

Youth Researchers Promoting Equality: Gender-based Violence Prevention in Rural

Manitoba

A Community-based Youth Participatory Action Research Project

By

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Abstract

Through the use of focus groups, this study explores the issue of gender-based violence prevention in rural Manitoba. Youth participants took part in a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project that used elements of community-based and arts-based research methods. Participants shared their understandings of gender-based violence, the role of rural geography in experiences and/or prevention of gender-based violence, and how they saw themselves and other young people as participants in gender-based violence prevention efforts.

The discussions with youth participants were analyzed from human security and structural violence standpoints through intersectional and standpoint feminist lenses. Findings of this research include: the development of a more complex and nuanced understanding of “rural”, the policy and structural level changes required to address participants’ discontent with the status quo as it works to perpetuate gender-based violence, and the desire of participants to continue the work of violence prevention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must start by thanking each and every one of the youth who participated in the study. Thank you for trying something new, for trusting me with your insights, for being so supportive of one another, and for continuing to be engaged in the work that we have all put so much time and effort into. I would also like to thank the school and parents of the youth participants for their support their and trust in me.

I cannot begin to thank my advisor, Dr. Maureen Flaherty (University of Manitoba), as well as the other three members of my advisory committee, Dr. Kelly Gorkoff (University of Winnipeg), Dr. Kendra Nixon and Dr. Judith Hughes (University of Manitoba) enough for their encouragement and guidance throughout this entire process. Thank you for allowing me to take the lead while pushing me to think further and differently than I would have been able to alone. Thank you for your patience with the process. As I have said before and will continue to say, I feel extremely lucky to have professors like you to learn from.

To my support network: my family, my spouse, and my friends, I thank you for your love and light. Thank you for allowing me to think out loud with you, thank you for the soft place to land, and thank you for your genuine interest in and support of the work that I do.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the financial support received from Peace & Conflict Studies and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba. I would also like to thank Voices Against Violence, a multi-site, national research initiative based out of Western University and funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Without the financial support from the scholarships and research grants that I received, I would not have been able to complete this research project with the same amount of support and resources for the participants. Thank you for seeing value in the participants' and my work.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is a global issue that requires context-specific solutions (Merry). These solutions cannot be imposed via a top-down approach, nor can the solutions that work in one area of the world be expected to work as effectively in other locations (Merry). Prevention efforts play an important role in the eradication of gender-based violence. They must be context-specific so as to address the unique complexity of the issue in a specific geographic location. Prevention must come directly from the community rather than being imposed by a third party. This paper describes a community-based Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project focused on gender-based violence prevention and the ways in which youth can be engaged as leaders of awareness raising and prevention initiatives.

Gender-based violence, as it is described by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, is “violence against women based on women’s subordinate status in society. It includes any act or threat... that inflict[s] physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender. In most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women” (1-2). Gender-based violence is not a problem that occurs only “over there” and “somewhere else”; it is as real here in Manitoba, and Canada more widely, as it is anywhere. The Canadian Women’s Foundation website curated an expansive list of statistics that have been pulled from the most recently published surveys related to violence against women and girls in the country. They report the following:

- Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.
- 67% of all Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted.
- Provincially, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have consistently recorded the

highest provincial rates of police-reported violent crime, had rates of violence against women in 2011 that were about double the national rate. (Canadian Women's Foundation)

While these statistics are disturbing in their own right, they become increasingly so when we are reminded of the fact that the actual incidence of gender-based violence is much higher than the official police-reported statistics due to the fact that such a large percentage of this violence goes unreported (Statistics Canada).

Purpose of the Study: Research Questions

Much of Canada's population resides in rural and remote communities that are by definition removed from easy access to city centres and the services that they are likely to provide. It is important to consider Canadian geography in discussions about the ways that gender-based violence is enacted, experienced, and prevented in Canada as a whole. This research project explores both structural and direct gender-based violence and their prevention with a group of youth who live in a rural farming community in Western Manitoba. The following research questions guided the process: 1. How do youth in a rural Manitoban community understand gender-based violence? 2. Do the youth in this community think that their rural location may have unique meanings related to experiences and prevention of gender-based violence? 3. How can these youth participate meaningfully in the prevention of gender-based violence? These questions were designed to be specific enough to provide direction but remain broad enough to allow for the use of a Youth Participatory Action Research methodology where the participants are able to dictate the direction of the research and the activities that become a part of it.

The decision to focus my energy and research on gender-based violence prevention in rural

Manitoba felt like a natural path to choose. During my undergraduate degree, I majored in Women's and Gender Studies. In the various courses I took and papers that I wrote, I began to realize that I was just as enraged by the reality of gender-based violence in my final year of study as I was when I first began the program. The visceral reaction to reading and hearing the stories of violence told by and about women that I know and women who are strangers to me remains. I knew that I needed to commit myself to the eradication of gender-based violence but I also knew that my constantly engaged emotions would lead me to "burn out" in very little time, so, I needed to find a place where I could be part of a positive movement while also protecting myself. This inner dialogue and process of self-reflection led me to prevention.

I am originally from a very small rural Manitoban community and have worked with youth in various local and international capacities for much of my working/volunteer life. As I began to read more about gender-based violence prevention I realized how little is written about youth engagement in the prevention process, how little is written about prevention in the context of rural North American communities, and how even fewer pieces focus both on youth and a rural geographic context. Gender-based violence is not confined to city limits. I wanted to engage in a research project that could address this gap in knowledge while hopefully contributing something meaningful to my home community and the youth who would participate.

Research Context

As mentioned above, this research took place in my home community, which will be referred to as "The Valley" in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. This section lays out my understandings of the community prior to running the research project.

Reflections from participants and a more up-to-date analysis are described in the findings

and discussion sections. The Valley is home to approximately 1400 people and is located in an idyllic location near a provincial forest. The main industry of the area is mixed farming – that is, animals and grains; many family farms have been in business for multiple generations though, as in many contexts, farms are becoming larger and larger and fewer families are keeping their small operations. There is a First Nation community in close proximity to these farms. The youth from the First Nation and The Valley attend high school together in a Kindergarten to Grade 12 School. As with many other rural Manitoban communities, the population is aging, many of The Valley’s citizens are retired and the community’s activities and services are geared toward this demographic. There are few opportunities for young people, which can lead to feelings of isolation.

I grew up in The Valley and owe a lot of who I am and what I value to the community that helped raise me. For approximately seven years, the duration of my undergraduate degree and Masters program, I lived in Winnipeg, the capital and also largest city of the Province of Manitoba; however, I still considered myself to be a citizen of The Valley and throughout my years in Winnipeg visited as often as possible. My life will continue remain closely connected to The Valley through work and family. In addition to my rural/urban subjectivity, my social location includes the following categorizations: I am a white cis-woman, from a working/middle class background, involved in a heterosexual common law relationship, I identify as a feminist and engage in feminist research.

As with any research endeavour, I feel it is important to locate myself at the onset of this process in order to allow for as much transparency in my biases as possible. It is my hope that a process of ongoing reflexivity will prove useful in this research. Kouritzin et al. describe the positive outcomes that can result from researchers’ own reflexivity: “when self-reflection

happens, a researcher becomes, ‘another subject in the research process and another dimension is added to the data’... As researchers, we ought to continually pose questions to ourselves regarding the relationship between our experience and the research” (190). I am committed to engaging in research that is not only fully developed in the areas that academia often privileges most- theoretical analysis, sound methodologies, and nuanced data analysis- but also in the areas of emotion and compassion which are not always as highly regarded. Prioritizing these areas will add depth to my research. It will also ensure that I remain an active participant in the research process through continuous and critical interrogation of my preconceived notions and biases that may otherwise seep into my analysis without notice.

This research was partially supported financially by a multi-site, national study formally titled, Promoting Health through Collaborative Engagement with Youth in Canada: Overcoming, Resisting and Preventing Structural Violence (aka Voices Against Violence) that was itself funded by a Canadian Institute of Health Research grant. In exchange for funds that covered the costs of youth honoraria, venue rental, and supplies, the findings of this research have been shared with Voices Against Violence and will be added to their collection of work focusing on the implications of structural violence on the health and wellbeing of youth in Canada.

Though it may be assumed, it is important to directly state my past experiences with youth in the area, as it is these experiences and the relationships that were cultivated in the process that which allowed me to successfully facilitate the research with this particular group of participants. Prior to facilitating this study I knew most of the youth who were enrolled in grades eleven and twelve (my target population) in the local school through the work that I had done in

our community. During my time employed at the local swimming pool, I taught swimming lessons and lifeguarded children from the neighboring First Nation as well as those from The Valley. I also worked at the school as a substitute teacher for two years. In addition to the paid and volunteer work that I engaged in with this community I also saw these youth during my visits home. There is only one grocery store, post office, community centre, etc. so I have the opportunity to see most people in the community whenever I am in The Valley. The relationships that we had built prior to engaging in or even entertaining the research helped to create feelings of familiarity and shared history that enabled the youth participants and me to build upon a strong foundation of trust and understanding. Trust and understanding have been paramount to the success of this research endeavour. It was important that the participants be able to trust my ability to facilitate discussions and activities that were not only meaningful to their learning and our collective work on gender-based violence prevention but also allowed them to feel safe, respected, and valued. It was also vital that the participants be able to trust each other and make a continued commitment to understanding each other's perspectives and ways of knowing. I needed to trust in the participants' commitment to the research and develop an understanding of their individual and collective strengths and limits as we moved through the research process together.

It is important to make clear that I think of myself as a member of this community first, and a researcher second, and it is with this mindset that I have gone through the entire research process. I found multiple points of value in this research topic: first there is a clear lack of scholarly attention paid to experiences of gender-based violence and prevention efforts in rural communities in North America, in Canada, and most specifically, in Manitoba as is noted in the

Literature Review, which follows. In contrast to this lack of rural focus in the literature, many Canadians have a desire to or are required to live rurally. These people's lives make this research an important and worthwhile endeavour. As Angela Davis noted during her recent lecture in Winnipeg, understanding the predicament of the few ("the few" in her example referred to the Black population in Winnipeg occupying 4% of the total population) may hold the key to a truly democratic future (Davis). I think this sentiment can be applied to "the few" who are marginalized in many ways in our country and within our province: the fact that there "aren't that many" rurally located folks in Canada (as compared to our urban population) does not mean that their predicaments should not be paramount in our quest for a more socially just nation. Gender-based violence affects the individual of course; it also affects partners and children, friends, communities, and the wider society. The people living in these communities as well as those in more populated areas and urban centres deserve to live lives free from fear of and actual violence.

Many scholars have chosen to engage with youth on issues of social justice and for good reason. Gibson et al. report that community-based participatory research that engages a small group of youth in the research process may help "youth to actively engage the larger community [and] may be an essential element in creating community-level change (127-128). Providing space for youth to be authentically engaged in the change making that they see as necessary in their own contexts is a powerful tool for social justice and for peace. Jacques et al. provide a well-researched literature review on the role of young people in community-based participatory research. The results of their search found that while programs and activities that

are both designed and implemented by youth increase the ‘buy in’ of other youth and can at times provide a solution to the lack of free time and enthusiasm that adults may have, this type of engagement is still rare. They found, after reviewing approximately 400 articles that described community-based participatory research (CBPR) with youth, that “only 56 actually met criteria for CBPR with youth. Within those 56 articles, only 18% engaged youth in all phases of the CBPR process. Most studies focused on general health and wellness topics... and only 4 studies focused on safety/violence prevention (121). In addition, as Looker and Naylor point out, there is an urban norm in studies that engage youth as participants and/or co-researchers, and they explain that there is a “trend in youth studies where young people are typically associated with urban issues” (42). Addressing these gaps in the research is an important initiative to undertake but it is equally, if not more important, to do this work in a way that gives as much back to the youth participating as they are giving to the process. Given the general open mindedness of young people, the research activities that take place have the potential to result in lasting change for the participants involved. Greene and Hecht describe the implications of participating in this type of research for young people and their behaviour, “active involvement in narrative development heightens engagement...producing cognitive and behaviour change” (642). While this kind of lasting engagement and positive cognitive and behaviour change is always possible, it cannot come to be unless the research environment allows for full expression of youth participants. Pruitt speaks to the silencing of youth in research projects in the following way: “access and resources are necessary for being heard, and those who are marginalized are often understood to be ‘silent.’ Young people certainly fall into this category, as often they are denied resources and access due to their age, leading to their needs, perspectives and experiences being

marginalized” (p.4). The ways that I engaged youth in this project resisted this type of silencing as much as possible at every stage.

While the primary goal of this research is to address the lack of information about gender-based violence prevention in rural Manitoba a parallel goal emerged. I realized after the first meeting with the participants that this research project would be just as much about learning how to engage youth in a collaborative, community-based peacebuilding process as it was about the findings that emerged. The topic of gender-based violence prevention provided us with a destination; the collective process of doing the research was the road that we all traveled to get there and it became just as important to us.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into a series of chapters that provide details about the research process, the results of the process, and some thoughts for moving forward. The chapter that follows, Chapter 2: Literature Review, pulls at separate conceptual and theoretical threads then weaves them together to create a grounded foundation for the rest of the discussions to be built upon. The Literature Review is separated into four sections. The first provides a conceptual understanding of gender-based violence that is grounded in feminist understandings of the experience, perpetuation, and ramifications of both structural and direct forms of this violence. It also focuses on the necessity to complexify the idea of “rural” especially in conversations about gender-based violence that is happening in rural communities. The second section gives an overview of intersectional and standpoint feminisms; these are the bodies of feminist analyses that I have primarily used in the development of my research and in the process of understanding

the results. The third section describes the utility of community-based participatory research in prevention-focused research. The final section places a feminist lens on human security and structural violence theories that were similarly used in the development of the research process and the analysis of the findings.

Chapter 3 is focused on the Methodologies and Methods of the research process. In this section, I provide the rationale for my decision to use the methodological frameworks of: Participatory Action Research, Community-based participatory research, and Art-based research methods. I explain the research sample and the means used to recruit participants. Next, the methods of data collection are explored with notes about the organization and structure of the focus groups. Finally, this chapter provides an introduction to the process of data analysis and evaluation.

Chapter 4 explains the process of doing the research; it provides a sample of the activities that were used to engage participants, some of the art that was created by participants, and some notes about the video that the participants co-created. In this chapter, I begin to highlight sections of transcript as a means of prioritizing participants' voices and continuing the work of participatory action research. More in-depth notes on process are provided in the appendix.

Chapter 5 continues the focus on participants' voices through the exploration of participant identified thematic findings. Their perspectives on the following are described: the challenges and opportunities of rural Manitoba living, the group's evolution in their understanding of and responses to gender-based violence; their continued disappointment in the "status-quo" of societal and mainstream media discussion around gender-based violence; the development of their personal connections and how this contributed to feelings of safety and their ability to tackle prevention efforts; participants' description of some practical methods for

addressing gender-based violence when they encounter it in the real-world; finally, some participant ideas for policy driven prevention, ideas for structural change that would make their community and communities like theirs less likely to become incubators of gender-based violence.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, describes some of the supplementary outcomes for the participants involved. These include an overall increase in their feelings of personal and group empowerment and new-found opportunities for engaging their networks in conversations about gender-based violence, discrimination and social justice. The sixth chapter also shares a deep appreciation participants shared, for the opportunity to come together as a group and further develop their relationships. In addition, this chapter acts as a conclusion to the thesis providing some additional analysis, personal reflections, and updates on the developments that have occurred in the time between the conclusion of the focus groups and the final stages of writing this document- a timeframe of approximately one year.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature review reveals that gender-based violence and its prevention, specific to rural geography in Canada and elsewhere, is sorely under-researched. While there is still more to be done in addressing the issue of gender-based violence in general, it seems as though what is written has contributed to an urban norm in violence research (Pruitt). Due to the lack of research dealing specifically with my topic of interest, I have placed heavy emphasis on exploring the first section of my literature review: rural geography as a complex categorization. The complexity of rural geography is further explored in the ways that it presents challenges to those who experience and/or wish to prevent gender-based violence. This literature review focuses also focuses on feminist perspectives on human security and structural violence theories as they are used within Peace and Conflict Studies.

Gender-Based Violence & Rural Geography

This section explores gender-based violence and the role of rural geography on the ways that this type of violence can be experienced. In order to compensate for a lack of research specifically focusing on rural Canadian perspectives on gender-based violence, I have pieced together multiple groups of literature in an effort to combine work that describes the implications of rurality on gender-based violence. In order to create this patchwork, I will first explore the following areas as distinct sections: gender-based violence, rurality, and intersectional and standpoint feminism. Once these have been explored separately, I will draw upon some of the few works that combine these areas of focus.

Gender-based Violence

“Gender-based violence” is a term that has experienced multiple shifts in definition in recent history. Engle Merry describes gender-based violence as an “umbrella term for a wide range of violations” (3). These wide ranging violations are experienced and enacted differently depending on cultural contexts. As such there is not a single, all encompassing definition for gender-based violence. Despite the fact that gender-based violence takes multiple and varying forms it can be broadly understood as violence that is enacted structurally and/or directly against women due to their marginalized position within society.

While de Lang and Gurman discuss gender-based violence in the context of the global South, their discussions speak to the fact that gender-based violence is a global phenomenon that, as de Lange puts it, “knows no geographical, cultural, social, economic, ethnic, or other boundaries. It occurs across all societies and represents a brutal violation of human rights, the worst manifestation of gender-based discrimination and a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality” (584). Gurman also recognizes the embeddedness of gender-based violence within communities around the globe. “Women and girls, comprising the overwhelming majority of victims, are most vulnerable to GBV’s social, economic and health consequences...GBV impacts women’s economic productivity, disrupts educational attainment and reinforces existing gender inequities within societies” (690).

Figures reported and published by UN Women provide strong evidence that gender-based violence persists. The following facts and figures, from the UN Women website, speak to the necessity to understand violence prevention as a worthwhile pursuit:

- In 1993, the UN General Assembly: Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women provided a framework for action on the pandemic. But more than 20 years later, 1

in 3 women still experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.

- Adult women account for almost half of all human trafficking victims detected globally.

Women and girls together account for about 70 percent, with girls representing two out of every three child trafficking victims.

- It is estimated that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives. However, some studies show that up to 70 percent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

(UN Women)

In addition to the statistics above, a Google News search using the terms: “Canada women violence” on December 7, 2016, generated 1.1 million results; the terms: “Manitoba violence women” resulted in 40,500 stories; and the terms: “rural Manitoba violence women” produced 10,900 results. While this kind of search does not constitute substantive academic research, it does provide a snapshot in time. What this snapshot demonstrates is that violence against women happens. Without question it is happening here in Canada, it is reported on in Manitoba, and there is evidence of incidences in rural communities as well.

There are reams of scholarly works describing the prevalence of gender-based violence, the importance of critical examinations of the root causes of this issue, perspectives on prevention. Scholars including: Abraham & Tastsoglou, Jewkes et al., Johnson, Ansara et al., Cares, Chowdhury, DeGue et al., Lundgren & Amin, Michau et al., Weeks et al. among others have contributed to this conversation.

