't, you know, no matter what I am anywhere in this world, if people don't like who I am or who I choose to be with that day, that's your problem and you need to look in your own closet and see what's wrong with you, cause there's nothing wrong with me* (Métis, bisexual, woman, 41, Winnipeg).

> *I think especially being here in Vancouver and especially our brothers and sisters here, to me it's a really big thing to know that we're all confident. People notice that and they take recognition and if you're comfortable in your own skin, whatever you do, I think that there's no, you know, you don't have a hard time carrying yourself wherever you go. I like the idea that, especially, we use the term Two-Spirited, and we don't have, we don't use the White way where we always have to label ourselves, you know. I think that when people start labeling themselves, it comes along with the labeling. But you guys are pretty well, you know, we know who we are, you know. I guess that makes a difference* (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 47, Vancouver).

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On the other hand, some participants spoke about feeling like their Indigenous and sexual or gender identities are separate. In the following example, it was difficult for this participant to even think about linking parts of his identity as he talked it out. Connecting these parts of himself had never occurred to him as a possibility.

For myself, I've never been in touch with, say, my ancestors in the gay community. I've never really done that connection. ... As a Native status man, but I've never had a connection between that and my sexuality. ... Cause I feel I've never, I've never linked the two. There's never been that connection that, that I explored the spirituality in my sexuality (First Nations, gay, male, 32, Vancouver).

Somewhat similarly, one participant spoke about how she feels confused and conflicted about being Métis, and again about being bisexual.

Cause, I mean, I was baptized when I was younger, and my mom, she's very spiritual, like Aboriginal, and my dad is Catholic, French Catholic. So when I was born I was baptized and my parents are regretting it now apparently, and I'm just saying, well I was born Catholic and Aboriginal so maybe I should focus on both, but then sometimes I get so confused. And I'm just like which one should I lean to? Because each one is telling me that this is wrong. This is wrong. I'm just like, what? There's this big war going on in my head, and I don't know what to do (Métis, bisexual, woman, youth, Winnipeg).

When asked about how the bisexual and Two-Spirit parts of her identity come in, this participant said,

I think it's just like another part of war. It's like Aboriginal people accept Two-Spirited and bisexual people, but the Catholic, Catholicism doesn't exactly cause they think it's a sin and what not. So I don't know. That's another reason also why I've been leaning towards the Aboriginal community, cause like if I was to say at church, "Hey, I'm gay", they'd probably like just shun me right away (Métis, bisexual, woman, youth, Winnipeg).

This young woman and other participants talked about having concerns about how they would be treated if openly bringing parts of themselves others find difficult. When fearing stigma or discrimination, multiple identities can mean confusion and

personal conflict. Participants spoke about how choosing to withhold themselves is not about being unsure of who they are, but rather being very aware of themselves and selective of how they present themselves - therefore choosing to be less out and more closeted in certain circumstances about their gender identity or sexuality. For instance, knowing that her father holds negative attitudes toward same-sex sexuality, this same youth stated,

> *I'm not 100% honest but there are some things that you have to lie about, like I don't know. Like for instance, my dad, is a perfect example. Yeah. Like I told him one day I had a boyfriend when I really had a girlfriend* (Métis, bisexual, woman, youth, Winnipeg).

Another participant spoke about her experiences in Native Housing, to illustrate how sometimes she decides to hold back parts of herself.

> *It's a very hard question because who is the same person in all different aspects unless you're someone who's out everywhere, and I find you cannot be out everywhere. My housing, I am not out to the other residents. From what I mentioned before, people are using drugs, alcohol. They don't even know who I am and I've already had bad experiences with some of the residents. So no, for me, I'm not, I'm not out everywhere* … (Female, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, 61, Vancouver).

In this way, when they can (i.e. when it is not necessarily visible or assumed), participants make choices about not sharing parts of themselves. Even when (more) visible, participants choose if and how to speak about the way they make sense of themselves with others. These judgments mean safety at the most essential physical and emotional level (Kanuha, 1998).

For some participants, their sense of themselves as Indigenous is a strength that they draw on as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ people. In this way, Indigenous cultures have power to inform identity for some Two-Spirit people when their teachings have been accepting of sex and gender role flexibility as in the following example.

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If I have the ability to work with women and children, like I mentioned before, I just do it. I don't set myself up to act that way. That's simply how I do it. That's how I was taught. I was taught from a very early age to cook, to take care of people, to take care of parents, all of this stuff. Through my teenage years, to learn how to drive, to learn how to take care of, set house. Everything, everything. You know, in a non-Aboriginal community that would be what women are taught perhaps. Guys are taught to holding their feeling. Guys are taught to fix trucks, whatever. Women are taught to stay in the kitchen, whatever. This is my thing. But I was taught how to do all of these things at a very young age. How to prepare food, recognize food. So yeah, to be able to say, my issue of homosexuality, whatever, is just who I am. There's a time and place for recognizing those things (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

At the most basic level, participants understand being *Two-Spirit* as the substance holding their First Nations and sexual and gender identities together. A young man and myself evidenced this in the following exchange.

Man: *So I have really no, right now, no real home except in myself and I can be free with myself at (agency), so I guess that's the basic. Was that the question you asked?*

Int.:   *You know what? You answered a lot of questions, cause really that's like where you're at home, where you're most relaxed, where you experience a feeling of belonging. I am curious, cause you said, you kind of think of yourself being in, not 3 places, but 3 parts kind of like, so there's the First Nations part, there's your gay part and the Two-Spirit is kind of what ...*

Man: *Holds it altogether* (Gay, Two-Spirit, male, First Nations, 20, Winnipeg).

Participants spoke of how the "holding together" substance of being Two-Spirit for some of them also means welcoming and living an individual and collective spiritual sense of themselves. For example,

I was very fortunate to have a traditional upbringing. ... I just know that a lot of our people sometimes have a difference of expressing themselves as First Nations or even saying Two-Spirit. Sometimes people just say it because it sounds good, you know, but it's a very sacred term to use. What I think that we, especially us here, we know we can come from all over Canada but we have a common bond, cause we're Two-Spirited, you know. But the thing that we have to keep in mind though is that, that's who we are. We're not gay. We're not gonna be part of the big balloon, picture, as the gay pride thing. We can never be because that's just the way they are. So I think for me, I always

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have a good sense and good respect to see all my brothers and sisters as Two-Spirited,
you know. That's what I like, cause that's who we are (First Nations Status, Two-Spirit,
male, 47, Vancouver).

Thus, participants evidenced awareness of multiple identities in terms of sexual

and gender identity alongside Indigenous identities, as well as identities rooted in

religion, spirituality, age, and development, as well as place of birth, language,

"visibility" as a Native person, non-Indigenous ethnic ancestry, and place of residence.

The words of participants show how thoughtful they are about who they are, how they

understand the different parts of their identities, where they come from and what

matters to them as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. This thoughtfulness and

diversity of experiences and opinions comes through in participants' descriptions of the

meanings they make of home, community and belonging in the context of migration.

Home

As related in the final reports of the project (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010;

Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011), participants moved and chose Winnipeg or

Vancouver for reasons of growth - to be themselves in education, employment, housing,

and for proximity to family connections. Some came to visit, explore urban culture, and

access health care and services for people living with HIV. For some, their

circumstances were dire – in seeking opportunities for basic shelter, acceptance as

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ, seeking safety and freedom to be themselves.

Some chose a city because they wanted something different from life in their reserve

community. For the most part, participants did not indicate they came to the city

looking for Aboriginal acceptance, they came *seeking acceptance around their sexual*

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and/or gender identities. What they found and developed in the most positive

circumstances were new surroundings that supported *all* of their identities (including

Indigenous).

Participants in both Winnipeg and Vancouver spoke about how *home* represents

a place to "plant" yourself, similar to the metaphor of *rootedness* used by Ramirez

(2007, p. 12). When using the planting metaphor, participants described this as

meaning to settle down, get roots, find your own place, have a job, know people, and be

in charge of yourself. Within these meanings, participants shared many descriptions of

home, some concrete and others more abstract. For example, for some home means

shelter, a place to live, eat, sleep and clean oneself. Home is also where my things are,

where I feel relaxed, and where participants said they feel comfortable – by themselves

or with other people. Some examples:

> *A place where you can be yourself, a place where you can just let go and not*
> *worry about anything and just not worry about finances for now, a home where you can*
> *just go relax, lay down and just think things over. If you want, it's a place where you*
> *can just study or work at home. Just a place where you feel comfortable, mostly*
> *comfortable even to a point where you don't have any clothes on, right? That's how*
> *comfortable...* (Transgender, female, 28, straight, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status,
> Winnipeg).

> *Home for me, I think, is my friends, my family and where I live, where I go to*
> *sleep, where I clean myself, where I eat, you know, where I spend my down time.*
> *That's home for me. ... And I think for us, for me anyways, is that I have friends that I*
> *go to that we can sit there for hours and hours and hours and do nothing, but we're*
> *okay with that. We're totally okay with that, and then there are days or times where we*
> *can get together and do lots of stuff together. You know what I'm saying? ... And it's*
> *okay. And nobody has to be anywhere. Nobody has to do anything. ... And that really*
> *means something, to be able to go into somebody's space or even you know, your own*
> *space* (40, First Nations, Status, MtF transgender, Two-Spirit, Winnipeg).

As we see in the last example, home is also about relationships with friends and

family. There needs to be a sense of connectedness for a space and a group of friends to

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feel like home. One participant likened *home* and *community* when she said, *"That's my circle of friends, you know, like my people I know, my family. Like my community is pretty much like home"* (First Nations, Status, transgender female, straight, 25, Winnipeg).

Others spoke about home being a cushion to fall back on if needed. Home is where you feel safe, and where you can be yourself, with a partner of your choosing, particularly important for participants as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. One participant said, *"Home is where you're accepted, where you're comfortable. ... Where you can just be yourself, you know, and lay on your couch with your partner and be comfortable"* (First Nations, Status, lesbian, bisexual, Two-Spirit, female, 30, Winnipeg).

Alternately, some participants spoke about coming for a short time and then staying - that Vancouver in particular *became* home. In this example, one participant spoke about feeling "lured" to Vancouver by her sister who reported there was work there. The participant said she believes her sister wanted to get her away from the drinking and drug use she had been doing. She states, *"... A beautiful sunny day, I came out here. It was snowing back home, snowing and everything, had a big parka on to come out here and it's all sunshine, bright and so beautiful. I kinda fell in love with the place..."* (Métis, transgender female, 44, Vancouver).

For others, *home* represents geography, where I come from, a place, "my territory", and "my people". This focus group participant spoke about how her original home territory is a part of her.

So why I left the city of Toronto, left my original home, I haven't. I haven't. It's all still with me, so I'm here and this is, this is, I haven't gone anywhere. It's all, it's all, I'm still, it's all still with me. I find "why" questions really difficult. Myself, I have to say, and it might be a little bit of a prejudice. "Why" seems to me that it's a White question. That's my only way of defining it is that, in my language, no such word exists - why. So I have a really, I don't really understand what it is that is being asked of me. So that I've given all this information in lieu of trying to ask questions, what do you mean by why? (Laughing) That's as much as I guess I could do. I could go on and on and on if I wanted to sort out that question and give you information about where it is I come from and where it is I'm going to. But I am here and it is all of me that's come to here and it's all of me I'm taking, so presently this is Vancouver... (First Nations, female, 52 years, queer, butch , dyke, Vancouver).

Other participants spoke differently - one referred to his experiences of moving away from his reserve community to become himself as a gay, Two-Spirit man. He shared the distinction he makes between the meanings of *homeland*, and *home.*

Like home, I don't call my reserve home. I call it my place like where I was born. ... Home is at my place downtown. That's my home. ...My things. My pictures. Just me, you know, I can walk around naked if I wanted to and just having nobody there, just you know, just like that. That's home, you know. ... Yeah, it's like, home is like, like going back home, is where your people are. Like a home like that is just a reservation. That's like where you're from, your homeland basically, but it's not a home, home to you, to be comfortable (being yourself) (First Nations, gay, male, 24, Winnipeg).

Participants spoke about how it is fine to be staying with family or friends in a crunch, but that in terms of your own identity, it feels best to have your own place to be yourself, and space to do what you want to. One participant said, *"Well as an adult, I had to look for a place. I didn't like staying with friends and relatives. ... Better off to live alone, or with my partner"* (42, lesbian, First Nations, Status, Winnipeg).

Home can also represent a positive future vision or hope as shown in the words of two participants. One said, *"Like I think of like having children in it and like being a mom and having people co-parent with me and like having a legacy, like a home is*

kinda like where I can start having my kids and staying somewhere forever, you know

…" (Métis, poly, queer, bisexual, female, Two-Spirit, 29, Winnipeg). Another said,

> *Well usually home means house, but I mean, that's kind of like the first thing that popped into my head, then all these other things started creeping in . … And I believe in the whole, I'm meant to be with someone, so eventually I'm gonna find home in love, hopefully* (Métis, bisexual, woman, youth, Winnipeg).

In the imaginings (Fortier, 2003) of a positive future home, or in the desire to wander, age and development seem to affect one's perceptions and attachment to a home (or urge to move). Generally speaking, younger participants in this study expressed more interest in fun and adventure, discovering themselves. Older participants spoke more about setting down roots, having a job, livelihood, and developing strong connections with accepting people who have common interests (not necessarily people with the same characteristics). For instance, when speaking about considering a move to another city, one participant said the following.

> *… I would stay within the community, within the boundaries of a Two-Spirit community. I guess, I'm an older person, I don't think like a teenager anymore. I'm an older person and so for me it's work, it's career, it's having a home, it's creating links to the community and stuff like that, so for me that's really, really important and so I wouldn't move just because it seems a lot more fun* (Transgender female, First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg).

In summary, participants spoke about home as a geographical place, as a physical or metaphorical space (with a desired tone or feeling), and as a quality of relationships.

Community

When considering how participants said that they make sense of *community*, we notice some overlap and distinctions from the themes of *home* and *belonging*. When

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asked to define the term, participants said that community can refer to a geographical

area and can also represent places where people live and have connections, such that

participants spoke about how relationships inform a sense or feeling of community

(akin to Ellerby, 2005 and Ramirez, 2007). Many participants stated that relationships

in community mean people connections, involvement, and participation. Participants

noted that community can also be about services and organizational supports. Thus,

community is about how people participate, engage in activities, and where they

develop and share their gifts. Community is also about people caring for each other.

Shared identity/identities can "fast track" a sense of community but may not be

lasting or meaningful. For some participants, they described how there are insiders and

outsiders in any community. Some people are more readily accepted than others, and

some not at all (despite similarities). The following quote is from a young transwoman

who has not felt accepted in the larger gay community.

And like you can go out into the gay community or gay events, whatever, and there's a hate on us, so that's not my community. Like I'm a real person. Like I don't go flaunt myself out there and you know, play, you know, do a play for other people. Like I'm a real person and very genuine and you know, I don't have to put on a show for nobody. I'm just who I am for a community and that's how I like to see my community and that's why I'm involved into the community (First Nations, straight, transgender female, 25, Winnipeg).

For some community means being cultural and accepting diversity as evidenced

in the following exchange:

Int.:   *So what communities do you feel like you belong to then?*

Woman: *I'm very strongly involved in the Aboriginal community right now.*

Int.:   *Okay. And is it specifically a Two-Spirit or a transgender community?*

Woman: *It's not only like Two-Spirit, like trannie. It's just the whole community, straight, and you can be whoever you want to be, you know, and they don't judge you there. And I'm in the Aboriginal community right now and that's where I'm staying* (Transgender, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Winnipeg).

Participants spoke about how feeling part of a community is based on a sense of belonging, where you can be yourself and be accepted. At the same time, belonging in a community is also based on perceptions, experiences and which sometimes includes 'not knowing', or reinforced stereotypes and/or expectations.

I couldn't live in that (First Nations) community anymore. It was, a whole lot of it was trying to show people who they thought I should have been, rather than me showing them who I was. And that, it was pretty harsh. I couldn't do a lot of things that I wanted to do. I had to be part of the house, White picket fence, pets, all these things that everybody idealized. And I couldn't do it (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

Community, belonging and participation are connected. When asked about community, one participant stated, *"… well again belonging of course. In some ways to me, community is part of also giving to it and getting from it. To be part of a community, you do have to put things in…"* (Métis, lesbian, female, 34 years, Winnipeg). For this participant, her sense of community and identity are connected. She volunteers in organizing her sports team and participates at the league level to keep things running smoothly for all teams to participate in the league. Her friendships and social circles are maintained through her participation in sports. In a similar way, the following participant spoke about how all of her community work is connected to being Aboriginal and Two-Spirit.

I think community for me means the people that are involved in the well being of our people, and I'm always talking about Aboriginal people as a whole. … Yeah, my Aboriginal people, but along that, anything that I do always has to be Two-Spirited related, where it's actually speaking to me as a Two-Spirited person, and also the

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people that are involved, there always has to be a component in the community that has to deal specifically with Two-Spirited people. And Two-Spirited people for me are Aboriginal people, so that for me it's all inclusive (First Nations, transgender female, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg).

Participants described inclusivity as a value of community. Community however is not always *experienced* as fun and inclusive. Participants spoke about tensions among nations and/or Indigenous cultural identities. As well, relationship dynamics and conflicting values can get in the way of people enjoying community groups and spaces (see also Ramirez, 2007). For instance, one participant said that she likes to hang out with women (in addition to gay men), but women sometimes "get pushy" by assuming she's available. For this participant, this means that her sense of a Two-Spirit women's or lesbian community is limited because of discomfort. *"… I just want to try and find a place where I can just, you know, sit back, relax, without anybody having to assume that I want to be picked up"* (Female, lesbian, First Nations, Status, 31, Winnipeg).

Another female participant talked about how she balances staying a little connected to the gay community, but still holds herself back because of some of the dynamics she perceives there.

I keep one foot in the gay community and there's many reasons why. For one it's not as accepting. I wouldn't say, but, I wouldn't say, I think just because it's about the dynamics. It's very unhealthy and as a professional woman, I'm just very aware of how I interact with people, so I don't try to burn my bridges by any means. I do like to support and it's not because I'm not proud of being a lesbian or about being gay. I don't need someone's approval to be proud about, of who I am and so in the gay community, no I really don't, and I think that's another area we can work on, and we have to really learn to accept and work from where everybody's at in terms of their own growth and acceptance, because not everyone's a proud, a proud lesbian or gay or even, like learning to take on the term Two-Spirited (Lesbian, Two-Spirit, female, 39, Métis, Bill C-31, Vancouver).

