Smudging and Concrete: Indigenous Traditional Ways in the City of Halifax

By: Shawn J. Martin

Dalhousie University

Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Abstract

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In spite of the increasing importance of urban-Indigenous (urban-Aboriginal) issues in Canada, very little is known about these topics in relation to Atlantic Canadian urban centers. Urban-Indigenous peoples are the fastest growing, youngest demographic in Canada, and are of vital importance to the future of this country. This research was conducted in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), which is part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. In this thesis, I am looking to gain a better understanding of Indigenous traditional ways in the city of Halifax. Interviews with 17 self-identifying Indigenous people living in the HRM help show the importance of Indigenous traditional (cultural) ways in the urban context. Diverse forms of engagement with these traditions, ceremonies, and cultural practices help urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM find a sense of belonging, and so much more. There is a real sense of hope amongst Indigenous people in cities such as Halifax. Indigenous traditional ways contribute greatly to this growing sense of optimism, and to a better future for First Peoples.

Acknowledgements

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Finally, I would like to thank *everyone* who spoke with me as part of this thesis. The resiliency of Indigenous peoples is truly inspiring. I look forward to continuing these conversations into the future.

Thank you.

Smudging and Concrete: Indigenous Traditional Ways in the City of Halifax

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I am looking to gain a better understanding of Indigenous traditional (cultural) ways in the city of Halifax, which for the purpose of this research encompasses the entire Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The focus of this research is on how Indigenous residents of the HRM engage with their respective traditional ways, as well as how these forms of cultural engagement affect their lives as *urban*-Indigenous people. But before I formally present my research questions and explain in detail my topic, I would like to provide the reader with some context.

Throughout much of my life, I have visited and spent time in several Indigenous (Mi'kmaw) communities on and off-reserve, always as the non-Indigenous, Euro-Celtic Canadian man that I am. I suppose that makes me something of a "familiar outsider." I grew up in rural Prince Edward Island with a mother who – since the late 1980's – has worked with both First Nations "on island," as well as the sounding Aboriginal communities across the province. Due to a conscious decision on her part, and a matter of convenience at other times, I would often go to work with my mother throughout my childhood. This was where it all started for me: at the workshops, keeping quiet during meetings, as well as visiting festivals and gatherings. This early engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities tweaked an interest in me that has never gone away. And yet I am outsider, and still have so much to learn – hence this thesis.

But enough about me; my identity as a non-Indigenous person will be evident throughout this thesis. It can be seen in my fieldwork, the ethical obligations I have faced, as well as my missteps and many mispronunciations, each of which I've learned from. In spite of the fact that I am a non-Indigenous person, I have taken on this research with the utmost respect, and have met nothing but kindness in return. Even at times where I was challenged or questioned about my research, it was always done in an honest and at times humorous way.

There is a great deal to learn from urban residing Indigenous people, and the ways in which they may engage with their respective cultures in the city. With that in mind, I have asked the following two questions:

1) How are Indigenous traditional ways lived and carried out in the urban center of the Halifax Regional Municipality?

2) How do these forms of engagement with Indigenous traditional ways affect the lives of urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM, specifically with regards to finding a sense of "belonging" in the city of Halifax?

The term "Indigenous traditional ways" was chosen to be as inclusive as possible. As a term, "Indigenous" is meant to include all First Peoples of "Turtle Island." For several Indigenous peoples, "Turtle Island" refers in part to Canada (Native Art in Canada, 2012). Participants choose to self-identify as: Aboriginal, First Nations, Native, Indian, Indigenous, Mi'kmaq or Micmac, Cree, Anishinabek, Ojibway Anishinaabebee kwi, and Métis. Each of these self-descriptions can be considered as included within the term Indigenous. The term "traditional ways" was also selected in order to be as inclusive as possible. Traditional ways should be understood as continuous and can include: language, ceremony, gatherings (Pow-wows, Maowi'omi), sweat lodges, prayer, sharing, storytelling, humour, art, and countless other cultural aspects from diverse Indigenous nations. These elements of traditional ways and several others will be further explored in the "findings" section. The term traditional ways takes into account both cultural distinctiveness, as well as the cultural "borrowing" which can take place from one Indigenous nation to another.

There is clearly much to learn about urban-Indigenous topics and issues, but in order for this thesis to have any direction or purpose, one must ask why it is important. Why is it important that I write a thesis about Indigenous traditional ways in the city of Halifax? The first answer to this question is based on the fact that so little research of this type has been done in Atlantic

Canada – including its urban centers. While there have been some very important undertakings in this field, academic and mainstream communities alike still know all too little about the experiences of urban-Indigenous people living in Halifax. While the significantly smaller number of both Indigenous *and* non-Indigenous people living Atlantic Canada – compared to other regions of the country – does contributes to this, it is not a valid excuse. Urban-Indigenous topics and issues in the HRM do matter.

Beyond an insufficient amount of prior research on this topic, there is an even more compelling matter to attend to: demographics. Put simply, Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) are the fastest growing, youngest demographic in all of Canada (AANDC, 2010). While the 2006 census reported a total of 1.3 million persons declaring Aboriginal identity, this demographic is expected to increase to upwards of 2.2 million by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Furthermore, this growing population of Indigenous peoples is young, as Statistics Canada states:

> The biggest challenge confronting the Aboriginal population by 2017 could be their large number of young adults aged 20 to 29 entering the labour market. This age group is projected to increase by over 40%...more than four times the projected growth rate of 9% among the same age group in the general population. (Statistics Canada, 2005)

It is also worth pointing out that these numbers come from 2001, and that the year 2017 is now fast approaching.

Finally, these figures are highly relevant in cities. The 2006 Canadian Census also found that over 50% of Aboriginal people live in urban centers (AANDC, 2010). With increasing urbanization and relatively high birth rates, the numbers of Aboriginal people living in several cities has doubled in the past 25 years (AANDC, 2010). In direct relation to my own research, the city of Halifax is an urban center which has seen a rapid growth of Indigenous residents. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of Aboriginal people living in Halifax was reported to have increased by an astounding 51% (Environics Institute: Halifax Report, p. 17). This happened at a time in which the total population of Halifax increased by only 4% (Environics Institute: Halifax

Report, p. 17). This brief overview of demographics demonstrates how important it is to foster a greater understanding of the experiences of urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax.

There is no updated data of this type to be found within the 2011 Canadian Census. The mandatory long-form census was eliminated by the Canadian federal government in 2010, effectively erasing future data relevant to urban-Aboriginal demographics (Adams, p. 5). Whether this is due to poor decision making or strategic ignorance, I will let the reader decide. However, based on past projections (2001, 2006) from Statistics Canada, and Environics Institute's use of the same data, we can expect these trends of growth and urbanization to continue.

These statistics give us an indication of both the challenges and potential which lie ahead. On the one hand, Indigenous people moving to the HRM will have to navigate this urban space, often for the first time. This presents challenges in areas such as housing, employment, and accessing services. However, the potential of this young and growing group of urban-Indigenous people living in Halifax should also give cause for hope. In an urban center which only experienced a total population increase of 4% between 2001 and 2006, urban-Indigenous people could certainly contribute a great deal to the HRM (Environics Institute: Halifax Report, p. 17). I believe that inaccurate labels of "dependency" directed at Indigenous peoples will disappear if the conditions are created for Indigenous residents of Halifax to be who they are, and all they can be.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Methods

This thesis is undeniably a qualitative project. That means it focuses on the detailed accounts of a smaller number of people, as opposed to statistical data collected from more quantitative projects. As a result, the most important research method I have used is the

"personal interview", applied in both individual and group settings. Other research methods used were participant observation, and document analysis. I was able to conduct 7 one-on-one interviews, as well as 1 group interview. All interviewees were self-identifying Indigenous people living within the HRM. The one-on-one interviews were comprised of 3 men, and 4 women. Two of these interviewees identified themselves as elders (both male), another three would qualify as adults aged 25-40 (two females, one male), and the remaining 2 would qualify as youth, aged 18-24 (both females). With regards to the group interview, there were 10 participants, 6 of which were male, and 4 were female.