Johnson provides evidence of the fact that “women are subjected to a broader range of

violent acts from intimate partners than are men and... severe and chronic violence, coercive control, verbal abuse and serious psychosocial consequences are uniquely inflicted by men on women and not the reverse” (400). While the United States and Canada have, as Abraham & Tastsoglou report, gained an increased level of public awareness about gender-based violence and strategies for addressing it, there are still contentious issues to be dealt with. They note, “the framing of domestic violence in terms of legislation, policies, and state intervention tends to fit disturbingly well within the neoliberal framework... Framing the issue in this way has complex consequences for women’s lives and, also, deflects attention from the social, economic, and political realities that contribute to abuse” (569). The social, economic, and political realities contribute to abuse in ways that normalize direct violence through the ever-present forms of structural violence that produce and reinforce all of the “isms” such as: racism, classism, sexism, ablism, ageism, etc. that make gender-based violence an expected reality for women, some more than others. The concept of structural violence and its role in gender-based violence will be explored in greater depth near the end of the literature review.

Jewkes, Flood & Lang point to the implications of hegemonic masculinity in dealing with violence against women and girls:

Over the past 10-15 years, interventions involving men and boys have proliferated around the world. These interventions have been motivated by a desire to address the role of men in violence perpetration, and recognition that masculinity and gender-related social norms are implicated in violence... Although not all men are violent, all men and boys have a positive part to play to help stop violence against women. (Jewkes, Flood & Lang 1580)

This research is based on an understanding of gender-based violence that is similar to Engle Merry’s. Gender-based violence refers to all acts of violence that are experienced by and enacted

against women due to the fact that they are women. This violence is experienced differently by all women depending on their multiple intersecting social locations including but not limited to: race, class, ability, geographic location, sexuality, and age. The concept of intersectionality will be explored further below. Women's experiences of gender-based violence cannot be succinctly summarized into an all-encompassing definition. A definition must remain broad enough to be applicable to a variety of complex and unique experiences. Inherent in this definition is an understanding that power and power relations between members of society who are more or less marginalized than others plays a large part in the ways in which gender-based violence is perpetrated and experienced. Of course, all of these acts take place within different contexts.

Rural Geography

In order to effectively examine gender-based violence in a rural context we must deconstruct and complexify the term "rural" and the socially constructed meanings that are attached to it. The Canadian "rural" is often defined by what it is not, "the rural area of Canada is the area that remains after the delineation of population centres" (Statistics Canada, November 2015). Rural is not part of population centres, it is what remains beyond the borders of our city limits. Statistics Canada also describes the Canadian rural as: small towns, villages and other populated places with less than 1,000 population... agricultural, undeveloped and non-developable lands, remote and wilderness areas" (Statistics Canada, November 2015). Various scholars have contributed meaningfully to this discussion (Andresen et al., Brownridge, De Lange et al., Hall et al., Looker and Naylor, Sandberg, Shoveller et al.) but the topic is still relatively understudied especially in connection to gender-based violence prevention efforts.

Andresen provides evidence that rural communities in North America may lack the “diversity of opportunities found in more populated areas” and youth are likely to “experience isolation from the adult world that typifies twenty-first-century American adolescence” (126). However, there are also a number of positive outcomes for youth residing in rural locations including: facing less competition for roles in their school and in community activities, having more opportunities to have their voices heard within community decision making practices, and feeling a sense of connectedness (Andresen).

Experiences of isolation are not the only experiences of youth in rural communities. Rurality is often equated with the beauty of nature, wide open spaces where you can be alone with the natural surroundings, where you can simply exist—unbothered by big city lights and crowds of strangers. This romanticized isolation paints a pretty picture but it is not such an idyllic situation for those who are experiencing gender-based violence. Unfortunately, there is relatively little known about the gender-based violence that occurs in Canada’s rural communities (Brownridge 68).

Sandberg has developed an extensive literature review that includes research in rural areas of North America and Australia. Sandberg argues that examinations of place are largely missing from discussions in feminist violence research, “there is little discussion on the differences between urban and rural localities as the place or context of violence. This is surprising, given the impact of theories on intersectionality within interdisciplinary feminist research” (350). My aim here is not to devalue the work that has been done on rural women’s experiences of gender-based violence and IPV; I am however pointing to a need for more of this work to be done.

There are two sides to the rural coin; I mentioned one in the discussion above- rural locations as picturesque and peaceful (and assumed to be non-violent). Authors including Sandberg, Looker and Naylor identify the other side of the coin, “another discourse on rurality exists... in this discourse, rural residents emerge as backward, narrow-minded, and traditional... This can be compared to stereotypes of the American hillbilly, representing people of the country as dumb and backward” (Sandberg 352). Looker and Naylor further contend that rurality is positioned in opposition to modernity and rural communities are often portrayed as “failures, as throwbacks, as primitives, as uncultured, as economically unproductive... rurality is powerfully associated with the past, with place, with stagnation, and with a kind of vague shame” (58). In this view of rurality, violence (especially against women) seems normalized, somewhat culturally-appropriate, and accepted by the “backward” population. The danger here is when violence against a certain group becomes normalized they may be at risk for becoming categorized as “other” and, therefore, deserving of the violence that they experience. The “othering” of women in rural communities further isolates those who may experience violence and counters any desire for prevention efforts.

Said’s “other” can be applied further to this analysis in the “othering” of rural communities themselves. Said’s pioneering work positions the Orient, an imagined community, as inferior and inherently different than the West. In addition, this so called inherent difference is used as a central tenant in the process of constructing and defining the West. “Processes of othering thereby involve the constitution of the self through the differentiation and repudiation of an imagined other” (Sandberg 357). Sandberg draws on Jansson to illustrate that “local rural regions may... become “the internal other,” which function to exalt the national identity and urban regions. Research focusing on IPV and rurality could then become yet another way of

locating violence somewhere else, this time in the internal other, embodied in rural men and women” (359). In order to avoid a problematic contribution to the othering of rural spaces and those who inhabit them, researchers who deal with rural locations must be careful to “deconstruct and challenge unitary understandings of rural/urban. Ruralities should be discussed not only as physical places but just as much as ‘imagined communities’ that are socially and culturally constituted” (Sandberg 359). Shoveller et al. also advocate for a discussion of place as representative of “the intersection of social and physical spaces, manifesting as both spatial and material effects” (827). As the contributors to the 2015 Status of Rural Canada Report state, “if you know one rural community...then you know one rural community. This really speaks to the diversity of rural Canada that exists for any given degree of rurality” (Lauzon et al. 2). In order to participate in resistance against the othering of rural spaces through research it is important to recognize the complexity of place- whether rural or urban. Research must seek out and identify the intersections of social and physical constructions where communities are located.

The final discussion in this theme of “rural” focuses on the complexity of anonymity in rural communities. As described above, the people who live in rural communities are likely to feel isolated; at times, this will be a welcome feeling- part of life in a rural setting; at other times, this will be related to what the community lacks. There are few service providers and fewer opportunities to share stories of experiences of violence with people who do not know you or the perpetrator. “As opposed to people in an urban context, rural victims of IPV are generally more geographically isolated while at the same time often less anonymous in the rural community, a complex and paradoxical situation that needs to be considered by researchers” (Sandberg 356). The inability to feel anonymous when identifying one’s self as a victim/survivor of violence may contribute to a culture of silence. The pressure to silence may

come from community members who are unsympathetic, it may be an internal self-silencing, or it may be a combination of the two. Regardless of the source, a culture of silence may not be welcoming to or see the utility of gender-based violence prevention efforts.

Intersectional & Standpoint Feminism

Intersectional feminists have long recognized the necessity to analyze the points at which multiple forms of discrimination intersect and create complex and multilayered experiences of marginalization (Bryan et al., Crenshaw, Woodward, Yuval-Davis). Yuval-Davis draws upon imagery created by Crenshaw to develop an understanding of the real and complex ways that intersectionality can be experienced by women:

Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group . . . tries to navigate the main crossing in the city... The main highway is ‘racism road’. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street... She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression. (196)

Using this imagery, it becomes obvious how gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, age, etc. can work together to create a unique experience of oppression for women who experience more or less of these social locations. As a white, middle class, educated, able bodied, straight cis-woman, I experience gender-based violence differently than a lesbian woman, a woman of colour, a woman with a disability, or a woman with any combination of these “identifiers” might. It is important to conduct research in a way that draws out these differences and understands their implications without creating false divisions between women where potential relationships across difference could result in solidarity amidst diversity. Lorde’s work speaks

to the importance of finding strength within difference and using it to our advantage without minimizing its presence. According to Lorde, differences must be seen as “a fund of necessary polarities... Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters” (111).

A feminist intersectional analysis is key to any research dealing with gender-based violence, it is especially important for studies taking place in rural contexts. Sandberg and Brownridge both speak to the importance of rurality being interconnected to gender. Additionally, multiple other social locations such as class, race, sexuality, ability, etc. must be looked at as interconnected to people’s experiences of rurality. Due to the complexity and uniqueness of each rural location within Canada and across the globe, it is impossible to provide a one-size-fits-all assessment of the ways in which rural spaces are inherently classed, raced, gendered, etc. It is important, however to work within the community, along side various community members to understand how these various social constructions intersect in their context to contribute to the varied experiences that are unique to their location.

Brownridge describes the ways in which multiple marginalized social locations work to exacerbate gender-based violence in this context: “Aboriginal women in rural communities are more likely to experience violence than non-Aboriginal women... [additionally, rurally located] Aboriginal women have 372% higher odds of violence than their urban counterparts” (68-75). This increased risk for violence in rural communities is rooted in the larger issue of Canada’s historical and ongoing colonial practices. Amnesty International provides a useful account of this in their 2004 document responding to discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Canada:

For Indigenous women in Canada, violence often takes place in a context shaped... by the power that the dominant society has wielded over every aspect of their lives, from the way they are educated and the way they can earn a living to the way they are governed. Historically, in most of the Indigenous cultures that are now part of Canada, there were distinct gender roles for women and men but relative equality between them. Through policies imposed without their consent, Indigenous peoples in Canada have had to deal with dispossession of their traditional territories, disassociation with their traditional roles and responsibilities, disassociation with participation in political and social decisions in their communities, disassociation of their culture and tradition. Colonialism, which has had a profoundly negative impact on Indigenous communities as a whole, has also affected the relations between Indigenous women and Indigenous men, and pushed many Indigenous women to the margins of their own cultures and Canadian society as a whole. (8)

Given the way that race, gender, sexuality, geography and other social locations contribute to a heightened risk of violence, it is clear that a feminist intersectional analysis is key to uncovering the complexity of the way that gender-based violence operates. An understanding of the complexity of gender-based violence in a rural (and urban) context is necessary to properly strategize appropriate prevention strategies that will be sustainable in a community.

One of the main tenets of standpoint feminism is particularly pertinent to my work: the understanding of “situated-knowledge”. Intemann draws upon the work of Wylie (2003) and defines situated-knowledge as the understanding that “social location systematically influences our experiences, shaping and limiting what we know, such that knowledge is achieved from a particular standpoint” (783). More than one’s perspective garnered from their experiences in a

particular set of social locations, a standpoint is, as Intemann puts it, “achieved through a critical, conscious reflection on the ways in which power structures and resulting social locations influence knowledge production... [developing insight about] how hierarchical social structures work... [and developing a critical consciousness about] the nature of our social location and the difference it makes epistemically” (785). Furthermore, the critical consciousness that allows us to develop a standpoint is accomplished by communities rather than individuals (Intemann 786). Hekman reiterates the strengths of the original formulation of feminist standpoint theory, “because of the dualistic conception of truth and reality... feminist standpoint theory has had the effect of problematizing absolutes and universals, focusing attention instead on the situated, local, and communal constitution of knowledge” (356). Intersectional and standpoint feminism is useful in creating understanding about what it means to both experience and prevent gender-based violence in a rural context. Complexifying both the geographical as well as personal (social) locations within which gender-based violence takes place helps to create a more holistic frame upon which to build prevention.

A Feminist Lens: Human Security & Structural Violence

Human Security

Before describing the necessity of and way into a feminist understanding of human security we must begin with an understanding of the ways in which human security as a concept is inherently occupying a gendered space. Hoogensen reports that human security’s focus on the “everyday security” of individual people rather than the state in traditional security analysis relegates it to a feminized or inherently less meaningful position than that of state (traditional) security (210). It is glaringly clear how masculinized understandings of security have been and continue to be;

“the dominance of traditional, state-based security thinking is a manifestation of masculinist, patriarchal structures, demanding that security only be defined from this position of privilege” (Hoogensen 210). I think that the only way to properly acknowledge and work against the devalued feminization of human security is to approach human security with a gender-centred, feminist analysis. Locating gender as central and employing a critical feminist understanding of human security is not only best for understanding the lived experiences of threats to human security for all people regardless of gender, age, ability, race, class, etc. it is also the only way to reclaim that which is feminine as that which is also inherently powerful and useful in theoretical and practical understandings of security. To be clear, the feminism I am discussing is that which is critical of the dominant “white supremacist-hetero-patriarchal-capitalist- colonial” social structures that are so prevalent across the world today (term adapted from bell hooks).

A gender-centred approach to human security applies a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to human security. A bottom-up approach is more apt to respond to the importance and fluidity of context in terms of threats and access to human security. Context here refers to the conditions that work to threaten and/or ensure security such as: place/geography, poverty, access to nutritious food and shelter, discrimination, violence, environmental conditions, etc. These conditions are rarely felt as strictly empowering or victimizing, a gender-central, feminist approach recognizes this complexity. Hoogensen explores the simultaneous recognition of victimization/agency:

A gender approach to security, claims that security must be linked to empowerment of the individual: victimization and agency are seen as two parts of a reality that should be addressed together rather than as opposites, as is usually the case... By learning about security from the ‘bottom up’, or from individuals and groups, theory becomes intimately

linked to political practice. (211)

The commitment to addressing victimization and agency in conjunction with one another speaks to the desire of feminism to make the personal political. In this way, a gender centred, feminist approach to human security lends itself well to the praxis- theoretically informed practice and practically informed theory- that is required in the achievement of human security.

Another strength of a gender-centred, feminist approach to human security is the recognition of the role of power-relations in who has access to human security and who does not. A gender-centred approach provides space for resisting hegemonic power structures. Hoogensen draws on Thakur to identify the relations between those who are marginalized and those who are more privileged. She notes that, “minorities perceive security threats differently from their majority counterparts... and that these different perceptions in separate sectors constitute ‘real’ security threats” (213). A gender-centred, feminist approach to human security properly politicizes the human experience. Using a gendered, feminist lens to approach issues of human security ensures that individuals’ experiences are valued and validated as important in their own right while also placing them within the, often oppressive, social structures in which they are occurring.

One of the major critiques a gender-central, feminist human security lies in concern that certain groups will be left out while women are prioritized. McKay addresses these concerns by drawing on Holzner and Truong who argue that “all forms of human (in)security are gendered, even though their manifestations, patterns and degree of intensity may be specific and context dependent,” because social structures, practices and symbols in societies are gendered (153). She goes on to remind us that “women’s low status worldwide, the inequality of and the profound influences of patriarchy on women’s ability to attain equality, the risk of privileging girls’ and

women's human security over boys' and men's seems remote and, even, implausible" (154). Additionally, a critical feminist approach ensures a human security that stresses "human relationships and meeting human needs, whereas a masculine view tends to emphasize institutions and organizations" (157). As such, employing a critical feminist version of human security will by its very nature defy the concerns of leaving certain groups out of the conversation. Perhaps the greatest strength of a critical feminist human security lies in its ability to pull out and politicize the oppression of marginalized people, regardless of its source.

To summarize, a gender-centred, feminist approach provides space for an inherently gendered concept to use its so called "femininity" as an asset rather than a limitation, it creates an understanding of intersectionality as central to the human experience and empowers individuals through a bottom-up approach which responds to the fluidity of contexts.

Structural Violence Theory

One of the most influential Peace Studies scholars, Johan Galtung has devoted much of his energy to the exploration of structural or indirect violence. His *Peace by Peaceful Means* defines structural violence as "built into the person, social and world spaces" Galtung's work also contended that structural violence is "unintended" (31). He explains that structural and direct violence are legitimized by cultural violence, which motivates individuals to commit violence or to "omit counteracting... violence" (31). Galtung has been referenced by many scholars; Botes and Burton both engage with Galtung's theories around structural violence in ways that are useful to this discussion. Botes refers to Galtung's definition of structural violence as, "factors that cause people's actual physical and mental realizations to be below their potential realizations. Structural violence... arises from social, political, and economic structures that

sanction the unequal distribution of power and resources” (362). Burton’s (1997) work is particularly useful to Botes in making the connections between structural violence and social deprivation clear:

Structural deprivation and violence... is prevalent though a large variety of institutions and social systems... Structural violence may be found in policy and administrative decisions, economic sanctions, the workplace, and families (where it can lead to domestic violence, and the sexual abuse of children). When these structural situations and conditions go beyond the human beings’ or groups’ ability to accommodate what is being done to them, they often lead to physical (behavioural) violence. (363)

Mullen also contributes to the scholarship on structural violence. Influenced by Christie (1997) as well as Galtung’s work referenced above, Mullen describes the role of structural violence in making mass atrocities possible: “this structural and cultural violence remains long after the atrocities are over, leaving violent systems intact. In other words, while these societies are in ‘transition’, they continue to be subjected to violent systems and social environments” (463).

In an effort to tie together many of the theories and concepts described in this literature review, I will point to the work of Christie (1997) who articulates the resistance of structural violence as an inherently feminist (also anti heteronormative, critical race and class focused etc.) pursuit. Christie looks at structural violence from peace psychologist lens. He notes that the peace psychologists are often “concerned about matters of political representation and voice, which, when systematically denied, are forms of structural violence” (324). He also notes the linkage between this understanding of structural violence and its connection to the oppression of voice to the work of feminism, particularly that done by scholars such as McKay (1996) and Reardon (1985, 1993). Christie notes that barriers imposed by patriarchy have many manifestations:

From gender-specific violence...to structural violence born of economic inequalities due to the 'masculinization of wealth.' Structural violence is also apparent in matters of political voice. Politically, girls will grow up to form the majority of the poor on earth, yet they will be a marginalized minority in policymaking arenas, where decisions will be made about the world's wealth and the satisfaction of human needs. (324)

What is made clear by all of the scholars listed above, and many others, is that structural violence creates a context within which direct violence can flourish and vice versa. Structural violence is the force behind keeping all other forms of violence as cogs in the status quo machine in ways that we see and feel and in ways that we are oblivious to. Those who are able to remain oblivious are those who are most privileged in and by a society that is run on the foundation of structural violence.