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In short, participants indicated that community can refer to a geographic or physical place, but is more likely to refer to people connected by interests (Horejsi & Garthwait, 2000), relationships and participation (social, voluntary, or service-based; McKnight & Block, 2010). Being connected with others in community requires feeling safe (A. Wilson, 2009), being accepted, and feeling a sense of belonging, along with the opportunity to develop and share gifts (such as strengths, abilities and capacities; McKnight & Block, 2010). Shared identities can offer a starting point for collecting people together as well as inform social and political organizing (Lundy, 2004; Ramirez, 2007).

Belonging

We have heard already how participants connect meanings of home and community with feelings of acceptance and *belonging*. In addition, participants shared how a sense of belonging is rooted in and supports positive identity - a sense of oneself and one's culture(s). Participants spoke about how a strong sense of themselves means they feel more confident about having multiple identities and also encourages being open to belonging in different community places. For some, identity-based belonging also offers spiritual strength and meaning.

I used to be embarrassed to be an Aboriginal person because of how people treated me. But now it's not. I'm becoming more spiritualized about those others, you know, and that's the whole basis for me. As long as I continue to maintain that spiritualism based on what my mother, my grandmother, sister have taught me, then that's it. That's what's gonna get me through and of course, I belong, to whoever I meet. It's almost simple but it's very complex (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 48 years, Vancouver).

Other participants described how the confidence they feel about who they are impacts how they enter spaces, and how they feel about entering new spaces. This participant characterized himself as outspoken and flamboyantly gay at times. When asked about belonging, he stated, *"Definitely. Because I make myself live here. Like everywhere I go, I kind of, I make myself fit in. That's just who I am, I guess. So everywhere I go, I feel like I belong because I brought myself there, whether you like me or not, I'm gonna be there"* (Inuit, gay, male, youth, Vancouver). As shown by this comment, a strong sense of oneself can help weather concerns about not belonging in community and can support a positive outlook.

Another participant articulated a sense of ownership that comes with belonging in "our community":

Do I have a sense of belonging in Vancouver? Yes and No. Certainly I suppose for more enlightened individuals, I do. I find that there's a better idea of the cup being half full or half empty in the community. Not "ours" or "theirs", so our community. There's always room for improvement, but certainly I belong wherever I want to be or where I feel I need to be, that's where I belong, regardless of what anybody thinks. I think that's an important thing to know (First Nations, bisexual, Two-Spirit, transsexual, queer, 43, Vancouver).

For some, belonging depends on feeling accepted. The following participant spoke about how belonging means feeling respected and appreciated for who she is.

… my sense of belonging is that I'm appreciated by all societies, be it straight, gay, lesbian, or trans-gendered, whatever. I'm accepted by all of these societies and they feel, a lot of them make me feel real welcomed and feel protected, like that I never have to look over my shoulder (First Nations, Status, Transgender MtF, 39, Vancouver).

Another example of acceptance included finding a "gay family" or chosen family (Weston, 1991) to complement accepting blood relations in these two instances.

… when you're in the reserve, you're trying to hide it but everybody knows. But you come here, and I went through that too when I was 16, it was like 'holy'. Once

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everybody knew that I was gay, my whole family, everybody, things changed, you know, how they treated me. But what kept me in Winnipeg was, you know, I always used to go to gay nights and there'd be nothing but gay people there at the bar. And they were so nice to me, you know, passionate and generous. I just think that having a gay family, you know, would make it easier, did make it easy to live here (Gay, male, 24, First Nations, Two-Spirit, Winnipeg).

The way, like for me, when I was younger, people were really disturbed by it because I was very, very, I don't even know how to say it, I was very flamboyant. I was very, very easy to read and I was very out. ...because my parents didn't stop me from being gay, you know, or Two-Spirited, you know. ... So I was free to express myself, but I think later on in my life, I began to really, really look at how my family perceived me and how important that became to me. And now I do have a really, really interesting relationship with them because I have a brother that's gay, and he's younger, like a couple of years younger than I am, but they've got to the point where, you know, they're comfortable calling me auntie or, you know, whatever, and I have nieces and nephews that I helped to raise and yeah, so that's a level of respect there, I think. And you make your family, I think, when you feel you become disenfranchised or however you feel, you know, like you've been rejected, you tend to create a family of your own that you can identify with, and one of the things I did is that I created a family where I had people that weren't actually in my blood relations and I created a support network around those people in my life, you know. So family for me, it has two different meanings, my blood and my ... chosen family, yeah definitely (First Nations, Two-Spirit, transgender, 40, Winnipeg).

For another participant, acceptance was found in the affirming stance of the

United Church.

You know, I know I was fortunate enough my girlfriend took me to her church and I loved it. I found out later that one of my aunts actually went to the same church and she was very accepting, and that was fine to go there, but I wanted to share my faith and that part of myself with my girlfriend at the time, cause she was very religious as well, and my parents wouldn't allow it (for her to come to our church) (Female, 35 years, bisexual, Métis, Winnipeg).

A sense of belonging can also be found in positive friendships.

He became friends, since me telling him about my sexuality, he became my best friend. Like he's my friend. He's my friend up north. He'll watch over me. I go hunting with him. I go out around the lake all day, all day around the lake, and I love it. I love it. I give my blessings. I thank the Creator. I take my tobacco out, just to get my thanks. Yeah (Male, Two-Spirit, gay, 42, Winnipeg*).*

For some, belonging comes in sharing their gifts – in having a role, or function to carry out (McKnight & Block, 2010). This participant spoke about spending time in a healing lodge.

It was, you know what? It was awesome. Like right from the get go, you're given a job. Like you actually have a sense of belonging and for me it was good because, you know, I'm away from my family and I had a structured surrounding, so everything I did, was, you know, there was a purpose for it (41, bisexual woman, Métis, Winnipeg).

Sometimes belonging depends on the values and perceptions of others, the ability to prove oneself, and the ideas we have about the perceptions others have about us. One participant spoke about identity politics and pressures she feels to conform that leave her feeling ambivalent about her desire to belong in certain places.

You know, who claimed it first and like, well and I mean if we have to face all these challenges, we have to kinda work from where everybody's at and respect that rather than, I know all the intentions are meant well when they go out and we want to make a more open community, I guess, in, in, a Two-Spirited community within the gay community, but again I think it comes down to accepting that not everybody's gonna be proud about that. And I don't like, I don't like having it, almost kinda, you know, we have to do this. Like no one has to do anything they don't want to, feel comfortable doing, to be honest. And we have to learn to accept that and why, why our motive, what is our motive when we, cause some people will take this as, like you're trying to impose this on me (Lesbian, Two-Spirit, female, 39, Bill C-31, Métis, Vancouver).

In a similar vein, participants also emphasized that belonging can only happen if one feels safe in a community or space (A. Wilson, 2009). Some spoke about feeling accepted in the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ community, but not within the larger Aboriginal community or the larger gay community.

... I grew up as a ward of the Crown until I achieved adulthood. I was running away in there as well and going into the major cities' centres, to me that young, that's a place where I could go and then not be caught and repatriated, knowing my own, choosing my own identities and sexuality just seemed like the more people, chances were I was going to be able to find others where I might be able to freely express myself (First Nations, Status, female, queer, butch, dyke. 52, Vancouver).

Another participant spoke this way about belonging:

In Vancouver, in the Aboriginal, Two-Spirited gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual community, I would have to say yes. On the other hand, I'd have to disagree with having a sense of belonging in the gay community as a whole. I would have to say that the stereotype of the Indian male is still there when you go and approach other non-Aboriginal people and at times it is uncomfortable (First Nations, gay, male, youth, Vancouver).

Some participants were cognizant of how acceptance can be tied to ideas groups have about "appropriate" behaviour for men and women. When asked if she can move freely among communities and be herself, this participant answered no – stating that in different ways she balances being up front and holding herself back.

No I don't, especially within the traditional community. Being Cree Métis, it's not accepted. I mean it's slowly being accepted and being a strong woman in a very patriarchal society that we grow up in, no. I know I stand the chance of getting the crap kicked out of me at times, and it, because I'm not taking that seat, supporting the men within that community, you know, like a good woman should be, like supposedly so, because I have a voice and because I'm pretty straight up, I stand a chance within the Aboriginal community, I have to admit. And even with my friends, I know mean well, but I think within the Aboriginal community, I face, like they don't hear the message. Like I'm gay, I'm lesbian, I'm Two-Spirited. It's like they kind of just ignore it and they still will flirt with you, right? And it's like, you know, at all costs, usually I'll just avoid going to certain functions just to avoid that. Or if I do, I'm very aloof because of that (Lesbian, Métis, 39, Two-Spirit, Vancouver).

Visibility of certain characteristics can make one more aware of feelings of judgment and discrimination from others. Alternately, visibility of common characteristics can foster feelings of belonging. This same participant (quoted above regarding misunderstanding and non-acceptance in Aboriginal community) spoke about attending University and being in Aboriginal student spaces.

That's when I, it was my first time being, the first time ever, ever doing anything just with our own people. It was such a cultural shock. To be honest, I remember sitting in the foyer a couple of times and all of a sudden, I just, self-awareness was like, I thought, "oh my god, these are all brown faces here". There's not one White face, and I had to get used to that, cause I was, it just made me aware how I was raised. Like

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I was raised very White, and how I totally kept my lifestyle that way ... (Métis, lesbian, Two-Spirit, female, 39, Vancouver).

Another participant talked about how he felt liberated coming to the city to have a second adolescence. He said, *"... The main focus was to have fun, cause to me I felt like I had missed that part of my life when I was growing up, you know, kids doing what kids do, experimenting and what not"* (Gay, male, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, youth, Winnipeg). He went on to say that for him, this meant partying, going to the bar, and being able to explore having sex with men. In that way, he found belonging in gay-positive, Two-Spirit positive spaces.

Belonging can be summarized as feeling safe, accepted, and welcome to be yourself. Belonging is relational, and interactive in that it brings people out of their shells (or fears) and allows people to be open to further experiences of belonging - fostering a positive and collective sense of wellbeing (in identities as Indigenous, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ).

Comparison of Participant Responses in Winnipeg and Vancouver

This section describes some similarities and differences noted in the findings from Winnipeg and Vancouver. I emphasize a comparison of comments regarding the main themes (i.e. home, community and belonging), however also include contextual information (such as identities).

When comparing responses about their cities, participants shared what was unique about their settings – the things they enjoyed most that made their location feel like home, or community. These comments were different for Winnipeg and

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Vancouver participants. I have also included here some similarities mentioned by participants in each of the cities that were more about the move to an urban setting (and not site-specific).

To begin, Vancouver is a collecting place for "refugees" in the words of one participant. As such there is abundant international, Canadian and Aboriginal diversity to be found, and a strong West Coast First Nations presence. If not from the West Coast, there may be no attachment to Vancouver as *territory*, but there was attachment expressed to the city for most participants as a place of *home* and/or *community*. In calling Vancouver home, participants noted what they like best about their city. Many referenced cultural diversity as a milieu for learning more about themselves and others. Some Vancouver respondents mentioned that at first they did not like or felt ambivalent about the city. So it took them a while, but then these respondents indicated Vancouver felt like home over time. Participants living in Winnipeg did not express similar feelings.

In addition, Vancouver participants cited the scenery in Vancouver, the gay community/scene, many cultural events, the size of the city (and larger accompanying LGBTTQ community), the fun of the city, nice weather/warm climate, and sunshine. Vancouver was described as beautiful by a number of participants, and some also referenced proximity to nature as something they valued – the mountains, ocean, parks and wildlife. They noted there is a lot to do, and it is easy to get around on public transit. Vancouver was also described as hospitable, welcoming, accepting, open, progressive, generous, family-oriented, safe (for the most part) and friendlier than other Canadian cities in participant perceptions. Overall, Vancouver seems to have a good,

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desirable reputation in the eyes and ears of participants in terms of attractiveness (as a place to live), diversity, education and services.

For those who need them, there are healing and health/medical services available, as well as shelters and community-based services (such as food banks, drop-ins) that participants have found helpful. These services help participants call Vancouver home because it means they have access to what they need to live in a physical sense and in a way that matters for them. Services to assist with transitioning are considered especially important, mentioned by most transgender participants.

Vancouver is also noted for having sweat lodges and access to teachings and ceremonial spaces within the city. This contributes to a sense of cultural community and belonging - especially in spaces that are friendly towards Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Along these lines, Vancouver was described as having a spiritual edge by one participant, with West Coast nations being seen as more connected to their cultures and Indigenous roots:

> *… it just seems out here that the First Nations, the Two-Spirited people, people of the west coast are more connected to their culture, language, identity, history, teachings and maybe it's because it's not so urbanized out here, and that proximity to the mountains, nature, ocean is much more prevalent. Yeah, where else can you see an eagle circling over the city? You don't see that back east. So yeah, I would say Vancouver definitely has a spiritual edge among Two-Spirited and Indigenous people, something that I noticed* (bisexual, female, transsexual, First Nations, Status, 36, Vancouver).

Regarding the Prairie participants, for those who have accessed them, Winnipeg participants speak about welcoming and kind people offering services (LGBTQ, Aboriginal, youth services, gay-positive police, and services for street-involved/sex-trade workers). One participant described people in Winnipeg's LGBTQ community as

nice, passionate and generous. Participants reported being thankful to find urban

Aboriginal organizations to help them access a sense of community and Two-Spirit

positive teachings. Some participants also mentioned the gay community and meeting

others in gathering places (namely the bars) in getting connected with an LGBTTQ

scene. Overall, participants described Winnipeg as accepting, big enough with enough

people in it to be interesting and feel free (or anonymous as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and

LGBTQ people), but small enough not to be overwhelming.

Participants emphasized that Winnipeg has a large Indigenous population and

good resources for accessing medical/health services, especially for transgenders and

those living with HIV. Participants cited more economic/employment opportunities in

the city than are available outside of the city. One participant spoke about how helpful

it has been to find an accepting activist community with which to engage, while others

described their unpaid work in a variety of community contexts (such as women's, anti-

violence, sports).

Some Winnipeg participants mentioned location, geography or climate as

something they appreciate about living in Winnipeg or Manitoba. A number of

participants mentioned specific areas in Winnipeg where they feel most comfortable and

safe living in as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. One participant mentioned

missing the prairie sunset when away, another spoke about loving the strong change of

seasons, one mentioned appreciating the weather in general, and a third spoke of feeling

drawn to the Assiniboine River. A couple of participants discussed how Winnipeg can

be easy to get around with good bus access and that if you live centrally, accessing

services is easy.

Many participants from both Winnipeg and Vancouver spoke about the lure of the city's "bright lights" - opportunities to experience something different, a cultural change, an urban experience, gay culture, anonymity and the exhilaration of a new place. All participants spoke about finding a chance to explore their sexual and gender identities. That said, some participants in both places talked about how it can be hard to find other Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people; this type of comment was more prevalent in Vancouver. Participants from Winnipeg and (some from) Vancouver stated they had chosen the city because it was the closest urban centre to migrate to.

Participants in both Winnipeg and Vancouver referenced tensions within their respective communities (i.e. within the Métis community, or within their First Nations community and within the LGBTQ community). Vancouver participants also referenced tensions among Indigenous communities and cultural groups – perhaps the result of so many groups sharing a smaller geographical area. In British Columbia, there are 198 First Nations communities, with the greatest diversity of Indigenous cultures in Canada. Linguistic groupings include Haida, Tsimshian, Salish, Athapaskan and Nisga'a. As an urban centre, Vancouver is home to more than 40 thousand Aboriginal peoples or 1.9% of the population (in Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011).

In Manitoba, there are 63 First Nations communities including six of the twenty largest bands in the country. Predominant Indigenous linguistic groups in Manitoba are Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Oji-Cree and Dene. Winnipeg is home to over 68 thousand Aboriginal people, 10.2 % of our urban population (in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010).

When we combine this population information with information from this present study, where Vancouver participants are more likely to be from out-of-province and Manitoba's are closer to home, I believe it can be said that Indigenous cultural groups are fewer in number in Manitoba, that Manitoba's First Nations population is greater and is more homogenous overall.

In considering how Vancouver participants seem somewhat more political, it was brought to my attention by a community member that Manitoba's treaties were signed in the 1870s, whereas there are still treaties in negotiation on the West Coast. This may contribute to a climate in which Vancouver participants are more politically engaged with their Indigenous identities, and communities more engaged in reinvisioning their relationship with the state and (re)building their nations politically and economically using land claim processes. The overall atmosphere is different - making past and present comparison difficult.

As I was reviewing Winnipeg and Vancouver participant comments looking for similarities and differences, I became curious if there was a relationship between identifying as Two-Spirit and participation in traditional cultural practices for participants. This curiosity came out of the connections participants made among their identities and their sense of home, community and belonging. For some, their cultural supports are paramount in supporting their identities. Since participants in Vancouver were more likely to identify as Two-Spirit, seemed somewhat more political, and spoke about the strong First Nations presence there, I wondered if there was more of a positive peer culture in that city's setting for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people (in

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terms of the accessibility of cultural practices for gender and/or sexually-diverse people). There seems to be some relationship in response to that question. A visual representation of responses about Two-Spirit identity and cultural practices is offered in Table 1.

In Winnipeg, five participants did not identify as Two-Spirit, but did indicate participating in cultural practices. Eleven participants identified as Two-Spirit and in participating in traditional cultural practices. Only one participant identified as Two-Spirit with no traditional cultural practices, and seven did not identify as Two-Spirit or as participating in any traditional cultural practices.

This compares with five participants in Vancouver who did not identify as Two-Spirit, but did indicate participating in cultural practices. Fifteen participants identified as Two-Spirit and in participating in traditional cultural practices. Only two Vancouver participants identified as Two-Spirit with no traditional cultural practices, and four did not identify as Two-Spirit or as participating in any traditional cultural practices.

Based on these numbers, it seems that there are some participants in both sites that participate in traditional cultural practices but do not identify themselves as Two-Spirit. The majority in both sites however identified themselves both as Two-Spirit and as participating in traditional cultural practices. There are some who identify as Two-Spirit but do not participate in cultural practices (these are in the minority), and some who do neither. In terms of comparing Winnipeg and Vancouver, Vancouver participants are more likely to identify themselves as Two-Spirit and more likely to indicate they participate in traditional cultural practices (and more likely to identify participating in a variety of practices).