The 7 one-on-one interviews I conducted had the dynamic of a casual, free-flowing conversation. Interviewees were asked up to 9 very open ended questions (see appendices), some of which were omitted depending on the focus of our conversation. Questions would often begin with the word "how" as opposed to "what"; a subtle word choice which allows interviewees to expand on what they would like to say, as opposed to giving a short answer. These interviews lasted anywhere from 28 to 67 minutes. The one-on-one interviews took place at: the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Center, on Gottingen Street; the Dalhousie Native Post Secondary Counseling Unit, located on campus; and the Dalhousie Grad House Social Club, also located on campus.

I conducted one group interview with 10 participants as well. This interview was also a form of participant observation, as it took place following a community elders' supper at the Mi'kmaw Child Development Center. I was introduced, then invited to help serve food to the elders and others attending the supper. I learned as much simply by being there as I did in the subsequent interview. We can learn a great deal by being part of the day-to-day experiences of those around us, especially when it means humbling ourselves, and building trust. With the meal finished and a sense of rapport built, I began the interview by asking some of the same open ended questions to the group. I made use of only 6 of these questions, as the interview became its

own self-sufficient conversation. I was happy to be able to "step back" and act as more of a "facilitator," refocusing the conversation and encouraging people to speak.

The breakdown of interviewees' self-identified nationhood or peoplehood is as follows: 13 Mi'kmaq participants, 2 Anishinaabe participants, 1 Mi'kmaq-Cree participant, and 1 Métis participant. While I was not aiming for complete representativeness, I am pleased with this breakdown, as Halifax is part of Mi'kma'ki. We are also still able to see in this small sample the relative diversity of Indigenous peoples living in Halifax. I would like to have spoken with a Maliseet person living in the HRM, as the Maliseet people comprise another nation belonging to the Wabanaki (Eastern) region (Prins, 1999). However, there can always be further research done on this topic.

Ethics

Social research inevitably involves a series of important ethical responsibilities. Requirements such as anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent serve to protect participants, and ensure that social research is done in good faith. For example, all participants either chose or were assigned a "pseudonym", unless they explicitly requested that their name be included in the thesis. Also, signed consent forms were provided to interviewees, with the exception of the group interview at the elders' supper where informed verbal consent was obtained. Yet when conducting research with Indigenous peoples, researchers must rise to meet a higher standard of ethical obligations. I would like to discuss this in relation to my writing style, and the need to respect Indigenous knowledges.

As the author and narrator of this work, it is unavoidable that I will be doing quite a bit of "talking." However, with regards to how the findings are presented in this thesis, I am placing a primacy on the experiences and perspectives of those I have interviewed. This is especially important to me as a non-Indigenous researcher. It also means that the most important data presented in my findings will be quotes, expanded on by myself, and supported by secondary

sources. My use of quotes and first-hand accounts is highly appropriate for this thesis. I am reminded of what one interviewee, Gary, told me about learning and tradition when he said: "I think it's important to respect the experiences of other people." I hope to have "respected the experiences of others" in my writing of this thesis by privileging the perspectives of those I have spoken with.

In my fieldwork, participants seemed to be keenly aware of the tendency of researchers to "parachute into" Indigenous communities, gather knowledge, and leave without sharing or returning the knowledge to the community. For example, after asking one interviewee, Sara, how she would describe Indigenous traditional ways, she subtly replied:

> I think of Indigenous ways in terms of research. And in terms of research I think of...making sure that the knowledge was respected. And not only that is was respected, but that the knowledge gathered from these people gives back to them as individuals, but also gives back to them as a community.

While I have no way of knowing whether or not this was directed at me, I certainly took notice of how it applied to anthropologists. It is indeed my responsibility to respect the knowledge I gather in this thesis, and return it to those who I have spoken with. I was reminded of this once again by one of the group interviewees, Linda, when she looked me in the eye and said: "And don't forget us when you finish your thesis." Because of these important responsibilities, I have approached each area of this thesis with the utmost respect. I will also be returning a copy (electronic or paper) of my thesis to all participants and organizations which were involved in this research; for the knowledge is not truly mine.

With these ethical responsibilities in mind, one is perhaps left wondering: "Can a non-Indigenous researcher say anything at all on this topic?" To this I would say *yes*, but only with respect and understanding. I am reminded of a quote from Michael Asch's article "Finding a Place to Stand" where he addresses the self-doubt of anthropologists working with Indigenous peoples:

> We [anthropologists] provide valuable perspectives on culture, on colonial history and on political relations that are missing from the conversation...We do not need to keep silent and remain on the sidelines. We can enter the conversation with respect and with dignity. We can find a place to stand (Asch, p. 206).

I hope to have found my place to stand in this research. I believe that I have been able to respectfully engage with, and contribute modestly to an important dialogue between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples living in Halifax.

<p style="text-align:center">CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW</p>

Throughout this thesis, I have aimed to prioritize the perspectives and experiences of those I have interviewed and spoken with. And yet, literature and theory are important ways of organizing and relating to the information I have gathered. The purpose of literature and theory in this thesis is to help inform, support, and contextualize my findings. While the literature and theoretical framework described below are very important to this thesis, I remain open to the ways in which my fieldwork will be different. Put simply, I am not afraid to "colour outside the lines" in how the literature, theory, and findings relate to one another. After all, that is where the learning happens. In this section, I will discuss some of the more important sources of literature and theory as they relate to my thesis.

The most important text informing this thesis is a chapter entitled "Owning as Belonging/Owning as Property: The Crisis of Power and Respect in First Nations Heritage Transactions in Canada", which was written by Dr. Brian Noble of Dalhousie University. Taken from the book *First Nations Cultural Heritage and Law: Case Studies, Voice, Perspectives*, this chapter unpacks the Kwakwaka'waka people's concept of "owning as belonging", as set against a more Western-legal "owning as property" (Noble, p. 465). While this article discusses topics ranging from respect, difference, property, and recognition, it is the concept of "owning as belonging" which is most important to my thesis.

Before unpacking this concept, I would like to stress the importance of remembering just how different Kwakwaka'waka culture is to Mi'kmaq, Cree, Anishinaabek or Métis cultures. The issue of cultural distinctiveness will come up once again in the "findings" section. However, this theoretical framework of "owning as belonging" gives us just that: a *framework*. It gives us a sense of structure around which we can make sense my findings, and see just how engagement with traditional ways affects belonging for urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax. I will reiterate that I am comfortable "colouring outside the lines" of the literature and theory.

With regards to the concept of "owning as belonging", I will be focusing on the way in which certain Indigenous peoples find a sense of belonging through "owning" – that is engaging with different aspects of their respective culture. Noble explains this in stating that: "'Owning as belonging' places a greater emphasis on transactions that strengthen relationships of respect and responsibility between people and what they regards as 'cultural property'" (Noble, p. 465). "Cultural property" is described in this text with reference to a previous chapter from the same book:

> Kwakwaka'wakw participant Andrea Cranmer provided details regarding the idea that cultural property consisted, literally, of everything that the Kwakwaka'wakw own:
>
> "It's all the traditions of the Kwakwaka'wakw that belong to me and belong to our people. It's the language, the Kwak'wala language...It's protecting all our songs and dances and history...That's cultural property" (Noble, p. 473).

With this in mind – and in relation to my research – "traditional ways" include that which can be considered as "cultural property."

Also important in "owning as belonging" is the way in which ownership of cultural property is an active and relational process (Noble, p. 467). Noble explains this in quoting Catherine Bell from an earlier chapter of this book:

> Relationships of "belonging" were traditionally demonstrated through performance and verified through being witnessed by the community. Songs, dances, and masks were an integral part of family identity" (p. 467).