This chapter brings together the insights of multiple scholars from diverse schools of thought to create a holistic and interdisciplinary foundation for the work that was done with the youth participants of this research project. In understanding that gender-based violence is a pervasive, systemic issue and that the research about gender-based violence in North America contributes to an "urban norm" the requirement of a rural-specific analysis becomes self-evident. The development of a rural-specific analysis requires a process of complexifying "rural" that moves us beyond stereotypical tropes of "rednecks and hillbillies" or idyllic country sides where country bumpkins are too busy making jam to enact and/or experience violence, gender-based or otherwise. The use of intersectional and standpoint feminism helps to ground this research in the understanding that the way that people "come to know" is heavily connected to their place in the world, including social and geographic locations, and the combinations of privilege and marginalization that these lead to. Finally, this chapter touched on the use of feminist

understandings of human security and structural violence theories. Applying a feminist lens to these theories aids in the ability to use them in violence-prevention work and helps to ensure their applicability to gender-focused work. The following chapter will build on the theoretical foundation above and move into discussions specific to the methodological underpinnings and practical methods that were used to carry out this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGIES & PRACTICE

The research questions that initiated this study were: 1. How do youth in a rural Manitoban community understand gender-based violence? 2. Do the youth in this community think that their rural location may have unique meanings related to experiences and prevention of gender-based violence? 3. How can these youth participate meaningfully in the prevention of gender-based violence? In order to examine these questions I chose to involve a group of 10 youth in a series of focus groups that occurred over three months. The principals of the methodological frameworks used as well as the specific methods in our day-to-day interactions will be explored in this section.

Building on the emphasis that was placed on the use of a feminist lens to understand and theorize about gender-based violence above, this chapter provides rationale for carrying the use of feminist research practices into the methods of this research project. Feminist research, as noted above (Christie, McKay, Reardon), prioritizes the authentic representation of voice. In order to authentically represent voice, we must create a context within which people feel safe and welcome to share their voices and trust that what they share will be accurately represented by the researcher(s).

Drawing again on the work of standpoint feminists, I felt it was important to consider myself as a community member first and researcher second. With this in mind, I chose to utilize qualitative methodology that would promote continued relationship building and prioritize the voices of participants. The methods used in this study are community-based and rooted in Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in addition to arts-based methods. As a means of carrying the process of YPAR throughout the entire research project I used grounded theory to analyze the data that emerged. The participants were involved in the early and mid-level stages of data

analysis.

Utility of Community-based Participatory Action Research in Prevention Work

There is a dearth of research examining youth-driven gender-based violence prevention in rural locations. The literature focuses on violence prevention more generally. Much of what is written about violence prevention broadly is also applicable to violence that is more specifically gender-based (Brownridge; Button & Miller; Hall et al.; Hausman et al.; Leff et al.; MacGregor et al.). There are a few key elements that are equally applicable to both conversations: full participation of community members, specific engagement with youth, and- more directly related to gender-based violence, male involvement in prevention efforts. These are the ideas that will be addressed in this section.

The literature agrees that prevention strategies must be culturally appropriate, they must come directly from the community in question, and they should include perspectives from as many stakeholders and representatives of the community as possible (de Lange & Mitchell; Gurman et al.; Miller et al.; Shoveller et al.). This is not an issue that is best served by a hierarchical imposition from government leaders (Packer et al.). Sustainable gender-based violence prevention efforts must start by casting a wide net: people should not be excluded from conversations about what they think would work best in their communities. It must be an inclusive process.

Andresen et al. describes the ways in which youth and adults should “create networks, built on trust” (138). A foundation of trust is key when working with community members - they must trust each other and the researcher(s) involved. If collaboration is to be encouraged, all participants must understand that their insights are equally valued and must feel safe enough to

share their knowledge and experiences. Bradshaw et al. advocate for the use of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in violence prevention research with youth. They argue that the central principles of CBPR such as “mobilizing the talents, energy, and insights of community participants” is key to effective prevention strategies (164). They also describe the “diverse ways in which prevention researchers are increasing the capacity of community members through collaborative engagement in original research as well as through providing training and promoting skill building. Integrating the scientific and practice activities likely results in more sustainable policies, practices, and programming changes” (Bradshaw 164). The notion of engagement is not one with a clear-cut definition, as it may mean different things to different people. Crooks et al. provide a useful definition that was used in their study involving youth. They claim that engagement was based on “meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself” (161). Community and/or youth participation must be an integral part of the research process. Their insights should not be treated as token sound bites that provide a useful piece of participant voice in a final manuscript. Just as participants are expected to participate meaningfully, researchers must treat their voices and knowledge as meaningful, important, and as a valuable part of the research that they are embarking on together.

In addition to general community members’ involvement I think it is even more important to meaningfully engage youth. A major concern of many rural communities is the longevity of their population. As such they are often interested in finding ways to not only attract young people to settle in their community and to make it an appealing location for local youth to stay (Looker & Naylor). Any community development initiative should involve the voices of local youth. In the context of violence prevention initiatives youth involvement is key for a

number of reasons. There is a wealth of research that contextualizes violence as a public health issue that affects youth disproportionately (Leff et al.; Hall & Kalischuk). As such, research engaging with violence prevention should deal directly with the population that is at the highest risk for not only experiencing but also enacting violence.

In addition to women's voices, male involvement in conversations about gender-based violence and prevention is imperative. We cannot expect prevention initiatives to be successful and sustainable if we are only encouraging half of the population to participate, especially given the fact that most perpetrators of gender-based violence are male (Hall et al., Gurman et al., Miller et al.). Gurman et al. and Miller et al. refer to a number of other scholars who insist that men and boys be included in conversations about gender-based violence. The results of Gurman et al.'s research state: "the importance of male buy-in and involvement was readily apparent. Study findings similarly supported the integral role that men play in successful GBV programming" (698). Similarly, Miller et al. assert that, "engaging men and boys to adopt gender-equitable, non-violent attitudes is recognized as a promising strategy to reduce violence against women and girls" (109). This does not mean that women's voices should not be privileged in discussions about gender-based violence and its prevention; however, we must provide spaces where men also feel safe to explore the meanings of gender-based violence and how they may be contributing to its perpetuation. Many young men in rural settings (and elsewhere) have never been required to acknowledge their male privilege; this process can be an unnerving one. We must support men in their journey to recognizing their unearned privilege before we require them to be sensitive and knowledgeable allies to women in the fight against gender-based violence. This process will be beneficial to everyone involved and will contribute

to the foundation of trust that was discussed earlier in this review.

The final point that I would like to examine in this section is the need for successful prevention efforts to be multidisciplinary and based on “best practices”. Gurman et al. state:

Collaboration is needed among the public health community, community leaders and policymakers to ensure that GBV programming efforts are complemented by policy efforts within communities they further advocate for prevention practitioners to establish partnerships with local authorities in order to obtain the needed political support [and to] produce a more integrated approach to reduce GBV. (700)

While Gurman et al. are coming at the issue from a community health perspective their insights are still applicable and relevant to my discussion. One researcher cannot run a single program with a limited sample of youth and expect widespread change across the entire community. In order for meaningful community change to occur there must be involvement across multiple community stakeholders. Another important aspect to successful prevention efforts is the need to implement evidence-based programs (Leff et al. & MacGregor et al.). In other words, our practices must be rooted in well developed, thoroughly researched, theoretically-based evidence and our evidence must be rooted in well documented, first person accounts of practice. There must be interplay between academic and community knowledge.

Methodological Frameworks:

In similar fashion to the literature review, this section will first explore Youth Participatory Action Research, Community-based research, and Art-based research separately and will then be pieced together into the patchwork of methods that was used by the participants and I during our

focus group sessions.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is rooted in three main characteristics, “the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge; the promotion of self and critical awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change; and the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation and dissemination of the research process” (McIntyre ix). Another principal element of any participatory research is the commitment to working with rather than on or for the people you are involving. This is a practice that must be worked at in every interaction with participants. They need to know that their knowledge is not simply being extracted without any say in or benefit from the end result. Equal participation between researcher and participants is not something that can be taken for granted, there are power relations that must be considered, especially in work involving youth. Moosa-Mitha draws on social identity theorists to explore power relations. She explains that scholars of this field often argue for the:

Acknowledgement of subordinate/dominant power relations that characterize social relationships in society. The basis on which people experience differential and subordinate power lies in the ownership of their social identity, where “difference” from an assumed White, heterosexual, able-bodied [male] norm results in various forms of oppression that are structural, relational, and cultural in nature. (61-62)

Researchers must work at acknowledging their own position of power and must also facilitate their research with an understanding of the power dynamics of the participant group.

This process will result in participants feeling safer and more welcome in expressing their views and sharing their knowledge with other participants as well as with the researcher. Chabot et al. draw upon Cahill's work to explain that, "successfully engaging youth in PAR requires power-sharing in research relationships and demands high levels of mutual trust, which require time and resource investment to develop" (23). Chabot et al. further outline necessities of youth engagement in PAR:

PAR with young people is based on collaboration and is premised on the understanding that sociocultural and structural forces have a profound effect on the lives of youth...

Research teams that attempt to engage in PAR need to work carefully to ensure they do not reinforce or exacerbate the negative effects of existing social hierarchies whereby academic researchers are regarded as 'experts' and co-researchers simply as

'informants'. (22)

Community-based Participatory Research

Community-based participatory research (CBPR), as it is ideally practiced, goes beyond research on and/or in a community, rather this type of research seeks to engage community in partnership in all phases of the research process (Blumenthal et al.). Community can be defined differently depending on context, for the purposes of this discussion the term refers to a population of youth who live within a specific geographic location. In order to engage in partnership with a community, the researcher must understand the community well and thus have the cultural competency to do so (Blumenthal et al.). Understanding communities take time; authentic understanding must be built upon a foundation of relationships. The Sage Encyclopedia of

Qualitative Research Methods describes the process of developing researcher-participant relationships as a strategy for engaging in research that is collaborative and reciprocal. In order to foster relationships that can lead to this type of research environment, researchers must be willing to engage in “self-awareness, reflexivity, and interactivity throughout the research. In such research approaches, it is common for researchers to engage in self-disclosure in research reports and sometimes directly to participants during data collection. The resulting shared intimacies lead to close and personal relationships” (Given 770).

Art-based Research

Art- in its multiple forms, as described by Zakin, can be a helpful tool for teaching young people tolerance and social justice regardless of their learning style. Where there may not yet be language to discuss these at times complex topics, art provides a vehicle for young people to share their knowledge and work through their feelings in a way that feels concrete (Zakin; Freedman; Greene & Hecht). In addition to providing a concrete path for knowledge acquisition and dissemination, art also creates an additional space for youth participants to take on a leadership role in the research process, this is especially true in projects that have additional elements of participatory research methods. Wood advocates for the use of art-based methods in work that engages youth in conversations about gender injustice:

The visual and arts-based methods allowed the participants to be the main decision-makers on what data were generated, and how this material should be used to educate the wider community. In contrast to teachers telling learners about gender inequalities, the participatory methods adopted created space for the participants to

deconstruct and to reconstruct their ideas. (363-364)

Furthermore, art can act as a form of resistance in efforts to overcome and reconstitute reality (O'Donoghue).

This research is built on a foundation of methodological and theoretical underpinnings that coincide with my personal values. Ensuring that my research practices matched my personal practices allowed me to feel more equipped to bridge the gap between researcher and community member in a way that made me feel equally comfortable and capable in both roles. A wide range of scholarship promotes the use of community-based participatory research as a tool for moving beyond working for communities to working alongside them instead. Isreal et al. draw from MacDonnel to describe this shift in the following way: “academics engaged in participatory research began to see themselves as moving beyond the legacy of ventriloquism (or speaking for community partners) to making room for the voice of people’s lived experiences, with the belief that ‘only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf’” (51). With this philosophy close in mind and heart, I conducted my research in a way that provided space for participants to share their knowledge in multiple venues where it could be heard and validated.

Participant Recruitment

Ten male and female youth were recruited as participants of this research project; there were participants from The Valley community as well as the neighboring First Nation. After receiving approval from the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, I was granted permission from the local school board to make two short presentations as a means of recruiting participants. Prior to these presentations I was

required to submit a copy of the ethics approval document to the school principal. These presentations took place at the beginning of core classes for both the grade 11 and grade 12 students and lasted no longer than fifteen minutes. In order for students to attend the presentations they were required to have submitted permission slips signed by their legal guardian. While I was initially very concerned that the requirement for signed permission slips would limit the amount of youth I was able to speak to, the school was incredibly cooperative and helped ensure that the vast majority of students had permission to attend my presentations. The presentation outlined my educational background, history in the community, interest in the research topic, and the details of the study. Additionally, I distributed packages of information, including my contact information, the letter of introduction, study information, and a sheet where students could identify their interest in participation (copies of materials are included in the Appendices). I asked all students to complete the form noting if they were interested in participating and place it inside the envelope provided. This theoretically allowed all students to anonymously identify their interest without too much influence from their peers and teachers. In practice however, peers and friends openly talked with each other about their interest in participating or not and the days of the week that would work best for their participation. In some cases, it was clear that these conversations swayed students in one direction or another, I believe more students indicated interest because their friends were openly interested and similarly, some students declined contact as a direct result of conversations with their peers.

I contacted each student who indicated interest using the information they provided on their “interest in participation” form. There were 16 youth who had indicated interest on the

form, by the time I had made all of the phone calls, there were a total of ten youth, three male and seven female, who had decided they were able to commit to the research process. The number of participants involved is significant when the total population of the area and class sizes are considered. The total enrollment of the school from Kindergarten to grade 12 is approximately 200 and the grade 11 and 12 classes are comprised of approximately 20 students each. Achieving a participant sample of ten out of a possible 40 speaks to the participants' eagerness and excitement about playing a role in this project.

Once I had a confirmed group of participants, I began setting up meetings with their guardians, at locations of their choosing, to discuss the possibility of their child participating and to sign consent forms. All ten interested participants' guardians agreed to meet with me and later signed the consent forms. From this point forward, I will refer to participants using the pseudonyms that they chose for themselves. A high level of anonymity was required by the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board in their approval of this research project. The use of a "participants" when discussing the group of youth and the use of their self-determined pseudonyms is one of the means through which I am attempting to ensure their anonymity.

Research Instruments

In order to complete this research I used various research instruments; all of which worked together and evolved to create a space where participants could lead the process as active agents in the research that they were contributing to. In order to create a space that felt more reciprocal than "data collection" through means of surveys and individual semi-structured interviews, I chose to use focus groups. In addition, our process was rooted in principles of community-based research, that is research done by, for, and within the community. We also used art-based methods specifically because of the ways in which art is able to "level the playing field" in

knowledge production and sharing. The use of art allows folks to share their insights and learn together without the requirement of feeling comfortable sharing ideas orally and without need for a well established, topical vocabulary. Details on the use of these research instruments are provided in the sections that follow.

Data Collection & Organization of Focus Groups

In order to engage the participants meaningfully in the research, and to collect data that could be meaningfully analyzed and would authentically reflect the voices of the participants involved I chose to conduct focus groups, audio record them, and transcribe how they could or already do individually and collectively participate in the prevention of gender-based violence in rural Manitoba. I have combined information on the data collection and the organization of focus groups here because the focus groups in many ways dictated the ways in which data was collected and the meaning that was assigned to it.

In the end, we conducted twelve focus groups, each lasting approximately 2.5 hours. All of the sessions except for one half session, involved all of the participants. The one half session, lasting approximately an hour and a half, was requested by participants as a “girls only” session. Prior to their request I asked participants, via an anonymous poll, to determine interest in an independent session- they were free to identify if they thought the session(s) should be separated by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, etc. Participants identified that the only separation that would make sense for their group was one based on gender. Another anonymous vote took place and a couple of the female participants identified a desire to participate in a group that would not include the three male participants. Prior to organizing this “girls only” session, I asked the male participants if they were comfortable with this option. All of the participants and I then engaged in a frank discussion about the need for people who are largely marginalized in society to have

their own spaces to talk about their experiences without having to explain it to people who may not understand what they're feeling. The participants were well versed in discussions about marginalization by this point as we had discussed it at length in prior sessions. The following sections will describe the organization of the focus groups and the ways in which data was collected during the sessions.

As mentioned earlier, the principles of YPAR were used in conjunction with community-based research, and art-based research practices to conduct this research. The project did not strictly follow YPAR methodology as I introduced the topic of focus rather than allowing the participant group to identify their own. In keeping with YPAR I took on a facilitative role while the youth participants dictated our discussions, the actions they wanted to take, and how and if they wanted to share their knowledge with their peers or with the communities. In some cases I would introduce an idea about an activity or an outline for a schedule but we would not move forward with anything unless the participants were in full agreement. I made a point of asking participants directly if they would prefer to run things themselves or if they appreciated me bringing some ideas with me each week, their responses were as follows: Alvin responded by saying, "otherwise I feel like we'd be lost and not know what to do" and Martha agreed and added, "or it would be the same thing over and over again and that would be boring". Based on the literature on PAR, it seems that this is a fairly typical experience. I could not predict what practices would work best for the participants prior to beginning the research; we had to negotiate them together on an ongoing basis and remain flexible.

The focus groups were organized into three main sections: 1. Introductions and relationship building; 2. Co-learning; 3. Youth led action and knowledge production. As seems to be typically in YPAR research projects, the methods and findings seem to blur. The practice

and process of “doing research” become as much a part of the findings as the data from the transcripts and pieces of artwork do. Due to the braided process, I have attempted to lay out the skeleton of the process in this section and will describe the process and outcomes in more detail within the findings section.

1. Introductions and relationship building

As might be expected in a town of less than 1,000 people, all of the youth participants who were involved in the research project knew each other prior to participation. Many of the participants were close friends who had known each other since elementary school. Despite the foundational relationships, it was important to take the necessary time to build relationships within the group so that all participants were able to comfortably engage, listen, and share with their peers and with me. The first few sessions were heavily focused on relationship building and provided some background and context on gender-based violence.

2. Co-learning

While we remained committed to relationship building and supporting relationships we were able to shift our focus to a process of co-learning after only a few weeks. In order to maintain the prioritization of our relationships with one another and the safety of the space we began and ended each session with a check-in, we continued to reflect on our ground rules, we spoke in a round circle fashion where everyone was given equal opportunity to share without being forced to speak, and we preserved time for storytelling and laughter. The use of a circle was inspired by Indigenous traditions involving Talking Circles (Assembly of First Nations). Similarly to these practices, we had specific rules about allowing each individual to speak freely and uninterrupted when it was their turn to share while ensuring that participants felt free to “pass” if they did not wish to share anything.

In the co-learning phase of our focus groups, the participants and I looked at direct and structural examples of gender-based violence, we explored the ways that boundaries between direct and structural violence are often blurred and how they can often reinforce and perpetuate each other. These conversations are described in more detail below.

3. Youth-led action & knowledge production

The participants and I spent over half of our time together working at youth-led action and knowledge production. This action-focused knowledge production gave the youth participants an opportunity to create their own gender-based violence prevention strategy. They were able to use what they had learned to that point to create material that would help them teach their peers and community members about gender-based violence and prevention. More than any other, this part of our time together was driven by and for the participants. Participants collectively decided that they would like to create a video as a means of raising awareness about and promoting the prevention of gender-based violence. A more in-depth discussion of their video and the themes it addresses can be found in the findings section. The process of creating the video was not taken lightly by any of the participants, they were dedicated in their approach and managed to continue our previous practices of checking in with one another and ensuring that all voices were heard and valued at each step of the process. With little of my help, the participants were able to see the video through the stages of brainstorming, planning, writing, acting, directing, editing, and posting on YouTube. They were also committed to planning for knowledge dissemination and provided clear direction about the ways in which they would like me to speak about the video in presentations and in writing.