Thus, Vancouver participants may seem more political and may be more likely to identify as Two-Spirit because the climate there is more political for those who are cognizant of treaty negotiation and self-determination efforts underway by First Nations in BC.

Across these similarities and differences of identification and practice, the ways participants described themselves inform and are informed by their identities. I have included this information because participants shared that their identities are the lens through which they experience and practice wellbeing as well as find a sense of home, community and belonging. Who you are cannot be removed from how you live and where you find safe, accepting places to call home, a community to belong in or how you develop a sense of being well.

From the words of participants, making meaning of home, community and belonging is both an individual and collective endeavour. It does not occur within a vacuum. Participants identified positive and negative factors affecting their sense of home, community and belonging. I call these influences facilitators and detractors respectively.

Facilitators

Facilitators are factors and experiences supporting a positive sense of home, community and belonging in the context of migration. In my analysis of transcripts I noticed descriptions of circumstances that contributed to participants' feelings of and ability to find meaning in home, community and belonging as Aboriginal Two-Spirit

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and LGBTQ people. These nurturing circumstances and experiences can be grouped

into two main categories – those extrinsic or external to participants and those intrinsic

or internal to participants.

Extrinsic supports and experiences include the ways one gets started in their

transition to the city, acceptance by others, community connections, visibility of

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and interests (including positive Two-Spirit

teachings), good health services and community supports, and supportive community

leadership.

Intrinsic gifts or strengths contributing to a positive sense of home, community

and belonging include one's *personal capacities* and *perseverance*.

Extrinsic supports and experiences. Participants spoke about how a

newcomer gets started in the city matters.   Coming to an urban setting from a reserve or

rural community can be a cultural and material resource shock. At a subsistence level,

participants spoke about not knowing where to go to find a place to stay, find food, look

for education or employment, and find other Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people

to connect with (reflected also in Teengs and Travers, 2006). Many participants

acknowledged the ease with which the bar or the streets can be found in comparison to

the difficulty finding a decent place to live and people willing to give safe, useful advice

that promotes individual and community wellbeing.

> *A lot of it, to me at the time, was basically getting out of that loneliness. I mean
> I can go to resources like the hospitals or doctors or psychiatrist or whoever to help me
> deal with the reasons why I moved down here, but initially, it's, I needed someone to be
> with. I needed some form of Aboriginal person or community or resource that could
> help me transition from the reserve, which is very limiting, to me is very limiting to*

understanding what the city is all about. How can I adapt to the city life? Because the transition period to me was, I almost wound up on the street (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

Some participants spoke about a lack of support from family and other community members in their decision to come to the city. This makes personal decisions and responsibilities even more impactful, as in the following example.

… they think it's dangerous, more dangerous in the city than it is in the reserve, which is true. But it's the decision that the kid makes, to get into trouble or to get into good situations, get to be part of the community. You know, you just don't come here and run right to the bar (First Nations, gay, male, youth, Winnipeg).

Safe, accessible spaces and positive Aboriginal and Two-Spirit/LGBTQ visibility foster positive feelings about living in and staying in a place. One participant said *"I was moving around looking for someone like me and then I was moving into the city, I seen other like young trannies my age like walk around, walk around like it's nobody else's business"* (Transgender female, youth, First Nations, Status, Winnipeg). Seeing and hearing people like oneself and who have awareness of issues and interests relevant to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people also is important (for example Métis hunting rights and land claims, sexual and gender diversity, transitioning services for transgenders).

Participants shared that sometimes acceptance is found first away from home and then positive visibility and acceptance seem to transfer back.

Like the reserve, it's accepting of what I am, whereas before they didn't until I started getting into the work I've done, do like outreach and do documentaries and they've seen what I can do and they started to accept me. I'm teaching about Two-Spirit people, so I did a Two-Spirit presentation on my reserve (Straight, transgender woman, Two-Spirit, transsexual, 41, Winnipeg).

Acceptance from family members and friends is extremely valuable in supporting a positive sense of home, community and belonging. Getting emotional support when it is needed from these sources flows naturally from acceptance. Being appreciated for who you are was something participants spoke about as a demonstration of respect. Further, cultural understandings (Indigenous and LGBTQ) and a positive peer group can reinforce a positive Two-Spirit identity, and make finding belonging and a sense of community easier.

I was actually quite lucky, … because I met people that were actually positive about being gay and being lesbian and Two-Spirited. … where they didn't hate themselves. They … love themselves and took care of themselves and were living (a) very, very healthy life (First Nations, transgender female, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg).

As well, some participants spoke about feeling pleasantly surprised and very thankful to access community teachings about being Aboriginal and/or Two-Spirit, especially when these had not been available in their original community. This thankfulness extended to appreciation for safe, accepting activities, events and places such as the International Two-Spirit Gathering and Camp Aurora (outside of Winnipeg) that are not alcohol-related. One participant spoke about finding Aboriginal and Two-Spirit teachings in attending a Winnipeg organization that helped him feel a part of positive Two-Spirit traditions.

…my parents, they're scared of it. They're scared of our teachings and I think that's a whole other issue about my family and my past that I don't have any control over. So I really felt like I needed to reclaim something I lost because they lost it. And I wanted to, and when you hear, I mean you hear more information about your people and you just get, you just have a sense of pride and that feeling is something that I cherish more so than anything else … what we need is guidance and we need to know what the guidance looks like, what our faces looked like, what our people looked like, what our traditions looked like, and what do they look like now (Youth, gay, male, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, Winnipeg).

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For this and other participants, their sense of community deepened when they were able to connect with people with common interests, learn more about Two-Spirit teachings and join in community spaces. For some, finding inclusive activism circles facilitated gathering with community and allies. More than one participant spoke about starting a student group in University that became a common gathering space for likeminded, inclusive and accepting others. In these ways unpaid work, in the forms of volunteering and informal leadership was in itself a way to build and strengthen community (for other examples of community activism and leadership, see Cameron, 2009; McKnight & Block, 2010; Ramirez, 2007; Walters et al., 2006).

Some participants spoke about connecting with a place in its character, people, politics and diversity over time. This proved especially enduring in the development of a sense of home when initial response to a place was negative or ambivalent. One participant said, *"I've moved for a reason, you know it was to go away to university, to have an adventure, but then I stayed because of the community I developed"* (Female, Métis, bisexual, 35, Winnipeg). Another example:

Now Vancouver is my home because I remember the last time I was living in Toronto. It was on _____ Avenue and the next main street is _____. And I have a big beautiful bachelor apartment, like a big, big bachelor, bigger than, actually this room and, this size of room that we're in now and a half, and for a bachelor that was great. And I filled it with furniture and I decorated it and had a fridge full of food and I was intent on building my life in Toronto. But what I didn't realize is that all the time that I spent away from my original family and all the people that I left behind in Toronto and returning many, many years back to Toronto to try to see if there was anything there, it ended up that there wasn't. And it was during the middle of the night and I made a decision and I just stayed up, and said, am I really intent in staying in Toronto, or should I return to Vancouver. I looked around my place, my home in Toronto, and then in the middle of the night, I said 'f.. it'. I'm going back home to Vancouver. And that phrase struck me, back home to Vancouver, because for many, many years I couldn't stand it here, and then that night I realized that over time, it became my home because I came out here under very unusual circumstances, faced

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difficult times, and despite it all, I managed to forge a home here in Vancouver, and the people I connected with through the years sort of started to grow on me. Connections with the Native community, with Two-Spirited people here, and that struck me when I was sitting in the dead silence in my apartment in Toronto, debating whether to just stay put or go back, and the end result was that I went back, and I left everything and returned with just a duffel bag to Vancouver and realized that this is my home, for better or for worse, and that somehow through all the years, I'd done enough right and made enough connections here and sort of, this is my home, cause I guess you could say that the acceptance I'd been looking for as a Two-Spirited person wasn't found within my own family and by Toronto, by extension, which is why I left that place to begin with and came to a then unknown place on the other side of the country, Vancouver, and hating it here for years upon years and then many years later realizing that this is now my home. So for me, I guess it's a bit different. The west coast took a little while to grow on me and it did. So I'm still here. This is my home (Bisexual, female, transsexual, 36, First Nations, Status, Vancouver).

In the transition to an urban setting, seeing people "like me" helped some participants accept themselves and feel a sense of belonging in their respective cities.

I didn't know there was other people like me. I came and I saw them and I thought, "Oh my god, there's a whole little community of them". I didn't know. I just one day came in and I go to a place called the (bar). I went in there and there was a whole bunch of Indians with dresses on and I thought I was having a cardiac arrest with one of my friends (all laughing). I've known I was Two-Spirit since I was born and I come in and finding a whole room full of them, like "Wow!" (First Nations, Two-Spirit, 53, Vancouver).

For those participants living with HIV or Hepatitis, knowing where and how to access health services specific to their needs can be lifesaving. As well, many transgender participants spoke about moving to the city to access information and services to assist them in transitioning. Finding services that fit for you can be difficult, but once found good health care and community supports were identified as major facilitators, staying factors in both Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Another factor identified in at least one participant's situation was how community leadership (Chiefs, Council members, Elders) can influence setting the tone for sexual and gender diversity acceptance in Aboriginal communities. In this person's

case, her father was the Chief and over time as people came to know that his daughter is bisexual and as he stood up for her, other people in the community came around, offering understanding and acceptance. In the original migration study consultations, community consultants spoke about the importance of having Elders and council members knowledgeable and accepting of variations in sexual and gender diversity working with them.

     Intrinsic gifts. *Personal capacities*. Walters (1997) suggests focusing on people's strengths, coping, and resiliencies in work together. Saleeby (2002) articulates strengths as talents, knowledge, resources and capacities. Informed by these sources and others (Hart, 2009b; McKnight & Block, 2010), I draw attention to how participants spoke about character traits, practices and experiences they cultivated. I describe these qualities and efforts shared by participants as *personal capacities*. These capacities, when practiced and acted out, help people grow into themselves in healthy, positive ways. One such capacity demonstrated by participants was hopefulness - holding a vision and dream for the future of inclusion for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. One participant stated,

     I think Vancouver understands the gay community, but my wishes and my dreams for everybody, I guess in the world, is, or in Canada at least, is to have a better knowledge of Aboriginal issues and Aboriginal history (First Nations, gay, male, youth, Vancouver).

     Despite how hard it can be to see your dreams realized or find acceptance for some Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, participants shared a sense of trying to live by their values (in this example, honesty). Others spoke about trying to be positive in the face of negativity and not taking the attitudes of others personally.

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… I'm not out everywhere, but I do try to, when …I do Wellness Workshops. I am out in there, in that community. I'm out with, and I do facilitation because I think, to be honest about who you are, someone who's taken part to know who I am is important (Female, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, 61, Vancouver).

Seeing oneself as a whole person is a capacity shared when one participant stated, *"The initial reason why I came here was just to a new life. And from that point recognizing my sexuality among many other gifts that have"* (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver). As well, drawing on family legacy and the power of familial relationships is a capacity that has sustained some participants:

My mother, she would have supported me. My grandmother, she'd probably be angry at me to some point but she would still support, respect at least. My sister, she's always supported me before she passed away. That shows me that women in the community are more powerful than the community itself because they're the ones that I believe in (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

Most participants showed their ability to laugh at themselves and others. Some demonstrated with jokes and others spoke openly about using humour to ease difficult or awkward moments. Using humour in this way was described as part of being an Aboriginal person (referenced also in Ramirez, 2007). Here is one example of using humour to ease sharing a difficult awareness, and also show self-acceptance.

I just put myself off as who I am. That's who I am. It's like trying to change my voice so it sounds more feminine. It's just so hard. It's just a conscious thing. No, I couldn't change. This is who I am and that sucks. I need surgery. I need surgery for that (Laughing) (Métis, transgender female, 44, Vancouver).

When asked about family support, one participant shared how his aunties joke about all the gay and bisexual Two-Spirit men in the family. He says, *"They think it's hilarious and they're proud of it … And my aunties (say), 'Those are all my gay nephews. Look they're all sitting in a row'. They're like, 'Yeah, you know. One's wearing a purse'"* (Gay, male, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, youth, Winnipeg). In

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this example, the participant interpreted his aunties' use of humour as a way to show

acceptance for him as a gay man.

Just as humour can demonstrate self-acceptance and acceptance of others, so can

practicing openness in speech (without humour).

*I think if we talk, if we are open with talking with our profs, our classmates, I
mean there's no barriers. Like I have nothing to hide about being who I am and I've
always been kinda, I've always walked to my own drum in that sense. So yeah, whereas
I could see if I was totally silent and scared, you know people will always wonder, why
do you have something to hide?* (Métis, lesbian, Two-Spirit, female, 39, Vancouver).

When deciding how openly to be themselves, participants talked about

developing judgments about safety and living accordingly. Being selective about

sharing parts of one's identity is a capacity that gets activated strategically.

*Actually with a few exceptions, where I have to just, I guess, for transsexual, we
call it "stealth", where we just blend in. You don't talk about it. But for the most part,
yeah I'm pretty much the same, cause my circle of friends and acquaintances and stuff,
they're accepting and they know and they don't judge. But if I'm with a new group I
don't know well, I just, yeah, keep it low key, but for the most part, I'm the same person,
yeah* (First Nations, bisexual, female, transsexual, 36, Vancouver).

In a similar way, people also develop judgments about when to speak up and

identify themselves, also strategically. This participant stated,

*So, I've also found that I can use it to my advantage by, you know, by specifying
that I'm Aboriginal and a lesbian, you know, places that promote diversity. I found
through my early 20s I was constantly the window dressing in the workplace* (First
Nations, Two-Spirit, transgender male, 37, Vancouver).

Being yourself quietly or more openly is a judgment call each participant made

for him or herself. For some, acceptance means standing out, and coming out. I heard

that for other participants, acceptance and safety mean blending in and not addressing

topics of gender and sexuality directly. It depends on the person and community

circumstances. Learning about yourself and your context and acting accordingly demonstrates capacity.

In the same way, knowing yourself can help you ride out a difficult time. For example, one participant spoke about being more prone to feeling suicidal when she is tired and worn out. This knowledge helps her pass difficult moments by getting the rest she needs.

Some participants can only be described as seeing the silver lining in difficult situations. In this example, a bar had closed in this participant's city and it was described as a significant loss of a gathering place for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people there. All the same, the following participant was able to see a positive side for himself, and took the opportunity to cut down on his drinking.

I'd like to see more programs opened up as well for Natives. Since the (bar) has been closed, I've been trying to cut my drinking a bit, you know, do less drugs. Everything seems to be working not too bad and now to maybe two drinks a month now, and that's about it. I won't have more (than) 2 or 3 in a bar anymore, not like I used to do in the (bar). I'd open and close the place. (Laughing) But since that is shut down, really the same thing, found no places to go, where the Natives go, eh, so it's a good time to quit drinking then (Métis, First Nations, gay, Two-Spirit, 47, Vancouver).

In addition, tenacity is a capacity I heard again and again in the stories shared by participants about their ability to stick up for themselves, others, and the collective (ex. advocacy, activism). In cases where participants had known each other for some time, and had a well-established sense of community, they spoke about the strength of their Two-Spirit community and connections as chosen family (Weston, 1991).

I've had to raise my voice around here a few times, push my weight around, and that was not, not only for me, I'm speaking for all of us because we all have to be heard, we're like family. We're a tight-knit family. Whatever happens to me would happen to my brothers and my sisters and it still goes on here (Non-status, First Nations, Two-Spirit, age unknown, Vancouver).

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Advocacy for themselves as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people extends into dealings with service organizations. Participants talked about calling organizational foul when they saw it.

They said to _____ that they'd love for the volunteers and staff and memberships to break down those barriers and those walls that we have to face on a day-to-day basis but it's all hearsay. Nothing's ever done about it. And I've always (been) complaining with these guys, practice what you preach. Don't say you want me to start educating the people here and then not follow through with it (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 51, Vancouver).

Voicing one's opinion in the face of discrimination can be experienced as a way of realizing self-determination and one's right to be oneself. Participants shared a feeling of personal responsibility to stick up for what they believe in.

Like I said before, I really don't care what other people think of me, per se. So yeah, I am very much myself and I get myself into a lot of trouble because I am myself, you know, so. … Well yeah. I've been known to get, you know, if somebody says something, I don't keep my mouth shut (First Nations, bisexual, female, 30, Winnipeg).

This can be extended to one's ability to stick up for oneself against the system. Another participant shared how he has voiced concerns to a public trustee responsible for his finances.

Yeah. I don't tell her much. I've had, I wouldn't say arguments with her, but I voiced, I voiced my opinion to her, how I felt about her, eh, and it's like, when she talks with me, it's like, "oh, (his name)". It makes me sound like a little kid. And I didn't like that. I told her, I says, "You know, either get your act together or I want another worker" (First Nations, male, Two-Spirit, gay, 42, Winnipeg).

In their commentary, participants shared reflections and analysis. They spoke about finding meaning in knowing they have something to offer based on knowledge and experiences, and in sharing their ideas through participating. For example,

I also have to take into account that we're really, really affected by the residential school system. Everybody here, no matter what we say, no matter what we

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do, everything we do is based on those things. … I never went to school in residential. I was very fortunate to have a traditional upbringing. That's something that I'll always keep in mind, but I never get used to it. … We have to continuously fight against our own, because… even when we know something's going really good for us, it just goes like that. Nothing else happens. It doesn't go anywhere. I think that for us here at least, it shows that we're making a difference. We want to be heard, you know, we want to be said. We've got a lot of ideas (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 47, Vancouver).

Just as sharing yourself and your opinions can be an expression of capacities, so too for some participants is accepting responsibility to engage with supports available, whatever that means for them.

Support to me is a lot of things. It's agencies, self-supports. Like I mean there's financial support, there's emotional, physical, you know, there's all kinds of support. But in general it all boils down to family, agencies, and community. And a matter of how you, a person engages in those supports. What he chooses to or not (Métis, bisexual, female, 41, Winnipeg).