What is being explained here is that that having ownership over cultural property through practice creates a sense of "belonging." Put simply: to do is to own, and to own is to belong." It is this specific aspect of "owning as belonging" which relates most closely to my research questions and thesis.

However, it must be said that this concept of "owning as belonging" also relates to a deep and reciprocal relationship with land. This comes up in the chapter, as Noble explains:

> In Gitanyow, owning as belonging also means one's attachment to the land. Amsisa'ytxw (Victoria Russell) explains this: "We actually have a place in this world, it makes a difference for me as a Luuxhon House member emotionally because it makes me feel proud to know I own land." Without the land, the songs, the crests, the history, she says,"I would be nothing" (Noble, 473).

It is important to note that my research is located in an urban area of Mi'kma'ki, and that it *will* stray from the culturally specific details of "owning as belonging" as set out in Noble's article. This is most evident with regards to the topic of land, and living in a relational manner with "the land." This is a matter which will be discussed in my findings. For now, I will simply say that the urban and Mi'kmaw contexts of my research altered without undermining the ways in which "owning as belonging" emerged in this thesis. That is to say, participants spoke to relating with their Indigenous traditional ways in a manner which reflected their culturally specific, and urban surroundings.

Building on this notion of "owning as belonging" I will also be referring to the "peoplehood matrix", as presented by Holm, Pearson, and Chavis (2003), and discussed by Stratton and Washburn (2008). The peoplehood matrix is described as four interrelated pillars which constitute Indigenous forms of peoplehood, or existing as a people (Stratton & Washburn, p. 51). The four pillars are: language, sacred history, place or territory, and ceremonial cycle (Stratton & Washburn, p. 51). The "pillar" in which I will be focusing on will be "place-territory" for how it relates to "owning as belonging", specifically in the urban context of Halifax.

In discussing "place-territory" as part of the peoplehood matrix, I am suggesting that it is possible for Indigenous peoples to "belong" on their territory, even in less conventional, urban terrains such as Halifax. In her M.A. thesis, Rebecca Thomas of Dalhousie University refers to this in stating: "Physical territory is immovable. The land can be appropriated, sold, mined and forested for resources, but it will still be a part of traditional Mi'kmaq territory with an unbroken history of occupation by the people" (Thomas, p. 101). This concept emerged as important only after my fieldwork, as several participants spoke to the ways in which they found a sense of belonging in the city of Halifax. Rebecca Thomas' explicit mention of the "peoplehood matrix" – and "place-territory" as one of its pillars – illuminated a key theme which had already been referred to by several interviewees.

Another concept located in the literature which is important to my thesis is "pan-Indianism." This term carries with it some controversy for its outdated terminology, and the way in which it implies grouping together distinct Indigenous peoples and cultures. However, it is almost impossible to explore the topic of Indigenous traditional ways in cities without considering pan-Indianism. In their article "Pow-wows as Identity Makers: Traditional or Pan-Indian?" Lerch and Bullers introduce the concept of pan-Indianism in stating:

> Pan-Indian activities are defined as cultural patterns that cut across traditional tribal boundaries to unite people in a wider, regional or national identity. Many tribes adopted Pan-Indian activities and symbols because traditional tribal cultures were being lost (p. 390).

However, while pan-Indianism may "cut across traditional tribal boundaries", it does not necessarily mean that these practices and beliefs will undermine more culturally specific traditional ways. With regards to Pow-wows, Cronk et al. are quoted in the same text as saying: "This Pow-wow does not submerge regional traditions and values; instead it is a different vehicle that allows different nations to express a common bond" (Lerch & Bullers, p. 391). It is evident that in certain contexts, pan-Indian and inter-tribal cultural practices serve to create unity between diverse peoples.

In my own fieldwork, examples of traditional ways which "cut across traditional tribal boundaries" include: Pow-wows, smudging, sweat lodges, and medicine wheel teachings. These specific forms of engaging with Indigenous traditional ways will also be referred to in this thesis as: pan-Aboriginal, pan-Indigenous, or as mainstream Aboriginal culture. There are two primary reasons for which pan-Aboriginal forms of cultural engagement and inter-tribal borrowing are so prominent in the city of Halifax. The first reason pertains to the diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures living and interacting in urban centers. The second reason is related to the fact that Indigenous peoples of Wabanaki (East coast) are "first contact" peoples (Holmes Whitehead, p. 7). This means they have experienced a much longer period of colonial disruption than other Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. These matters will be discussed in the findings section, but are worth introducing now in relation to pan-Aboriginalism, and inter-tribal borrowing.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

I must first acknowledge that this research takes place during a very important moment for many Indigenous people. In late 2012, a grassroots Indigenous movement called "Idle No More" rose to prominence in Canada, and around the world. Rallies took place in Halifax and elsewhere in opposition to the Canadian Federal Government's omnibus budget bills (C-38 and C-45); both of which were identified as examples of a broken relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state (The Star, January 28, 2013). Almost simultaneously, the "Made-in-Nova Scotia Process" became a source of public debate for its executive and non-accountable approach to treaty negotiations (Cape Breton Post, March 11, 2013). This was especially pertinent for interviewees, as the Made-in-Nova Scotia Process involves the Peace and Friendship treaties between the Mi'kmaq nation and the British Crown (Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, 2013). While these events are not directly related to my research, they had an influence on the political and socio-cultural consciousness of interviewees.

My findings will be structured in order of their applicability to my two research questions. My first research question asks: *"How are Indigenous traditional ways lived and carried out in the urban center of the Halifax Regional Municipality?"* I will begin by presenting a general overview of how participants understood and felt about "Indigenous traditional ways" in relation to the urban context of Halifax. Following this, I will move into a more specific discussion of the forms of engagement with Indigenous traditional ways that participants referred to. This will include themes such as pan-Aboriginalism and borrowing, as well as cultural distinctiveness.

My second research question asks: "*How do these forms of engagement with Indigenous traditional ways affect the lives of urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM, specifically with regards to finding a sense of 'belonging' in the city of Halifax?"* I will begin discussing this question in relation to the previously mentioned concept "owning as belong", and the ways in which participants both identified with and expanded on this concept. From there, I will discuss the effects and importance of Indigenous traditional ways in the lives First Peoples living in Halifax. This will allow for us to see the very real impact which traditional ways can have on the lives of urban-Indigenous people.

The final portion of my findings section will focus on the topic of "visibility." By this, I mean the degree to which Indigenous people living in the HRM feel accepted or respectfully recognized in the city of Halifax. In light of that fact that participants did not feel visible in any positive sense of the term, I will discuss some possible reasons for this. This will be analysed through what I am referring to as: "external visibility", relating to public awareness and the role of the HRM, as well as "internal visibility", relating to pride, and the inter-generational effects of the Indian Residential Schooling System. The issue of visibility may give us insight into the challenges and endeavors which lay ahead for Indigenous residents of the HRM.

Importance, Intent, and Urgency

One of the first observations which became apparent in my fieldwork is that many

Indigenous people living in Halifax do indeed value their cultures and traditions, and often

engage with these traditional ways in their day-to-day lives. While I recognize that being

engaged and active with one's traditional ways happens on a spectrum, there can be no doubt

that the importance of these things persists in cities.

This brings us to my first research question: "*How are Indigenous traditional ways lived

and carried out in the urban center of the Halifax Regional Municipality?*" In a very general

sense, participants pointed to the fact that urban Indigenous residents of Halifax engage with

cultural practices and traditions in a more intentional and deliberate way than perhaps those

living in (often rural) reserve communities. One interviewee explained this in comparing her

home community (Indian Brook First Nation) to her life in Halifax:

> Tia: It's more like if you're at home and it's around you, you'll pick it up. But then in the
> city it's like, "Here we have this program. We want you to do this program and here are
> the benefits." It's more structured I guess in the city.

