

“My ancestors would be proud of us”

Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Housing Histories,
Experiences, Struggles, and Perspectives



Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak – Women of the Métis Nation

#303 – 340 MacLaren Street Ottawa, ON K2P 0M6

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Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation (LFMO) is a National Indigenous Women's Organization that serves as the democratically-elected, representative, national and international voice for Métis women across the Métis Motherland. LFMO is mandated to represent and promote the human and Indigenous rights, and the economic, social, and political needs, interests and aspirations of Métis women, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people across the Métis Motherland.

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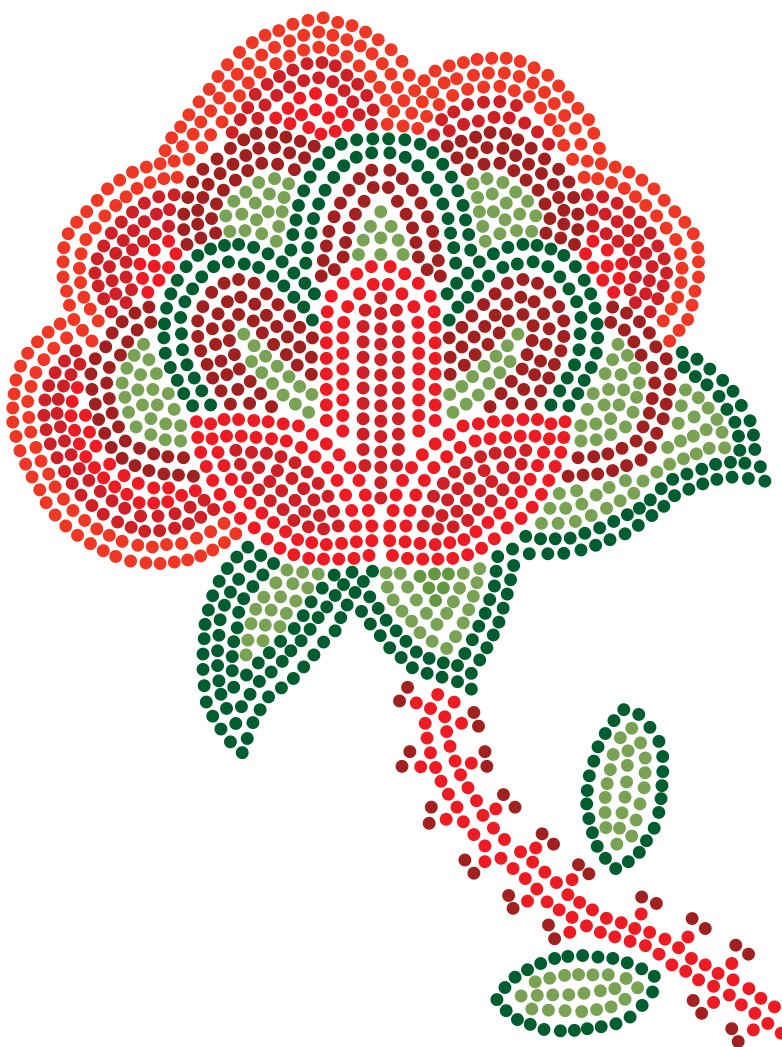
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Executive Summary	6
3. Methodology	9
i. A Métis Approach to Gender-Based Analysis.....	9
ii. Data Collection Procedure	9
4. Historical Background: The Gendered Impacts of Métis Dispossession.....	10
i. Canadian Settler Violence, Land Rights, and The Roots of Precarious Housing	10
ii. The Consequences of Failing to Honour the Manitoba Act: Scrip Fraud and Dispossession.....	13
iii. Dispossession and Displacement in the Wake of the Reign of Terror.....	15
iv. The Expansion of the Scrip System and the Rise of Provincial Rehabilitation and Settlement Schemes	17
5. Intergenerational Social and Cultural Impacts on Living/Housing Situations	21
i. Loss of Culture and Intergenerational Transmission of Culture.....	22
ii. Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence, and the Child Welfare System.....	23
iii. Access to Education and Employment.....	24
iv. Disability, Health, and Well-Being	25
6. Review of Existing Gender-Based Data on Housing and Living Conditions	26
7. Survey and Engagement Session	31
i. Lone Parent Households.....	32
ii. Métis Elders	32
iii. Precarious Housing and Homelessness	32
iv. Homeownership.....	33
v. Access to Services.....	33
vi. Métis Women's Housing and Violence at Home	34
vii. Métis Women's Housing and COVID-19	34
8. Interview Data	35
i. Intergenerational displacement/dispossession	36
ii. Social/Living Conditions	38
1. Intergenerational Poverty.....	38
2. Need for partner/to share costs of living.....	41
3. Discrimination Against Disabled Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People	42
4. Homophobia and Transphobia in Housing	43
5. Racial Discrimination and Experiences in Relation to Racial Coding.....	43

6. Sexual Harassment, Familial Violence, Interpersonal Violence, and Domestic Abuse	45
7. Childcare costs/lack of access	48
iii. Housing Conditions	48
1. Mold, poor air quality, illness	48
2. Homes in need of major/minor repairs and renovations	49
iv. Housing Needs, Support, and Ideal Housing Situations	51
9. Environmental Scan.....	56
10. Recommendations.....	61
References	62



1. Introduction

This report addresses the housing situation of Métis people who self-identify as women and/or as 2SLGBTQQIA+ living today within Canada. We know from available statistics that Métis who self-identify as women are more likely to live in overcrowded housing, housing in need of repair, and to experiences incidences of homelessness are rates higher than the general, non-Indigenous population within Canada. There is no available statistical data as to the housing situation of those Métis who expressly identify as Two-Spirit and/or as LGBTQIA+. Given that organizations geared towards addressing homelessness and/or housing precarity do not compile information regarding Métis-specific experiences, there has as well been a gap in qualitative information regarding Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's realities.

We do know, however, from existing research on the wider matter of Métis housing, that Métis have experienced negative impacts with respect to housing stability and security arising from colonization directly and manifested in the form of impoverishment, houselessness, and unsafe/insecure housing. The experiences of the Métis Nation with respect to land dispossession and displacement from our homes as a result of Canada's development as a nation cannot be decoupled from the lived experiences of Métis today. In the context of this report, it cannot be decoupled from the introduction of racism and of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and classism into the lives of Métis Nation people. For Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as this report discusses, these experiences have been particularly harmful.

As LFMO has written elsewhere, Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ face “a unique form of marginalization and discrimination; first, as Indigenous peoples; second, as Métis—the ‘invisible’ among Aboriginal people; and third, as women.”

In order to understand the system marginalization of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people as it pertains to housing today, it is necessary to understand how historical trauma as it specifically pertains to rendering Métis in precarious positions with respect to housing, connects to the safety (or lack thereof) that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience with respect to housing today. While Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people show incredible resilience and strength in navigating colonialism's impacts on their housing situations, it remains that the ongoing crisis that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face with respect to housing is directly attributable to the longstanding consequences of colonization and egregious gaps in policy initiatives intended to address anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination. This report therefore critically analyzes Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences with respect to housing and includes a series of recommendations based on extensive review of historical, archival, survey, and interview-based data.

2. Executive Summary

There is growing awareness as to Métis peoples' experience and struggles with respect to securing safe and affordable housing. In part the growing awareness comes from the work undertaken by Statistics Canada to gauge the housing situation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit more broadly, in particular via the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, but the growing awareness is also linked to the direct advocacy work of Métis people ourselves. Métis have taken great strides to shed light on the history of displacement and dispossession as our nation has experienced. Across Canada there is increased understanding and recognition of the impacts of systems of land dispossession such as the Scrip system and the federal government's failure to honour the terms of the Manitoba Treaty (also known as the Manitoba Act of 1870), leading to the later development of Métis shanties and Métis road allowance communities. While undoubtedly tight-knit communities defined by integrated kinship networks, the housing and living conditions for Métis in shanty towns, road allowance communities, and other urban and rural impoverished communities was stark. Over the past 70 years, Métis people have become increasingly urbanized, driven into urban centres after waves of processes of displacement that left Métis as an Indigenous people without a land base.¹ As such the Métis National Council (MNC) in its 2015 report titled "Benchmarking Métis Economic and Social Development" identified housing as one of the key indicators of Métis well-being.²

While the greater awareness of the struggles Métis people have faced with respect to home and housing security is notable, there is often the tendency to speak of Métis people as a collective, eschewing a more focused discussion of the Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples experiences with respect to housing. This is crucial given that LFMO's Métis-specific gender-based analysis of the situation reveals that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples face significant challenges with respect to securing safe and affordable housing, a direct result of the intersecting layers of oppression Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples experience on the basis of colonialism, racism, sexism, gendered discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia. The report herein therefore addresses the situation of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples in the context of housing.

Readers will not that at times the Report suffers from notable gaps in the discussion of 2SLGBTQIA+ people's experiences. Wherein Métis-specific data and reports have been available, they have been included, however it bears mentioning that the situation for 2SLGBTQIA+ identified Métis people remains woefully underexamined. As is consistent in other studies regarding Indigenous experiences, research focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences lack a distinctions-based approach with notable gaps in focus on Métis experiences and lived reality. There are few statistics, if any, that speak directly to Métis 2SLGBTQIA+ people's experiences with

¹ Thomas, Jasmin. Benchmarking métis economic and social development. No. 2015-07. Centre for the Study of Living Standards, 2015. 11.

² Ibid.

respect to housing, houselessness, and housing precarity and reflects an urgent need for future study. As will be discussed, at least some of this is attributable to the fact that pre-existing research has taken a pan-Indigenous (or pan-Aboriginal) approach. To that, Indigenous-focused data collection methods have not historically utilized a distinct category of self-identification for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. With respect to the 2011 National Household Survey, wherein respondents could identify in accordance with their claimed Indigenous affiliations (i.e. First Nations, Métis, Inuit, etc.), they were only presented with “male” or “female” with no option akin to 2SLGBTQQIA+ who for those who may not exist within the sexed binary presented to them.³ The discrimination here is immediately apparent, as respondents were given multiple options for self-identification within the category of Aboriginal. It bears mentioning that the forthcoming release of Indigenous-focused and housing-related data in September 2022, may have more to add to this analysis, as the Canadian Census for 2021 worked to address the past anti-2SLGBTQQIA+ approach of census-taking.⁴

Further to this, one of the greatest limitations in understanding the experiences of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples with respect to housing and homelessness, is the relative lack of focused data. While some statistical information is available arising from recent census reporting (the 2011 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, and the 2016 Canadian Census) there is a greater deal of work to be done. Further, wherein data can be extracted based on Métis self-identification within the aforementioned survey data sets, categories based on self-identification as Métis may not be accurately reflective of the Métis experience itself.⁵ In addition to this other studies data generalizes and combines the experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit into categories of either “Aboriginal” or “Indigenous.” This leads to the invisibilization of the distinct experiences of Métis.⁶ Further to this end, few focused studies exist as to the situation of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+. In fact currently available statistics, while they can be extracted and evaluated on the basis of self-identification as Métis and through a binary gender lens, there continue to be constraints, as mentioned, on 2SLGBTQQIA+ data.

What we can glean from available research makes it clear that there are distinct differences informed by both the Métis experience with colonization and with, for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, intersecting experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia (among other things). This has led to disparities in employment rates; health and wellness and access to healthcare; interpersonal, familial, and domestic violence; and education. Critically and taken together these have come to have profound impacts on Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people’s ability to access and keep safe, secure, and affordable housing. The Report begins

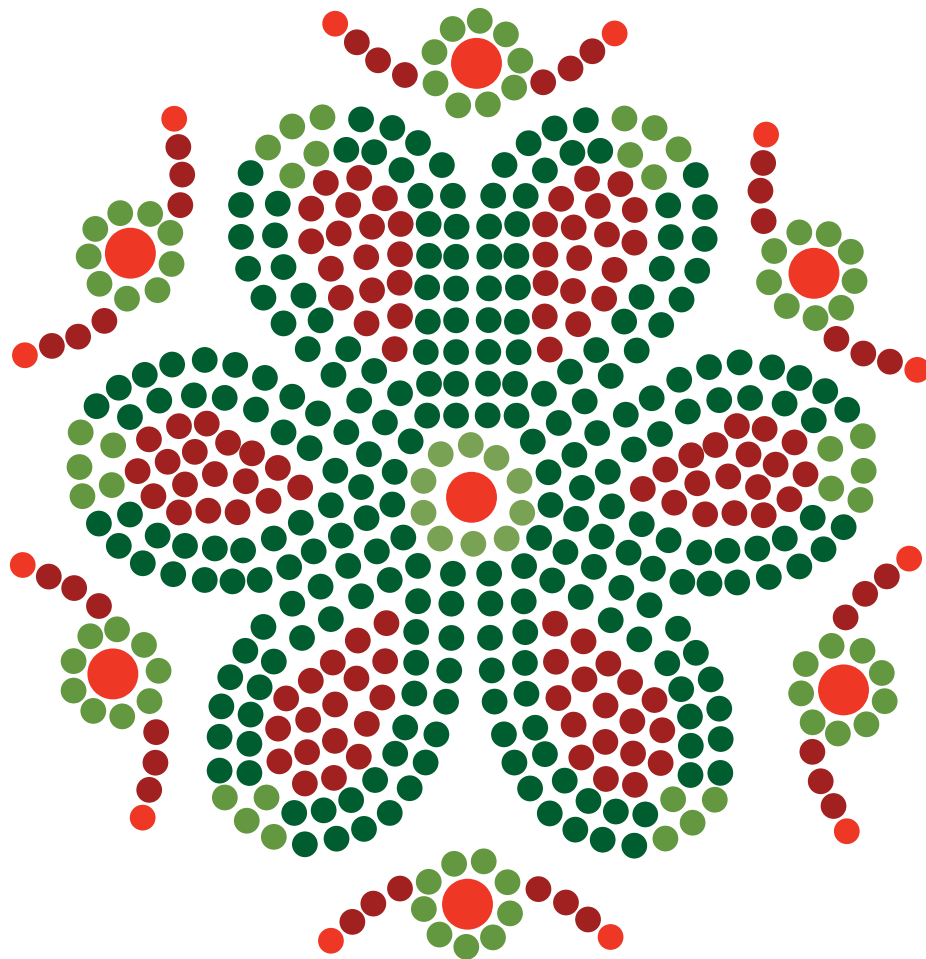
3 See Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011028.

4 Gemmill, Angela. “New gender questions in 2021 census ‘a good start,’ transgender, non-binary advocates say.” CBC News. 7 May 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/gender-questions-2021-census-sudbury-1.6017153>

5 See Chris Andersen’s discussion on the problems created by the racialization of Métis in the Canadian Census and issues around the problems of self-identification in Andersen, Chris. “From nation to population: the racialization of ‘Métis’ in the Canadian census.” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 347-368; see also Andersen, Chris. “The colonialism of Canada’s Métis health population dynamics: caught between bad data and no data at all.” *Journal of Population Research* 33, no. 1 (2016): 67-82; Andersen, Chris. “The colonialism of Canada’s Métis health population dynamics: caught between bad data and no data at all.” *Journal of Population Research* 33, no. 1 (2016): 67-82; Andersen, Chris. *Métis: Race, recognition, and the struggle for Indigenous peoplehood*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014; Gaudry, Adam, and Darryl Leroux. “White settler revisionism and making Métis everywhere: The evocation of Métissage in Quebec and Nova Scotia.” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 116-142; Leroux, Darryl. “‘We’ve been here for 2,000 years’: White settlers, Native American DNA and the phenomenon of indigenization.” *Social studies of science* 48, no. 1 (2018): 80-100; Leroux, Darryl. *Distorted descent: White claims to Indigenous identity*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2019.

6 See Andersen 2008, 2014. See also Patrick, Caryl. (2014). *Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada: A Literature Review*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press; Thistle 2017; Native Women’s Association of Canada 2019.

by outlining the methodological approach to data collection. Next, we offer a focused discussion on the links between Métis people's experiences with colonialism and the sexist and gendered impacts on/for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. We then chart the long-term impacts of ongoing structures of colonialism before moving into a review of existing quantitative data. Then the Report moves to discuss the qualitative research undertaken, evaluating the results of interviews with Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ participants in light of pre-existing data and against the backdrop of Métis history. Lastly, we offer recommendations to address issues raised within this Report.



3. Methodology

i. **A Métis Approach to Gender-Based Analysis**

This report takes a distinctions-based approach that also prioritizes a gender-based analysis framework. A Métis-specific GBA+ analysis centers Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the research while also being attentive to impacts on/for those identifying as Métis men. It also addresses the multiple layers of oppression and positionality of people in considering the impacts of policies and initiatives that impact them.⁷

ii. **Data Collection Procedure**

For this study the researchers deployed a gender-based analytical lens centring the experiences of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+. We used a mixed method approach that involved the use of a survey, conversational interviews, document analysis, and literature reviews. Over the course of four months, we conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with Métis women and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Both authors recruited Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people via social media and through connecting with our pre-existing networks. We also used snowballing methods which included asking people we interviewed to share our information with other Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people willing to speak to us. Using this approach, we interviewed 21 total participants from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Three individuals identified as Two-Spirit or transgender and the others identified as cisgender Métis women. Each interview lasted between 1-3 hours and were conducted via telephone or Zoom video call given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We added substantial historical information to help frame our interview data and to help readers understand how historical oppression and state-sponsored violence continues to negatively affect Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Our interviews were transcribed verbatim and through NVivo Transcription. We then used Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software package to organize interviews and create “themes” or patterns across the 21 interviews we conducted. Using this approach, we compiled a series of key findings which we describe in detail in our findings section. This method of analyzing ethnographic data follows the process described in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw.⁸

7 Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak. « Métis Specific Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Tool. 2019. <https://metiswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Metis-Specific-GBA-Tool.pdf>.

8 Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

4. Historical Background: The Gendered Impacts of Métis Dispossession

To understand how and why Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples experience issues with housing insecurity to the extent that they do, it is crucial to understand the root causes of the current situation. For Métis women and Two-Spirit peoples, the origins of the problem are to be found in Métis experiences of/with colonialization. The dispossession of Métis of land rights is one of the root causes of Métis women and Two-Spirit people's experiences of housing insecurity as it exists today. Dispossession of land rights has not been, however, experienced in a vacuum but finds its footing in anti-Indigenous racism that positioned the Métis as inferior to Canadians of European ancestry. At the same time, land dispossession was interwoven with the imposition of foreign mores of sexism and misogyny that devalued Métis women and Two-Spirit peoples' roles within Métis families – and subsequently within the Métis Nation.

i. Canadian Settler Violence, Land Rights, and The Roots of Precarious Housing

When Canada formalized itself as a country in 1867, it set its sights on expanding through present-day Manitoba, and connecting a railway across the prairies, through the Rocky Mountains, in order to create a continuous travel route to the colony of British Columbia and both expand and consolidate lands it sought to claim for itself. As tensions flared between the Métis and settler Canadians in the Red River area, Métis continued to carefully navigate and negotiate a relationship with Canada that would see Canada recognize and respect the self-determination and self-government of the Métis Nation. In the late 1860s, however, settler Canadians living in the Red River Settlement area organized themselves out of both a sense of rightness and self-righteousness, determined to overthrow the Métis provisional government of Red River led by Métis leader Louis Riel.

