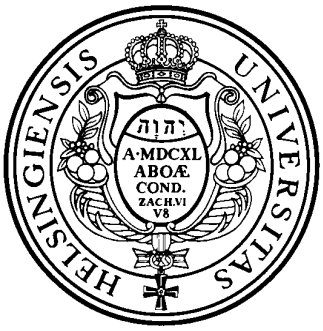

Master's Thesis
Geography
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"A NATION IS NOT CONQUERED UNTIL THE HEARTS OF ITS WOMEN ARE ON THE GROUND"

Stories of Indigenous women and colonial resistance in Winnipeg, Canada

Pauliina Linnea Harjula

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Supervisor(s):

Tommi Inkinen
Rani-Henrik Andersson

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENECES AND GEOGRAPHY

Mail Box 64 (Gustaf Hällströmin katu 2)
00014 University of Helsinki

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO – HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET – UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion) Faculty	Laitos – Institution) Department
Faculty of Science	Geosciences and Geography

Tekijä – Författare) Author
Pauliina Linnea Harjula

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Tiivistelmä – Referat) Abstract

The attempts of the Canadian government to abolish Indigenous ways of being through forced assimilation has resulted into a collective trauma and marginalization of Indigenous peoples. The legacy of this colonial genocide has been particularly devastating to Indigenous women who experience oppression by Euro-Western patriarchy through both their race and their gender. Colonial mind-sets and structures of the society in the past have denigrated and dehumanized Indigenous womanhood, and persist to victimize the women in particular and hurtful ways today. Despite being one of the most disadvantaged groups in Canada, Indigenous women are not victims – they are survivors, resisting the forces that oppress them by reconstructing the identity of Indigenous womanhood and taking action for social change. Regarding this topic and urban Indigenous realities in general, the city of Winnipeg in Manitoba is a place of special interest. It has lately become the toponym of violence and racism against Indigenous people in Canada, and especially Indigenous women. However, the city also has, for quite a while now, fostered a determinant and organized Indigenous community whose women are strongly expressing themselves and working for social change.

This thesis describes the relationships I have built with the urban Indigenous community in Winnipeg to deepen the understanding of some the ways Indigenous women engage in colonial resistance through collective identity constructions and direct action in the city. By participating in the everyday life of the community, having one-on-one conversations and exploring personal narratives in social media I have learned how colonial resistance takes place in the women's lives and in the city. I have transcribed my learning into three individual stories of three women who were my main participants. These stories speak of resistance through self-expression and action to reclaim spaces of autonomy. They reveal the significance of healing from colonial and personal trauma through the reconnection with spirituality and tradition, education and sense of belonging to a community.

This thesis, centering the inspirational stories of resistance, is situated in anti-colonial framework, incorporating philosophical and methodological premises of Indigenous research paradigm. As such, the purpose of this study has been not only to uncover the power of Indigenous resistance but to support the ongoing global effort of Indigenous peoples to decolonize and restore their cultural-political sovereignty, identity and ways of knowing.

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urban Indigenous women, colonial resistance, identity, social change, Indigenous research paradigm

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Tiivistelmä – Referat) Abstract

Kanadan valtio on syntyhistoriansa aikana pyrkinyt systemaattisesti hävittämään alueella asuvat alkuperäiskansat kulttuureineen. Kansanmurhaan verrattavan pakkosulauttamisen seurauksena alkuperäiskansat kärsivät nykyään vaikeasta kollektiivisesta ja sukupolvet ylittävästä traumasta ja elävät vähemmistönä yhteiskunnan marginaaleissa. Kolonisaatiolla on ollut erityisen tuhoisa vaikutus alkuperäiskansojen naisiin, jotka kokevat sekä rotuun että sukupuoleen liittyvää sortoa euro-länsimaalaisessa patriarkaalisessa yhteiskunnassa. Kolonialistinen yhteiskunta on historian aikana mitätöinyt alkuperäiskansojen naisten perinteisen kulttuuri-identiteetin ja ihmisarvon, mikä on ajanut naiset nykyiseen heikkoon sosiaaliseen asemaan sekä alttiiksi epäinhimilliselle ja alentavalle kohtelulle.

Alkuperäiskansoihin kuuluvat naiset ovat ihmisryhmänä Kanadan huono-osaisimpia. He eivät kuitenkaan ole uhreja vaan selviytyjiä, jotka sinnikkäästi vastustavat heihin kohdistuvaa sortoa identiteettinsä uudelleen muodostamisen ja yhteiskunta-aktivismin kautta.

Winnipeg on otollinen kohde alkuperäiskansojen kaupunkielämän ilmiöiden, kuten syrjäytymisen sekä kolonialismin vastaisen toiminnan tarkasteluun. Preeriakaupungista on tullut alkuperäiskansoihin ja erityisesti niiden naisiin kohdistuvan väkivallan ja rasismin ilmenemispaikka. Toisaalta Winnipegiin on muodostunut määrätietoinen alkuperäiskansayhteisö, jonka naiset yhä voimakkaammin ja näkyvämmin ovat alkaneet vastustaa heihin kohdistuvaa sortoa ja ryhtyneet toimimaan yhteiskunnallisen muutoksen puolesta.

Tutkielmani kuvailee luomiani suhteita Winnipegin alkuperäiskansayhteisöön ja kolmeen alkuperäiskansoihin kuuluvaan naiseen. Näiden suhteiden kautta olen syventänyt kokemuksiani tavoista, joilla naiset uudelleenrakentavat kulttuuri-identiteettiään sekä harjoittavat kolonialismin vastaista suoraa toimintaa kaupunkitilassa. Osallistuessani naisten ja kaupunkiyhteisön arkeen, käydessäni kahdenkeskisiä keskusteluja, kuunnellessani kertomuksia ja tarkastellessani naisten itseilmaisua sosiaalisessa mediassa, olen tutustunut ja oppinut, millä tavoin kolonialismin vastainen toiminta ilmenee näiden naisten elämässä Winnipegin kaupungissa.

Keskityn tutkielmassani voimauttaviin kertomuksiin Winnipegissä asuvien alkuperäiskansojen naisten harjoittamasta kolonialismin vastustamisesta ja kolonialismista vapautumisesta. Viitekehykseltään tutkielmani on kriittinen ja olen yrittänyt sisällyttää siihen alkuperäiskansojen maailmankatsomukseen perustuvia akateemisia käytänteitä. Tutkielmani tavoitteena on paitsi sisällöltään myös toteuttamistavaltaan tukea alkuperäiskansojen liikettä, joka pyrkii palauttamaan itsemäärämisoikeuden omaan kulttuuriin, identiteettiin ja elämänkatsomukseen.

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urban Indigenous women, colonial resistance, identity, social change, Indigenous research paradigm

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To all the women who are keeping those hearts off the ground.

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FOREWORD TO THE READER

For the past two years I have been on an eye-opening learning journey to the world of Indigenous peoples of Canada and North America.

I have been privileged to receive teachings and take part in traditions, practices and ceremonies that have taught me about the history, world views and cultures of Indigenous peoples, and what it means to be an Indigenous person in Canada today. I have learned how deeply colonization has cut to the Indigenous ways of being and why the wound keeps bleeding from generation to another.

It has to be understood that colonization is not history. Colonization is a mind-set that lives through the social relations and structures of the society that are built on the domination of the colonizer and oppression of the colonized. I have come to understand that in Canada, Indigenous women are carrying the heaviest burden of colonization, discrediting them as human beings and making them the most victimized group of people in the country.

But victimized does not mean weak and discredited does not mean defeated.

Throughout these two years I have become involved in the local Indigenous community in Winnipeg and followed very closely the ongoing social movement of Indigenous people taking place all over Canada. The ways that Indigenous women respond to the everyday realities of colonial oppression has moved me. It has become clear that Indigenous women, although being victimized, are not victims. They are survivors, and this is the message I want to deliver.

This thesis was never aimed to be impersonal or apolitical –quite the opposite. I am very much personally invested to the people and issues that I am presenting in this thesis, thus, I have built a research project that not only discusses resistance but becomes part of it. It is a project that is motivated by a personal relationship to the local Indigenous community in Winnipeg and rooted in ethical commitment to social change. Apart from delivering the important message of resilience of Indigenous women, my hope is that this thesis, trying to respect the liberation of Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing, encourages into thinking institutional research as a holistic project of experiential learning and meaning-making.

"Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual, academic research is a…lie, it does not exist." (Hampton 1995:52)

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Someone wise once told me that 'it takes a village to write a thesis', so, I will take this opportunity to thank everyone who directly or indirectly, willingly or unintentionally have joined this 'village' of mine.

First of all thank you my participants, *my friends* Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna for the relationship you have shared with me. Thank you for your honesty and trust. Thank you for the laughs and the cries, you truly have inspired me. Chi miigwetch.

I want to thank every individual in the community in Winnipeg who have welcomed me in with an open heart and mind. Special thanks to the youth and staff in Ndinawe, I feel lucky for been given the chance to share time with you. Also, I am forever grateful to Broadway Neighborhood Centre staff and Eagle's Nest for the opportunities you have given me in the past, they have contributed to this project a lot.

Thank you, Meg, my love, for keeping me alive throughout this project, literally and metaphorically. The rest of my Loewen family, thank you for the encouraging words and taking me as part of your pack. Thank you all other friends and my ultimate frisbee team in Winnipeg for the much needed distraction. Gabi, I missed you.

To all the people who have contributed to the teachings I have tried my best to present in this thesis, including Elders, course instructors, keepers of ceremonies and spontaneous encounters in the city, a big thank you. I also want to acknowledge the library staff at University of Winnipeg for their help and flexibility with your "guest" customer.

Many thanks to my supervisors for the flexibility and willingness to review this thesis on top of their other professional duties. Also, thank you everyone at the department of geography who have taken their personal time to help me at the beginning of this project.

My geography mates, thank you so much for the laughs and peer support, and for patiently listening and trying to understand my passion towards these issues.

Finally, thank you, my dear friends and family in Finland and Australia for always being there for me, oceans and months apart. You have been in my thoughts more often than you know.

Mikko, my partner in crime, thank you for our friendship that brings joy and meaning to my life every day. My dear sister, Karoliina and my mother, 'Madre', none of this - or anything ever - would have been possible without you. Thank you for always supporting me and never keeping me from realising my passions. And thank you, Dad, for the many stories you had the time to share with me. I wish you were here to read this one.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 New People of The 7th Fire

"*The Fourth Fire…told of the coming of the light skinned race*:

You will know the future of our people by the face of the light skinned race wears. If they come wearing the face of brotherhood then there will come a time of wonderful change for generations to come. They will bring new knowledge and articles that can be joined with the knowledge of this country. In this way, two nations will join to make a mighty nation. This new nation will be joined by two more so that four will for the mightiest nation of all. You will know the face of the brotherhood if the light skinned race comes carrying no weapons, if they come bearing only their knowledge and a hand shake.

Beware if the light skinned race comes wearing the face of death. You must be careful because the face of brotherhood and the face of death look very much alike. If they come carrying a weapon ... beware. If they come in suffering ... They could fool you. Their hearts may be filled with greed for the riches of this land. If they are indeed your brothers, let them prove it. Do not accept then in total trust. You shall know that the face they wear is one of death if the rivers run with poison and fish become unfit to eat. You shall know them by these many things.

In the time of the Fifth Fire there will come a time of great struggle that will grip the lives of all native people. At the warning of this Fire there will come among the people one who holds a promise of great joy and salvation. If the people accept this promise of a new way and abandon the old teachings, then the struggle of the Fifth Fire will be with the people for many generations. The promise that comes will prove to be a false promise. All those who accept this promise will cause the near destruction of the people."

In the time of the Sixth Fire it will be evident that the promise of the First Fire came in in a false way. Those deceived by this promise will take their children away from the teachings of the Elders. Grandsons and granddaughters will turn against the Elders. In this way the Elders will lose their reason for living ... they will lose their purpose in life. At this time a new sickness will come among the people. The balance of many people will be disturbed. The cup of life will almost become the cup of grief.

> *In the time of the Seventh Fire New People will emerge*. They will retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail. Their steps will take them to the Elders who they will ask to guide them on their journey. But many of the Elders will have fallen asleep. They will awaken to this new time with nothing to offer… The task of the New People will not be easy.
>
> If the New People will remain strong in their quest the Water Drum of the Midewiwin Lodge will again sound its voice. There will be a rebirth of the Anishinabe Nation and a rekindling of old flames. The Sacred Fire will again be lit.…then *the Seventh Fire will light the Eighth and final Fire*, an eternal fire of peace, love brotherhood and sisterhood." (Banai 1988, 90-95, italics added)

The ancient prophecy of the Seven Fires, traditional knowledge of the Anishinabe peoples, has foretold the history of their people from pre-colonial era to present, predicting the arrival of European settlers, the devastation of colonization and the struggle to "rekindle the old flames". However, most importantly the story tells how the new generation of the Seventh Fire will eventually emerge. These New People will overcome the damage and destruction caused by "the light skinned race"; restore and reclaim the sovereignty of their people and (re)establish society constituted on harmony, solidarity and respect.

I opened with this widely known Indigenous story because it quite brilliantly captures Indigenous peoples' cultural revival and movement for social change in Canada today. As one of my participants Chelsea put it: "We are living interesting times". Indigenous peoples across the country are round dancing at malls, drumming on the streets, camping out in front of government establishments, blocking highways and walking thousands of miles to get their message through: We are here. We always have been and we always will be. Throughout the two years of my experiences in Canada, I have come to experience firsthand this resilience and determination of the people whose culture and ways of life have been attempted to systematically destroy. Being well informed about the oppressions that Indigenous people encounter in a society dominated by Euro-Western patriarchy, I have become particularly intrigued by the ways Indigenous women empower themselves in the colonial conditions of racial and gendered victimization.

Victimization as a phenomenon can be looked through different disciplinary perspectives, but in this thesis I conceptualize it as a social construct; an intricate product of human action that is relational to race, gender, time and space. It is a severe cyclic problem that is grounded in

the genocidal history of Indigenous peoples and degradation of Indigenous womanhood, and reproduced in the present mind sets and structures of the colonial society.

The attempts of the Canadian government to assimilate and demolish Indigenous cultures in the recent past have led to a deep interpersonal trauma and marginalization of Indigenous people. The abrogation and dehumanization of Indigenous womanhood has victimized the women in particular ways. The reality of victimization becomes a lived experience in various dimensions: in the public and at home, in other people's attitudes and actions, and most sadly, in the internalized mindset of Indigenous women themselves. The outcomes of these realities are sinister. Indigenous girls and women are going missing and getting killed more commonly than any other women in Canada (RCMP 2013) and the high likelihood of encountering violence and exploitation is overlooked and perpetrated by institutional systems of care. Beyond the statistics and news headlines, there lie a thousand untold personal stories of harassment, humiliation, domestic abuse, systematic exploitation, crippling addiction, child apprehension and prejudice. Despite these realities, Indigenous women have persevered. Just as the first six Fires have come to be, so has the Seventh.

This study began to take form over a year ago in 2014, at the end of my experience as a visiting graduate student in University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. I remember vividly when the news on Tina Fontaine, an Indigenous youth from Sagkeeng First Nation broke out (CBC 2014a). The body of this 15-year-old, wrapped inside a garbage bag was accidentally discovered in Red River downtown by the police. A national outrage followed and the truth about Indigenous women's struggles across Canada began to unfold to the public, exposing the underlying realities on deeply rooted racism, sexism and decayed systems of governmental child care.

As much as there is daunting heaviness and despair around the issue of victimization, there is also a tangible atmosphere of determination. Winnipeg, for many, is the toponym of violence and racism against Indigenous people in Canada. The city has always been a central site to Indigenous people and urban Indigenous experience, and lately it has become a central site of imperative colonial resistance and social action.