This sense of intentional engagement with traditional ways was said to be even more pronounced

for those who are been born and raised off-reserve, and in a city. Rita explains: "So for me, to

find my culture in the city, I had to go looking for it, because I wasn't raised with those reserve

ties." Another interviewee, Sara, reiterated this in saying: "And you have others who may know

that they're native, but they're born and raised in the city so they have to...try a little harder to

get more of a sense of cultural identity." It is clear that engaging with one's own Indigenous

traditional ways in Halifax is an active, and not a passive experience.

Another general point that should be made is that "Indigenous traditional ways" does not

refer to "religious" practices. This can be made seen by observing that things like language and

humour have been included as part of traditional ways. In our interview, Rebecca Thomas spoke

to the "dailyness" of what can be considered traditional ways in explaining:

Rebecca: It's very much a lifestyle. I feel with a lot of Christian religions – it's a regiment. "I am Christian from 10 till noon on Sunday's, on Easter, on Christmas", that sort of thing. Whereas when you're a First Nations person, it's a lifestyle, it's every day...So traditional ways go beyond that of spirituality and stuff. It's a sense of life; it's a way you interact with people.

With this in mind, it is no wonder that Indigenous traditional ways remain important in the urban context. Far beyond being limited to "religion", or trivialized notions of "Culture", traditional ways come together to make up a larger "sense of life."

Five different participants also explained that they had either taken for granted, or not fully realized the importance of their traditions and cultural practices until they moved from their reserve communities to Halifax. This was said to create a sense of urgency for certain participants, and that a loss of cultural identity was a concern in an urban environment. One participant, Rachel, described this in saying: "I think there is a sense of urgency, because if you don't take part in traditional things, you kind of lose your...identity as an Aboriginal person within the city, and I think that's a really easy thing to do."At this point, my findings reveal that Indigenous traditional ways can take on a greater importance in cities, leading to more intentional forms of engagement in the urban setting of Halifax.

Pan-Aboriginalism and Cultural Borrowing

The concepts of "pan-Aboriginalism", and "borrowing" of traditional ways from one people to another both emerged as important themes in my fieldwork. I will refer to Lerch and Bullers once again as they explain that:

Pan-Indian activities are defined as cultural patterns that cut across traditional tribal boundaries to unite people in a wider, regional or national identity. Many tribes adopted Pan-Indian activities and symbols because traditional tribal cultures were being lost (p. 390).

Examples of this as referred to by interviewees include: Pow-wows, smudging, medicine wheel teachings, sun dancing, and the well-attended sweat lodge ceremonies in the HRM. However, it should be noted that those I spoke with were well aware of this. Furthermore, participants

pointed out two main reasons for why pan-Aboriginalism and cultural borrowing were so common in the HRM: (1) A diversity of Indigenous peoples in cities, and (2) the lengthy period of colonial disruption on the east coast. Pan-Aboriginalism and cultural borrowing were seen as contentious topics, but were generally identified as an important source of unity amongst diverse Indigenous peoples in the HRM.

One exchange between two participants in the group interview summarized this topic better than I could have ever done myself. In responding to the question "How would you describe Indigenous traditional ways in the city of Halifax", the following discussion ensued:

> Dan: You have what's referred to as "mainstream Aboriginal culture." Then you also have Mi'kmaq culture, which is not really the same thing. Then you have the influences from several other cultures: Cree, Inuit, Mohawk. For example...the medicine wheel, it's not Mi'kmaq, it never was. There's no word in Mi'kmaq for it...But they're all part of Halifax culture.

Another interviewee, Rita, seemed to accept this but wanted to explain why "mainstream Aboriginal culture" and borrowing were so prevalent in Halifax. Speaking next, she said:

> Rita: What I want to say is that the reason why we have the medicine wheel here, and other traditions form other cultures here is because we are first contact people. And we lost a lot of those, and so what we're doing now is we're finding our medicines and what not from other cultures. We borrow from others, and in that sense it helps...keep our Aboriginal identity.

This exchange helps us understand why pan-Aboriginalism and cultural borrowing are common forms of engaging with Indigenous traditional ways for First Peoples living in the HRM. A diversity of Indigenous cultures, and approximately 500 years of colonial contact in Mi'kma'ki have contributed greatly to this dynamic (M.A.C.S, 2013).

The theme of cultural borrowing amongst Indigenous peoples in Halifax was also discussed in relation to the popular sweat lodge ceremonies which take place near the Shearwater Air Force base. Sweat lodges are often identified as an Indigenous tradition originating in the prairies, and amongst Indigenous peoples of the Plaines (McIvor et al., p. 10). Rachel, an

Anishinaabe woman living in Halifax had this to say about the sweats lodge ceremonies which she attends in the HRM:

> Rachel: I think the native culture in Halifax is really influenced by the Mi'kmaq culture. But the sweat I go to, for example, it's a Navaho sweat. But it's...this one way that they've adapted and combined a bunch of traditions into this sweat.

On one hand, Rachel recognizes as an Anishinaabe person the importance of Mi'kmaq cultural influences in Mi'kma'ki. Yet at the same time, she also refers to the "adaptations" and "combinations" of diverse cultural traditions which go into this one sweat. This observation is very symbolic of the diversity of Indigenous peoples and traditional ways in cities such as Halifax.

However, I must be clear that notions of pan-Aboriginalism and borrowing can be problematic at times. While "mainsteam Aboriginal culture" and cultural borrowing are important negotiations in a "first contact", presently urban area such as Halifax, this can also create issues around cultural distinctiveness for specific Indigenous peoples. While the issue of cultural distinctiveness will be discussed bellow, it must be said that building unity amongst Indigenous peoples in the HRM is central to how Indigenous traditional ways are lived and practiced in Halifax. Bill expressed this point very well during the group interview:

> Bill: Because an urban area by definition is a stew, a minestrone. It has a mix of cultures and a mix our cultures as Indigenous peoples. And I don't have any difficulty...with what to us is kind of like one of our teachings: sharing. Because there's bound to be things that are just Cree, or just Mi'kmaq. But let's find that commonality. Especially in the world we're living in today, where they're trying to divide us from each other.

The balance between unity and uniqueness, as well as pan-Aboriginalism and distinctiveness is a topic in which both sides must be heard.

Seeking Balance: Distinctiveness and Language

It must not be forgotten that the entire HRM is part of Mi'kma'ki, and that the vast majority of Indigenous residents of this urban center are indeed Mi'kmaq. Partly as a result of this, several of the interviewees brought up the importance of engaging with culturally specific

traditional ways. Joe was able to speak to this while looking comparatively to his home community of Eskasoni, Mi'kmaw First Nation:

> Joe: Growing up in Eskasoni, we didn't have all the stuff that came from the west. When I moved down here three and a half years ago, this is where I learned the western [Native] culture. And to me, it was an eye opener. Right from the day I got here and still to today; I'm learning about the western Native culture. It's a great thing! But maybe we should find out what our heritage really is; what our culture actually is.

While Joe has positive feelings towards learning about traditional ways from Indigenous nations further west, he also stresses the importance of pursuing more culturally specific, Mi'kmaq (in this case) traditions. This issue of distinctiveness amongst Indigenous peoples does not appear to be limited to the Mi'kmaq either. Rachel explains this issue in more general terms as she says:

> Rachel: I would say that First Nations...have been fighting for a really long time not to be viewed as "the Indian" in the Westerns. I think the idea of this sense of Indigeneity that is broad and covers the Mi'kmaq, and the Mohawk, and the Ojibwe is kind of stereotyping "the Indian" as this one thing when the cultures are different.

Having a distinct identity as a people is evidently of great importance. However, there are unique challenges facing east coast (Wabanaki) Indigenous peoples in pursuing this. Rebecca discussed these challenges during our conversation in the following way:

> Rebecca: But at least with east coast nations, it's difficult because they've had hundreds of years more of colonial influence and all that stuff. So what it is that I can see and say, "*that* is specifically Mi'kmaq" is all muddled. Because there's so much borrowing, and adoption of other things.