For some, living through difficult experiences has allowed them to clarify their values, and they have done this (ex. in speaking one's truth). This participant stated,

I kinda decided when I disclosed about the sexual abuse to Child and Family Services when I was 16 that I wouldn't be hiding anything ever again because it makes me sick. I had allergies that were like really, really bad, I think as a result of like lying for a lifetime, you know, and hiding things. So it was kind of, it was kinda like a deal I made with myself, was like, if I tell just one more secret, there ain't gonna be any more secrets ever, you know (Métis, Two-Spirit, bisexual, poly, queer, 29, Winnipeg).

Perseverance. Another significant intrinsic facilitator identified in my secondary analysis is perseverance. Linda Akan (Saulteaux) reviews teachings of Saulteaux Elder Alfred Manitopeyes as they were shared with her. She provides a cultural description of perseverance as a desirable character trait for success or survival. "Perseverance is continuousness of thought, action, and living" (1999, p. 17).

Some of the older participants offered perspectives of their lives over time. They demonstrated in their stories of survival how they continued to persevere in

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making sense of themselves and in seeking meaningful homes and communities.

Although long, I share a participant's story here to demonstrate her gifts, ability to

respond to positive supports, and how these contributed to her ability to find belonging

and wellbeing over time.

This participant spoke about her confusion as a young person growing up in her

reserve community. The following excerpts from her focus group interview lay out

how she came to feel suicidal, decided to move to the city to save herself, lived through

the AIDS crisis and violence, and came to see herself as a strong community member

with offerings to share. She begins,

Okay, I, as a teenager I actually started having suicidal thoughts because I didn't know what my sexuality was or what it meant or what it was about. People weren't actually willing to talk to me about it because actually nobody knew. And I started … having like anxiety attacks, depression, suicidal thoughts because I couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. And that's how I felt, "What is wrong with me? I don't understand what's going on. …Tell me how to deal with it", so. Something came to me, I guess, when I was about 16, 15 already 16, I had met people that had actually lived in Winnipeg and they said, "You really should consider moving to Winnipeg" because one of my friends told me, "You're gonna die here if you don't leave". And that was just by my own hand, you know, because I was having already suicidal thoughts at that time. I didn't know where to go for support.

She continues,

I had a very, very intact family and then I had to leave. But it was only because I knew I would kill myself if I stayed in that reserve one day longer. … I loved my mother and my father. I loved them…. They were so kind to me and I just hated the fact that I had to leave but the thing was, is that oh like, like what my spirit told me, now that I look at it back, you know, when I listen now, is that "You're gonna die if you don't leave. This is it. This is your option. That's it. There's no other way out. Die or leave!" … and I left, because I was listening to what my spirit told me. … So I'm very grateful for that experience because it was horrible at the beginning but now I understand why I'm still here today.

This participant connects her experiences with addiction to difficulty accepting

herself and being challenged in making sense of what was happening around her.

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> *… the reason I drank was because I couldn't deal with being gay. Like I couldn't deal with it. Oh, I really hit the jackpot when I came out here because when I came out, AIDS came out. And AIDS was killing people left, right and centre. And I was like, "Holy crap!" What's the world, and it's like, people are dying around you, like, it was like, I don't know, like but the thing was the only way I knew how to deal with it was drink and forget about it, like just drink myself into oblivion. Because people I was meeting were dead like a month later and it was like, okay, like "What's going on here?" So there was a lot of fear and a lot of confusion. … And because everybody was dealing with it in a way they knew how to deal with it, I just didn't know how to deal with it. I was like really confused, really afraid and really scared. And I thought, if I drink, then I won't have to deal with it, you know, because there was a lot of fear. And I think, like the first time I went into depression was the first time that I heard about it and what it was doing to gay people, because I kinda had a sense that I might be gay. I might be gay, but you know, and they said gay men are dying of AIDS. And that's when I really fell into depression when I was a teenager and started looking at killing myself because I thought, "Oh my God, is this what I'm looking to go into, you know? Is this my life? Is this it? Am I gonna go to a city and die of AIDS? Like is that it?"*

All that confusion was compounded by experiences of violence.

> *Well I remember when I first moved out here, that we used to all gather, everybody gathered at the Hill, which is the Legislative grounds at the back by the river. And a lot of times there would be fag bashers in the area and they would, they would fight with us. They would beat us up. They would attack us and push us in the river. They would do everything to us, but the thing was is that, I didn't allow it per se because I fought back all the time. I didn't allow them to do that to me, but other people did get beaten, with 4 or 5 guys attacking them.*

Despite such intense challenges, this participant made connections in the city that helped anchor her and make sense of herself as a Two-Spirit person. She says that she *"met people that were … on the path of healing"* and set a positive example, which opened a door for her.

> *I was actually quite lucky, actually quite lucky because I met people that were actually positive about being gay and being lesbian and Two-Spirited. I actually met people that were actually positive about it, where they didn't hate themselves. They … really actually like themselves, love themselves and took care of themselves and were living (a) very, very healthy life. So I was very lucky in that sense.*

She goes on to say, *"I was sober for 14 years. All the years I went and did all these healing ceremonies and all these conferences and stuff like that where I could actually learn about myself. So it impacted my life. I could actually learn about it (being Two Spirit)".* In her story is the example that accepting and positive social connections and support circles make individuals stronger and help in the healing process (McCormick, 1995) that must come after one has left an original home.

One of the things that people don't realize, like for me, that isn't realized until, you know, much too late in life, but that there really is a sense of loss in having to leave somewhere and you carry that with you, you know, until you find a place where you can actually let it go. And I think that family and friends, the family and friends that I have, have really allowed me to voice that, and people encouraged, and people have encouraged me to talk about that experience, you know. So I've been very lucky, again, in that sense that people have said, you know, "What do you feel like? What do you feel like at this moment? What is this about? Where are you going with this?" So it's been good in that sense, yeah.

In the focus group conversation, this participant encouraged another young transgender participant to continue working in her job:

That looks really good on a resume, good work history. You know, when I was your age, nobody told us that. We were living it up. We were just living it up. Nobody told us to get a job, go to school, do, nobody told us. There was like 45 of us and we're just like, oh you know. 16 of us living in a bachelor apartment, you know. … Nobody stopped us. Nobody said, "You know what? Do this." And then like okay, and then everyone started dying off, all our friends, and so, you know, "What do we do now?" Cause nobody told us, we were just flying everywhere. And now, I look on it, like I'm glad people just kinda put it in my head, planted seeds. "Go to school, get an education, you need to work, you need to do this", you know. And you'll get that opportunity which we didn't have. Nobody stopped us, and all my friends, all my people are dead that I grew up with, that I came out into the city with are dead. Nobody stopped us. Nobody told us, "This is bad for you. This is not gonna do any good for you". We just went, we were nuts, all of us, and nobody stopped us.

I asked her if she thinks the environment is better now for young Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people coming to the city.

It is much better, definitely, definitely, because you know, we're making, because we're older and we're actually out in the world working, we're making pathways. All these things that we're doing, right now what we're doing, we're making these pathways for the young ones to follow. So when you go apply for a job somewhere, they'll say, another trannie worked here before already.

She shares her recommendations for community building.

… cultural teachings, sweat lodges, because Aboriginal people need a reference or a place where they can identify with a past. Okay, you know, everything comes to me in my life because I'm Aboriginal. …. I don't have a White way of seeing the world. I don't have a European way of seeing the world, because I was brought up in the language, and in the language, therefore it's a culture, Cree. So I don't understand the European worldview because that's not my worldview. My worldview is the earth. It's the sky. It's the animals. It's trees. It's the elements of the world, of the earth and why they come to us and what we learn from them. And that's all in our language and that's how my parents raised me. So when I came here and people were like, you know, all this stuff, in English, and I was, okay, this makes absolutely no sense to me. … I don't understand what it is to be a welfare client … in the system. It's really foreign to Aboriginal people, because when we need help, we go to a neighbour and say, can you help us? And that neighbour will. And we don't fill out forms. We don't fill out, you know, that hasn't been our experience (First Nations, transgender female, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg).

This story of determination and longevity illustrates how a positive sense of home, community and belonging develop over time. They require peer support and are connected with individual identities and rooted in individual and collective wellbeing.

Detractors

Just as individual and external factors and experiences can foster positive feelings and help people make sense of what home, community and belonging mean for them, negative experiences can impact feelings and make a place feel less like home, a community feel less welcoming, and a person very isolated with no place or people to

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belong to. Violence, discrimination (sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, HIV-related stigma), misunderstanding and exclusion in health care, employment, in on-reserve or in urban housing are all examples shared by participants that affected their sense of belonging and community.

One participant spoke about what it was like for him to realize how people in his reserve community perceived him.

It was, you know, you get ostracized not only because you're a city boy, but you're coming there feeling like, I should have realized in a small place, people being exposed to things, and it's funny because when I was in Winnipeg, I never noticed gay guys. I never noticed black men. And so when I went to the res, you know, I was (emphasis) the gay guy, you know, I was (emphasis) the queer (Gay, male, Two-Spirit, youth, Winnipeg).

Thus, dealing with the judgments of others can make a person feel like there is no accepting place for them. Another participant talked about how service criteria can foster feelings of inaccessibility and are therefore experienced as isolating.

They require medical reports and whichever, and, you know, there a couple of centres where you have to be HIV or a person with disability before they accept you and you know, it would be nice if they could all accept everyone as is, and not go through all these restrictions. It would be helpful (First Nations, Two-Spirit, transgender woman, 35, Vancouver).

Additionally, participants spoke about differences in service provision (for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people), dynamics of jurisdictional issues (provincial/federal, Status/Non-Status, specific illness-related) and HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

Here it's not so much focused on my Aboriginal heritage or traditional needs or anything like that, but a lot of it is focused on the disease, which as an individual helps me but as an Aboriginal person doesn't help me because there really is no way to speak with someone who is perhaps going through the same thing, because it's so deep-rooted in me, like who I am and what I do, as an Aboriginal person, that it's sometimes difficult to speak to someone else. So the problem is again, it's communication between

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individuals, individual people, particularly Aboriginal people. I think to me, they've been so separated. The on-reserve problems or reserve issues, Indian Act, all that kind of stuff, that we've actually divided ourselves ... The problems I'm dealing with now, my diagnosis, my health diagnosis, HIV, that was a problem, because if I go into any organization, particularly my community. I talk to them about my HIV status, wham, the door's shut (First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

As well, misunderstanding from non-Aboriginal service providers makes Indigenous people feel unwelcome and misunderstood, but also provides a rallying point in the following example.

They don't understand our Two-Spirited language, you know, how we talk. They can't believe how we talk to one another. To us, we can laugh and laugh it off, you know. They take it as a bad thing. We shouldn't be talking like that. Why are we talking, you know. Like I say, they expect us to be White or something. That's the way I take it, especially in the last couple of weeks, we've gone through a lot of that here (at this organization). I think we've come a long, a little ways, but there's still a long ways and a lot of avenues to get angry, you know. ... everything's always a problem, no matter what you do when you first start out or whatever. You have to break down barriers and you know there's barriers for all of us to break down and if everyone does that, you can break barrier down, it opens the door for all of us (Non-Status, First Nations, Two-Spirit, age unknown, Vancouver).

For participants who have been street-involved or worked in the sex trade, loss of chosen family through murder, sex trade, and drugs can feel devastating (see also Seisha, 2010). One Winnipeg participant stated that she thinks there have been *"seven (deaths) in like 6 years. It seems like one goes every year, or something like that. It's really messed up"* (Transgender female, First Nations, Status, straight, 23 years, Winnipeg). I asked her and her co-participant what the impact of these losses is on their sense of community. Their responses:

#1:   *Well I guess we're getting smaller and smaller.*

#2:   *It makes it less of a community.*

#1:   *Yeah.*

Contemporary effects of historical trauma. Some participants spoke about how they believe historical trauma and contemporary colonial effects create conditions in First Nation communities whereby sexuality and gender diversity is not understood or accepted (also discussed in Cannon, 2004; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004; Teengs & Travers, 2006; Meyer-Cook, 2008). For example, the following participant spoke about how homophobia and transphobia in Aboriginal communities (in general and in his own) have been fueled by residential school experiences of community members.

Because in my view, I think they have a limited understanding of what it means to be an Aboriginal person. I say that because they live on reserve, which means the reserve system to me, is totally limiting towards any person living within that legislation or Act or anything like that. I would say, particularly the, many of the, not Elders, but many of the, I'll say people of my parents' age, only because that's something that they've been taught. Through residential school being taken away from, or whatever circumstances, that took them away from that family unit. You know, I'm a third generation result and it's something I will always believe in. However the ones that do support me are the ones that have not been jaded in certain ways (First Nations, Two-Spirit, male, 48, Vancouver).

Discriminatory attitudes result in not being able to bring multiple identities or a full sense of self. Participants described this as limiting their ability to feel at home or belong in a community.

I went to a powwow just recently, on my mom's reserve, the _____, and the people there, like I saw absolutely no Two-Spirited people. I saw people on the reserve and I asked them, "Are you going to the powwow?" They said no, "God, no". I was like, "Well why?" They never gave me a straight answer. Because it's sad, but some, not most, but some Aboriginal people are also homophobic. They're not supportive of Two-Spirited people. I've run into people like that. It's kinda sad because they should be accepting cause that's what the Medicine Wheel is for. Like we're supposed to be accepting of everybody, everybody, no matter what their colour is, no matter what people they like (Métis, bisexual, woman, 20, Winnipeg).

One man spoke about how he feels his family accepts him – but only to a point. He can't speak about being gay, or be open with family about romantic relationships.

… myself, my family supports me in a way that they know I'm gay and they still love me and they let me come to family dinners and stuff, but it's still to the point where I can't bring somebody home with me or to the point that I can't talk about my life. Like my life is still separate from what it is back home (Two-Spirit, First Nations, gay male, youth, Vancouver).

This type of experience expressed in the previous example was cited as a reason for seeking home and community in urban settings, away from original or reserve communities. Participants also spoke about how bad interpersonal dynamics and cross-cultural tensions within and across small communities can affect them.

Yeah, I don't interact very much with Two-Spirit people anymore, but I feel that I have long term friends that have become family down here and I feel supported in my lifestyle by them. The reason that I don't interact with Two-Spirit people is because of, it's kinda like family. You can hurt each other really badly and my last relationship I had was with a Two-Spirit woman from Toronto and she moved here to be with me and I introduced her to all my Two-Spirit friends, and they immediately started hitting on her and broke us up. So from that experience, I felt like, "Why would you do that?" Using the power, the interaction with each other, is supposed to be with integrity but I felt like it was, it was almost like anything was possible and everything was possible. Go after each other's mates and each other's partners, and that really disgusted me, so I keep everybody at arm's length now (Female, First Nations, Status, Two-Spirit, 62, Vancouver).

Another woman talked about how she feels her Cree teachings are not accepted (and may be in conflict at times) with West Coast teachings, which is experienced as a community detractor. She indicated that she has experienced these tensions among nations as a lack of acceptance. *"… no one ever talks about all the animosity between all nations. I don't know if anyone ever raises that. The lines, there's lines that cross, that divide the First Nations communities"* (Métis, lesbian, female, Two-Spirit, 39,

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Vancouver). These tensions can exacerbate feelings of isolation and diminish efforts at relationship and community-building.

A couple of participants spoke about how an accepting family member can act as a bridge to other family members and a home community, but if that accepting family member dies, the Two-Spirit person becomes estranged from the rest of the family or community for a time, or indefinitely. One participant described this. *"My mom was the more supportive one than my dad, and after she passed away, my dad kind of cooled off to me for about three years, and then he finally started coming around when I introduced _____, my new partner, to him ..."* (First Nations, Status, gay, male, 28, Vancouver).

Another detractor that can be linked to contemporary colonial effects is a lack of Aboriginal and LGBTTQ visibility and resources in First Nations communities, which participants said contributed to their feelings of isolation.

I know as a gay First Nations male trying to find school and trying to find that funding and being sent here, being sent there, it's all like spread over the world, like you know, walk 20 miles to walk back another 20 miles, you know, like it's quite hard when you don't really know how to do it or what to do. I really think there should be more fields open to maybe, you know, teach kids once you get out of high school. This is what you can do. This is how you can do it (Inuit, gay, male, 20 years, Vancouver).

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Wellbeing

Participants spoke about what health and wellbeing mean to them and for them as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Specifically, the positive and negative impacts of moving on health and wellbeing are discussed in the reports of the primary

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project (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2011). Here, I focus on wellbeing in relation to what participants said in connection with home, community and belonging for them as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Participants shared that a sense of wellbeing is connected to living a good life (see also Adelson, 2006 and Hart, 2002). This includes holding strong identities and a solid sense of home, community and belonging. Wellbeing responses were offered in the context of each participant's story of coming to be whomever and wherever they are now (in terms of identities, and in terms of physical and metaphorical spaces and places; similar to descriptions in A. Wilson, 2009). I have clustered participant responses according to areas of wellbeing they spoke about – *physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual, relational* and *cultural.* It can be noted however that there are many connections among these areas (Four Winds Development Project, 1988).

In addition to areas of wellbeing and in relation to being well, participants referred to the ability to know themselves, be themselves, stick up for themselves and others, and engage with and work within community settings. Here, I offer a few words about what participants shared about wellbeing in each of these areas.

To begin, participants described health and wellbeing in the *physical* realm to mean having a safe home, good food to eat, and decent place to lay your head. They described being active and also having downtime, time for yourself. For those working on harm reduction or sobriety, they described having a healthy, non-addictive relationship with alcohol and being drug free, or reducing use. For some this meant doing treatment programs and trying to get out of the "lifestyle" associated with their drug use (therefore avoiding living in certain areas, working in the sex trade, and

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socializing with certain people). For some practicing harm reduction has helped them decrease their addictions. A couple of participants also spoke about needing access to traditional foods, as well as being at peace with oneself in nature as elements contributing to their physical sense of wellbeing.

In addition to physical wellbeing, participants seemed comfortable speaking about *spiritual* wellbeing and describing what spiritual health means for those who practice living that way. Honouring the sacredness of teachings, culture, identities and practices were mentioned. For example, although separated from some teachings growing up (raised Christian), one participant was still taught the sacredness of certain creatures, hunting and eating practices, as well as the circular nature of respect and helping. Other participants spoke about the sacredness of the term *Two-Spirit* and how they take it seriously to refer to themselves that way, finding spiritual meaning and cultural resonance. For some, spiritual wellbeing and health occurs not only in the ways they refer to and reflect on themselves, but also in practices they share with others such as ceremonies, drumming and singing, and community teaching and organizing. Thus, the individual and collective practices of identity development, community building and spirituality fuel each other (Ramirez, 2007).