1.2 Research objective and purpose of the study

As I was studying about Indigenous research methodologies for my thesis I bumped into critique on how Indigenous research topics too often focus on illness and negativity. Focusing research is focusing energy (Wilson 2008). It is essential to learn about the causes of a

problem, but also to concentrate on the positive. Doing so improves harmony and the connectedness of important relationships which have been lost in problematic situations (Wilson 2008). Focusing on negative, on the other hand, is focusing on disharmony and possibly even propagating the problem. Also, constantly having research questions that are problem centred – rather than solution centred - unintentionally perpetuate the image of Indigenous people as somehow infantile and helpless, needing to be being patronized and controlled (Chilisa 2011). With these critical scholarly notions and my personal observations, I came to find the focus of my thesis research.

The aim of this study journey has been to deepen my experience on the resistance of Indigenous women in Winnipeg through the episteme of stories. Theoretically, I am looking at the phenomena of victimization and resistance as social constructions of power and meaning-making that is dynamic in time and space. Guiding questions for this journey have been:

1. How has colonization impacted Indigenous womanhood?
2. In what ways do Indigenous women in Winnipeg resist colonial structures and victimization?
3. How is identity construction, space and direct social action present in the exercise of resistance?

As I clarified in the foreword, the purpose of this thesis is not merely to explore colonial resistance as a phenomenon but to actively take part in it. I have committed to this agenda in two ways. First, I have grounded the epistemology, ethics and methodology of this study in Indigenous paradigm that resists Euro-Western domination per se. Second, the methodology that I established for this study has allowed me to participate in resistance *in situ*. In other words, I have arranged my research project to take place in Winnipeg where I could support the anti-colonial efforts of the community actively in person.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Anti-colonial approach

This thesis is situated in anti-colonial framework that critically scrutinizes and theorizes the phenomenon of colonization. As such, it is part of the family of critical theories that as research frameworks aim to reveal social, political and cultural inequalities of power that stem from differing human experience such as race and culture, gender, and class; and pursue to actively transform the society through research (Getty 2009)

The prefix 'anti' in anti-colonialism describes the fundamental premise of the framework and distinguishes it philosophically from post-colonial and neo-colonial articulations (Lewis 2010). Post-colonialism implies to colonization as a historical phenomenon that has caused the present forms of domination (Dei & Asgharzadeh 2001), whereas neo- colonialism discusses the creation of new forms of colonial domination (Kempf 2010). Anti-colonialism, on the other hand, perceives colonization as a continuous 'transhistorical' phenomenon that is prevalent in contemporary societies through its structures and social relations (Dei & Asgharzadeh 2001; Kempf 2006). Anti-colonialist theory, thus, argues that colonialism is a constantly iterated social condition. It critiques colonial structures and processes and interrogates them actively (Dei 2002). Colonization is a term in today's globalized world that can take multiple meanings depending on the context, so it is best to clarify that in this thesis I contextualize colonization as domination of the global Euro-Western cultural norm over local Indigenous.

Historical colonization, in other words European imperialism, has globally legitimized Euro-Western cultural experience which is embedded in worldviews and ways of knowing that center values such as individuality, secularity and 'objective' reasoning. These worldviews have become, along with the domination of Euro-Western culture, the global intellectual norm, so ingrained in the structures and functions of our modern societies that they hardly go noticed. For an example, the institutions of academia and academic research - including Master's theses - are structural materializations of this norm. So, for Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing to be validated and decolonized, they, as paradoxical as it sounds, first need to be articulated within this dominant norm. Critical theory, and especially anti-colonialism have developed into means for these articulations, providing a joint framework, a mutual "language" by which Indigenous research paradigm and Euro-Western research paradigms can be understood by one another (image 1).

Next I will elaborate on the worldviews and values that inform Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing that underpin the ontology and epistemology of Indigenous research paradigm that I have attempted to incorporate in this thesis.

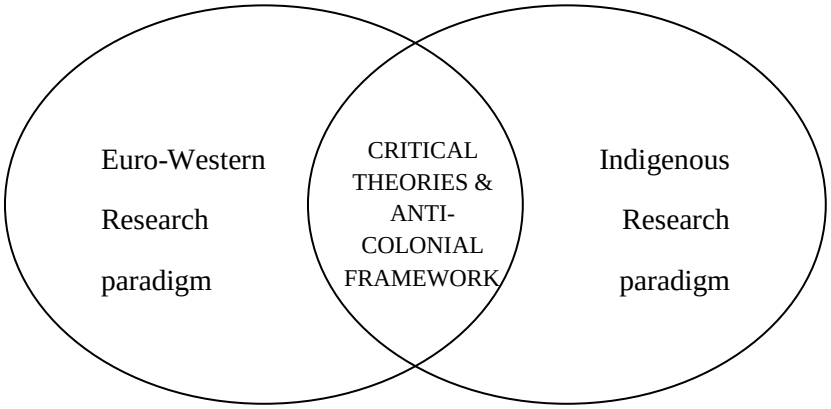


Image 1. Situating the framework of the thesis

2.2 Indigenous research paradigm

When I was doing my graduate studies at University of Manitoba in 2013-14, I experienced an "intellectual awakening" regarding these dominant knowledge systems and normalized academic research traditions. I realized that my own Euro-Western cultural perception about what knowledge is (ontology) and how we can 'access' that knowledge (epistemology) are, in fact, just one way of becoming conscious and knowledgeable about the world around us. I learnt that there are knowledge systems and ways of knowing that have been around for thousands of years, but have been silenced with Euro-Western colonization. Now, generations later, these *Indigenous ways of knowing* have started to revive, develop and proliferate as Indigenous peoples, "The Fourth World" (Chilisa 2011), have begun to emancipate their ways of being.

Education and research have played a big part in the oppression of Indigenous peoples, thus, the liberation of those systems and traditions have become a priority for the global Indigenous community (Smith 2004; Denzin et. al 2008; Battiste 2013). As an approach to research, Indigenous paradigm validates and centralizes the distinct *local ways* of knowing, acquiring, producing and presenting knowledge of the 'Fourth World' (Chilisa 2011). Therefore it is simultaneously both global and local paradigm: aiming for global decolonization but being nuanced and politicized by locally situated Indigenous knowledges (Dei 2002). As local

Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson from Opaskwayak Cree nation in Canada has stated in his book on Indigenous research paradigm:

> "We [Indigenous people] are beginning to articulate our own research paradigms and demand that research conducted in our communities follows our codes of conduct and honours our systems of knowledge and worldviews." (2008:8).

Indeed, whether done by Indigenous or non-Indigenous investigator, the research should follow 'when-in-Rome' mentality and be respectful to the local Indigenous culture(s) that are involved in and impacted by the research. So, as I was constructing the design of this thesis, I came to understand that doing research with Indigenous community in Winnipeg required me to step out of my frame of reference, the dominating Euro-Western norm, and adopt some fundamental characteristics of Indigenous way of doing research.

In the remaining of this section I will try to describe the fundamental philosophical and ethical corner stones of Indigenous paradigm that prominent Indigenous and ally scholars in North America have articulated as the base of the local ways of knowing. I attempt to illuminate the philosophy behind *relationality* and *relational accountability* and the holistic and circular features of Indigenous epistemologies which inform research design and methodologies from the choice of the topic to the presentation of research findings.

Indigenous nations of North America are a mosaic of hundreds of unique cultures (Dickason & Newbigging 2010) nevertheless, there are also similarities regarding holistic and circular way of viewing and pursuing life; kinship of all beings through the immanence of one spirit of origin (the Great Spirit or the Creator); and manifestations of that spirit in metaphysical experiences that are a natural part of our lived and sensed realities (eg. Graveline 1999; Cajete 2000; Fixico 2013). Wilson (2008) points out that is a questionable and somewhat impossible task to try to narrow North American Indigenous worldview down to one definitional denominator but if this was to be done, it would be relationality.

Relationality is the 'Native way of 'seeing'' life and the world around us through the interconnectedness of objects and beings (Fixico 2013). Nothing or no-one exists independently – we, the living; the non-living, including places, ideas and abstractions, even the ones that we cannot 'rationalize' or measure - the metaphysical, such as dreams and intuitions - become real through the webs of interrelated relationships that we share with the universe or cosmos (Fixico 2013). In the same trait of thought, knowledge also becomes 'existent' and 'visible' to us through shared relationships (Wilson 2008). Therefore,

knowledge is always relational and shared. It cannot be owned by an individual like a possession because without sharing a relationship there is no knowledge.

Knowledge seeking (ie. research) is thus based on the building of relationships and that project of building ought to happen according to certain rules. *Relational accountability* describes the ethical and moral condition, 'the rules' of building the relationships. It is the premise that all relationships are equal, and in fact, this moral principle, "the Natural Law of Democracy" (Fixico 2013) in Indigenous view, should guide all human behaviour and action, not just research. We should always act, think and speak with a good heart. (Personal communication Dr. Jerry Fontaine, September 2013). In terms of research practice though, relational accountability can be seen as the code of ethics and the criteria of research integrity (Wilson 2008). This code and criteria crystallizes in the three R's: Respect, Responsibility and Reciprocity that are embedded and centralized in building and fostering of the fourth R, Relationship (Weber-Pillwax 2001; also Graveline 1999; Christensen & Poupart 2013). These three R's as a code of ethics should direct each stage of the research project from choosing the topic to the methodology and presentation of the study. As criteria of research integrity they ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness (i.e. validity, credibility and honesty) of the research project (Wilson 2008).

These philosophical underpinnings hopefully clarify the epistemology of Indigenous research being a holistic project of learning through shared relationships. Now, relationships do not form through thinking but experiencing (Ross 2014). I cannot *think* a relationship into existence, I have to *feel and experience* it into existence. So, learning is not a process achieved primarily through the mind but through the heart. "Heart learning" (Ross 2014:243), then, is in the centre of Indigenous epistemology and is very much tied to the practice of storytelling. Stories are able to evoke the heart that will then stick the stories to the mind, and better yet: I will discuss more about the nature and importance of story in the section about methods (chapter 5). Next, I turn to examine colonial impacts on Indigenous womanhood and try to describe the complexity of victimization as a historical and contemporary social construction.

3. COLONIALISM & INDIGENOUS WOMEN

3.1 Genocide & marginalization of Indigenous people in Canada

European colonization of North America and the establishment of Canada and the United States has happened with the expense of Indigenous peoples who occupied the continent long before the "coming of the light skinned race". However, it is important to acknowledge from the outset that the process of colonization did not happen simply by the English and French arriving to what is now known as Canada and conquering the lands occupied by hundreds of diverse Indigenous nations. As historical recordings and the prophecy of the Fourth Fire tells, there were sporadic periods of time of peaceful and constructive relations between the settlers and Indigenous peoples that were marked by co-existence characterized by trade, cultural exchange and intermarriage. Métis nation, one of the Indigenous nations in Canada, did in fact emerge from this type of continuous cultural and economic interaction and intermarriage between the local Indigenous nations of Anishinabe and Cree and French and English settlers (Dickason & Newbigging 2010).

At this point it comes important to emphasize that Indigenous nations are not and have never been a homogenous group of people with the same cultural, social and political traditions and structures. They were – and still are – independent nations with rich history of interaction between each other including trade, kinship, political coalitions as well as feud and warfare long before Europeans arrived to the eastern shores of the 'New World'. Thus, violence, skirmish and upfront battles which started to break out more frequently towards the latter half of the 1800s were not only Indigenous people versus settlers-conflicts. Indigenous nations formed alliances with the French or the English and often played important part as their allies against each other or the new independent settler nation of the United States (Dickason & Newbigging 2010).

Colonization of Indigenous North America did not happen in a simple and conclusive caesarean manner, *veni, vidi, vici*. The eventual subjugation of Indigenous nations lies beyond battlefields, in a sum of factors that emerged the over 300 years of contact. Euro-American settlers introduced lethal epidemic diseases (Crosby 2003) and practiced policies such as starvation in addition to military 'persuasion' in order to enforce removals of whole nations from their homelands (Daschuk 2013). Gradually weakened by disease, war, famine and spiritual relapse caused by detachment of their ancestral lands, it is evident that the warning of

the Fourth Fire became true and the "light skinned race came wearing the face of death" with "their hearts filled with greed for the riches of this land" (Banai 1988:91)

More systematic genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada was brought about with the establishment of Canadian Confederation (Chrisjohn et al. 2002). Racial legislation known as the Indian Act, enforced in 1876, was a legal instrument mandated by the Canadian government to take control over Indigenous peoples and the lands they lived on. The Indian Act outlined a set of rules and regulations that only applied to Indigenous peoples. They were categorized with federally assigned labels that determined whether they were status or non-status Indians; their rights to land, right to mobility, right to practice culture and livelihood and political participation were restricted (Dickanson & Newbigging 2010; Ross 2014). By the turn of the 1900s majority of Indigenous nations were separated into smaller tribal bands and isolated to the remote reserves that now scatter the map of Canada.

The Indian Act imposed a child-like status upon Indigenous peoples and was used as a legal tool to not only control but to assimilate (Lawrence 2004). After Indigenous nations were hauled to reserves, the federal government and the Crown were facing 'an Indian problem' with the isolated communities that did not participate in the society. This was an issue needed to be solved in the face on growing industrialized economy and also because the Crown was, after all, mandated to provide education on the reserves as part of the signed treaties with Indigenous nations (Ray 1996). In order to fulfil this duty with minimal expenses and to finally integrate Indigenous peoples as a productive part of the Canadian society, the government came up with a solution that is now considered as the most destructive practice of genocide in Canada: the Indian Residential schools.

The main function of these federally funded educational establishments operated by Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches became to root out 'simple Indian mythology' by denying the students their culture, native language, worldviews and beliefs upon corporal punishment and other penalties. The aim was to mould the students to Euro-American norms and societal values so that they would ultimately abandon Indigenous identity and disconnect from their family and traditional way of life. Only then would they be able to fully participate in the society and labour market, and pursue full political enfranchisement (Long & Dickason 1996; Ray 1996).

In the past few decades the horrid truth about residential schools have begun to unravel as the survivors and their families have stepped up and shared their painful memories of these

institutions. A special Truth and Reconciliation Committee was established in 2009 to investigate these wrongdoings and the recently published report is a compilation of official documents and statements from over 7000 survivors and witnesses. The report reveals a dark chapter of Canada's history from the late 1800s until the 1980s, the pages heavy with stories of humiliation, torment, heartless violence and sexual abuse of children and youth of whom over 6000 never returned home (Truth and Reconciliation 2015). These schools have had devastating consequences on generations of individuals and families and the legacy remains to haunt Indigenous communities today. Indeed, the warning of the Fifth Fire and the false promise of "great joy and salvation" and "the new way of life" that Residential Schools were to bring to Indigenous peoples only brought "great struggle" and "near destruction" that was going to "be with the people for many generations" (Banai 1988).

The trauma of Indian Residential Schools continued as the schools started to be run down in the 1970s and -80s. During those decades, known as the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous children were apprehended from their families to foster care or to adoption by government child care services at alarming rates. These apprehensions have been given two reasons. First, parents were seen to be unfit to take care of their children due to 'neglect' which was merely poor understanding of Indigenous child rearing traditions and family structure, or they were taken due to the parents' addictions and abusive behaviour. It has to be mentioned that these behaviours were indirect impact of Residential School trauma. Second, some of the children were newly returning residential school students and thus by putting the children to foster care the government was filling the budget "void" that the on-going closure of Residential Schools was causing (Ross 2014).

