



Original Article

## ANISHINAABE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY THAT ASSISTED IN THE ACT OF RESISTANCE BY RESURGING ANISHINAABE MOTHERHOOD TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS AND PEDAGOGIES

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### ABSTRACT

The Anishinaabe is one of various indigenous people of Canada. This article explored the Anishinaabe women's Traditional Teachings and pedagogies in a contemporary way as an act of resistance. The focus of this article is the Anishinaabe Research Methodology as an intellectual framework that is oriented on relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and the reclamation of our knowledges in their communities. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is integral to the Anishinaabe principles of living known as the Seven Grandparent Teachings. We used a research technique known as Nbwaachiwi (the art of visiting). We used the 'Aunties kitchen table' style of knowledge collection, which is open-ended and one-on-one - just like you'd be at your auntie's kitchen table, sharing stories and drinking tea. The information presented in this paper can help mothers who want to learn Traditional Teachings and pedagogies in order to resist intergenerational trauma and colonization. With the Inheritance of Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies, mothers are determined to raise their infants using Anishinaabe traditional methods, will have cultural identities and lives than their previous generation.

**Keywords:** *Canadian Indigenous people, Anishinaabe Motherhood, Anishinaabe Research Methodologies, Indigenous Motherhood, Traditional Teachings, Pedagogies, Community Based Research*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Borrows (2010) states that “there is more than one Anishinabek intellectual method” (p ix). I used an Anishinaabe<sup>1</sup> Research Methodology, grounded in Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Knowing. As I understand, the Anishinaabe Research Methodology is an intellectual framework that encompasses our understanding of natural laws, spirituality, and reciprocity. The natural laws are tied in with the spiritual principle that everything on Earth is imbued with spirit. The spiritual principle of

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<sup>1</sup> The Anishinaabe Peoples are comprised of various Nations with similar languages called the Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatomi, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa. These nations historically inhabited the lands around the Great Lakes Region that is borders into Canada and the United States.

the Anishinaabek ties in the four orders of Creation - physical world, plant world, animal world, and human world - with the metaphysical world (Johnston, 1976). The Anishinaabek had to make sense of the natural order and create our own methods to ensure our survival. As Anishinaabek, we honour all life and we give back to our community so that our children and future generations benefit

The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is specific to my Nation and the way we view life, and is focused on listening, observing, and having informative visits. I did not want to engage with pan-Indigenous methodologies, but instead empowered and amplified our Ways of Knowing. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology allowed to focus on strength-based research. I engage this research as an insider-outsider (in-between) researcher: I am an insider because I am an Anishinaabe gaashi (mother), a daughter, an auntie and academic mother. I am an outsider because I am an reside outside of my Anishinaabe community but within an urban Indigenous community. This has created this unique bridge as an in-between because I use my western education and traditional knowledge to build a passage when navigate the two realities.

## **II. WHAT IS THE ACT OF RESISTANCE IN RELATION TO MOTHERHOOD?**

In the past, our Traditional Way of Life, including sacred traditions and customs, were hidden or practiced in secret because policies were enforced to eradicate Anishinaabe ceremonies and languages. Anderson (2006) explains that, “the church and state have dismantled the philosophies, practices, and systems that upheld our status as women, a dismantling that has been fed by a simultaneous process: the construction of a negative Native female identity” (p. 98). By targeting the women, you target the culture and transmission of knowledge. There was a time when Anishinaabe women were held in the highest regard because of their ability to bring life into this world and for their connection to the spiritual realm. Women are considered matriarchs in many Nations, unafraid to stand up against violence of any form to lead their families towards Mino-Bimaadiziwin (living a good life). These women hold a great responsibility to their families and future generations, as predicted by the beliefs of their Elders. Anderson (2000) states that, “the guidance that women receive from their mothers, aunts, grandmothers shapes the way they learn to understand themselves and their positions in the world. These teachings, these ways of working together as families build resistance” (p. 123).

Colonization and ongoing assimilative tactics have forced the dismantling of traditional Anishinaabe family structures. Many families succumbed to the pressures of following a patriarchal way of life, while some clung onto their roles as educators of the language, culture, and Traditional Teachings. That, however, continues to be an act of resistance. When Anishinaabe mothers attend ceremonies, that is an act of resistance. When Anishinaabe mothers have babies to strengthen their Nations, that is an act of resistance. When those children begin speaking the language, that is an act of resistance. When mothers are out in the fields picking sweetgrass with their children, that is an act of resistance.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Anishinaabe women are engaging in their language, culture, and Traditional Way of Life, which is, in itself, the ultimate act of resistance as they continue to have binoojiinhsag (infants) and pass these knowledges down to them. The Anishinaabek that are currently living and breathing are the very act of resistance, including their simplest acts of just sitting with their families, visiting their families, and joining in the laughter (Simpson, 2017). When these children are nurtured by Anishinaabe matriarchs, the teachings will be carried through their blood onto the next generation, where their children will also have a strong identity of who they are as Anishinaabek, and so forth. They are embodying the language, ceremonies, and continuing the Ancestral Knowledges. We are

collectively saying that genocide did not work on our Ancestors, and it will not work on us as long we keep on breathing life to continue our Anishinaabe lineage.