Over 500 years of colonial disruption, and the arrival of French Christian missionaries no later than 1611 have both had significant effects on east coast Indigenous nations (Pastore, 1998). And yet, Mi'kmaq participants did express to me that there are practices, traditions, and aspects of Mi'kmaq culture to be found and taken up. These culturally specific traditional ways are closely connected to "the language."

The Language

Throughout my fieldwork, speaking one's Indigenous language was often mentioned as something that is helpful in accessing culturally distinct traditional ways. Halifax residing

Mi'kmaq interviewees in particular spoke to the importance of reasserting – and in many cases

relearning – the Mi'kmaq language. While efforts are being taken to relearn Indigenous

languages, it is said that there are less than 8, 000 Mi'kmaq speakers today (CBC, 2008). Gary

explained the way in which learning his own language (Mi'kmaq) has allowed him to gain a

greater understanding of Mi'kmaq culture: "And the more I learn, the more I understand that the

language also – it carries with it our world view, how we see the world...Because our language is

uniquely us." While it is quite likely that the Mi'kmaq language has changed over time, it stands

to reason that the language is still a reflection of a culturally specific world view.

Gary elaborated on the topic of language as a culturally specific worldview by providing

me with an example from the Francis and Sable book, "The Language of this Land, Mi'kma'ki":

> So I can say "nutj", which means "my father". Then I could say "kutj", which means
> "your father". Or if someone else was here...and I said "wutj", it would mean "their
> father." But there is no word "utj"...In our language, the prefixes are required for the
> word to even be. So you can't have "utj", you can't have some "father" that's
> disconnected...And in that way, everything is interconnected, and everything is related to
> other things.

Gary went on to explain that this sense of interconnectedness found in the Mi'kmaq language

helps him understand more distinct aspects of his culture. Other interviewees used their

Indigenous language (Mi'kmaq once again) to describe culturally distinct practices or traditions.

Joe did this in referring to "Netukulimk", a practice of sharing:

> One thing that belongs to us as culture, as a people, is we have what we call Netukulimk.
> Netukulimk is, when I go hunting; I give away what I get...We never kept anything for
> ourselves. I should say – the loon, I never like the taste of [laughs]. I shared that a lot!

This is also indicative of the resilient sense of humour enjoyed by so many Indigenous people,

including those in Halifax. It is clear that Indigenous languages are an important way of

accessing culturally distinct traditional ways.

Belonging in the HRM

I will now attend to my second research question, which asks: "*How do these forms of engagement with Indigenous traditional ways affect the lives of urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM, particularly with regards to finding a sense of 'belonging' in the city of Halifax?*" I will begin to address this question in relation the concept of "owning as belonging", as discussed in the literature review. Dr. Brian Noble introduces this term in stating: "'Owning as belonging' places a greater emphasis on transactions that strengthen relationships of respect and responsibility between people and what they regards as 'cultural property'" (Noble, p. 465). It was also explained in the literature review that "traditional ways" can be included as part of "cultural property."

What is most relevant to this thesis is how "owning as belonging" is an active and relationtional process (Noble, p. 467). By engaging actively with one's traditional ways, a person takes "ownership" of them, thus creating a sense of "belonging." While it is important to note that Noble wrote this article about his work with Kwakwaka'wakw Indigenous people, "owning as belonging" still serves as a useful framework when thinking about Indigenous traditional ways in the city of Halifax. Consider this reflection from Sara on the role of traditional ways in the HRM:

> Sara: I think they bring Aboriginal people together from all different communities. So I feel like a lot of these urban-Aboriginal community gatherings or programs allow people from reserves, or who have moved to the city to feel a sense of belonging.

In a separate interview, Rachel also made reference to this relationship between traditional ways and creating a sense of belonging in Halifax: "I think that it really does affect a sense of belonging. It really does give you a sense of community when you take part in a pow-wow, or take part in a sweat...and develop this sense of community." As we can see, participants spoke of the relationship between traditional ways and "belonging" in a way which was similar – but not identical – to "owning as belonging."

Interviewees did report feeling that they could attain a sense of belonging in the HRM by engaging with their traditional ways. However, several interviewees also expanded on this idea of "owning as belonging." Rebecca, who has previously worked with Dr. Noble, spoke to this in her interview:

> Rebecca: I had it switched. That you can belong to something, but you really have to own it. So, I belong to the Mi'kmaq nation, and I am placed in these belongings with or without my consent. But I can have the opportunity to really own my culture. See I spin it, I flip it. I belong to the Mi'kmaq...But I can really own it if I want.

In this sense, Indigenous peoples living in Halifax (and elsewhere) belong "always already" to their nation and people. Yet by really "really owning" one's culture and traditional ways, urban-Indigenous people can create an even deeper sense of belonging while living in a city. Rebecca was not alone on this matter, as Gary stated in a separate interview:

> Gary: So 16, 17 [years] is when I really started to take ownership over being First Nations, of being Mi'kmaq, and I really identified with it...I learned about the medicine wheel, and I learned about where I come from. You have to accumulate knowledge and experience until you get the point where you can make the decision to own it.

Once again, we can see that Gary recognizes "where he comes from" as Mi'kmaq First Nations. And yet, it is after learning and accumulating knowledge he "takes ownership" over his identity. For good measure, I will refer to Rita's thoughts on this matter: "As a youth growing up a 3rd generation urban-Aboriginal I was having...identity issues. Because I knew what I was, and I felt it, but I had to go be with my community, find my community."

The incredible insights of those I spoke with allow us to see how my theoretical framework changes in the context of the HRM, which is urban and part of Mi'kma'ki. If I have been able to contribute anything to the literature and theory referred to in this thesis, it is that "owning as belonging" can work as a "feedback." That is to say, urban-Indigenous people in Halifax can find a sense of belonging through traditional ways, and *also* belong "always already" to their nation and people. These two dynamics act on each other, reinforcing and strengthening the very identities which Indigenous peoples are born into.

What about the Land?

It is worth noting that "owning as belonging", as discussed by Noble, places emphasis on having a reciprocal relationship with the land on which a people reside. This is an area in which my urban-based research is bound to depart from the literature. However, interviewees self-identifying as Mi'kmaq were quick to remind me that Halifax is still part of Mi'kma'ki. So while the urban setting of the HRM may not enable traditional practices such as hunting or fishing, Mi'kmaq residents of Halifax are still firmly planted on their traditional territory. Gary spoke to this as he said:

> Gary: So when we say things like "Msit No'kmaq", all my relations...My Dad reiterates this all the time. He says: "Your blood has been on this land for thousands, and thousands, and thousands of years. Your ancestors are in the ground, they're in the trees, they're in the air, they're in the animals."

In a separate interview, Rebecca reiterates this sense of belonging in Halifax as part of Mi'kma'ki: "It helps to be Mi'kmaq in Mi'kma'ki...You know, I'm Mi'kmaq, I'm surviving. We're the Wabanaki, 'people of the dawn' and we're still here."

This brings us back to the "peoplehood matrix", as was discussed in the literature review. This concept – introduced by Holmes, Pearson, and Chavis – is made up of four interrelated "pillars" which constitute Indigenous forms of peoplehood, or existing as a people (Stratton & Washburn, p. 51). These pillars are: language, sacred history, place or territory, and ceremonial cycle (Stratton & Washburn, p. 51). For the Mi'kmaq, and particularly those living in Halifax, much has changed over time. Several of these "pillars" have been significantly affected by over 500 years of colonial disruption, and more recent urbanization. And yet, I will refer once again to what Rebecca Thomas says about "space-territory" in her MA thesis: "Physical territory is immovable. The land can be appropriated, sold, mined and forested for resources, but it will still be a part of traditional Mi'kmaq territory with an unbroken history of occupation by the people" (Thomas, p. 101).