Moving into the realm of the head and heart, participants described thoughts, feelings, attitudes and approaches to living that can be grouped together under *emotional* and *intellectual* wellbeing. Many stated that wellbeing means having a positive outlook or attitude, and acknowledged that sometimes it takes work.

I live by 3 basic principles. No regrets, cause you can always learn from whatever you've done. Keep child-like optimism for every day you live, and the third would have to be - I just said it last night, it's just hard to keep remembering -

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optimism, oh, moderation (laughing) (First Nations, gay, Two-Spirit, 20 years, Winnipeg).

I mean it has it's ups and downs, like in any place but mostly it's been positive. It all depends on how you want to make your living quarters. You make it your own, you know, if you want to be positive, be positive, if you want to be negative, be negative. It's all up to you. It's all in your mind and how you feel in your soul. Spiritual (First Nations, straight, Two-Spirit, 45 years, Vancouver).

Many participants demonstrated and spoke about using humour and talking to connect with others, deescalate tension, and as a tool in healing. Examples of this are offered in the personal capacities section of intrinsic gifts. Many participants shared a recognition that they benefit (especially as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people) from the efforts and examples set by those that have come before them to pave the way. Thus role models have been extremely important in breaking down barriers to sexual and gender diversity acceptance, and in helping younger Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people feel good about themselves. Knowing this history also encourages people now to think and act consciously as role models for next generations.

…I hear all these stories about how the older generation trannies had problems like when they were younger I guess, with the fights and violence and all that and I don't know, it's just like, I get support, but I know they were there to take it for us instead of us. … Yeah, like they broke the molds and yeah, we're, the younger generation, we're free. We're not free, but we're more accepted and more supported (First Nations, transgender female, 22, Winnipeg).

This young transwoman went on to say how she is trying to hold a job and show she can be a good worker so that she will pave the way for other transgenders who want to work at her workplace. *"I guess someone's got to set an example for them or be a stepping stone so I'm gonna keep working and try to maintain my job. Cause I had a job for a year before, so I can do it again."* In this way, she sees herself as contributing

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to community wellbeing, the sense of community, and belonging that was started by other transgenders and that newcomers will feel as they follow her.

In addition, when asked about health and wellbeing, many participant responses could be grouped according to their impact and practice in relationships. I call this *relational wellbeing*. Examples such as loving, safe relationships, sharing emotional and sexual intimacy, and mutual respect were mentioned a number of times. Other examples included having positive peers, and access to inter-generational mentors, Elders and teachers. For those trying to make positive changes in their lives, wellbeing means building the reputation you want to have with others. Participants spoke about showing people you can hold a job, pay for your own place, and make legitimate money (mentioned by those in the sex trade). The benefits of these positive changes were described in terms of one's relationship with themselves and in how they were also relating with others. Consequently, participants said that making positive personal changes impacted their relationships positively, and would put them in a better position from which to appreciate kinship with others. This is congruent with teachings regarding responsibility. Individual responsibility for actions must be in relation to community and all living things (Hart, 2002; S. Wilson & P. Wilson, 1999).

In another realm, it seems that the term *cultural wellbeing* is most often used to refer to ethnic and nation-based cultural references. In this case, I am using the term to describe participants' descriptions of *both* positive Indigenous *and* positive gay or transgender descriptions of wellbeing. Participants spoke about needing to learn about role flexibility in gender expression, choice of romantic/sexual partners and see options accepted as legitimate in their environments. Young people need to have access to

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appropriate information required to make sense of themselves as Aboriginal Two-Spirit

and LGBTQ people. This means being accepted in your family and community, being

encouraged in positive, healthy ways, and knowing of Two-Spirit positive traditions.

Positive examples of cultural wellbeing teachings include:

... you know, for us, for a man to wear a dress, for me it wouldn't phase me. It wouldn't phase me. It just wouldn't because I understand that. That's where I come from and that's traditionally our roles, but I've done that so it wouldn't phase me, and for other people, it's like, I don't get it, you know. For me, it's I already have an understanding of that (Transgender female, 40, Two-Spirit, First Nations, Status, Winnipeg).

Well I think in like the Native tradition, it's allowed. Like I know if you were Two-Spirited in my culture, I know where my family's from. We're from _____ First Nations, so we're in the Yukon, and I know throughout our history, it's always been accepted and it's always been something that's never been frowned upon.   So if you were, like it's really upon on welcoming, and it was kind of, if you were Two-Spirited or gay, you were kind of put on a pedestal because you were sacred.   You were different. ... Well I know, back way when, like say you were a bisexual male and there was a gay male, and nobody else was gay, then you could fill that, the bisexual male could go with the gay male, you could fill it, complete, everybody could be in love and be happy, you know, your tribe would be complete. And that's why they like it (Gay, male, Inuit, youth, Vancouver).

In a different example, while incarcerated, one participant spoke about how

learning about her culture as a Métis woman helped her come to terms with living with

HIV and Hepatitis:

The only thing, when I was incarcerated, being (HIV) positive. I think it was a good thing because it was, I was involved in my culture. My culture gave me more of a sense of who I am and where I want to be as a Native person in life, and it just helped me physically, get in touch with my illness and how it's gonna affect me or not affect me. How I choose to live my life is how my health is gonna be affected (Métis, bisexual, woman, 41, Winnipeg).

When participants spoke about learning and knowing their culture as Indigenous

peoples, their examples included spiritual care. Thus cultural and spiritual wellbeing

are connected. Participants also included a positive vision and hopefulness based on

living up to your best, living up to your people, and the known positive histories of

Two-Spirit people.

> *For me, the little bit I know about Two-Spiritedness, is that we were, we were special. We were pillars in the community for all facets of the tribe. We were there for everything. We were multi-taskers, is what we were, so and I look back, I look back at my family or people in the community who are making changes, social change or whatever, I feel like I'm not doing enough. I feel like I have to be living up to what I am. I think as a Two-Spirit, there's so much more I need to know about my culture. So much I need to know, so much that needs to be found* (Gay, Two-Spirit, male, First Nations, Status, youth, Winnipeg).

Participants also said that wellbeing is about *being yourself,* and *speaking up for*

yourself and others, participating in community organizing, and *"developing opinions*

more complex than yes or no" (as stated by the following participant):

> *I had always kinda wanted to be like part of like calls for justice. But just was so busy drinking and drugging and dancing and having like fabulous party time that I was too hung over in the morning to go to like rallies and stuff, you know. So that was really like refreshing the past 3 years or so* (Female, Métis, bisexual, poly, queer, Two-Spirit, 29, Winnipeg).

Sharing knowledge and experiences of healing and wellbeing are important

ways to contribute to and participate in community in healthy ways. Doing things for

yourself and asking for help when you need it are indicators of health and wellbeing

mentioned by participants, as is being grounded in yourself and your identity in a

positive way to speak up for yourself and for what matters to you.

> *I pictured myself abuse free and then, now I don't take anything from anybody. Well the public I watch myself and then with, say with family members, they try to be verbally abusive all the time. I just don't listen. Like you know what, you can keep your mouth going, but your opinion of me does not matter to me. My opinion of me matters to me so there's nothing you can do to break me anymore. So now I have no contact with my family cause I've shut them out* (First Nations, transgender female, straight, 28, Winnipeg).

Having a strong sense of identity and spiritual meaning informs practices demonstrating individual and collective cultural and spiritual respect. These concepts are shown in participant examples - of having a vision of wellbeing, seeing opportunity as it comes, and taking it. One participant said there was *"... so much opportunity [with coming to the city], like so much opportunity afforded itself to me, and it's like, I'm grabbing it. I'm grabbing it. I'm grabbing it. Yeah. So I was very lucky in that sense"* (First Nations, transgender, Two-Spirit, 40, Winnipeg).

In summary, participants spoke about how wellbeing is connected to how they make sense of themselves as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and also in the quality of life they are able to lead. Safe homes, communities, and a sense of belonging inform and provide material examples of holistic wellbeing.

Of relevance here, McCormick (1995) completed a study on healing among First Nations people in BC. His findings can be related to factors that promote wellbeing for the purposes of this study. From conversations with 50 participants, McCormick identified what facilitated healing for participants. His findings include participation in ceremony, expression of emotion, learning from a role model, social connection, spiritual connection, help and support from others, helping others, and anchoring oneself in tradition. Outcomes of healing included balance and a sense of belonging.

We see that participants in this secondary analysis identified facilitators of home, community, and belonging congruent with McCormick's study.

Participant Recommendations

Within the migration project, participants were asked about their experiences of services and recommendations to make these better (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010; Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011). Within this study, I note that participants also made comments and recommendations about factors that support community building. These can be clustered into a number of categories: supports/services, spaces, sharing/ participation, solidarity, action, stability, self-governance/determination and cultural safety.

Supports and services were described as sites with potential for community building by participants – by offering spaces for people to collect themselves and their interests, but also as places to receive health information (especially regarding gender and sexuality), cultural information and teachings. To facilitate community building, formal and informal supports must be inclusive, accessible, flexible resources that help with what you need. Needs may be concrete like food and shelter, or identity-based. A community-building perspective also means that *services are provided in communities and all are eligible for services because all are members of the community* (not because there is anything inherently wrong with a group of people, and not because only certain types of people have something to offer, such as professionals). Rather all members of the community have something to offer, and all may benefit from services and supports.

Overall, participants indicated that community could be strengthened by more services for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people around networking and connecting, accessible from within or outside of Vancouver. A service such as this would help prevent isolation and ease adjustment to the city, and would also be relevant for people moving into Winnipeg from rural or reserve communities.

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As well, participants also suggested support and other services for specific segments of the Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ community. These services would offer community-connecting places, address specific needs, and also promote health, wellbeing and healing. Suggestions included services for aging Two-Spirit people, healing groups and other mental health services that contextualize trauma experiences (versus just treating for depression or anxiety), Aboriginal and Two-Spirit specific services while also building capacity of non-Aboriginal and non-LGBTQ offerings, restoration of the Gender-Identity Clinic or another one-stop shop for transition services (Vancouver), healthy relationship supports, transitional supports, and domestic violence supports for LGBTTQ. One participant, in describing what had been helpful for him indicated the need for a caring "umbrella" under which people can be nurtured and walked through whatever it is they need.

In addition, to promote a sense of community and belonging, participants spoke about the need for gathering places for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people to discover, develop, practice and share their gifts. There is a need for inclusive, accepting, culturally mixed LGBTTQ spaces to break down myths in/about LGBTTQ community and regarding Aboriginal communities/people. The goal as articulated by participants is to foster pockets of accepting community, creating safe places to belong for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Gathering spaces would meet multiple purposes - to access supports, but also participate in supporting others; to connect, build friendship and other links (political, cultural, hobby-based for example); to organize around common interests; and offer activity and event-centred spaces (such as gatherings, meetings, ceremonies).

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Participants spoke about the need for affirming churches with visible LGBTTQ and Aboriginal participation. Further, any space designated with the potential to support community building must be physically accessible with gender-neutral washrooms.

Of note, participation in the migration study was experienced and expressed by many participants (with some surprise) to be beneficial. Having a voice, naming yourself, being heard and documented, and feeling like you have an impact on what matters for your people and people like you is important (and promotes healing, McCormick, 1995). Participants mentioned how good it was to come together to think and talk about what it means for them to be Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ, and how it reminded them of what is important to them about their communities.

Participants also spoke about positive Two-Spirit visibility, honouring those who came before, and having opportunities to learn from the experiences and wisdom of others. Again, this underscores why *coming together to share stories* and experiences is so important. The stories participants said they wanted to share and hear were those of growth, coming out, and healing, plus inclusion of known Two-Spirit histories and examples of acceptance. Further, participants had much to say about Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ involvement in community development and decision-making and the need for even more of this to happen. They indicated knowing that their community has lots to offer and doing so means more chances for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ to shine, and have a spotlight like other groups.

Building *solidarity* and being politically engaged with an accepting, inclusive collective has been important for some in building community and feeling belonging. Opportunities to organize that are positive, issue-centred and alcohol and drug-free have

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been helpful and were specifically noted (for example more events like Camp Aurora outside of Winnipeg and the International Two-Spirit Gathering). Participants placed an emphasis on personal responsibility within a collective. Everyone has gifts to share and a role to bring. In this, we have choices about how to relate to others (i.e. sister, peer and not client or victim).

Participants spoke about how important it is for them to have the support of others as allies. There is much work to do for siblings, friends, and supportive family members to raise awareness and show acceptance regarding sexual and gender diversity. As well, people can use their positions to influence attitudes. For instance, strong accepting leadership can set a positive and inclusive tone for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in Aboriginal communities. Participants also spoke about the need to reach out to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ living outside of cities.

Action can take the form of community or individual agency. Participants spoke about the need for promoting acceptance and education around multiple identities within communities and community spaces. Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people need positive, fun, safe activities (without alcohol or drugs) that can contribute to belonging. Facilitating and hosting all-ages events encouraging family inclusiveness was identified as promoting community.

On the individual level, participants spoke about how they had been helped by the actions of others (see also McCormick, 1995) – in some cases being stopped from self-destruction. They talked about how getting your act together can in turn put you in a better place to be a role model in doing good for yourself and others. An example offered was more young people getting and holding jobs, getting off the street, and

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showing they can make something of themselves. In this way, setting goals and working towards them can be extremely important in developing skills and proving potential be successful.

At the most basic level, participants spoke about needing *stability* in their lives before they can fully participate in their communities. Stability means having safe, decent housing, health care, and nutrition. Some need help with managing addictions, and finding safe(r) streets and spaces to hang out. A stability dream expressed by a couple of participants was central, safe housing specifically for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Self-determination for Indigenous communities and groups of people means for individuals and alliances to build stability for their peoples (for ex. in housing, health care, nutrition and education on the individual level, and collective wellbeing, self-governance, and cultural vitality on a larger scale.) Efforts at self-determination and self-governance must be Aboriginal-centred and informed by Indigenous worldviews.

Participants spoke about the need for a variety of opportunities for cultural and spiritual care (including ceremonies, sweats, teachings and opportunities for healing) as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. This concept of *cultural care and safety* must embrace acceptance of differences across and within Indigenous identities and sexual and gender diversity, thus building cultural competency across identity areas. For instance, Aboriginal people need access to positive, appropriate education that informs sexual and gender identity. Within this there is a need to challenge perpetrator myths - to expose and differentiate among pedophilia, abuse dynamics and healthy

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LGBTTQ gender and sexuality. Perpetrator myths and experiences of same-sex abuse are legacies in many communities that influence homophobic attitudes in the present.

Cultural safety also means that LGBTQ communities (i.e. the gay and lesbian centre) can learn about First Nations and Two-Spirit culture(s). One participant stated, *"I'm gonna very honest about this one. I think they could step up to the plate and not have to be asked to learn about our culture" (*Métis, Two-Spirit, female, lesbian, 39, Vancouver).

Overall, there must be acknowledgement and acceptance of multiple identities, and differences and similarities among First Nations. One woman said, *"Being Métis, I find I need to find that other part, like I'm searching for that other part of me, you know, the non-Aboriginal part of me and trying to discover cultural and tradition there"* (Métis, Two-Spirit, female, lesbian, 39, Vancouver).

In summary, participants connected their individual experiences and identities with collective wellbeing as Indigenous *and* Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Despite differences across identities, they identified what they have learned and made recommendations accordingly about conditions that contribute to community building with relevance for all Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

The next chapter links all of the themes identified in this study and demonstrates conceptually how a positive sense of home, community and belonging are linked to identities and wellbeing, as well as situated within contextual factors that help or hinder processes of positive meaning-making.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

Conceptual Model

Overview. This conceptual model represents my final analysis in this secondary study of the meanings of home, community and belonging for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in the context of migration. First I offer a quick overview, to be followed by more detailed description.

Graphic 1: *Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Meanings of Home, Community and Belonging in the Context of Migration*
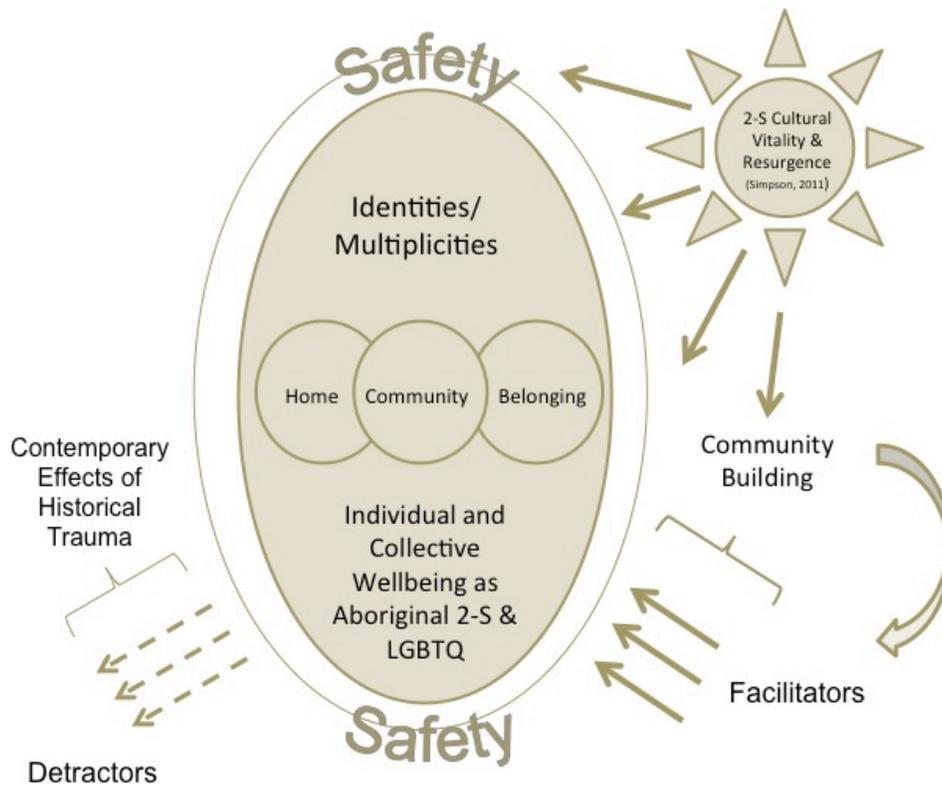
What I represent in the graphic is that for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in this study, positive awareness of *home, community* and *belonging* are made sense of in the context of their multiple identities (*identities/multiplicities*) as well as *individual and collective wellbeing* as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Individual wellbeing informs and is informed by a positive sense of home, community and belonging, and cannot be separated from collective wellbeing for identity and interest-based communities (Horejsi & Garthwait, 2000).