During the action and knowledge production phase, the youth and I participated in many

activities together, these were meant to provide time and space for reflexivity, continued relationship building, and co-learning.

Analysis & Evaluation

All focus group sessions were recorded using an audio recording device and were transcribed verbatim after each session. For the purposes of cost saving and as a means of staying connected to the data at each level, I transcribed, de-identified, coded, and analyzed all of the recordings without the use of software. In keeping with the requirements of the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, all identifying information including names of people and places were replaced by pseudonyms during the transcription process. Transcripts and recordings are stored on a password protected computer.

Following the lead of PAR practitioners, the data have been analyzed using grounded theory. McIntyre draws on other practitioners to define grounded theory as a method that:

Provides a framework for ‘developing conceptual categories [that] arise through our interpretations of data rather than from them’... In addition, it encourages researchers to be reflexive about how ‘their prior interpretative frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials’ influence their analysis. (55)

Grounded theory allows the data to speak for itself rather than attempting to use segments of the data to answer a specific hypothesis or constrained research question. It is especially useful in collecting data that have largely remained unaddressed (Charmaz, Charmaz and Liska Belgrave,

Lingard et al.). Additionally, Charmaz reports that the use of social constructionist grounded theory assumes the following: “(a) multiple realities exist, (b) data reflect researchers’ and research participants’ mutual constructions, and (c) the researcher enters, however incompletely, the participant’s world and is affected by it. This approach explicitly provides an interpretative portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it” (349).

Through using social constructionist grounded theory I have been able to identify themes, categories, and concepts from transcriptions of sessions as well as the participants’ interpretations of their creative (art based) means of knowledge sharing. This method of analysis also allowed for an opportunity to share my reflections, interpretations, and ideas about themes with the participants so that they were able to clarify, critique, question, and make additions to what I generated. Near the end of our time together, I sat down with the participants and went over in detail, the notes that I had taken, the themes that I had pulled from the transcripts, and my overall impressions about our work to ensure that the data was fairly representing everyone involved. The participants had opportunities throughout the process to engage in the conversation; I also encouraged them to post on the Facebook group, text, or call me if they had ideas about what should or should not be reported on after our focus groups ended. It was important for me to ensure that any representation of the participants’ voices be accurate. In this way, participants remained involved and participatory in a segment of the research process that is often left to only the researcher.

The methods used for coding followed guidelines set out in qualitative research methods. The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods provided me with a framework to use in my attempts to create meaning out of what seemed like a mountain of data. As mentioned

above, I transcribed all of the focus group sessions myself; doing so allowed me to develop some preliminary memos from the onset of the process. Once ten of the twelve focus groups had been transcribed I did an initial coding of the data, this combined with my preliminary memos was shared with the youth participants. The participants agreed with the themes I had found and encouraged me to use these themes as a framework for further coding. It was important for me to continue using the principles of YPAR in all aspects of the research process, coding included. I wanted to ensure that participants were able to have a say in the ways in which I would represent our work and felt confident in my abilities to share their voices in ways that they thought they should be shared. This tiered process resulted in a group of nine broad themes, shared in the next chapter, that included impacts of participation for the youth involved as well as more focused responses to gender-based violence. While the process of coding qualitative research is inherently a subjective process I attempted to mitigate this as much as possible, striving for a transparent, sound and reasonable interpretation of the data that the youth participants entrusted me with.

Participants were given a \$40 honorarium for each time they were involved in a focus group. The honorarium funds were included in the research grant from Voices Against Violence. Other benefits to participants included a shared meal and detailed information about how to best represent their participation on their resumes/CVs. Some participants approached me during and after the focus group ended to write reference letters and/or be listed a reference and I agreed in every case.

In order to ensure that the focus groups were meeting the needs and expectations of the participants, I asked them to participate in a few different evaluation processes intermittently

throughout the focus groups. In addition to the Question and Comment box that was described earlier, there were three more formal evaluations: one halfway through the focus groups, during our sixth meeting, and the final evaluation occurred during the twelfth (final) meeting. In addition to these formal evaluations, during the second focus group participants answered questions related to their base level understandings of structural violence and health. Copies of the evaluations that were used can be found in the Appendix.

The introductory assessment of participants' understandings of structural violence and health was implemented primarily in response to the data collection needs of Voices Against Violence. The series of questions were pulled from a Voices Against Violence project that occurred in Ontario (Voices Against Violence). While the evaluation was in response to the needs of Voices Against Violence, it overlapped with our group's goals for the focus groups and felt like a natural addition. The midway evaluation occurred during our sixth of twelve meetings. There were seven participants present during the meeting. The final evaluation occurred during our last focus group, seven of ten participants were present. Similar to the midway evaluation, during a focus group prior to the last, participants were asked to collectively decide on questions that would be asked and the way in which they would respond to these questions. The details of all evaluations are presented in greater detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4: WORKING TOGETHER: NOTES ON PROCESS

The methods section provides an overview of the processes and practices used at each phase of the research project; this section gives additional details. As mentioned in the methods section, the focus groups were organized into three main sections: 1. Introductions and relationship building; 2. Co-learning; 3. Youth led action and knowledge production.

While the methods section focused more on the planning process and the skeleton of the research, this section will provide more detail about the research in action, and the outcomes of the process. This section will also include photographs of the art that was created as part of the activities that the youth participated in. It is important to value the art created in the same way that the participants' voices and my analyses are, with this in mind I have chosen to integrate photographs of their art into the body of this section rather than representing it within the appendices. In the pages below, the youth participants will be identified by the pseudonyms that they chose for themselves. The following participants are self-identified women: Simon, Martha, Louise, Myrtle, Theodore, Alvin and Sofie. Macho Man, Walter and John are self-identified men.

Introductions & Relationship Building

In order to build relationships within the group that extended beyond those that naturally exist as a byproduct of living in small communities, the participants and I spent a good deal of time in our introductory sessions building relationships and developing understanding with each other. We managed to delve into deep conversations and learn a lot about one another within the first three sessions. This allowed us to intersperse relationship building activities into the other focus

groups sessions that focused more on co-learning and action without difficulty.

In order to create a space that felt safe to share in, I allowed my story to be accessible to participants so that they felt more comfortable doing the same with me and the other participants. I shared more detailed information about my background and my interest in collaborating with them to explore the prevention of gender-based violence in rural Manitoba and that ways in which youth can play a role in the prevention process.

Through a variety of activities, games, and art-based methods the youth participants and I began to get to know one another on a deeper level. During the first two sessions, the participants collectively generated a list of ground rules for creating a safe space and for participation. The participants took these lists and created visual references on large posters, which were hung on the walls of our meeting space in the community centre each week. Both of the lists remained open for additions and/or edits throughout the duration of our time together. In addition to the guidelines, the youth participants were also receptive to my idea of using a “Question and Comment Box”. The Question and Comment Box was used as a conclusion to each focus group and served as an ongoing, informal opportunity for reflection and evaluation. Participants were given a blank piece of paper and a pen to write down a question or comment (if they had one) as a result of the discussions that had taken place that day. Participants were not required to write something but everyone did have to mark the paper in some way so that no participant was singled out as the author of a question. Some weeks I received lengthy questions and/or comments from all participants and others I received a pile of drawings. Participants were for the most part able to come up with something to write on their own but would occasionally ask me to supply a question. When I posed a specific question participants were encouraged to answer it

or to write something of their choosing. The ritual of closing our time together with reflection via the Question and Comment Box allowed me to understand how participants were feeling about the process in its entirety and created a space for participants and I to practice the ongoing reflexivity that is necessary in PAR projects.

The participants and I found the activities outlined in this section to work well for us in our efforts to get to know each other better, many of these activities are ones that I have participated in during Peace and Conflict Studies classes. I did not ask participants to take part in activities that I had no prior experience either participating in or facilitating. Exercise specifics are found in the Appendices.

Name Game: The participants and I shared the stories of our names with one another.

Participants were asked to say their name, tell the group how they got their name, and share any stories that came to mind upon reflecting about their name. While all participants knew the names of each person in the room, some of the stories about their names' origins and nicknames were new information and spurred a lot of conversation and laughter.

Rules for our space: Participants were asked to brainstorm about the things that they needed from myself and the other participants in order to make the space feel safe for sharing and exploration. The participants ended up creating two lists that were hung up on the walls each time we met. The lists outlined their rules for a safe space and guidelines for participation. The participants worked together to come up with the list and create the posters below:



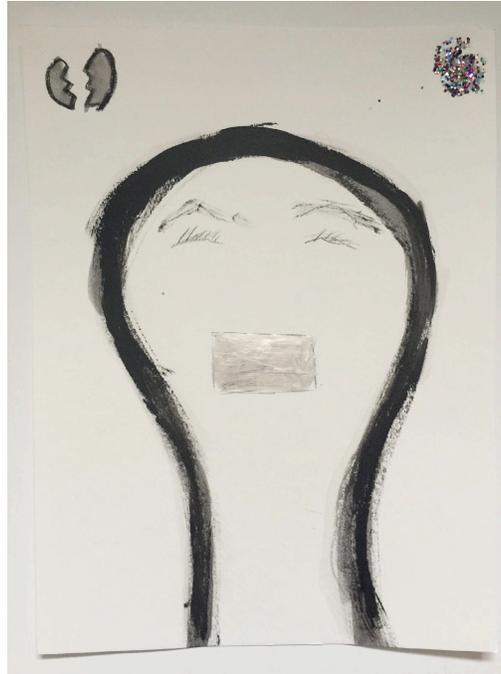
What makes a good communicator discussion: The participants were asked to think about communication and people in their lives who are particularly gifted communicators. Once we had all had time for thinking quietly, we shared stories about the people that we had been thinking of and our insights into the qualities that made them good communicators. Participants and I then pulled qualities of good communication out of the stories that were shared and vowed to try to emulate our communicators during our time together.

10 things in common: As a means of developing a deeper understanding of each other and our backgrounds the participants and I worked to create a list of ten things that we all had in common with one another. While much of the process was done in fits of laughter the participants were also able to find similarities in their experiences across their very diverse social locations.

What does rural mean to you? The yarn game: After receiving feedback through the Question and Comment Box that participants wanted more opportunities to stand up and move around

during our sessions, we played “the yarn game” together. The focus of the activity was simply, “What does rural mean to you”. Participants and I stood in a circle, one person started with a ball of yarn and shared their idea of what rural meant to them, once they had finished sharing they held on to a piece of the yarn and threw it to someone else in the circle, this process continued on until every participant had the opportunity to share twice. We were left with a web within our circle representing our distinct but interconnected ideas about rurality and how it impacts our lives and the people that we are. Insert quote “if you know one rural community, you know one rural community” Important to get a sense of the participants’ understanding of rural in their specific context.

What does gender-based violence feel like? A visualization exercise: In this art-based activity, participants were asked to share their ideas (through whatever means they were most comfortable with) about how gender-based violence might feel for a survivor of violence, the families, friends, and communities of people who had survived/been victimized by violence, and/or the perpetrators of violence. The photograph below represents Myrtle's idea of what gender-based violence may feel like for a survivor. She explained her piece in the following way: “I attempted to paint a picture, I kind of used Martha’s idea about how a lot of people are silenced, so that’s supposed to be the duct tape, that’s a broken heart to represent the sadness, and then the sparkles are for hope and the future and stuff”.



Affirmations: During our fifth week together, the participants and I took time to write out and read affirmations for each person in the room. This activity was chosen as a means of solidifying the safety of our space and the support of one another before we moved into the co-learning phase where discussions of examples of gender-based violence and root causes would be discussed in more depth. The participants decided that they wanted to individually and anonymously write a few sentences describing what they appreciated most about one another, once everyone had written something about everyone else, the person to the right of the individual receiving affirmations would read what the group had said. The participants felt that this format would allow them all to express themselves fully and would give each of us the opportunity to hear each other's responses without the "awkwardness" of saying how they felt directly to the person they were describing. As a facilitator, I found this to be one of the most powerful exercises we did as a group. Watching and listening to the participants solidify their partnerships with one another is something I won't soon forget. The simple act of telling each

other what we appreciated about them and why became a crucial component to solidifying the foundation of trust that we had built with each other. Some of the participants had the following to say about their peers:

Throughout the duration of the group you've become more vocal and I like that. I like how we can come here and I can hear you talk because you're so quiet at school. I like your ideas too, they're very unique."

"I like how you add ideas to the group and you always put your opinion out there for each topic we talk about."

"I appreciate that you are one of the few boys who is mature enough at your age to sit down and talk about gender-based violence. I feel like your ideas are valued in our group."

"I like how you're able to think quickly for ideas and that your artistic mind is always able to contribute to the group."

Co-learning

In order to explore gender-based violence while ensuring no disclosures of experiences of violence were made, we focused our attention on news stories. I had, perhaps naively, planned to bring in a mix of contemporary and historical examples in order to provide the group with diverse examples based in Canada or at least North America each week. What I found was that there were more than enough examples of new incidences of gender-based violence popping up in the news on a weekly basis. As much as possible, I tried to find news stories where there were elements of both direct and structural violence, participants quickly began to discuss the overlap between and ways in which direct and structural violence reinforce and normalize each other.

While obviously important to discuss examples of gender-based violence and the ways it is enacted in a Canadian context, I thought and participants agreed, that it would be equally

important for us to also examine examples of resistance. Given the fact that our time together aimed to focus primarily on prevention, we wanted to have a wide range of examples of the successes other individuals and groups have had with their prevention and resistance strategies. Participants seemed especially interested in the initiatives taking place within their province so I prioritized Manitoba-based examples as much as possible.

In addition to looking at examples of gender-based violence and prevention initiatives (a full list is provided in the Appendices), the participants and I also engaged in a number of activities to explore root causes of gender-based violence:

Social location identification and intersectionality mapping: In these activities, participants learned the term ‘social location’ and practiced identifying social locations. Once they had developed a good understanding of what characteristics are included in one’s social location we created hypothetical people who were assigned various social locations. Participants named our hypothetical people and we walked through some of the ways in which their social locations could lead to different and/or similar life experiences. We were careful not to assume that all people with the social locations that we had assigned to our hypothetical people would experience life in the same way. While not necessarily transferable to real people the activity did provide participants with an opportunity to see the world from another perspective and perhaps become empathetic to experiences of those quite different from themselves.

I’ve heard, I’ve thought, I’ve said: This activity was originally created for a Peace and Conflict Studies/ Social Work course entitled, “Facilitating Intergroup Dialogue” in 2015. Two of my classmates and I developed this activity to help the participants of a group we facilitated come to terms with the learned racism that is so prevalent in contemporary Canadian society. For use in

this research project, I tailored the questions and statements to better fit our topic of gender-based violence. While I had originally intended to use this activity with the entire group of participants, many similar questions and comments naturally came up during the “girls only” half-session. In an effort to keep the process aligned with the group members’ wants and needs I decided to facilitate the activity when it seemed to fit best, with their permission to do so. The piece of transcript below is a good representation of the process of collective decision-making that was often used in our focus groups:

Breann: Alright, so I have this quick little activity that we can do if you want. It’s an activity that I kind of developed with some folks that I had a class with. It is called, “I’ve heard, I’ve thought, I’ve said”. So it’s a list of ten questions categorized into: I’ve heard, I’ve thought, I’ve said. So if we want to keep it super anonymous you can write the numbers 1-10 on a paper and write yes or no, or we can do like eyes closed hands up, or we can make it totally not anonymous and raise our hands in front of everyone.

Martha: I don’t mind raising my hand in front of people

Many voices: yeah, I don’t mind, me either Martha: I don’t feel like you guys would...

Sofie: Judge

Martha: Yeah that you would judge or even it would be confidential I think

Theodore: Yeah

Breann: So, are we all feeling like 10/10 this is a safe space?

Whole group: yeah, yes

We engaged in this activity in an effort delve into some of the female participants’ feelings about gender-based violence, common stereotypes, and the ways in which women can be implicitly or directly involved in the shaming and blaming of other women. Some of the statements we worked through included: I’ve heard people say, ‘boys will be boys, they just can’t help themselves’ (all participants raised their hand); I’ve thought, ‘I’m too nervous or scared to do

something but that joke made me really uncomfortable' (all participants raised their hand); I've said, 'she just made that up to get attention' (5 participants raised their hand). While some of these statements are quite broad the participants and I had a conversation about the fact that all of these should be considered in the context of gender-based violence and the previous discussions we had had. Participants were also free to ask for clarification about and discuss the statements that were presented. I asked the participants how they felt after the activity, the transcript piece below captures their responses:

Simon: Kind of bad

Martha: Guilty... Like, I think all girls kind of pick on other girls at some point in their life whether it be not to their face, or to their face. I think its bad that we do that to each other

Many voices: Yeah

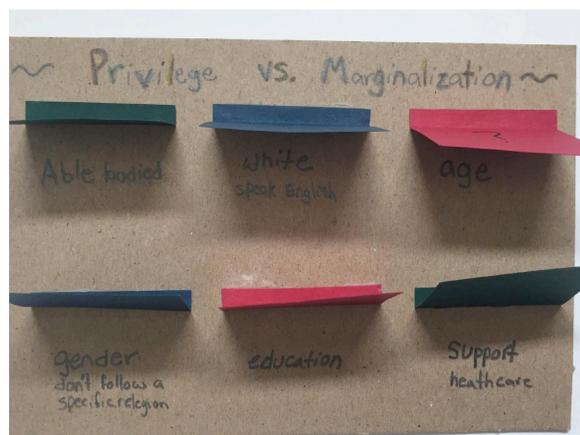
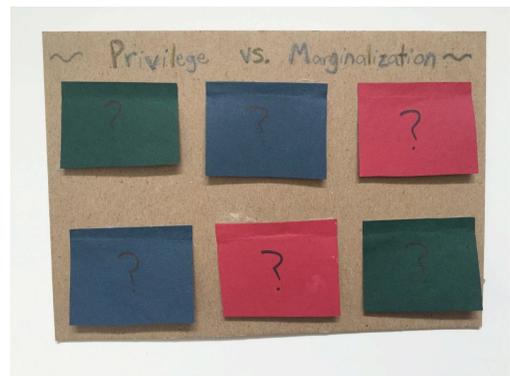
Sofie: I'll be completely honest, I think it's because of like jealousy and stuff. So, you say, like oh like look at what she's wearing, she looks like a slut. Just because you're jealous

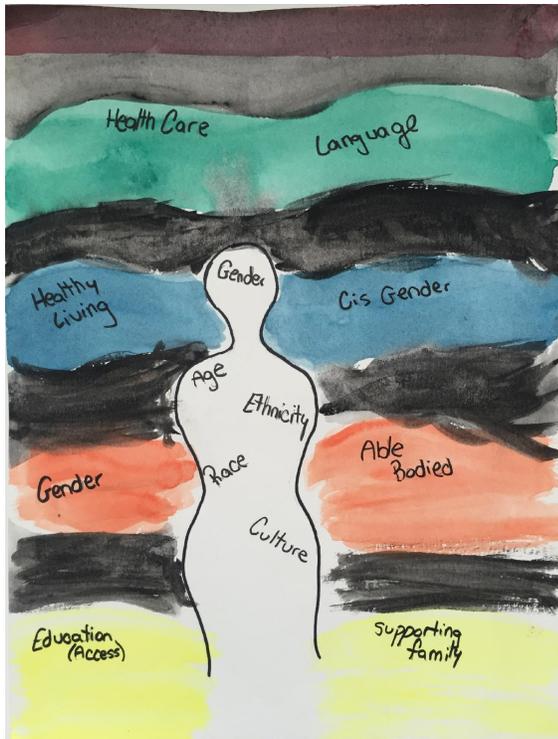
Martha: Like society, like the way we treat women, has impacted... we've grown up with this... people talking like that I think. And like when I'm scrolling on social media I know I do it all the time, I judge everything I look at. Like I say these mean things in my head, I would never say that to that person's face, I'm not that kind of person but you still, you think those things naturally and I don't know

The participants showed individual bravery and comfort with one another and with me through their honesty after the activity. It was powerful as a facilitator and as a community member who has known these young women for much of their lives to watch them push through the discomfort and share their unfiltered thoughts and feelings with their co-participants. Moreover, the participants were able to use some of the topics we had discussed earlier to frame their

feelings and locate them within a larger societal structure. Perhaps one of the first steps toward violence prevention is moving past understanding the issue in a broad context to being able to locate one's self within it as someone who is capable of both experiencing and perpetrating it. Privilege walk & Privilege and marginalization visualization: As is often the case in social justice focused groups, I used the Privilege Walk to introduce participants to their social locations and the implications that they can have on the ways in which we move through life. Cooper's work provides examples of and rationale for the use of this activity. In order to reinforce the group's understanding of social location and to encourage some reflexivity I asked them to also participate in an art-based visualization project. Participants were asked to visually represent their social locations in whatever way felt right to them. I encouraged them to work individually or in groups, and to use any medium they wished. Some of the results of the exercise are shown below with the participants' explanations of their work captured alongside:

Mine kind of represents, like when you're born, you don't really know like what kind of family you're going to be born into or how you're going to grow up to be. So underneath there will be either a privilege or a marginalization- so there's like able bodied or gender, age, supportive family, and just different things underneath





So for mine, the colours are the good and then there's always marginalization in between all the good. So it's not all good. And on the outsides, in the good, I put things that are good for me. And in the body- that's me- those are the marginalization which is like gender, age, ethnicity, and I put that in me.