The depth and breadth of the trauma that Indian Residential Schools and Sixties Scoop have had on present day Indigenous communities seems to be surprisingly poorly understood by the majority of Canadian public. The legacy of the genocide has become intergenerational and collective, impacting many Indigenous families and individuals that are broken by violence and substance abuse and disconnection to their cultural identity and spirituality. Problems tend to accumulate and as a result of this complicated social, emotional and spiritual trauma, generations of Indigenous peoples across Canada have become the most deeply disadvantaged and marginalized people of the country. This "new sickness" of the Sixth Fire is a cyclic of poverty, low education and unemployment coupled with substance abuse, prostitution, interpersonal violence and health issues plaguing Indigenous communities across Canada and North America (Pearce 2014; Swanson 2010).

Non-Indigenous people often blurt out "why is it so hard to just get over it", referring to the trauma and socio-economic problems. Firstly, trauma and marginalization were not a choice, it is result of forced colonization and genocide. The idea of assimilation and genocidal practices was to destroy Indigenous cultures by outlawing the practices and making the people to be ashamed of who they are. This 'cultural identity terror' resulted into something what scholars have called 'a soul wound' (Duran et al. 1998), an internalized colonial consciousness that has coiled Indigenous people to "believe that [they] are incapable of learning and that the colonizers' degrading images and beliefs about [Indigenous] people and [their] ways of being are true" (Hart 2002:27). One of reasons why this internalized conception of self is hard to 'get over' is, at least in my view, that Indigenous identity is socio-centric, meaning, that sense-of-self is "a mind is a mind-in-relational activity, a-mind-in-community" (Joe Couture, cited by Couture & McGowan 2013:229). Thus, it is hard for an individual who identifies with the community to change the internalized consciousness by her/himself. It takes a whole community to heal together, and this is level of healing does not happen overnight

Secondly, the sad fact is that oppression of the colonized is deeply rooted in the institutions of the dominant society of the colonizer (Freire 1970).The construction of the racial 'other' did not stop when Indigenous children were put into residential schools to be 'civilized' or when they came out, or when the children were adopted out from Indigenous families during the Sixties Scoop. The Indigenous 'other' keeps reproducing in peoples' minds sets through the institutional structures of the society from education and employment market to justice system and welfare which maintain to function on the basis colonial thought. This colonial thought is not anymore about abolishing or 'civilizing the savage' but rather about social exclusion, ignoring the Indigenous worldviews, denying nation-to-nation sovereignty and belittling the past and present calamities.

3.2 Colonial impact on Indigenous womanhood

Colonial oppression is grounded on the notions of racial and cultural hierarchy. However, oppressive experience in Euro-Western culture is deepened with gender inequality that celebrates the dominance of the masculine over feminine. Therefore, Indigenous women have suffered from Euro-Western colonization twofold: because of their race and because their gender. Women in European society have always been inferior to men, whereas Indigenous cultures were mostly based on balanced harmony between the two (Dickason & Newbigging 2010; Fixico 2013). Patriarchal mind sets and values of the colonizer has denigrated the

traditional socio-political status of Indigenous women and dehumanized them to consumable objects through particular sexual imagery. This attack on Indigenous womanhood has victimized Indigenous women in a particular fashion.

Many Indigenous societies held women equal to men or even higher than men regard social and political status. Women were perceived powerful for their ability to give life, and they were respected as educators and providers in the community (Voyageur 1996). In some matriarchal nations such as the Seneca of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederation women were atop of political decision-making. They selected leaders within the community and had the final ruling over warfare or other affairs concerning the whole community (Shoemaker 1991). The political, social and economic stewardship of women was often times not comprehended or accepted by the leaders of settler delegates who were accustomed to deal with men in formal affairs. Colonizers' values, customs, social and political structures and mind sets gradually found their way to the social relations and cultural traditions of many Indigenous nations. Thus, over time the traditional status of women began to alter. The inception of the Indian Act was a final notch in the disenfranchisement and domestication of Indigenous women. They were now by law stripped from any rights to political involvement or ownership to land, possessions or their registered Indian status under the Indian Act (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission 1991). Residential schools on their part set strict gender boundaries and thus misplaced women and girls from their traditional societal roles, confining them into the sphere of domestication and silence (Phillips 2003; Ross 2014).

Suppression of Indigenous women has been propagated indirectly but effectively through erroneous patriarchal perceptions that have dominated the picture of Indigenous cultures and peoples in historical recordings and documentations until very recently. Early explorers and anthropologists who described Indigenous cultures often misunderstood the position of women in their communities as they themselves were Euro-American and male. Thus, everyday life and the behavior of women in their community were misinterpreted through patriarchal lens which inherently saw women inferior and subordinated. For an example, when an Indigenous man was walking before her wife, that was understood to symbolize the wife's subordination to her husband and reflect a woman's status in the family and consequently in the whole society. In many of these cases the reality was totally different: the husband walked ahead his wife in order to protect her, not to dominate her (Voyageur 1996).

In addition to cultural misinterpretations, Indigenous women have been intentionally dehumanized with sexualized racial exotica in Euro-American literature and art. These images have later developed into damaging stereotypes that remain to have a profound impact on the way Indigenous women are perceived. Sexualized image of Indigenous women developed very early when the body of Indigenous woman was used as a metaphor to describe the untouched bounty of the New World; 'a virgin land' to be exploited and controlled (Anderson 2000). The dichotomous imagery of "the good Indian" or the "the bad Indian", a traditional moral categorization of Indigenous people by Euro-Americans, was then extended to the sexualization of Indigenous women: the noble, cooperative 'Indian princess' who secretly longed to be rescued by Euro-American civilization, and the promiscuous, resistant 'Dirty squaw' whose negative image became the moral scapegoat for the colonizer to exploit Indigenous land and people (Anderson 2000). Euro-American culture has mystified the imagery of Indigenous women for generations and the fantasy of a heroic and untouchable Pocahontas has remained as the portrayal of how any 'good' Indigenous woman should appear. Traditionally this exotic 'Indian princess' has been the object of unattainable sexual desire of non-Indigenous men; the distant, strong and beautiful savage with high morals. As Green (1975:208) explains: "She is sacrosanct. Her sexuality can be hinted but never realized." Therefore her darker imaginary twin, "the Dirty squaw" was to serve the purpose to realize the sexual fantasies, for she was no heroine, just an impersonal figure to "do what white men want for money or lust" (Green 175: 208). She became the faceless, anonymous, miserable but unsympathetic persona whose antagonism and irresponsibility forgave her exploitation and justified the assimilation of her people and her culture.

While the fantasy of the mystical "Indian princess" now mainly lives in naive Disney fairytales, the negative impression of the "Dirty squaw" has unfortunately stuck with Indigenous women through generations and remains to impact them in disturbing ways. As I mentioned at the end of the previous section, colonial consciousness and imagery has been sadly often internalized by Indigenous people themselves (Hart 2002). With Indigenous women this has meant the acceptance of worthlessness and low self–esteem which makes it easy to subdue to mistreatment, abuse and exploitation. Together with pervasive social problems including poverty and addiction has subjected Indigenous women to consequences of victimization that today manifest in desolate ways including violence, sexual exploitation, and at its worst, death.

3.3 Victimization today

Victimization and the issue of violence against Indigenous women is unfortunately nothing new to indigenous communities who have been advocating and raising awareness for their loved lost ones for decades. However, the problem and its magnitude has only become known to wider audiences in the past couple of years through the reports of government officials and non-governmental advocates, including United Nations Special Rapporteur (Pearce 2013; RCMP 2013; Committee 2014; Anaya 2014). The infamous figures listed in the report by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP 2013) reveal that 16 % of all the victims in recorded cases of missing and murdered women in Canada are Indigenous while Indigenous women only count for 4 % of the whole female population in the country. The harsh reality culminates in provinces such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan where the proportion of Indigenous women of all female homicide victims hangs between 49-55 %. Put it other way, every other woman killed in these two provinces is Indigenous. In addition, a General Social Survey of 2009 reveals that in the 12 months prior to the survey 67 000 Indigenous women, 15 years-old and over, reported being victims of violence. That is 13 % of all Indigenous women in Canada and the number excludes victims of spousal violence, the most frequent and unreported type of violent victimization (Statistics Canada 2009; RCMP 2014).

Indeed, interpersonal family violence is one of the pervasive outcomes of the collective trauma caused by residential schools and apprehensions during the Sixties Scoop. As just mentioned, majority of the domestic violence experienced by Indigenous women (or women in general) fall through the statistics, however, the problem becomes evident when looking at the homicide of the missing and murdered Indigenous women that is a family member (RCMP 2014). However, the imagery of the exploitable and worthless ‘squaw’ extends beyond the home, placing Indigenous women to a significantly higher risk of becoming violated by a casual acquaintance and/or a stranger than their non- Indigenous counterparts (Pearce 2013). Sadly, many of these victims often have a background in addictions and sex trade which, without a question, higher the risk of becoming a victim of violated and exploited. Indeed, prostitution and involvement in sex trade among Indigenous women is comparatively higher than among their non-Indigenous counterparts, and is never a personal choice but a form of victimization in itself (Pearce 2013).

Since the tragedy of Tina Fontaine, new facet of systematic victimization has come to the light: governmental child welfare. Tina was under the care of provincial Child and Family Services (CFS) in Winnipeg when she went missing. The investigation of the events leading

to Tina's disappearance not only revealed disturbing neglect by the police and the CFS personnel in charge of her (CBC 2014b) but gave away the completely inadequate and unsafe organization of temporary placement of the children in care who were in most cases placed in private city hotels. In addition to being easy to run away from, it was found out that these facilities were exposing children and youth to drug use, sex trade and violence. These risks faced by children and youth in governmental care are not race exclusive – but again, looking at the figures of children in "the system", for an example in Manitoba, the percentage of Indigenous children was currently hanging in 90% (Apollonio 2015).

Ever since the outrage that followed the revelations of Tina's investigation and the incidents of brutal violence on children placed in the hotels, CFS in Winnipeg has taken action to abandon hotels as temporary placements (CBC 2015). However, the same institution still remains to attack Indigenous women through unjustified and badly informed apprehensions of children from their birth mothers. Many of the Indigenous women subjected to this 'new Sixties Scoop' have a personal history in the care system or have been recounted to suffer from addiction or unstable economic situation, and therefore, without thorough assessment nor evidence of bad parenting for that matter, their children are most likely to be apprehended - often times straight from the hospital. In fact, according to the most recent findings of the provincial advocate of Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Cora Morgan, as many as 30-40 babies a month encompassing only one of the central hospitals in Winnipeg are taken from their mothers right at birth (speech at 'Stand Up for Children' event, 3 Oct 2015).

Relationship between mother and a child is one of the most crucial bonds for the wellbeing of the mother and the healthy development of the child. Clearly, there are cases where it is best for the child to be raised outside this natal relationship, but story by story it seems to become more evident that the harm CFS is causing to these children and mothers is profoundly detrimental to both. Not only does losing your child invalidate the mother as a caregiver, but being in care it highers the risk of the child, especially, in the light of the statistics, Indigenous girls to face exploitation and violence.

4. ELEMENTS OF RESISTANCE

In the previous sections I have discussed colonization and victimization as an ongoing social phenomenon that has been created in the mind sets, actions and societal structures of the past but has prevailed and is reproduced in the present-day society. Therefore, victimization can and should be perceived as a *social construct* that is dynamic in time and space. Now I turn to look at resistance – the key interest of this thesis – as a counter-phenomenon to colonial dominance and victimization. I link social constructions of collective identity to the context of power relationships and explain how identity itself works as a means to resist colonial dominance. Then I look into the ways the present era of efficient communication technology, especially the expansion of social media, has changed the dynamics of social agency and created new opportunities and new spaces for resistance to take place on different scales.

4.1 Identity and power

Identity is a constructed source of meaning and experience to a social actor – an individual or a group - on the basis of a cultural property or cultural properties of the greatest priority to the social actor (Castells 1997). Identity is constructed through a process of individuation (Giddens 1991) but then again, this never altogether separable of the perception of others (Calhoun 1994). In other words, identity is a conception of self, impacted by the context in which it is constructed. Social construction of identity is significant to discourse of victimization and resistance, all of which take place in a context marked by relationships and dynamics of power. In order to understand the discussion on identity constructions in this section and to have a better understanding of causes of colonial victimization outlined in the previous section, I will briefly elaborate on the concept of power itself.

The relationships and dynamics of domination and oppression in a society are best explained by thinking about power as "action upon action", not as a commodity possessed by social actors (Foucault 1983). Occurring only in the interaction between different social actors, power is dispersed throughout the structures of the society in diverse forms. What follows is that power is not a uniform force that would be only concentrated to certain individuals or entities, but it becomes effective through different networks on different scales in different ways (Foucault 2003). In other words, while there is power exercised by the dominating social actors and structures of the society, there is always counter-power that is exercised *on them* by social actors who they govern (Castells 2013). In other words power is action that can be initiated by anyone on anyone, anywhere and anytime. Thus, the forms and effects

emerging from the relationships of power between social actors are dynamic and fluctuate in space and time (Gallagher 2008).

Now, construction of identity in itself is exercise of power because it is *action of construction* done by social actors. Castells (1997) proposes three distinct forms and origins of collective identity building that lend significance to the discourse of colonial victimization and anti-colonial resistance. Firstly, identity can be a 'tool to rule' as first introduced by Sennett (1980) in his theory of authority and domination. This so called 'legitimizing identity', as further discussed by Castells (1997) is a way of dominating institutions and collectives of dominating social actors to rationalize their domination by creating an identity that becomes the social norm. As stated above, identity is formed through a process of individuation. However, legitimizing identity can be internalized by the subjects of domination, thus concealing the power exercised by the dominating social actor. This is usually the situation in colonized countries in which legitimizing identity has been the pillar of establishment of 'civil' society and instrument of socio-emotional rule.

Where there is domination, there is always resistance. 'Resistance identity', then, is the response of those who have been devalued and oppressed by the logic of domination. It arises from the sense alienation and resentment against unfair political, social and economic exclusion, and leads to the creation of communities (Etzioni 1993), forms of collective resistance. As such, resistance identity glues individuals together, paving a platform to the construction of 'project identity'. Project identity is production of subjects, collective social actors made by individuals that become a medium to these individuals to reach a holistic meaning to their existence. Building of project identity is building "a project of a different life, perhaps on the basis of an oppressed identity, but expanding toward the transformation of society" (Castells 1997: 10).

4.2 New spaces of resistance

Since the constructions of defensive identities are very much tied to the interaction of individual social actors, the discourse of identity and social agency has to be situated in the context of information society that is characterized by intensive communication technology and digital networking. Internet and especially interactive social media platforms such as Facebook have opened a whole new domain for collective identity construction by blurring the traditional division of lived reality to 'physical' and 'virtual' (Farman 2012) and thus

multiplying the opportunities and venues for self-expression and socio-political intervention (Castells 2013).

Not only do social media platforms allow personal expressions of self to emerge on the basis of collective identity but they make collective identities immediately visible to a large number of other social media users (Milan 2015). Social media platforms and their material intensify the formation and maintenance of communities. Communities, on the other hand, hold the essential elements that collective identities require to form and prevail: sharing and interaction (Melucci 1996). As such, social media has created new and powerful spaces for the construction of defensive identities - such as resistance and project identities - and the exercise of social agency of counter-power and resistance (Milan 2015).

Put into the context of urban experience, these new spaces of networked mass self-communication create another opportunity for resistance to occur and proliferate. Combination of digital space and urban space has resulted in the formation of spaces free from the domination of the societal bodies of governance. These hybrid spaces of autonomy are argued to be crucial to the formation of revolutionary social movements (Castells 2013). Needless to say what this potential has brought to the anti-colonial agency of the Fourth World, especially since people around the globe, including Indigenous people (at least in Canada) have become predominantly urban (Howard & Proulx 2011).