The “Portage boys,” also known as the “Portage Gang,” was an organized group of pro-Canadian settlers living at Portage la Prairie (that included notable Canadians such as Charles Mair, Charles Arkoll Boutlon, Thomas Scott, and John Christian Schultz). They frequently attacked the Red River Métis, rejecting both Métis self-government and land rights. In the wake of the Riel government's arrest of some of their members they descended on the Red River area in February of 1870. They announced their intent to free their compatriots and kill Riel. Their first stop was to the home of Henri Coutu and Marie Catherine Lagimodiere Coutu, a family with which Riel often stayed. There, they ransacked the home and harassed the family.⁹ As the Portage Gang made its way through the streets of what is today referred to as

9 Barkwell, Lawrence. “The Reign of Terror Against the Métis of Red River.” Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, 2017. <https://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/149078>. 2; see also “Memorable Manitobans: William Bernard O’Donoghue.” Manitoba Historical Society. http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/odonoghue_wb.shtml.

Winnipeg, they wantonly beat and harassed Métis, even extending their wrath to disabled Métis, such as Norbert Parisien, who reportedly lived with cognitive disabilities. In the case of Parisien, they beat him and nearly lynched him.¹⁰

Such violence would only be extended with the arrival of the Canadian government's Red River Expeditionary Force (RREF), a punitive military expedition dispatched to Red River. A few short months after the Manitoba Act received royal assent (May 12, 1870), bringing the Red River area into Confederation as the Province of Manitoba, as the late historian Lawrence Barkwell writes, the Red River Expeditionary Force (RREF) of 1,200 men entered Fort Garry on August 24, 1870.¹¹ Barkwell notes that the conduct of the soldiers stationed at Fort Garry would be reported in newspapers both near and far – in Red River, in Ontario and Quebec, and as far away as New York – as a “reign of terror.”¹² In providing a notable list of RREF assaults and attacks against Métis people, Barkwell notes that the RREF openly assaulted Métis throughout Red River.

The twinning of both anti-Métis racism with sexism meant that women would often be subjected to sexual violence at the hands of aggressive Canadian settlers. For Métis women this violence often manifest in the form of rape, exemplified by the case of the horrific gang-rape by RREF soldiers of 17-year-old Laurette Goulet.¹³ The threat of sexual violence – and violence widely, including the threat of the murder of their husbands, children, parents, themselves, and their extended kin – made the Red River area, a deeply unsafe and unstable place for Métis women to live. The Saint Paul, Minnesota paper the *Daily Pioneer* reported that prior to January 4, 1871, RREF soldiers Patrick Morrissey, Richard Wilson, David Hamilton, and Robert Jamieson, along with Corporal James Hayes and one Corporal O'Neil forced their way into the home of Toussaint Vaudry and “propositioned the women inside.”¹⁴ Let us be clear. The violent entry into the home and the “proposition” at gunpoint can only be interpreted as an overt threat to the safety and well-being of the Métis women and girls in the home. When Vaudry and Joseph McDougall managed to successfully drive the soldiers from the house, they “returned with reinforcements and severely beat both men – Vaudry’s injuries were considered critical.”¹⁵ Violent gangs of soldiers continued harassing and assaulting the Métis community. Archival records likewise show that on May 4, 1871, Private Evans of the RREF was arrested for raping Marie La Rivière.¹⁶ A gender-based analytical lens compels us to recognize that it is important to note that in such instances Métis women and girls experienced a distinct form of harassment that would render them unsafe in their own homes.

While many Métis undoubtedly remained in Red River, many more began to flee their homes. Métis landholders faced constant attacks and harassment, the Red River area saw an influx of Anglo-Ontario settlers arriving, and Métis women and girls lived under the constant threat of sexual and other forms of violence. On December 8, 1871, armed settlers broke into Louis Riel’s home in St. Vital and when they

10 Ibid, 3.

11 Barkwell, Lawrence. “The Reign of Terror Against the Métis of Red River.” Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, 2017. <https://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/149078>. 2.

12 Ibid.

13 Barkwell 2017, 11; see also LFMO 2019, 22.

14 See Barkwell, Lawrence. (2017). “The Reign of Terror Against the Métis of Red River.” Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute. <https://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/149078>.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid, 8. See also Shore, Frederick. (1991). “The Canadians and the Métis: The Recreation of Manitoba, 1858-1872.” Ph.D. dissertation. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. 251.

found he was away held guns to the heads of the women remaining in the home, loudly threatening them. They threatened to shoot the women if they did not reveal Riel's whereabouts and before leaving in a violent rage warned the women that "the Métis leader would be killed before the night had ended."¹⁷ It became unsafe for Métis people to leave their homes, and with the knowledge of attacks such as that on Laurette Goulet and Marie La Rivière well-known among the community, ever more dangerous for Métis women and girls to leave their homes.¹⁸ At this same time, however, Métis women and girls were not safe *within* their homes, as the attack on women at the Riel home in St. Vital and others demonstrates. On August 14, 1872, twelve RREF soldiers launched an attack on members of Laurette Goulet's family. The three soldiers that entered the home of one Madame Goulet, attacked the women and the rest of the residents therein, with Laurette's uncle Maxime Goulet violently bashed in the head with a stick.¹⁹

While there are currently no historical accounts publicly available regarding the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people at this time, it is undoubtedly the case that those who were derogatorily positioned outside of the strict norms of heterosexism and heteronormativity of the time would also have faced as great a threat both inside and outside of their homes.

As a result of these attacks and the hostile push for Anglo-Canadian settlement in the area, Métis became, in essence, refugees in their own homelands as "many Métis began to migrate further west to Willow Bunch, Batoche, Lac Ste. Anne and St. Albert, in what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta."²⁰ Barkwell cites the St. Paul *Daily Pioneer* that in covering the attacks in Red River stated that the purpose of the reign of terror was, among other things, "to drive out by threats or actual violence all the French Half-Breed population."²¹ As a result of this constant aggression, many Métis did flee. Historians estimate that as a result of these attacks against Métis, the number of Métis living in Red River dropped from 83% in 1870 to just 7% in 1886.²² From here on in it is important to distinguish that while many fled to other Métis communities across the Métis motherland, and quite simply out of the Red River area, families remained in Red River, enduring violence and aggressive forced change to their worlds.

While waves of settlement and fur trade expansionism undoubtedly led to disruptions to Métis ways of living, it is, the Wolseley Expedition that marks a turning point with respect to the destabilizing Métis Nation people's ability to live in their homelands with safety, stability, and security. The waves of dispossession and displacement that flow from the events of 1870 and the ongoing denial of Métis land rights, leads us to the situation facing us today, whereby Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, over 150 years later, continue to struggle for unilateral access to safe, secure, and affordable housing. In light of this it becomes necessary when discussing Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences

17 qtd. In Barkwell, 6; see also Public Archives of Manitoba. Lieutenant Governor's Papers, Letter Parenteau et al., December 9, 1871.

18 Shore 1991, 259.

19 Ibid, 10. For more information see also Begg, Alexander. Red River Journals and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956; Ronaghan, Neil E. A. "The Archibald Administration in Manitoba, 1870-1872." Winnipeg: Ph. D. dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1987; Shore, Frederick. "The Emergence of the Métis Nation in Manitoba." In Lawrence Barkwell, Leah Dorion and Darren Prefontaine (eds.), Métis Legacy, Volume I. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2001: 71-78; Shore, Frederick. (1991). "The Canadians and the Métis: The Recreation of Manitoba, 1858-1872." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manitoba.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid, 5.

22 Learn Michif. (2022). "The Manitoba Act." Learn Michif. <https://www.learnmichif.com/heritage/the-manitoba-act>

with housing, to distinguish the historical context for those who remained in the Red River area and other nearby communities, and those who left.

ii. **The Consequences of Failing to Honour the Manitoba Act: Scrip Fraud and Dispossession**

Amidst the ongoing violence, the Dominion of Canada passed two Orders-in-Council “which allowed open settlement on the lands of the North-West in advance of survey.”²³ As historian Fred Shore writes, the effect of the Reign of Terror was to push “the Métis away from the centre of power and influence in the North-West and at the same time providing a safe milieu in which to propagate an effective system of dispossession.”²⁴ Despite the war waged against Métis families, Métis should have been entitled to recognition in Canadian law of their land rights via sections 31 and 32 of the Manitoba Act. As legal scholar Darren O’Toole writes, the Manitoba Act s.31 purported to extinguish any claims Métis had by way of Indian title to their land, “and put aside 1.4 million acres of federal Crown lands for ‘the benefit of Half-Breed families’.”²⁵ Ostensibly all those deemed “half-breed” as of the date Canada assumed control over Rupert’s Land - July 15, 1870 - would be eligible to obtain scrip to exchange for a land patent. This system was made possible by the fact that shortly after the signing of the Manitoba Act the government initiated “the Dominion Lands Survey that imparted a grid system over the whole Northwest that resulted in a homesteading program of settlement... further produced the foundation upon which scrip commissions took place.”²⁶

According to settler historians Frank Tough and Erin McGregor, “‘Scrip’ is a term used to denote ‘a certificate, voucher, etc. establishing the bearer’s right to something’” and “was issued with the intent of ‘extinguishing’ Indian title by granting land (or money) to individual Metis people.”²⁷ Fraud and corruption were evident from the start, as Métis began complaining near immediately about the government’s inaction to protect them and their land rights.²⁸ The federal government did not start issuing scrip certificates to be exchanged for land until 1876, six years after the Manitoba Act was signed and over a half-decade from when Métis began dealing with violence and harassment in Red River. The scrip commission in Manitoba would “effect Metis differentially in that many Metis lost land, while others would retain it by trading in their scrip coupons for sections of fee simple land (private property).”²⁹ Fee simple land, the core of the private property system of land-holding, was a mechanism whereby Métis and other Indigenous peoples’ land relationships were transformed from collectively-held to individual private property via a system of absolute ownership.³⁰

For those Métis who lost land and their homes in the short term through the scrip system, it was generally due to rampant fraud. For example, when Patrice Cyr, a Métis resident of the Parish of St. Agathe in Manitoba applied to the Department of the Interior for scrip as was his right under the Manitoba Act, it ultimately ended up in the hands of a non-Indigenous law firm: “Although Cyr’s scrip was eventually used in the purchase of a homestead in southern Manitoba, neither the Department nor Bain and Blanchard could prove conclusively that

23 Shore 1991, 254.

24 Shore 1991, 254-255.

25 O’Toole, Darren. “Métis Claims to ‘Indian’ Title in Manitoba, 1860-1870.” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXVIII, 2 (2008): 242.

26 Parent, David. (2021). “Governing Metis Indigeneity: The Settler-Colonial Dispossession and Regulation of the Metis in Mid-Twentieth Century Manitoba.” PhD dissertation. Edmonton: University of Alberta. 133.

27 Tough, Frank and McGregor, Erin. “‘The Rights to the Land May Be Transferred’: Archival Records as Colonial Text—A Narrative of Metis Scrip,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 34, no. 1 (2011): 36.

28 Ibid.

29 Parent 2021, 133. See also Sprague, D. N. (1988). *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press.

30 See Adese, Jennifer. (2022). “Extinguishing the Dead: Colonial Archives, Anxieties, and Reflections on Research Métis Scrip.” *Allotment Stories: Indigenous Land Relations Under Settler Siege*. Justice, Daniel Heath, and Jean M. O’Brien, eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

it was Patrice Cyr who had taken delivery of the document.”³¹ In fact, fraud would become so pervasive with the expansive of the scrip system across the prairies through the Northwest Half-breed Scrip Commissions (1880s-1920s), that in 1921 Bill 138 amended the Criminal Code of Canada to:

*“impose time limitations for the prosecution of several offences, and it was amended so that ‘Any offence relating to or arising out of the location of land which was paid for in whole or in part by scrip or was granted upon certificates issued to half-breeds in connection with extinguishment of Indian title’ could not be prosecuted after three years from the occurrence of the offense.”*³²

As Tough and McGregor note, the effect of this amendment of the Criminal Code was to in fact “decriminalize scrip frauds arising out of the relationships between the Crown and the Metis in respect to Aboriginal title.”³³

As most analyses of scrip processes tend to forgo gender-based analysis in favour of broad strokes analysis, it bears mentioning that Métis women likewise experienced the same kinds of experiences with respect to fraudsters and the harmful impacts of dispossession – and particularly for those who were dependent upon their husbands in a period in which Canadian women were viewed as property of men, and for those like Mary Elizabeth Prince Wilkins McPhail who were heads of households in their own right as widowed sole support parents for their children, the impacts were grave and the system of exploitation seemingly more aggressive. In the case of Prince Wilkins McPhail, the “Department of the Interior, Canada, allowed William John Robinson, ‘real estate agent,’” to purchase her scrip claim “for \$50 (at best) in groceries (of questionable quality). Though both she and her father, David Prince, had thought the \$50 was merely a down payment, they protested in vain.”³⁴ As a result of the questionable practices of Robinson, the widowed Prince Wilkins McPhail and her children were victimized by unscrupulous scrip practices. When Prince Wilkins McPhail actively challenged her mistreatment at the hands of Robinson and the unwillingness of the Department to intervene on her behalf in the matter and fairly compensate her for her scrip claim in Robinson’s failure to do so, a declaration was subsequently made by a labourer named James W. Ward on January 27, 1898. In the declaration, Ward asserts that he bore witness to her agreement with Robinson and could attest to her thorough understanding of the terms, but he also casts sexist aspersions upon Prince Wilkins McPhail, to undermine her credibility, insisting

31 “Métis Scrip – The Foundation for a New Beginning.” Library and Archives Canada. 1 March 2012. <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/metis-scrip/005005-2000-e.html>.

32 Tough and McGregor 2011, 54.

33 Ibid.

34 Hall, Norma J. “‘Cheated’ Of Scrip and For Her Trouble, Branded A Lying Proprietress of a House of Hill Fame: Mary Elizabeth ‘King’ Prince-Wilkins-McPhail.” Mothers of the Resistance. <https://resistancemothers.wordpress.com/about/peeh-quaa-is-pa-kwai-es/mary-elizabeth-king-prince-wilkins-mcphail-cheated-of-scrip/>. See also Canada, “Papers re Half-breed Claim of Mary Elizabeth Prince now Wife of Charles McPhail and Widow of Anthony Wilkins,” [Dominion Lands Branch registry](#), Library and Archives Canada R190-36-2-E/ formerly RG15-D-II-1, reel T-13889, file [252830](#) (1890-1898), Canadiana.org Heritage Collection images 640–736.

that she either ran, or worked in, a brothel. Ward insists that she is as well “well known in the said town as the proprietress or inmate of a house of ill-fame therein.”³⁵

What this situation reveals is that while all Métis dealt with a deeply manipulative scheme of scrip speculation back by federal government inaction to take appropriate measures to remedy the fraud rife within the function of the system, Métis women most certainly experienced this layer of dispossession in a manner distinct from Métis men who did not face particularly sexist attempts to discredit their character. At the same time, were we to put any stock into Ward's attestation about the living and working conditions of Prince Wilkins McPhail, it would as well force us to recognize the gendered impacts of the Reign of Terror and its aftermath that would see Métis women – and especially those widowed either through the Reign of Terror or otherwise – forced to work in one of few available roles available to them outside of the home at the time: sex work.³⁶ Due to the pervasive racism Métis women and girls faced, they were often denied employment opportunities that allow them to live in anything other than substandard living conditions. They were forced to live in exceedingly unsafe conditions. In the case of one Métis child, 15-year-old Mary Thomas, she and her 17-year-old sister (whose name was never made public in media reports), were sent to Winnipeg by their mother in 1884 and took up living in a boarding house downtown. The boarding house was, in fact, a known brothel. As Christine Macfarlane writes, in addition to the fact that Mary had become pregnant, “their race more than likely presented obstacles to employment.”³⁷ As a result they both found themselves working as “escorts.” Mary would soon experience the horrors of rape, just as the young Laurette Goulet had years before.³⁸ For Métis women who did enter into sex work as a means and mode of survival, newspaper accounts of the period indicate that they often lived in shanties that had cropped up in the Red River area arising from the displacement of Métis from their homes. The layers of violence caused by the dispossession of Métis families from their land is profound.

iii. Dispossession and Displacement in the Wake of the Reign of Terror

Contrary to common rhetoric, as Métis scholar David Parent argues that “following the passing of the *Manitoba Act*” Métis who continued to live in Manitoba “could not have hidden even if they had wanted to... Métis had nowhere to hide.”³⁹ Where Métis communities were overrun by white settlers and those communities recast as “white settlements,” the Métis families that continued to live in the areas of the settlements were often pushed to the fringes and pejoratively framed as shanty towns. Barkwell writes that areas such as Fort Rouge, Bannock Town, Dog Patch, Mud Flats, Tintown and others were names given to Métis “fringes” on the edge of “white settlements.”⁴⁰ Métis people driven from their homes and dispossessed of their land but who stayed within the Red River area were referred to by municipal politicians as “squatters.” David Burley points out, Métis families continued to live in the area in an area known as The Flats “below the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers” and in small communities referred to as Rooster Town (also known as Pakan Town) and Turkey Town further afield.⁴¹ Rooster Town

35 Hall n.d.

36 See Macfarlane, Christine Anne. (2002). “‘Unfortunate women of my class’: prostitution in Winnipeg, 1870-1910.” Master's thesis. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba.

37 Ibid, 44.

38 Ibid.

39 Parent 2021, 125.

40 Barkwell, Lawrence. “Manitoba Métis Road Allowance Communities.” Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, n.d. <https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/149480.Manitoba%20Metis%20Road%20Allowance%20Communities.pdf>.

41 Burley, D. (2013). Rooster Town: Winnipeg's Lost Métis Suburb, 1900–1960. *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 42(1): 8; see also Peters, Evelyn, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner. Rooster town: The history of an urban Métis community,

moved locations but was notably “located along the railway right-of-way between the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway which ran down what is now Grant Ave. and the CNR tracks to the south.”⁴² Today, Grant Park Shopping Centre, Pan-Am Pool and Grant Park High School sit on the lands that Rooster Town would come to occupy. Many of the families in Rooster Town had been displaced from their original parishes in Red River and few had been able to secure any kind of title to the lands they lived on. Métis women living in Rooster Town were devastatingly impoverished and homes were made of an assemblage of materials. There was no running water and no sewer services. As with women living in other parts of Winnipeg, women in Rooster Town struggled to enter the wage labour market. The struggle to provide for their families was particular acute for those Métis women who were heads of their households. While some found work as domestics and some in sex work, many Métis women who lost their husbands in the Reign of Terror and due other causes were left alone to raise their children struggled to ensure security and stability for their children, finding themselves in oppressive poverty. They struggled with securing employment and experienced egregious hardship as single mothers/as heads of households working for appallingly low pay as washerwomen.⁴³ This caused them to often move in search of safe, secure, and affordable housing, a phenomenon we see frequently reflected in the lives of Métis heads of households/single mothers today.

Some Métis had more “stable” living conditions, in Fort Rouge, for example, a handful of Métis were able to own their houses, but they did not own the land upon which their house sat – they leased their land.⁴⁴ This reflects the shifting system with which Métis were dealing. For Métis who were not at once dispossessed of their land (and thus their homes), after the passage of the Manitoba Act and the introduction of scrip, they would soon come to face new displacement arising from the expansion of the scrip system, provincial regulatory schemes, and municipal pressures. As Parent writes, “expanding townships and municipalities” and “municipal technologies such as property taxes and by-laws” would come to dispossess even those Métis people who had managed to hold on to their homes and lands.⁴⁵ While it took place over a longer period of time, it nevertheless manifested in the same end result – a continuously unstable housing situation for Métis. Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner write thus that “even owning one’s land could be precarious” and indeed it was often more so the case for Métis women.⁴⁶ Charlotte Omand, a widow, who had “owned a three-room house and two lots on which the Chipperfield family lived” was forced to sell the land and house in a tax sale.⁴⁷ She had been “unable to earn enough to support herself and her small children, and the extended Omand family did not make enough to subsidize her and her offspring. As a result, she was unable to pay the taxes on her property and lost it.”⁴⁸

Métis women were not dependent on Métis men, as it has been classically framed in Canadian academic and policy research, but Métis women lived in a system that depended on the health and well-being of all members of the family and community. With the aggressive waves of dispossession brought

1901–1961. Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2018.