### III. ANISHINAABE MATERNAL PEDAGOGIES

Maternal pedagogies, in broad terms, are the primary caregiver's knowledge of teaching and learning that is passed down to their children through "beliefs, values, methods, principles, and practices" (Abbey, 2010). Our communities help build our families who are integral to sustaining our Nationhood, increasing our survival rate against predators or enemies, and assisting with the duties around the community. Our communities have passed on stories of survival, origin narratives, and multilayered teachings. For example, one of our core teachings is based on listening to our mothers speak as they tend to their daily activities. Child (2012) explains that "women continuously worked and otherwise interacted with relatives, and the roles of daughter, sister, mother, and aunt were important mantles of responsibilities" (p. 15). When women become pregnant, they have a natural maternal instinct to teach their children about survival and to pass on their lineage. The Anishinaabe maternal pedagogy is grounded in teaching children through experience, and children exercising their freedom within safe boundaries to explore the world around them. Ultimately the teaching and learning methods are undertaken collectively, between parents and child, child and the community, and are grounded in spirituality (Anderson, 2007; Brant, 2014). Understanding your role in passing on cultural knowledge, engaging with spirituality, respecting Creation, and raising a Nation is sacred work within an Anishinaabe maternal pedagogy. This sacred duty is based on the belief in feminine energies within the cosmos, where we are linked to the creation of the Earth, moon, and water (Anderson, 2007). Our daily activities are governed by the Earth's teachings and elements (Cajete, 2000).

There are exceptions where family members or close friends who may not have their own children will "adopt" a child by choice and treat them as their own and share in the responsibilities of mothering (Bédard, 2006). These women all assist in nurturing and shaping the identity of children. Indigenous women are given the responsibility to teach children, raise a strong Nation, and understand the relationships in both the animate and inanimate world. It is important to cherish your role as a woman and provide support to other Indigenous women (Bédard, 2006).

There has been and will continue to be a steady influx of settlers into indigenous communities to conduct research on their ways of life. According to Wendy Genuisz (2009) "the colonization process both destroyed and preserved indigenous knowledge" (p. 3). Nations were left to hope that the documentation of these knowledges would be resurrected at some point in the future. Therefore, Indigenous Peoples are looking for knowledge gaps and piecing together their collective historical past by bringing back their stories and ways of life, and by making sure their children embody resilience. Indigenous Peoples As a result of our efforts, we are having to fill in knowledge gaps, bringing back lost stories and traditions, and teaching resilience to the next generation.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

#### 1. Lens of Inquiry

This research is a qualitative study involving conversations with mothers and traditional Knowledge Holders. The research was conducted through an Anishinaabe Knowledge lens of inquiry and is

focused on the question: how we can adapt Ancestral teachings and Traditional Knowledges to fit within our contemporary society? For example, we pass on stories such as we come from the stars, and books have been produced to share this knowledge such as the recently published book *I sang you down from the stars* written by Tasha Spillet-Sumner (2021). It is important to know who we are as an Anishinaabek, and Anishinaabe knowledge is needed today for our continued strength in our culture. Anishinaabe Knowledge is the foundation of my thesis because it relates to the Ancestral maternal customs that we had prior to colonization. Some of those teachings include the importance of celebrating pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, and Nookimis (Grandmother) roles like we once had, because they are key to rebuilding a strong Anishinaabek Nation.

Specifically, I have also used the Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood as a lens of inquiry for my thesis. The Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood involve having the responsibility of raising your child away from harm. This also entails raising them with love and respect while guiding them to achieve their dreams. It is important that I follow the Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood while conducting research because it will allow me to avoid the pan-Indigenous model of how other Nations engage with child-rearing practices. I will focus on the realities of “traditional parenting values and practices” (Muir & Bohr, 2014:67). As well, most contemporary Anishinaabe cultures are heavily influenced by Canadian society and Christianity, which I wish to avoid as I want to reinvigorate Traditional Teachings. I want to assist in building a healthy Nation and start supplying Anishinaabe mothers with the tools to learn about their culture, language, and ceremonies.

Within the Anishinaabe Research Methodology, I will use the guiding principles called the Seven Grandparent Teachings, which are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. I approach my research with these principles because it is becoming a part of my bundle. The bundle I carry is the Traditional Knowledge to raise culturally grounded children, but also to build my own Anishinaabe intellectual perspective. The wisdom each of my Knowledge Contributors carries is so profound, and they carry each of their experiences with bravery. They spoke with honesty and humility, and they accepted their life’s journey with respect and love. Most importantly, they spoke their own truths on what it is to be an Anishinaabe Gaashi (mothers). From a researcher’s perspective, I honour each story shared, but more importantly, I treat each Knowledge Contributor’s motherhood journey with respect and love. I was very careful with sensitive information and wanted to ensure that each Knowledge Contributor had the opportunity to review our conversations once they were transcribed. I also wanted to amplify their voices because it can be a hard road to walk down as you attempt to incorporate Traditional Knowledge in contemporary times. I wanted to honour each Knowledge Contributor’s voice because it builds our collective stories and struggles of becoming mothers.