These themes of a) identities/multiplicities, b) home, community, belonging, and c) individual and collective wellbeing are interrelated, bound together within the centre of the graphic. Home and belonging are connected through community, yet with distinct elements. *Safety* is both the overarching umbrella and foundation that surrounds the centre circle; required for growth, learning and positive meaning making to occur (Wilson, 2009).

Detractors, in the lower left corner, are the factors and experiences that interfere with developing positive identities and sense of home, community, belonging, and wellbeing as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Detractors are exemplifications of the *contemporary effects of historical trauma* reaching into the lives of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in the present.

Facilitators, on the other hand (in the lower right hand corner) are the factors contributing in positive ways to the development of overall wellbeing and healthy home and community spaces in which to belong. Facilitators (detailed in the next section) contribute to healthy individual and collective identities, and are thus examples of *community building*. Community building also acts as a facilitator.

Two-Spirit cultural vitality and resurgence (Simpson, 2011) is the sun that nourishes the centre circle, and cultivates community building. It reaches into the past to draw upon positive Two-Spirit histories, nurtures contemporary enactments of Two-Spirit identities and practices (Champagne, 1997) and provides a vision for the future upon which to act. For those participants identifying as Two-Spirit people (rather than LGBTQ), this has incredible power to nurture both their cultural and sexual and gender identities, as well as their place in the sacred circle (Beaucage, 2010).

The centre circle also represents a seed, which has potential to grow within the right conditions. A positive sense of one's identities, wellbeing, and rootedness in home, community and belonging can grow with the support of facilitators, community building and the light and warmth of cultural vitality, resurgence (Simpson, 2011) and re-emergence (Hart, 2009b). *Wellbeing* means *being well* – an expression of action, and set of practices and processes - not simply an outcome. I speak further to each of the areas represented in this model in the next section.

Description. Here I offer additional description of the areas represented in the conceptual model, as well as explain further the relationships among the concepts (apart from the primary themes of home, community and belonging which were detailed in the Findings section). Here I include *safety, multiplicities, contemporary effects of historical trauma, community building* and *Two-Spirit cultural vitality and resurgence*. I relate each of these back to the findings as exemplified by participants.

Safety. Safety is the footing required for a sense of home, community and belonging to emerge. Participants spoke about needing safe places within which to be and become Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people (see also A. Wilson, 2009). The theme of safety emerged out of participant descriptions of *facilitators*. These included positive culture (queer, Aboriginal, urban), positive visibility, acceptance, supportive relationships, a safe and supportive political context (with awareness of issues of interest and concern for Indigenous and LGBTQ people), and economic wellbeing (having access to what is needed, stability). This study establishes how together, these facilitators create an environment that promotes safety for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Participants also spoke of *detractors* – experiences of discrimination, rejection, isolation, poverty, homelessness and violence interfering with safety. Only in safety is a sense of wellbeing possible, with the opportunities to attend to all of one's parts (spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental) and mobilize to take action in positive ways (Four Winds Development Project, 1997). The words of participants show how hurtful racism, homophobia and transphobia are, and how ardently they have each in their own way worked to find safety in a home, places they belong, and a community in which they get what they need, participate, and are able to contribute (McKnight & Block, 2010).

Multiplicities. Multiple identities can be challenging to navigate. Making sense of oneself in an integrated way is a process that occurs over time and interdependently among one's identities and contexts. This process has been described as *becoming or*

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(be)coming out by Walters et al. (2006) and *coming in* to oneself by A. Wilson (2009).

These developmental, process-oriented descriptors account for the many parts of

themselves people bring, the intersections among identities, and within-group diversity

(Brant, 1994; Walters, 1997).

This study demonstrates the many ways Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ

people make sense of their identities, where they come from, where they are, and what

they hope for in seeking home, community and belonging. It shows there are many

ways to define oneself, and that each person does this in their own context, in their own

way, depending on the circumstances. I use the term *multiplicities* to refer to multiple

identities, intersections among identities, experiences of multiple oppressions, as well as

the diversity *within* and *across* Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ identities.

Some participants seem to identify more strongly with their Indigenous identity,

while others with their sexual and/or gender identities. Some hold all of the parts of

themselves together (including class, ability, faith/spiritual practices, language among

others) while others may place greater emphasis on one or two depending on the

context, their development, and their place in life. Regardless of the extent to which

they have been able to integrate their identities, participants shared strong feelings about

needing inclusive, accepting community places, flexibility regarding sexuality and

gender roles, and respect for First Nations people, communities, and ways of being. So,

despite great diversity in the social locations of participants, they communicated

consensus in how having social needs met defines the places and spaces where they find

meaningful home, community and belonging in the context of migration.

What are the connections between the identities of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ and the meanings they attribute to *home, community* and *belonging*? As discovered in this secondary analysis, finding a sense of home is tied to the identities of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people – in the past, present, and vitality and resurgence in the future (Simpson, 2011; see also Brant, 1994).

Contemporary effects of historical trauma. In the Canadian context we must consider our past. Experiences of historical and contemporary colonization have impacted Indigenous peoples' abilities to know foundational elements of their history and culture (Maracle, 2010; Ouelette, 2002) and hence, themselves (Henderson, 2000a; Kovach, 2009). Participants spoke about feeling disconnected from their territories, language, and histories as family and nation members, and first peoples of this land. Colonization has resulted in a collective and individual sense of what Fieland, Walters and Simoni (2007) refer to as "historical and contemporary trauma" that interacts with sociodemographic vulnerabilities to negatively affect the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples (p. 268; see also Walters & Simoni, 2002). The disconnection of Aboriginal peoples from cultural knowledge through the practices of colonization "transformed and scattered the fragments of First Nations knowledge into clandestine secret societies – and nearly eradicated Indigenous knowledge" (Maracle, 2010, p. 81). Some participants spoke to not knowing more than an ancestor was "Indian" – with no nation, language, or cultural specificity.

Particularly in regards to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, knowledge regarding gender and sexuality teachings seems difficult to access or retrieve (Meyer-

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Cook, 2008; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004). This can be directly related to structures of colonization. For example, Status became accrued through gendered relations that elevated men over women, third/other genders and sexual others. These changes systematically dismantled existing community and nation practices around roles, relationships and community participation (Brant, 1994; Cannon, 2004; Kinsman, 1987; Meyer-Cook, 2008) impacting experiences of home, community and belonging with ongoing effects in the lives of all Aboriginal people and particularly for the wellbeing of those who currently identify themselves as Two-Spirit or LGBTQ. Meyer-Cook (2008) notes, "The attempt to assimilate and eradicate Two-Spirit expressions is rarely acknowledged in healing circles" (p. 252).

In this regard, participants discussed how difficult it can be to find safe spaces for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people to access positive teachings, ceremonies, and healing supports inclusive of sexual and gender diversity. Participants of Métis identities shared how they may struggle to find where they fit as blended people, or "mixed bloods". Thus, for those with mixed, multiple, or hybrid identities having safe spaces where pleasure in kinship and belonging are experienced is much needed (Richardson & Seaborn, 2009; see also Anzaldua, 1987 regarding Mestiza experiences).

In addition, Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people live with the effects of forced mobility and settlement (Cannon, 2004), lateral violence (Meyer-Cook, 2008), residential schools and generations of abuse that have resulted in misunderstandings and an inability to address healthy sexuality and gender expression in many communities (Brant, 1994; Teengs & Travers, 2006). Myths such as homosexuality = pedophilia are common, and unresolved trauma interferes with positive attempts at education (Meyer-

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Cook, 2008; A. Wilson, 2009). A number of participants spoke about how the impact of Christian churches in their communities has resulted in almost wholesale acceptance of Christian teachings resulting in the erasure of positive Two-Spirit histories and traditions (see also Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004).

Participants shared concrete examples of the continuing effects of historical trauma, such as post-traumatic stress, child welfare experiences, relationship violence, fears of being perceived as perpetrators, and lost teachings about sexual and gender diversity. They related their experiences of racism in the larger community and homo/transphobia in First Nations communities to European colonization of Indigenous peoples. We are just beginning to understand, acknowledge and accept (to an extent) the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous people, communities and nations within this country currently governed as "Canada".

Further, historical trauma reaches into the present and affects dynamics within Aboriginal communities, moving consideration of cultural differences into what participants spoke about as an experience of divisions among nations in some cases (also in Ramirez, 2007). Tensions among nations can worsen feelings and expressions of superiority and may exacerbate competition for resources. Historical trauma also results in circumstances described by participants as marginalization and misrepresentation of Indigenous interests and lack of visibility and appropriate resources for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Material effects of generations of cultural trauma – such as poverty, inadequate housing and healthcare, challenged relationships, addictions, homelessness, murder and interpersonal violence have resulted in the loss of peer group members for many

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Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people (Seisha, 2010). Street-involved participants

in particular shared how these challenges and losses can be experienced as

preoccupying at least, and devastating in worst-case scenarios, which makes creating a

positive sense of home, community and belonging more difficult.

Community building. Participants in this study named three main ways in

which they access community – by interacting with useful, inclusive services, by

offering themselves in community service (i.e. volunteering or unpaid work, community

leadership), and by attending community events. In each of these examples, the

potential of bringing people together to share themselves, their stories, and gifts is what

builds community and fosters individual and collective identity development and

wellbeing (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002; McKnight & Block, 2010).

Good, relevant services become welcoming, accepting places to gather, help people

make sense of and become themselves, within a group of accepting peers. Participants

indicated that differences are ok because across differences, an inclusive and accepting

common vision of culture and belonging gets fostered.

As people grow older, they need access to whatever promotes a good life –

employment/a means to make a living, housing, friendship connections, good health

care, access to culture, teachings, a peer group, and an opportunity to share their

themselves. A good life is about holistic wellbeing, rooted in supportive community

connections and community wellbeing as a whole (Hart, 2002, 2009a). Brant (1994)

describes the *Good Red Road* as a way of being among Native peoples that links the

personal and communal - promoting balance and cultural continuity (p. 11).

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This study shows the potential community members have to assist and support each other, and the respect they share for differences in life stage. Participants demonstrated capacities to contribute, a desire to support community building, and strong ideas about what people need for good, healthy lives. The Greater Vancouver Native Cultural Society is one example of how Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people having been working (since 1978!) to support newcomers and ease their transition to city life (Buffalo, 2005).

There are many First Nations people speaking up and out, organizing to increase common understandings about what our colonial history means for specific nations. As well, there are non-Indigenous peoples working to make sense of what it means to be allies in decolonizing efforts (for example, see Siegel, 1990 on anti-racism). Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies must continue to develop shared interests in working together as neighbours and members of the human family to build stronger communities and places of belonging for everyone (Calliou, 1998; McIntosh, 2009a, 2009b).

Two-Spirit cultural vitality and resurgence. How people name themselves is paramount to the sense they make of home, community and belonging. Participants have shared that speaking to being lesbian, bisexual, transgender or gay has been important for them in finding solidarity in community. Further, identifying with the term *Two-Spirit* has carried resonance and meaning for those who use it because the term is (Aboriginal) culture-specific (Cameron, 2009). For participants naming themselves this way, they express an awareness of political, collective, and spiritual elements of the term. They believe in the sacredness of their being (Champagne, 1997;

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Four Winds Development Project, 1988; Walters et al., 2006) and the connection this brings with other Two-Spirit people.

For many, cultural knowledge and culturally specific contexts of accepting (i.e. gay-positive, sexuality and other gender inclusive) Two-Spirit teachings are key to their identity development, community participation, and contributions to Two-Spirit cultural practices and resurgence. *Resurgence* is a term used by Simpson (2011) to describe collective cultural mobilization and action. This must occur in localized contexts, because traditions and teachings are language and culture-based, community and nation-based. Thus, although *Two-Spirit* is a term that has connected, affirmed and galvanized many Aboriginal people, at the same time it is paramount to focus both at this macro political level as well as at the micro level of individual communities and people.

This theme may not seem important for those who don't strongly orient their identities around being Indigenous (generations removed from Aboriginal territory or community, or more recently discovered Métis for example). That said, Two-Spirit vitality and cultural resurgence is important for Two-Spirit people and everyone. Simply, it draws attention to racism, patriarchy, hierarchy, and heterosexist and homophobic practices institutionalized in the colonization process on a community-by-community and nation-by-nation basis. It is only by uncovering Two-Spirit teachings and traditions (that in many cases were forced underground or taken underground for protection) that we can continue to deepen our understanding of our own history as many peoples living on Turtle Island and in this place currently governed as Canada.

Kovach (2009) says that cultural longevity is dependent on the ability to maintain cultural knowledges. She states, "At the heart of a cultural renaissance,

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Indigenous or otherwise, is a restoration and respectful *use* of that culture's knowledge

systems" (p. 12). For those who attribute meaning to calling themselves Two-Spirit,

Two-Spirit cultural vitality is like air and water – it is life giving. Combining teachings

and practices of the past and carrying them in the present, participants demonstrated

how they are living what it means to be Two-Spirit people in ceremonies, drumming,

singing, prayer, dancing, art-making, caregiving, and in community engagement and

organizing across differences in Indigenous nationhood. One participant stated,

> *As I would say, I'm only involved with Turtle Island, that means North America. And yes, I would say I would be involved with, it doesn't matter what type of language you speak. It doesn't matter the colour of your skin or the long growth of hair or the difference of the regalia. We're all the same. There's four medicine wheels. All of them are correct. It's other people, other tribes or other communities, have different aspects of cultural beings. Like say, some people would have clans. Some people would just have a community. The Aboriginal people, we're all communal, but then again, with the Two-Spirited people, we get outed nowadays. Now it's no mistake that we're coming back strong again. We just celebrated our 20th anniversary for the Two-Spirit gathering. It's been 20 years that we've been claiming ourselves, cause berdage was not really a word for us. Berdage wasn't really a word for us, so reclaiming our name and renaming ourselves was like Two-Spirited, like how we felt better* (Transgender, female, 28, First Nations, straight, Winnipeg).

Thus, participants spoke about the strength of the Two-Spirit community as an

organizing force across Aboriginal identities, akin to a *hub* (Ramirez, 2007). As well,

participants in this study shared hopefulness about a positive future for Two-Spirit

people and the need for First Nations leadership to participate with Canadian federal

leaders to make things better for Indigenous peoples in general and specifically for

Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Participants demonstrated their opinions,

interests, engagement, need to contribute and desire to speak and be heard as Two-Spirit

people.

Discussion

The majority of participants moved originally to seek a place to be themselves and find acceptance for their sexuality and/or demonstrated gender differences. They felt so compelled to do this; they were willing to leave the circle of their original communities. In this search for a new home, they were not seeking places to be Aboriginal, but rather Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ people. What many reported is that over time they found homes and community spaces of belonging. They were able to make sense of themselves as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people *and also* find places of respect, with traditions, teachings, and contemporary practices that nurtured their Indigenous and Two-Spirit-specific identities (for those connecting with Indigenous roots).

What we find in this study is that despite many commonalities, Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people cannot be reduced or described as a single group. The diversity within and across participant identifications was enormous and is one thing about this study that can be generalized. An intersectional analysis allows and invites us to consider participants' specificities and requires us to look at the interfaces among identities to better understand participant experiences, insights (in the forms of those facilitators and detractors that affect sense of home, community and belonging) and recommendations.

Just as participant identities cannot be homogenized, there is not one set of homogenous colonial impacts – diverse communities and nations have been affected differently. Participants indicated differences in their experiences and perceptions within certain communities and nations. Similarly women, children and other genders

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have experienced effects of colonization differently from men. Indigenous activists,

educators, artists, writers, and community workers document, share and protest losses

of language, cultural knowledge, teachings, self-governance and territory that impact

the lives of Aboriginal people today, among them Two-Spirit and LGBTQ. In addition

to being in a context that generally misunderstands and disregards the Indigenous as

first peoples of this land, and despite gains in the acceptance and mainstreaming of

LGBTQ identities, there continues to be much ignorance and misperception about

sexual and gender difference (Banks, 2003; Cochrane, 2004; Filax, 2004; Hagen, 2004).

The strongholds of patriarchy, sexism and heterosexism are alive, well and often

invisible and insidious which makes them most damaging for Aboriginal Two-Spirit

and LGBTQ people trying to anchor themselves within positive Two-Spirit teachings

and communities.

Howard and Proulx (2011) note that life in cities for Aboriginal people is

mediated by adherence to particular cultural traditions and how one is socially

perceived in terms of kinship. As (predominantly) urban Aboriginal people,

participants in this secondary analysis demonstrated with their words how they need

social and cultural connections to inform their identities and wellbeing as Indigenous

peoples and also Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ. Another way of looking at this is

identified by A. Wilson (2009). She shows how opportunities and supports facilitate

personal and collective development for Two-Spirit people in urban settings but also

within a whole life context and as such, demonstrate how identities and experiences are

interdependent across time. Culture, identity, history and the present are bound together

and are part of what Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people bring as they migrate seeking safe homes, communities and a sense of belonging.

While Walters (1997) discusses her perspective that urbanization represses traditions and may negatively impact gay American Indian experiences of acceptance, Newhouse (2011) asserts rather that urban Aboriginal peoples remain connected to culture and tradition, while also reinventing themselves and traditions as urban Indigenous peoples living well in cities (see also Buddle, 2011; Environics Institute, 2010; Ramirez, 2007). The Greater Vancouver Native Cultural Society is one example of the ways Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people are connecting in urban areas to support each other, define themselves, build community and live out their identities as Indigenous and sexual and gender diverse people (Buffalo, 2005).

Experiences shared by participants demonstrate vitality, creativity, flexible, and fluid community building that occurs in connecting across similarities and differences (Howard & Proulx, 2011). Participants spoke about coming together to share knowledge, resources, and kinship in Two-Spirit community places and spaces, like the *hubs* Ramirez (2007) speaks of.