42 Barkwell, Lawrence. (2018). “Historic Métis Settlements in Manitoba and Geographical Place Names.” Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute. <https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/149493.Historic%20Manitoba%20Metis%20Settlements%20July%202018%20final.pdf>. 27

43 Peters et al 2018, 31-32.

44 Peters et al 2018, 33.

45 Parent 2021, 133-134.

46 Peters et al 2018, 33.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

by Canadian colonization, Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people were deprived of the safety and security of living in their homelands and among their immediate and extended kinship networks. These extended networks supported one another in times of difficulty and ensured that Métis children were raised in culturally connected, stable home environments. As has been discussed throughout this section, the dispossession of Métis families from land, and Canada's refusal to honour the terms of the Manitoba Act of 1870, placed Métis women in extremely precarious positions.

iv. The Expansion of the Scrip System and the Rise of Provincial Rehabilitation and Settlement Schemes

Métis who left Red River did not see their troubles end upon joining other Métis communities. For those at Batoche, they would face another Canadian military action in 1885, while others continued to be impacted by the processes Parent identifies above and by what settler scholar Pauline Wakeham refers to as the “long emergency of invasion.”⁴⁹ When a community of Métis reformed the Métis national government under Louis Riel at Batoche, insisting that Métis land rights be recognized and respected, Métis were again the targets of a Canadian military attack, culminating in the Battle of Batoche (May 9-12, 1885). As the Canadian militia targeted the Métis community of Batoche, Métis women were particularly active in protecting their homes. Métis women “engaged in battle, loading and repairing guns, making bullets, often standing just behind the men.”⁵⁰ Once again, the Canadian government's unwillingness to respect Métis people's inherent right to self-determination and to self-government led to the direct instability of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+.

The violation of Métis people's homes led to a number of deaths – a least one young Métis-Dakota girl “was killed in the crossfire and hastily buried by the soldiers” and two young girls died from tuberculosis.⁵¹ In the aftermath a number of Métis women died from “causes related to or at least aggravated by the sufferings and deprivations of war. They died of consumption (tuberculosis), la grippe (influenza), and fausse-couche (miscarriage).”⁵² The attacks on the Métis community and their homes at Batoche would continue to have ripple effects, as Diane Payment notes the consequences of such violence would continue to account for “the proportionately high death rate in 1886 as well.”⁵³ A number of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people lost their fathers, sons, and husbands at the hands of Canadian soldiers – either through death or imprisonment. Again, given the transitions brought as a result of sexist mores in Canadian society and the principal of coverture that saw women as property rather than as people, many Métis women were “dispossessed of their homes and personal belongings” and would have to fight extensively to recover what was taken from them.⁵⁴ The long-term consequences of this cannot be understated as we examine the position of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people today. The events at both Red River and Batoche have had deep ripple effects and have set a foundation for homelessness, poverty, and housing insecurity that have continued to render Métis women and girls vulnerable through today. For those who had been widowed in 1870, 1885, and/or otherwise lost spouses and children to illness and other conditions of systemic violence, the fracturing of kinship

49 Wakeham, Pauline. “The Slow Violence of Settler Colonialism: Genocide, Attrition, and the Long Emergency of Invasion.” *Journal of Genocide Research* (2021): 1-20.

50 Payment, Diane. (2012). “Women of Batoche.” Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute. 2.

51 Payment 1996, 27-30. For more information see LFMO 2019, 23-24.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Roy, Sylvia. (2016). *We are Still Dancing: Métis Women's Voices on Dance as a Restorative Praxis for Wellbeing* (Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa). 16; see also Payment 1996.

networks and the dispersal of Métis family members threatened the social fabric of Métis community life. Preliminary research into the period between 1870-1920 shows that Métis women suffered from the death of their children due to disease, malnutrition, and other factors at an exponential rate.⁵⁵

It was with the events of the resistances and the breakdown of Métis communities and families left in the wake of Canada's assault wherein Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ began to find themselves in even more marginalized positions. In the wake of 1885, the federal government's approach to relations with the Métis has been through an unwritten policy of neglect and ignorance, waiting for the forces of non-Métis settlement and municipal and provincial policy changes to assimilate Métis into Canadian society.

Processes that portended to offer a minimum of redress for Métis suffering after the attack at Batoche, such as the Rebellion Losses Commission for financial compensation, treated women in accordance with their husbands. If a widow made the case that she had not been directly a part of the conflict and should receive compensation of the damage done to her home and the losses incurred by Canada's attack, the Commission's lawyer generally rejected such a claim "especially given that at this time a woman's property was considered her husband's."⁵⁶ Métis women's claims were "likewise rejected on the basis of denunciations by others and the fact that 'the husbands had been party to the loss'" and thus bore the brunt of blame for Canada's destruction of their homes and livelihoods.⁵⁷

Métis author and scholar Jesse Thistle writes that in other parts of the prairies, the consequences of the Dominion Land Survey of 1872 was such that it "divided the prairie into settlements called homesteads. In between those lots and sites, spaces were left for roads, future railway lines and other infrastructure. Ten feet on either side of these spaces were allotted for works to do maintenance. These thin strips of land were often left unused by the Crown."⁵⁸ Métis families that were driven from Batoche, who were unable to rebuild, and/or who could not live there in safety, along with those for whom the expanded scrip system continued to fail, set up communities within road allowances. In Saskatchewan, from 1885-1945, for instance, "the landless Métis moved from locale to locale, often forcibly, in order to make a living and live among themselves."⁵⁹

For Métis women within road allowance communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and for those designated as squatters on their own land, racism and sexism continued to make them especially vulnerable. In Nicole St-Onge's study of Métis women living in St. Eustache, those born between 1911 and 1924 identified challenges faced by Métis women in continuing to live in rural areas. While both the federal and provincial governments saw no reason why Métis could not and would not assimilate into

55 See Adese, Jennifer. (2022). "Extinguishing the Dead: Colonial Archives, Anxieties, and Reflections on Research Métis Scrip." *Aliotment Stories: Indigenous Land Relations Under Settler Siege*. Justice, Daniel Heath, and Jean M. O'Brien, eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

56 Payment 1996, 30.

57 Ibid.

58 Thistle, Jesse. (2019). "Forced to live on roadsides: the dark history of Métis road allowances." *Unreserved: CBC Radio*. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/from-scrip-to-road-allowances-canada-s-complicated-history-with-them%C3%A9tis-1.5100375/forced-to-live-on-roadsides-the-dark-history-of-m%C3%A9tis-road-allowances-1.5100660>; see also Zelig, Ken and Victoria. (1987). *Ste. Madeleine: Community Without a Town*. Métis Elders in Interview. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications; Campbell, Maria and Racette, Sherry Farrell. 1995. *Stories of the road allowance people*. Penticton: Theytus Books.

59 Prefontaine, Darren. (nd). "The Road Allowance People." Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute: 15.

the wage labour economy of cities, for Métis women in St. Eustache, the prospect of the city was quite terrifying:

“Certainly for the Fort Rouge [nickname for Métis neighbourhood in St. Eustache] families, linguistic and educational barriers along with an awareness of latent racism kept them away from urban areas where the possibility of better jobs existed.”⁶⁰ The Métis women interviewed similarly rejected the idea that they would move to cities for better working conditions, insisting instead that if life was so untenable in their rural homes that they were, in fact, being pushed out by racism.”⁶¹

Darren Préfontaine, of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, writes that Métis in Saskatchewan were deprived of a stable land base by “systemic racism, Scrip speculation and government policies such as the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (1935), which gave the state the power to forcibly remove the Métis from their homes.”⁶² The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act targeted Métis people living in road allowance communities and forcefully relocated them to provincially-run experimental farming colonies:

Perhaps the most notable example of government paternalism towards the Road Allowance People occurred in 1949. In that year, the CCF government loaded many southern road allowance Métis, largely from “Little Chicago” in the Lestock area, into “special” railway cars in an attempt to settle them at Green Lake. While the Métis were aboard the train, many watched in horror as local government authorities burned down their homes.⁶³

Métis families were once again at the mercy of governmental processes that paid little attention or care to the wants and needs of Métis families. These “experiments” were established at a number of other places, including (among others) Glen Mary, Lestock, Lebret, and Crescent Lake, Saskatchewan.⁶⁴ In road allowance communities, Métis women continued to head up the domestic sphere, while also harvesting and preparing food and medicines for their families and communities. While Métis women filled vital roles in the balance of communities the forced relocations and disbanding of road allowance communities and the subsequent move of Métis women and families into cities, in particular, altered the landscape of the ongoing housing crisis. In cities, whereby it was not possible to live off the land, to harvest, and for Métis men to hunt and trap, the overarching change placed Métis women in a position of deep housing insecurity. Over time, this would lead Métis women to (as Cheryl Troupe writes in the context of Métis women in Saskatoon) become more politically vocal.⁶⁵ As there were a number of small-scale programs initiated by the province of Saskatchewan and CMHC, there is still research that needs to be conducted to identify past practices from the mid-century period and to gauge what/where/

60 Peters, Stock and Werner. (2018): 49; see St-Onge, Nicole. “Memories of Metis Women of Saint-Eustache, Manitoba-1910-1980.” *Native Studies Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 45-68.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 “Métis Settlements and Farms.” nd. Canadian Geographic Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada. <https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/metis-settlements-and-farms/>.

64 Ibid.

65 Troupe, Cheryl. (2009). *Métis Women: Social Structure, Urbanization and Political Activism, 1850-1980*. Master's thesis. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan.

how the solutions to the crisis that the federal government and the province has created for Métis people failed to sufficiently remediate the harms visited upon Métis.

In Manitoba, communities such as Ste. Madeleine, Métis people's homes were literally burned to the ground by government agents in 1939, when the provincial government of Manitoba and municipal governments colluded in designating the land as "community pastures as part of what was called the Prairie farm rehabilitation administration."⁶⁶ Oral history accounts of what took place at Ste. Madeleine also reveal that in addition to burning down the people's homes, their dogs were also shot.⁶⁷ The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act specifically "forced Metis farmers from the area with little to no compensation to create a pasture for settler farmers."⁶⁸ Twenty years later, the City of Winnipeg "ordered that the houses of Rooster Town be torn down and its residents evicted to make way for Grant Park Mall, Grant Park School and the expanding city neighbourhood of Fort Rouge."⁶⁹ The complete disregard for the well-being of Métis families cannot be disregarded. The forced relocations, displacements, and disposessions and the frequent framing by governments and media as though the intergenerational impacts of such trauma was the result of an innate deficiency in Métis people, further compounds the callous egregious of this conduct. We can see the intergenerational impacts in our interviewees, and in women like Della Lavallee, whose great-grandfather, great-grandmother and their children were forcibly removed from their home. When Prince Albert National Park was created in 1927 in Saskatchewan, the Lavallee family was removed from their home "and federal officials burned down the cabin" that was their home.⁷⁰ Her great-grandfather "Louis Lavallee lived there most of his life, raising children and grandchildren in a trapline cabin." As a result of the profound destabilization of their family, they and each generation after greatly struggled. This culminated in Della being "apprehended by government workers at age five and raised in non-Indigenous foster homes. She was not allowed to speak her Cree language." Such relocations and displacements – and indeed the trauma visited on families – continues to this day. It has led to loss of kinship relations, language, culture, and community – and is as responsible for genocide as other policy mechanisms visited on Métis and other Indigenous people. Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ have borne the brunt of the violence of these actions.

In Alberta, where Métis had continued to live in their communities, the Dominion Lands Act and corrupt scrip process opened Métis communities for settlement by non-Indigenous settlers. Changes to scrip regulations meant that land that was originally promised to the Métis was turned over to new immigrants by land speculators.⁷¹ In communities such as Lac Ste. Anne, St. Albert, Athabasca Landing, Fort Vermillion, Lesser Slave Lake, and along the Peace River the Crown's demarcation of "Crown land"

66 Hobson, Brittany. "New exhibit in Manitoba commemorates tragic Metis history that 'needs to be corrected'." APTN News. 24 May 2019.

<https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/new-exhibit-in-manitoba-commemorates-tragic-metis-history-that-needs-to-be-corrected/>

67 Ibid.

68 "New book describes forced Metis displacement from Manitoba borderlands." CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-metis-michif-herriot-ste-madeleine-1.3849157>

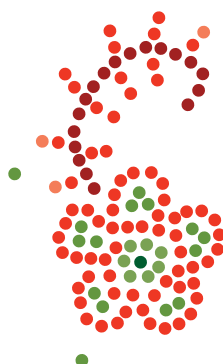
69 August, Ian. "Rooster Town Kettle and Fetching Water." Winnipeg Arts Council. 2019. <http://winnipegarts.ca/wac/artwork/rooster-town-kettle> .

70 Warick, Jason. "'All we can do is forgive': Descendants of Métis trapper visit site of his eviction by federal government." CBC News. 22 September 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/all-we-can-do-is-forgive-descendants-of-metis-trapper-visit-site-of-his-eviction-by-federal-government-1.4833509>.

71 See O'Byrne, Nicole. (2013). "No other weapon except organization": The Métis Association of Alberta and the 1938 Métis Population Betterment Act. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 24(2) : 311-352.

and the instituting of homesteading initiatives that denied many Métis access to land patents for lands within their pre-existing communities saw many Métis turned into squatters on their own land.⁷² Métis likewise struggled to secure title to their lands and a series of petitions were issued by Métis to the federal government in an effort to see their title secured (Blackfoot Crossing 1877, Cypress Hills 1878, Edmonton and St. Albert 1880).⁷³ At the same time, as the federal government ensured that those it designated as “Halfbreeds” could no longer be within treaty, a number of Métis who were able to move between Métis communities and reserve spaces in Alberta were withdrawn from treaty and saw their Indian title extinguished. The lists “Halfbreeds Withdrawn From Treaty” are overwhelmingly filled with the names of Métis women, and in some cases of Métis women who married non-Indigenous men. This demonstrates an alternate pathway through which federal legislators enforced the Indian Act of 1876’s gender discriminatory blood quantum provisions that held that an Indigenous woman’s “status” (and that of her children), in the eyes of the Canadian government, was determined by whether their husbands were, or were not, Indians recognized by Canada. By 1932, Métis in Alberta formed political associations that actively worked to push the Alberta government toward the establishment of land bases for Métis. The *Métis Population Betterment Act* was passed in 1938 by the provincial government of Alberta to provide some measure of land for Métis people in order to address the problem of rampant homelessness and visible poverty – leading to what are known today as the Métis Settlements and the only recognized land basis established for Métis people.⁷⁴

These haphazard and uncoordinated attempts to remove visibly impoverished Métis from the sight of settlers, to “better” and “rehabilitate” have generally failed to secure the long-term health and well-being of Métis families and communities. The continuing waves of dispossession and displacement that Métis have experienced is a direct causal relation to the challenges facing Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples today. The strain placed on kinship networks that would traditionally cushion Métis families and communities in hard times as been torn apart by processes of colonialism. While many Métis have fought this and have worked to create family and community resilience through renewing kinship connections in, for example, urban contexts, as the interviews we discuss shortly reveal, this cannot supplant the urgent action needed by people in power within the Canadian government to take financial and coordinated steps to repair the damage that has been done.



72 Ibid 315.

73 Rupertsland Center for Métis Research. 2018. “RMCR Scrip Booklet.” Edmonton: University of Alberta: 10.

74 Pocklington, T. C. (1991). *The government and politics of the Alberta Métis settlements*. Regina: University of Regina Press: 10.

5. Intergenerational Social and Cultural Impacts on Living/Housing Situations

As Métis scholar Jesse Thistle writes, to understand homelessness from an Indigenous lens, we have to be attentive to what home actually means for Indigenous peoples. As has been discussed throughout, our relationships with our families and communities have historically provided a “buffer” for a lack of access to “built environments.”⁷⁵ But with the disruption caused to Métis people’s lives by colonialism and its relatives such as neoliberal policy agendas, Métis kinship networks that would allow for resilience in the face of housing access have been challenged. For Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, lack of access to resources that are geared towards the unique impacts on them from the aforementioned waves of dispossession, have also rendered them vulnerable to layers of violence – from state institutions and arising from introduced and embedded misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia in Métis communities. For instance, cultural transmission leading to cultural loss has drastically suffered as a result of dispossession. Arising from the vulnerable positions Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are placed in due to a lack of safe, accessible, and affordable housing, they in fact experience domestic violence at rates higher than non-Indigenous women.⁷⁶ Thirdly, these factors compound to contribute to an enduring cycle of under-education among Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Given the constant displacements of Métis families and the lack of fixed addresses, coupled with racism faced both in the residential school system, the day school system, and in public schools in predominantly white towns, Métis children have suffered from a lack of access to education for generations. This continues to feed the affordability crisis.

i. **Loss of Culture and Intergenerational Transmission of Culture**

As has been previously discussed, access to safe, secure, and affordable housing is central to the health and well-being not just of Métis individuals, but of Métis families and communities. Our interview participants reflect on the struggle to retain language and culture, particularly as people reflected on the forces of dispossession and displacement that have broken up Métis families and communities.⁷⁷ As River, one of our interview participants reflects,

⁷⁵ Thistle 2017, 15.

⁷⁶ LFMO 2019.

⁷⁷ Mazzoli, Maria. (2019). “Michif loss and resistance in four Metis communities.” *Kahkiyaw mashchineenaan*, “All of us are disappearing as in a plague” *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*: 96-117; see also Kumar, Mohan B., Melissa Walls, Teresa Janz, Peter Hutchinson, Tara Turner, and Catherine Graham. “Suicidal ideation among Métis adult men and women—associated risk and protective factors: findings from a nationally representative survey.” *International journal of circumpolar health* 71, no. 1 (2012): 188-229; Giroux, Monique. “‘From Identity to Alliance’: Challenging Métis ‘Inauthenticity’ through Alliance Studies.” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 50 (2018): 91-118.

As a kid with somebody who didn't really have a strong cultural support system and who was basically being told or denied their culture in a way from others, I didn't really have a leg to stand on. (River) Waves of intergenerational displacement have negatively impacted the transmission of culture.

ii. Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence, and the Child Welfare System

There is a lack of disaggregated data and research related to violence against Métis women, girls, and/or 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. While there are some broader statistics that speak to the situation of Indigenous women and girls, it is not generally distinctions based. The few statistics available do reflect the fact that Métis women experience intimate-partner violence at higher rates than non-Indigenous women. The 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces revealed that Métis women were nearly twice as likely (46%) to “experience physical abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime compared with non-Indigenous women (22%).”⁷⁸ In fact, the number reported was in fact higher than that reported for First Nations women (42%).⁷⁹ A staggering 63% of Métis women reported experiencing psychological intimate partner violence, a rate higher than that reported for non-Indigenous women (42%) and First Nations (57%).⁸⁰ In addition, Métis women reported experiencing sexual abuse “by an intimate partner in their lifetime” at rates higher than First Nations women (26% for Métis versus 18% for First Nations), and more than double that of Indigenous women (11%).⁸¹ Nearly half of all Métis women who responded to the study reported experiencing sexual violence by intimate partners or other parties (48%).⁸² Lack of access to safe, affordable, and secure housing for Métis families and for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in particular, contributes to these rates of violence. As one anonymous Métis Two-Spirit identified person reflects:

“I’ve definitely been in relationships that have been abusive, one being emotionally – it really goes hand in hand – abusive, which was escalating towards the end and I got out, just because I couldn’t take it anymore. (Métis, Two-Spirit, lesbian, female, 40s, Vancouver).”⁸³

Familial dynamics have been strained under the pressures of colonization. Statistics on intimate partner and domestic violence demonstrate the fact that the dispossession of Métis women has led to forms horrific forms of violence. Unstable home lives render Métis women vulnerable both inside *and* outside the home.