In fact, Canada has already seen the development of such anti-colonial resistance with the rise of an ongoing Indigenous movement, Idle No More. This "peaceful revolution", the largest Canada-wide social action since the civil rights movement in North America in the 1960s, started late 2012 when three Indigenous women with a non-Indigenous ally took on raising awareness on an omnibus bill that was threatening the welfare of water and the environment on Indigenous territory (Idle No More 2015). The women took the issue to social media with a hashtag #idlenomore which quickly grew viral (Sinclair 2014). Throughout its first winter Idle No More expanded to address an array of issues pertaining to Indigenous sovereignty and human rights in Canada (Kinon-nda-niimi Collective 2014). The 'trademark' of the movement are round dances, walks and other peaceful means of occupying public space, mostly urban space, by combining Indigenous cultural traditions with the protest manifesto. The spirit of Idle No More prevails and lends momentum to each new protest that rises from the revelations of injustice and colonial oppression on Indigenous peoples in the Canadian society.

5. SITUATING METHODOLODY AND THE STUDY

5.1 Story as methodology

As I briefly mentioned in the discussion about Indigenous paradigm, stories and the practice of storytelling is in the core of Indigenous epistemology as it operationalizes "heart learning" (Ross 2014). 'Story' in Euro-Western cultural meaning of the word does not describe the deep significance of the concept to Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing. Margaret Kovach (2009) elaborates on the value of story by crystallizing its essence into being "both a method and meaning" (101). She continues: "If research is about learning, so as to enhance the well-being of the earth's inhabitants then story is research. It provides insight from observations, experience, interactions, and intuitions that assist in developing a theory about phenomenon" (103). Indeed, stories are a holistic way to narrate and construct meanings and serve as tools of learning through the relationships they bring together. Wilson (2008) describes the relationality of personal narrative as: "…getting into a relationship with someone. You're telling their side of the story and then you're analysing it" (115). But the story itself can also serve as the analysis, and in fact, meticulous breakdown of stories through coding steers the ideas and experiences presented in the story away from their contextual relationships and thus away from the knowledge these relationships hold within (Kovach 2009).

I have used story in two ways in this thesis: to learn (i.e. to gather data) and to provide meaning of what I have learned (i.e. to analyze and interpret the data). Stories today come in different forms and the experiences and frame of reference of the teller always impact the way story is told and retold. In indigenous tradition story is always told and re-told orally (Battiste 2013; Christensen & Poupart 2013). However, stories might as well can be mediated through visualizations or written presentation (Holliday 2007). Sometimes the emergence of a story only requires being present in a situation, experiencing it and then sharing it. In the language of Siksika nation (Blackfoot) story literally translates into "being involved in an event" (Kovach 2009). .

I have tried to triangulate all of these different ways of learning through a story to build and articulate the holistic relationships with my participants Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna, the community and the phenomenon of colonial resistance in Winnipeg. Before I proceed to describe how I operationalized these story methods I take a brief tour in Winnipeg to elaborate on it as a site of urban Indigenous experience pertaining to the issue of victimization and Indigenous resistance.

5.2 The study site - Winnipeg

In order to understand Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna's stories, there has to be an understanding of their context, of the city that has become a toponym for both struggle and resistance of urban Indigenous community. Winnipeg is a unique city for Indigenous peoples historically, culturally, demographically and spiritually. It is situated in the middle of Canada, the very centre of the whole North America and in the intersection of two rivers. It is in the traditional and sacred land of the Anishinabe nation and is part of Treaty One territory. It is the birth place of the Métis nation and the site of significant colonial history of Canada including the battle of Seven Oaks and Red River rebellion, a war lead by Métis freedom fighter Luis Riel (Dickanson & Newbigging 2010). Today, Winnipeg is home to over 70 000 Indigenous city dwellers from various nations and tribes, making a the city with the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada (Statistics Canada 2013).

Urbanization of Indigenous people in general has been in a steady incline since 1960s, starting with post-war exodus from the reserves, resulting from the abolishment of the reserve 'pass-system' – a major obstacle to Indigenous people's mobility since the establishment of reserve system in the late 1800s (Lawerence 2004). The rapid increase of urban Indigenous population all over Canada in the past 20 years has been more due to the high birth rates and to legislation changes in the Indian Act (Guimond 2003: Siggner 2003) than the migration from the reserves. However, 'the rez problems' including exclusion, poverty, under-education, unemployment, addiction and violence have, unfortunately, replicated and even amplified in the city (Silver et al. 2006).

Social and spatial segregation in Winnipeg is staggering (image 2). Indigenous people are disproportionately located in the inner-city areas that are among the poorest postal codes in the country (Cain 2013). The migration of Indigenous families to the city in the 1970s was triggered by the suburbanization of the city's immigrant population that vacated the central areas of the city. Also better employment opportunities and health services were major pulling factors. Indigenous urban migrants and families found themselves settling in the inner parts of the city, the areas today known as 'the North End' (north side of the CN Rail Yards) and 'the West End' (west Broadway and west of Central Business District, CBD) (image 3) where there was affordable housing and accepting attitudes (Comack & Silver 2008; Silver 2010).

For a long time urban Indigenous people have been perceived being out-of-place, not belonging to the city picture by both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people (Buddle 2011). This perception has started to take a shift with the diligent dismantling and critical discourses of who is the 'real Native' (Lawrence 2004; Howard & Proulx 2009), however, discriminatory and adverse attitudes of urban Indigenous population and the accumulation of socio-economic deprivation to the areas that majority of Indigenous city dwellers have come to occupy, continue to reproduce racial segregation in Winnipeg. Many non-Indigenous Winnipeggers know where 'the ghetto' is and tend to stigmatize it in a heavy manner. I remember having a conversation about living in Winnipeg with one of the professors at University of Manitoba at the very start of my studies in 2013. He was relieved to find out that I had found residence near the university because there were areas in the city that were not suitable for living. " Like north of downtown", he said, "you don't want to go there, it's dangerous".

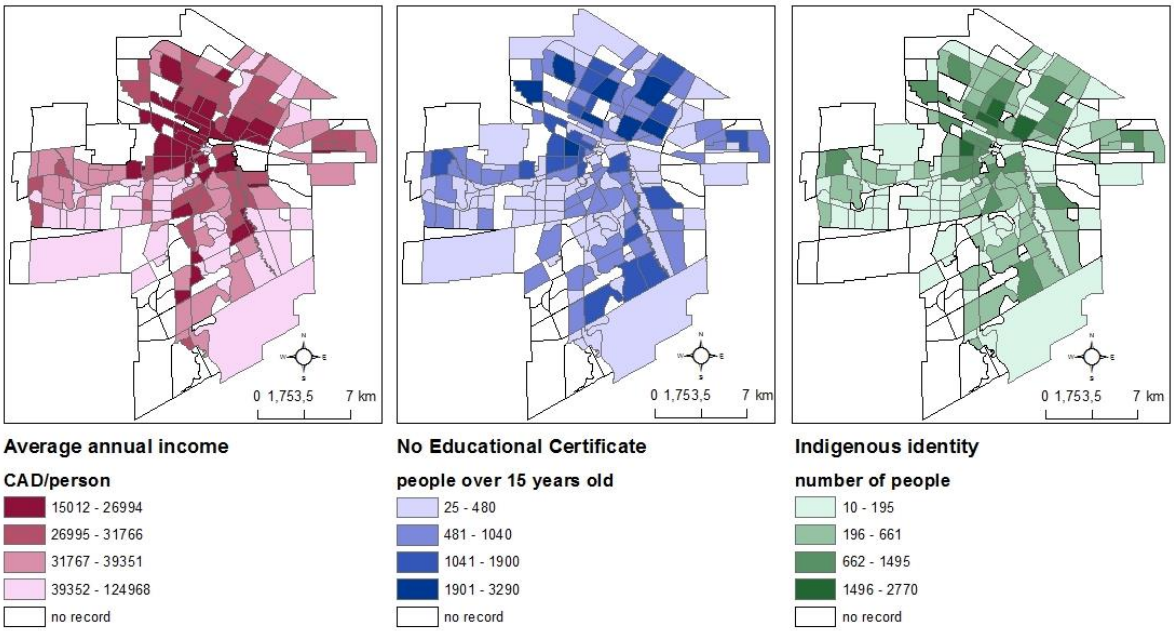


Image 2. Coropleth map on average annual income, educational (high school) certificate and Indigenous identity affiliation by neighborhood in Winnipeg. (Open Data Catalogue 2015, spatial analysis on the data done with ArcMap).

The stigma is not completely manufactured, though. For a couple of decades now Winnipeg has notoriously been known as "Murderpeg", the homicide capital of Canada (Jewel 2014). Violent crime rates are at the top of the country's large urban areas and significantly above the national average (Boyce et al. 2013). The inner-city postal codes are also the site of drug dealing and sex trade business which are usually controlled by organized crime. Infamous

Indigenous gangs have provided an appealing solution to poverty, lack of identity and social alienation to urban Indigenous youth growing up in the troubled, impoverished and racially segregated 'Ends' of Winnipeg (Buddle 2011; Jewel 2014), thus perpetuating the struggle of urban Indigenous community to battle the issues with violence, victimization and racism.

However, as the focus of my thesis presumes, where there is deprivation there is determination to make things better. Winnipeg and its segregated inner-city areas might be the centre of unprecedented poverty, crime and demise for its Indigenous citizens, but they are also the centre of unprecedented Indigenous resilience and sense of community. The communities in these areas have organized themselves in numerous areas of social and economic development to issue the problems regarding poverty, gangs, violence, health and social belonging (Silver et al. 2006). Indigenous led development programs and grass-root organizations have ensured that Indigenous cultural revitalization and healing is on the agenda of community development. The community has become even closer in the past few years that have seen incidents revealing the harshness of urban Indigenous experience, and specifically that of urban Indigenous women. As I briefly disclosed in the introduction and chapter on victimization, the death of Tina Fontaine, a 15-year-old girl from Sagkeeng First Nation brought the reality of Indigenous women to public consciousness. It started an uproar, calling for national inquiry on the issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and drawing attention to the ways Indigenous people and especially the women are perceived by the society, thus perpetuating the risk of them becoming victimized.

Indeed, the community in Winnipeg responded to Tina's death with force. A vigil and a memorial walk were organized via social media within a day after her passing. Nearly a thousand people gathered at Alexander Docks by Red River where her body was found and walked down Main Street to Oodena circle at The Forks (image 3). Shortly after, a women's protest camp was established in Memorial Park, next to Manitoba's Legislature Building (image 3) to raise awareness and demand a national inquiry was set up by five Indigenous women from the community. The self-sustained camp supported by the whole community grew some 20 tents strong and remained for over two weeks, holding up against eviction orders by the authorities (personal communication, Chelsea 2015). Numerous rallies, walks, events and social media campaigns have been initiated by Indigenous community ever since, reacting to each new incident of victimization, violence and systematic oppression, with the

most recent causes of activism having evolved around the issues with CFS care and child apprehensions.

As Silver et al. (2006) concluded in the study investigating Indigenous community development ten years ago: "There is no turning back, the future is full of hope" (46). Indeed, social mobilization and colonial resistance in all levels within Indigenous community in Winnipeg has only grown stronger. The stories of urban Indigenous women taking action and exercising resilience in their communities and their everyday life have been documented elsewhere in Canada and North America (Scarpino 2007; Howard-Bobiwash & Krouse 2009). I will now add stories from Winnipeg to this grand narrative of resistance.

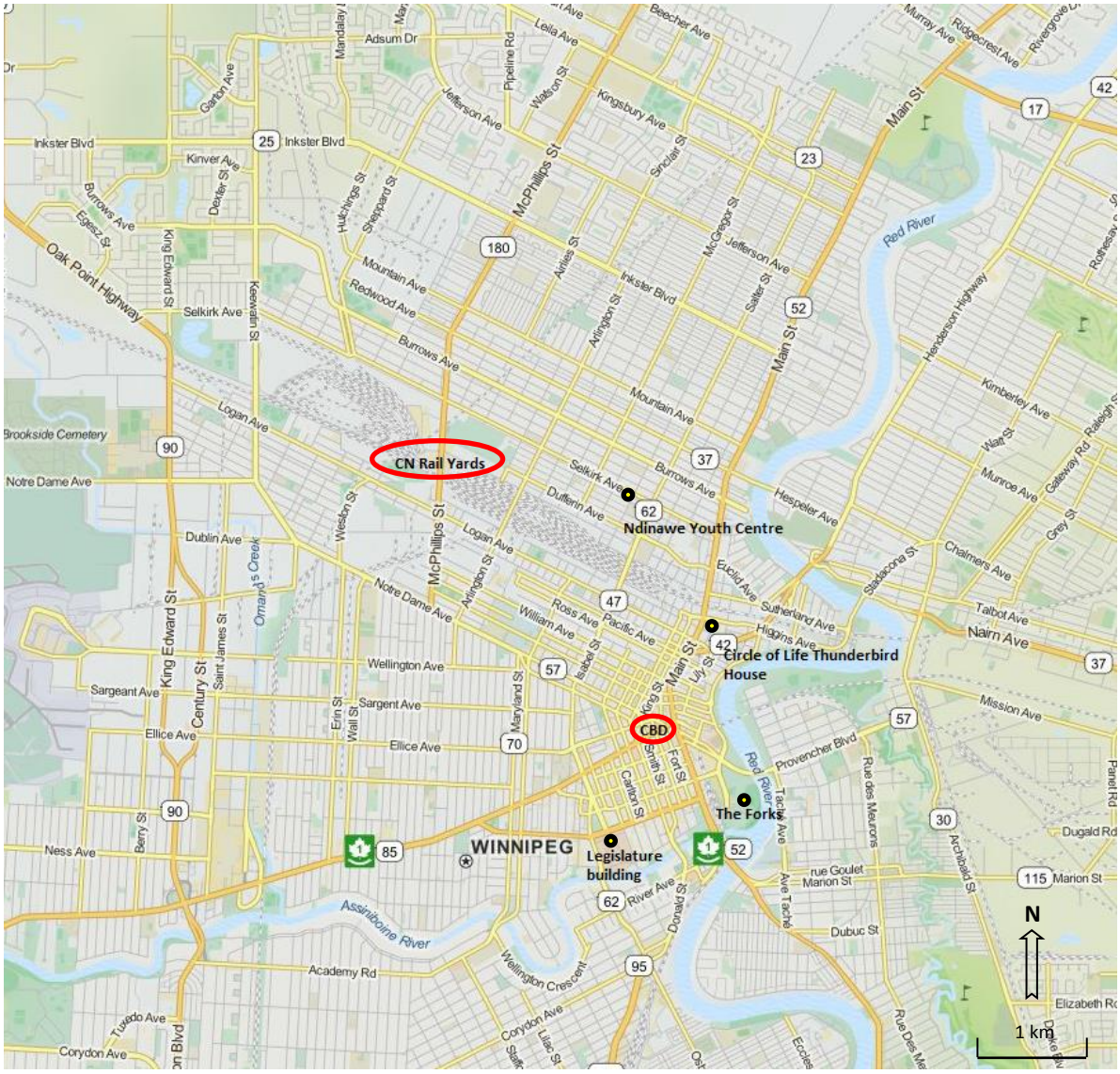


Image 3. Central Winnipeg showing places relevant to the study context. (Open Street Map 2015, edited).

5.3 Methods: stories for constructing the stories

5.3.1 Participation in the community – stories from the field

Learning by experience and participation within Indigenous epistemology correspond participant observation in ethnography: a method in which the investigator becomes an active participant in the everyday life of the subjects she/he is studying while documenting the lived experiences (Lichtman 2014). Incorporating all senses, it is a holistic way to learn from a direct interaction with others and the environment while purposefully reflecting, transforming, validating and give personal meaning to ideas and information (Graveline 1999). Participation learning is a natural cognitive process that takes place every day throughout our whole life as we experience, observe and take part in situations and interactions (Wilson 2008).

Thus, regarding this study, the beginning of my 'data gathering' through field stories dates back to summer 2014 when I started to participate more frequently in the Indigenous community in Winnipeg. I was volunteering at Eagle's Nest, a recreation and cultural program for Indigenous youth where I met Jasmine and taking part to the events and activities by local community centres in the North and West End areas. The most powerful experiences during those times must have been the vigil for Tina Fontaine and the women's protest camp for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). These two particular events have been very influential to my thesis by directing my research focus and providing continuous source of reflection.

The actual phase of experiential learning in the community for this thesis started at the end of July this year 2015 when I returned to Winnipeg for my research. I met up with Chelsea whom I had met last year at the protest camp and who now introduced me to Jenna. Jenna helped me to land a spot as youth volunteer again, this time at Ndinawe, a resource centre for youth in the North End.

During the four months I stayed in Winnipeg (18.7.-11.11.2015), excluding the very final two weeks of my stay I took actively part to various events, rallies and other activities in the city. Not all of these occasions were exclusively organized by or for the Indigenous community but taken my study focus majority of them were. In the table below (table 1) I have listed and very briefly described my participation in the community over those four months from July to October that played the most significant part to the construction of Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna's stories. I did not take field notes or recordings as it would have interfered with the organic way of learning. Therefore, majority of the research data has accumulated from the

reflexive journals and notes that I wrote during and after the conversations with Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna in addition to the material I gathered from their Facebook profiles.

Image 4. Jasmine and I participating in Medicine Walk "Stand Up For Children", 3rd October 2015. Copyright Michael Kannon (Facebook Photos 2015).

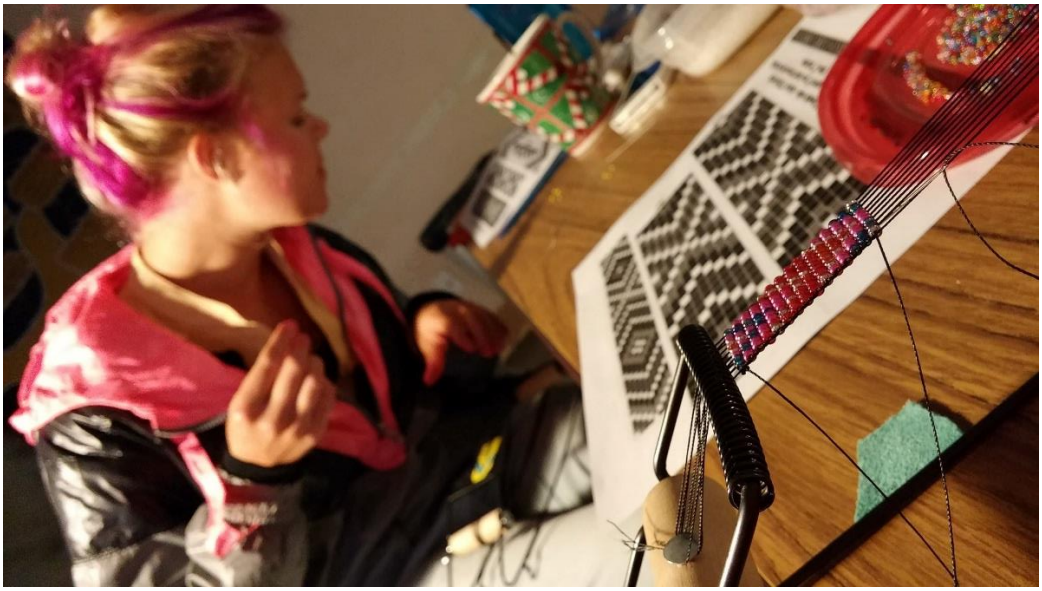


Image 5. Volunteering on Jenna's shift at Ndinawe and learning traditional loom beading between chats. (Jenna Facebook Photos 2015).

Table 1. Participation learning in Winnipeg.

EVENT/ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHERE & WHEN	ORGANIZER
Open Drum Practice	Open house for women's and men's big drum practice. Hand drums welcome too	Circle of Life Thunderbird House, every Tuesday 6:30-8:30pm	Circle of Life Thunderbird House
Youth volunteering	Volunteer work at drop-in	Ndinawe youth resource centre, about 10h/week	Ndinawe
Food Bank volunteer	Food distribution to community members in need of food assisstance	Ndinawe and Indigenous Family Centre every other Monday	Winnipeg Harvest, non-profit organization
Manito Ahbee International Pow wow volunteer	Part of Manito Ahbee Festival that celebrates Indigenous culture and heritage	MTS Centre, Winnipeg, 12-13.9.2015	Manito Ahbee
8th Annual Grandmothers Medicine Walk	Medicine walk through downtown finishing at with Grandmothers' teaching circle	Circle of Life Thunderbird House to Oodena Circle, 21.9.2015	Community collective
Stand Up for Children fasting, Medicine Walk & Ceremony	Ceremonial event to raise awareness of the staggering number of children in provincial care	Children's Hospital to The Forks	Cora Morgan, Manitoba Aboriginal Child and Family Services advocate
3rd Annual Midnight Medicine Walk	Community walk around the neighbourhood to show support to the exploited and those 'working the street'	Bell Tower, North End	Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO), grass-roots youth organization
Jasmine's assistant at Living Arts 10 show	Event of performative arts including body painting, contortion and acrobatics	Fame Nightclub	Living Art collective

5.3.2 Facebook profile – virtual stories

Social media has become a new space of human action and experience in many ways (Papacharissi 2011), and probably most predominantly for the opportunity it provides for personal and collective identity construction through self-expression and –articulation. Platforms such as Facebook enable this meaning-making through multi-mediated visibility and connection including text, images and audio-visual clips. (Milan 2015). Put it another way, social media platforms afford interactive spaces for personalized narrative, a story.

Now, the characteristics of 'interactive' and 'narrative' were the main reasons to include Facebook profiles, or Timelines, to the triangulation of my story methodology.

I explored Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna's Facebook profiles giving the main focus on the Timeline feature; a space on a user's profile account where the user and the people in her/his network can post stories, photos, videos and links to webpages. The posts appear in chronological order and the settings of who can post, see the posts, comment on them or 'like' them can be edited by the user (Facebook Help 2015). Therefore, Facebook Timelines provide an interesting and alternative personal story narrated via multimedia presentation.

Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna are all active users of their Facebook accounts which made their profile pages even more relevant for being used as a data source of personal narrative. I ran a light content analysis on each of the women's Timeline by counting all posts that the women themselves had posted during the month of July 2015. I then identified the prominent voices they were using by letting the themes of the posts emerge naturally. I have tried to reflect those voices in their stories of resistance but I also used them as guiding framework to the conversations, much like Scarpino (2007) used talking circles in her study on urban Indigenous resilience as 'a guiding method' to her open-ended interviews.

Table 2. The Facebook "voices"

JASMINE	CHELSEA	JENNA
-Artist and visual expressionist -Mother and family caretaker -Community advocate -Inspirational narrator and 'everyday cheerleader Total number of posts: 274 (July 2015)	-Practitioner of traditions -Student and future social worker, feminist -Community member and activist -Mother, friend and partner Total number of posts: 134 (July 2015)	-Everyday poet & emotional narrator -Community activist, "angry Indian" -Youth leader/motivator, positive enthusiast -Humorist and prankster Total number of posts: 153 (July 2015)

I ended up following an intuitive and organic style with the conversations, meaning, no *in situ* recording was made. Therefore, the field notes I documented right after do not include

Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna's direct voices much at all. In order to get their direct voices better incorporated in the stories I have used their Timeline posts and Facebook Photos as 'co-constructions' (Holliday 2007:111) to vocalize their personal multimedia narratives. I have purposely used a magazine type of layout, having the Timeline quotations converted into graphics and embedded conveniently with photos between the text. This may be an unsettling approach to academic presentation but nevertheless validated one (Lichtman 2014), and moreover, facilitates to bring Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna present in their stories.

5.3.3 Conversations – interactive oral stories

Interviews are at the heart of qualitative inquiry (Lichtman 2014) and ways of interviewing as diverse in number as there are interviewers. However, I am attempting to stay loyal to Indigenous ways of doing inquiry, and oral storytelling through conversation is at the heart of indigenous qualitative methods (Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009). Being open for the free flow of dialogue, conversational inquiry does not restrict or impose external boundaries to the participant's meaning-making (Kovach 2009).

Image 4. Conversing and spending time in the park with Jenna (on the left) and Chelsea (taking the photo). (Chelsea Facebook Photos 2015).

Initially I had planned to record and/or document the conversations with Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna, and I was equipped with the recorder on my phone and a notebook for my first conversation with Chelsea. I had also sent the few questions in advance I was hoping to converse with each of them – the questions mainly pertaining to the voices I had found prominent in their Facebook narratives.

I remember being probably more uncomfortable than Chelsea with my pen and notepad when we sat down to have a cup of coffee to converse. Sure enough, after an hour and a half of chatting – in a somewhat more loosened up mood – I discovered that my phone had turned off in the last quarter of our session and had self-deleted the whole recorded file. I took that incident as a teaching; if I intended to follow through Indigenous research methodologies, I should commit to the cause holistically. And so I did.

I sat down with all three women once to purposefully talk about the themes for my thesis. Those sessions took place between 22.-29.9.2015. However, in the end I arrived at the decision that I will use whatever conversations, chats and stories we have shared throughout my time in Winnipeg. These interactive oral stories certainly did not follow any prefixed structure but emerged naturally, just like they should. I wrote down reflexive notes within relatively short time after each 'thick conversation' I had had with any of the three women. In some cases the documentation took place a good while after the conversation and so I was reliant on my distant memory. However, this is not an issue in Indigenous research tradition since use of memory is part of the epistemology and thus is completely acceptable, endorsed even (Hampton 1995).

The stories that I have narrated for this thesis are my personal stories of 'heart learning' from the participating Indigenous women. They describe the relationships I have built with Jasmine, Chelsea, Jenna and make meaning of my 'involvement in the experience'. 'Story as methodology" fits well to the purpose of my thesis, I think, as it is a way of "decolonizing research". Better yet: "stories of resistance inspire generations about the strength of [Indigenous] culture" (Kovach 2009:103). Next I present stories of resistance of Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna, three Indigenous women who have inspired me (and will hopefully inspire the audience) about the strength of their culture, and the strength of them as women.

6. STORIES OF RESISTANCE

6.1 Jasmine

I met Jasmine at Eagle's Nest, a cultural resource and recreation program for Indigenous youth where she worked and I volunteered in summer 2014. The first time I saw her was when the youth had a campus tour at University of Winnipeg. Jasmine had started at her position while I had been away traveling for a couple of weeks, so we were new to each other when everyone showed up to our meeting point. I remember the warmth and energy that radiated from her when she greeted the youth. Then she turned to me with her big smile that was framed with big beautiful Indigenous design earrings.

It turned out that Jasmine was a student of University of Winnipeg herself, doing a bachelor in Native and Urban studies, so, as we were zigzagging up and down the hallways, stairwells and study areas she joined the guiding staff, backing them up with her own study experiences and pointing out places around the building with great enthusiasm. I recall her encourage the youth by saying that she never had thought of herself being "academic", yet here she was, a second year undergraduate student.

Sacred Medicine picking with Jasmine (middle) and a co-worker Aldora (right) in Peguis First Nation reserve land as part of Eagle's Nest cultural activities. (Pauliina Harjula personal photos 2014).

Vigil and a march for Tina Fontaine and Farren Hall through downtown Winnipeg (Pauliina Harjula personal photos 2014).

During that summer and fall we became closer friends as we bonded over our work at Eagle's Nest and our Scandinavian bloodline – Jasmine has Norwegian Sami ancestry on her father's side. We hung out and shared some memorable and moving experiences together including Sacred Medicine picking, sweat lodge and the vigil that was organized for Tina Fontaine and Farren Hall. Jasmine took me to the women's protest camp that was set up after Tina's passing to take action on the issue on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. She also connected me with people from the Broadway Neighborhood Centre where I ended up doing the final practicum of my teacher education diploma. Jasmine herself had taken a youth program there a couple of years ago, an experience that she cherishes and appreciates greatly. Not only did she form close friendships but she was able to put in practice her resourcefulness as a budding artist.

Indeed, art and visual self-expression is something that I noticed being part of Jasmine's character and her everyday life from the very start. She describes her art as contemporary Indigenous fusion, working mainly with brush or spray brush on canvas and body. She told me that she has always known how hold a pencil and, in fact, before she established herself in Winnipeg after having her twin boys, she tried to study visual art in Vancouver where her 10-year-old daughter lives with her father. Although being a university student is now a significant part of her life, she said that studying art did not resonate with her at all and that she felt uncomfortable about it. She further explained that art for her is first and foremost

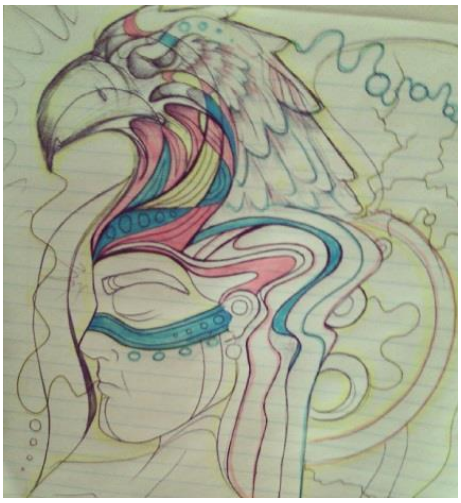
"Mother Earth" (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2015)

"Work in progress #MoonBearWoman" (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2014)

about spiritual expression and creative self-actualization, not a forced theory or a scholarly credential. She felt that there was something missing about her creative output, and it was not until four years ago when she finally found the support and mentorship of the right people that helped her art to "come alive".

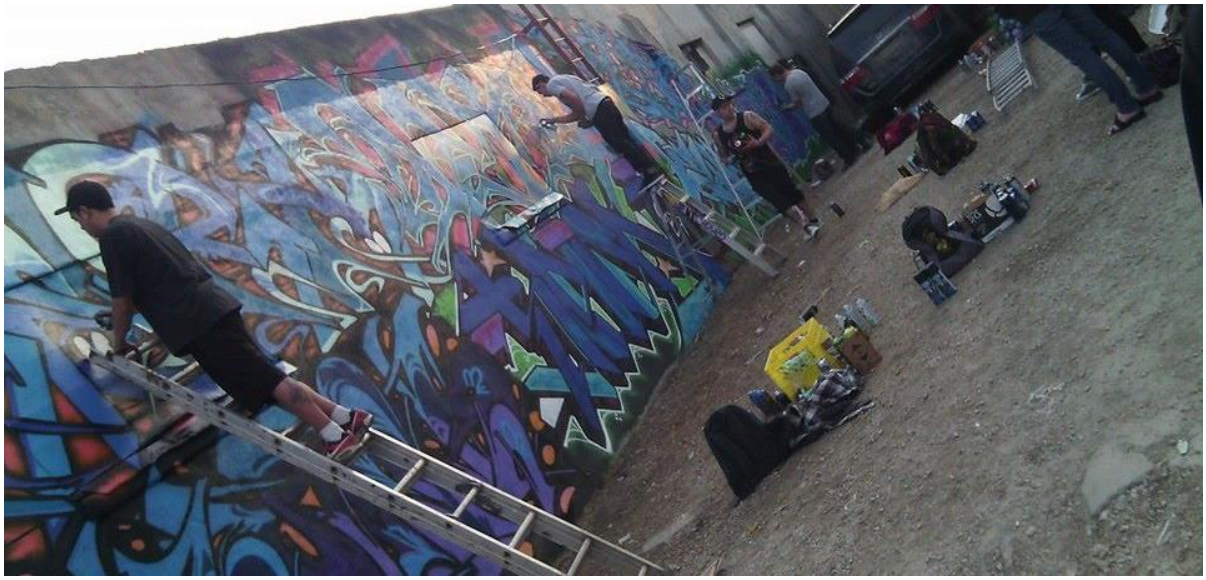
Jasmine confessed that often times she is not even aware what she is creating when she picks up the brush or the pencil. Afterwards she might look at her work and wonder: "Did I really make this?" However, it is a natural experience to her to express her inner-self through image. She also feels that in some ways she is being a mediator between the physical and the metaphysical. She communicates with the spirit world through intuitive emotions and dreams and then visualizes it. Majority of her themes seem to resonate with her own life, often portraying relationships to womanhood and Indigeneity, relationships between a mother and children, friends or the connection to the Creator. She says that regardless of the theme, her art is always grounded in and inspired by love to those connections she conveys to visual presentations.