What is different however in the experiences of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people is that they may not return the same way to their original communities as described by Ramirez (2007). In fact, they may make new sense of territorial definitions of belonging, and find homes and "new territories" that are more geographically dispersed and fluid. Their identity-building and social networking may take more imaginary and creative forms blending elements of past and present (Buddle, 2011; Fortier, 2003) due not only to experiences of rejection (in Aboriginal and LGBTQ

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communities), but also in part to the creativity, adaptability, talents and capacities of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. Despite difficulties adjusting to city life and experiences of marginalization and oppression, participants in this study reported most often to be happy with their circumstances as urban Aboriginal peoples, integrated in their multiplicities over time (similar to findings in Environics Institute, 2010; see also Newhouse, 2011).

Lee & Brotman (2011) found that people holding multiple identities (LGBTQ refugees in their study) need spaces within which to bring and be themselves. They also need connections to their cultural communities as well as the larger LGBTQ community. Through multiple positive spaces and connections, people resist spatial marginalization (Seisha, 2010) and are able to find support in resisting oppression and marginalization. Although differing in social locations, Lee & Brotman's findings are relevant and congruent with this current study. Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ participants identified how important it is to find solidarity in connection with others. To do this, they must be able to bring all of themselves. In this circle of safety, participants indicated being able to develop a strong sense of home, community and belonging, and were then able to participate in and contribute to the wellbeing of themselves and their communities, thus contributing further to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ culture and vitality.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Strengths and Limitations

In considering the strengths and limitations of this project, I was impacted by the strengths and limitations of the larger migration project. Within that, we were able to connect with participants predominantly through our community Advisory Committee contacts and word-of-mouth. Our final list of participants represents some groups better than others (i.e. with solid female and transwomen representation, some gay men and no transmen in Winnipeg; more Two-Spirits, gay men, and transwomen in Vancouver).

In Winnipeg, this project is rooted in solid community Advisory Committee participation. This is a strength. I hope that members will continue to participate over time to assist with distribution of these findings so that they can get back to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and communities. Enlisting community stakeholder participation has been a strength of my research project, but can also be considered a challenge as time passes (should people move, become unavailable, etc.).

As stated earlier, I know the Winnipeg data set very well. This is less the case for the Vancouver data, despite my best efforts at listening to and reviewing the recordings and transcript materials. I expected to (and experienced) some difficulty getting into and following the Vancouver data. For example, because I facilitated the Winnipeg interviews and focus groups, I remember the conversations with participants and went back to transcripts easily if something came up to double-check. I don't have the physical, sensory memory of meeting with Vancouver participants.

Further, as a non-Indigenous person, I am limited in my ability to know how best to work with and within Aboriginal communities. I was raised and continue to live

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in what can be an unfriendly (and hostile, misunderstanding) marinade for First Nations and other Indigenous peoples. I am sure I may have missed or not completely understood some references because despite being an LGB insider, I am an Aboriginal outsider.

I do believe strongly however that a strength of the project is the foundation it had and community connections already established within the larger migration project (Ristock, Zoccole & Passante 2010). The community members have been patient, excellent teachers and it is with their permission, and ongoing guidance and support and commitment that I was able to use the data for this secondary analysis. Any mistakes are my own. I hope and expect that my shortcomings are offset by the experiences and expertise of my thesis and community Advisory Committees. Of note, one Advisory Committee member (Marjorie) is also a member of my thesis committee. I consider this a gift – that links the history of the project through this study of home, community and belonging.

To account for the limits of my worldview, I have been actively educating myself about Indigenous epistemologies and continue to undertake reflexive processes to be mindful of the impact my social location, philosophies and experiences have in my research actions and interpretations (Kovach, 2009). I have done this through journaling, consultation with advisors and committee members, discussion with friends and colleagues, and in writing. I also root the findings contextually and historically (as suggested by Indigenous, feminist and critical perspectives (Code, 1995; Kovach, 2009; O'Neill, 1995; see also Saleeby, 2002).

Relevance for Social Work

There is little in the social work literature on social work practice with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, nothing from a positive (community-building, wellbeing) perspective, and an absence of research on Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ meanings of home, community and belonging. In this way, I contribute to a gap in social work and to larger inter-disciplinary perspectives by collecting and articulating the words of participants from their own perspectives.

Locating participant interests within a framework of wellbeing, and in the context of their multiple identities (Indigenous and Two-Spirit/LGBTQ among others) has the potential to raise awareness of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ concerns, hopes, capacities and perseverance and also highlight the importance of Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive social work and social justice activism orientations. These findings can positively influence Indigenous and non-Indigenous social workers, and social work educators in both university and field-based settings.

Since notions of home, community and belonging are taken for granted in many instances, in articulating participants' meanings of these while drawing attention to multiplicities, community facilitators and contemporary effects of historical trauma, this study has potential to dramatically inform social workers across social locations about the difficulties Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people may face in their everyday lives – concerns and interests that cannot be assumed or taken for granted without specific attention to the realities of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Further, despite discussions about work in communities, in my experiences of community organizing, most social work seems to emphasize individual actions in

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community building.   More efforts need to be concentrated at collaboration, solidarity, and *collective* action and organizing that promotes community building, community capacity and wellbeing. All community members must be seen as stakeholders with offerings to share, as well as people who may benefit from supports and community services. This means an orientation that moves away from "service providers" and "service users" to that of *community members*. We are all connected, and we need each other.

Consequently, this research can inform individual and collective approaches to working with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and communities, so that we may more appropriately and justly work together, according to the hopes, needs and interests of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and Indigenous communities. This research can also inform working in non-Indigenous communities, and non-Indigenous LGBTTQ communities as well. Good community work is good community work.

Application(s) of the Research

Within and outside of the discipline of social work, this secondary analysis on Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ home, community and belonging has the potential to contribute to numerous areas of study. These areas of study include identity, intersectionality, migration, space and place geographies, Native and queer diaspora studies, community development, and community-based and Indigenous research methods.

Specifically, I offer through the findings of my research:

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a) Increased understandings of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples' varied experiences and diversity of understandings and meanings regarding *home, community,* and *belonging* in the context of migration.

b) Increased understandings of *multiplicity* in how Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people identify and define themselves; and how identities inform meanings of home, community and belonging.

c) Increased holistic understandings of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples' experiences of home, community, and belonging in the context of their identities and in relation to their experiences of wellbeing.

d) Increased understandings of the *capacities* and *perseverance* of Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people in community building.

e) More developed understandings of the *contemporary effects of historical trauma* and colonizing practices as they reach into the present for individuals, communities and nations – specifically for those who identify as Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. These effects interfere with the development of safe communities and spaces in which to belong, and call home.

f) *Community building* recommendations as shared by participants for working with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people and communities in ways that foster collective wellbeing and thus individual wellbeing and provide positive contexts in which to develop a sense of home, community and belonging.

g) *Community building* recommendations that emphasize *collective* knowledge sharing, capacity building, organizing and action to promote wellbeing and cultural awareness, continuity and vitality.

h) General social work practice: work with LGBTTQ, work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, working across differences, political implications of practice, awareness of intersection of oppressions, multiple social locations and social work practice, anti-oppressive practice, making sense of oneself as a learning ally, community organizing.

i) Social work education: findings/content of this study can inform curriculum. Processes related to practice and working with/within communities can be used to inform field learning, research, curriculum development and teaching practices.

j) This project exists as an example of inter-disciplinary social work *qualitative* and *community-based* research informed by *Indigenous, critical* and *feminist* methodologies and can be used as such by students seeking current examples of such research.

k) Recommendations for further research specific to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people: connections to Indigenous and Two-Spirit cultural practices; an inventory of how Two-Spirit people are contributing to cultural vitality and resurgence of Two-Spirit ways of being; and experiences of intersecting oppressions and identities as they inform alliances and community organizing across difference among Two-Spirit and LGBTQ communities.

Research can inform decision-making and help us understand the world around us. In its OCAP document, the First Nations Centre states, "Good research has the potential to create valuable new knowledge or substantiate what we already know. It can also foster positive change or confirm that things are working well." (2007, p. 2) Many Indigenous scholars are using research processes planfully and thoughtfully as decolonizing processes – as important for academic institutions and non-Aboriginal peoples as for Indigenous peoples and communities (such as Anderson, 2003; Hart, 2002 and 2009b; Kovach, 2009; Richardson & Seaborn, 2009). As a non-Indigenous person working to be an ally to First Nations peoples, I hope this research exists as a de-colonizing project that will positively affect the future experiences of Indigenous people that identify as Two-Spirit and LGBTQ and the larger community, as well as myself.

McEwan and McEwan (2003) acknowledge Silverman in asking if a given area of study has theoretical and practical significance. They state that in the area of education, an inquiry project needs to have "usability" and "inform real decisions in real educational environments" (p. 110-111). A tenet of Indigenous research methods includes accountability to relationships, community relevance and giving back to the communities from which participants come (S. Wilson, 2008; A. Wilson, 2009). Further, a decolonizing framework assists in deciphering the contradictory experiences associated with dual accountability – to an Indigenous community and a Western research site (Kovach, 2009).

In ensuring that the work of this project does not simply sit on a shelf, what I had initially proposed was that the completion phase of my thesis work would occur in the information-sharing process. I hoped to offer social and other community workers

useful knowledge for working in good ways with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, and in Indigenous communities to promote and build on existing wellness, capacities, and agency.

Originally, I planned to create both a summary and a user-friendly report (booklet style) for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples to share as they see fit in their individual and collective advocacy efforts. This reference would be for Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ communities, with a section also for people working in community settings with Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ. Upon reflecting, I am not sure how best to share the findings of this analysis – and I realize that it is not up to me. Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people need be involved in these decisions. I would like to connect with community Advisory Committee members in both Winnipeg and Vancouver and see how *they* would like to highlight the information (the medium), what needs to be included (the content) and how best to share it with specific target groups (the process) (Hart, 2009b).

Post-Script: Reflections on Myself in Relation to the Project

A question I have repeatedly returned to throughout this process has been that of one of my thesis committee members (Deana). She asked "Why Aboriginal?" Why am I doing this study of Aboriginal people?

My first response was (and has been in many moments) agreement – she is correct, I have no right, entitlement or place to do this research. Upon observing my feelings when I respond this way (even in my thoughts), I notice I feel guilty – for taking the place of learning and opportunity an Aboriginal student and researcher deserves (more!). I feel guilty for overstepping my bounds as an ally. I believe my role as an ally is to listen first and foremost (as I keep making sense of it and I expect and hope it will become more refined as I grow). In doing this research, I have acted out more power in relation to the project then perhaps an ally should have. (This brings me to other questions I have pondered, being 'What is solidarity?' and 'What are the roles of allies?')

Some of my guilty response is my own drama, and perhaps overdeveloped sense of responsibility. When I think more about it though, there is a part of me, bolstered by community engagement and feedback, that thinks, 'Wait, why not?'

Without minimizing the need for and importance of Indigenous-led research and scholarship, I would like to point out that this research is about Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people. There is more to this project than one identity grouping (such as "Aboriginal" that is a vast and diverse, congruent and contradictory 'Canadian' constitutional misnomer anyways). Just as there is not one way to be Aboriginal, there is not one way to be Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual,

intersex, queer, questioning, or an ally. These are all umbrella terms. To this diversity, multiplicity, misunderstanding, tension, agreement, and rallying cry - I can relate. Without imposing myself, without making my ideas most important, but to inform my listening ears, mind and heart to the words and stories and hopes of participants.

So this is why Aboriginal, and why me… because I believe I have brought myself – all of my parts, quietly, gently, and more respectfully than I walk most days. I am practicing consciousness, examining the words of myself and others, and trying to offer something good and useful in return for the gifts given to me in this role by consultants, community Advisory Committee members, participants and thesis committee members. I believe that people have shared their best with me (best efforts, toughest stories, biggest hopes, hard and valid questions, constructive feedback and patient guidance), and I have tried to offer my best in return. Everyone's trust and confidence are gifts I take seriously and accept humbly. Thank you.

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Appendix A: List of Community Advisory Committee Members

Winnipeg

Marjorie Beaucage (Community Member)
Rosa Colavito-Palao (Therapist, Nine Circles Community Health Centre)
Cathy Denby (White Wolf Speaking, Sexuality Education Resource Centre)
Kelly Houle (Community Member and Educator)
Albert McLeod (UAR-AYC, Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. - Those Who Lead)
Carrie McCormack (Kali Shiva AIDS Services)
Peetanacoot Nenakawekapo (Two-Spirit Outreach Worker, Nine Circles   Community
Health Centre)
Rath Pranteau (Community Member)

Vancouver

Ken Clement, Co-Chair Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
Raigen D'Angelo, Trans Alliance Society of BC
Tia Eagles Claw, BC Persons with AIDS Society
Lynda Gray, Urban Native Youth Association
Robert Hong, Four Feather Society, and Aboriginal Wellness Program, Vancouver
        Coastal Health
Sarah Hunt, Community Advocate, Independent Contractor
Karen Joseph, Co-Chair Community Advocate, Independent Aboriginal Contractor
Winston Thompson, Healing Our Spirit

Appendix B: Guiding Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) as accepted in Winnipeg

The research team and Advisory Committee agree to the following principles:

- Members of the research team acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal right to self-determination, including the jurisdiction to decide about research in their communities. In doing so, the research process shall be built upon meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the research team and Aboriginal communities. Further, the research team agrees they will strive to respect the privacy, dignity, culture and rights of Aboriginal peoples.

- The research team will strive to include meaningful and equal participation with Aboriginal community members. Therefore, the parties agree that Aboriginal community members will be involved from beginning to end in the research process, from research question formulation, though data collection, analysis and sharing of research findings.

- The research team agrees that they will collectively make decisions with the advisory committee about the research questions, recruitment of participants, data collection and interpreting results.

- The research questions must not only reflect academic interests but ensure that the research is meaningful, relevant and beneficial to Aboriginal communities.

- In sharing the findings of the research with Aboriginal communities, the research team agrees that the language and manner of sharing research will be appropriate.

- The purpose of the research project will be explained to all stakeholders (interview/focus group participants and advisory committee members) in a language that is appropriate to the Aboriginal community. Likewise, the research team will explain potential risks and benefits in a similar manner.

- The research team agrees they will not sensationalize problems in Aboriginal communities. Rather, they will strive to present a balanced portrait that also focuses equal attention on more positive aspects. As such, the research team understands that they will collaboratively prepare draft findings with input from the advisory committee. The parties agree to review findings in a timely manner (e.g. two weeks).

- Given that all members of the research team and advisory committee will be provided the opportunity to review and comment on findings, any one member of the research team may not, particularly once initial dissemination has

occurred, further analyze, publish or present findings resulting from the above mentioned research project unless the entire research team reaches a consensus.

- The Principle Investigator is responsible for maintaining the integrity of all data collected, such as storing participant consent forms, etc. However, once privacy and confidentiality of participants has been demonstrated, data sets in the form of computer files may be shared with all members of the research team. In cases of disagreement over transfer of data sets (as described above), the research team will strive to achieve a significant degree of consensus.

- The research team agrees to provide meaningful and appropriate research capacity-building, as indicated by the advisory committee.

- The research team agrees that Aboriginal communities have the right to follow cultural codes of conduct and community protocols. However, rather then end a research relationship, in situations where Aboriginal community members are in disagreement, the research team will strive to resolve conflict towards achieving a significant degree of consensus.

- The research team agrees that it may be necessary for Aboriginal community members (investigators and participants) to seek advice and support from community elders and other community leadership. The involvement of Aboriginal elders in the project will be discussed and decided by each advisory committee with the research team.

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010.)

Appendix C: Guiding Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP)
as accepted in Vancouver

Two-Spirit People, Migration and Health Research Project

Guiding Principles of Research

The Research Team and Advisory Committees
The Research Team consists of: Janice Ristock (Principle Investigator), Art Zoccole (Co-Investigator), Cindy Holmes (Research Assistant – Vancouver), Lisa Passante (Research Assistant – Winnipeg).

The Research Team works with an Advisory Committee in each research site (one in Vancouver and one in Winnipeg) comprised of key stakeholders representing: Aboriginal and Two-Spirit community organizations and individuals, and non-Aboriginal allies working with Two-Spirit people.

Guiding Principles: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession
The research team recognizes the highest standards of research practice and will ensure that the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) will be respected as outlined below (a definition of OCAP follows). The following statement of principles is based on and adapted from the guiding principles from the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN).

The research team and advisory committee agree to the following principles:

- Members of the research team acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal right to self-determination, including the jurisdiction to decide about research in their communities. In doing so, the research process shall be built upon meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the research team and Aboriginal communities. Further, the research team agrees they will strive to respect the privacy, dignity, culture and rights of Aboriginal peoples.

- The research team will strive to include meaningful and equal participation with Aboriginal community members. Therefore, the parties agree that Aboriginal community members will be involved from beginning to end in the research process, from research question formulation, though data collection, analysis and sharing of research findings.

- The research team agrees that they will collectively make decisions with the advisory committee about the research questions, recruitment of participants, data collection and interpreting results.

- The research questions must not only reflect academic interests but ensure that the research is meaningful, relevant and beneficial to Aboriginal communities.

- In sharing the findings of the research with Aboriginal communities, the research team agrees that the language and manner of sharing research will be appropriate.

- The purpose of the research project will be explained to all stakeholders (interview/focus group participants and advisory committee members) in a language that is appropriate to the Aboriginal community. Likewise, the research team will explain potential risks and benefits in a similar manner.

- The research team agrees they will not sensationalize problems in Aboriginal communities. Rather, they will strive to present a balanced portrait that also focuses equal attention on more positive aspects. As such, the research team understands that they will collaboratively prepare draft findings with input from the advisory committee. The parties agree to review findings in a timely manner (e.g. two weeks).

- Given that all members of the research team and advisory committee will be provided the opportunity to review and comment on findings, any one member of the research team may not, particularly once initial dissemination has occurred, further analyze, publish or present findings resulting from the above mentioned research project unless the entire research team reaches a consensus.

- The Principle Investigator is responsible for maintaining the integrity of all data collected, such as storing participant consent forms, etc. However, once privacy and confidentiality of participants has been demonstrated, data sets in the form of computer files may be shared with all members of the research team. In cases of disagreement over transfer of data sets (as described above), the research team will strive to achieve a significant degree of consensus.

- The research team agrees to provide meaningful and appropriate research capacity-building, as indicated by the advisory committee.

- The research team agrees that Aboriginal communities have the right to follow cultural codes of conduct and community protocols. However, rather then end a research relationship, in situations where Aboriginal community members are in disagreement, the research team will strive to resolve conflict towards achieving a significant degree of consensus.