78 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00007-eng.htm>.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ristock, Janice, Zoccole, Art, Passante, Lori, and Potskin, Jonathon. (2017). “Impacts of colonization on Indigenous Two-Spirit/ LGBTQ Canadians’ experiences of migration, mobility and relationship violence.” *Sexualities* 22 (5-6): 775.

For some Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+, the dispossession and displacement of Métis families and communities is interwoven with continuing cycles of interaction with the child welfare system. That housing policy, research, and program delivery *must* be accountable to Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ arising from the harms wrought by colonization is a matter of urgent need, as reflected in the story of Elaine Durocher, a Métis woman from Saskatchewan:

I was in three foster homes by the age of six years old. . . I went from a White foster home to the reserve with my mother and stepfather. I felt unsafe immediately. I had nothing; no food, no love. . . Then I went to residential school as a day student. I started there as a six-year-old for five years. . . I learnt to run by the time I was 10 years old. I was homeless when I was 12 years old. At the age of 14, I was sleeping under bridges and near railway tracks. . . I remained in unsafe housing all my life. Even when I was with my kids' fathers, I faced abuse and rape but I still had to stay. I felt I had to stay because those guys were the fathers of my children, and my mom never left even though she was beaten by my stepdad. . . After they took my baby girl away, I was homeless again and back on the street. Then I had another girl. In 1986, during the Expo Games in Vancouver, I was homeless again with two girls and pregnant. In 2007, I became homeless again. I was living in Port Coquitlam and was 50 years old.⁸⁴

Elaine's lived experience highlights the intergenerational trauma caused by the dispossession of Métis families and communities from our homes/lands. Métis girls are placed in situations of great precarity and for some, they are never able to find their footing and regain access to safe, secure, and dependable (and affordable) housing.

iii. Access to Education and Employment

The 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey revealed that Métis women were less likely to be employed than Métis men (59% versus 62%), were more likely to hold multiple jobs than Métis men (10% versus 6%), and were more likely to work in part-time jobs than Métis men (27% versus 12%).⁸⁵ This latter statistic is connected to the fact that Métis women were more likely to be responsible for child care. 22% of “core working age” (ages 25 to 54) Métis women “who worked part-time reported doing so because they were caring for their children.”⁸⁶ As reflected in other data analyzed in this report, a large number

84 Martin, Carol Muree, and Harsha Walia. 2019. “Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.” UBC Community and Partner Publications. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubccommunityandpartnerspublicati/52387/items/1.0378104>.

85 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2017. “Labour Market Experiences of Métis: Key Findings from the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey.” Statistics Canada. 26 November 2018. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2018002-eng.htm>.

86 Ibid.

of Métis women report an income shortfall relative to their ability to cover both short term and long term housing repairs. While Métis women **are** employed, the nature of work, the number of hours (part-time versus full-time), and overall pay, continue to play Métis women in a position of financial disadvantage. In turn this compromises housing stability and security. Were Métis women still consistently living in interconnected familial units on their lands as they were prior to Canada's coordinated efforts at dispossessing Métis and controlling the terms of our existence as a people, Métis women would not find ourselves in such difficult situations. The resilient networks Métis existed in as a core of our existence were compromised by the dispossession of us of our land bases. Systemic and structural barriers arising from our displacement and dispossession contribute to our struggle to access safe, affordable, and sufficient housing.

iv. Disability, Health, and Well-Being

For Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, the intergenerational impacts of forced relocations, displacement, dispossession, institutional, and settler colonial violence cannot be understated. As reflected in interviewees responses, particularly those who noted struggling at the nexus of employment, housing, and disability/accessibility, health-related challenges were a significant causal factor in someone's ability to live in safe, affordable, and accessible housing. One of the primary challenges in understanding the situation for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people is the general lack of data related to Métis health and wellness.⁸⁷ For instance, between 1980 and 2009, only 80 "peer-reviewed articles related to Métis health were published" and very few of these have firm statistical data related to Métis (versus pan-Aboriginal or pan-Indigenous data).⁸⁸ The fact that between 1992 and 2001, only two studies focused on Aboriginal health had direct data on/for Métis makes it even more challenging to demonstrate the circumstances facing Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+. While there are signs this is poised to change, this is important to note. In fact, one of the direct causal factors **for** this lack of data is identified as the "lack of clearly defined, landed Métis communities."⁸⁹ The violent dispossession and displacement of Métis families and communities is a self-perpetuating cycle whereby it has created conditions that compromise Métis women's, girl's, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people's health while also rendering it difficult to **assess** health disparities among these populations.⁹⁰ The links between health and wellness, housing, and the legacies of displacement remain an underexamined area and an important one for future research. This is in fact urgent as studies have shown that Métis women experience suicidal thoughts at rates higher than that of Métis men and than non-Indigenous women (23.4% for Métis women, 14.9% for Métis men, and 13.8% for non-Indigenous women).⁹¹

It also bears mentioning that Métis people report living with a disability at rates statistically comparable to First Nations people living off-reserve, and substantially higher than non-Indigenous people.⁹² Off-reserve First Nations report living with a disability at a rate of 32%, while Métis report at 30%. By contrast, non-Indigenous people report living with a disability at a rate of 19%.⁹³ Métis women report living with a disability at rates higher in older age. For those 55 years old and older, 43% report living with a disability while those 15 to 24 reported

87 Métis Centre of the National Aboriginal Health Organization. "Paucity of Métis-Specific Health and Well-Being Data and Information: Underlying Factors." NCAH. <https://www.nccih.ca/docs/context/FS-PaucityMetisHealth-MetisCentre-EN.pdf>.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 See LFMO 2019, 33; see also Kumar et al 2012.

92 Hahmann, Sara, Badets, Nadine, and Hughes, Jeffrey. "Indigenous people with disabilities in Canada: First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 15 years and older." Statistics Canada. 12 December 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2019005-eng.htm>.

93 Ibid.

at 31%.⁹⁴ This is still statistically significant for both populations. In fact, Métis aged 25 to 39 reported living with a severe disability at rates higher than off-reserve First Nations, Inuit, and non-Indigenous people.⁹⁵ According to the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Canadian Survey on Disability (2017), Métis women reported living with various kinds of disabilities at rates consistently higher than Métis men, including pain-related (24% versus 17.2%), mobility-related (11.7% versus 8.3%), and (among others), dexterity-based (6.4% versus 3.2%).⁹⁶ As some of our interview participants outlined, living with one or more disabilities undoubtedly impacts Métis access to employment and in turn has a direct impact on Métis people's living conditions. As more Métis in urban areas reported a disability than in rural areas, this may lead to the invisibilization of the housing struggle nexus for Métis living in rural areas – areas with far less access to supportive infrastructure.⁹⁷ More distinctions-based research and GBA+ research is needed to determine the extent to which attributing factors such as pollution and dietary disruptions have come to impact Métis women's reporting as to the nature and possible causes of the conditions they identify.



94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Hahmann, Sara, Badets, Nadine, and Hughes, Jeffrey. "Indigenous people with disabilities in Canada: First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 15 years and older." Statistics Canada. 12 December 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2019005-eng.htm>.

97 Ibid.

6. Review of Existing Gender-Based Data on Housing and Living Conditions

According to the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (2016), the majority of Métis people live in metropolitan areas defined as areas with a population of at least 30,000 people. The APS reports that 6 in 10 (62.6% of Métis respondents) live in such areas. This demonstrates the significant over-time impacts of land dispossession and displacement that Métis have experienced which has led many Métis to migrate from rural to urban areas in search of employment and a future for their families. As Métis elder Nora Cummings reflects on her in interview with the Lii Mimwayr Di Faamii (Family Memories) project, Métis from the community of Round Prairie were moved into the City of Saskatoon from their road allowance community, a process that strained the ability of Métis families to continue living as they always had – in tight-knit intergenerational family units that were deeply interdependent upon one another.⁹⁸ In spite of the effort made by Métis families to remain interconnected, as Cummings reflects, people continued to work across Saskatoon to keep their connections strong.

At the same time, Métis continued to deal with endemic poverty that has rippled across generations. As previously discussed, the historical roots of Métis dispossession from the land has led to intergenerational displacement and disconnection. For many, the result has been deep and abiding impoverishment. The resulting poverty that families experienced over generations has led to overrepresentation in statistics related to housing conditions. In the prairie provinces the 2016 APS revealed that nearly 10% of Métis lived in crowded housing, with numbers statistically highest for Métis living in the territories (11.4%).⁹⁹ According to available data, we know that Métis people broadly, whether living in rural or urban areas, were less likely than the non-Indigenous population to live in a dwelling owned by one of the members of their household (61% for Métis in 2016, 71% for the non-Indigenous population).

In a study undertaken in 2017 as to Indigenous Two-Spirit people's lived experiences, one young Métis interview respondent who identified as Two-Spirit, bisexual, queer and female in Winnipeg noted with respect to the housing situation:

“There seems to be like a lot of problems with affordable housing. Yeah, cause I know like people who appear as a visible minority, especially when they're Aboriginal, like if they sound Aboriginal on the phone, they don't get

98 “Nora Cummings – Growing up on Saskatoon’s Road Allowance.” 7 January 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glAbjVe-b9oY>.

99 “The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada.” Statistics Canada. 25 October 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016021/98-200-x2016021-eng.cfm>.

*the call back . . . [Also] like I know a lot of landlords get really upset if they figure out that, like those two roommates aren't roommates, you know. (Métis, Two-Spirit, bisexual, queer, female, 20s, Winnipeg)."*¹⁰⁰

This important insight from the interviewee highlights the hidden dimensions of discrimination for Métis 2SLGBTQIA+ people wherein they may apply for housing and landlords make assumptions as to their sexual identities. Wherein they are “uncovered,” landlords biases and their homophobia and transphobia co-mingles with their existing anti-Indigenous racism. Aside from scant references arising from interviews such as this, however, there is a lack of available statistical data accounting for the experiences and situation of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and this represents an urgent area in need of further focused study.

We do know from available statistics that Métis women and girls in particular deal with a lack of safe, secure, and affordable housing relative to non-Indigenous women and girls. In the 2011 Aboriginal Peoples Survey 13.3% of those who self-identified as Métis women lived in homes in need of major repairs while 32.3% were in homes in need of minor repairs. This echoes the data representative of the Métis people as a whole, whereby in 2006 13.2% of Métis reported living in housing that required major repairs, a number that is nearly twice that of the non-Indigenous population (6.8%).¹⁰¹ By 2016, the percentage of Métis people reporting that they lived in a home in need of major repairs decreased (11.2%), yet Métis continue to experience issues within regard to accessing safe and liveable housing.

For those who identify as female in the 2016 Canadian Census and the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples' Survey, their responses paint a diverse picture with respect to their living situations. In the former, 11.3% of Métis women reported living in a home in need of major repairs, with 34.2% indicating that their home was in need of minor repairs. Further, Métis people identifying as male reported living in a home in need of major repairs at lower rates than those identifying as female – at just under 11%. By contrast male respondents were more in need of homes with only minor repairs (35.1%).¹⁰² That female-identifying respondents live in homes in need of both minor and major repairs at significant rates is consistent with data provided regarding the financial resources of respondents. For instance, in the prairie provinces, over one-third of all female-identifying respondents, irrespective of the numbers of members in their household, indicate that they would not have the resources to cover an unexpected expense of \$500 (36.7%).¹⁰³ For lone member households, over half (51%) of female-identified respondents aged 55+ indicate that they do not have the financial resources and resiliency to cope with an unexpected expense of \$500.¹⁰⁴

100 Ristock et al 2017, 779.

101 Thomas 2015, 11.

102 Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016166.

103 “Number of persons in the household and meeting basic household needs and unexpected expenses by Aboriginal identity, age group and sex.” Aboriginal Peoples Survey. 5 May 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4110005601>.

104 Ibid.

A review of 2011 National Household Survey Data Tables gives us even greater insight. For example, in Saskatchewan 14.3% of respondents identifying as both Métis and female indicated that their homes were in need of major repairs. Among those reporting as non-Aboriginal and female, the number was considerably lower, at 9%.¹⁰⁵ Those reporting as Métis and female did so in numbers closer to that of non-registered or non-treaty First Nations (17.5%) that their homes were in need of major repairs.¹⁰⁶ Respondent rates showed consistency across prairie provinces with 14.8% of respondents identifying as Métis and female in Manitoba indicating a that they lived in homes in need of major repairs, while 11.9% in Alberta likewise indicated the same.¹⁰⁷ In each of the prairie provinces those identifying as Métis and female reported living in homes in need of major repairs at a rate nearly double that of the non-Indigenous population (for those responding as non-Aboriginal and female, those indicating they lived in a home in need of major repairs was 8.5% in Manitoba and 6.1% in Alberta respectively).¹⁰⁸ Rates of respondents reporting as Métis and female also indicated the need for minor repairs at rates higher than non-Indigenous respondents – with 32.6% in Manitoba (versus 29% for the non-Indigenous respondents) and 31.4% in Alberta (versus 25.1% for the non-Indigenous respondents).¹⁰⁹

There are, as well, distinctions between respondents who identify as Métis and as female when living in major urban centres versus living in smaller towns and cities located further from major centres. This was particularly acute across the three prairie provinces, with respondents living in more northerly locations reported living in homes in need of both minor and major repairs higher than non-Indigenous respondents, but also higher than those in more southerly locations. For example, in Thompson, Manitoba, statistics revealed that more non-Indigenous respondents lived in homes in need of minor repairs (39.3% vs. 38.1% for Métis respondents) but the margin was slim.¹¹⁰ However, in reporting housing conditions wherein residences were in need of major repairs, the gap was stark with 23.8% of respondents reporting as Métis and female specifying that they lived in a home in need of major repairs.¹¹¹ By contrast for the non-Indigenous female respondents this number was just 9.6%, a stark distinction consistent with challenges reported by our interview participants who lived in northern communities. The contrast with Winnipeg as a southerly urban centre also indicates a marked difference. For those identifying as Métis and female, 14.5% remarked living in homes in need of major repairs, less than that of Métis women in Thompson but nearly twice as much as non-Indigenous respondents in Winnipeg (8.4%). Métis women as well lived in homes in need of minor repairs in Winnipeg in higher numbers (31.4% vs. 28.5%). This is as well consistent with the findings from our interviews.¹¹²

In both Saskatchewan and Alberta, the data paints relatively the same picture. For instance, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan 8.7% of Métis women reported living in a home in need of major repairs, in contrast to just 7.4% of non-Indigenous women respondents. As well, 32.7 of Métis women reported that their dwellings needed minor repairs a number still higher than that of the non-Indigenous respondents (32.2%).¹¹³ For those respondents from Saskatoon, the disparities remain notable. 7.4% of Métis women reported homes in need of major repairs, with 32.6% in need of minor repairs. For non-Indigenous women these numbers were 5.8% and 25.6% respectively.¹¹⁴ In the region of Wood Buffalo, Alberta, 9.9% of Métis women reported dwellings in need of major repairs and nearly half reported homes in need of major

105 Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011036.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011036.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

repairs (42.4%). With respect to the need for both major and minor repairs, Métis women responded at rates indicating double the need in comparison to non-Indigenous women (4.7% for major repairs and 21% for minor repairs).¹¹⁵ While the gap was less stark between Métis and non-Indigenous in Edmonton, the percentage of respondents identifying as Métis and female living in dwellings in need of major repairs was consistent between Wood Buffalo and Edmonton (with 9.6% reporting a need for major repairs in the latter). The proportion of Métis women in Edmonton whose dwellings required minor repairs, however, was noticeably lower than Métis women in Wood Buffalo (42.4% vs. 31%). In Edmonton, as mentioned, the gap was less stark in Edmonton than in Wood Buffalo, non-Indigenous women still reported the need for both major and minor repairs at lower rates (6% for major repairs and 25.2% for minor repairs).

It is important to note that for communities under-educated with respect to home ownership, the distinctions between what constitutes a “minor” and “major” repair may as well contribute to the data presented. In fact, numbers of those in need of major repair may be higher than reported, as reflected in our interviews. Respondents at times under-estimated the seriousness of repairs needed instead expressing gratitude for simply having a roof over their head. Having said that, the available data does make it abundantly clear that there are marked disparities between the living conditions and housing safety as experienced by Métis women and non-Indigenous women. A comparatively higher number of self-identifying female respondents live in homes in need of either minor or major repair. For Métis women living in areas away from major urban cores, this gap is even clearer. This reflects not only on the challenges with accessing safe housing for Métis women, but also highlights that economic marginalization continues to shape Métis women’s experiences with respect to housing. Given what has been previously outlined regarding the experiences of Métis women and families under colonization, that respondents in areas away from the urban centres (such as Winnipeg) from which they were actively driven away from, might not come as a surprise. Yet it is clearly a situation of systemic inequality and marginalization largely invisible to the general public. Further, as it stands, it is not possible to cross-section the 2011 National Household Survey data by gender identity – with the 2021 Canadian Census being the first to expand data collection beyond the gender binary.¹¹⁶ There is indeed a pressing need to identify distinctions for those 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people.

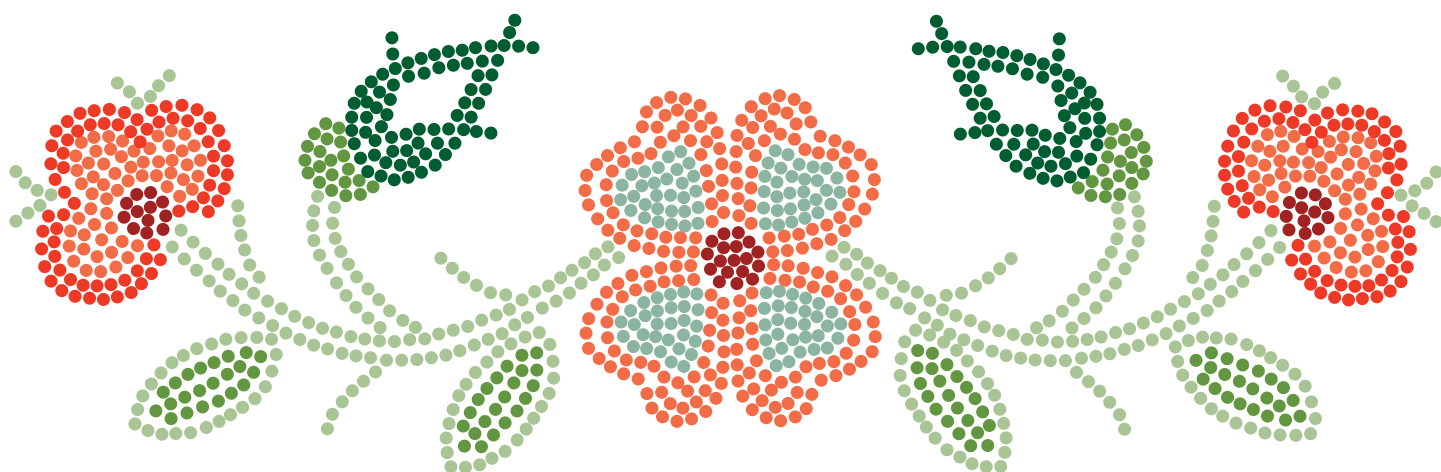
In both Alberta and BC recent housing need assessment surveys indicate that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are particularly impacted by housing crises. MNBC may have provided one of few sets of data related to 2SLGBTQIA+ people’s experiences. Their survey revealed that individuals who identified as non-binary, 2-spirit, or with other gender identifies “experience higher rates of unaffordable housing” than do those who identified in the survey as male or female.¹¹⁷ It is important to flag that the data tables presented in the MNBC Housing Need Survey lists only three categories associated with (presumably) with gender identity – Male, Female, and Other. It bears further noting that the categories of male/female correspond with sex assigned at birth and *not* gender identities (the gender binary having been constructed as man/woman). In addition, the category of Other, as discussed, is unable to give a respectful and sufficient set of data for those who are 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Still, given the little data available, it is our hope that in highlighting it, it may nevertheless provide insight.