I'm running hurdles; my hurdles are the things that kind of hold me back. All the people cheering are like showing my privileges.

The youth participants first identified a few large scale changes that needed to be made, these included: increasing access to services in rural communities, promoting diversity training in all sectors, focusing on a cross-community relationship building process, increasing police presence, and engaging youth in community-based governance and decision making. Once they identified the large-scale changes that they felt were necessary, they drew buildings, houses, streets, gardens, etc. on their town map that would facilitate the desired changes. A detailed description of these policy level changes follows in the section focused on thematic findings.

Youth-led action

As mentioned above, this section was where most of our time together was spent. I was able to take a back seat to the participants and their vision for prevention. While we still focused on reflexivity, relationship building, and co-learning, the majority of our activities emphasized action. This section also included two of the three evaluations. The evaluations are included here because the questions that were asked and the methods for facilitating the evaluations were chosen and/or created by the participants themselves.

The participants collectively decided that our research group should be named, “ Youth Researchers Promoting Equality: Gender-based Violence Prevention in Rural Manitoba.” When asked about its significance, a few weeks after choosing the name, participants reported that the name represented who they are and what they were trying to accomplish. They were a group of youth involved in a process of promoting equality through community and relationship building with peers while collectively learning about gender-based violence.

During the same evaluation session, participants were asked to describe their relationships with each other, with me, and to provide some description about the communities

and their school environment. In addition to what was mentioned above, specific to race relations, participants identified feeling more connected to each other after participating in the focus groups. They reported finding it easy to come together, they felt that their relationships grew stronger as the groups progressed, and that they were increasingly comfortable opening up to each other.

When asked about their experience with me, as the facilitator of the focus groups, the participants reported feeling more comfortable to engage in the focus groups with me because of our previous interactions, “It was easy because we knew you” reported Sofie. Simon similarly reported, “we’re more comfortable because we kind of know you... you’re not just some random”. Many of the participants seemed to appreciate the environment that I tried to create that challenged hierarchy and privileged participants’ voices, the following quotes came from many participants and speak to their appreciation of the focus group environment: “you made us feel like equals”; “you always kept the group in high spirits”; “[you] made us feel more comfortable because you didn’t have the traditional rules of a classroom”, it wasn’t like, strict... I guess it helps that you’re not that old either (Martha). The prioritization of storytelling and relationship building helped to create an environment that felt safe, welcoming, and fun so that participants were happy about meeting each week and were able to think critically in a non-judgmental space.

In addition to their group name, the participants also led the decision making processes related to their prevention focused video, the presentation the group agreed I would make about the research project at their school and the article I would write for our local newspaper. They provided guidance on how to best represent them and the work we had done together in my

thesis writing, the writing I would do for Voices Against Violence, and in any future presentations I would make. In order to let the video speak for itself, I will simply state that the participants were the sole creators of the short film from beginning to end. They worked collectively, drawing upon each other's' unique and distinct strengths to brainstorm, write, direct, act in, produce, film, edit, and promote the film. The resulting labour of love can be found by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JILfxBR5KrE&t=3s>. The video was shared over 200 times through the original YouTube post and another 1300 times through a scholarship application program, the 2016 application site was unfortunately removed after the application deadline past.

Evaluations

Over the course of our focus groups, the participants completed three evaluations. The first was used as a “baseline” for the outcomes more directly related to the goals of Voices Against Violence in understanding participants’ grasp on ideas like structural violence, oppression, health, and empowerment. Participants and I sat facing each other around a circular table to discuss these questions (available in the Appendices) as a group. As with most of our interactions, the style of conversation was casual: participants did not raise their hand before they spoke, we ate while we discussed, and participants were free to ask for clarification throughout. Participants were instructed not to answer questions that made them uncomfortable. They were free to say “pass” as a response or to simply remain quiet. This occurred during our second meeting so some of the participants were still somewhat reserved in the ways they expressed themselves. Nine of ten participants were present during the discussion. As the questions were

posed, participants stated that they had not discussed the term “oppression” in the past. Given their unfamiliarity with the subject they were able to grasp the general meaning quickly through linking it to their own life experiences and working on it from a micro to macro level. Health was seen holistically from the onset of the discussion; no probing questions were necessary to encourage thinking beyond the absence of sickness. Empowerment was seen as action based where positive change occurred for self and others. Their understanding of structural violence was likely influenced by my recruitment presentation at their school and the consent forms they and their parents’ signed as they both contained a brief definition of structural violence. Participants were however able to move beyond the definition that had been given to them and begin to think about the idea and express its meaning in their own words. Links between structural violence and health of youth focused on emotional/mental well-being and the perceived powerlessness of those who may be experiencing structural violence.

The week prior to the second evaluation, participants and I created the evaluation questions together. Participants sat around a circular table together while I wrote their ideas on a flip chart. I encouraged participants to come up with questions that they would like to see on the evaluation and that they felt would help to improve the latter half of the groups. They collectively developed the questions and the format of the evaluation. They chose to have it be completed individually and anonymously- none of the participants wrote their name on the evaluation forms. They also came up with the rating scheme and the option for writing additional information as necessary. Participants expressed that they were learning new and valuable things as a result of participating in the focus groups. They reported feeling safe and welcome to participate. Some responses showed an emergence of feelings of empowerment through the desire and capability to create positive change. Participants also provided valuable feedback on

how to improve the group such as: mixed reviews on feelings of preparedness for creating a prevention strategy, requests for more hands on learning, and increased access to examples of prevention strategies. All of this feedback was integrated into the groups that followed. I made a conscious effort to check in with participants to ensure that the changes were enhancing their experience and addressing the concerns they had at the midway point. For our purposes, this evaluation was extremely beneficial in its ability to enhance communication and ensure that participants were feeling engaged and valued. I became aware of participant needs that I would not have known about otherwise and was able to adjust my facilitation style and the organization of the group as necessary to better engage the participants.

For our third and final evaluation, I wanted to ensure that we covered as many of the VAV specific final evaluation questions as possible without forcing participants to answer any questions they were not comfortable with, I used a projector to display the VAV evaluation questions and our own previous midway evaluation questions so that participants could choose which ones they would like to include and build upon. After choosing the evaluation questions from the lists displayed, we went through our choices and “filled in the gaps”. Participants suggested additions and talked amongst themselves until they were happy with the result. Our finalized list was posted on the group’s private Facebook page so that they could have another opportunity to add to or edit the list of questions. Participants decided that they felt comfortable enough as a group to answer the evaluation questions verbally in a discussion format rather than through written response. Participants revealed a sense of growing empowerment within themselves individually and as a group in their ability to create positive change. They expressed many positive feelings about the YPAR process and the method’s role in our focus groups including: creating a safe space, allowing for increased relationship building, creating an

environment that helped participants become more open minded, creating a safe space for exploring new and at times difficult topics, and facilitating inclusion. The participants also discussed how the process had already impacted their lives and thinking patterns in positive ways and described the ways in which they thought their new perspectives would impact their future relationships and conversations with loved ones.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The original goal of the research project was to first, identify the ways in which youth in a rural Manitoban community understood gender-based violence; second, gather information about the ways in which the youth involved understood their rural location and its implications for experiences and prevention of gender-based violence, and finally, to develop strategies to meaningfully engage the youth involved in the prevention of gender-based violence. This chapter will begin with an in-depth look at the context within which the research took place, from the participants' perspectives. This section describes the youth's understanding of their rural location and their perception of the possible implications of location on gender-based violence as it is experienced and prevented. What follows is another braided section, comprised of both research/thematic findings as well as participants' personal reflections on the outcomes of their participation in the research. In both strands, findings are organized into themes that were generated from the coding process that was outlined above.

Context: Participants' Perspectives

The community was described by participants in a duality that is similar to much of the research on small communities. The small size of the community and population seemed to either make participants feel safe and welcome or isolated and judged depending on the context of a given interaction. Martha had the following to say: "everyone says 'hi' to everyone and waves at each other, even if you don't know them. But you probably know them". Myrtle mentioned feeling constricted, isolated, and like there were a lack of opportunities. Other participants also mentioned that a high percentage of the citizens are seniors, many are white, and that there is a

lack of cultural diversity. While many participants felt supported by their families and the wider community they also felt that there was a lack of privacy and that personal information could travel quite quickly throughout the community.

Historically, the relationships between many of the people living in The Valley and the nearby First Nation have been strained. While there have obviously been exceptions to this tension and relationships fostered across racial and other boundaries the shared history of mistrust and misunderstanding cannot be ignored here. Participants talked about this relationship in the context of their experiences within the high school while making connections to broader community life intermittently. Participants confirmed that there continues to be a divide between students from The Valley and the neighboring First Nation. One participant who had grown up in The Valley from a young age also had close relationships with some of the students from the neighboring First Nation. She explained her observations in the following way: “I feel like they just keep to themselves because they feel like everyone is hating on them kind of. That’s how they see it though, some of them feel like they just aren’t welcomed. Like I know that. They have their own different ways of looking at things.” The factors contributing to the strained relationships between communities in this case are unfortunately replicated across the nation and various scholars speak to this. Tupper draws on many theorists in her work on Aboriginal-Canadian relations, based on the work of Sutton Lutz and Dion she writes: “[Indigenous peoples] have been vanished from our history books and, in many cases, from our communities... Stories [of] dominant Canadian history reflect an unwillingness and inability to come to terms with the reality of Canada’s relationship with Aboriginal people” (49). Further, she notes the ignorance that is reproduced generationally may in fact be strategic:

In many respects, it is strategic (though not always conscious) for settler Canadians to remain ignorant about the colonial project and the ways in which Aboriginal people experience violence... Dominant historical narratives, perpetuated in and through school curricula and the stories told to young people, not only allow Canadians to remain ignorant about important aspects of Canada's past, but actively produce ignorance. (50)

Resistance to this division has always been visible and continues to grow but there are still conversations that encourage the youth from The Valley to continue contributing (consciously or not) to the process of making youth from the neighboring First Nation feel like unwelcome guests at the school that they share.

Within the school, participants noted that they thought there were approximately 80 students enrolled in grades 9-12. When asked what it felt like to attend the school and interact with their peers, participants had a lot to say. Martha and Alvin had an interesting exchange of ideas: Martha reported, "I think it's comfortable, you can wear whatever you want, I don't feel like there's a lot of judgment at our school" while Alvin countered, "But then for some people it's like the opposite, it depends on who you are. There's some people who are friends with everyone and others who are like, oh I can't stand anyone here." The participants seemed to agree that much of their comfort came from knowing those in their friend group from a very young age; some had moved from kindergarten through their current grade with the same core group of friends. They mentioned that they found it difficult to create and maintain meaningful relationships with people who were "new additions" to the school regardless of their cultural background. Myrtle empathetically stated, "I think it's harder in our school if you're a new person because people are so close already." Given the relatively small enrollment, usually less

than 150 from grades 9-12, students are able to get to know each other very well. As the participants have noted, this has implications that can lead to feelings of inclusion and support but can have the opposite effect as well. This has specific implications for youth's abilities to change their own and their peers' understandings of and participation within a culture that perpetuates gender-based violence.

While aware of the complex race relations within and between the two communities, the participants seemed to work well together in the research process and did not have problems working collectively. When asked about their relationships with one another during a final evaluation, participants mentioned that they were more keen to consider participating because they already knew each other before the focus groups began and that they considered each other to be "pretty good friends".

Thematic Findings

Rurality: Challenges & Opportunities

Participants described their experience of living rurally in very similar nature to the ways in which rurality is depicted in the literature (Andresen et al., Brownridge, De Lange et al., Hall et al., Looker and Naylor, Sandberg, Shoveller et al). The following block of quotes is the result of a game that the participants and I played to explore their feelings about living rurally. As described in the activities focus section of the Appendix, we stood in a circle and passed a ball of string around; when someone caught the ball of string they would say something about how they felt about living in the community (as always participants were free to "pass" if they did not wish to share) before throwing to the next person, they would hold a piece of the string. The result was

a visual web of our diverse, yet interconnected understandings of rurality.

Rural to me, is a community where everyone knows each other and is fairly friendly to each other. (John)

I like living in a rural community, I feel like you have more privacy, like living in a smaller town than a city. (Martha)

I feel like if you were to do something people talk about it fast, it gets around faster. (Alvin)

Rural to me is relying on small farms to provide our goods. Walter: kind of quiet. (MachoMan)

Everybody knows everybody and kind of knows your story and who you are. (Theodore)

It can be quiet and peaceful which is a good thing but also you can't really, nothing can be kept a secret for long. (Myrtle)

I think farming and that kind of stuff. (Simon)

It feels like you have a place to call home, people that you can talk to. (Martha)

I'm going to miss it when I leave next year. (Theodore)

You always have something to come back to, to fall back on, childhood friends. In small towns, everyone is used to one idea of a person like Martha was saying, as the "norm". So when we go other places if you're different from the group you could get... (Simon)

But also, if you see those other people you might think that that's weird, or have like racism towards them. (Martha)

Yeah, so it goes both ways. (Simon)

If you live in a rural area and you are different, and your sexuality you identify with something else or you're attracted to another gender, in a rural community you can get really shunned or just put down for that. Whereas when you go to an urban you're more open minded because there's more diversity so you might feel more belonging or acceptance and that just might be the place for you. (Alvin)

Well, if you're in a rural community you're more likely to face this stuff because it's such a small place and everyone knows each other/ what's going in your life.
(MachoMan)

On one edge of the sword, there is a sense of community and belonging and on the other, a closed-minded, traditional, and often-conservative mentality that can result in discrimination and violence. Participants also made connections between both of these perspectives on rural communities and the implications for people who are or might at some point experience gender-based violence. Unsurprisingly, they described the ways in which a supportive and caring community would provide feelings of safety to survivors of violence. However, participants were concerned that traditional mindsets, conservative values, and misunderstandings of difference may result in an unwillingness to participate in meaningful prevention and intervention activities.

A lack of access to information related to gender-based violence as it occurs, pragmatic prevention strategies, and intervention services were all mentioned by participants a number of times. The participants identified that this lack of access could be linked to their rural location but also thought that it was likely an issue that impacted those in urban settings as well.

Participants often reflected on the fact that they would not have access to meaningful conversations about gender-based violence and prevention if they had not decided to participate

in the focus groups. They also spoke at length about the lack of prevention focused media coverage and expressed desire to have discussions about gender-based violence integrated into their school curriculum. Myrtle had this to say after we went through a list of recently published news stories related to gender-based violence: “I think it’s strange how nobody talks about it and then that way we would know that that stuff does happen... I just think people need to talk about it more so that we can work towards preventing it.” Theodore also expressed frustration after the discussion: “I’m just surprised that like, we’ve never heard of these... Why haven’t we heard about what else is going on?” Other participants had the following to say at various points during our time together:

It's only the last one I've ever heard about. I think it's strange how nobody talks about it and then that way we would know that that stuff does happen... I just think people need to talk about it more so that we can work towards preventing it. (Myrtle)

I'm just surprised that like, we've never heard of these... Why haven't we heard about what else is going on? (Theodore)

It just really like has an impact, hearing these stories, it's usually, mainly occurs against women and it's... I don't... well... interesting to hear about all those stories but it is also scary. I'm a female. (Sofie)

It's just kind of scary knowing about that... that can happen to you anytime, wherever you are, it doesn't matter there could be that one person that's just triggered off and you'd never know based on how they look. So, that worries you. And then on the last one, you always see about how these Aboriginal women are going missing but you never see anything about how to help prevent it. You always see that big number of how they've gone missing, but you never see anything about how to prevent it. It's just that one thing. And being Aboriginal too, that kind of scares me, way more. (Alvin)

Sad. It's really sad. Being a girl myself and Aboriginal as well, hearing about all of them, yeah. (Louise)

The remaining themes explored in the following sections offer insight into the participants' understanding of their unique rural context. These findings may or may not be reproduced in other rural Manitoban/ Canadian communities but are important to the ways in which these participants were able to create meaning around gender-based violence and its prevention.

Evolution of Participants' Responses to Gender-Based Violence

The elements comprising this section describe the participants' responses to gender-based violence. Their responses are reflective of their previous exposure to and understanding of discussions about gender-based violence. At the onset of our discussions the participants were generally very angry about gender-based violence and had a difficult time understanding the "why" of it all. While these feelings of unease were present throughout the discussions from the first session to the last, the participants were more able, near the end of our time together, to frame their responses within a more developed understanding of the larger social and political landscapes within which this violence occurs, and in so doing made some choices as to their responses. The following pages outline some of the initial and intermediate level responses given by participants while the more pragmatic and policy driven responses are represented nearer to the end of this chapter.