Inspiration can hit at any moment and Jasmine often finds herself doodling for an example at university lectures. She sometimes gifts her "lecture art" to the professors or other people who have inspired her learning and healing. Although art is a way to express her inner-self and transcendent connection with the metaphysical, she has also turned it into a profession and a source of income. She brings her talent to cultural events such as pow wows and makes custom designs upon requests. The work is predominantly themed around Indigenous spirituality and culture. Jasmine said that unfortunately she finds little time in her daily schedule to practice Indigenous traditions or go to ceremonies, apart from what she gets to do through her work. I remember her also telling me that her mother has brought her up in very strict Christian ways. She has begun to connect with the traditions of her Indigenous ancestors only when she became older. Looking at her work, I sensed that art is an alternative and safe way for her to participate in the production and exploration of her culture. Although taking pride of her Indigenous heritage and being very



"Doodle I gave my UIC councillor she rocks! #NativeArt highlighter and ink! #EagleWarrior (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2015)

much involved with local Indigenous issues through her work and studies, Jasmine still feels that she has found ‘her home’ in the multicultural the art community of the city.

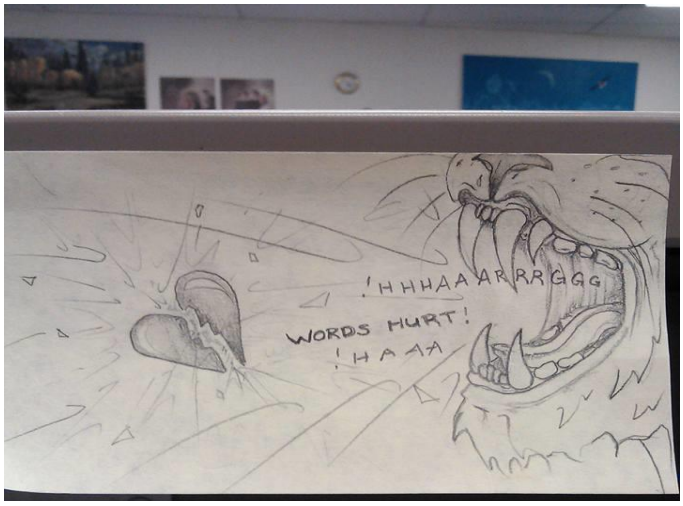


Mural painting (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2015).

Another way that Jasmine has found to connect with the traditional knowledge and worldviews of her ancestors is by taking university courses on Indigenous spirituality and Indigenous ways of knowing as part of her B.A. In fact, education has been a way for her to explore and reflect on her cultural background in many ways. One of the most of important things she has come to discover, she says, is the underlying factors to the negativity that takes place against and among Indigenous people. She has learned to connect the historical and social trauma of genocide and colonization to the anger, restlessness and illness among the youth. It was revealing to herself too, to understand her own family members’ struggle and her illicit adolescence years. On the other hand, learning about prejudice and the structures of racism has made her more equipped to encounter these attitudes and behaviors in constructive and healthy ways.

Learning to encounter racism does not mean becoming immune to the hurt it causes. I asked her once that does she feel she can freely express herself visually as an Indigenous woman in the public in Winnipeg. With a tired smile she said: “When I have the energy and I’m feeling good, yes, but when I’m out of energy…nope.” Used of seeing her in the big Indigenous earrings and other cultural accessories, it was hard to hear that she has to assess every day whether she has the extra energy to carry the weight of these cultural symbols or not. She added that it might be just her being over-sensitive and taking other people’s attitudes and

words too personally. I thought it was disturbing that she had to even question whether her reaction to racial prejudice was a matter of over-sensitivity.



"Sometimes it's hard to explain how I feel so I draw it instead." (Jasmine Facebook 2015)

A couple of weeks after this conversation about prejudice and racism we met up at a local café. I immediately noticed Jasmine was not wearing her signature jewelry. When I asked how she has been she said she was quite tired and had been arguing with some of her family members over their disrespectful behavior. After our coffees we headed towards Portage Place shopping mall, downtown. As we were walking she shared a story from a previous day about a bus driver who had given her singled out unfriendly service. She continued saying "it's always us [Indigenous people] who move away on the sidewalk" and that you get looked down upon and followed by staff and security in stores. As we were talking we took the escalators to the second floor of the mall and she pointed out a clothing store adding: "…and like that store over there, *Ardene*…I went there yesterday and the lady at the fitting rooms made me leave my backpack outside the room". She continued to tell the whole story how she was shopping and wanted to try on two shirts. The non-Indigenous shop assistant working at the fitting rooms had then asked her to leave her backpack outside the dressing booth. Jasmine got uncomfortable and asked why, while holding up the two shirts as an assurance that she only had those two items with her. The girl insisted that it was a company policy to leave backpacks outside the fitting rooms. Jasmine felt shamed and undignified.

Then an idea popped up in our heads: I should go and try on exactly the same amount of items wearing my backpack and see if would be treated differently. The result of our little social experiment was not surprising but nevertheless disturbing. I had just walked into the fitting room with my backpack on. The shop assistant, who we confirmed to be exactly the same one from yesterday, had only asked me how many items I was trying on and without even checking she had let me in.

We ended up filing an official complaint but Jasmine requested that instead of consequences to this individual employee, she offered to do a workshop on prejudice and cross-cultural encounters to the whole staff. She has studied a lot about these issues as part of her university studies and has learned that racism is often times so ingrained that the person does not even recognize those behaviors in themselves.

Jasmine prefers constructive and gentile ways of taking a stand and avoids antagonistic confrontations. As mentioned earlier, she has had it rough in her younger years and has personally experienced the violence that can follow from being in a wrong place at a wrong time. In her everyday life she usually rises above those confrontational situations and walks away. She also knows places and spaces in the neighborhood where she might encounter threat and menace and deliberately avoids them. However, she told about this incident happened near Central park a little while ago. She had taken her twin boys and her mum there to have some family time outdoors. For no apparent reason Jasmine got verbally attacked by a these young men who were roaming in the park. The situation was getting more aggressive despite Jasmine's effort to suppress it. Finally, a line was crossed and "the ghetto came outta" her, she said laughing.

Jasmine said that her cup only spills over when there is a threat to her family and especially to her children. Motherhood is something that has become to mark her identity. Her love and affection towards her sons is overflowing and becomes evident in her conversation.

"When the boys were younger I couldn't even go anywhere they had such a difficult time not being able to communicate. Now we go places and we've learned to understand each other. I never thought these days would come but we made it. They are sweet, obedient, hilarious boys. Sigh* just reflecting on how far we've come. They've taught me so much and gave me love I never even knew existed."

(Jasmine Timeline 2015)

I can also tell that Jasmine suffers immensely over the separation from her first born, her 10-year-old daughter who lives in Vancouver. She told me she had her at a very young age and after a series of events ended up losing custody over her. I sensed that this loss has affected her self-esteem as a caregiver and made her feel even stronger about her role as a mother to the twins whose well-being is everything to her. Her boys, apart from 'just being boys' have special needs which adds an extra flavor to Jasmine's everyday life. Although

being challenging at times, it has only made her more convinced that it has been a "double blessing from the Creator" to have these children in her life to teach her about its many wonders.

This care-giving nature coupled with her own daily struggle she has to face as a racially singled out Indigenous solo mother motivates her to advocate for issues that 'hit close to home'. Her hard work in the world of academia has started to pay off and a while ago she was asked by the newly appointed advocate of provincial Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Cora Morgan, to complete her inner-city studies practicum with her. Jasmine was stoked for the opportunity. I once again got to witness her enthusiasm when we met up at 'Stand Up for Children' awareness raising event that included a four day fasting - a traditional Indigenous way of seeking spiritual guidance in times of crisis and disharmony.

On the left: Jasmine's interpretation of the issue, a work named "No More Stolen Babies". On the right: Jasmine's son at the event ground (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2015).

At the camp ground Jasmine was actively advocating the child care issue on behalf of Cora and the other four women who had at that point been without food or water for four days. Jasmine walked around the event site and talked with community members who had showed up. She would listen to their personal stories and experiences and share her expertize on the topic. She was clearly in her element, speaking for an issue that she was passionate about while helping the women who were fasting.

Jasmine has clear visions for her future. After finishing her studies she wants to establish her own art infused community advocacy program that teaches individuals, especially the youth, healthy relationships with self and others. She has already been testing her wings with "I Am" workshop on self-esteem that she runs for people of all ages on request. Jasmine herself has journeyed quite deep waters and has had to row against the current to have achieved what she has. I know now that the contagious smile and the effortlessly flowing feathers hanging from her ears are sometimes a result of hard work with her inner-self before the day has even started. Over the course of our friendship, I have learned that Jasmine is a realist who dreams big and finds her own goals in helping others to achieve their own. She is grounded in and reformed by the expressions of love that she discovers in her art, community, family and connection to the Creator.

6.2 Chelsea

I met Chelsea at the women's protest camp for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) that took place in Memorial Park shortly after Tina Fontaine's passing in August-September 2014. I visited the site at the very beginning of the protest when there were only a few tents and a sacred fire set up, surrounded by tribal flags and banderols reminding by-passers of the issue. Jasmine knew people at the camp and had asked me to go with her to support the cause.

Protest camp ground with Sacred Fire and the flags of Métis Nation, Kahnawake (Mohawk) Nation, Dog Creek 46 First Nation and Long Plains First Nations reserves (Jasmine Facebook Photos 2014)

We were welcomed to the camp by Chelsea who seemed stressed and tired, anxious even. I thought maybe it was not a good time to visit. Regardless, I gave her the bundle of sage – one of the Four Sacred Medicines - that I had brought as a gift and a donation. Tears started flowing from her eyes as she accepted the bundle. Then she reached out to give me a heartfelt hug and explained that she had been crying for the past couple of days for the overwhelming support and sympathy that everyone had showed towards the camp.

For the following week I visited the camp a number of times and saw it growing with a couple of tents each time. I was chatting and getting known to people but did not really got to see or spend time with Chelsea as she had the busy role of being one of the leaders of the camp. Towards the end of my visit I wished her all the best with the protest and the cause. She thanked and added: "I know we will talk again". We sure did.

A year later I came back and was excited that Chelsea was going to be part of my research. She was excited too. We talked a lot about the camp that had connected us a year ago and it was fascinating to hear about it from her perspective. Chelsea feels very strongly about the camp. It was a pivotal experience in her life in many ways. Through the camp she has become more involved in activism and social affairs of the Indigenous community and she bonded

with people who have now become her closest friends and connected with traditions that have become part of her everyday life.

She had been asked to join to the camp leadership by three other women who wished her to be the spokesperson of the camp due to her academic background in social work. She was educated in Indigenous cultural history but also was also literate in the political and social issues evolving around MMIW. She felt honoured and took the position with great anticipation. Not everybody in the community liked this though. She said that even at the camp – which was supposed to be a safe place – she experienced what is called 'lateral violence'. It materialized as distrust from community members who questioned her abilities and motives of being a public representative of the camp, and accused the whole leadership of dishonest management over the monetary funds that were donated to the camp by supporters.

She reminded me of an incident that occurred a while ago when we had first met up after my return to Winnipeg. We had joined a Facebook event organized by the community to protect sacred ceremonial grounds from an electronic music festival at The Forks – a historical and cultural site in the intersection of Red River and Assiniboine River, central Winnipeg. I remember it was only me, Chelsea, her kids and a few familiar men from the community's self-sustained safety watch, the Bear Clan Patrol. Chelsea went to talk to these community members about the event and came back seemingly upset. While talking with them she had casually mentioned that she was with me to talk about the activism in the community as part of my Master's thesis. One of the men – the spouse of Chelsea's good friend that she had met at the protest camp last summer - had then blurted out that maybe I should rather talk to him or a few other women about these matters because Chelsea had not even been participating in the protests lately and thus had "fallen out of the loop". The comments hurt Chelsea deeply. Not only because she had been already feeling bad for not having been able to participate in the community's activist scene lately while she had been completing her Bachelor degree, but because he had devaluated all the work, energy and emotions Chelsea had put in the community throughout the whole year. Tears in her eyes Chelsea explained that this was a

> ***"i think that when you are in the public eye, it is always important to remember the teaching of humility. its great that you are out there making changes and building bridges.....***
> ***Remember, you have a whole team and community of people who without all your interviews, articles, and events would not be possible."***
>
> (Chelsea Timeline 2015).

prime example of the type of lateral violence that was unfortunately prevalent in the community.

I told her I remembered this incident and repeated what I had said then, that how strange it seemed to waste energy to fight with one another when everyone [in the Indigenous community] is committed to the same goal. I then asked Chelsea why does she think that some people do lateral violence. In her view it is the modern day individualistic mentality and the selfish pursuits that sometimes blur the fundamental value of a community and working towards common good. The primary motivation for engaging in activism is no longer about advocacy but about boosting your own ego. Chelsea also told me that although everyone unites under the same banner of fighting for Indigenous rights, an internal 'methodological' partition within the community can be detected, having divided the community into the radical and the moderate activists. She has used her academic resources to study the infamous Indigenous social movement of the 1960-70s, the American Indian Movement (AIM) in order to find out what kind of activist action works and what does not. Chelsea herself supports peaceful and educative approaches because "blocking the highways just makes people angry". And when people get angry the actual message gets lost.

Stern but diplomatic activism was exactly the factor that in Chelsea's view made the women's protest camp last summer successful. The purpose of the camp was to put pressure on the national inquiry on MMIW and demonstrate that Indigenous communities have had enough of government's lethargy to take action on issues regarding Indigenous peoples' rights. Chelsea said she observed how the public discourse took encouraging turns during their camp-out, and although the government did not succumb to the demands on national inquiry (trying to argue that the issue with victimization is 'a not sociological problem' but a matter of crime prevention and resolution), an additional 25 million dollars was budgeted to the preventative work for women experiencing violence. Chelsea pointed out that while the government's response was far from what was demanded and needed to be done, it was an indication that their protest had not fallen to deaf ears. It had marked the beginning of change.

For Chelsea, it also marked the beginning of personal change. As mentioned before, she did not only become part of the activist community and form new relationships but she also connected with her ancestors' traditions. I had asked her earlier about drumming that I had found to be a prominent theme among her Facebook posts and she said that she only started drumming at the protest camp. I was truly surprised because it was such a huge part of her and

seemed to define her social and spiritual life. Chelsea said that when she was at the camp she would cry every time she was near the drum. Apparently that is quite a usual reaction of many Indigenous people who hear the traditional drum for the first times. Chelsea was told by a grandmother Elder that it was her blood memory that woke up in her. Beat of the drum is a triggering factor that unites the person with her/his ancestors and grounds the spirit. Hearing the drum is like returning home.

The drum had such a powerful impact on Chelsea that she was terrified to pick it up and sound it herself at first. She was also worried about the many protocols around the drum – and many other traditional practices and ceremonies for that matter. She was not sure if she would do something wrong or offensive. Eventually she overcame this fear with the support of the other women and knowing that she was acting with a good heart. Becoming more and more educated in her university courses about the impacts of colonial patriarchy on Indigenous traditions, she came to understand that the only way to navigate in the jungle of protocol was to use one's own judgement, trust on the goodness in heart while respecting the views of others. Drumming started to feel more empowering to her and she was asked to join the drumming group of the women in the community. Later that winter she was gifted her first hand drum.

Open drum at Thunder Bird House. (Chelsea Facebook Photos 2015).

It becomes very obvious from Chelsea's stories that drumming plays a big part in her life. She goes to open drum practices at Circle of Life Thunder Bird House on Tuesdays with her drum sisters and other community members. They usually bring the big drums there and everyone in the community, Indigenous or non-Indigenous is welcome to join. In my view 'practice' is quite misleading name for these gatherings for what I have seen, though. It felt more like being in a get-together of bunch of friends who brought their kids and other family members along, maybe some food to share and just jammed the evening away.

Chelsea's hand drum with painted by an artist friend Patrick Ross in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Chelsea often takes her drum in to the park to sing with her children, friends or by herself (Chelsea Facebook Photos 2015).

"Each time women gather in circles with one another, the world heals a little more"

(Chelsea Timeline 2015).

Traditional drumming and singing are an integral part of Indigenous culture and spirituality. Thus, it has become an integral part of Indigenous activism as cultural representation but moreover, as a powerful means of healing that it brings to the people. Chelsea told me about this compelling rally earlier this year called "Take back the Streets". Chelsea's friend, Jackie, got dozens of community members to help her find her niece who had gone missing. The police did little to find her, although she was known to be a high-risk individual, so, the women, supported by the community members, took on a personal mission to find her. They raided some of the crack houses in the city neighborhood where they knew she would most likely to be located. Jackie had asked Chelsea and other women to bring their drums.

Chelsea drummed and sang with others the whole time while they were searching the niece. They drummed so that they could get closer to her. To tell her she is loved and to bring her home. Jackie, the family and the group finally found the niece but unfortunately could not persuade her to leave.

Women from the community singing at "Taking Back the Streets". Jenna in the middle row, Chelsea behind her. (Taking Back the Streets Facebook Page 2015)

Interesting about the story was that when media took on it, the first thing the journalists asked Chelsea - who was asked to be the community spokesperson again – was a question about the break-in-enter by kicking a door down at one of the houses where the group trying to find the niece. To Chelsea that showed, once again, the sad priorities of the society and the prevalence of racism in Winnipeg. She pointed out that would anyone have batted an eye about the kicked-in door if the news had been about white family trying to find one of their missing girls?

Along with drumming, another traditional practice Chelsea finds resort in her life is beading. She is self-taught and beaded quite a lot when she was younger until a phase of "parties and boys" took over. She picked it up again a couple of years ago and beading has now become one of her favourite ways to spend her leisure time. Chelsea said that beading has become more meaningful to her now that she has started to learn about the traditions behind it. Apparently beading was one of the activities that used to bring women together in the old times – much like drumming. It allowed women to have their own exclusive space and time to talk, share stories and receive teachings from the Grandmothers and Elders.

Chelsea and her beadwork. (Chelsea Facebook 2015)

To Chelsea, beading is clearly a way of meditation and creative self-expression. Not only does she post about her exquisite traditional jewelry on her Facebook but wears it on daily basis.

Chelsea is a strong Indigenous feminist and to-the-point advocate of Indigenous issues. However, I have also learned that she has a very sensitive and emotional side to her which I have taken notice of throughout the building of our friendship, right when I first met her at the protest camp. She has her deep personal struggles which sometimes attempt take an overpowering grip of her. Chelsea, like unfortunately many other Indigenous women, comes from a background of brokenness and a "soul wound" (Duran et al. 1998).

She shared her story about her younger years as well as her mother's and grandmother's traumatizing past of violence, alienation and addictions. Chelsea had experienced the governmental care system herself when she moved to Winnipeg form West Ontario with her mum. A Sixties Scoop survivor, her mum had paradoxically grown to be racist towards Indigenous people due to being raised in a non-Indigenous family with no idea of her ancestry and only seeing the negativity of the near-by First Nations reserves in the area where she lived. Therefore Chelsea, too, has only started to discover her Indigeneity as Métis-Anishinabe later in her life. There is still gravity in her spirit that she is working on to confront and come in terms with. Chelsea knows the journey to healing is not easy but she is very aware of the importance of that personal journey to take place.

"Got a job. Not in my field and its something i have done for years before I need to heal my spirit before i begin to help others heal theirs."

(Chelsea Timeline 2015)

I asked Chelsea her opinion on healing and resistance, should one happen after or before the other? We contemplated about this for a while. Chelsea said it is sometimes hard for her people to initiate healing through traditions because according to some protocol, in order to touch the drum, for an example, you have to have been clean and sober for this and this amount of hours. A restriction that is very hard to overcome for persons struggling with addiction. But sometimes individuals might start resisting 'the system' and gain enough strength to start the process of healing. We came to the conclusion that there is no linear order. Healing and resistance walk together hand in hand in a circle - just like everything and everyone else in this world.

6.3 Jenna

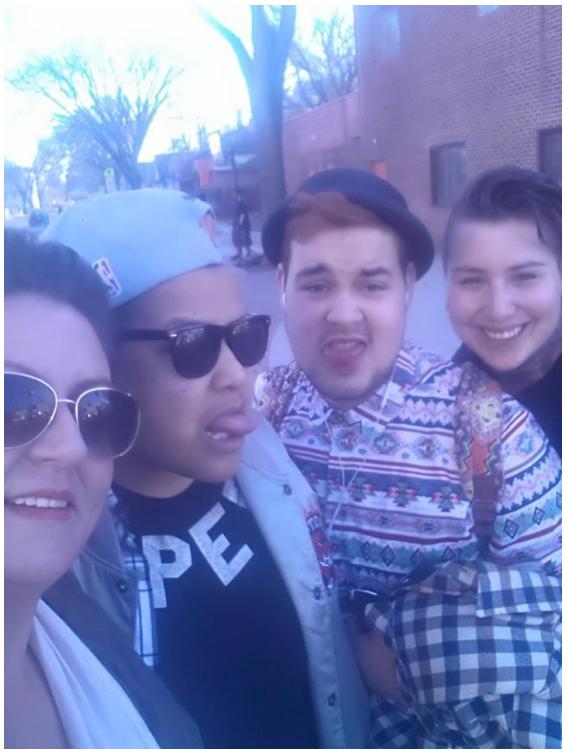
I got to know Jenna just this summer through Chelsea. She told me Jenna would be an interesting person to talk to about my thesis and arranged us to meet at "Meet Me @ the Bell Tower" (MM@BT), an initiative run by a local grass-root organization Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO) in the North End every Friday to address issues in the community. I was familiar with MM@BT and AYO, and I knew Jenna was one of the main figures in the organization and consequently a long-standing and well-known activist in the Indigenous community. She is prominent part of the young Indigenous representation in Winnipeg and I had often seen her leading cheers at rallies and events. For some reason our paths just had not crossed before. Until now.

A group photo that is taken at every MM@BT gathering. (Meet Me @ The Bell Tower Facebook Page 2015)

It was like going on a blind date: I was not exactly sure who I was going to meet and I was excited but also nervous. I had an image of her as this fearless activist who did not take nonsense from anyone - and I certainly did not want to be that 'anyone'. After looking around for a while and not finding her, I bolded up and contacted her in Facebook. In the next second she sent a message exclaiming: "hey pauliina!!!" I replied saying that I was just about to write her but she got me first, to which she continued: "lmfao !!! hilarious!!! yeah im inside [Ndinawe youth centre] airconditioner / i cant take too much heat /or else i over heat". With

those witty welcoming lines it became clear that being nervous about meeting her had been totally pointless.

On that same "date" she arranged me to start volunteering at Ndinawe youth centre where she works. Over the following weeks that we hang out I began to realize that Ndinawe was not only her job it was part of her 'hood', her home. Jenna had been raised by this 'hood' since she was a pre-teen. Her mother who is a Sixties Scoop survivor gave Jenna away to a lady she knew when she was only a toddler. The "adopt mom" abused and exploited her and finally put her to CFS care. Jenna ran away and moved to the street. Knowing what the street can be like to a young Indigenous girl in Winnipeg, I asked her how come she has not ended up being another cold case in the police files. She could not really pinpoint an exact reason why, but she said that there has always been an internal drive for "something else". Her people are warriors, she said. They have survived generations of genocide.



Chelsea and Jenna with her co-workers and friends, Zech and Rikki from Ndinawe. (Jenna Facebook Photos 2015)

This warrior in Jenna has usually showed up as "the angry Indian". It started as physical aggression when she was about four years old. She used to call up street fights with other kids in the neighbourhood and throw in a few rounds of punching at the block before supper time. It was not until she was a lot older when she began to learn about the history of her people, residential schools and the effects of intergenerational trauma. She finally

Racism. Racism is all i see on my time line..... People who are .... People calling people out .... (needs to be done) but Why cant we look past our skin and look whats in our hearts? But then again thats been fucked with too..... So lets just all love one another without judgement..... #thisisgettingold #ineedtochangetoo # slowlygettingthere

(Jenna Timeline 2015).

began to understand where all those angry feelings were coming from. Becoming conscious of the impacts of colonization both helped her to understand her anger but also infuriated her further. She got frustrated about the way she was treated by other people and the society for being Indigenous. Jenna has dealt with racism her whole life and it has affected her. She learned to answer racism with racism from early on, and this 'offensive-defensive' mindset is still very much part of whom she is today.

However, she is very honest about it too. She snickered half-jokingly that she still puts every white person on "probation time" before she lets go of her racial prejudice. (I hope my time is done…). Jenna explained that, if someone truly and honestly offers their help, she does not see the race but if someone comes and just comments on what she is doing and what she should or should not be doing, that is when the issue with race steps into the picture. She is sick of the white mainstream society trying to control her, her culture and her people. She also pointed out that she constantly works on herself to get rid of these internalized ways of being judgemental, and she knows that counter-racism does not end the oppression towards her or her people. She is aware that most of the time the problem lies in the system and lack of education rather than in the personality of an individual.

Jenna also acknowledges that it is not only non-Indigenous people who need to be educated and calls out her own people on things she does not conform with or finds unjust. She expects respect from everyone to everyone equally. Having learned about internalized colonization she loudly protests against it, especially when those behaviours come in her way of trying to practice and revive her culture.

"WHO GIVES THE RIGHT FOR A MAN TO TELL WOMEN THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DRUM????..... THE TEACHINGS are life, Maby you wanna learn them....and also in regards to rules at a ceremony, can you not write out the rules cause there are none .... Respect is the only mutual rule....."

Jenna Timeline (2015).

Becoming educated has also made her understand her birth-mother at the reserve who is still very much affected by the Sixties Scoop trauma. She has recently reconnected with her and has begun to forgive her the past. She now knows how trauma works on individuals and

instead of judging the mother Jenna has learned to judge the colonial system that traumatized her.

We talked about life on the reserve and Jenna said she has made a decision of never wanting to be part of it. Her home is in the city and despite having relatives living on both her mother's and her absent father's reserves these communities are alien to her. Moreover, she knows how people can end up in that environment. She has lost too many of her loved ones to those realities and does "not need that sh*t" in her life. She also feels like she does not need the reserve to reconnect with Indigenous roots and have the support of a tight knitted-community. She already has a home community, her 'hood', where she can express herself and her traditions and that is in the city.

When I asked about the traditions, she said that drumming and singing are 'her thing' but also identifying as Two Spirited. According to Indigenous tradition it means that one senses and expresses both spirits the male and the female. Jenna said she has never felt confused about herself being Two-Spirited, whereas trying to figure herself out in the Euro-Western categorizations gets her puzzled.

Jenna recalls that the first time she picked up a drum was in her early teens when she started to take cultural programs on traditional teachings and practices through youth resource providers such as Ndinawe. I asked her if she drums and sings at other times too, apart from social gatherings and community events. She said she would drum whenever she feels the

> ***"I wanna drum and sing on selkirk right now !!! Who's down ? I will be there on powers and Selkirk now until 4:00 ☺***
> ***come down and jam with me, its such a nice day !!!!!***
> ***#bringingspiritbackonselkirk"***

(Jenna Timeline 2015).

Jenna taking her drum out to the people (Jenna Facebook Photos 2015).

urge. She drums and sings to herself but furthermore, she "takes the drum and its spirit out to her people". By this she meant that she would walk down the streets in 'her hood' or go to locations like Portage Place shopping mall downtown where she knows Indigenous city dwellers tend to gather and spend time. She would drum and sing and people would walk up to her and listen. Often some of the listeners share their story and longingly tell her how they have not heard the drum for years. Jenna remembers this one woman who came to her and said that she had moved to Winnipeg from Vancouver two years ago and this is the first time in ten years she has heard the drum. I, too, got to experience the compelling power of the drum when the three of us Jenna, Chelsea and I met up in Central Park one day to spend the afternoon. As we were singing and drumming a few songs, at least three different groups of Indigenous passers-by approached, stayed and listened. One man sat down on the loan and after we finished he thanked us for singing "his song'" which he had "not heard for a long, long time". And before him this little boy had just quietly stood next to us, all eyes and ears.

The park was a public space but I was interested how Jenna has handled the legal issues in commercial spaces like Portage Place mall which are usually under strict regulations and permissions on busking and other public performing. She told me that no-one has ever stopped her at the mall after she spoke to the management of the premises and nonchalantly declared that she is "practicing the traditions of her ancestors to her people on her people's traditional territory, thank you very much". That sounded like Jenna in her element, the fearless activist who does not take nonsense from anyone.

"Winnipeg Water Wednesday" rally by the road to raise awareness about a crisis of water sustainability in Shoal Lake 40 First Nation. Jenna on the right. (Jenna Facebook Photos 2015).

When I talked to Jenna a little more about her activism in the Indigenous community she told me she was not really comfortable with the ways the more radical community activists had started to 'run their business'. She had started to take distance to those protests and saying the same as Chelsea that blocking the roads and such only makes people angry. The power of the protest is grounded in peace and respect.

Indeed, despite her explicit ways of expression she prefers to advocate and raise awareness in a constructive way. She is definitely one of the leading characters in the local Indigenous community and also a leader who the youth look up to – even if she would get "bitched at" by them at her work every now and then. And sure enough, being the 'big Al' and 'big mama' she takes great care of her 'homies' and 'yahoos'.

> ***"Okayyyyyy wheres all the homies @..... im on shift from 11-9 so Come visit me and be safe here at the center and maby bring me some nacho cheese and pickles lol jk <3 just get your bums down here so i know you are safe !!!!"***
>
> (Jenna Timeline 2015).

I remember when we were sitting in a diner around the block from Ndinawe one afternoon having chats about my thesis. She was facing to the window that looked out to the street corner. The whole time we sat there she would scan the street behind me, her eyes fixing into someone with concern every now and then. On our way out we walked to up to one of the youth who she had seen from the window, lingering at the bus stop eyes half closed and glazed. She gave him her take away box of onion rings. We said our byes with Jenna and the two of them started walking together down towards the center.

She is protective and endearing over the youth and people in the community who she considers her family. She is friendly and welcoming in her witty ways but also very careful of letting people to be part of her private life and 'her hood'. She lives and breathes the community and struggle that has raised her. Sprouting resilience and positivity, protest and affection, she also knows who she wakes up with every day. The "angry Indian" inside Jenna fights fiercely for the things that she finds important but there are times when the anger raises demons that try to fight her instead. Sometimes they knock her right to the bottom. But she perseveres and gets back up again because she does not take nonsense from anyone – including herself.

7. DISCUSSION

Stories are analyses within themselves (Wilson 2008), and there are as many discussion points that could surface from those stories as there are readers. Next I will bring up some of major themes I found important or prominent and try to synthesize them with the elements of resistance discussed earlier in this thesis.

The first thing that stands out in these stories is that all the three women are visibly and loudly Indigenous. They take pride of their Indigenous heritage and are very candid about their cultural affiliation. The history of colonial genocide and assimilation practices were aimed to attack the identity of Indigenous people and made Indigenous identity something to be ashamed of. Colonial patriarchy gave Indigenous women 'the choice' of being either a fetishized Disney fantasy, a dirty and disposable 'Squaw' (Voyageur 1996; Anderson 2000; Phillips 2012) or simply be nothing at all. Thus, it has become one of the most important tasks of Indigenous women to break down the dehumanizing imageries and deconstruct the collective identities that have dominated people's perceptions of Indigenous women – including Indigenous women themselves.

These defensive identities (Castells 1997) are tightly connected to the revitalization of ancestral 'everyday' traditions such as drumming, singing or beading and using them as the means to resist and execute counter-power in everyday life. Drumming, especially, in Chelsea and Jenna's stories came up as unparalleled medium for self-healing and reclaiming of Indigeneity and Indigenous feminism. Chelsea's story reveals how the sound of drum has the power to awaken a person's blood memory – the innate spirit of the ancestors – and thus initiate healing and give sense of spiritual belonging. Jenna, apart from engaging to her ancestral roots through drumming also finds resort in traditional Two-Spirited identity, a concept of spiritual gender orientation that is often misinterpreted in mainstream articulations. Jenna and Chelsea both speak of decolonizing patriarchal Euro-Western impact on the traditional ways of being, thus bringing the discourse of Indigenous feminism as part of colonial resistance.

Connecting with traditions is first-step to personal healing and relationship-building with Indigenous ancestry (Scarpino 2007). However, building a relationship with the Creator and spirituality can be mediated thorough other practices too, like Jasmine has done with her art. Lacking the resources to nurture the traditions including drumming, dancing or ceremony she

has found a natural and resourceful way to reconnect with her spirituality through the expressions of visual art.

Another very prominent theme that emerged from the stories regarding identity construction and healing was the importance of education. Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna all articulated how becoming aware of the genocide and its impacts on their people they have been able to better understand their inner self, their past and other people's behaviours towards them such as neglect and racism. They have been able to start to forgive others and themselves, and work on building constructive ways of encountering these unsettling experiences.

Community, another prominent theme in the stories, is an essential element of resistance for Indigenous women in many ways. First, it provides a safe and encouraging surrounding to develop and foster Indigenous identity (Scarpino 2007). Secondly, in the context of identity constructions, reactionary *resistance identities* tend to lead to the formation of communities (Etzioni 1993). Resistance identities and the communities they form, are the base for the emergence of *project identity*, a more stabilized construct of a new identity that provides a source of meaning and a tool for social change (Castells 1997). I would also like to point at Jasmine's story to highlight that a healthy community that fosters Indigenous identity construction does not have to be necessarily Indigenous. She has found a way to connect and nurture her Indigenous culture and spirituality in the art local community, while still having a strong network in the active Indigenous community as well.

Community in Indigenous worldview is also the 'basic unit' for sense-of-self and thus an essential component for holistic healing and reconstruction of identity (Ross 2014). This 'mind-in-community' highlights the importance of collectiveness in all human action, including identity constructions or direct social action and activism. The stories of Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna have reveal what is supported by literature (Silver et al. 2006; Howard-Bobiwash & Krouse 2009) that direct action through peaceful protest, community activism and (re)claiming of Indigenous space in the city have become a common and an effective way to exercise counter-power and initiate social mobilization.

Internet and especially social media has revolutionized social agency and the ecology of social movements. Providing a powerful independent space for interactive identity building and formation of communities social media platforms (Milan 2015) together with urban space have formed hybrid spaces of autonomy that take social agency to the level and become social movements (Castells 2013).These hybrid spaces of autonomy - Indigenous autonomy - are

quite well being created by Indigenous women in Winnipeg who have taken the lead in community engagement. Chelsea's story was marked by two very powerful demonstrations of resistance and reclaim of spatial autonomy. She was part of a two-week women's protest camp out in front of a prominent government establishment, Legislature building; and joined the collective of women from the community who took the right to their own hands and did a neighbourhood search to find a vulnerable family member and bring her home. Jasmine on her part was advocating at a four-day an event at the Legislature building that raised awareness on the issue with alarming number of children being in government care. Jenna, being one of the community's prominent youth activists has been part of a number of protests and rallies taking place all over of the city. I found particularly interesting the way Jenna reclaims Indigenous space and exercises self-authority by merely taking her hand drum to the public spaces and bringing the spirit back to her people.

Mobilization of larger number of people requires a triggering factor that causes outrage in a crowd that feels strongly related or touched by the events leading to the trigger (Castells 2013). To me it is obvious that the death of Tina Fontaine in 2014 was such a trigger – it mobilized the whole community and especially Indigenous women who would identify with her the most. Social mobilization requires the conquering the basic emotions of fear and anxiety which, after sufficient feelings of security from a like-minded collective are replaced with anger. Anger and frustration came up in Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna's stories. Jasmine's and especially Jenna's stories reveal that the source of these negative emotions were unclear to the women when they were younger but as they learned about the underlying mechanisms of trauma and colonialism they were able and determent to channel the anger in constructive and peaceful ways not through physical outbreak or violence.

In Castells (2012) observations on social movements of resistance, enthusiasm and hope eventually become the dominant emotions that overpower social agency which evolves into larger social movements. Enthusiasm, hope and determination, indeed, are the emotions that reflect strongly through the stories of Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna. It is hope and determination for healing of themselves and healing of their community. Hope for the next generations of Indigenous women and girls not having to grow up exploited or feel humiliated for who they are; or worst of all, go missing and be found by the river bank in a garbage bag. It is the hope and determination that stories of victimization and shame will be replaced with stories of resistance and pride, and that "the cup of grief" will return into "cup of life".

8. CONCLUDING NOTES

8.1 Synopsis of the stories

Indigenous women are the most victimized group of people in Canada, yet they are not victims – they are survivors. The resistance of Indigenous women in Winnipeg that I have been privileged to experience and learn about through the relationships with Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna and the community in Winnipeg has revealed the ways the women engage in personal healing and resistance by collective identity constructions and direct action in the city space.

Personal healing and identity workings are strongly characterized by reconnecting with spirituality through traditional practices or other expressive ways that enable the relationship with the Creator and Indigeneity to be established. Strong and explicit Indigenous self-expression is a way to reconstruct the distorted colonial imagery of Indigenous womanhood that has been deeply rooted in the mindsets of the society, often including Indigenous people themselves. Thus, collective identity building in itself is a means to resist colonialism by allowing individual emancipation and exercise of counter-power in a society that structurally oppresses them.

Community, whether Indigenous or not, is essential for fostering healing and the construction of these collective anti-colonial identities. The other way around, construction of collective identities reinforce the formation of like-minded communities and with an agenda for social change they become fertile bases for social mobilization and ultimately social movements. The protests and social action that have taken place in Winnipeg as a response to the most recent incidents of victimization of Indigenous women and girls have become part of a larger social movement of Indigenous people in Canada (Idle No More), aiming to reveal the injustices experienced by Indigenous women and restore the leadership and integrity that has traditionally signified Indigenous womanhood.

The forms and ways of resisting colonial structures and mind sets has been transfigured by the expansion and proliferation of social media that provides a new kind of space of autonomy and community building. The stories of Indigenous women in Winnipeg mirror the employment of this new domain of communication and presentation to the projects of identity-building and social mobilization. Indigenous people and Indigenous women have resisted against colonization for centuries, however, there are strong signs that the modern information age has brought the

one last missing boost to the smouldering flames, marking the beginning to the anticipated change towards the "The 8th and Final Fire." (Banai 1988:95).

However, as predicted by the prophecy of The Seven Fires, the task for the New People is not easy. Resistance and resilience rises from the struggle; it is defined by it and grounded in it. For what I have experienced and been told by Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna, the healing from personal wounds caused by intergenerational trauma of genocide and assimilation is a lifelong and life-consuming mission for these present-day generations. Indeed, the will-power to resist falling prey to victimization and the demons of one's personal past is in a continuous test. Finding the right path is just the beginning of the task that present generation of Indigenous women have to undertake, the real challenge is to remain on the path and pave it for the ones coming after.

9.2 Personal reflection

A research project should always signify more than just searching answers to research questions or testing hypotheses. It should be a process of personal learning and transformation: "If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (Wilson 2008:135). First and foremost successful about this whole experience was, indeed, the holistic personal transformation. I have learned about the limits to my own frame of reference regarding Euro-Western worldviews and thus learned about the innate privileges that come with my cultural affiliation and race. I believe these realizations were fundamental to be able to 'think outside the box' and try to understand the Indigenous ways of being, not to mention Indigenous ways of knowing.

My aim for this thesis was to take part in the resistance in two ways: construct a research design that applies Indigenous research paradigm in a respectful and meaningful way, and actively participate to the resistance in Winnipeg by formulating methodology that allows support to the cause happen naturally. I hope that I have succeeded to articulate what I have learned about the philosophical foundations of Indigenous worldviews that guide Indigenous research. This way I have also hopefully contributed to the rethinking of the ways and motives conducting qualitative research in academia. I have tried to follow the ethical premises of the three R's (Respect, Responsibility and Reciprocity) throughout the research project by choosing to focus on strength instead of disability, and learn through personal relationship-building with people and contexts as the main method. Relationality is an epistemological key for Indigenous research and relationships should have the time to develop

into a level that mutual trust is established between the investigator and the participants (Kovach 2009). I realized early on that time was the main restricting factor for my thesis project and so I chose to ask Jasmine and Chelsea who I already had a relationship with. Jenna's participation happened almost of its own accord because we seemed to bond quickly and had mutual connections. The personal relationship which naturally involves accountability and commitment to that relationship is the primary instrument for ensuring that the study is conducted ethically and with integrity (Wilson 2008). However, to be completely sure that these women knew what they were consenting to I presented them a formal information letter and form of consent (appendix 1). The actual research plan that I have disclosed in the information letter changed along the project but regardless, all the women were included in the process of creating their stories which they read and commented before they were added in to this thesis report. Personal relationships as a method of inquiry are, as mentioned above, time consuming and unfortunately I did not have the time I wanted for an analytic discussion of the stories with either of them. On a positive note, my motives and ability to convey the collective message of their stories were trusted, so I am feeling comfortable of presenting the conclusions that I have. Personal relationships, being part of the messiness of life cannot be predicted, which adds another challenge to the conduct of an academic study. In addition, I would like to point out that relationships-building also comes with the warranty to carry the emotional backpack beyond the study scope. Becoming close to the people and learning about their life and experiencing their realities also mean becoming closer to their struggle and pain, while realizing that there is little that you can do to help.

The response that I received from Jasmine, Chelsea and Jenna was encouraging and implied that I have managed to describe their life events and resistance in an inspirational and empowering way. To me, their feedback on their own stories and the project as a whole is of the highest importance, so, in this regard the thesis has served its purpose to the people it was committed to. With my experience I would argue that conducting subjective research that involves personal commitment is rewarding and makes the project more meaningful to the investigator and the participants. The concerns about whether this kind of research approach that embraces subjectivity and human emotions valid or academic owes to the debate between worldviews, as explained in the theoretical framework of this thesis. I personally submit to the notion that research is fundamentally *learning* to make change through shared relationships of knowledge. Therefore I would also like to think that 'emotional and passionate', and 'academic and intellectual' as concepts do not, and should not, have to be mutually exclusive.

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APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION & CONSENT OF PARTICIPATION

Title: "We are survivors, not victims" – Learning from urban Indigenous women about spaces of healing & resistance.

Investigator: Pauliina Linnea Harjula

Dear Jenna

This is an official information letter and a request to be a key part of my Master's thesis, which I'm completing as a partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts in University of Helsinki, Finland.

As you might remember, the thematic of my thesis study situates itself around the issue of racial and gendered victimization of Indigenous women, a social problem that has prevailed for decades but only recently has become better known to a wider audience in Canada and beyond. The problem has its origin in colonization and practices of cultural genocide, which have oppressed Indigenous women in complex ways and created a multifunctional space of victimization that retains to expose women to violence and other ill-treatment.

Having seen the severity and the reality of the problem before my own eyes, I've been struck by the ways Indigenous women – *you* - refuse to be victimized by oppressive stereotypes and menacing statistics. I find the power of resistance and healing you exercise in your everyday life as individuals and as a community truly inspiring.

The stories of victimization must to be voiced – and so do the stories of survival. This is what I hope to be Master's thesis.

Your involvement & privacy

What I'm asking from you is to share your story with me; discuss about the issue of victimization, and moreover the ways you physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually resist to be victimized – how you are healing and being healed as an individual and essence of Indigenous womanhood.

Talking about methods, I'm asking your consent to the following:

1. To explore your Facebook profile (timeline and posts), to get an idea of the ways you express yourself and take action.
2. To discuss about your life and the issue of victimization with regards of Indigenous womanhood, identity, community action etc. in an interview

The interview is intended to be very informal in nature, in fact, it's just another everyday conversation with the exception that the topic is been decided beforehand and I will be recording it and/or taking notes. I'll inform you in advance about some of the specific questions I'd like us to cover in our conversation. They will include your life events so far and some themes that stand out in your Facebook profile. But clearly I'm not going to make you talk about anything you don't feel like talking.

I hope to schedule this interview conversation with you between **13th-22nd September**, but by the 25th at the latest. I don't intent our conversation to take more than a couple of hours of our time but I'm in no rush – we can go on as long as we like or meet up a couple of times if we wish.

I intend to use our interview conversation combined with your Facebook representations as the key knowledge to analyze the ways you decolonize and devictimize Indigenous womanhood on personal

and collective levels. The analysis is comparative, grounded in traditional teachings of the Medicine Wheel on four directional human experience (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) [1] and the theoretical conceptualizations of space informed by critical social geography. We can talk about these ideas in our conversations.

I also wish the process of analysis to happen together with you and other women who are part of this thesis study. Each of you will be given the draft of the thesis to be commented on as many times as necessary, until we are all happy with the very final version. This is a way to ensure that everything you have shared or will share with me that (stories, ideas, feelings, images or other productions) will be checked with you before being published. The level of your engagement in the commentary of the thesis is totally up to you, though. I don't expect you to devote chunks of your time on it but you're more than welcomed to be as involved as you want.

Also, since you are the voice of this thesis it would be great if your voice could be credited appropriately by using your own name. However, the final decision stays with you, of course.

Finally, I understand that life is unpredictable sometimes, so if you in any point feel like you cannot be part of this anymore it's totally fine. Just let me know if I can still use the conversations or anything else we've shared prior that moment.

Sharing the work

As mentioned above, you will have full access to be part of the process of analysis and the ways your voice will be presented in the final thesis. You will also have full access to the thesis once I get it published online in December. I will give you an electronic copy of it too. All data and study material will be preserved with me until the thesis is published. After that it will be destroyed, unless we agree otherwise.

Lastly and most importantly, I am so very grateful that you are willing to be a key player in my thesis. I owe you and will return the favor in any way I possible can. Just please let me know how.

Official consent

Signing this letter is an official way of stating that we both agree to commit and to be part of my thesis project in the ways described above, and that you know your participation is voluntary.

Signatures:

_____ _____

_____ _____

Your Name & date My Name & date

Forever grateful,

Pauliina

[1] I will seek guidance from an Elder or another trusted cultural teacher on the Medicine Wheel to ensure the teachings are interpreted and applied in a respectful and appropriate way.