115 Ibid.

116 Stratis, Niko. “Despite its best efforts, the Canadian government others trans folks in its latest census.” Xtra. 14 May 2021. <https://xtramagazine.com/power/canada-2021-census-trans-data-200893#:~:text=The%20census%20asks%20two%20questions,self-de-fine%20one's%20current%20gender>

117 Big River Analytics Ltd. “The Voice of the Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia.” Métis Nation of British Columbia. 7 January 2022. 28.

With respect to Housing Affordability, 42% of respondents identifying as female indicate that they are struggling amidst unaffordable housing. 43% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ respondents as well indicate that they struggle with unaffordable housing, while only 38% of respondents identifying as male did.¹¹⁸ Although 17% female-identifying people reported that they are dealing with an inadequate housing situation, the number was much higher for those who reported as Other (28%).¹¹⁹ The assessment also indicates that those who identified as other report living in unsuitable housing at a higher rate (12%) than those who identified as male (10%) or female (9%).¹²⁰ The Métis Housing survey notes, for their part, that the vast majority of their programs support single mothers (81.1%) rather than single fathers (18.9%), demonstrating that Métis who identify as women still carry the predominant responsibility for raising children – precisely why integrated housing and childcare spaces such as that being developed by MNBC and other organizations are so vitally important.¹²¹ They also identified key reasons people do not participate in the program, including lack of awareness about the programs available (49.5%), issues with accessing or filling form in (17.2%), and people being unable to provide the information needed to complete the application.¹²² What these reveal corresponds with what we have found in data elsewhere and from within our interviews – there is a lack of stable, secure, and affordable housing. To date, approaches to address housing issues have been largely fragmented and unsustainable.



118 Ibid 46.

119 Ibid 68.

120 Ibid 74.

121 Métis Housing. "What We Heard." nd. https://www.metishousing.ca/uploads/source/What_We_Heard_-_Housing_Needs_Assessment_Report_V5.pdf.

122 Ibid.

7. Survey and Engagement Session

In 2021 LFMO undertook a survey of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to ascertain the current realities. Though Métis housing experiences are certainly unique from First Nations, Inuit and non-Indigenous experiences, Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks' housing realities are also different from that of Métis men's experiences. In the following section we identify some of the key themes identified from the survey.

i. Lone Parent Households

Almost a quarter of LFMO's survey respondents identified themselves as a lone parent. In the majority of cases, a lone parent is a Métis woman, Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+ individual under whom most or all responsibilities related to household maintenance fall, such as cleaning, cooking, home repairs, childcare, transportation, finances, etc. These are also often one-income households, making these responsibilities even more challenging to balance. For Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ lone parents who are far from their home and community and who wish to move closer to family, they often cannot afford the move and further, cannot afford to live in these areas, deepening the disconnect between Métis and their culture.

ii. Métis Elders

Living with one's children, parents and other family members is not a far cry for many Métis households and is a way for generations to connect, heal and share culture between them. Not only are Métis youth able to learn from Métis Elders, but Métis Elders are able to stay better connected to their families, consequently ensuring a healthier well-being. However, adequate space is often cited as an issue for multigenerational households who struggle to accommodate each member comfortably. It is also worth noting that sometimes this situation is out of necessity, with Métis Elders on fixed and limited incomes, unable to afford senior housing, or in cases where waitlists are incredibly long, with no interim solutions for Métis seniors who need housing immediately.¹²³ What we have also heard is that in addition to aging Métis women who do not have the ability to maintain home repairs and needs, many Métis Elders have cited a great need for Métis-specific seniors' housing and Elder support to ensure they are able to stay in their homes for longer or, if not, to be able to stay in a safe and culturally appropriate environment.

iii. Precarious Housing and Homelessness

Current definitions of homelessness as well as any research undertaken related to Métis women's, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks' experiences of homelessness and precarious housing must recognize how

123 LFMO 2021.

colonialism has created uniquely prejudicial housing outcomes for them.¹²⁴ Precarious housing must also extend to include not only physically precarious housing such as a lack of shelter and/or inadequate housing, but also emotionally precarious housing as well, such as unsupportive living environments or housing programs and services that are not culturally relevant. Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are more likely to experience hidden homelessness, such as staying at a family member or friend's house and/or living in overcrowded housing. Indeed, there is a strong connection between precarious working conditions, financial instability and precarious housing impacting Métis women's abilities to meet household needs.¹²⁵ Additionally, those who are on the brink of homelessness often lack the necessary support to prevent them from falling into a cycle of precarious housing and homelessness.¹²⁶ For Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks struggling with addiction and poverty, often they lose connection to their children through colonial child welfare systems and the justice system. When a Métis woman loses her child, she loses her spirit and will to exist.¹²⁷ Indeed, there must be a greater number of Métis-specific wraparound services designed for Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks and their families struggling with addiction and poverty that do not work to aid in the removal of their children from their culture.

iv. Homeownership

Much of the research that exists on Métis women's housing, while essential to the conversation, is deficits-based, focusing on homelessness and shelter needs. However, 76.2% of Métis women that LFMO surveyed noted that home ownership is indeed one of their goals and in fact, 57.1% were currently homeowners.¹²⁸ That being said, Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ homeowners, often experience discrimination from housing decision makers, including bankers and mortgage specialists, who often only address their male partners in correspondences and transactions. Additionally, young Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks are becoming increasingly unsure if homeownership is even possible for them, unlike previous generations, and if so, whether it would be a good investment due to uncertain housing markets and skyrocketing prices. There have also been a number of noted barriers impacting Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks' abilities to purchase homes, with almost 80% of LFMO's survey respondents experiencing these barriers themselves on their way to homeownership. These have included financial barriers (such as difficulties or inability to save or qualify for a mortgage); credit history or requiring more information about the mortgage negotiation process. This process especially should be culturally appropriate and safe spaces for Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks to ask questions and learn.

v. Access to Services

There is something to be said about the irony of the high cost of living in cities and urban centres which offer a greater amount of resources and services, compared to the more affordable housing costs in rural communities, closer to one's culture, but where housing resources and services are far fewer. In cases where public transportation is unaffordable and/or inaccessible, this issue is magnified. For those who are able to access housing services and programs, red tape is also a very regular reality for many Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks. For some, applications were seemingly lost and they never heard from them again; for others, waitlists were exceedingly long and did nothing to address

124 LFMO 2020.

125 Hahmann 2019.

126 LFMO 2021.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

their urgent risk of not having safe housing. Some Métis women who initially reached out to mortgage assistance programs and services found that the process took so long and lacked an understanding of what community support looked like. A common feeling too has been a shared distrust of banks and governmental bodies, with a preference for working with Indigenous mortgage corporations or lenders and programs who are more familiar with the towns and communities of their clients.

vi. Métis Women's Housing and Violence at Home

The complicated impacts of colonial violence and intergenerational trauma have created a number of Métis households where peace, tradition and connection to culture have been replaced with addiction, abuse and violence, disproportionately impacting Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks. In fact, the foremost cause of Indigenous women's precarious housing/homelessness is violence at home.¹²⁹ When Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks no longer feel safe in their homes, the street or a shelter are often their only accessible options. Furthermore, Métis women are more likely to be subject to abuse and violence when compared to non-Indigenous women, particularly if they are between the ages of 25 and 40.¹³⁰ Even though many Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks are attempting to flee violence at home before they find themselves precariously housed or homeless, they often encounter further violence in these situations as well.

Despite this, LFMO has heard at our engagement session, in our survey and throughout our research that many Métis women are reluctant to access mainstream as well as Indigenous shelters and housing services because of the lack of Métis-specific programming. With a lack of culturally relevant services, Métis survivors of domestic violence can be further traumatized. Neighbourhood violence and a resulting lack of community support also play major roles in Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks' housing experiences. One participant at LFMO's engagement noted that teenagers had tried to kick in her door; when she called police, they in turn asked what she had that they might want and did not come by to check on her and her family. Not only did this not solve the participant's immediate need for safe and secure housing, but it also served to further discourage her from seeking help in the future should other violent situations arise.

Isolation often accompanies domestic violence and the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded this further. Results from a survey looking to understand how the pandemic has impacted Nations, Inuit, and Métis women shows that 1 in 5 have been subject to violence (e.g., physical, psychological) during the first three months of the pandemic.¹³¹ Indeed, in additions to the health stresses that the pandemic has brought in, it has also deeply impacted Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ folks' housing experiences across the Motherland.

129 Ontario Native Women's Association. (2018). Indigenous Women, Intimate Partner Violence and Housing. Learning Network Newsletter Issue 25. London, Ontario: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.

130 See O'Donnell, Vivian and Wallace, Susan. (2011). First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women. Statistics Canada. http://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Government%20Documents/Women_In_Canada_6thReport/WmCanada_AborigWm.pdf; MMIWG 2019.

131 Wright, Teresa. "Violence against Indigenous women during COVID-19 sparks calls for MMIWG plan." CBC News. 10 May 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/violence-against-indigenous-women-action-plan-covid-19-mmi-wg-1.5563528>.

vii. Métis Women's Housing and COVID-19

The pandemic brought to light many already existing gaps in housing services accessible to Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks, which soon became intensified because of the challenges brought by COVID-19. Multigenerational households are a common Métis reality, with young children growing up alongside moshoms, kokoms and aunties. These can certainly be happy and healthy households, if there is enough space to house them comfortably. Throughout the Métis Motherland, families saw their older children moving in with parents and grandparents because of unemployment due to COVID-19, to homes that are not large enough to accommodate them and their needs. Indeed, in LFMO's survey, one participant noted having to convert their dining room into a bedroom to make enough room. It was also noted that the pandemic was even more stressful for households with immunocompromised family members, living in multigenerational and often very overcrowded houses.

Housing adequacy has continued to be an issue for many Métis households during the pandemic; for many renters, the operations and maintenance of apartment buildings has noticeably deteriorated since the pandemic took root. High staff turnover coupled with infrequent visits to properties has led to an increase in violence in buildings as well as increased needs for repairs, forcing Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks to seek outside services for support or to become their own advocates to ensure safe housing. For Métis families whose children were at home for more of the day, noise complaints and tension between neighbours were noted, especially due to playground closures and fewer available community spaces for infants and children.

Isolation and a lack of connection to one's community also became a major issue during the pandemic. For Métis students who left their communities, they were unable to reach out to Métis connections in their new neighborhoods, as households were unable or uneasy about taking in new visitors. Additionally, a stable Internet connection was noted as a recurring need during the pandemic, as it became the main source of connection between families and communities who had to stay at home and/or self-isolate. However, not all Métis households have access to stable Internet and thus were increasingly isolated during stay-at-home orders.

COVID-19 also limited employment and income opportunities for Métis women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ folks, leading to difficulties in affording mortgage and rent payments. Combined with rising food costs and soaring electricity and water bills because everyone is at home, many Métis homes have had difficulties making ends meet. Additionally, for Métis households especially in northern rural Ontario, an influx of individuals working from home led housing prices to soar. In cases where Métis families have had to move households because of increasing costs, they've consequently been pushed them farther away from social housing and services and into neighbourhoods where homes are more run-down and unsafe. One participant noted that they have been homeless for a year because of the pandemic.

8. Interview Data

i. Intergenerational displacement/dispossession

All of the interview participants reflected on the links between their present condition and the displacement their parents, grandparents, and ancestors experienced as Métis people. They connected their struggle to access safe, secure, and stable housing to the displacement of their families and communities through (among other things) colonization, scrip, and road allowances. They also reflected on the processing of coming to learn about their family's own displacement, whether through stories passed down from family members or through their own efforts to learn about what happened in/to their families:

I'm trying to piece together if it could have been...cousins or were...siblings of my ancestors who lived in Rooster Town. (Maggie)

I've done quite a bit of family research, and I find her living as a child on [...] Street which would have been part of Rooster Town. (Justina)

So when I look at the family, when my mom went back down to and when I got sick, when they moved south after retirement...It very much looks like road allowance because they basically got like an acre or two from a bunch of different farmers. It's hard to explain this story. (Jamie)

We haven't had a cohesive family homeland. The last time would have...was maybe two to three generations. It was like some scrip passed in two on. We were issued scrip along with everybody else and dispersed along with everybody else...So – and I don't know really that that was cohesive – but I know there's pictures of gatherings that I've seen. (Justina)

Again because we are Native...they had to forfeit it...they make us, like, you know, second class citizens...We know we never forfeit the land even with the scrip and that, like my grandmother was supposed to have scrip but it was an X which doesn't really show proof that she agreed to scrip. (Jennie)

There was supposed to be scrip. One of the things I had noticed when I had went to the archives and got some paperwork but all my paperwork pretty much a lot of it is gone. But there was scrip taken with an X." (Jenny)

I've got lots of scrip in my family...I don't know what happened to all of it. I know some, some of my ancestors, or family, were farmers. I didn't know them, so this is what I'm getting from stories from my uncle, or even paperwork that I've seen. Yeah, things I've seen online, people who've been writing about it...but I learned that my mom grew up on land that was given to her family...she grew up on that land,

intergenerationally, so she lived with her grandmother and uncles. So they all grew up on that same land. So that's what I know, I know it was parcelled off. I know they were right along the Red River, so I know my, my parents fished there, my grandparents fished there. Yeah. Chopped their own wood. They lived in a cabin, like a log cabin... I just know that we don't have that land, like my family doesn't – is not on that land anymore. That's what I can say for sure. (Gina)

Interviewees such as Marcia indicated that they had been told from their dad that the reason they lived where they did is because they were “nomads” who had come from the Red River and were Red River people. Each of the interview participants reflected on a sense of loss arising from their family's displacement from the land:

... Métis women specifically, I would say that we're always a few steps behind you know, because we're not fully Indigenous and we don't really have a little community of our own. People still sometimes referred to us as the white Indian. I think there's discrimination and generational trauma from our past, you know, not healing yet. We find ourselves with men like I did and end up in domestic violence situations with Ministry involvement. We just need a place to come together and feel connected and feel safe. (Arielle)

I wish we still had it. I've been on that trap line with him. Chasing those grizzly bears. (Tumbleweed)

We don't have any land out in that area. That's all been taken away. (Lori)

My grandfather grew upon that land, and then it was parceled off. I think he gave some away to create a little schoolhouse and then it was just parceled off until it was just a house on the land. (Gina)

Scrip. But as is common with many other Métis those were then sold. So that was a number of generations ago... But, you know, I've seen the scrip records and I know that we don't have them anymore. (Erica)

... the impact of being forced to move, like being pushed out of your, your ancestors, your parents, being pushed out of communities and other places, and the move between their rural communities and the settlements in the city. (River)

... people always moved, but it's different when you're moving because you're under pressure and stress. It's not the same as buffalo hunts. (Jamie)

Some of the properties in the family were sold so cheaply over time, like a house for \$5000. We're talking about 50 years and 60 years and you know, but they're hanging on to these memories. Some cousins are still traumatized that they didn't get it. (Sharla)

In coming to learn about their family's experiences with things such as the scrip system, participants also reflected on the struggle to come to an understanding as to what happened and why. As Martina reflects,

just started searching my family names and I just pulled up a bunch of different, all of my relatives and ancestors who got scrip, and like I didn't even really know what it was or know that my family got it or understand what it meant. (Martina)

They also reflected on a sense of loss arising from how ways of raising children and of growing up had changed as a result of systems such as the scrip system and the gradual loss of community connections and land-based relationships:

we didn't grow up that way. Maybe it's because we were in the city. I don't know, but it just seemed to never really stick. (River)

The reflections of these interview participants further underscores the urgent need to address systemic marginalization that is rooted in the longstanding dispossession and displacement of Métis families and communities from our lands. As will be discussed in the following sections, this has had particularly devastating impacts on Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

ii. Social/Living Conditions

1. Intergenerational Poverty

One of the largest overarching themes in the interviews we conducted were the multiple forms of socioeconomic issues faced by participants. These economic issues were multifaceted and tended to affect people for their entire lifetimes. For the individuals that we included in this study economic hardships began in their childhood. Most of the participants experienced some kind of economic hardship with about 75% of them experiencing extreme poverty during their childhoods. Two participants reflected on the following:

Well, my living conditions for me [growing up], I would think that we lived in poverty. My dad had broke his neck. From being incarcerated. We lived a very interesting life because my parents were always under scrutiny... we grew up basically on welfare. So we live below poverty. There was many times that my parents couldn't afford to pay rent. So we'd end up having to move or, you know, there's times we lived in people's garages. There was times we lived in our own vehicles. (Faye)

When you were growing up, so you grew up on...my grandmother's farm...my dad going there, they struggled a lot like it was. ...we were poor, poor. We...my mom didn't have a driver's license and there was six of us kids and so we didn't have running water...with an outhouse. We had to melt snow in the summer or the winter, you know, things like that. (Marcia)

...we'd be homeless and then we move to a new city or somewhere one of her family members lived, we moved a lot. And then, sometimes we lived in a car on a freeway off ramp and out of the McDonald's dumpster. Then we moved up here. Just my mom and my brother and me. 25 years ago. She worked at a car wash. And we basically lived off her tips. It was rough. We didn't really have food or really anything." (Arielle)

Faye and Marcia embody the sentiments of the 21 one people included in this report. Faye in particular grew up around her parents struggles with drug addiction and frequent incarceration. While her family was able to receive some supports from social programs it was not enough to secure stable housing. Given this her family regularly moved or simply slept in their car. Marcia shared their experiences with more rural based poverty. While their family did have a home, it lacked indoor plumbing and running water. For the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to, early childhood poverty was prevalent and tended to spill over into their adulthood.

Given multiple forms of poverty respondents discussed they also noted how their parents, grandparents and extended family battled with housing insecurity and/or helped them navigate the housing system, even from their own marginalized positions:

Well, when we moved up here to be with my 'cause my dad was, my mom and dad separated and we were living in like some cockroach infested prostitute ran motel. . . and then my dad went to jail. And then my mom moved us up here, and then my grandma had a big house but she had 12 of us living there.
(Arielle)

My mom managed to negotiate a lower rent than the landlords were asking. So . . . it was a lot of illegal apartments that were not, you know, the best conditions, non-responsive landlords, and I know she did have to move around a fair deal. I'm not exactly clear on, you know, the details regarding not just because I was young, but there was a lot of moving around with her. Definitely kind of substandard housing. **(Erica)**

. . . when I first rented my apartment and stuff, I was absolutely clueless. And there were actually a few times I almost got scammed because I didn't know what I was doing, and I was lucky enough to have my mom who was able to walk me through it, but. . . I remember several times imagining myself not having her and . . . having to navigate that alone. That's a very vulnerable position to be in, and I'm someone who grew up in the city. I can't speak for people who live outside of the city. . . There are a few times where my property managers are doing very questionable things, but they should not have been doing.
(Elizabeth)

Arielle discussed how most of her extended family lived with her maternal grandmother. She felt the whole family “mooched” off her and lived there without providing financial support. Arielle and her mother found themselves living there after her parents separated. Here they dealt with overcrowded living conditions and poor quality of housing. Additionally, her family tended to mistreat her mother for various undisclosed reasons. Erica discussed some of the experiences her mother experienced with housing. This included illegal apartments, landlords who refused to fix essential parts of the home and moving on a regular basis.