Disappointment In Status Quo:

Participants were not shy in expressing their discontent with the status-quo. From victim blaming

and shaming, to misrepresentation in the media, to underrepresentation of strength and resistance focused initiatives, the participants consistently voiced frustration. The following quotes from participants come from various focus groups, occurring across the three-month timeframe.

A lot of times I feel like they blame the woman, as like you said in court they said well why didn't you do this or this. They shouldn't change how they live to avoid having their rights taken away. (Martha)

It's like if a woman wears something "too revealing" and they get raped, it's their fault because they wore that revealing thing. But men should just learn to control themselves not be like that. (MachoMan)

Or if they're trying to change the way that we're dressing to make these boys not distracted by these women, but they should be teaching the boys not to be distracted. They should know that that's not appropriate. (Martha)

I just think it's too bad that those terrible things have to happen before people do something about it. But I guess that's just the way a lot of things work. So it's good that it's happening, that people are trying to change it. (Myrtle)

Teach the guys that girls aren't objects. They're people with feelings and stuff.
(MachoMan)

It's like I should avoid going somewhere and like change my lifestyle, like that doesn't seem reasonable. (Martha)

You can't tell her that she's going to be safe here and not safe there. You can't control... (Martha)

And it's just like afterwards people will be shunning you like, "I told you not to go

there, why did you go there”. You know? (Alvin)

It makes me sad to see what some guys are like. Its sad to see myself like stereotyped like that kind of. (MachoMan)

It’s like they always have an excuse that it’s the woman’s fault. (Sofie)

Creating Personal Connections: Reflexivity in Action

As participants’ understandings progressed they began to connect personally to the content that we covered. While maintaining a strict non-disclosure policy within our space, participants were able to talk about things they had heard in the past and not understood as gender-based violence at the time, experiences of structural violence, stereotyping, and catcalling. An ongoing conversation among participants focused on a person who periodically worked with the school. Some of the participants spoke about experiences with the individual while others spoke to what they had heard from peers in their community and those in the wider school division. They shared that the individual seemed to be perpetuating some sexist attitudes within the classroom environment:

Alvin: That’s like saying a girl can’t have muscles because she looks too masculine.

Martha: He is sexist

Alvin: Yeah, he said ‘girls shouldn’t workout, they should not look like that...See it’s just people like that that make me so mad... And like, he’s sitting there in the weight room while you’re sitting there working out, and you’re like ‘oh, should I be doing this, should I not be’. I mean I don’t care what he says but there might be some people that do.

Martha: So I was in (local restaurant) with (partner) and we ordered sandwiches and I was looking at the desserts and I think I said I was going to get one of them. And [he] who has no business, he was sitting there, eating by himself, and had no right to say

anything about my decision, he had no right to even watch what I was doing. Like who cares what I'm doing, it's none of your business. He's like, 'oh don't forget, a moment on the lips forever on the hips'.

Theodore: I think he's sexist... Sorry, like I'm not trying to say that about him but like yeah, I feel like he is, like he always says rude comments.

Sofie: He doesn't like women, at all... but like he doesn't know what he's saying to the girls and that they take it to heart. And he's got no right saying that... coming into our school, saying that to students... He sits behind his desk and he continually asks the boys, so what did you get for number one, so what did you get for number six on this page. And all of us girls are sitting up at the front and he never walked back to us once.

Martha: He never asked us once

Theodore: He's stuck in the olden days

In these conversations, participants were able to connect their personal frames of reference to our broader conversations about the ways in which structural and direct violence can reinforce one another. It was not clear if the school or the division were fully aware of the comments made by the substitute teacher- I did encourage participants to approach the principal if they felt comfortable doing so and offered my support to them during their decision making process.

Participants were however able to make connections between an authority figure dictating what women should/should not do and how they should/should not look while doing it and the concept of structural violence. Once participants had a frame of personal reference upon which to build a deeper understanding they were more able to move forward in less familiar considerations of structural violence. For example, participants were easily able to identify the silencing of trans and gender-non-conforming voices in the 2016 census through the binary option provided.

Another personal connection that was drawn by participants was captured during the 'girls only group' when they explained a conversation between one of their male peers and a few

of them during a writing period at school. The male peer they described was someone they had all known from a very young age, someone that they were very comfortable around and with whom they felt safe. Their conversation about one individual evolved into a reflection about the many times in their lives that they had heard similar sentiments from other men, who are generally trusted by participants. The participants were once again brave in their honesty and shared their feelings freely with their peers and I:

Martha: Today in the spare room, I don't know if all of you were there but when (name of boy in class) was making jokes about... I don't want to be that person to like stand up to what he was saying. He was like, he was writing a project on the Dove self esteem ads. And I don't want to say that he's a bad person because I know that he's not like that.

Simon: He was making a joke out of it but still

Martha: He was joking about how, 'oh, these make women more vulnerable and easier to get with... it makes them have a lower self image and maybe depressed and then that's when you swoop in for the catch because they're vulnerable'.

Theodore: And he knew it was wrong because he was like, "oh I'm not actually going to write that"

Martha: We all laughed and no one said anything and it's just an example of like not wanting to be the person not to laugh at that. And I feel like he obviously...

Myrtle: And he wouldn't be the type of person to do that either

Martha: If it was another guy, we're making it okay, we're laughing about it

Theodore: If it was like, you walked by someone on the street and you heard them say that it would be...

Simon: I think it makes like the person who's saying it think it's okay

Martha: And then do it again, and then more people laugh... I felt guilty while I was laughing but like to me, to be honest, it's easier to make it a joke than to be that person

Simon: To stand up to it

Sofie: Because if we would have stood up he would have been like, 'I was just

kidding (emphasis of a defensive tone)'... But that's just like if we were, if the table was turned, and we said if it was just as bad to say it about a guy like that, I think they guys in our class would also laugh but I think deep down that it would hurt them too... I think we were just all obligated to laugh. He was just typing, he was typing crazy stuff and then he just blurted it out and well... I didn't know what to say

Martha: But he has this good subconscious mind that tells him, no I shouldn't be saying this, but the other guys don't have it. Especially when he's with more guys he feels like he should joke about it because he's with the guys.

Theodore: That's what I was going to say, yeah. Some of them that are really nice and they're fine but then once they have those like three guys with them they feel like they need to impress them.

Simon: Didn't two of them have a competition to see who could get a girlfriend first?

Sofie: One lasted with his girlfriend and actually wants to be with her but the other two are like oh 'I'm going to get a girlfriend first and I'm going to fuck her'

What much of this piece of transcription points to is the way in which young people are socialized into becoming young women and men. As much as the young women were disgusted, offended, and hurt by the comments of their male counterparts, they were still very quick to defend the other young men and assure me and each other that "he's not that guy". Based on the discussions of the young women in the focus group, it seems as though the males saying these hurtful things to or in the presence of their female counterparts are not always sure of what they are saying but in some ways feel pressured to utter these words as means of proving themselves to other young men. Hegemonic masculinity is as dangerous for young men as it is for young women- setting unrealistic standards of who men are and what they do.

Alvin: So, like gender-based violence doesn't just happen to girls it can happen to guys too.

Simon: But it's more the norm for it to happen with girls.

Martha: Also, because men have like bad like, that thing in society where men have

more power. So like if a man is being abused he's scared to speak up because he's losing his manhood or whatever. So, it might be harder for them to talk about it or prevent it from happening.

Simon: It's almost kind of made into a joke, being sexually abused in prisons I find. Like I don't know, they make jokes about it.

Participants, especially the female participants, spoke extensively about catcalling and street harassment as their understanding of gender-based violence developed. Similar to some of their points above, participants may not have understood catcalling as gender-based violence when they initially experienced it but did feel immediately uncomfortable with it. Participants seemed to naturally settle into the practice of reflexivity and often called upon past experiences during their "Aha moments". What was particularly interesting for me was their method of group storytelling. Their long-standing friendships, the extent of their shared experiences, and high level of trust with one another was most obvious to me when they told stories in this way.

Sofie: That brings me back to when we were in (neighboring community), we were walking past this car of kids that we knew. This kid, like we knew the driver, and then we knew some of the guys in the back...

Martha: We were driving away, she honked the horn, one guy rolled down the window...

Sofie: That we didn't know, we have no interactions with him and he yelled...

Martha: 'You whore.'

Sofie: 'You guys are a bunch of sluts.'

Martha: And then drove away, yeah 'you sluts'.

Sofie: We don't know them. We texted one of the guys that we knew and they all thought it was a big joke but it was like... you have no idea who we are like why the hell would you roll down your window and say that?

Martha: Like what did I do to provoke you to say that? Nothing. You have no reason...

He wouldn't say that to a guy, like you know, he wouldn't say that to a guy, you know?

Like he wouldn't call a guy a slut or a whore.

Through this excerpt it is obvious how participants used each other as support to get through telling an emotionally charged story about their collective past experiences. What is not captured in the transcripts is something that I reflected on in my field notes. During these periods of collective storytelling the level of non-verbal communication that took place in these moments was equally powerful. Participants sat nearer to each other, looked directly at the speaker, and periodically touched hands or placed an arm around one another. In these moments I was reassured of the amount of trust in the space and felt moved by the ability of these young people to protect and comfort one another.

In later discussions, the participants also pulled at some important threads that are so often wound around discussions about street harassment, particularly as it pertains to women's experiences of this harassment. Participants discussed the perception of blurred lines between complementing and objectifying women in public spaces. As is far too common, the participants had learned that comments on women's bodies on the street, from cars, and in other public spaces should be understood as a compliment regardless of the actual impact on the woman who is targeted. Participants seemed to breathe a sigh of relief when they came to the realization that street harassment exists and that it is normal for women who experience it to feel unsafe or at the very least not to understand the experience as positive. The young men in the group provided reassuring statements to their female peers, offering support and noting that they would never condone or participate in that kind of behaviour, they also expressed remorse that these kind of events have become so normalized in the lives of women.

Pragmatic Prevention & Coping Mechanisms

At a certain point in our discussions about the realities of gender-based violence, once the weight

of its pervasiveness began to settle, the youth participants decided they wanted to figure out what they could do, in real life, to combat this kind of violence. As per our usual method, participants guided this process and asked for my support only when they needed direction or had a specific request for me. Given our success with using hypothetical situations as a means of understanding some other new topics the participants decided that they would like to come up with some hypothetical situations in which gender-based violence may occur and then work collectively to brainstorm ideas about what they could do to address the violence and/or to ensure their own and the safety of others.

I don't know where it was but I saw this thing, if you see another woman who is clearly in like an uncomfortable situation with a guy to like go up to her and said, "oh hey how's it going" and pretend you know her and try to get her out of the situation. And if she shuts you down she might not want help but if she takes it she might need your help. That way you aren't really putting yourself in as much danger you're just taking her out of the situation... Because if there's two of you he might not keep nagging at her. (Martha)

Later-

Martha: I'm not speaking specifically, but in general when you have most often like an older guy hitting on young women. Like you want to tell them to stop but you're younger than them right so you feel like you don't stand in that position to tell them, "I don't like what you're doing so please stop talking to me like that." So usually if an older man does try to hit on someone he does it in a joking way, like you just kind of laugh it off.

Alvin: To me, my reaction to that would be like you're such an old man, why are you trying to hit on a little girl? What the hell are you thinking? Can't find someone your own age?

Martha: But like if you're working you can't piss off a customer.

Alvin: But I think like there's a limit- if they're being inappropriate while you're in your workspace you should have a voice to be able to say something back to them and you shouldn't be in trouble for it.

MachoMan: For me I could pretend to be her brother or something, try to get him away.

Martha: You could call him out on it if there were other people around they might pipe up with you too.

Policy & Prevention:

As mentioned previously, the participants and I used art-based methods to pull out ideas about policy level prevention initiatives that would be necessary to help eliminate gender-based violence in our community. Through the creation of a mapping activity, participants were able to articulate their vision of an ideal and violence free community. Many of their suggestions deal directly with mitigating threats to human security as well as dismantling the institutions within which structural violence plays out. They noted the following areas where change would need to be instituted:

- The Town Council will be fully democratic, and those involved will represent the members of the community by involving youth and seniors. There will be a focus on becoming more culturally diverse, and including more women and gender non-conforming folks. In addition, there will be representation from families that have lived in the community for many generations as well as from new members of the community. There will be an emphasis on open dialogue between Council and community so as to facilitate continuous learning.
- Support Centres of multiple kinds will be created. They will be run by community members for community members. Possible areas of focus include: addictions, education, parenting and relationships, and healthy living.

- The School will promote violence prevention and awareness raising. There will be more emphasis placed on critical thinking and collaborative working environments. There will also be increased diversity training and relationship building that will be facilitated through things like cultural weeks where co-learning among peers and teachers can occur.
- Families will work with one another at home to promote inclusivity within and outside of the home by calling into question all of the “isms” that are prevalent in larger society: sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, classism, etc.
- The Hospital will have an increase in regular staff that lives within the community, more advanced technology, and emergency services.
- Churches will provide more options for learning about spirituality and faith. These will all be welcoming and will include ongoing learning so that diverse populations feel comfortable and welcome. There will be an open Spiritual Centre where people of all faiths can gather safely.
- The Grocery Store will carry more variety and have healthier options at a more affordable rate. They may carry produce from the community garden.
- Sports and Recreation Centres will be created and will be open to everyone. Hours of operation will ensure that community members are able to use the services in the evenings and on weekends.
- A Youth Space will be created and will provide a place for young people to go as an alternative to the “party scene”. It will be a safe and fun place to go.
- A Senior Centre will be located next to the Youth Space to encourage intergenerational relationship building. It will similarly prove a safe, welcoming, and entertaining space for seniors.
- Police presence will increase. Community members will have reliable and consistent police service that is non-judgmental, involved in the wider community, and protects and serves all community members in an equitable manner.

As is evident by the list above, the youth participants identified opportunities for change at almost every level of their community’s structure. They envision a community in which all citizens are able to play a meaningful and valued role in keeping themselves and each other safe while

ensuring all needs are met. Participants were realistic in their process of envisioning. They did not expect that challenges and obstacles to peace and the end of violence would simply disappear; they worked within the realities of our current political and social environment to develop a context within which the community would be more aptly able to deal with challenges and produce a non-violent result.

Results of Participation: Participant Outcomes

In keeping with the tenets of PAR I think the most logical place to begin an assessment of the effectiveness of this research is with the participants' reflections on the impact they felt as a result of participating in the research process. This section describes, in participants' own words, the personal outcomes of the research and their thoughts on the process. The section concludes with implications of this work on future academic and community work.

In addition to the findings above, more specific to gender-based violence prevention, additional findings related to the impacts of participating for the youth involved emerged. Participating in the focus groups seemed to impact the youth in a variety of ways. The themes explored here reflect those that were most frequently expressed. As with the themes above, these were reviewed with participants to ensure that I was analyzing the transcripts and understanding their feedback in ways that were reflective of their experiences.

Empowerment

The most frequently expressed feeling by far was that of empowerment. As mentioned above, participants often voiced their frustrations around feeling like no one (generally mainstream media) ever talked about the resistance activities that take place in response to gender-based violence. It seemed that participating in the focus groups gave the participants a place to fill the

void that they felt- to fill the silence about gender-based violence with well rounded discussions and to address the lack of action with their own resistance. The following excerpts from transcripts illustrate the participants' feelings about their increased individual and collective empowerment:

I feel like it is hard to talk about these things but it's a good thing that we are talking about it because I feel like we're actually doing something to help this. Because everyone has somebody, like a female in their family that they love and these bad things are happening to a lot of people that we know and I feel like it should be known and we should talk about it. (Martha)

I learned a lot that I didn't really know that's been going on and it sucks and it's sad but I think we could do something to help prevent it. (Louise)

But like, in schools they should teach what we're learning here. This is like, that would be helpful. (Theodore)

I like when we talk about the more serious stuff because then we get into it, even though it's sad to see it it's nice to know what actually happens, and what could happen. I just like being able to talk about it because usually you don't ever talk about it until you come to something like this. (Alvin)

I'm the same human being that that guy is over there, sitting behind us, like you can't treat me differently. You can't. (Martha)

We learned how we can prevent it in our everyday lives, for example how to not be a bystander. Like I'm more aware of other people's marginalization and how it affects their lives. (Martha)

I know the places where it can occur now, more than I would have before. Like in the

workplace or at school. I knew those were there but like how it was happening I know more about now. (Theodore)

We won't be scared to say something now, if we know it's not right what's going on. (Sofie)

I feel more empowered. (Martha)

I won't be afraid to stand up for someone who's being hurt by it. (Sofie)

I feel like we're being more a part of the community because we're actually talking about it and doing something about it instead of just ignoring it... Like there's things that I didn't know were gender-based violence before, like hidden things like structural violence that you don't really see, it's kind of like behind the scenes. I think I'd recognize that more now (Martha)

And it makes you feel like you're actually doing something. (Myrtle)

You realize that you can do something about an issue and progress it into something bigger. (Sofie)

And I think even for like the future, it could be like for your own kids, just teaching them whether it's a boy or a girl. (Myrtle)

These are some of my favourite quotes of all the transcribing that I did. While the work we did was often difficult and required that the participants push into some uncomfortable spaces they felt that it was valuable work to do, work that inspired positive change. The more time I have had to spend with the transcripts and quotes like those above the more I have come to realize the inherent power in grassroots movements. The change that occurred in participants as individuals

and as a collective had implications on their own lives, the lives of those in their networks, and based on their words above seems to have the potential to continue to influence their future selves and the relationships that they are yet to have.

Engaging social networks in new gender-focused discussions

Participants, some more than others, shared in great detail about the reactions of family members and friends to their participation in the research project. In some cases, the support they received from their social networks further solidified their commitment to the process and provided unique opportunities for communicating in new ways with those around them. In other instances, Alvin's for example, her commitment to the project was supported by one parent and was met with some resistance from the other. Some participants, especially Myrtle, preferred to keep to herself about her participation in the research and did not engage in many deep conversations with her parents or friends who were not participating in the research about her experiences.

Sofie: My mom is really like, hey Breann is doing something about this. And like she's really supportive of it. I usually tell her what we talk about because she's my mom and she thinks it's good that we're learning about how to prevent it... My mom is really interested in it, I talk to her for like 1/2 hour after every meeting. I tell her what we talk about and stuff. She thinks it's good that I'm involved in something interesting like this... A lot of people that like opted out of it are really, I think they're very like: 'oh shit, I should have stuck to my guns and done that'.

Macho Man: My mom asks me about it all the time too. We have like really long conversations about it and what we discussed too.

Alvin: Like my mom always asks and is like, oh well that's good. And then my dad is more like one sided, not the good kind of one sided, he has his belief and opinion- we kind of argue about it whenever I get home and then it's like oh whatever, he gets kind of

fed up about it. But that's his own opinion.

Martha: All the guys at school are always like, so what do you talk about?

Simon: My grandma is really curious about what we talk about.

Theodore: Yeah, my grandma is always asking.

The varied levels of engagement with people from outside of the participant group spoke to the diversity of the participants and their unique ways of maneuvering through new and often difficult concepts as they developed their individual understandings. As a community member/researcher it was an unexpected but incredibly rewarding experience when parents of participants would approach me in the community to commend the structure and content of the focus groups that the participants and I created together. They were impressed by their children's commitment to the process, their demonstrated increase in self-confidence and connection to their peers, and the new opportunities to learn with their children about the root causes of gender-based violence.