- The research team agrees that it may be necessary for Aboriginal community members (investigators and participants) to seek advice and support from community elders and other community leadership. The involvement of Aboriginal elders in the project will be discussed and decided by each advisory committee with the research team.

OCAP has been defined by the National Aboriginal Health Organization and the First Nations Centre as follows*:

Ownership: The notion of ownership refers to the relationship of a First Nations community to its cultural knowledge/data/information. The principle states that a community or group owns information collectively in the same way that an individual owns his or her personal information. It is distinct from stewardship or possession (see Possession).

Control: The aspirations and rights of First Nations to maintain and regain control of all aspects of their lives and institutions include research and information. The principle of "control" asserts that First Nations, their communities and representative bodies are within their rights in seeking to control research and information management processes that impact them. This includes all stages of research projects, and more broadly, research policy, resources, review processes, the formulation of conceptual frameworks, data management and so on.

Access: First Nations people must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities, regardless of where these are currently held. The principle also refers to the right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information.

Possession: While "ownership" identifies the relationship between a people and their data in principle, the idea of "possession" or "stewardship" is more literal. Although not a condition of ownership, possession (of data) is a mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected. When data owned by one party are in the possession of another, there is a risk of breach or misuse. This is particularly important when trust is lacking between the

owner and possessor.

Schnarch, B. (2004). *Ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) or self-determination applied to research: A critical analysis of contemporary First Nations research and some options for First Nations communities.* First Nations Centre and National Aboriginal Health Organization.

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011.)

Appendix D: Sample Information Letter and Consent Form

This Winnipeg example was printed on University of Manitoba letterhead. A copy was given to participants for their records and a signed copy kept in files in a locked office in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies.

Open Letter to Participant

University of Manitoba   **Sexualities, Vulnerability,**
Women's and Gender Studies Program   **Resilience**
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2   (SVR)
                                                  Université de Québec a Montréal

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This letter will provide you background about the study, as well as contact addresses if you have any questions or concerns.

This project looks at migration and mobility experiences of two-spirit (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and/or transgender) Aboriginal people. We want to better understand the experiences that have influenced you to move, and also those that have influenced you to stay in place. We are also interested in how you make sense of home, belonging, and yourself (as Aboriginal and two-spirit/LGBTQ). We want to know about positive experiences you may have had and/or experiences of discrimination that you may have had (for example, homophobia, racism, and violence) and how moving may have impacted your health and well-being.

This is a two-year project (2007-2009). We are looking for participants in two cities, Winnipeg and Vancouver. In each city, we will complete some individual interviews and two or three focus groups. At the end of this project, we will produce a "final report" as well as a fact sheet or pamphlets for community members to educate each other and community service organizations about important issues related to Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people, migration and health.

A Research Team is directing this project. The Principal Investigator for this study is Janice Ristock (204-474-9912 or 204-474-8689 and at ristock@cc.umanitoba.ca) Professor, University of Manitoba Women's and Gender Studies and the Co-Investigator is Art Zoccole (416-944-9300 ext. 222,

Executive Director, 2-Spirit People of the 1st Nations, Toronto, ON and at art@2spirits.com). An Advisory Committee of community members works on the research at each stage as it progresses but your identity will not be revealed to Advisory Committee Members.

This research has been approved by the **University of Manitoba Joint Research Ethics Board.** 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.

The research coordinator is Lisa Passante and she will provide you with more details about your interview/focus group session. We thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Janice Ristock, PhD
Women's and Gender Studies Program
Faculty of Arts
University of Manitoba

Information and Informed Consent Form

Who is doing this study and what is it about?
This pilot study is conducted by
• **Janice Ristock** (204-474-9912 or 204-474-8689 and at
ristock@cc.umanitoba.ca) Professor, Women's and Gender Studies,
University of Manitoba and
• **Art Zoccole** (416-944-9300 ext. 222, Executive Director, 2-Spirit People
of the 1st Nations, Toronto, ON and at art@2spirits.com)
• **and an Advisory Committee in Winnipeg**

Beginning in 2007 and completed in 2009, this study has been funded by
the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). We would like to learn
about your experiences of mobility and any negative and/or positive
experiences you may have encountered because of your identity as a two-
spirit/LGBTQ Aboriginal person. It is hoped the study will help us suggest
ways in which health care services may better understand the role of
Aboriginal culture and how best to address any negative experiences (like
homophobia) when providing services to two-spirit people.

We invite you to be part of our study if you are:
• An Aboriginal person (including First Nations, Inuit and Métis)
• Self-identify as two-spirit (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
queer, woman in relationship and having sex with women/men , man in
relationship and having sex with men)
• Are 18 years of age or older (or with parental permission);
• Speak English;
• Have moved more than once in your life seeking home, safety, or
belonging.

What is your role in the study?
You can decide if you want to be part of this study. Your role in the study
will not affect your right to receive services or care from any host
organization. If you do participate, we will ask you to answer questions in
a face-to-face interview (about 1 to 2 hours), or to participate in a focus
group (2-3 hours). The interviews and focus groups will be conducted by a
person employed with the research team. If you do not feel comfortable,
you do not have to answer every question in the interview or focus group
discussion. Or if you chose, you may stop at any time and withdraw from
the study. When the interview or focus groups is over, you will receive a
$25 gift of thanks (even if you stopped the interview or focus group).

What will be done with the information?
The information from all the interviews and focus reports will be put together into a report that summarizes the findings. All information that can potentially identify study participants will be removed. You may obtain a copy of the final report by contacting the Research Coordinator or Janice Ristock. Also, articles may be written for journals or presentations at conferences. Pamphlets or fact sheets may be created to share with community members to help them learn more about migration and Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people.

Is the information you give us confidential?
Yes. Your name will only appear on this Consent Form that indicates you understand the nature and purpose of this study. We will not share your name or identity with anyone and it will not appear in any report, article or booklet. All identifying information including names and locations will be removed at the point of transcribing the interview/focus group tapes. The interview information and consent form will be locked separately in secure places. Interview and focus group tapes, transcripts and notes will be destroyed 7 years after the study is finished.
Please note: Under federal law, should abuse of children or persons in care be revealed during the course of the interview or focus group discussion, the research coordinator/interviewer has an obligation to report this to the appropriate authorities.

If you have questions about the study or problems with interviews or focus groups, you may contact:
·   Dr. Janice Ristock at the University of Manitoba: 204-474-9912 or 204-474-8689 and at ristock@cc.umanitoba.ca
·   **This research has been approved by** The University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. **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.**

You must sign two (2) copies of this consent form:
Before you can participate in this study, you must sign this consent form. Please sign two (2) copies. One copy is for you to keep and one must be given to the interviewer **_before_** the interview or focus group can begin. If you have any questions about the study, you should ask the interviewer for answers before you sign this form. The form shows that you agree to be part of the study. It shows that you understand why we are doing the study, that the interview or focus group will be audio recorded and how

the information you provided can be used (if we can use direct quotations from your interview or not) and if you wish to be contacted again in the future about this project.

I have read the information about this study and I understand:
- It is my choice to take part in the study;
- If I take part, I do not have to answer all questions or I can stop the interview or stop participating in the focus group at any time;
- I understand the interview and focus group will be audio recorded;
- I was given an opportunity to ask questions and they were answered by the interviewer to my satisfaction;
- My part in the study will not affect my right to access care and other services;
- Study information will be combined into a report, journals, conference presentations or fact sheets;
- My name will not be shared with anyone;
- I will get $25 for participating in the interview.

Please print your name and sign below:

I, _____, agree to be interviewed/ participate in a focus group for this study. (Print your name)

_____   _____
(Signed in Ink)   (Date)

Audio-recorder:
I give permission to use an audio recorder for the interview or focus group:
Yes   No

Initials

Direct quotations:
Direct quotations from this interview or focus group can be used in reports:
Yes   No

Initials

Check Transcript:
I want to check the transcript (written notes) of my interview: Yes   No

(If yes, give contact information below)
Initials

Follow-up Contact:
I volunteer to be contacted again later in the research study and to give me feedback on the summary of major findings/themes:
Yes   No

(If yes, give contact information below)
Initials

I can be contacted at:

_____

_____

_____

(postal address, telephone and/or email address)

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010.)

Appendix E: Winnipeg Background Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your status as an Aboriginal person?

Inuit _____

Innu _____

Métis _____

First Nations (status) _____

First Nations (non-status) _____

Other (please specify – e.g., Bill C-31, etc.) _____

Non-Aboriginal _____

2. What is the first language you learned to speak?

_____

3. What term would you use to best define your sexuality?
(Check all that apply.)

Heterosexual (straight) _____

Gay _____

Lesbian _____

Bisexual (like both sexes) _____

Transgender (male to female) _____

Transgender (female to male) _____

Two-spirit _____

Queer _____

Unsure of my sexual orientation _____

Other (please specify) _____

4. What word best describes your gender? (Check all that apply.)

Female _____

Male _____

Transgender _____

Inter-sex (born with sex parts of both male and female) _____

Other (please specify) _____

5. What year were you born? (Please specify.)

_____

6. Where do you live? (City, town, Aboriginal community etc.)

Most of the time _____

How long have you lived there? _____

Some of the time _____

How long have you lived there? _____

7. What is your current living arrangement? (Check all that apply.)

rooming house _____   living with friends _____

rent house or apartment _____   living with relatives _____

emergency shelter _____   living alone _____

own a house or condo _____   living with a partner _____

homeless/live on the street _____

Other: _____

8. Do you have children who live with you?

Yes _____   No _____   Some of the time _____

9. Have you moved from an Aboriginal Community (reserve, rural community or town)/Métis Settlement/Inuit Hamlet to the City (i.e. Winnipeg or other city)?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, how many times as an adult? _____

How many times as a child (under 16)? _____

10. Have you moved within the city?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, how many times as an adult? _____

How many times as a child (under 16)? _____

11. Have you moved from a different province to the city?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, how many times as an adult? _____

How many times as a child (under 16)? _____

12. Have you moved from a different country to the city?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, how many times as an adult? _____

How many times as a child (under 16)? _____

13. Do you travel to your home community?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, how many times per year? _____

14. If you do travel back and forth, how much does it cost to do this travelling?

_____

_____

15. Have you ever been taken from your biological parents?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, adopted _____   or

placed in foster home _____   How many times? _____

16. Did you attend a Residential School?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, for how long? _____

17. Did your parents, guardians, grandparents or other relatives attend a Residential School?

Yes _____   No _____   Don't Know _____

If yes, who attended?

Mother _____   Father _____

Guardian(s) _____   Grandparents _____

Other relative _____

18. Have you ever been forced out of your community because of your sexual or gender identity?

Yes _____   No _____

19. What are your short or long term health concerns?

None _____   Diabetes _____

Hepatitis C _____   HIV _____

Cancer _____   Tuberculosis _____

Weight Concerns _____   STIs _____

Other _____

20. Have you ever experienced domestic violence in a same-sex/LGBTTQ relationship?

Yes _____   No _____

21. What is your highest level of education?

some grade school _____   some high school _____

high school diploma _____   some college/university _____

university/college degree _____ graduate degree (M/Ph. D.) _____

20. Do you participate in traditional cultural practices?

Yes _____   No _____

If yes, please check all that apply:

dancing _____   drumming _____

singing _____   spiritual practices _____

medicines _____   living on the land (hunting/gathering) _____

ceremonies _____   language _____

art _____   healing _____

Other_____

21. How do you make money? (Check all that apply to you.)

State Sponsored (E.I., Social Assistance) _____

Disability Benefits (CPP, MPI, Worker's Compensation, other) _____

Full-time Work _____

Part-time Work _____

Casual Work _____

Student Funding (Band funding, Student Loan) _____

Sex Trade _____

Drug Trade _____

Other _____

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010.)

Appendix F: Vancouver Background/Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your status as an Aboriginal person?

Non-Aboriginal ___ (**Stop Here**)
Inuit ___
Innu ___
Métis ___
First Nations (status) – please specify Nation/band ___
First Nations (non-status) – please specify Nation/band

_____

Other (please specify – e.g., Bill C-31, etc.)

_____

2. What term would you use that best defines your sexuality?

Heterosexual/Straight ___ (**Stop Here**)
Gay ___
Lesbian ___
Bisexual (like both sexes) ___
Two-spirit ___
Queer__
Unsure of my sexual orientation ___
Other (please specify)

_____

No answer

3. What word best describes your gender?

Female ___   Two Spirit ___
Male ___   Gender Queer ___
Transgender (male to female) ___   Transsexual ____
Transgender (female to male) ___   Intersex ___
Other (please specify)

_____

4. What year were you born? (Please specify)

_____

5. Where do you live? (i.e. Vancouver, Reserve)

Most of the time _____
How long have you lived here? _____
Some of the time _____
How long have you lived here? _____

6. Have you moved from:

Reserve/settlement/hamlet to city? Yes___ No___

If yes, how many times as an adult? ____

As a child (under 16) ____

Within the city? Yes___ No___

If yes, how many times as an adult? ____

As a child (under 16) ____

Town or other city? Yes___ No___

If yes, how many times as an adult? ____

As a child (under 16) ____

A different province? Yes___ No___

If yes, how many times as an adult? ____

As a child (under 16) ____

A different Country? Yes___ No___

If yes, how many times as an adult? ____

As a child (under 16) ____

7. Was it your choice to move to Vancouver?

Yes ___   No ___

8. What is your highest level of education?

Grade 9 or less	High School Diploma
Grade 10	Some College/University
Grade 11	Completed College Certificate/Diploma
Grade 12	Completed University degree

9. How do you make money? (Check all that apply to you)

       Federal /Provincial Assistance (E.I, Social al Assistance) ___
       Full-time Work ___
       Part-time Work ___
       Casual Work ___
       Student Funding (Band funding, Student Loan) ___
       Sex Trade ___
       Drug Trade ___
       Supported by Spouse or family ___
       Self-Employed ___
       Other ___

10. What were your living arrangements for the past 12 months?

       Renting an house or apartment ___   Room & Board ___
       Own a house or apartment ___   Sleeping on a couch ___
       Streets ___   Bed in a Hostel ___
       Correctional Institution ___   Live with Family/Friends ___

11. I have children who live with me
       Yes _____   No _____   Some of the time _____

12. Have you ever been taken from your biological parents?
       Yes _____ No _____

If yes, _____ adopted
       _____ placed in foster home   How many times? _____

13. Were you ever abandoned by your biological parents?

       Yes ___   No ____

14. Did you attend a Residential School?

       Yes _____   If yes, for how long? _____
       No _____

15. Did your parents, guardians, grandparents or other relatives attend a Residential School?   Yes _____   No _____   Don't Know _____

       Mother _____   Father _____   Guardian(s) _____
       Grandparents _____   Other relative _____

16. Have you ever been forced out of your community because of your sexual or gender identity?

        Yes _____   No _____

17. What are your short/long term health concerns?

None ____	Diabetes ___
HIV ____	Hep C ___
Cancer ___	Tuberculosis ___
Weight Concerns ___	STI's ____
Other ___	

18. Have you ever-experienced domestic violence in a same-sex/LGBTQ relationship?

        Yes ___   No ____

17. Do you speak your Traditional Language?

Fluently ___
Knowledge of some of my traditional language ___
No ___

18. Do you participate in traditional cultural practices?
    _____ Yes   _____ No

If yes, please check all that apply:

_____ Dancing   _____ drumming   _____ singing

_____ Spiritual practices   _____ living on the land (hunting/gathering)

_____ Medicines   _____ceremonies   _____ language

_____ Art   Other_____

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011.)

Appendix G: Winnipeg Qualitative Interview Guide

Discussion Questions
➢ WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES

1. Where were you born and where are some of the places that you have you lived?

2. Why did you decide to move? (What are the reasons you have moved?)

3. How did you decide to come to Winnipeg?

4. Have you had any problems while living in Winnipeg?

5. What are some good/positive things about living in Winnipeg?

6. How do you define community?

7. What communities do you belong to in Winnipeg? (gay/lesbian? Aboriginal? Women's, other communities etc.)

8. Do you feel you can move freely through different communities in Winnipeg? Are you the same person in each community?

9. Where do you experience a feeling of belonging?

10. How do you define "home"?

11. How have your moves influenced the way you make sense of where you belong, where you find "home"?

12. What do you see as the impacts on your health and wellbeing (positive or negative)?

13. What are some of the ways you have coped with moving?

14. Does your family support you?

15. What are some services that would be helpful to you and other Aboriginal Two-Spirit/ LGBTQ people? (housing, healthcare, education)

16. Is there anything else you would like to add to help us understand your experiences of moving as an Aboriginal LGBTTQ person?

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010.)

Appendix H: Vancouver Qualitative Interview Guide

Vancouver Interview Guide

1. Where did you live before moving to Vancouver?
2. Why did you move?
3. Why did you choose to move to Vancouver? (Probe around violence, discrimination, lack of Two-Spirit resources in your community, etc.)
4. Has moving had an impact on your health and wellbeing (positive or negative)? Can you give us some examples?
5. Have you had any problems while living in Vancouver? (Probe – Have you experienced any discrimination – racism, homophobia, transphobia, violence, housing, health?)
6. What are some good/positive things about living in Vancouver?
7. Do you feel you have a sense of belonging in Vancouver? (Probe – What does community mean to you?) Why or why not?
8. Do you feel that you can move freely through the different communities in Vancouver? Are you the same person/does your identity change in each community? Can you give us some examples?
9. How do you reach out to people/how do you connect with others?
10. Does your family support you? If yes, how? If no, why?
11. What are some services that would be helpful to you and other Aboriginal Two-Spirit, LGBTQT people? (housing healthcare, education, spiritual)

(As produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Potskin, 2011.)

Appendix I: Template for Home, Community and Belonging Data Summary, Review and Analysis

City and Summary of Main Demographics

1. **How does the participant describe his/her/their identities?**

2. **What does that participant say about "home" in the context of migration?**

3. **"Community"?**

4. **"Belonging"?**

5. **Experiences supporting a positive sense of home, community, belonging (especially related to migration)?**

6. **Experiences negatively impacting sense of home, community or belonging?**

7. **How does the participant speak about health and wellbeing?**

8. **Strengths shared?**

9. **Resiliencies?**

10. **Recommendations for community building?**

11. **Anything else that stands out?**

(Created according to example by Ristock, as produced in Ristock, Zoccole & Passante, 2010.)