For Mi'kmaq residents of the HRM, it appears that an unbroken occupation of the land known as Mi'kma'ki has an important effect on feeling a sense of belonging in the city of Halifax. This is reflected in what one interviewee, Bill, said about living in the HRM: "This is where I come from. This is Mi'kma'ki." Admittedly, this area of analysis is not complete. More research would be required to have a better sense of how other First Peoples relate to land in a city which is *not* part of their traditional territory. As a starting point, I would suggest that other traditional ways may take on a greater importance to "fill the gap."

Effects of Indigenous Traditional Ways in Promoting Belonging

At this point, I would like to give some concrete examples of just how traditional ways can promote belonging for Indigenous people living in the HRM. On one level, participants spoke to how gatherings, ceremonies, and organizations like the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Center and Dalhousie Native Education Counselling Unit all help urban-Indigenous people to find a sense of community in Halifax. Tia gave this example in referring to the role of traditional ways while living in Halifax: "Like new friends I've met here at the center, and then people that I've known through associations with other communities. I guess it really does affect my relationships and friendships." In transcribing the recording of this interview, I could hear Tia adjusting the beads on her Aboriginal handicraft bracelet she had recently made at the Native Education Counselling Unit. This was a subtle reminder of how organizations like these organization help urban-Indigenous people quite literally *wear* their cultural identity with pride.

On another level, interviewees spoke to the importance of culturally appropriate services for urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax. At the Micmac Native Friendship Center, services related to housing, employment, or youth work are all made to be relevant to the lived realities of urban-Indigenous peoples. As a result, traditional ways become part and parcel of these same services. Gary spoke to this with regards to the "Kitput Youth Program", based out of the Friendship Center:

> Since we've really started to advocate these principles and these ideas about Aboriginal culture – well, we had our [federal] funding cut last summer. And four of our youth, they started the "We Need Kitpu" campaign. Then we had the day of action...And they all spoke more profoundly, and self-aware than I've ever heard people speak. And I feel that that's in direct relation to their emotional intelligence that they've developed here.

This is but one example of the importance of culturally appropriate services for urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax. These services appear to be more effective, and help urban-Indigenous people find place or belonging in the urban environment of the HRM.

On an even deeper level, certain participants described how connecting with traditional ways in the city of Halifax enabled some urban-Indigenous people to make significant life changes. The most profound examples of this – as referred to by interviewees – related to: drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and even preventing self-harm. For the sake of context, these are social issues, and can *not* be explained by negative stereotypes. Colonization and various forms of continuing marginalization have created large gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on scales such as the Human Development Index (HDI); which measures health rates, life expectancy, and living standards (Statistics Canada, 2013). Matthew (an interviewee) gave a hard-hitting example of just how important one specific tradition-based service provided by the Friendship Center can be:

> Matthew: Ok, so there are 4 people I know of who came to me and they said if we weren't here, they'd be dead now. They would have committed suicide. There's one person who came to us and said, "You were my last call." When they called me – and I remember that call – They asked to come in and I said "Ya, come on down!" Anyway, they said, "I already broke the rope once" [before calling]. Told me this months later.

This is an extreme but compelling example of why Indigenous traditional ways in cities such as Halifax should not be dismissed as "just culture." For several urban-Indigenous interviewees, traditional ways seem to permeate many areas of their lives, creating a sense of belonging, and so much more.

Visibility

The topic of "visibility" is another key theme which stood out as important in my fieldwork. By visibility, I mean the degree to which Indigenous peoples living in the HRM feel accepted or respectfully recognized in the city of Halifax. Based on the responses of interviewees, urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM do *not* feel visible in any positive sense of this term. The reasons for this will be discussed through what I am referring to as: "external visibility" – relating to public awareness, and local municipal actors – as well as "internal visibility" – relating to pride, and the inter-generational effects of the Indian Residential Schooling System.

External Visibility

With regards to "external visibility", a lack of public awareness was often referred to as a challenge facing Indigenous residents of Halifax. In the group interview, Dianna described some of these challenges:

> Dianna: A lot of times they just assume. Get to know us, ask us questions; we'll tell you. We're proud people. And we'll share anything, and we just want people to, not put us on a pedestal, but accept us for who we are: As First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

In fact, more than one interviewee could refer to an instance where they encountered someone who either claimed to have not met an Indigenous person, or were unaware there were Indigenous people living in Halifax.

This lack of public awareness was also discussed in connection to cultural sensitivity. Rebecca referred to this in relation to the concept of "Indian time", which was discussed as more than just a humorous expression:

> Rebecca: People joke, they say: "Ah, I'm late, I'm running on Indian time." But the essence of it is that it's a constant reordering of priorities...So there is that clashing of the worlds. Of the 9-5, regimented, Monday to Friday world that does not like to stray from that very comfortable rubric; and the fluidity of a lot of Aboriginal cultures, and the reorganization of priorities.

Examples of this "reordering of priorities" amongst Indigenous people included: helping out an elder, assisting a family member, or attending a funeral in one's home community outside of the HRM. I was reminded of this "reordering of priorities" the next time I visited the Micmac Native Friendship Center. Looking up above the front desk, I noticed a clock which had *no hands*; the sign below it read "Indian Time." In spite of having a laugh at this, I also recognized that it represented much more for urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM.

Gatherings such as a Pow-wow or a Maowi'omi were listed as examples of ways in which community gatherings can also serve to create greater public awareness of urban-Indigenous peoples living in the HRM. Sara spoke to this in relation to the annual Maowi'omi on campus at Dalhousie University:

> Sara: Not only able to have the Aboriginal students on campus hear the drum, come towards the drum and have that sense of unity and community. But we're also able to showcase to other people who may not have seen a Maowi'omi before, or people drumming, or dancers dancing.

These gatherings certainly do seem to promote a greater sense of visibility for urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM. While attending this year's Maowi'omi at Dalhousie, I remember a First Nations (Mi'kmaq) friend of mine looking up at the Mi'kmaq flag flying on the flagpole of the university's quad, and saying: "That's great. We'll just need an even bigger flag next year!"

Interviewees also pointed to a need for the HRM, and its municipal council to take a more proactive role in recognizing and embracing urban-Indigenous residents. Dianna spoke directly to this issue:

> Dianna: We're not asking to be anything bigger or better than anyone else. All we want is to be accepted for who we are, and what our roots are, and what we can offer to help the HRM community grow and prosper. Cause we have a lot to offer.

It is worth noting that Dianna stresses the mutual benefit of both the HRM, and urban-Indigenous people. One of Halifax's more notorious examples of ignorance was referred to by Rebecca: "Halifax isn't doing the best job in welcoming. I mean there's still Cornwallis Square downtown. That's a huge insult to the Mi'kmaq people, huge insult." For Indigenous and (increasingly) non-

Indigenous peoples alike, this is an outdated reminder of Halifax's violent colonial past. From the HRM city council down, future projects would do well to take into consideration the perspectives of urban-Indigenous people.

Internal Visibility

The topic of "internal visibility" refers to the way in which interviewees talked about pride. Many of those I spoke with would discuss Indigenous traditional ways as a means of creating pride and belonging as an urban-Indigenous person in Halifax. And yet, I realized there were also challenges to creating this sense of pride. This can be seen in what one interviewee said about encountering a man from Six Nations at a national Aboriginal conference:

> He looked at me and he said, "You're from the east coast." Right off the bat, as soon as he looked in my eyes. And I was kind of shocked, like he was reading my mind, I was like, "How do you know?" And he said: "Cause you have shot pride"...I thought that's crazy cause it's true in the sense that the spiritual people on the east coast that I've met, when they talk about energy, or when they talk about the spirits, they're kind of under their breath [*says while whispering*].

I had previously mentioned how 500 years of colonial disruption would play a part in such dynamics. And yet, this comment also forced me to face an incredibly difficult topic: the Indian Residential Schooling System. On this matter, I will be referring to those I spoke with only as "interviewees", and not by their pseudonyms.

On the topic of traditional ways, one interviewee said to me: "Hopefully you'll talk about residential schooling, which has set the climate...that really affected me and my relationship with my culture." With this, I realized that the residential schooling system could not be avoided as a topic. The fallout from this unimaginably horrible act of assimilation has had inter-generational effects on how Indigenous peoples relate with their traditional ways. Another interviewee spoke of their experiences with this:

> I looked in the mirror and there was an Indian looking at me, and I look Indian. But I didn't know what that was because of the residential schools. All it did was give me shame, there was no self-esteem. I was never proud; I never felt good being an Indian.

The tragic importance of this topic is significant in relation to engaging with one's Indigenous traditional ways. One interviewee had this to say about someone they knew:

> The fact that he was a first speaker; he didn't speak English when he went to the Residential School. Now he doesn't speak Mi'kmaq. You can't deny that. And because of that, he didn't go back. Because of that I wasn't raised in a reserve community, because of that I don't speak my language. So you can't – you *have* to talk about it.

Hope in the City

Even in light of this difficult topic, interviewees spoke of traditional ways in terms of reclaiming their identity. On this topic, one interviewee said: "It has made such a difference in people's lives. It's starting to bring back the pride, the culture." The difference made by traditional ways in creating pride was also discussed in direct relation to living in Halifax: "In the urban centers there is a fierce pride...I'm Mi'kmaq myself, but I know Maliseet people here, and I know Mohawk people here, and I know Cree, and Ojbwe that are here, and they're all so fiercely proud." Furthermore, a report from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation refers to traditional ways in the following manner: "Manifestations of one's culture (traditions, ceremonies and language) are often important sources of pride and self-esteem, serving to support individuals in their struggles against adversity" (Stout & Kippling, p. 23). Bringing back a sense of pride through traditional ways is nothing short of an act of resilience, and an affirmation of one's right to belong on this land; urban or elsewhere.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have set out to gain a better understanding of Indigenous traditional ways in the city of Halifax. In doing this, I have spoken with 17 self-identifying Indigenous people living in the HRM. This was done by conducting 7 one-on-one interviews, and 1 group interview with 10 participants. As a non-Indigenous researcher, qualitative interviews have allowed me to place a primacy on the experiences and perspectives of those I've spoken with. The amazingly

insightful input from *everyone* I spoke with helped me do this. All I had to do was listen, or "ksituaqn" (hear good things), as Joe would say.

I have asked two main questions in this research: 1) How are Indigenous traditional ways lived and carried out in the urban center of the Halifax Regional Municipality? 2) How do these forms of engagement with Indigenous traditional ways affect the lives of urban-Indigenous residents of the HRM, specifically with regards to finding a sense of "belonging" in the city of Halifax? I have presented my findings in order of their relevance to these questions.

Very generally, participants spoke to how Indigenous traditional ways took on a greater importance in the urban context. Also, many of the specific traditional ways (sweat lodges, Pow-wows, smudging, the medicine wheel) which participants spoke of could be described as either "pan-Aboriginal", or as involving "cultural borrowing" from one Indigenous people or nation to another. These two terms were discussed in relation to the concept of "pan-Indianism", as described in the literature review. However, participants where quite aware of this, citing two primary reasons for "pan-Aboriginalism" and "cultural borrowing" in Halifax: the diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures in the HRM, and the lengthy period of colonial disruption amongst Indigenous peoples of Wabanaki (east coast).

In response to "pan-Aboriginalism" and "cultural borrowing" in the HRM, several Mi'kmaq participants spoke to the importance of identifying traditional ways which were distinct to their nation and people. Participants often spoke of Indigenous languages as both an example of, and as a means of accessing culturally distinct traditional ways. However, at *no* point was the need for greater cultural distinctiveness expressed at the cost of unity amongst urban-Indigenous peoples living in the HRM.

Interviewees also felt that traditional ways did promote a sense of belonging amongst Indigenous people living in Halifax. This is similar to the concept of "owning as belonging",

where by actively engaging with aspects of one's cultural property, a person takes "ownership" of it, thus creating "belonging" (Noble, p. 467). While participants did identify with a sense of "owning as belonging", they also spoke of traditional ways in a manner which expanded on this concept. Based on my findings, owning as belong can work as a "feedback." This means urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax can find a sense of belonging through traditional ways, and *also* belong "always already" to their nation and people.

Interviewees also referred to the concrete effects of engaging with Indigenous traditional ways in Halifax. On one level, traditional ways are an important means of finding community, and building relationships. On another level, traditional ways were cited as key to delivering culturally appropriate services for urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax. Also, some interviewees felt that connecting with traditional ways in the HRM enabled certain Indigenous people to make significant life changes related to their health and well-being. Participants were near unanimous in saying that they did not feel visible as Indigenous people living in the HRM. This was discussed in terms of "external visibility" and "internal visibility", as well as the importance of traditional ways in promoting greater visibility for Indigenous peoples living in the HRM.

Limitations and Future Research

The most significant limits of this research did not stem from my identity as a non-Indigenous person, but were instead related to time limitations. The 8 month time-frame of a university academic year, coupled with a new and cumbersome ethics approval process meant that I had less than four months to complete this project. Also, it must be said that I spoke with only 17 self-identifying Indigenous people living in the HRM. While this not detrimental to qualitative research, there are still thousands of other Indigenous people living in the HRM whose concerns and perspectives matter. We still have so much to learn from each other.

Future research could pursue a more detailed analysis of cultural borrowing and inter-tribal negotiations in practices such as sweat lodges, Pow-wows, and other cultural practices. In this short thesis, I was only able to "scratch the surface" of these topics. Future research could also analyze public policy and funding of urban-Indigenous programs, in light of their increasing importance. Increasing urbanization requires that a greater focus to be placed on urban-Indigenous communities with regards to policy, funding, and services.

In concluding this thesis, I am reminded of a moment during one interview, where a young toddler was exploring her mother's office at an urban-Indigenous organization in Halifax. As I saw this, I was reminded of all the hopes and challenges and work which lie ahead for urban-Indigenous peoples – Canada's youngest and fastest growing demographic. For the mutual benefit of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, we must work together to create the conditions in which urban-Indigenous residents of Halifax can be who they are, and all they can be. I would like to end this thesis with a few words from Matthew which relate to Indigenous traditional ways, the city of Halifax, and belonging:

> Matthew: I feel like if you know who you are, and you feel good about who you are – that to me is the biggest difference. This is Turtle Island, no matter where I'm living. This is where I belong.

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APPENDICES

Recruitment Script

To be delivered over the telephone, email, or in person with potential participants

Hi, my name is Shawn Martin, a student at Dalhousie University. As part of my program, I am completing a project on "traditional Indigenous ways, and their possible effect on urban-Indigenous Peoples of Halifax." I am looking to see how traditional Indigenous ways relate to living in a city. Would you be interested in talking about this topic with me? Participation is voluntary, or "up to you." I would be looking to meet at some point and discuss this topic in an informal "conversation-type" interview. You would be more than able to withdraw you participation at any point. I hope this project helps to better understand the concerns and perspectives of Indigenous people living in Halifax. Is this something that may interest you?

If a telephone message or email: I can be contacted at (902) 209-0594, or by email at shawnjmar@gmail.com. Feel free to contact me anytime. Have a great day!

Interview Guide

1) Where is your home community? Where do you live today?

2) How would you describe Indigenous ways, traditions, cultural practices or beliefs? (practices, ceremony: sweats, smudging, pow wow, drumming, song, stories, prayer)

- o Do you engage with this in your own life, examples?
- o What do these things in your life mean, do?

3) What do traditional Indigenous ways, practices, traditions mean to you as an urban-Indigenous person in Halifax?

- o Does its importance change living in a city?

4) What kind of an effect do you think traditional Indigenous ways have on the lives of urban-Indigenous peoples in Halifax? Is there a negotiation?

- o What about those living in cities who are less engaged with (this) their Indigenous traditions, practices and beliefs?

5) How would you describe "cultural property", or things belonging to your culture? That would be things you see as part of your own culture.

- o What role do these things play for urban-Indigenous Peoples in Halifax? (use if little info on question 3)

6) Do you think traditional Indigenous ways affect "belonging" or finding a place for First Peoples living in Halifax? If so, how does that play out in their lives?

- o How does that change in a city, with a different relationship to the land

7) Do traditional Indigenous ways affect the building of relations and relationality amongst urban-Indigenous Peoples living in Halifax? Why, why not?

8) How might these issues/topics in Halifax compare to other Canadian cities?

9) Is there anything else you would like you add?

NÉTUKLIMK

NET TOOK LIMBK

Note: This sheet was handed to me after mispronouncing the word "Netuklimk" several times. The interviewee was polite but clear in their correction. I have also learned from making mistakes.

Shawn M./ Shawn

Consent Form

Traditional Indigenous Ways and the Urban Environment of Halifax

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project being conducted by myself (Shawn Martin), a student at Dalhousie University, as part of my Honours degree in Anthropology. Helping out with this research is entirely up to you, and you can leave at any time. There will be no impact on your personal, private, or professional life if you decide not to participate in the project. The information below mentions what you may be asked, and how it has been ensured that there will be minimal risk related to your participation in this project. This means that you will not be asked to do or to talk about anything outside of your day-to-day life. Any questions can be referred to Shawn Martin (myself). My supervisor on this project is Dr. Liesl Gambold, a professor with the Dalhousie Faculty of Arts and Social Science. Contact information for both of us will be provided below.

Topic

In my research, I am looking to learn about traditional Indigenous ways and their effect on urban-Indigenous Peoples. Basically, I want to see how Indigenous/Aboriginal/First Nations/Native traditions and culture are practiced (or not) in the city of Halifax. I hope to explore whether or not traditional Indigenous ways have an effect on urban-Aboriginal people in Halifax. I recognize that this research is important, since over 50% of Indigenous Peoples in Canada now live in cities. I hope that you feel willing to participate in this project, which I will go about with all of my respect, and kindness. Any Indigenous person living in Halifax is eligible to participate in this study. It will be entirely to participants to self-identify as Indigenous in whichever way they would like. It is not of any concern to me to "verify" a person's self-identification. The only condition to be placed on participants is that they are above the age of 18. This is to ensure that minors are not put at any risk whatsoever.

Interview Process

To help me understand traditional Indigenous ways and their potential effect on urban Indigenous peoples of Halifax, I will ask you to participate in a one-on-one interview. In this interview, you will be asked very open questions about Indigenous traditions and culture in the urban environment of Halifax. I will ask a bit about traditional Indigenous ways as they are practiced in Halifax, and your degree of engagement in this. Interviews will take place at a location of your choosing. Interviews will take place at the Micmac Native Friendship Center, but accommodations can be made to meet at an office or workplace. Interviews can be expected to take 30-45 minutes, and can go longer if you may wish to continue. Please feel free to answer questions on your own terms, and in your own way. I will be using quotations from the interviews in my thesis. Pseudonyms (fake names) will be used in the thesis for quotes, unless you specifically request on the signature page below (or by verbal consent if applicable) to include your name. I plan on conducting anywhere from 10-15 interviews in total.

Participation and Withdrawal

While this is only undergraduate-level research, there are some ways in which it could benefit interviewees, and the broader community. To better understand the perspectives, needs, and concerns of urban-Indigenous Peoples is of the upmost importance. This is a young and growing group of Halifax residents who have a great deal of potential. A copy of my thesis will available at the Micmac Native Friendship center in order to add to our understanding of the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in Halifax. You can stop you participation at any time, and your name and information provided will be kept confidential. If you would like to withdraw your participation, any notes or data taken will be destroyed or erased. Should you feel uncomfortable discussing any practice, ceremony or aspect of your culture, you are free to not talk about anything you consider too sensitive. However, this is highly unlikely, as we will be

discussing things no different from your day-today life and spirituality. It is extremely important to me that you are comfortable during an interview, and that you share only what you feel free to share in our discussion. There will be no compensation in money, food or any other form for participants.

Confidentiality

It is very important to me that the information you provide is kept private. Only myself (Shawn Martin), and my research supervisor (L. Gambold) will be have access to this information. We will share out findings (without names), in presentations to one group, the Dalhousie department of social sciences. You will not be identified by name or title in any way in my thesis, unless specifically requested and noted on consent forms. Confidentiality will be insured by keeping all information on a password protected computer, which only I have access to. Anonymity of participants will be achieved by using pseudonyms (fake names) to identify people in the report. I will also make sure in the thesis does not to refer to any interviewees by their job title or place of work. The only situation in which full names will be included will be if a participant specifically requests that their name be in the report. At all times during the interview, you are free to stop participating, and the information will not be used. If that is the case, then any notes or data will be deleted or shredded. If at any point after your interview you would wish to withdraw your information provided, you are also free to do so up until March 1st.

Contact Information

I (Shawn Martin) would be more than happy to speak with you about any questions or concerns you may have before or after the report's completion. I can be contacted by phone at (902) 209-0594, or by email at shawnjmar@gmail.com. My Dalhousie University research supervisor (Liesl Gambold) can be contacted by phone at (902) 494-3689, or by email at liesl.gambold@dal.ca. I will be sure to contact you if any new information comes up that may

affect your decision to participate. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this project, you may also contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or by email at ethics@dal.ca.

Respectfully yours,

Shawn J. Martin

Signature Page: Traditional Indigenous Ways in the Urban Environment of Halifax

Researcher:	Research Supervisor:
Shawn J. Martin	Dr. Liesl Gambold
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology	Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
Dalhousie University	Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3L 4P9	Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4P9
1 (902) 209-0594	00 + 1 (902) 494-3689
shawnjmar@gmail.com	liesl.gambold@dal.ca

I have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study. However I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

- I hereby give my written consent to participate in this study: (please check one)
  Yes ___

  No ___

- I hereby give my written consent to tape-record my interview: (please check one)
  Yes ___

  No ___

- I would like to have my name included in the thesis and in relevant quotations: (please check one: if left empty a synonym [fake name] will be used)
  Yes___

  No___

_____
Signature of Participant   Printed Name   Date

_____
Signature of Researcher   Printed Name   Date

Verbal Consent Confirmation

AFTER HAVING READ CONSENT FORM ABOVE

Do you understand all of this to your satisfaction?

Do you agree that this interview can be tape-recorded?

Would you like to request that your name be included? (if not a pseudonym [fake name] will

be used)

Do you agree to give verbal consent to participate in this project?

Note date and time:

Community Letter of Approval from "Micmac Native Friendship Center" Executive Director, Pam Glode-Desrochers

To whom it may concern,

I would like to confirm my awareness and approval of Shawn Martin's undergraduate research which will be taking place at the "Micmac Native Friendship Center" in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I understand that the topic of his honours thesis in social anthropology is "Traditional Indigenous Ways in the Urban Environment of Halifax." The research will explore Indigenous traditional ways and practices in the city of Halifax, and the effect they may have on urban-Indigenous residents of the city. As part of this research, interviews will be conducted at the "Micmac Native Friendship Center." Interviewees will be recruited by referral from me, and Mr. Martin has permission to contact personally those referred to him.

I understand that participation in this research and its interviews is entirely voluntary, and that participants can withdraw at any time. If interviewees do wish to withdraw their information, their confidentiality will be protected, and any data or notes taken with reference to them will be deleted and not used in the thesis. Participants' anonymity will be protected in the research by using pseudonyms, unless the opposite is specifically requested.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm my approval for this research.

Pam Glode-Desrochers

Executive Director, Micmac Native Friendship Center