Group Relationship Building

As I had initially expected, the group of youth that I worked with were comfortable with each other from the onset, there were few, if any, awkward silences and no instances of purposeful exclusion. Over the course of our three months together the participants became noticeably closer with one another. They were more able to push one another to think more critically, to question one another, and to support one another when difficult conversations arose. Watching their relationships flourish was honouring to witness.

I liked how we got more comfortable around each other... made our relationships stronger. (Simon)

I feel like we talk to each other more... I'm really glad I took this opportunity. I'm a really opinionated person and I think it's helping me become more like open minded to listen to other people's opinions and kind of making my own decisions kind of thing (Martha)

I like getting know everybody because I'm kind of shy around school and don't really talk too much. So it's nice to talk to everybody about opinions and hear stories and stuff. (MachoMan)

It felt good that [MachoMan] was here too, it's not just women trying to make a difference. (Theodore)

I feel like hearing other people's opinions kind of gave you like a wider view other than just your own, to be more open minded and looking at things from a different perspective. (Alvin)

A participant's mother reached out to me after the last session to thank me for providing an opportunity for her child to "come out of their shell" and share themselves with their peers in such a meaningful way. She told me that their participation in the focus group had boosted their confidence and contributed to more positive experiences with peers at school. While I did not expect a research, project focusing on gender-based violence prevention to include these kind of "spin off" results I am so pleased that it did. These results solidified my suspicion that we were doing community-based Y-PAR right. It seemed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that as the participants grew closer they also became more committed to and passionate about their role in the research project. Their question box submissions became increasingly more centred around giving me enough data and the "right kinds" of data to complete this research the way that I envisioned it going. The following submissions capture some of these concerns:

I liked being able to tell stories about ourselves and getting to know each other a little more. Do you feel we are doing well at guiding the conversations?

Feel like we're coming together as a group really well, we all share ideas/opinions openly. I learned lots from today's session. Enjoyed the art aspect. Feel like we did group work really well (compared to group work at school).

How do you feel about the way the group is going? Do you feel that we all participate to our full extent? I am a little quiet but I am learning many things and am thankful for this experience.

There is no question in my mind that the success of the research project and the focus groups would not have been what it was if the participants had not been able to come together as cohesively as they did. The time we devoted to relationship building over the course of our focus groups was well worth the investment.

Thoughts on the Utility of CB-PAR with Youth

The research summarized in the literature review above notes that community-based participatory research with youth can be successful when the following conditions are met: the community members involved are participating fully; the process is community and culturally appropriate; if youth are working with adults they must co-create a foundation of trust; safety must precede collaboration; youth voices must be integral to the process rather than tokenized.

Based on the verbal and written responses of participants, the products of our focus group: participants' art, their video, and their continued engagement, and my personal reflections, I think that we were able to effectively use the methods of community-based youth participatory

research to develop a deeper understanding of gender-based violence and to come up with some strategies for prevention. As I have mentioned above, this research project was as much about the methods of engagement as it was about the content of our discussions and the results that emerged. The following participant quotes provide a window into our process, the facilitation style that worked for us, and the intertwined outcomes as participants viewed them.

You're always more comfortable when you have food to eat. And you made us feel more comfortable because you didn't have the traditional rules of a classroom. It wasn't like strict. (Martha)

You made us feel like equals (MachoMan)

It didn't feel like you were bossing us around (Martha)

You're not a scary adult (Simon)

I guess it helps that you're not that old either (Martha)

It's not like you go home not learning something new each week. (Sofie)

Everyone was respectful of what we had to say. (Sofie)

We kind of built a relationship with the same people that came every week. (Martha)

It made me feel more confident because everyone was talking about the same things and opening up their minds. (MachoMan)

I was kind of shy off the start but not really anymore (Simon)

I think some of the more heavy stuff was a bit more difficult to talk about but then it ended up being a good thing because we'd all share our opinions and stuff. (Myrtle)

Everyone's ideas were accepted and used, like if anyone had an idea about the video everyone would try to make that happen. We tried to use everyone's ideas and put them together. The group wouldn't do something that someone wasn't comfortable about. Like we had votes and stuff to make sure everyone was okay with it. (Martha)

I liked the variety in activities, there was always different things. (Myrtle)

It's very informative and I feel like it will help me in the future. (Simon)

I don't want it to be over but I had fun and I learned a lot. (Theodore)

I'm sad it's over too. I learned a lot and I think it was a... (voice breaking, teary eyed)
(Sofie)

It was a great opportunity for a small town (Simon)

Yeah, I'm really glad I decided to participate in it (Myrtle)

I'm just sad that it's ending, I like talking about stuff like this and it just interests me. I'm going to miss having these conversations with everyone. (Alvin)

Yeah, I'm going to miss hanging out with everybody and talking about this stuff.
(MachoMan)

As some of the quotes suggest, participants were concerned about coming to the end of the research process and anticipated missing the connection with their peers and the discussions that they participated in together. While they may not have continued to have semi-structured discussions once a week for approximately three hours, anecdotal evidence: continued posts in the Facebook group, text messages that I have received from participants since the groups ended,

conversations I have witnessed in the community, and participants' personal posts on social media suggests that the participants have managed to continue a critical and engaged thought process on gender-based violence. In this way, the focus of the research has been sustained and has left a lasting impact on participants and those in their social networks.

Final Thoughts from the Participants

During the final two focus group sessions I wanted to ensure participants had as many opportunities as possible to reflect on their experiences, ask any remaining questions, and feel some sense of closure after their months of hard work and commitment. We used a few different methods to begin these conversations; two of the more structured means were the final evaluation and the final question box submissions. The quotes below are a few of the submissions to the question box:

Glad I got to be a part of the group and really enjoyed the experience

I am very sad that the group is ending. I've learned so much and am greatly thankful

Thanks for making these past three months a great experience! You truly are a great facilitator and such great company! I hope you enjoy the rest of this.

My favourite part about the entire process has been becoming more aware and involved

My most favourite part of the group was hearing everyone's opinions on the different questions and just discussing the topics with everyone.

Breann, thanks for this great opportunity. I learned so much valuable knowledge :)

I'll miss seeing you every week! You brighten everyone's mood and are a wonderful person.

I hope I did everything I could to help your research! I hope ya don't miss us too much! Thanks again Breann!

Loved having the group. Will miss you!

I am very happy to have participated in this group. I have learned a lot and am excited to see

the impact we have on the community! Thank you for all the time and dedication you have put into this group.

During two of our last focus groups, as part of our final evaluation process, I asked participants, “What do you hope will come out of this project in the long run?” The participants had the following to say:

More people wanting to do something about the topic. (Simon)

And more people knowing what it is and how they can help. (Theodore)

That a lot of people will see the video that we post. (Alvin)

It was clear that participants felt it was important for other people in their community and their social networks to see the work they had done and to take away some inspiration about how to become involved in the work of gender-based violence prevention.

Final Notes on Findings: A return to the research questions

In order to conclude the findings of this research, I will return to the research questions that guided the project.

How do youth in a rural Manitoban community understand gender-based violence?

The youth participants moved through processes of meaning making collectively and individually, both within the focus group setting and outside of it in conversations with their peers and families. In this process of creating meaning, participants explored their own standpoints and developed greater understandings of the role of intersectionality in the ways that people move through the world. Developing these understandings helped participants to sharpen their critical thinking capabilities and begin to question the structures in place that have allowed gender-based violence, in direct and structural forms, to become normalized. Feminist standpoint theory, as noted by Intemann and quoted

above, problematizes absolutes, which allows us to focus attention on local and communal construction of knowledge. The participants were able to successfully utilize their knowledge construction efforts to come up with a broad, yet pointed, definition of gender-based violence. The final definition was shared in the participants' video, they defined gender-based violence as: "harmful physical or non physical actions directed at people of a certain gender" they also defined it operationally through the use of examples that they acted out which included structural and direct violence. The participants involved in this research project were able to use their collectively generated knowledge to develop an understanding of a concept that was previously unknown to them. They worked together to understand how their own social locations and "ways of knowing" contributed to the definition that they created. Participants were also able to use this as a means of increasing their abilities to think critically and carefully about their community and broader Canadian society.

Do the youth in this community think that their rural location may have unique meanings related to experiences and prevention of gender-based violence? Simply put, yes the participants in this study did think that their rural location could result in unique challenges and opportunities in violence prevention work. The majority of the youth that participated in this research process had only ever lived in the area; all participants had only ever lived rurally. It would be interesting to follow up with participants who have now had an opportunity to experience life in an urban setting to see if their perspectives have changed. They reflected on rurality and its implications in the following ways:

It can be quiet and peaceful which is a good thing but also you can't really, nothing can be kept a secret for long. (Myrtle)

If you live in a rural area and you are different... you can get really shunned or just put down for that. Whereas when you go to an urban you're more open minded because there's more diversity so you might feel more belonging or acceptance and that just might be the place for you. (Alvin)

Participants also made connections between these perspectives on rural communities and the implications for people who are or might at some point experience gender-based violence. Unsurprisingly, they described the ways in which a supportive and caring community would provide feelings of safety to survivors of violence. However, participants were concerned that traditional mindsets, conservative values, and misunderstandings of difference may result in an unwillingness to participate in meaningful prevention and intervention activities.

Some of the participants' understandings of rurality closely mirrored what is described in the literature; where rural tends to be conceptualized as a two-sided coin. One side of the coin presents idyllic and peaceful imagery while the other presents backward "hillbillies". As participants talked more about their experiences of rurality, the separation between the two sides became more blurred, their explanations more nuanced, resulting in a more complex collective understanding of the home that they had all known for most of their lives.

Their concerns related to rural location and experiences of gender-based violence spoke to the notion of human security- who has access to it and who does not, depending on the specific local context. A lack of access to information related to gender-based violence as it occurs, pragmatic prevention strategies, and intervention services were all mentioned by participants a number of times. The participants identified that this lack of access could be linked to their rural location but also thought that it was likely an issue that impacted those in

urban settings as well. Participants often reflected on the fact that they would not have access to meaningful conversations about gender-based violence and prevention if they had not decided to participate in the focus groups.

How can these youth participate meaningfully in the prevention of gender-based violence? The participants of this research project demonstrated that youth can become involved in prevention efforts in many ways: through consciousness raising in their communities, through thought provoking art, within research, through supporting their peers in dismantling preconceived ideas and supporting each other in learning, through the creation of public service announcements such as the video they created and shared. There is no end to the ways in which youth can lead these initiatives, what is important is that they are in the driver's seat; our job as community members and researchers, is to support them, follow their lead, and trust their vision.

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY MEMBER TO RESEARCHER: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS & CONCLUSIONS

It has been approximately eight months since the focus groups ended. While there has not been a community-wide action to prevent gender-based violence in this part of rural Manitoba there have been pockets of conversation within the community that I had not heard prior to the youth's engagement in this research project. The combination of participants' conversations with those who were not a part of the research group, the articles in our local newspaper, and the video that was shared numerous times, with approximately 1500 views, contributed to the participants' hope that more people would know what gender-based violence is and begin to understand how they are able to contribute to prevention.

Looking at the impacts from a numerical perspective, the participants comprised approximately 1.25% of the population of the community in which the focus groups were held. It is safe to assume, based on the identifiable people who shared the video and their geographic location, that most of the video's views occurred within and in very close proximity to the community. The video views far surpass the total population of approximately 1000-1200 people in The Valley. I see this as a huge success and a testament to the commitment of the participants to share what they had learned about gender-based violence prevention with the people around them. As noted above, Gurman et al. point to the fact that one cannot expect widespread change as the result of a single research project with a limited number of participants. While these numbers may not point to a huge reach across the nation or province, they do point to a direct and meaningful impact on the community within which the focus groups occurred. This grassroots level, community-based, impact was the goal of the participants and I and I am proud

to say that I think that we reached our goal.

In order to complete this research project, I recruited a group of ten youth, numbers eventually leveled off at seven participants, to participate in a series of twelve focus groups. The material result of the focus groups was a participant created video that addressed the need for awareness raising about and prevention of gender-based violence in rural Manitoba. The research was based on a multi-strand theoretical foundation of intersectional and standpoint feminism, the creation of a complex understanding of “rural”, and feminist understandings of human security and structural violence theories. In addition to creating a video, the participants discussions contributed to understandings about: the challenges and opportunities inherent in their experiences of rurality; the evolution of their understanding of gender-based violence into that which was more nuanced and reflective of our social and political climate; the process by which disappointment in the status quo can lead to resistance and action; personal coping mechanisms as well as suggestions for policy level prevention. Participants also reported to gain greater senses of empowerment; new means through which to engage their social networks in gender and violence-focused discussions; a new capacity for building relationships among other participants; and the utility of community-based YPAR in research dealing with prevention.

Engaging in this type of research project has allowed me to participate in the fight against gender-based violence in ways that felt meaningful and impactful. The ability to facilitate this research project as a community member/ researcher presented a unique opportunity to “do” community-based participatory action research as I feel it is meant to be done, by community members, with community members, and for those community members. The participants that I worked with and I benefited greatly from our shared history and understanding of the context

within which the research project was taking place. We were able to create a foundation of security and trust fairly easily and relatively quickly which, in turn, helped us to delve into a challenging topic and create some transformative outcomes for the participants involved and for people who were impacted by the participants' involvement.

This research contributes to the fields of Peace and Conflict Studies and feminist violence prevention focused research. Through the addition of a feminist lens, I have examined gender-based violence and its prevention using the human security and structural violence theories, this application contributes to ongoing conversations pointing to the need to place increased value on feminist perspectives of peacemaking. Additionally, this research is important to the field of Peace and Conflict Studies in Canada because it provides an example of the ways in which human security and structural violence theories can be combined with intersectional and standpoint feminism to create a framework within which we can better understand the lived realities of people with various social locations living in non-urban locations. This contributes to non-violent peacemaking efforts that are specific to rural Canadian geography, which is an area that is currently underdeveloped in Peace Studies.

Canada is not immune to the dangerously fragile boundary between direct and structural violence, this is evident in the travesty of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the nation. It is obvious that more attention needs to be paid to our own shortcomings in addressing the structural violence that contributes to the disproportionate marginalization of certain members of the Canadian population. This youth-driven research study on rural gender-based violence prevention contributes to the work that is desperately needed to continue resisting the status quo.

In many cases, the drawbacks of this research are also related to what fills my day-dreams, I did not want it to end, ever. While I think the participants were able to accomplish a lot in our short time together and seemed to enjoy the process, part of me feels like we have only begun to scratch the surface. In an ideal world, with endless funding and support from school divisions across the nation, I would love to replicate this process of youth-driven, community based research focusing on violence prevention. It would be interesting to see the unique and similar findings that may emerge in different rural communities in Canada. I can only assume, based on the research that has come before this and the reactions of the participants that I worked with, that youth across Canada would enjoy the opportunity to become more responsible for their own learning and contribute positively to their communities through anti-violence work. It would be interesting as well, to note the change in young people's understandings if the research process could last over entire school years, throughout their high school careers, rather than for only three months.

As alluded to above, this research also addresses the issue of an urban norm in feminist violence research. The work of the youth involved in this project contributes to discussions of place in feminist violence research that many scholars, who have been noted above, argue is so important to engage in. Through the process of complexifying rurality, this work helps to further validate the experiences of rural victims/survivors of gender-based violence while simultaneously prioritizing prevention efforts. According to the 2011 Census, over 6.3 million Canadians live rurally, or in areas with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants (Statistics Canada, 2015). Lack of population density does not correlate with a decreased need for efforts promoting security and peace. It does require unique and context specific strategies that are targeted toward

the population that is intended to benefit. The results of this research make a strong case for the use of community-based participatory action research projects that engage youth in processes of social justice and anti-violence focused work. Sofie summarized the impact of this research so well, when she said, “I feel that like, if the 8 of us here can sit down and try to make a change, if everyone would just realize that that can happen, the world would just be a better place”. The sentiment in Sofie’s statement, something I think all of the participants agreed with, is the greatest impact of this research project: the young people involved left feeling empowered to create positive change and began to understand that they can require the same of those around them.

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APPENDICES

Materials used in Recruitment Presentations

As is mentioned in the “Participant Recruitment” section of the thesis, I facilitated presentations within the school to recruit participants. The following materials were used in those presentations:

Script:

Hi everyone, my name is Breann Maxwell. I went to school here and graduated in 2009. I worked at the gas station, the Pool, and here at the school as a Substitute Teacher. Moved to Winnipeg after I graduated to go to University- now I’m in grad school there working on a Master’s degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Exercise: Before I get into the rest of my pitch I want to ask all of you a quick question. Would you please close your eyes and raise your hand if any of the following applies to you? Raise your hand if you are a woman or care about a woman in your life- someone like your mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, girlfriend, friend. Okay, keep your hands up and open your eyes.

I’m here today to talk to you about an opportunity for you to participate in a research study that I’m doing on gender-based violence prevention in rural Manitoba in order to complete my Master’s Thesis. Broadly speaking, gender-based violence refers to all acts of direct and structural violence that are experienced by and enacted against women due to the fact that they are women. Structural violence that is gender-based refers to the often invisible or “normalized” policies and practices that lead to fewer opportunities for women and girls. Expressions of direct gender-based violence are the visible or more obviously oppressive actions against women and girls such as sexual abuse, domestic or marital violence, and harassment. Lots of people think that gender-based violence only affects women, but based on the little exercise we just did, we can see that it actually affects everyone. When women that we love are hurt, we hurt too. Gender-based violence effects individuals, families, communities, and the larger society we live in.

In my research, I want to look at how youth can be involved in and/or leaders of prevention efforts against gender-based violence. In order to do that I'm hoping to get about ten participants who would come meet with me and the other participants in focus groups once a week for about 12-14 weeks.

- The focus groups will last no longer than three hours and will take place at the Boardroom in the new hall.
- We'll meet any day of the week that works well for all of the participants.
- During our focus group meetings, we'll talk about our understandings of gender-based violence, we aren't going to talk about personal experiences at all. We're just going to develop a definition together so that we can effectively talk about how to prevent gender-based violence in communities like ours.
- The research I'm doing is participatory which means that the participants, you folks, will guide the process and I'll be more of a facilitator. While the general topic will remain gender-based violence prevention, we'll take that in any direction that you choose. We'll work together to figure out how you want it to go and I'll support you along the way. We'll also work together to make sure that all the participants feel safe and welcome to contribute.
- The research is also art-based. So, in addition to talking with each other and asking questions, you'll be able to express yourself and the things your learning about, wondering about, or thinking about creatively through any means you like. You can paint, draw, write, sculpt, photograph, or anything else. I'll provide all of the supplies you need.
- The focus groups will be audio-taped, so I'll set up a voice recorder when we start and then transcribe- write out word for word- after each focus group. While I'm writing it out I'll remove all names and other identifying information. You'll remain anonymous, the people who read my final thesis won't know who participated.
- There will be food provided at all of our meetings and you'll be paid \$40 for every focus group you attend to cover costs of transportation and to reimburse you for your time.