## **2. Anishinaabe Research Methodology**

There are many Indigenous research methodologies out there that are Nation specific. I have chosen one of many Anishinaabe Research Methodologies. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology I have used for this research is centered around relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and the reclamation of our knowledges in our communities. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is similar to Grounded Theory. It is important to note that with Grounded Theory, “theory is not discovered; rather, theory is constructed by the researcher who views the world through their own particular lens” (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019:3). Though both approaches work well, I privileged Anishinaabe knowledge sharing methods to make meaning from my lens over Grounded Theory because we collect, analyze, and share data in a different capacity that is not incongruent with how we share our knowledge (Wabie, 2017). The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is fundamental to harnessing the knowledge and

validating it within the Anishinaabe community so we can reclaim the principles of our Traditional Ways of Knowing within an academic discourse. It affirms that “Indigenous Peoples engage oral traditions, historical/Ancestral knowledges, and cultural resources to examine current events and Indigenous understandings in ways consistent with traditional worldviews and cosmologies” (Iseke, 2013). By focusing on relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and reclamation I am conducting research in accordance to the Seven Grandparent Teachings.

The conducting, gathering, and sharing of my research is to assist mothers and our future generations to Mino-Bimaadiziwin. Over the years, I had conversations with other Indigenous mothers who shared their birthing stories that were similar to my own. When reflecting on stories shared from families, friends, and colleagues, I began to wonder if we are embracing our Traditional Teachings, and, if not, why? If we are engaging with the teachings, what exactly were the mothers doing to raise culturally grounded children? Having an idea of what stories exist in our communities, I wanted to understand what teachings were utilized at the time of birth. This research is not meant to shame mothers; rather I want to understand the dualities of birthing stories and experiences to grasp what the reality is like for Anishinaabe mothers living in a contemporary colonized world.

The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is about creating relationships, reciprocity, and responsibility. Wilson (2001) discusses relational accountability: “your methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship?” (p. 177). The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is central to relationships and the reclamation of our knowledge in our communities. This includes the inanimate: the spiritual understanding that something bigger than us is happening, and that the Spirits will be watching over us. Linda Smith (1999) also reaffirms the importance of this methodology by stating: “it frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed, and shapes the analyses. Within an Indigenous framework, methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of Indigenous research” (p. 143).-The strength of my research utilizes the Anishinaabe framework. This area looks explicitly at Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies, and is unique as they have not been documented in written form. The purpose of privileging an Anishinabek position throughout this research aims to strengthen Anishinaabe Nationhood by offering it a voice and engaging with it in an anti-colonial framework. I have focused on mothers and their stories and experiences. I do not include many voices that also need to be amplified, such as mothers who have had abortions and miscarriages, and those that have adopted.

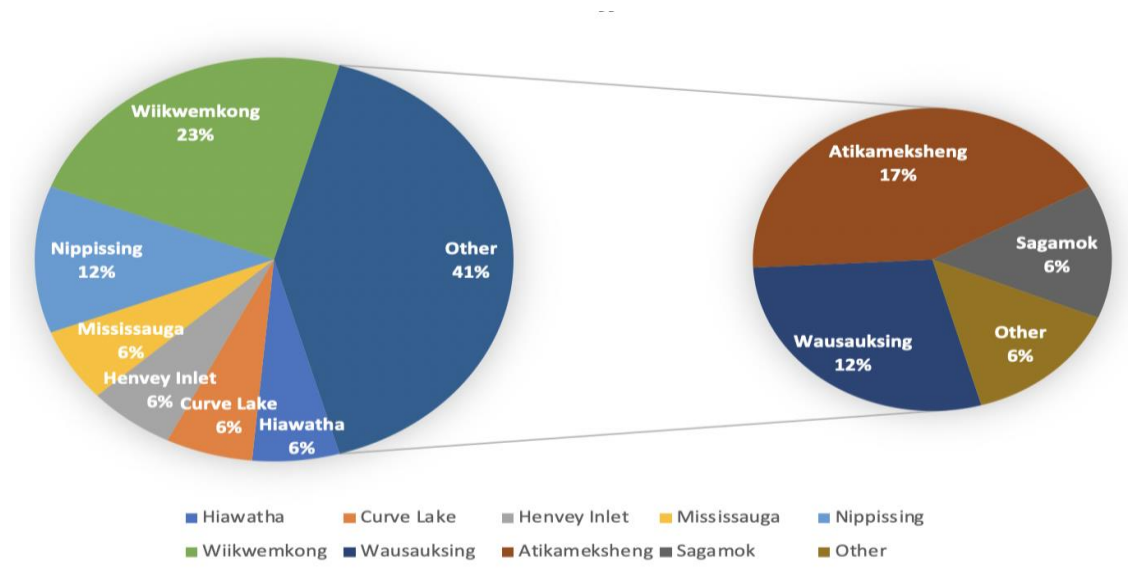
I wanted to ensure the research process is conducted in a good (ethical) way that can assist future mothers and future generations. It is paramount to center this research from an Anishinaabe point of view to facilitate an ongoing process of decolonization and resurge our Traditional Teachings as we work towards rediscovery and recovery. Since Grounded Theory is not linear, much like Anishinaabek Research Methodology, they were a complement to one another because they are flexible. The Grounded Theory was selected because I was able to Indigenize the process by utilizing Anishinaabek ways of knowing and created a hybrid of knowledge. By gathering data in a respectful way, I was able to use my lens as an Anishinaabe Kwe to ensure I was also adhering to the Seven Grandparent teachings. When engaging with community work, one needs to understand that our “research is ceremony,” as coined by Wilson (2008), and that it should be honoured. As an Indigenous researcher, it is essential to acknowledge our lived experiences, teachings, and ways of knowing, and that these conversations are a sacred time between two people. For example, as the Knowledge Contributor shares their knowledge with the researcher, it is like an individual approaching an Elder/Knowledge Holder. The researcher is asking their auntie to share their knowledge or their lived experience.

### 3. Knowledge Contributors

For this study, I acquired 15 people who shared their knowledge on motherhood. It was essential to me to have insight into the maternal teachings and pedagogies as they are transmitted within different stages of pregnancy. As a result, I had conversations with five Anishinaabe gaashiyag, some living in an urban area, and some within a rural setting. In addition, I had four conversations with pregnant Anishinaabe women because I thought it was important to capture their stories before the birth experience. Also, I was able to see if there was any resistance to utilizing cultural practices during their pregnancies. I visited with four nookimisag (grandmothers) who were regularly engaged in traditional practices. I also spoke with two Anishinaabe midwives who work with Indigenous women and were willing to share their teachings about labour and delivery, and who spoke about the importance of midwifery. Each of these women has contributed to critical pieces of the motherhood teachings and pedagogies.

I utilized the ‘snowball sampling’ method (Chilisa, 2012), which is a method of referral. I was also thinking about this as if my auntie does not know the answer, she would tell me to go and visit another person who may be knowledgeable on the subject. I began my conversations with respected Anishinaabe nookimisag who could search for Knowledge Contributors they thought would be informative. I emailed each referred people to first see if they were interested, and then I sent my letter of intent, consent form, and research questions. I followed up day or two later to see if they were still interested in sharing their knowledge in the study.

<Figure 1> First Nation Affiliations<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Note. The blue quadrant branches off to another pie chart that shows the Knowledge Contributors from Wausauksing and Atikameksheng, Mississauga and Six Nations, and Sagamok and Atikameksheng, Atikameksheng and Nipissing. There is a bit of travel between communities, so I took the locations where the Knowledge Contributors are currently calling both places home.

In Figure 1 - First Nation Affiliation (located on page 30), I have created a graph to demonstrate the complexity of locations as the Anishinaabek continue to move within their territories. First, I broke down each of the First Nations, and then the second graph shows the individuals who are from two communities. Despite the treaties, Anishinaabe still travel from one First Nation to the next.

This research did not require any band council resolutions. Each Knowledge Contributor had freedom to engage in the research. At the time of this research, almost all of the women resided within their home communities. I did not collaborate with any agencies. However I did contact two midwifery agencies to see if the Anishinaabe midwives were interested in becoming part of the research project. I received notification from one centre and no response from the other. I do want to note that I knew some of these Knowledge Contributors either directly or indirectly. I had many referrals, but only those individuals that were familiar with me are the ones who had participated. I did have Knowledge Contributors decline the visit because they thought I wanted 'traditional' mothers that engage in Anishinaabe practices daily.

#### **4. Knowledge Sharing Methods**

I went to trusted nookimisag (grandmothers) in urban communities who referred me to Anishinaabe gaashiyag (mothers). I invited all Knowledge Contributors for an online coffee meeting. I had an Auntie's Kitchen Table style for knowledge sharing method, where the conversation is open-ended and one-on-one, like you would at your auntie's kitchen table, sharing stories and having tea.

Within the Anishinaabe research framework, I informed Knowledge Contributors how I would gather, interpret, and share the knowledge. The research method I focused on, the Nbwaachiwi Method, involves collecting information on our lived experiences because "our lived experiences are records of these histories" (Abosolon, 2008:24). Shirley Williams (2020) explains that Nbwaachiwi is the art of visiting. Usually, when we see our families, we are visiting with intent. For example, when we visit, we are checking in on our loved one's health and well-being, to see if they are safe and secure, and sometimes visiting knowing that person holds specific knowledge. I wanted to connect with the Knowledge Contributors by visiting them first and learning who they are, before asking them what could be construed as personal questions.

I wanted to have kitchen table style, where we could have tea and fry bread with jam, or have tea with a traditional treat. I wanted to establish long-lasting relationships as per the Anishinaabe Research methodology outline, and to have relational accountability. I rejected narrative and storytelling methods because I wanted to have actual conversations. I wanted to hear their birthing story, the of the births of their children, and the teachings behind the birthing ceremonies, allowing the conversations to flow as naturally as possible. However, due to the pandemic, we had conversations over Zoom platform.

Before our conversations started, I reviewed the ethics form with the Knowledge Contributors one to two days before our visit. As I was filling in the documents, I had tobacco pouches sitting next to me with my intentions and traditional confidentiality method. The traditional confidentiality method is when we sit with our medicines and create a sacred space. Within that space, I respect the stories being shared with me. It allowed me to navigate between the ethics of the University research and the Anishinaabe research ethics. Throughout this knowledge sharing process, I was taking notes and not recording. I had guided conversations, and all Knowledge Contributors received the questions before the visits started.

I did follow-up visits to clarify any information. I wrote in a journal to reflect on the thoughts of our conversations. After the visits, I began to see themes emerging and started making meaning through themes. I paired my notes with the discussions and started drawing out themes. In some cases, I reached out to Knowledge Contributors, and they did not respond to me. Some explained that they were not traditional enough to participate in my study. It was more common that the Knowledge Contributors did not respond after multiple attempts. I did not pursue further than that out of respect that they may not want to engage in a research study.

## **5. Knowledge Sharing Practices**

Due to the pandemic, I could not engage in an Auntie's Kitchen Table style of gathering information. However, for most of the conversations, I used Zoom platform and I felt like I transcended time and space, and almost like I was in their home visiting them. I was still able to engage in intimate conversations.

Once the visits were completed, I asked Knowledge Contributors if they knew anyone interested in the study. A majority of my referrals were people within my own community. I opted to not recruit within my community, though it became a little challenging.

When it came to recruiting midwives, I contacted one of the referred midwives, and she agreed. I had another one that was referred but was unresponsive to emails and phone calls. I reached out to the midwife organization, and they were happy to contribute. I had two other midwives that had personal issues arise and could not engage at this time. In total, I had two midwives that shared their stories.

## **6. Knowledge Sharing Protocols**

I emailed the letter of intent, consent form, and research questions to the Knowledge Contributors. Once the Knowledge Contributors agreed to do the study, we scheduled a Zoom call or phone call at a time that worked for them. Some mothers had to wait until their children were asleep, which was typically after 8 pm. I often had to give a few dates and times as options, and sometimes had to reschedule the visits because of unexpected circumstances. All of the Knowledge Contributors opted to do a one-time visit that ranged from 20-70 minutes in length. During our conversations, any information that the Knowledge Contributors did not want to share, they requested that I stop recording the session. I complied and will not be sharing that information. The visits with the Knowledge Contributors lasted for four months.

I uploaded the recorded conversations to Yuja, a software that transcribes audio files. I had to edit some of the missed or inaudible speech, and any words/phrases in Anishnaabemowin. I focused on the stories and quotes I would be using for this study.

## **7. Gift Giving**

It is Anishinaabe protocol to provide tobacco to the Knowledge Contributors because they are assisting the researcher. Once we went over the consent form, I obtained verbal consent from the Knowledge Contributors. Typically, tobacco would be offered before signing the consent forms. Due to the pandemic, I was unable to do that. Instead, I pre-packaged tobacco in paper envelopes and had them with me during the conversations. After the visit, I placed each tobacco pouch into each Knowledge Contributors mailing envelope. I also put in a pair of Indigenous-made earrings, valued at \$30. It was vital for me to find an Indigenous artist that could make a unique set of earrings using the

mother of pearl and cowrie shells, two items that come from the water – which is essential to our development as babies. A couple of Knowledge Contributors got a different set of earrings because of the stories that they had shared with me, having to do with their Spirit and Spirit names. These earrings and tobacco were accompanied by a personalized thank you card to honour their stories. If the Knowledge Contributors decided to withdraw at any point of the research, they were entitled to keep their gift because I valued the time they took out of their schedule to converse with me. I funded this research study from my personal funds. Once the visits ended, I went to the post office to have the packages sent out. I sent follow-up messages to Knowledge Contributors to see if they had received their gifts. Some responded, and others did not. I wanted to ensure they received their gifts. Some Knowledge Contributors received additional gifts such as stories or teachings that I collected along the way.

The Elder on my committee, cautioned me that I should not be mailing tobacco because we should be giving it before our conversations started. I explained that with COVID restrictions, along with lockdowns, it would have been impossible for me to have any visits conducted for another few months to a year if that was the case, thus creating a bigger financial burden by staying enrolled in another year of university. I also explained that I still wanted to honour the Knowledge Contributors time, stories, and teachings; therefore, I sent the tobacco and a gift. I wanted to stay true and close to our tobacco protocols and gifting practices as per the Anishinaabe intellectual framework and Anishinaabe Research Methodology. In explaining my intentions, I had sat with my actions around the tobacco offering protocols. I was not doing it out of ill-intent or disrespect, but instead adjusting to the situation of the pandemic. I thought by altering the traditional tobacco offering to my Knowledge Contributors that I did honour our time together. She agreed.

I shared my stories in celebration with how far we have come as Anishinaabe kweok (women). As someone who is asking for intimate information, I do understand what I am asking of them. I have been trained in Indigenous relations and in Indigenous research practices. I use the research opportunity to strengthen Indigenous voices and experiences of women, mothers, children, and our Nations. I know that women are the backbone to our cultures and our lineages.

## **8. Community Dissemination**

We must give knowledge back to our communities. When I completed the visits, I sent the information back to the Knowledge Contributors so they knew what I was using in this study. The Knowledge Contributors were given the option to remove, edit, or approve their quotes. The consent process is part of Indigenous protocol, and the relationship is on-going throughout the completion of the research. Also, for Knowledge Holders, they were able to see how I interpreted their knowledge and shared their teachings. Typically, I would have a feast for my participants, but at the final stages of the study we were still in a pandemic. I am still working on ways to distribute research for mothers that wish to engage in traditional pedagogies.

## **9. Making Meaning**

In *Kaandossiwin: How we come to know* by Kathy Absolon (2011) is rephrasing the data analysis to ‘meaning making’ I look at the conversations I had with the mothers as “coming to know” as stated by Absolon (2011). However, I rephrased it to ‘making meaning’ which encompasses of making sense of the data, but it also provides the reader the opportunity to make meaning of the information and assist in strengthening communities.

When I was ‘meaning making’ of the conversations, I had no outside sources of assistance. I utilized the Zoom platform to record our sessions. I uploaded the transcripts to Yuja, a software that the University provides. There were errors as Yuja cannot translate our Anishinaabemowin language. There were also some instances where the conversation was not clear. I took these rough drafts and sent them to the Knowledge Contributors letting them know that they were auto-translated by computer software. Later, I sent the Knowledge Contributors the quotes that were used.

I went back frequently to listen to the stories that were shared by the Knowledge Contributors. I needed to sit with these stories at times because their individual stories were so powerful and related to different stages of motherhood. I took pen and paper to make notes on emerging themes. Each time I came back to listen to their stories, I would find another theme and make connections to the other women’s stories. I felt like it was becoming a spider web of knowledge, all interconnected. All the trauma that fractured our communities was sourced back to colonization.

I had a few Anishinaabe (women) who requested to be anonymous. In part of Anishinaabe research and the Seven Grandparent Teachings of Respect, Trust, and Humility, I let the Knowledge Contributors choose their own pseudonyms so that they could find their stories. I had created both a written and verbal confidentiality forms. The Knowledge Contributors were given it ahead of time to review and given the opportunity to ask questions. I also had a verbal confidentiality agreement in case there were technology issues and they could not sign the document.

## 10. Knowledge Sharing

I started my visits with Anishinaabe Nookimisag (Grandmothers), Gaashiyag (mothers), Maajiishkaayag (pregnant women), and midwives. I had four conversations with grandmothers, five mothers, four pregnant women, and two midwives. In total, I had fifteen Knowledge Contributors. I have provided Figure 2 - Knowledge Contributors Locations Throughout Ontario to situate the them geographically.

<Figure 2> Knowledge Contributors Locations Throughout Ontario<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Note. These are approximate locations—many of the Knowledge Contributors are currently living within their traditional territories.

Some of the Knowledge Contributors are from one First Nation or commute between two that they call home. It was evident that many of the Anishinaabe mothers commuted between two or more communities, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous communities. Some worked in cities and commuted quite frequently. Others had positions in First Nations communities that were not their own, but still felt like it was home. Some were not raised on their traditional Anishinaabe territory, but in one of the neighbouring Nations such as Haudenosaunee Nation or Cree Nation. Whichever the case, it was interesting to note how we still travel within our territories. Most of these Knowledge Contributors resided on the Northeastern Shoreline along Lake Huron. In this map, I wanted to show the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek and Treaty areas, as we live along the Great Lakes on both sides of the geopolitical border.

## **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

I found that it was overwhelming for mothers have access to Anishinaabe maternal teachings but it is up to them to translate which teachings they will utilize when raising their children. That said, each conversation I had proved that women are resilient in nature and no matter what life gives them and they will find a way to provide for our children. I will share four themes of Traditional Parenting, Pedagogies, Resistance and Resurgence, and Bundles and how Anishinaabe Motherhood teachings were uncovered.

### **1. Traditional Parenting**

Traditional parenting was defined in a variety of ways by the Knowledge Contributors, with each providing their own perspective. It entailed reclaiming Anishinaabe Traditional parenting using our traditional teaching, using medicines and stories as discipline. The grandmothers and midwives suggested that young mothers access services and organizations to teach them about traditional mothering and what that is. For guidance, try using a metaphor to traditional parents by using “the Creation story to mentor parenting. I use it as a teaching tool for birthing because there are so many teachings that parallel the Creation story, like the first movement and the first sound of creating life.” In resurging Anishinaabe culture, there is a need to re-establish the Anishinaabe parenting model, which is to infuse our traditional practices into, in terms that we see fitting, a contemporary perspective. This can be land-based learning, reclaiming Anishinaabemowin, medicine teachings, and going on the powwow trail. Also, looking at the spiritual role of traditional methods, we go back to the foundational teaching where, It was explained by one mother

I understand that children choose their parents and they choose their parents for certain things that they know their parents can teach them. That children are a gift from Creator, and they're given to us for a short time, that we take care of them and nurture them as best we can. We have to conduct ourselves in this world that provides for the next Seven Generations.

Melanie Corbiere (as cited in Anderson, 2000) states that: “that child is your spiritual responsibility. That’s what children are.” (p. 162). Furthermore, a Knowledge Contributor shared her understanding of what our role as mothers is:

We come with our instructions, like a blueprint. We do have free will with our life on Earth, but it depends on how we support and connect with our original purpose. We have to honour our child's purpose. We are spiritual beings, and we help and support them by connecting them to their purpose and ensuring that they have a strong foundation.

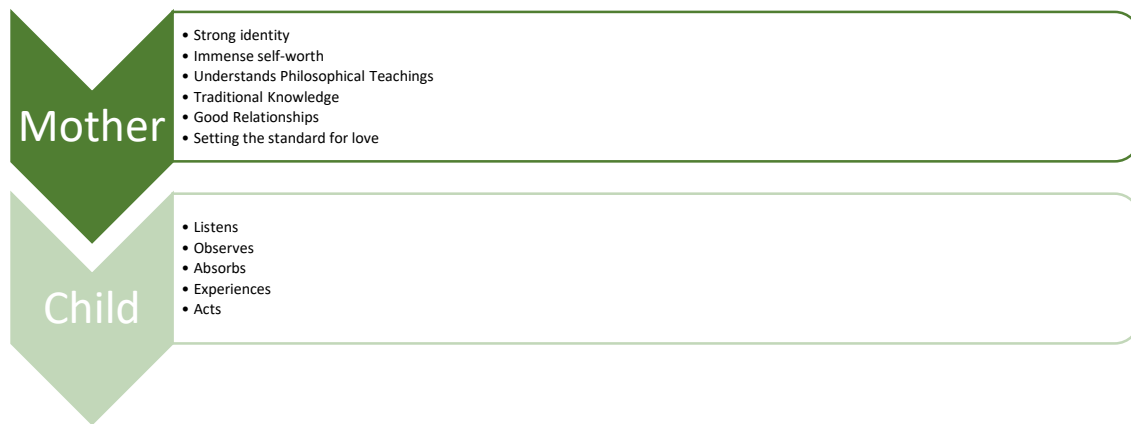
What we demonstrate to our children, they will follow. We must become strong role models and we must model our behaviour to our children and grandchildren. This includes everything from spiritual, physical, mental, emotional health and well-being, taking care of the land, and speaking our languages. It is important it is to set a good example for your children, and it is something she remembers from both her mother and grandmother.

## 2. Pedagogies

Colonial violence has had intergenerational and intragenerational effects on Anishinaabe communities. Indigenous women face violence, abuse, and psychological stress due to intergenerational trauma. Most of these issues have historical roots. Our Indigenous communities are rife with traumas, each generation copes with the traumas differently. The reason Anishinaabe mothers are in these cycles because of the fractured and shortage of cultural upbringing and language, which leads to lack of identity and self-worth.

One promising outlook emerged was mothers are breaking intergenerational cycles. The mothers stated that the push for wanting something for their children. When Anishinaabe mothers were supported, they had the strength to leave toxic environments. Listening to their stories on how mothers were able to get away from unhealthy relationships. This led to these mothers rebuilding themselves to role model what they want for their children. When correlating the themes, it became evident that the mothers are the first role model. I have developed Figure 3 Traditional Pedagogy chart that illustrates how the mother transmits knowledge.

<Figure 3> Traditional Pedagogy<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Note. The knowledge is passed down by the mother, and the child absorbs what they are taught, passing it on to their future generations, whether it is beneficial or detrimental. This diagram could apply to fathers or caregiver. The child takes in what is being role modelled to them.

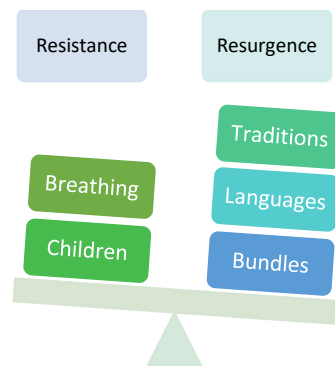
The Knowledge Contributors shared that a mother should be on her journey to having a strong Anishinaabe identity, have immense self-worth, understand the philosophical teachings (such as the Seven Grandparent Teachings, Creation stories, etc.), have Traditional Knowledge (know the stories, histories, bush survival skills, etc), and begin/maintain good relationships with self and with community. One of the purposes of this study is to look at how our Traditional Knowledge can be transmitted to children. A crucial aspect of pedagogies is role modelling. Most Knowledge Contributors agreed that they show their children what to do and how to be loved. The parents set the standard on what kind of relationships the child will have and stipulate to them with what is acceptable and what is not.

One of the tenets of traditional education is that children must be taught from an early age. When culture is normalized and introduced to them as infants, it becomes ingrained in their daily lives. When traditions are upheld, they become ingrained in their daily routines the transmission of traditional knowledge and practices contributes to the development of a child's sense of self and place in their culture. As the child grows, they are acutely aware of everything going on around them. As they gain the ability to do so, they begin to take notice of the surroundings. Emotional and psychological responses are formed as a result. They will, in turn, respond to their surroundings in a similar way. Because of this, the child learns everything from his or her mother, and then it's up to him or her to take on the rest of the world. By ensuring that children have a strong foundation at home with culture and knowledge, they know who they are as Anishinaabek. Thus, we are re-building Nations one family at a time.

### 3. Resistance and Resurgence

I asked a few of my Knowledge Contributors to define motherhood resistance and resurgence. I left it open-ended to see how the Knowledge Contributors interpreted and defined these terms in light of their own experiences. Some people questioned why we would refuse to become mothers. Why wouldn't we raise our kids? Others considered it and defined resistance to colonization, assimilation, and patriarchal norms.

<Figure 4> Defining Resistance and Resurgence<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Note. This figure shows that Resistance to colonization is happening as each child is birthed into the world. The Resurgence portion is the area that requires the most work as the Anishinaabek Nation rebuilds their communities.

In Figure 4 (page 33), I shared their collective definitions of resistance, stating that as Anishinaabek, we resist colonization and assimilation simply by breathing. The other aspect is that children are carrying on the generations, which is the ultimate act of resistance. The second question asked them to define Resurgence, and they responded by stating that it is the process of reclaiming our Ways of Knowing and Living, as well as our languages, this helps building our collective bundles that will be passed down generation to generation. In addition, Figure 4 demonstrates the daily balance of living closely to Mino-Bimaadiziwin (Living a Good Life). Anishinaabek mothers are aware of their role as a mother and their correlation to Mother Earth. Balancing the role or resistance to colonization and resurging Anishinaabe practices.

Resurgence is the reawakening of cultural and traditional customs that were utilized by the Anishinaabek prior to contact. We, as Anishinaabek kweok (women), are taking up the task to nourish our Ancestral past with the guidance of our Elders and continued motivation of our children (Anderson, 2006). We no longer must keep our Ancestral traditions secret, such as requesting our placentas, openly supporting breastfeeding (if mothers choose or are able to do so), discussing moon times (menstrual cycles), and carrying our babies proudly in tiknigaans (cradleboards). Resurgence can happen in both rural and urban areas. When we reinvigorate our Traditional Ways of Life, we are strengthening our Ancestral connections and relationships with the Earth, which then creates the healthy Nations that we envision for our children (Simpson, 2011).

#### **4. Bundles**

The study was valuable in developing a parenting bundles teaching. There are bundles for motherhood and bundles for our children. A child's bundle contains, but is not limited to, a pair of moccasins, a tiknigaan (cradleboard), a medicine pouch, the four medicines (sage, sweetgrass, tobacco, and cedar), a drum, dream catcher, copper mug, and a traditional shaker. We want them to have their bundles to help them along the way. A mother's bundle includes the above but also traditional stories, songs, philosophies, knowledge, Mino-Bimaadiziwin teachings, and love. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather items that a mother should have or consider having before embarking on the journey of building her motherhood bundle. Each mother and child carries their own set of tools, which we add to as we mature and grow. These bundles must include our own Creation Stories, in which we learn about how we were born, because it is our origin stories that teach us who we are, who our family is, and who our clan is, and it is our origin stories that boost our self-esteem. Overall, the information provided was extremely valuable. Overall, the information provided was so rich. I did not expect that Anishinaabe motherhood came with so many challenges, but when our mothers are strong and healthy, so are the children. We must strengthen our communities in order to raise children with their bundles who can navigate the world on their own. We should prepare their bundles before they arrive so that they are immersed in culture and teachings when they are born.

This research study revealed that Anishinaabe mothers are actively reclaiming their culture because of the guidance they have received from their friends, families, and communities. We, as mothers, are working collectively to resist colonization in our families and to continue to revitalize our teachings. Although we have been in a transformative shift for the past decade, where Anishinaabe mothers are bringing back traditional practices proudly, I see the momentum building for teachings in existing families that have little cultural knowledge or those not fully immersed in cultural practices. Furthermore, the research revealed that the passage of knowledge is a continuous cycle, whether we carry the strengths or the trauma for the next generation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

I wanted the knowledge contributors to leave with a sense of empowerment and the ability to redefine motherhood on their own terms, whatever that may entail. None of the literature spoke to resistance and resurgence within motherhood – some authors mention it generally along with our inherent connection to the land, but I felt that the important work that Anishinaabe mothers are doing with regards to resistance and resurgence needed to be specifically noted. Now that I am looking back on their answers and this research, what is the continued Act of Resistance mentioned in the title of my research? The Act of Resistance is when mothers choose safe spaces for themselves and their children. The Act of Resistance is when mothers end intergenerational cycles. The Act of Resistance is when mothers carry themselves closely to Mino-Bimaadiwizin. The Act of Resistance is when we have children and those children continue our traditional practices. There is no blueprint for raising children, but in Anishinaabe ways of knowing, we have teachings that point us in a good direction, with the understanding that all other teachings will follow. Although Anishinaabe mothers have gone through so much historically, we see a shift in recent generations that want to break intergenerational cycles. Those that are conscious of the traumas that permeate our communities do not want to contribute to the ongoing historical processes. I am happy I could gather women from different First Nations, both on- and off-reserves, to shed light on this. When the Anishinaabek can engage in Ancestral practices openly, proudly, and unapologetically, they are resurging our traditional matriarchal family structure. Anishinaabek kweok (women) are bringing sacredness back into the circle and bridging new cultural wisdoms that tie our Ancestral Knowledges with current realities.

The Anishinaabe Research Methodology has its own knowledge sharing methods (or data collection methods) that are specific to our culture. We gather the knowledge and shared it in a storytelling format with the community. With that, I used my Ancestral Anishinaabe practices of Mino-Bimaadiziwin to conduct, collect, and share my research with present and future generations. This research design was selected to reclaim our traditional methods and knowledge, respect Anishinaabe ethical protocols, and adhere to the University's ethical procedures. More specifically, I used our Anishinaabe ethics of the Seven Grandparent teachings because I hold myself accountable to community but also to Gzhe Mnidoo (Great Spirit). The Anishinaabe Research Methodology informed my research and was the template to answering my research question, but more importantly, it shaped the way I was 'meaning making' and honouring our Anishinaabe intellectual framework. I hope that this research study enlightened or resonated with you. As more Anishinaabe mothers continue to have their babies they are continuing to resist colonization because colonization was meant to eradicate us. We are still reclaiming our Traditional Knowledges and resurging these traditional practices to have culturally knowledgeable children.

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