The legacy of early childhood poverty and housing insecurity affected them greatly into their adulthood. For example, participants reported asking parents for help to find housing only to realize that their parents did not know how to negotiate the modern rental market system. Or in some cases, given family disagreements or other longstanding family issues, parents or older family members were not able to help the younger generation even if they had the financial means to do so:

Systemically, I feel that I have been set up to not necessarily have that best foundation, coming from inadequate housing, not coming from a family of great financial means that were, you know, not able to help secure that housing, etc. **(Erica)**

And I had to get a co-signer for an apartment. I remember and that was a struggle because that I had to go to my parents and my mom, and I do not have a good relationship. With my family and I'm actually estranged from them and my family. My mom is, I love my mom but she's very traumatized. I don't know exactly what happened to her, she didn't really talk about it but you know there's a lot of generational trauma, and she's just not really a functioning adult. **(Martina)**

Erica and Martina share the various challenges they encountered attempting to receive help from their family members. While both acknowledge that their parents were good people, they simply were not able to help due to living in poverty, multiple forms of trauma or ongoing family conflicts they were often connected to historical forms of oppression. This meant that young adults even those with university educations experienced multiple barriers to finding housing. These barriers included a lack of credit, a lack of security deposit or lack of a co-signer or little understanding how finding housing worked as a whole.

A lack of income, resources and access to affordable housing put the individuals we interviewed in precarious housing situations for most of their lives. This included living with having multiple roommates and staying with friends for a few days at a time. In extreme cases respondents described staying in unstable housing like cars, campgrounds, or hotels. As a whole even respondents who identified as middle class struggled to secure housing:

Yeah. It's just really challenging, like with the cost of living and everything and like the living wages just don't exist. And so, I think that's really challenging. (Linda)

I've lived with my partner, my boyfriend of four years and we split the housing... he takes over more of the rent though because he just makes more money than I do. And I find it hard to keep up with the rent. But yeah, if it wasn't for a partner, I definitely wouldn't be able to live in Toronto. So it is helpful to have that to split the cost on things. (Lori)

Here Linda and Lori describe their experience with housing. Linda aptly describes that she feels there are no “living wages” left in Canada. Lori who is a successful professional also mentions that she could not afford to live and work in Toronto without the help of her partner. For Sharla, the rising cost of food and utility bills pose a challenge to their ability to manage their mortgage and other monthly costs:

with the price of food that goes up now. Oh my goodness... the utility bills were the same as mortgage. Never seen that, like they both doubled in the last month and they were already creeping up. So then the price of food now and I just, you know, we could barely make it comfortably in the last round of bills, but, you know, again, knocking on wood, we could do it (Sharla).

In addition, Sharla makes visible a certain kind of survival economy, whereby other Métis women she knows of use the food bank – not because they are necessarily short on food all the time, but because it frees up money that could be spent elsewhere:

Do you know how many people I know who use the food bank? Like you wouldn't believe, [people] with regular full-time jobs and they just... once they've started using the food bank, they won't stop because it's a significant---even if they could maybe buy the groceries, it's significant---significantly reduces their costs for the month, so they'll just say, you know? (Sharla)

In fact what Sharla draws attention to is the common myth that being employed full-time automatically translates to being “okay.” In fact, as she points out, even for those employed full-time it may not be “enough” and accessing food banks at least releases some minor amount of financial person that Métis

women are dealing with. The individuals included in the study made a straightforward observation: they did not make enough money and could not afford the skyrocketing cost of living across most of Canada.

One interview participant, Sharla, reflected extensively on the challenges facing Métis single mothers, noting that even being marginally above the poverty line was not enough to ensure access to affordable housing. In fact, it ended up preventing them from accessing Métis-issued funding programs:

The Métis Nation, they have housing. I wasn't even allowed to go on the list. Told no, it's not for me. And I don't understand why...just basically, no, our list is too long. You'd never get down the waiting list. You're better off without us. And I had a baby on my hip and I needed somewhere to go. (Sharla)

even when my son was really young, if you'd go in looking for funding but you had better credentials than the person approving it, you could forget it. It doesn't matter how much you need it, you can forget it. Mind you, my brother, whose got letters around his name, you can always. He's a guy...But they would tell me 'Oh, you don't need this. Basically you already. Make enough money.' You're barely over the poverty line. So, you know, go on...this is just always I found the way it was. (Sharla)

Not making enough money was by far the biggest challenge for the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we interviewed.

2. Need for partner/to share costs of living

Even for those who were able to secure rental housing, it was often contingent on staying in a romantic relationships where their partner could help pay half of expense. When women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people did not have this support, it had intense negative effects for their well-being and often resulted them having to live in subpar housing, temporary housing, or shelters. This was particularly accurate in areas such as Fort McMurray, where housing costs are prohibitively high and there are few safe options for employment for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This would lead some women, in particular, as Sharla reflects regarding her experiences living and working in Fort McMurray, to simply marry rather than to try and seek out work/housing that would ultimately contribute to their further precarity. Having a partner was seen to mitigate that strain (while also create a complex system of dependency). This became more challenging for those interview participants who had to take care of children. These feeling was exacerbated in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia where housing tended to be particularly expensive.

The experiences of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who owned property were not much different from those who rented. Those who own property also found themselves in a precarious situation. The ownership of land, a home, or condominium was often contingent on staying with a romantic partner (in the case of most of the interview participants, this was with a cisgender man), or in some type of well-paid blue-collar work that was increasingly difficult to attain:

Housing was just unbelievable, and I lost the condominium that I did have. I couldn't continue it. Because when the mines shut down...everything was shutting down when the mine every four or five years was closed. It was...that's what happens...My husband happened to have land here but... two years ago our house burnt right to the ground when they had that northern fire. So we just lost everything and have to start over again. (Jenny)

The above quote sheds light on the challenges that respondents shared during the interview process. Even for the few women who were able to purchase a home, this did not equate to securing long term safety and security. For those who lost jobs or a partner, they often also lost their ownership and access to secure housing. When women did lose ownership of their homes, they were not able to purchase property again.

3. Discrimination Against Disabled Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People

Finding affordable housing became even more complex than we think about the various identities that these women carried. For example, many respondents noted the landlords were unwilling to rent to them if they were on social assistance or some type of disability related supports. Landlords felt that being on social assistance would make our respondents unreliable. Many landlords also cited the fact that they were afraid to rent to individuals in wheelchairs or with other physical disabilities for fear of having to upgrade or make their living spaces more accessible. The stigma of receiving this assistance often outweighed the actual help individuals received. For example, two respondents shared the following:

And I think right now in our society, that is a huge pandemic in itself, is that if you live on social assistance, how do you afford to live? Like here, I think a single person might get \$800 a month if they're lucky. Well, rents are \$1200/\$1,400. So how do you find a place to live? (Faye)

My income until very recently was primarily through the Ontario Disability Support Program, which gives very little money so that's part of why my housing situation has been so unstable, like, just to contextualize it a bit, the maximum monthly ODSP is split into two amounts there's, there's your housing allowance, and then there's the rest of your money which is for everything else. And the maximum they'll give you for the housing allowance is \$490 a month. (Donna)

Donna and Faye shared their experiences with receiving social and disability related supports. Both mention the large discrepancy between the actual cost of rent versus the amount of money they receive. Both note that finding an apartment in this day and age with these current supports are nearly impossible. This is exacerbated but landlords require proof of income. As mentioned previously, once many landlords find out about disability or other social benefits, they tend to be apprehensive to rent to these individuals.

Some of our respondents noted that the strains of systemic inequalities and systemic bias towards people with disabilities significantly impeded their abilities to provide secure housing for their families:

I was working part time as a receptionist, had two babies while I went through school, and by the time I started working, I had all three. My eldest has autism, so then we were paying for all of our specialty assessments and treatments and programming and the house...I am a mom of a kid with autism. The barriers are extreme...Private therapy assessment alone is like a year and a half to a three year wait, by which time any benefit you would have gotten from it may be gone because the earlier the intervention, the better. Some like occupational therapy, speech therapy, all of these things that I mean, I have insurance. I'm very lucky. People who don't your kid just doesn't get that treatment. They just don't. You might eventually get it from the province, but by the time your kid is in school. They age out of those provincial programs, and they're supposed to just get it in school while they don't. And what they do get is insufficient. That's just how it is...I just...I find it appalling and I don't know if they even have any specific benefits for adults with physical or intellectual disabilities. Like what the hell is that? How do you

how do you build a nation and leave your...[special] needs...those folks behind anyway? So that's my rant on that. That's a rant I've been hearing in my heart for a long time. So you're the first person who gets to hear it out loud. (Justina)

Justina reflects on the shortcomings of Métis-funding supports as it pertains to supporting the educational and health care needs of Métis children with special needs. While this may not appear immediately connected to housing, as Justina pointed out elsewhere in the interview (and as referenced earlier), the high costs of caring for a child with special needs (in this case, autism), makes it near-impossible for low-income and even middle-income people to keep roofs over the heads of their families. This was also reflected on by Jamie, who cited the high cost of medications needed for managing symptoms associated with their disability, and the lack reasonable supports for them. The high cost of medications compromised their ability to address the major repairs needed in their home that continued to compromise their health and well-being.

4. Homophobia and Transphobia in Housing

Individuals who identified as transgender also face additional challenges when securing housing. The respondent to identify this transgender discussed experiencing over homophobic and transphobic discrimination from landlords. In some cases this was over discrimination add another instances landlord simply did not return their phone calls or refuse to look at their applications. In their opinion, this meant finding secure housing extremely difficult for people who identify as transgender or two spirit.

While I transition, and some people have been at their jobs for like 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, but when I transitioned whatever, I made a whole lifestyle change. So it can look very unstable on paper... And this kind of comes back to the gender stuff, and then I don't want to be pigeonholed- oh you're trans- and if I tell a guy this, who's a landlord, and I'm, like people say that I'm attractive, but as soon as I disclose that I have transitioned then I get sexualized, and I can be potentially harassed which, it creates a very unsafe environment to be in. (Annie)

Lot of our two spirited or LGBTQIA+ people, some of them are on the street, or couch surfing or living with somebody else because they can't find a place. (Faye)

Several friends of mine who are Indigenous transwomen have struggled enormously with housing and yeah, that is just something that doesn't need to happen anymore. There' are solutions and you just got to add money and you're off to the races, but for whatever reason or reasons, it's not really happening. (Elizabeth)

In the case of Annie, one responded noted that she only had five years of credit history under her new name. She didn't want to disclose her previous name or identity for fear of sexual harassment or a general negative stigma. Given this lack of credit history finding an apartment was even more challenging. Faye feels that as a whole for the two-spirit community finding housing is nearly impossible. Given this Two-Spirit individuals end up homeless, couch surfing or engaging in high-risk behavior to find somewhere to stay. This also included staying in one to relationships even when they felt they were in danger.

5. Racial Discrimination and Experiences in Relation to Racial Coding

The people we spoke to also experienced multiple forms of racism when attempting to find somewhere to live. Participants expressed a range of experiences. Some participants felt discriminated against on the basis of having darker skin, others described being “in-between” and always either too Native or too white, while others expressed awareness that they carry some form of privilege for being “white passing” and noted that they did not believe that they experienced racism in the “same way” as darker-skinned people (or those visibly coded as Indigenous) do:

My other daughter lives in [...]. And she struggles because her skin is dark like mine where [...] is a little more fair...she does have a grade 12 education. She takes care of children and old care like, type thing. And she also cleans homes and cleans churches. But she doesn't have that, you know, the top type of job that she could have if she wasn't dark-skinned. (Jenny)

...it is one of the hardest things for especially if you're dark skinned, which I am. You have a lot of people who make it really rough when you – if you do get into housing, you're harassed. You're kind of pushed out or they try to buy and sell the house from underneath you. (Jenny)

...this one lady who had been in that complex for like 30 years and was very active in her culture. She was an alcoholic...she got really drunk and started threatening me telling me that I'm too white, I'm not brown enough to live there. And I shouldn't deserve to be there, and her and her husband... I caught her husband in a tree staring through my kitchen window one night, he told me that he worked for the dockyards and...he has somewhere to hide my body, and they started threatening my kids and stuff so the housing people moved me out of there and relocated me somewhere else, but those people followed the moving trucks and found out where I lived again. And so it's like I'm too white for some places too brown for others. I just don't fit in, I don't know.” (Arielle)

there's a lot of racism that goes on, if it's like I said to you, if you go to rent something, they let everybody else know, and there's someone there that will block it. So it's not because you don't have the money, it's because they make excuses as to why you shouldn't or can't get into that housing or that unit. (Jenny)

I became like her pet Indigenous project. She let me live with her for five hundred dollars a month, and it was like she had an indigenous roommate. (Jamie)

For interviewees who noted their white-passingness, they also noted that when landlords or roommates found out about their Indigenous heritage, they experienced bigotry and discrimination. A number of participants reflected on a feeling of fear or wondering if the fact that they had been coded as Métis contributed to their negative experiences with landlords, while others drew attention to the intergenerational pressure to pass as white, arising from anti-Métis racism that was outlined earlier in this Report:

...when those rent increases are going up...mine was the first apartment to get the increase. And I always wondered and I still wondered, like, was I somehow targeted in that way. Right? Why was I one of the first people to get the increase? (Lauren)

It also said no smoking...and I was a little worried because I had just started to get involved with smudging...So I think the only time I ever disclosed my background was in that because I wanted to protect myself. (Lauren)

I always got the sense that it was like the housing situation was one where you did like the good Catholic thing, you got married young, you move into a house and you pass as white if you can work that to your advantage and raise your family as best as you can...And I think that's exactly what my pepere did. And then my dad and my mom, they, I think they were able to. (Elizabeth)

The narratives here point to two dimensions of racism when attempting to find housing. The first involve landlords and property managers overtly refusing to rent spaces to people who are visibly indigenous. This as we mentioned tends to affect darker skin Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ who if they were able to find housing, they later face a slew of racialized challenges including discrimination from roommates that involved negative comments, stereotypes, verbal abuse, or tokenism as was the case with Jamie. For many of the people we interviewed they opted to hide their Indigenous ancestry in an attempt to avoid this mistreatment. For those who couldn't they had to deal with the consequences of being a racialized person that included not finding secure housing or being mistreated by roommates.

Given the multiple challenges women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience when attempting to find housing many reached out to native and Indigenous based services in their community. They believed initially that perhaps these organizations could help them find secure housing for themselves and for their families. The women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to have a complex experience while doing this. For many who are lighter skin and white-passing they felt that there were "too white" for Indigenous-focused services. This meant they were oftentimes greeted with suspicious looks, were intensely scrutinized about their indigenous heritage or we just not provided services.

So I feel like I experience some like...I don't look native enough and in the same breath, because I transitioned so well, people can pigeonhole me for being someone different than who I am. (Annie)

...the feeling like I don't fit in anywhere because we don't have Métis housing here. I think there's one building I heard is just opening or just being built or something. But it's either Indigenous or mainstream. And so there isn't a place to feel like you belong, 'cause you know I'm either too white or too brown. So that's one of the challenges. (Arielle)

Annie and Arielle both share their general feelings about not fitting in. This includes feeling too white to access indigenous based services. This also includes not being white enough to secure housing without aid from Indigenous-based organizations or services. In the case of Annie, her experiences are further complicated by being Two-Spirit and transgender. All of the women we spoke to share the same sentiments.

6. Sexual Harassment, Familial Violence, Interpersonal Violence, and Domestic Abuse

Another theme found in our research was women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences with sexual harassment, familial violence, interpersonal violence, and domestic abuse. Abuse was almost always at the hands of men and created unstable living situation for women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their

children. Many also stayed in these toxic relationships because they could not afford housing elsewhere and were dependent on their partner to pay a portion of the rent:

I think that financial precarity and housing precarity, has definitely led me to stay in some somewhat unhealthy or potentially abusive relationships longer because I just, I mean I think financial precarity kind of just says it **(Martina)**

so I was in an abusive relationship for five years. I had, like, drug problems or whatever. I know I was an addict and I believe that my kid's father took that to use that...huge advantage or whatever, who knows.... But we definitely did not get along and it was quite abusive...and I moved into my parent's place because I really had nowhere else to go. **(River)**

In the above excerpt from Martina they reflect on the general challenges of experiencing financial precarity. She also discussed his staying in a potentially abusive relationship due to these economic issues. Martina's statements are not atypical, as demonstrative in River's words. She points to a multi-faceted problem that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people encounter. Even if you find housing, it is contingent on staying with the partner. If this partner is abusive your options are limited since you can't afford to find housing elsewhere. This left the people we spoke to in a very challenging position.

In some cases, the people we spoke to also grew up in abusive homes and this had deep impacts on their experiences with housing. Their experiences as youth reflect the reality for them as Métis children:

I had to really distance myself from my family because of the trauma that was existing and housing has actually always been like a very unsafe place for me because of the fact that I was raised in a very harmful parenting dynamic, family dynamic, whatever you want to call it, to the point where I was trying to move out at the age of 16 and considering like I was Google looking up how to be homeless. Like how to live on the street. And I recognize that there's a lot of privilege and being able to do that research safely from my home rather than actually being forced out onto the street and doing that. But at the same time, the fact that a youth is asking themselves these questions, that's horrifying. **(Elizabeth)**

The women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to eventually decided that living in an abusive relationship was unbearable for them and (in some cases) their children. For women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who did experience abuse most decided to leave eventually. But this had very severe consequences in their personal lives and in their housing situation:

He was very abusive. He had drug addictions on and off too. And he, we decided to move to Calgary, Alberta, to, you know, start over and have a new life and get rid of his triggers and everything so I gave up my job and my low income housing and stuff to move there to support his sobriety and then four months into being there he just started getting high and while I was at work one night he took the rent money and flew back here to get high. So, I just brought the kids and came home, and that's when I got this apartment, which for what it is now out there I guess isn't that bad but I mean I pay 2200 now for a three-bedroom apartment, which is pretty steep going from 900 to 22. **(Arielle)**

And that's when I actually began to struggle the most, that in all honesty, for a woman who's never gone on welfare, I went on, on social assistance. When I first left my husband in 99, I was on it for a year and I should have

probably stayed on it in hindsight. You know, honestly, I wish I just stayed on for that time, so I could have put more time into my children. And when I worked, I had to work sometimes 14-hour days, and I was exhausted and I really do regret not just using those social programs and staying home. So, housing it was very difficult. I worked day and night to afford our homes and it was very scary, very scary to try to raise the kids in a situation like that... I chose some boyfriends to try to, you know, balance things out. And it always worked out badly. (Tumbleweed)

I had initially moved out with a partner who is also Indigenous and Two-Spirit but that only lasted so long because the relationship was really messed up and toxic. And so I would kind of live the relationship would be off and on and whenever it was off, I would move in with her parents. But after the first couple of times, I realized, well, both of them are equally crappy. I can't stay with this person and I can't stay with my family. (Elizabeth)

I looked into housing. Even at that, like 30% of your rent and \$14 an hour plus benefits cuts to \$600. It's 30% of your rent for like Manitoba Housing for like our low-income housing, 30% of your gross income, right? So it's like that was \$630 out of my paycheck, but I was only making like \$1400 a month. So to tackling, like, childcare... \$200 plus a month. Plus, transportation and all that, I was only... having \$14 left, so I couldn't move out. (River)

In the above narratives Tumbleweed and Arielle describe their experiences with abuse and its impacts on their housing situation. For example, Arielle had secured affordable housing for her partner and children. Her spouse was regularly troubled with substance abuse issues and was often abusive. In an attempt to support him in his rehabilitation they moved to another city and gave up paying \$900 a month for rent and instead now paid \$2200. Her partner's sobriety was short-lived and he eventually took the family's money and continued using drugs and alcohol. After this event she was not able to secure subsidized housing for her children and herself. Tumbleweed had similar experiences. She left her husband in 1999 after multiple years of abuse. As a sole breadwinner for her and her children she worked more than 14 hours a day in order to make ends meet. During our conversation she admitted that she unfortunately neglected her children during this time. She also attempted to find new partners. However, these men that eventually became abusive as well and created a larger problem.

In addition, some Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people expressed experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace that would come to threaten their ability to support themselves. Some participants reflected on the things that they felt that they had to put up with in the course of their work – racism, exploitation, sexual harassment – because they needed to be able to keep a roof over their head for the sake of themselves and their children:

I wasn't going to let them take away my shelter because that's what would have happened in the end. As like, I have to take that harassment because otherwise, you know, I won't have shelter. And that's not going to be their choice." (Sharla)

When I was truck driving in Fort Mac, that's why I wouldn't do it. Because I mean, literally, you're one of the only women for miles and they're treating like a prostitute the whole time you're there and you are not getting compensated like that, I'll tell you, you know. Yeah. So, it's like your dignity for your paycheck at that point, right? (Sharla)

Sharla also reflected on a particularly violent encounter with RCMP officers, who handcuffed her and threw her in the “drunk tank” on the assumption she was a sex worker. They also beat her in the process:

So that kind of... just the kind of stuff that can happen when you're trying to go to work, like... I guess my hair was too long and my skirt was too short for them to believe I was professional or trying to be here in school... But they just, without thinking too much, threw me in the drunk tank... Looking back, I'm surprised that I bounced back and just went to work and, you know, I was there for about another week then I left town because I had another job to go to, but I couldn't just stop either like that. It wasn't like I had a soft place to fall for free and I could just afford to just curl up... but there's lots of times like that. (Sharla)

These narratives summarize the feelings of the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people that experienced multilayered forms of sexual abuse and harassment.

7. Childcare costs/lack of access

Another common issue raised by our interview participants is regarding the costs associated with childcare that took a sizeable amount of money out of their monthly budget:

It was really expensive... and it was so funny because a lot of the women in the daycare, they thought I was crazy for paying the full price. Like, didn't I know about these subsidy forms that everybody else had to pay one hundred and fifty bucks, but I had to pay like [the] seven hundred rate. So it was just brutal. It was like more than my child support went to the childcare, but I needed it because I needed to work full time. (Sharla)

A number of other interviewees reflected on the challenges of navigating the need for childcare in order to work – and in turn in order to be able to put a roof over their heads. The prohibitive costs of childcare, lack of access to subsidies, lack of available spaces, lack of culturally relevant childcare programming, and the challenges with respect to aligning work/childcare schedules all contributed to a situation where Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people struggled to balance childcare responsibilities with working to provide for their families.

iii. Housing Conditions

A sizable portion of our respondents reported unsafe living conditions in their homes. This particular finding included the poor conditions of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's housing and were separate from partner or family abuse. The people we spoke to also reported such things as landlords being unwilling to fix broken components of their house, unsafe security measures in their building and apartments, and a lack of security.

1. Mold, poor air quality, illness

A number of other interviewees reflected on their (and other residents, when in a shared living situation like an apartment building) experience with unsafe housing conditions – being forced to live with things such as mold, gas exposure, and their struggle with illness as arising from such exposure:

And I said, you know, this is not feeling safe. When you can smell gas like that and people are complaining of headaches... On the second floor, people were having headaches of a three-storey building. So. You know, and it just start to feel like these people don't care about us. It was traumatic in a way, because it just started to feel like the place you live wasn't a safe place, like emotionally or physically. (Lauren)

The underlying issue for all of the stuff that drives me and has been moldy housing and moldy trailers because I'm just like mold is killing me and my family. It's more of like poor quality housing. My mom moved down south to her old family trailer and it was just all black mold, so I get very angry about the quality of housing that we put up with. (Jamie)

Both Lauren and Jamie discuss the poor conditions of their housing situation. Lauren later reported a “gas” smell that was making her two entire floors of her building sick. Building management and owners ignored these complaints and did nothing. Jamie discussed how multiple generations of their family had to live with mold in apartments, trailers, and their homes. Their efforts to address mold often went unaddressed – either because housing repair programs are out of their reach or, as in the case of Jamie, they live in a northern region wherein access to housing repair services are costly, prohibitive, and sometimes non-existent.

Jamie felt it was *particularly* important to emphasize in this report how invisible the problem of mold is for Métis people in relation to housing and linked their history of living in mold-filled housing with their current disability. They also felt quite strongly that living with black mold also contributed to their mother's illness and passing. When subsequent interview participants were asked about mold *each* of them reflected upon living in a place at one point or another that had black mold. The sentiments shared shed light on the various challenges and unsafe living conditions Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people need to navigate.

2. Homes in need of major/minor repairs and renovations

Every interview participant we spoke with indicated that the places they were currently living in were in need of major repairs, minor repairs, or both. Consistent with available statistical data, the Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke with also noted that they were largely unable to afford making necessary repairs to their homes or as written above, their landlords either misled them about the status of repairs, the nature of repairs, and at times outright refused to make necessary repairs. In some cases, interviewees struggled to meet criteria laid out by Métis organizations to access funding support to undertake repairs. Justina reflected on the challenges at length:

We were concerned about the roof, because it has started leaking... We had refinanced our home so that I could go to school. We didn't know if we had enough wiggle room to refinance twenty thousand dollars in a short time... we couldn't and we reached out... they declined us again. So, we were on our own anyway. So now we just have more debt and more drain on our cash flow. Like, yeah, this is embarrassing to a certain extent... Yes, we could be still renting. We could. It's not like we have a new car... There's no toys. Yeah, it feels weird. I get to shake my fist at the government and how hard we have to work to just... you know, keep the lights on. (Justina)

I could send you pictures... You might love the pictures. Actually, I cannot overstate how rundown the house was, like cannot possibly overstate it. The last owner had been there since 1948 and... the house

had just deteriorated basically since then. So, we had no plumbing, an oil furnace, which out here, nobody does that. That's not a thing. So that had to be replaced. It was all knob and tube wiring, the floors, like the linoleum was worn right through. It was curling up and people would trip on it. . . plaster, literally falling off the ceiling. . . And then life kept keeps coming, so the house is still in a state of, I would say, extreme disrepair. . . Extreme disrepair now we've been able to chip away at some of the repairs. The big one came just this year. We had to do the roof and we reached out. . . for some support with that because of the age of the house, the height of the house, the fact that the chimney was also unstable. The roof was going to cost \$20,000 and we have no savings. . . this is how we lived. . . I don't want to say it's a poverty lifestyle --- it's not a I have a lot to be grateful for and I recognize I have a lot of privilege and a safe home --- we live well below the standard of our peers.
(Justina)

The term “renoviction” generally used to refer to situations where landlords/property companies make renovations to rental units and increase the monthly rent, often well beyond what would be allowed for a normal annual rental increase:

One of my family members was actually being. . . I don't know if being pushed out of his residence is a good way of putting it, but there was a developer interested in building a huge, like, high-rise condominium next to his house. And not only that, but it was in a neighborhood where there are several Native people living. And there were concerns about like whether or not things are being done by the book, by this condominium company in our city and just the entire situation of witnessing my family member go through a modern form of colonialism with fair housing just completely blew my mind in the worst way as possible. **(Elizabeth)**

So it was like basement, hardly any light. There was a mouse in there. You know, oh, and then as I was living there, they start to call the place. . . they change their advertising now they're called luxury apartments. . . This is the thing now, right? You've heard that probably, right? Yeah. I don't know what's going on in this city, but they keep popping up with these luxury apartments, these huge buildings everywhere. . . How can single people afford like \$1500 a month plus rent? Right. And I don't know. So there was a sense, like, am I being unfairly targeted? . . . then they were doing all kinds of renovations for the whole year and a half that I was living there. And so, like, you know, from 7:00 in the morning till 5:00 and then with the pandemic working from home and all that like, you know, banging, drilling like, you know what I mean? And like, this one time there was water and debris like streaming into my apartment and my they were just like, “Oh, sorry about that” and they just got some of their younger crew to clean it up. So I had made like little complaints here and there. And yeah, I just always wondered like. . . am I being punished for opening my mouth? Right. And then after disclosing being Métis, you know, did that do something right? . . . it was a really tough time, like, I kind of felt like it was traumatic in a way, because it just started to feel like the place you live wasn't a safe place, like emotionally or physically. Because, yeah, they were doing all these renovations to an old building. So they were breaking into walls, and we were never told about any asbestos management. . . then turns out a neighbor found some kind of documentation about some asbestos things in the basement. You know, and I was in the basement. . . But of course, they deny that, right? **(Lauren)**

Lauren also noted that the associated rental increase ultimately forced them from their home. They felt that in trying to rally their neighbours around the matter, they were sympathetic but largely indifferent. As Lauren reflected, they had stable jobs throughout the pandemic and, to their view, were also “white in appearance.” In addition, Lauren was able to access some from legal assistance to try and take the matter to the Landlord

and Tenant Board in their province, but that provided no recourse, leaving them feeling even further marginalized:

for me, it was survival, like I could not accept a \$300 rent increase like. But also, it's also so unfair. Right? So not only could I not accept it financially speaking, but on a justice point, right? And people kept saying, "Oh, that's not right, they have laws about that." I'm like, well, not when companies get around the laws, right? (Lauren)

Long story short with that whole process, but I think there was three hearings and the lawyer went down and looked through a stack of paper this big because you're allowed to review the documents that the landlord sent and he literally did that. He spent hours like, how is a regular public person supposed to do that? How is a regular person supposed to do that? They cannot they would not. So the system is built to fail for people that it's set up to supposedly protect. Right? Yeah. I think it's supposed to be this neutral ground between landlords and tenants or something I don't quite know. That's what I thought. But you could see through the process, they were so lenient with the landlords... You know, throughout the whole time of being there, construction all around me, so like mental and emotional stress and then, you know... Mice like this in your so-called luxury apartments, right? But yeah, long story short, I felt dehumanised in that process. I felt disrespected, not heard. I felt, like I said, that the system was set up from the beginning to favor the landlord, so doing the process of the hearings feels so defeating. When you felt you were set up to fail from the beginning, I don't know how I would have done it still, though, without the lawyer working for free like this was just luck this happened. (Lauren)

In many cases, the rental increases (sometimes hundreds of dollars more) force current tenants out of their homes and with zero recourse to challenge what has happened. This most egregious form of gentrification is impacting **all** Canadians currently renting homes, but the impacts of this are compounded for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the fact of generations of displacement, dispossession, and marginalization.

iv. Housing Needs, Support, and Ideal Housing Situations

Above we discussed the multiple challenges Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience as related housing. Along the same lines many of the people we spoke to provide insights into what housing programs and options they felt were important. The most overwhelming theme was their belief that Métis specific housing should be available exclusively to them. When Métis-designated housing was opened to other Indigenous peoples, some Métis sat on long waitlists and/or were never able to access housing that they perceived as intended for them. In Arielle's case, they noted facing hostility from First Nations people in pan-Indigenous housing spaces for not being "brown enough." Many of the people we spoke with discussed experience discrimination when trying to access housing support from other non-Métis Indigenous organizations. They cited a general inability to attain Indigenous based housing or affordable housing as a whole as a rationale for wanting this type of support. The people we interviewed also felt this housing should be subsidized, well-maintained, safe and easy to access. A number of participants also felt that there needed to be down payment assistance in order for them to purchase a home. Finally, those who we spoke to felt that they should have access to short term as well as long term housing. This was particularly important to women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people that had experienced domestic abuse and were fleeing violence at home. We summarize the main housing needs and requests in the section below.

One of the main findings that we uncovered where individuals desire to have access to the land and open space. While some of the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to enjoy living in urban centres, a notable number of them expressed the desire to have access to open space. This included being able to hike outdoors, engage in various practices and nearby forest for being able to access large bodies of water on a regular basis:

Another thing that I'm kind of thinking it might be like a little out there, but a connection to the land, so it would be interesting, like we could have some some housing options in like some of these Metis communities that are just outside of Winnipeg to have that connection with, like geographically with like some of our own lands, that would have been our ancestral lands or just the land in general. You can connect with the land in like an urban and urban city center...but I'm just thinking like youth who are trying to reconnect, like it's really important to to be out on the land too. And so it'll be interesting to be able to have like housing options that allowed us to to do that instead of being right in the. The city center just kind of limited to where housing is the most affordable. (Maggie)

I wish I could have a place like in my territory, like in the mountains and Alberta like in Jasper or near like the Athabasca River and just be able to live a bit more traditionally in land in nature. Just having access to that...and fresh air, with lots of trees would be so wonderful. (Jenny)

Respondents often shared the desire to have access to nature on the land for various activities. They also discussed their desire to engage in traditional practices and open spaces. While some women prefer to live in large cities, they still wanted access to open spaces on a regular basis. Given the general cost of housing (and transportation) most women we spoke to were unable to access the land. Those who enjoyed living in the city found it even more meaningful if they were able to rebuild community for their children in the neighbourhoods they were living in – rekindling Métis kinship and community ties:

I also kind of conceive of it, too, as far as honoring the Métis identity by creating like proximal kinship relationships that that is part of a good life...one where your neighbors are in your home and you're in your neighbor's home and you can rely on one another and you can't, you know, your children have safe places to go, like, I see...the geographical side of it, that not just having a network but having a community in proximity to you is is a part of Métis identity. And...that makes me feel proud to be manifesting that again. Like, actually like my ancestors would be proud of us with our little, you know, traipsing around from door to door in the street. (Justina)

Many of the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke wanted to be able to live alone or with only their children, that they could afford and without needing to depend on a partner or anyone else in their lives. Many of our respondents simply wanted a town home for small house with the yard so they and their children can access some green space. As one interviewee mentioned (Elizabeth), this is also an urgent matter:

An ongoing issue that's existed is the fact that kids have been taken away because there aren't enough rooms in an apartment, according to a social worker. And that is completely unacceptable and preventable. (Elizabeth)

Maybe the Métis Nation could focus differently on their housing...they don't have housing for single people either. They have family places that could have been the other thing going against me. It's me and one kid. We could fit in a one-bedroom apartment if we want it. You know what I mean? So if they actually had housing for single people, then maybe there wouldn't be such a line up other places for subsidized housing as well. Maybe that could open...all the domestic disputes that would have [been] avoid if they had single person housing...I think just having that, that little possibility to go somewhere safe would probably have helped a lot of my friends I was talking about who just moved in with somebody. You know what I mean? Like, that's their way of getting by...I have a friend right now who I'm sure she stays with her man because he pays the rent and she is his slave for it. You know. And she thinks that's what her value is. So, you know, some reasonable single person housing that's actually accessible without, you know, doing a whole walk of shame around town through a shelter and everything else might change that." (Sharla)

That's what having the home is about, having the stability where you don't have to move all around because you can have a place at whether you own it or you rent it. It's home, right? You don't have that stress on top of whatever else is going around in the world. (Sharla)

Obviously, I would want to have like a detached living situation where like I could have children and I'm feeling pretty freaked out about that because like the housing market is so wild in Victoria. (Linda)

I want to be within that space in like a, you know, just like an apartment nice apartment or townhouse or something I don't want like a whole a whole house with a yard or, or whatever I think we need to be moving towards increasing, increasing density in urban spaces in general so (Donna)

Linda and Donna both discuss their ideal living situation. For them, it would be home ownership and a modest piece of property. They both also felt the yard space would be important so their children can play. While not all women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people advocated for homeownership or felt that that was important, a large segment did. For those that did feel home ownership was key their main issue was the need for a substantial down payment for future property. Most women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people were content with a small apartment or town home as long as it had some greenspace for personal or shared use.

A large segment of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we talked with preferred communal living arrangements. They describe these arrangements as a large apartment complex or building but also had shared communal spaces. In these communal spaces they imagined cultural events where they could discuss and learn about multiple issues related to the Métis Nation. All women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people describe having access to Métis elders as a key component of their ideal living situation:

[Ideal living situation] would be intersectional and intergenerational and the way that we would learn from each other in that kind of space.' And, yeah, it allowed me to think about housing differently, especially for queers that you don't get to see older queers or necessarily younger queers to be in a space where you get to see queers of all ages, is also a really nice thing to do in the housing in particular. And in community, where you have elders living in the same place as little ones. (Gina)

I heard that they'll have like an elder on site. And there'll be cultural teachings about the Métis people and that there might even be childcare on site. And that sounds amazing you know that just to be connected where you belong. And like people, I didn't have my grandpa died before I was born and my grandma hated me, you know, so I didn't have elders in my life, or grandparents... A complex, with a yard...a community room, where we could do barbecues as a community or potluck or potlatches as a community and an elder could come and do like you know teachings or drum making workshops or regalia making workshops. Knowledge, like I said knowledge sharing. Maybe there could be speakers that come in about domestic violence in case somebody is hiding it, or the LGBTQ group will run out of there, because that's a huge thing these days, I know my daughter struggled with it. I just would envision like a little community type setting with all of that, you know, maybe infant development workers come in and do the ages and stages questionnaires with the little with the little guys and help the moms with some parenting strategies or support. (Arielle)

...this idea of having housing that would actually support our elders. That's really amazing to me because I do know several elders who struggle. Even into their old age with housing, and it's it's awful because these are people...who do so much. For passing down knowledge and maintaining, maintaining our communities and our ability to practice our culture in a lot of ways and just to know that they've struggled throughout their whole lives to...have a home that's frankly heartbreaking and to me that there's going to continue to be people who --- like, everybody ages, right? That to have that in mind, that that cycle is going to continue is just really cause for concern." (Elizabeth)

Here Gina and Arielle both describe their ideal living situation. They as well as other women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we interviewed describe the Métis specific communal living arrangement. This housing complex would ideally have open spaces, Indigenous-based services, elders, and a space to share information related to the Métis community. What they describe is oftentimes referred to as wraparound services. Wraparound services are a series of services and supports that would help individuals live happy and well-rounded lives. These may include educational supports, social services, and community-based resources. These two interview participants also spoke to the importance of having specific supports for people from the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Additionally, they and other women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people felt it was key to have Métis elders present as well as children from all ages. The importance of Métis elders is reflected upon by Elizabeth, who expresses great concern regarding the housing gaps for Métis elders – and demonstrates holistic thinking in noting that we *all* become (if we're fortunate) older people one day.

Finally, the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to believe that there should be short term housing available for any Métis woman or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person in need. This narrative was particularly important when discussing the experiences of those who had been through domestic abuse.

Yeah, I mean, I don't know, what's already out there, this might already exist. But I think like having maybe more shelters that they can go to where they can stay for a little bit while they you know, get on your feet. And just like, I mean, I just don't know why, like more hotels and stuff aren't turned into options for homes or, you know, we're constantly building new homes. So like, why can't that just be subsidized and just kind of given to Indigenous people or just other people that need this? (Lori)

Lori, another woman we spoke to, believes there is a scarcity of short-term housing options for women. Her and other respondents felt that this resource was particularly important for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Some of the respondents emphasized that if decision-making tangibly involved Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, then things might actually begin to look different:

There is no mother and child...consideration in the planning. And that should include --- and I'm just going to be totally selfish here...if there are parents who want to go to school, that school should be paid for. Regardless of income. They should be able to leave their job and attend school full time. That's how you actually raise people out of where they are because it's not about tuition. It's about tuition and loss of income...Those were crazy years of yeah, of like going to my mom's for dinner because we literally had no food. We could not buy food. We had children that we couldn't feed. We had nothing... And even with the amount of privilege I had, it took that much out of us to get a Bachelor degree... What about a single parent? What about a family that doesn't have the level of income that we do...like what is wrong with taking the long view people? And I think women take the longer view and our men don't. And I guess maybe there's some social stuff that we're kind of steeped in that makes us consider risk and reward in a longer term than boys are raised in. I don't know, but it just generally seems...very much short term, splashy announcements and then a lack of follow through and a lack of long-term vision. Like, you built a childcare in Thompson. I'm sure Thompson needs more than one. Why aren't we supporting all families? Like what great a ribbon cutting? It's a nice childcare centre, but you're not... it's not a systemic solution. (Justina)

I will say any time in the schools or at conferences where the theme is anything about reclamation or rights or...systemic oppression of almost anyone, but specifically, I'm thinking of conferences on Indigenous people, it's women that are there, which angers me because reconciliation and reclamation is not women's work alone. I don't understand why we're doing all of the work. And...its overwhelmingly obvious in any conference or committee meeting, it's women who show up to do the work of breathing life into a community, and I don't understand why. It's very annoying to me that men seem to not even notice, they don't even notice that there's none of them in the room and that none of them are contributing. (Justina)

Here respondents such as Justina discuss their deep-seated belief that decisions made with respect to the Métis Nation need to involve Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people from the ground up. A number of interviewees expressed the belief that if Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people were more thoroughly involved in such work, that it may manifest in systemic change. A comprehensive approach that considers *all* voices within the Métis Nation as essential to manifesting change. This is reflected in the interviewees Dolores T. Poelzer and Irene A. Poelzer conducted with Métis women in Northern Saskatchewan, many of whom (as we will shortly discuss) insisted that even things such as housing design planning *must* involve their voices, perspectives, and needs.¹³²

132 Poelzer, Dolores T. and Poelzer, Irene A. (1986). "In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Métis Women Speak Out." Saskatoon: One Sky. 56-57.

9. Environmental Scan

As mentioned above, initiatives leading to the establishment of Métis land bases (the Métis settlements) shows some effort to respond to Métis people's housing needs. The impetus was, however, two-fold, as the province of Alberta also desired a path to minimizing the presence of visible homelessness and poverty among Métis families and communities. Other bungled provincial programs that brought more harm than good to Métis families and communities have vastly overwhelmed the landscape of initiatives. In more recent years, however, the federal government has made a number of funding commitments in relation with the Métis Nation, and while there is still a lot more that needs to be done, current and ongoing initiatives show some promise for the future. While it is outside of the scope of this study to offer a comprehensive review of housing initiative programs, a broad strokes overview of recent developments is highly relevant to identifying where change is still desperately needed.

In July 2018, the Métis Nation and the Government of Canada signed the Métis Nation Housing Sub-Accord. The Sub-Accord involves a \$500 million investment that will run over 10 years.¹³³ The Sub-Accord outlines that it will, among other things, help to address the needs of “vulnerable Métis people, including those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, persons with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, those with mental health problems and addictions, veterans, seniors and youth.”¹³⁴ Arising from the 2018 federal government budget announcement, the agreement also outlines commitments around funding for increasing Métis home ownership, repair and maintenance of existing homes, and rental aid initiatives – all over a 10 year period. According to agreements made regarding funding distribution, for example, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S), and Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) would each receive 25% of the allocated funding, while Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and Métis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC) would share the remainder in equal parts (12.5% each).¹³⁵ As many initiatives are in development at the time of this Report, it remains to be seen how whether those developed under the auspices of this funding arrangement will proceed in a manner responsive to the distinctive needs of those fleeing domestic violence and Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, the announcement and intention to engage in a gender-based approach is promising.

The Métis Nation of Ontario runs the Métis Housing Stabilization Program that is as well funded through the Reaching Home program. According to the MNO website there is assistance for tenant advocacy emergency assistance and legal referrals (whether there is legal funding support is unclear), education around tenant rights, aid with affordable housing applications, assisting in access to emergency shelters for those fleeing domestic

133 Government of Canada. “Métis Nation Housing Sub-Accord to provide \$500 million over 10 years.” 4 November 2021. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1548426109089/1636047297154>.

134 Government of Canada. 2018. “Canada-Métis Nation Housing Sub-Accord.” <http://www.albertametisgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/MNC-Canada-Housing-Sub-Accord.pdf>

135 Narine, Shari. “New Metis seniors housing is nearing completion in historic community.” *Windspeaker*. 10 July 2020. <https://windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/new-metis-seniors-housing-nearing-completion-historic-community>.

violence and/or those who become homeless, along with household support for people transitioning out of shelters, and other information-based services. The program functions on a case-by-case basis and as of December 2021, requires some measure of computer literacy for people to be aware of the program and to access the email and telephone information for the program. It is unclear as to whether MNO will be developing fixed housing initiatives. There is no indication of a gender-based analytical lens to understanding housing support needs, with respect to a brief mention of support for those fleeing domestic violence situations.¹³⁶ With respect to home improvement, MNO offers the MNO Home Improvement Program (MNO-HIP), which is a one-time forgivable loan to low-to-moderate income home owners (who are registered citizens with MNO) “to complete necessary repairs to their home to extend its useful life and/or improve accessibility for persons with disabilities (to a maximum of \$25,000).”¹³⁷ The program is delivered in two tiers, for minor repairs under \$10,000 and for major repairs of up to \$25,000. For the purposes of determination maximum household income level, MNO uses “income at the 60th percentile” or “the provincial level 60th income percentile.”¹³⁸ While the program is indeed helpful, funding is neither guaranteed, there is no information with respect to the number of applicants funded per year, and it in essence requires (as with other Métis housing repair loan programs) that applicants but a lien on their homes.

In British Columbia, MNBC has embarked on a number of projects arising from the sub-agreement. In September 2021, MNBC purchased land in Kamloops to begin its work on building integrated housing, childcare, and office centres.¹³⁹ In October 2021, MNBC released information regarding plans to build below-market rate rental housing in Campbell River. The \$1.16 million project, with funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Early Learning and Child Care Accord, would include “housing for Métis families, a Métis child care centre, and office space for the North Island Métis Association (NIMA).”¹⁴⁰ In November 2021, MNBC announced similar projects in Surrey (\$6 million) and Saanich after obtaining land upon which they would construct below-market rate rental housing.¹⁴¹ In both areas the project would also include early learning and child care space, along with office space for the MNBC local offices. The \$2.2 million Saanich project was directly funded through the accord and MNBC’s acting president indicated that integrated housing and childcare centres would be a priority for MNBC across all regions. Caitlin Bird, the then-acting president of the Métis Nation Great Victoria chapter issues a statement that “the vision is to create a space where Elders can connect with young people in the child care centre as well as families and other community members.”¹⁴² A similar project

136 Métis Nation of Ontario. “Métis Housing Stabilization Program.” Métis Nation of Ontario. 6 December 2021. <https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/housing-infrastructure/mets-housing-stabilization-program/>

137 Métis Nation of Ontario. “Home Improvement Program.” Métis Nation of Ontario. 13 January 2022. <https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/housing-infrastructure/home-improvement-program/>.

138 Ibid.

139 Peters, James. “Métis Nation BC buys downtown Kamloops property for \$3.8M, plans housing project.” CFJC Today. 25 September 2021. <https://cfjctoday.com/2021/09/25/metis-nation-bc-buys-downtown-kamloops-property-for-3-8m-plans-housing-project/>

140 Campbell River Staff. “Métis Nation of BC to build below-market rental housing for Métis families in Campbell River.” Vancouver Island Free Daily. 28 October 2021. <https://www.vancouverislandfreedaily.com/news/metis-nation-of-bc-to-build-below-market-rental-housing-for-mtis-families-in-campbell-river/>.

141 Atkins-Baker, Megan. “Metis Nation targets families with rental housing, childcare project in Saanich.” Saanich News. 9 November 2021. <https://www.saanichnews.com/news/metis-nation-targets-families-with-rental-housing-childcare-project-in-saanich/>.

142 Ibid.

was announced for Terrace, BC.¹⁴³ The commitment to integrated spaces comes closed to taking a holistic approach to addressing the interrelated crises of housing, poverty, lack of access to childcare, and cultural loss. The initiative is not, however, without issue.

The decision to include office space for MNBC locals is indeed unique. While it is of course understandable that in tight real estate markets and a desire to ensure timely access to services administered through MNBC locals would make the integration of office space desirable, our research tells us that without further research undertaken with Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people with respect to their feelings on this particular construction plan, it remains to be seen whether people will find it desirable to have integrated (presumably) politically-oriented offices in such proximity to their homes. For Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ with negative experiences with institutional structures and with political organizations, this has the potential for bringing up feelings among them that they are being “monitored” or “observed.” This is potentially triggering and re-traumatizing and may act as a deterrent for those who might otherwise need access to such housing and childcare supports. Further research would be required to determine how decisions were made with respect to the inclusion of office space and if this is something that is responsive to the wants and needs of the most marginalized of the community.

In August 2021, MN-S issued a call for proposals regarding the development of capital projects and other initiatives to address Métis housing and homelessness issues – the results of which remain to be seen at this time.¹⁴⁴ In December 2021, the Round Prairie Elders’ Lodge opened, comprising 26 affordable and accessible housing units for Métis elders.¹⁴⁵ The primary driver of the project, Central Urban Métis Federation, Inc. (CUMFI) is a Métis-led non-profit founded in Saskatoon in 1993. CUMFI received a number of funding contributions, including \$1.5 million from MN-S with funding from the Canada-Métis Nation Sub-Accord that went “toward the land purchase and a deposit on modular units.”¹⁴⁶ CUMFI has long taken an equity and gender-based lens to housing initiatives as they have a number of projects responsive to the needs of the whole family – including affordable housing programs, those leaving domestic violence situations, temporary emergency homes for children, and other emergency and respite initiatives such as Aunties Place and Kokum’s House (temporary respite program for families). MN-S has also very recently hired Jason Mercredi to work within MN-S as a Homelessness Manager to work towards addressing Métis people’s experiences with homelessness in Saskatchewan.¹⁴⁷ As with other provinces, MN-S also offers housing repair and first-time home buyer programs. Within Saskatoon there is as well the Métis-founded company Camponi Housing Corp., which offers a Geared-To-Income housing program that maintains a number of spaces. As with other programs it is application-based and requires a credit check and rental references, however the website is explicit that character references from a teacher or other figure can stand in lieu of both.¹⁴⁸

143 Link, Rod. “Métis purchase land for Terrace housing project.” 1 February 2022. <https://www.terracestandard.com/news/mtis-purchase-land-for-terrace-housing-project/>.

144 Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. “MN-S Call For Proposals For Social Supports and Housing To Address Homelessness.” 23 August 2021. <https://metisnation.sk.com/2021/08/23/mn-s-call-for-proposals-for-social-supports-and-housing-to-address-homelessness/>.

145 Vescera, Zak. “‘A dream come true’ as affordable homes open for Métis elders.” The Star Phoenix. 3 December 2021. <https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/a-dream-come-true-as-affordable-homes-open-for-metis-elders>.

146 Central Urban Métis Federation, Inc. “CUMFI Opens the Round Prairie Elders’ Lodge.” 3 December 2021. <https://metisnation-sk.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CUMFI-MNS-Media-Release-Round-Prairie-Elders-Lodge-Final-1.pdf>.

147 MBC News. “MN-S hires long-time community advocate for role devoted to homelessness.” 1 March 2022. <https://www.mbcradio.com/2022/03/mn-s-hires-long-time-community-advocate-for-role-devoted-to-homelessness>.

148 <https://www.camponi.ca/docs/2020-complete-application.pdf>.

With respect to MNA, MNA owns both the Métis Capital Housing Corporation and the Métis Urban Housing Corporation. It manages rental housing for over 3,000 residents with just under 900 affordable housing units throughout the province (including some with barrier free access), located within 14 urban areas.¹⁴⁹ Subsidized and affordable housing programs are open to anyone with proof of Indigenous ancestry. In 2019, MNA announced the expansion of housing-related programs – including home repair assistance, down payment assistance, Métis family supports, and support for students in need of rental assistance (according to one interview participant the latter was recently canceled leaving students on the hook for the full cost of their rent).¹⁵⁰ In July 2021, MNA partnered with the town of Lac La Biche to support a temporary camp for homeless people.¹⁵¹

Some significant challenges and questions remain. GBA+ is inconsistently present across approaches to housing initiatives. In addition, some project initiatives have come up against significant racism whereby non-Métis residents argue that Métis housing will devalue their homes and bring crime into their neighbourhoods.¹⁵² Current housing initiatives/programs also need further examination as to the scope of their focus. For instance, some interview respondents indicated that because some subsidized and affordable housing initiatives (such as Métis Housing's) are not Métis-exclusive, a number of off-reserve First Nations have been allocated housing, making it more difficult for Métis in need to access the supports they see as being administered by their representative organizations. Additionally, it is not clear as to what the long-term dimensions of the funding relationship will be between the Métis Nation and Canada, and thus what the long-term dimensions of relationship and responsibility will be for repairs, maintenance, etc. As interview participants reflect, even where programming has been available, due to funding shortages and interruptions, and in some cases arising from prohibitive requirements, many are unable to take advantage of such programs. For instance, many affordable housing rely on applicants having access to, among other things, good credit and rental history. However for those who have struggled with housing insecurity and poverty, both good credit and stable rental history pose significant barriers to access. For older, single or widowed Métis women who were in a living situation where they had been dependent on a partner to act as the “breadwinner” for most of their lives, they are unlikely to meet both the credit and rental history requirements. Wherein as mentioned above some programs make it clear that they allow for character references in lieu of formal credit histories and rental references, the lack of clarity may see that Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are uniquely disadvantaged by such criteria. As Dolores T. Poelzer and Irene A. Poelzer document in their series of interviews with Métis women in Northern Saskatchewan, women's roles in the domestic sphere meant that they were often cut-off from direct relations to capitalist power that would enable them to meet housing support criteria.¹⁵³ A gender-based lens taken to such programs would be necessary to attend to the distinctive position of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Further, while the sub-agreement and the associated initiatives arising out of it are notable, there may be inconsistently applied practices and developments across provincial associations and regions. There are also questions as

149 Métis Nation of Alberta. “Who is Métis Housing?” 2022. <https://albertametis.com/programs-services/housing-programs/>.

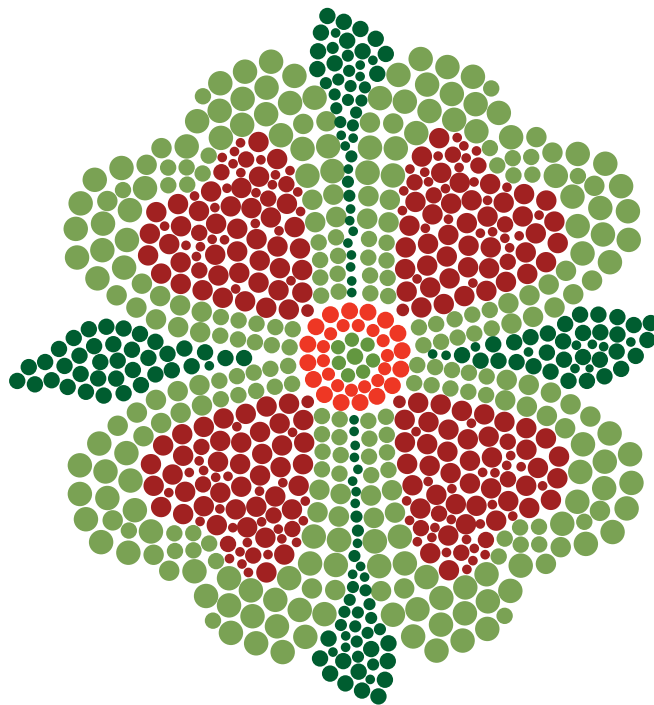
150 “New Housing Programs Announced.” Otipemisiwak. 2019. <https://albertametis.com/app/uploads/2021/05/O-mag-2019-Issue3-Online.pdf>.

151 Pasiuk, Emily. “Lac La Biche County, Métis Nation of Alberta partner on temporary homeless camp.” CBC News. 16 July 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/lac-la-biche-county-metis-nation-of-alberta-partner-on-temporary-homeless-camp-1.6102639>.

152 Quenneville, Guy. “Some concerns about Métis-led housing project in Saskatoon reflect ‘antiquated view’ on inclusion: developer.” CBC News. 27 September 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-blairmore-camponi-affordable-housing-election-1.5739047>.

153 Poelzer, Dolores T. and Poelzer, Irene A. (1986). “In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Métis Women Speak Out.” Saskatoon: One Sky. 56-57.

to whether such initiatives will directly aid in the harm brought by the introduction of sexism and gendered discrimination to Métis people's lives. To take a gendered-based analytical lens to these housing initiatives is to recognize that more often than not the kinds of visions that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people express for safe, security, and affordable housing that is responsive to their unique experience within the Métis Nation, is often ignored. As Poelzer and Poelzer document, Métis women expressed concern even at the lack of inclusion with respect to housing design. Wherein programs and initiatives were created to construct housing for Métis families, they generally ignored the perspectives and needs of Métis women who would carry the bulk of child-raising responsibilities in the home. Poelzer and Poelzer's interview participants identified the need for inclusion in such conversation so that they may ensure adequate storage, number of rooms, placement of electrical outlets, etc.¹⁵⁴ To this end, our interview participants echoed the words of Poelzer and Poelzer's across generations, with both sets indicating that there also needs to be greater *education* and direct engagement at community levels (meeting people where they are) around rights and access – from things ranging from information for young women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people as to *how* to rent, what is required, what their rights are as tenants, to how to turn on stoves and how to use washers and dryers. Wherein these are innate and intergenerational trauma has led to gaps in the transmission of life skills, the consequences of not knowing how to navigate these aspects of “everyday life” can lead to grave outcomes. As one of Poelzer and Poelzer's interview participants noted, “When they don't know, serious things can happen. They can have a fire... and what if the little children or old folks are there.”¹⁵⁵



154 Poelzer and Poelzer 1986, 81.

155 Ibid, 81.

10. Recommendations

LFMO recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Push for distinctions-based and gender disaggregated data collection regarding Métis housing experiences
2. Examine the link between Métis housing, homelessness and domestic violence
3. Examine the link between the dispossession and displacement of Métis from our land and the lack of safe and secure land bases for Métis
4. Include Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ folks at tables, working groups and work taken to understand Métis core housing needs
5. Commit to systemic, long-term change by putting in place Métis housing service navigators to assist with processes such as home ownership programs, mortgage negotiations, budgeting, rental assistance, Métis homecare services, seniors' housing, etc.
6. Commit to the revision and expansion of ownership programs that are responsive to the needs of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people as detailed in this Report, and this includes engaging in consultation work with them from the ground up, taking into account the system disadvantages they face
7. Commit to the expansion of short-term housing solutions for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, with an expanded focus on transitional housing initiatives for Métis girls, women, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and their children, fleeing domestic violence and abuse
8. Provide funding to all Indigenous based organizations for the provision of Métis-specific services
9. Provide additional funding for research on the specific challenges the Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience today arising from the historical and contemporary challenges faced due to housing marginalization
10. Develop targeted subsidized Métis-specific daycare programming that is responsive to, and reflective of local costs of living, housing, etc.
11. Give back Métis land and commit funding for the rebuilding of historic Métis communities, particularly in the areas identified in this Report whereby the communities have suffered, and continue to suffer, greatly as a result of harmful government programming

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