This is a great opportunity to participate in a research study and figure out how they can be run. If you're thinking about going into Social Sciences in University this will be a wonderful opportunity for you to test the waters a little bit. It will also look really great on your resume and

CV- we'll talk about how to write it up during the focus groups. It's also a great opportunity to contribute to a body of research that is underdeveloped right now. There isn't much written about rural experiences of gender-based violence in North America, never mind Canada, and even fewer pieces written about prevention efforts involving youth in rural regions. I'm really hoping to start contributing to what is written but I can't do it on my own, I need participants who are willing to come and share their thoughts with me so that we can share them with other researchers and policy makers who have the power to do something with them.

In the envelopes I handed out- you'll find a piece of paper that says: Interest in Participation at the top, if you are interested in participating or learning more about what your participation would look like please check YES and write your name, age, and contact info. If you aren't interested, that's totally fine, just check NO. Once you're finished filling out the form please put it back into the envelope and seal it.

Also in the envelope is an Information Letter, if you're interested in participating you can take this home with you and share it with your parents. If you're under 18 your parents will have to consent to your participation. We can chat more about that when I contact those of you who are interested.

Does anyone have any questions? If you have any questions while you're reading the form please let me know.

Opportunity for Grade 11 & 12 Students: Participation in a Research Project

Gender-based Violence Prevention in Rural Manitoba

What's the research about?

Involving youth in the prevention of gender-based violence in rural Manitoba

The research will explore the ways in which gender-based violence (GBV) is understood by youth in rural Manitoba and how they envision successful prevention efforts. Participants will never be asked to talk about their own or others experiences of violence. They will be asked to develop a definition of GBV with the help of the Principal Investigator and then work together to imagine possible prevention strategies.

Who's doing the research?

Breann Maxwell is the Primary Investigator

Breann is doing this research as a component of her Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg. The results of the focus groups will be used as data in her writing and will contribute a great deal to the final thesis. Participants' involvement is highly valued and appreciated.

What does participation involve?

You will be asked to attend as many weekly focus groups as you can over the next 12-14 weeks. They'll last no longer than three hours. You'll only be asked to participate within a group setting.

The overall topic is gender-based prevention but this project is participant driven. You tell me how you want the research to go and what you want to focus on. Participants are co-researchers in this project.

We will talk, ask questions and do art. You'll have opportunities to paint, draw, sculpt, photograph, etc. if that's how you feel most comfortable expressing yourself.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE PARTICIPANTS?

1.
You'll receive a \$40 honorarium in cash for each focus group you attend. This money is intended to cover your transportation costs and to reimburse you for any time you may take off of work.

2.
Something unique to put on your resume/CV. Participating in research projects looks great on applications to universities and jobs.

3.
There will be food. We'll have plenty of snacks and beverages every week.

*Letter: Statement of
Interest Form*



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

**Ph.D. Program in
Peace and Conflict Studies**

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Information Letter

My name is Breann Maxwell, as you may know I grew up in Grandview and have worked at J&D Comer Store, the Grandview Swimming Pool, and at Grandview School as a substitute teacher. Though I moved to Winnipeg to go to university I visit home as much as I can and have worked in town intermittently since graduating high school. I have a BA(Hons.) in Women's and Gender Studies and Political Studies from the University of Manitoba and am now in the final stage of my graduate program working toward a Master's in Peace and Conflict Studies from both the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba.

I've chosen to explore gender-based violence prevention in rural Manitoba as the topic of my Master's Thesis. I am hoping to recruit approximately ten local youth who are interested in participating in weekly focus groups that would last no longer than three hours and would occur over about 3-4 months. During focus group meetings, participants and I will discuss what we understand about gender-based violence in a broad sense (no participants will be asked to divulge their own or other's experiences of any type of violence). Once we've reached a collective understanding of what gender-based violence is and how it might be experienced/enacted differently in a rural area, we will begin thinking about prevention and resistance strategies. The focus groups will be largely directed by youth participants so that we can address their specific concerns and areas of interest. Our time together will be spent in a variety of ways including: talking with each other as a large group, talking with peers in smaller groups, and creating art and/or participating in artistic processes that tell the stories of our learning. I will facilitate all of the focus groups and we will all work together to maintain a safe and welcoming space for all participants. These sessions will be audio-taped. I will transcribe the sessions to writing, keeping the transcription in a secure place where no names will be associated with the notes.

I am inviting you to participate in this study, please share this letter with your parent/legal guardian so that you can discuss the possibility of your participation together. If you or your parent/guardian have any questions that you would like me to address prior to making your decision please feel free to contact me using any of the following options:

My personal cell phone with secure voicemail: 204-770-0572
My email address: urnmaxw28@mY!!ffianitoba.ca

If you have indicated your interest in participation on the form that was provided to you at my presentation in your classroom I will be contacting you using the information you

umanitoba.ca/mauro_centre



Activities Used in the Research Process

This section provides more detailed information about each of the activities that were mentioned in Chapter 4. This information can be used as a guide for facilitating the activities with groups of approximately 6-12 participants.

Name Game: The goal of this exercise is to first introduce all participants to the facilitator and to each other. This exercise also aims to help participants remember each other's names and/or learn something new about each other. The process for this exercise is as follows:

Individually, participants introduce themselves, they can do this orally or by writing their name on a white board or large piece of paper. The participant will then share a story about their name, a nickname, or the origin of their name. This is also a great opportunity to get participants' preferred names and being the practice of using it in place of their legal name if so desired. I was first introduced to this exercise during my coursework in Peace & Conflict Studies.

Rules for a Safe(r) Space: The goal of this exercise is to have participants collectively contribute to guidelines that they will police as a group in order to make themselves and each other feel as safe as possible. The process for this exercise is as follows: Participants share their ideas orally. On a large piece of paper, the facilitator will write down suggestions from the group. This paper will be kept and posted on the wall each time the group meets. It remains open for additions and/or edits throughout the groups' meetings. I was first introduced to this exercise during my undergraduate degree in a Women's & Gender Studies course.

What makes a good communicator Discussion: The goal of this exercise is to encourage participants to reflect on communication and the styles of communication that they find most effective. Through reflection and open discussion, participants are encouraged to emulate these

effective communication techniques within the focus groups. The process for this exercise is as follows: While participants are seated in a circle, ask them to quietly think of someone who they think of as a good communicator. Allow participants to think about the individual for a few moments. If participants are comfortable with it, go around the circle and ask participants to share some information about the person they thought of and a few of the qualities that make them a particularly skilled communicator. The facilitator should record key qualities. Once everyone has spoken, the facilitator will review the list of qualities and the group will help the facilitator organize the list into similar qualities. The group will then summarize the overall themes of the similar qualities and make a commitment to try to emulate those in their interactions with one another. I was first introduced to this exercise during my coursework in Peace & Conflict Studies.

10 things in common: The goal of this exercise is to help the participants and facilitator come together as a group and build relationships upon a foundation of common experience. This exercise helps to ensure that all members of the group, regardless of prior relationships, have an opportunity to create and contribute to cohesion. The process for this exercise is as follows: While in a large group, ask participants (this can include the facilitator as well if the group agrees) to begin brainstorming possible common experiences that all members of the group may have. If possible, try to encourage the group to think of specific experiences rather than overly broad commonalities such as, “we all have arms, legs, etc.”. I was first introduced to this exercise during my coursework in Peace & Conflict Studies.

The Yarn Game: The goal of this exercise is to get participants to think about a broad topic or question both individually and collectively. Participants are given an opportunity to

share their ideas and to find the ways in which these ideas are distinct and interconnected. The process for this exercise is as follows: Participants stand in a circle, the facilitator passes a ball of yarn to the first participant. The first participant briefly responds to the question or statement and holds on to the string of yarn while passing the ball to another participant. This continues until the yarn has all been used or until each participant has answered twice, whichever comes first. At the end of the activity the yarn should look something like a spider web or dreamcatcher. The facilitator should ask participants to reflect upon the ways in which their responses were similar, different, and how they were connected to one another. I was first introduced to this exercise during my coursework in Peace & Conflict Studies.

What does gender-based violence feel like? A visualization exercise: The goal of this exercise is to create a situation in which participants are able to consider gender-based violence as it may be experienced by a survivor, the survivor's social network, and/or the perpetrator. It is helpful near the beginning of the process as it helps to ground participants in the topic of focus. The process for this exercise is as follows: ask participants to imagine what gender-based violence might feel like for any or all of the people who may be impacted by it. If participants are open to it, ask them to either visually or textually represent their thoughts. This can be done in any way that participants feel most comfortable with but should be done individually. This exercise was developed with the participants of this research project.

Affirmations: The goal of this exercise is to reinforce the safety of the space and further develop group cohesion. The process for this exercise is as follows: While seated or standing in a circle, ask participants to consider some of the attributes that they most admire and/or appreciate about each other. At the group's discretion, ask them to either verbally share or anonymously

write one of these affirming statements about each of their peers. If participants choose the anonymous option: gather a separate piece of paper for each participant, write their name on the top of the paper, have each participant write something on each paper except the one with their own name on it, when the papers return to the person that they belong to, have the individual to their left read an affirmation about their peer, continue around the circle. Once everyone has shared invite the group to share their feelings about the exercise. This exercise was developed with the participants of this research project.

Social Location Identification & Mapping: The goal of these exercises were to help participants understand social locations and the ways in which categorizations such as race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. can contribute to the privilege and/or marginalization of individuals in our society. The process for this exercise is as follows: The facilitator should first provide an introductory lesson on social location and be sure to include examples. Work with participants to brainstorm a comprehensive list of social locations. Once participants are familiar with the concept, invite them to work together to imagine hypothetical people and identify their social locations. Once social locations have been identified, explore them as a group, and discuss the ways in which the hypothetical people may move through the world differently as a result of their social locations. Once participants have had ample opportunity to work through social locations and their possible meanings as a group invite them to do some critical self reflection on their own social locations. If participants are comfortable, ask them to visually represent their social locations as privilege and marginalization that they encounter in their daily lives. This exercise was developed with the participants of this research project.

I've heard, I've thought, I've said: The goal of this exercise is to help participants reflect

on their own participation in processes of learned and normalized practices of discrimination. The exercise should not be used to blame participants or make them feel guilty, it is simply a tool to help participants come to realize how we can all participate in discriminatory processes without necessarily intending to. The gradual transition in statements from I've heard to I've said helps participants ease into this realization. The process for this exercise is as follows: prior to meeting with participants, create a list of approximately 10 statements categorized by three prefaces: I've heard, I've thought, and I've said. The statements should all relate to one form of discrimination such as racism, sexism, etc. so as not to overwhelm the participants. Have participants sit in a circle and depending on their level of comfort and the statements you've created have them either a) close their eyes and raise their hand if the statement applies to them; b) write the numbers 1-10 on a piece of paper and write yes/no in response to each question and anonymously submit to facilitator after the exercise; or c) have participants raise their hands in front of their co-participants and engage in discussion after each statement. After the statements have been read and the participants feedback has been collected, talk as a group about the way that people feel about their own participation in discriminatory practices. As the facilitator, you should be prepared to remind participants that we are taught how to "do" discrimination by our society and systems, these are learned behaviours, not innate. It is important to spend an equal amount of time talking about resistance strategies so that participants do not feel bogged down and helpless after this exercise, remind them that the first step to creating change is seeing the need for change to occur. This exercise was created by Ashley Edson, Gaetane Lafond, and myself for a Peace and Conflict Studies Class: Facilitating Intergroup Dialogue in 2015. The course was taught by Dr. Cathy Rocke at the University of Manitoba.

Privilege Walk: The goal of this exercise is to further participants' understandings of the impacts of privilege and marginalization in their own day-to-day lives. This activity should only be done if and when participants have formed a safe and trusting relationship with one another. It can be a high risk and emotionally triggering exercise and should be approached with caution and care. The process for this exercise is as follows: Ask participants to stand in a straight line with a bit of space between them, make sure they leave space in front of and behind them. Read a list of statements (these can be found in various online resources or you can create ones that fit your group) and ask participants to step forward or backward if the statement applies to their experiences. Moving forward indicates privilege and backwards, marginalization. While participants are stepping forwards and back, their eyes should be closed or they should be looking directly at the floor. Once all statements have been read, ask participants to open their eyes and look around the room. After a few moments of quiet reflection begin a discussion about the exercise and how everyone feels about their new place in the line. Ensure that you remind participants about self-care and reinforce the safety of the space and support of the group.

Mapping a town free of violence: The goal of this exercise is to allow participants the opportunity to imagine their ideal community, one that is based on their own but with adjustments that they think would contribute to a community where no forms of violence could exist. This exercise also creates a good opportunity for further discussion afterward, about the kinds of strategies that could be used to take their current community in the direction of their ideal community.

The process for this exercise is as follows: On a very large poster board, ask participants to collectively map out a town free of violence. Ask them to think about the way the streets

should be organized, where the businesses and service providers should be located, and where people should live. Once they have mapped the town, ask them to go through it and discuss what is happening on the streets and within the buildings and how they contribute to the town being violence free. This exercise was developed with the participants of this research project.

News Stories Examples of gender-based violence & resistance

The following examples were used within the focus groups to illustrate examples of gender-based violence as well as ongoing acts of resistance and prevention focused initiatives.

Examples of gender-based violence in the news

- 14 young women murdered in 1989 at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. Known as Montreal Massacre
- Sexual assault case in 2014, Alberta judge: Robin Camp. Asked the 19- year old complainant why she “didn’t just keep her knees together and move in such a way that her alleged attacker couldn’t penetrate her”
- Ongoing trials and news updates of the Jian Ghomeshi cases
- Ongoing updates and background information regarding Canada’s Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women
- Ongoing updates of Misogynist Group Return of Kings “meet up” scheduled for Winnipeg in 2016
- Questions of structural violence in 2016 Census: no options to report for gender non-binary people and/or transgender folks
- 2015 case in Northern Manitoba of a RCMP officer taking a woman he had arrested out of a cell and to his home to, “pursue a personal relationship”
- 2015 case in Southern Manitoba of a woman who was choked, beaten, stripped, and pushed out of a house naked by her boyfriend. RCMP tried to convince her not to lay charges

Examples of Resistance in the news and on social media:

- In Canada, 6 December is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This day was established in 1991 to mark the anniversary of the murders at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal
- #NotOkay and #YesAllWomen used to speak against acts of GBV (structural and direct)
- #BeenRapedNeverReported used by thousands of women to talk about violence that those in Canada and internationally had experienced
- #MMIW used on social media to discuss issues related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada
- Use of rallies and marches, annual and event specific, to bring awareness to the topic and promote resistance and prevention
- Jamie Black’s Red Dress Project: The empty red dress really evokes the absence of these women but it also marks the absence of these women so we can’t forget that they’re gone,” said Black.
- Walking With Our Sisters: each pair of vamps (or “uppers” as they are also called) represents one missing or murdered Indigenous woman. The unfinished moccasins represent the unfinished lives of the women whose lives were cut short.
- Government of Manitoba’s “Stop the Violence” campaign with Winnipeg Blue Bombers: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/stoptheviolence/videos.html>

Evaluations

As mentioned above, the participants completed three evaluations. The questions used in each process are shared below:

Voices Against Violence Evaluation Form: used in Initial Evaluation and to inform the final evaluation

Focus Group Questions

(To be administered in the initial stages and final stages of participation. May be administered in any format, including an arts-based approach such as theatre)

1. People experience various kinds of oppression in their lives. One definition of oppression is “the exercise of authority or power in an unjust manner”. This unfairness may be based on gender, race, poverty, disability or other characteristics of a person. Can you tell me how you think young people might experience oppression in their daily lives?
2. What are the effects or impacts of oppression?
3. Do you think young people recognize oppression when it occurs? Do they think there is anything to be done about it? What might prevent someone from taking action against oppression?
4. As you think about yourself and friends or family members your age, what does empowerment mean? How can young people be empowered?
5. We’re also interested in knowing how you think about the term ‘health’. As you think about yourself and friends or family members your age, what comes to mind when I say the word “health”? Probe: does it just mean the absence of illness?
6. Have you ever heard of the term “structural violence”? What comes to mind when I say these words?
7. How does oppression or structural violence impact the health of youth in Canadian society?

Mid-point Evaluation

Week 6: Evaluation

Please rate each question on a scale of 1-10 and provide any additional information in the space provided or on the back. The scale represents the following: 1 being “NO” or “VERY LITTLE” and 10 being “YES” or “EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS”

1. Have you learned something new about gender-based violence?
 1. Do you think you would recognize gender-based violence more easily now than when you first started participating in the group?
 2. Do you feel prepared to create a prevention strategy?
2. How has your experience with the group been so far?
3. Do you feel safe and comfortable to share your ideas and participate?
4. Do you feel engaged and interested? If not, how can the facilitator improve your experience?
5. Do you feel Breann is organizing the group effectively? What could she do differently to improve?
6. Do you feel that you’re learning something useful from the content? What could be added to strengthen this for you?
7. Do you feel the other group members are respectful? If not, how can this be improved?
8. Do you feel that your ideas/input are being used to their full extent within the research process?
9. Will what you’ve learned be useful/helpful to you later in your life? Do you feel that what you’ve learned so far has had an impact on you already?
10. Do you feel that Breann is open to group members ideas? If not, how can she improve?
11. Did it matter to you that Breann is also from the community and may have had previous interactions with you? How did this make you feel about participating?

Final Evaluation: completed orally and as a group

Final Evaluation

1. How has your knowledge or understanding of structural violence changed as a result of your participation in the group?
2. Has your participation in this group changed how you approach situations that might be considered structural violence?
3. How has your participation in this group changed how you feel about your community and how involved you are or would like to be in the future?
4. Were you able to participate in this group in the ways you expected or wanted to? If not, can you tell me more about that? If so, what made that possible?
5. Do you feel your input was valued and taken seriously? Did you feel you were able to influence decisions about the direction the group would take?
6. What contributed positively to the activities of your group? Was there anything that was negative?
7. What do you hope will come out of this project in the long run?
8. Is it something you would like to do again if you had the opportunity?
9. What have you learned about GBV?
10. Do you think you would recognize gender-based violence more easily now than when you first started participating in the group?
11. How did the other participants impact your experiences?
12. Will what you've learned be useful/helpful to you later in your life? Do you feel that what you've learned so far has had an impact on you already? Examples.

Approvals



Research Ethics and Compliance Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

October 22, 2015

TO: Breann Maxwell (Advisor M. Flaherty)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Lorna Guse, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JEREB)

Re: Protocol #J2015:097
"Gender-based Violence Prevention with Rural Youth in Manitoba"

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

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

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325) a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project Number: <http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0>)
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

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

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



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AMENDMENT APPROVAL

November 3, 2015

TO: Breann Maxwell
Principal Investigator [REDACTED]

FROM: Lorna Guse, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol #J2015:097
"Gender-based Violence Prevention with Rural Youth in Manitoba"

This will acknowledge your Amendment Request dated October 28, 2015 requesting amendment to your above-noted protocol.

Approval is given for this amendment. Any further changes to the protocol must be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation.